

# New plans after rents talks with Minister



**DISSATISFACTION** was expressed at a Rent Action Committee meeting attended by representatives of about 30 community and trade union organisations on March 2.

The meeting was convened to discuss

Monday, March 1's meeting between the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC) delegation and the Minister of Community Development, Pen Kotze.

It was also to examine "the way for-

ward" in the present rent struggle. THE people present were very unhappy with the response of the minister to the demands made by CAHAC.

It was also said that the only way forward was to build much stronger grassroots organisations rather than taking angry decisions which are difficult to carry out.

A positive step in this direction, it was felt by many, would be for the people present to go back to their organisations and the mass of the people

## Stop rent increases

MASS protests throughout the Western Cape has forced the Minister of Community Development to speak to the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC).

CAHAC gave the Minister Pen Kotze a memorandum outlining the people's demands: Rents we can afford, rent increases be stopped, the central government takes responsibility for housing, and big-

ger state subsidies for housing.

The Minister said he could not stop rent increases because housing

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# CHL's BIG BLUFF OVER LAVIS LIGHTS

THE Bishop Lavis Action Committee (BLAC) has accused the Citizens' Housing League (CHL) of giving "hollow and misleading" reasons for its continued failure to provide 3 000 Lavis-town residents with electricity.

After the community's 20-year campaign for electricity, BLAC says it has finally exposed the "emptiness" of the CHL's claim that it cannot borrow funds for the electricity project from private sources without Government permission.

BLAC says there is nothing to stop the

CHL from getting a loan on the open market - and statements by the Minister of Community Development, Mr Pen Kotze - have confirmed BLAC'S view.

In an interview with a reporter from a daily newspaper late last year, Mr Kotze said the CHL could get money from any source it chose without Government permission.

The central Government only provided a portion of CHL's income, Mr Kotze said. "The CHL is a private enterprise. It generates its own funds. It also has a reserve fund. It can get money - any-

where it wants without Government permission," he said.

However he believed the CHL preferred to wait for a Government loan because this would carry a far lower interest rate than a private loan.

Asked why the funds promised by the Government 2½ years ago had still not been provided, Mr Kotze said the money was "not available." He could not say when it would be provided.

While BLAC continues to condemn the Government for failing to provide the necessary funds, it says Mr Kotze's statements have

exposed the "hollowness and emptiness" of the CHL's excuses.

"If the CHL really had the interests of the residents at heart, as it claims, it would go out and get a private loan if Government funds are not provided," a spokesperson from BLAC said.

"For years we have had pious promises and misleading statements. Now we see the CHL for what it is, a heartless landlord apparently only concerned with drawing in its rentals and not with the welfare of its tenants."

There was also no acceptable reason for the CHL's refusal to use



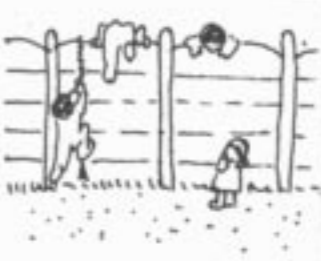


its reserve fund to launch the electricity project, the spokesman said.

"It comes down to the fact that the CHL's priorities are not the people's priorities. The CHL wishes to keep its reserve fund for other matters. We regard this as a blatant misuse of power which should be devoted to meeting the priorities of the community."

"The same argument applied to the central Government," he said.

"It is interesting to note how quickly the priorities of white voters are met in comparison with the pri-

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# 'A great show of solidarity'

THOUSANDS of workers in factories throughout the country staged a work stoppage to commemorate and protest against the death in detention of Neil Aggett.

A worker said: "We in our union supported the work stoppage to show our rejection of detention without trial. Neil Aggett was a trade unionist who fought for the betterment of all workers".

Such was the spirit of workers who supported the call by the Food and Canning Workers Union for a national day of mourning. The death in detention of Neil Aggett was met with shock throughout the country. And, as the shock faded, it gave way to anger and a great show of solidarity by workers and the broader community. Memorial services attended by

thousands of workers and concerned people, paid tribute to him and his work in promoting worker solidarity.

From all quarters the government was condemned for its harsh laws which allows for detention without trial and with no access to anyone. In statements issued by residents associations, students, youth, women's organisations religious groups and trade unions, they called for the scrapping of security laws.

Thursday, February 18th, will remain in the minds of many people. While some attended memorial services at their places of work and in the communities, others, adopted a minute's silence. It is reported from Durban that a worker jumped off a truck at 11.30 a.m. (the scheduled time of

the stoppage) to join thousands of workers in a half an hour of solidarity.

Support also came from workers who are unorganised. At a plant in Koeberg it is reported that several hundred workers who are not unionised supported the call.

Commenting on the success of the stoppage, a trade unionist said, "workers have moved closer together as a result of the stoppage. They also moved closer to the union. It was a great show of solidarity".

## United stand

At a summit conference of 29 trade unions last year, the unions expressed the need for a united stand against the bosses and the state. The unions also took a strong stand against attempts by the state to control them. Bannings and detentions

of trade unionists were condemned. The stoppage was a great step forward in trade union unity and true to the spirit of the October conference.

GRASSROOTS to workers who participated in the stoppage. "We can only pay tribute to Neil Aggett by carrying his work forward. Our union must continue to support calls like the work stoppage. It showed the world that we are not satisfied," he said.

Another added: "The stoppage made us aware of our strength as workers in this country. The message from the workers was clear - the government cannot simply act against our unions. If they do, they will be met with the organised strength of the workers in this country. We must continue with the struggle for democratic change."

## Thousands support call for work stoppage

GRASSROOTS spoke to trade unions about the support for the work stoppage. This is what they reported.

- **FOOD AND CANNING WORKERS UNION (FCWU)**  
The union experienced 80% support from organised factories.

**CAPE TOWN**  
Milling Companies 650  
Irving & Johnson 2 300  
I & J Hout Bay 500

**JOHANNESBURG**  
Langeberg, All Gold, I & J  
Fattis & Monis and Epol 3 000

**SOMERSET WEST**  
Gants and Deepfreeze 3 000

**WELLINGTON**  
SA Dried Fruit and Oakglen  
Canning Co. 400

**CERES**  
Ceres Fruit Juices 600  
Ceres Fruit Growers 900  
Ceres Aart-Ko-op 200  
SAD 90

**PAARL**  
Langeberg 800  
All Gold 1 400

**GRABOUW**  
Kromco 450  
Elfco 350  
Appletiser 200

**SALDANHA**  
Sea Harvest and SB  
Fishing Co-op 2 000

**WOLSELEY, WORCESTER  
ASHTON, MONTAGU 1 000**

A total of 17 740 workers participated in the stoppage.

- **FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS (FOSATU)**  
"The stoppage was successful at 83 factories involving 52 000 workers throughout the country.

We see this as a great step forward", said a spokesperson for FOSATU.

- **GENERAL WORKERS UNION (GWU)**  
6000 workers who are members of our union in Cape Town, East London and Durban participated in the stoppage. "On the whole, only organised factories supported the call.

The workers at these factories were very well disciplined and dignified. They held meetings during the stoppage to discuss the death in detention of one of our leaders. They sang workers songs and in some instances wore black armbands".

- **MEDIA WORKERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA (MWASA)**  
MWASA had an 80% success to their call with 400 members stopping work. A memorial meeting was held during the half an hour stoppage.

- **CAPE TOWN MUNICIPAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION**  
issued the following statement:

The CTMWA expresses solidarity with Dr Neil Aggett's family and near ones.

His death is a loss not only to the trade union movement but to the whole movement for democratic change in this country.

Similarly we express our solidarity with all other detainees and their relatives.

The CTMWA is deeply concerned about the whole question of detentions.

We are totally opposed to all those laws which place detainees at the mercy of the Security Police with no access to anyone else.

We say that such laws must be scrapped in toto.

As such the recommendations of the Rabje Commission are totally unacceptable and will change nothing."



From all parts of the country they came to pay tribute to Neil Aggett at his funeral and, to recommit themselves to what he stood for.

## DON'T BE BLUFFED BY STEYN REPORT

THE Media Workers Association has issued a newsletter in which it urges its members "not to be bluffed" by the Steyn Commission report.

The newsletter says: The Government is once again trying to discredit MWASA. This time its Steyn Commission of inquiry into mass media is saying untrue and damaging things about our union. The commission is so badly informed it still calls us a 'journalist' organisation when about 90 percent of our members in the Western Cape are not journalists.

You, as a member, will know that MWASA is a trade union. It is a workers' organisation fighting for better wages and working conditions for all its members.

You know this from your experience in the union; from the meetings you have attended; and from the reports you receive from representatives on the regional council.

Don't let anybody fool you by saying anything else. These are the people trying to destroy our union because they don't want democratic unions which fearlessly fight the bosses.

The commission is also saying we are 'political' and a 'front organisation'.

The Writers Association of South Africa (WASA), as a journalists' organisation, used to speak out strongly against the sufferings of our people.

WASA also believed black consciousness would help our people

realise their pride as human beings and would make them stand up for their rights in the land of their birth.

But WASA is no more and MWASA, the Media Workers Association of South Africa, also does not play this role.

MWASA fights for higher wages and better working conditions for our members.

If the higher wages and better working conditions we are fighting for, are eaten up by increases in rent or electricity or increases in bus and train fares, then we are forced to take a stand. This we are doing at the moment on the rent increases.

We are not saying these problems are not ultimately tied up in

politics. But this is NOT our role as a young union trying to build up itself into a strong workers' organisation.

MWASA is a democratic union. The members, including yourself, make up the union. You, have the final say of what happens in the union. If there's anything happening in the union which you do not agree with, you have the right to put it straight.

Don't allow yourself to be misled or bluffed by what others say about MWASA.

JUDGE MWASA. FROM WHAT YOU KNOW IS HAPPENING IN THE UNION, NOT FROM WHAT YOU READ IN NEWSPAPERS.

# Demand for bus shelter

WESTRIDGE residents complain that while the bus companies want to increase the fares, the service they supply remains poor.

"For instance," said a spokesperson for the Westridge Action Committee (WESTAC), "thousands of workers from Westridge have to stand in a long queue in Hanover Park waiting for a bus to take them home."

"But there is not a single bus shelter. Winter will soon be here and people are going to get soaked."

WESTAC has started organising around the bus shelter issue.



WESTAC is campaigning against the lack of bus shelters at Hanover Park terminus. While the bus companies have applied for increased fares, the people bear the burden of a poor transport service.

# UNITY AGAINST HIGH FARES

## CAHAC leads struggle against busfare increases

TWELVE organisations on behalf of thousands of people objected to the increases in busfares by the bus company operating in Mitchells Plain and Atlantis.

The struggle against high busfares was co-ordinated by the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC). The organisations that worked with CAHAC in this struggle were:

Federation of Cape Civics, General Workers Union, Food and Canning Workers Union, Electricity Petition Committee (EPC), Mitchells Plain Youth Movement, Rocklands Ratepayers Association, United Women's Organisation, Cape Town Municipal Workers Association, National Union of Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers and the Atlantis Housing Action

**'If the bus company was given the fare increases, many will be forced to live below the breadline.'**

Committee.

With one voice the people told the government appointed National Transport Commission: "We cannot afford the present busfares. How can we be asked to pay more?"

"We have been moved away from where we work by unjust laws like the Group Areas Act which caused much hardship and suffering. Our families have been broken up."

"And now we also have the extra burden of high busfares."

"Shouldn't the gov-

ernment pay for its own bad policies?" the people said.

The bus companies are asking for an average increase of 30 per cent. For example the fare for the internal service in M.P. will go up from 15 to 20 cents and in Atlantis from 15 to 25 cents.

The fare from Atlantis to Killarney will go up from 90 cents to R1,20. From Morgenster (Mitchells Plain) to Hanover Park the fare will go up from 30 to 40 cents.

A social scientist

from the University of Western Cape who recently did a survey in Atlantis, pointed out to the commission, that if the bus company were given the fare increases, then many residents will be forced to live below the breadline.

He also stated that there can be no economic reason for people living in Atlantis.

That because of a bad government policy many people were experiencing many hardships. "Many people interviewed were forced to live below the bread-

line because of the huge rents they have to pay," he said.

CAHAC presented the main reasons why the increases should not be granted.

Firstly it believes that transport being a social service should not be provided for profit but must be run by the state or local authorities on a non-profit basis.

Secondly in most countries the poorer people live near the centre of town or near where they work.

In this country thousands of people have been moved by the government against their wishes, and therefore the government should bear the cost of its policies and not the people who have no say in the laws that affect every aspect of their lives.

## Hout Bay increases

SINCE 1971 rents for the 44 fishermen's cottages in Hout Bay has risen from R16,03 to R41,51.

"We know that we have paid for these cottages over and over. We were promised that we could buy the cottages, but this never happened," a resident said.

"In the past the cottages used to be maintained regularly. But not any more. Now we have to pay for maintenance."

"In 1980 the Coun-

cil decided to paint the window frames and doors. They decided to use three different colours. The tenants had no say whatsoever.

"They painted the first 12 cottages and then stopped - apparently the job became too expensive."

"In 1974, sewerage pipes were laid. However, only 10 cottages got flush toilets."

"We want to buy these cottages, but the council won't agree because they say there is

too much repair work to be done.

"We now realise that only if we stand together and voice our grievances collectively will our voices be heard."

"We have had house meetings and representatives have been elected. We will decide together what our next step will be. We are dissatisfied with the latest rent increases and have joined the campaign for rents we can afford."

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1977	Datsun 1407 GX Auto	3 500	1978	Datsun 120 Y Deluxe	3 600
1977	Toyota 1800 Manual	3 295	1978	Audi 5E GLS	5 995
1977	VW Beetle 1600 DL	2 700	1978	Datsun 120 Y Beige	3 700
1977	Toyota 1600 Carolla	3 500	1978	Datsun 140 Y S/W	4 200
1977	Mazda 1600 Capella	3 000	1979	Cortina GHIA 3000 Auto	7 500
1977	Toyota MK2 Auto	3 500	1979	Mazda 323 1300 Blue	4 500
1977	Toyota 2000 GSL Auto	4 000	1979	Mazda 323 Red	4 500
1977	Corolla 1600 X Mags	3 500	1979	Mazda 1800 Capella Auto	2 995
1977	Datsun 1407 GX Green	3 400	1979	Corolla 1200 & Mags	4 200
1977	Datsun 1407 GX Blue	3 400	1980	Golf 4 door 1100 LS	4 995
1977	Peugot 504 S/W Yellow	4 400	1980	4 x Datsun 120 each	4 300
1977	Toyota GSL Brown	4 000	1980	2 x Corolla 1200 each	4 300
1978	Datsun 140 Y SDX	4 000			

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Cypress Street residents demand proper entrances and suitable fencing.

## WESTAC'S first campaign

ANGER is rising in Westridge over a two metre high wall, known to many residents as "The Wall of Shame".

The wall which fences off Eisleben Road from Cypress Way is causing many of the residents in the area extreme hardship.

Because the main entrances into the area are situated quite far off, residents are forced to climb over the wall when they enter or leave.

Some manage to squeeze through a small gap — but this still leaves a one metre drop to the pavement.

Many residents have suffered as a result of the wall, especially the elderly and sickly people in the area. One of the residents, a pregnant woman, has had a miscarriage after injuring herself climbing over the wall.

In winter it is even more difficult

for people to walk the long way round in the rain.

The Westridge Action Committee (Westac) a body formed recently to take up the community's problems, has started a campaign around the wall problem.

At house meetings held in the area affected directly by the wall, residents expressed their dismay at the Council's bad planning.

They demanded that proper entrances be made for the area and that suitable fencing be provided for the residents in Cypress Way.

At the house meetings, the residents have organised themselves into street committees to take up the problem.

Other organisations in the area have also pledged their support for the WESTAC campaign.

# MTA looks at how it is organising

AT the beginning of this year members of the Manenberg Tenants Association took a long hard look at themselves, with special emphasis on the mistakes that they had made.

The following is a summary of what they saw and how they went about solving some of the problems.

In the new areas we tackled we relied too much on our original workforce to take the message of the civic to the people instead of drawing the people into actively participating in building the civic.

Field workers had to remain in the street to look critically, with the street committees, at the problems facing them and to make discoveries as to how issues are connected with each other.

### Street leader

To do this properly we lacked the workforce, taking into the number of streets that had to be covered.

In the already organised areas the "street leader" was looked upon as the one who would solve their problems. The majority of the people in the streets were inactive.

Through our involvement with this situation we adopted the branch structure, where we worked on contacts in the area. Contacts showed more willingness to take up problems in the real way.

Informal meetings were held between old members and new contacts, who had given

their names at mass meetings. Problems in the area were discussed as well as ways of building up the civic.

These people formed themselves into a branch with a representative on the general body.

Through experience we discovered that the best way to draw people into the civic was through their own active involvement.

House meetings became much easier to

organise, as branch members had real contact with the people. They knew that many of the people's problems were the same as theirs.

Branches came together at monthly meetings to exchange ideas, reflect on what they were doing and to decide which issues affected the area as a whole.

To build stronger branches and to equip

them with organisational skills, workshops are necessary, as the need arises.

In the workshops we will look at what branches are doing, look at our potential in the area and to act with the potential we have.

As one of our members put it: "It means never to do less than we can or ought to do, but not to attempt to do things that are really not ready to do."

## Teachers' Protest —

### Call for organisation

"WE are witnessing a total onslaught against the people by forces of the state." This was said at a public meeting attended by 200 people in Athlone recently.

The meeting was called to protest against the unjust dismissal, transfer and demotion of teachers.

The meeting was also told that trade unions, civic bodies, student organisations, sports bodies and now teachers are experiencing the full force of the state machinery.

"This attack against the teachers can only be met by the establishment of a democratic teachers organisation and the formation of legitimate parent-teacher-student

organisations," the meeting was told.

All speakers at the meeting called for unity and for greater involvement of teachers in community affairs.

A teacher said that no reasons were given for the transfers and no state department can convince us that it was in the interests of education.

"We should not make any apologies for the politics of our teachers, we should be proud of them."

The meeting condemned this attack on teachers and it was resolved that:

"The victimisation of teachers involving dismissals, transfers, demotion and other forms of harassment is aimed at hampering the democratic and progressive

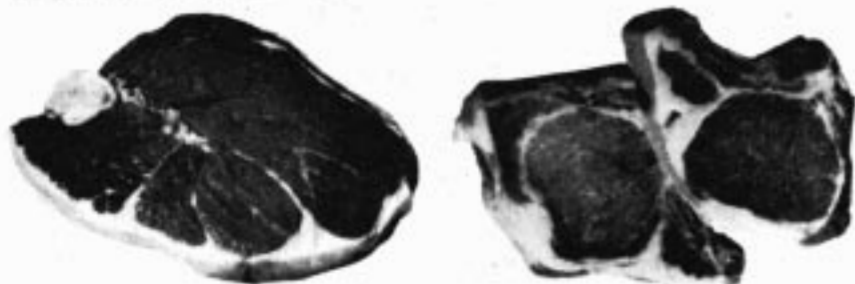
participation of teachers in community and sporting organisations, we therefore call for:

1. The unconditional reinstatement of transferred, dismissed or demoted teachers,

2. The formation of legitimate Parent-Teachers-Students Associations and other democratically elected organisations of the people,

3. A non-racial education system administered and formulated by parents, teachers and students in a united and free South Africa, and we realise that the above demands can only be achieved through the formation of strong Parent-Teachers-Students Associations, Teachers organisations and Student organisations.

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# DAY CARE SHORTAGE

## A great burden for working parents



IN townships all over the Western Cape, thousands of parents are struggling to provide day-care for their pre-school children.

Forced to go out and seek work, many mothers can no longer care for their children.

While the bosses require them to they do not try to make provision for their children.

And so many a parent has to make do with a

private arrangement with a helpful neighbour. In some townships, the neighbour eventually sits with a large group of children who require constant attention.

In most cases, this child-minder has little if any training and has to battle constantly against the inconvenience of the lack of facilities in her home.

A case on our doorstep is New Crossroads,

near Nyanga, where over 900 families live.

Here two women have taken nearly 200 children into their homes to help solve the problem of the working mothers.

In her tiny two-roomed home, Mrs K houses 84 children.

"Some are still babies when they come to me," she said when Grassroots visited the children. "Four of

them even sleep here because their mothers cannot keep them with them where they work as domestics.

"The others arrive here at 7.30 a.m. and stay here until their mothers return from work at night. They bring their own lunches because I cannot manage to give them food," she said.

And two streets away from her, Mrs N has taken in 100 children.



## Attempts to crush SAAWU

AMONG the people in detention are four officials of the South African Allied Workers' Union - Thozamile Gqwetha, Sisa Njikelana, Sam Kikine and Eric Mntonga.

One of them, Thozamile Gqwetha, has been admitted to hospital, and, according to his brother Robert, was 'unrecognisable' when visited earlier this month.

A spokesman for the family said this week that he was 'much

better', but the cause of his illness is not yet known.

The detention of SAAWU officials is part of a long attempt to crush worker organisation in East London.

The unions there face not only hostile employers but also the South African government and the Ciskei government.

Recently it has seemed that these three were working together to make it hard for the unions to operate.

Unions have been hounded out of premises in the 'white' area of East London and forced to pay high rents for shoddy offices, their officials have been harassed by the police and the employers.

Key SAAWU members have been fired from the factories where they are working. In one case at least, replacements were recruited by the Ciskei Central Intelligence Service.

The chief minister of the Ciskei and his

brother are often found making hostile and provocative statements about the unions, SAAWU in particular.

Now the manager of the cinema where the unions often held meetings has received a death threat, SAAWU is having difficulty finding a printer for its newspaper, The Worker, and all three progressive unions - SAAWU, General Workers' Union and African Food and Canning Workers' Union - have been

thrown out of their offices under the Group Areas Act and harassed by security police and officials from the Department of Community Development.

This is the second time SAAWU has been forced to move in one year.

This week 35 SAAWU members were found guilty in a Ciskei court of incitement to public violence (they were singing workers' songs after a meeting).

The list of attacks

on the unions is long.

And many of the most violent attacks have been on individuals as well as organisations.

Mr Njikelana's house in Mdantsane has been set alight; Mr Gqwetha's mother and uncle died when their house mysteriously burnt down, and at their funeral a close friend of his, Miss Deliswa Roxiso, was shot dead by police.

Both Mr Njikelana and Mr Gqwetha have spent long periods in

detention, without ever being charged in court.

But SAAWU has not collapsed under these attacks from the African state and the Ciskei state.

A democratic union is more than its leaders. SAAWU goes on organising in East London,

A democratic union is more than its leaders. SAAWU goes on organising in East London, run at the moment by workers who have come recently from the shop floor.



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FLORAL WREATHS

# THE PEOPLE OF ATLANTIS SPEAK

## 'We need a strong organisation'

FROM all over the Western Province, from Grabouw, from Saldanha, Elsies River and Manenberg people came to Atlantis hoping to find a better life. But as one housewife said:

"If I had the choice, I would go back to Stellenbosch where life was not so bad."

These are the words of Mrs Appollis.

Her husband works in Salt River for their five children.

She has been unable to find a job in Atlantis.

From the R50 per week that Mr Appollis earns, R18,68 is spent on rent (per week), R10 on electricity (per month), and R8 on water.

He also has to pay R5,50 per week for a clipcard to Cape Town.

Mr Appollis is forced to work in town because there are no jobs in Atlantis.

The jobs that are available in Atlantis offer lower wages.

The residents of Atlantis did not have a choice when they moved there.

From where they came there were no houses and Atlantis was the only place where they could find a house.

The Group Areas Act forced the people to leave their older communities like District Six and prevented them from getting houses in other areas where houses stand empty.

"Because of all these problems, we in Atlantis need a strong organisation through which we can voice

our grievances. The only way is for us to organise ourselves," said a spokesperson for Atlantis Housing Action Committee (AHAC).

AHAC, an affiliate of CAHAC, was launched at a mass meeting on 1st February this year. More than 400 people attended the meeting. A committee was formed and is organising in the area. Atlantis has been hit hardest by the rent increases and recent proposed busfares. AHAC is taking up this fight.

### Developed

Atlantis was developed as a growth point because the government refuses to do away with the Group Areas Act.

Houses and suburbs were built together with developing factories to provide jobs.

But the industries have not moved to Atlantis and there are no jobs.

Only 40 percent of the breadwinners work in Atlantis. The other 60 percent work outside in areas like Bellville, Parow and Maitland.

At present there are 30 000 people in Atlantis. The area is divided into a number of "suburbs" like Avondale, Protea Park and Saxon Sea.

There are blocks of flats like the Dura Flats, Atlantis Senior Secondary School is the only high school and also has to cater for pupils from Darling, Mamre and Pella.



## AHAC fights busfare increases

MR Groenemeyer who works in Tiervlei spends R10 per week on transport to work by bus. Mr Groenemeyer is one of many families in Atlantis who earn R40 per week. With rent increases and other expenses it is hard to make a living.

The people of Atlantis have to use the bus because there is no train service which is

much cheaper. Mr Groenemeyer says the bus service is not only expensive but also unreliable.

"Daar gaan nie 'n week verby dat ek nie laat by die werk aankom nie".

He also feels that it is unnecessary for the Atlantis bus-service to increase its fares since there are only bus shelters on the wrong side

of the road and the service is poor.

The bus does not enter Protea Park, one of the suburbs of Atlantis and residents walk about 30 minutes to the nearest stop.

The residents of Atlantis are totally dependent on the bus service to move out to other areas. This they have to do often, not only to get to work,

but to do other necessary things like shopping, attending school and the hospital.

AHAC has organised residents to lodge their objections with the National Transport Commission. They have attended the hearing and presented their problems themselves to stop the busfare increases.

## THE FIGHT CONTINUES FOR NYANGA SQUATTERS

FOR the Nyanga bush squatters the struggle continues.

Soon it will be one year since about 2 000 homeless people occupied bush and sand between Crossroads and Nyanga.

Today their ranks have been thinned to about 100 survivors — hardened by months of exposure to the elements, police harassment, arrest and the now repetitive cycle of deportation to the Transkei and return to Cape Town.

The survivors — constantly on the run — are becoming adept at evading the clutches of the police.

The group symbolises the ongoing plight of 'illegal' blacks caught in the minefield of influx control.

But the group has evolved a strategy which differs strikingly from the low-profile 'illegality' chosen by hundreds of fellow squatters — who opted for township lodgings in preference to the exposure of life in the Nyanga bush.

### Deported

The movement back to the bush was initiated by those squatters who found their way back to Cape Town in November after being 'deported' to the Transkei from the Nyanga squatter site. They were joined by some of the original Nyanga Bush people who escaped arrest and deportation last year.

By the end of last year those squatting on the Nyanga site totalled

several hundred.

Their numbers have since been depleted in regular police raids on the group.

### Solidarity

Strong solidarity characterizes the group activities. Many squatters lost their jobs when deported to the Transkei.

Those who retained jobs pool earnings to support unemployed members of the group. The squatters have also established links with people in the township, depending partly on this source for their food.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the Nyanga squatters to keep down jobs.

Being shot at by police on January 26 did not do much to improve job security. Squatters now fear that taking jobs will make it easier for the authorities to trace them.

But there is no talk of throwing in the towel.

The squatters seem determined to remain on the Nyanga site, chosen close to the administration board complex as if to remind officialdom of their presence.

Squatting next to a squatter camp, marginals of the marginal, the small group of Nyanga squatters continue to remind Cape Town of the impact

influx control has on the lives of black South Africans throughout the Western Cape.

## Poor facilities

The Atlantis residents have a good way of describing life in this "promised land".

They all say "Atlantis maak jou flenters."

Through this people refer to the many problems that they face in Atlantis.

Atlantis only has one supermarket and two smaller dealers to cater for 30 000 residents. The people prefer to shop in town because the prices are much lower and there is a wider choice of goods. A member of the A.H.A.C., Mrs van Rooyen who prefers to shop in Athlone has to spend R4,80 each Saturday to get to Athlone.

The medical facilities offered in Atlantis are inadequate. A survey of the facilities was done by the UCT Medical School. There is one day hospital providing 28 in-patient beds.

The hospital is staffed by 2 part-time doctors and 15 nurses.

No doctors are on duty at night and over weekends, only on standby for emergen-

cies.

There is a clinic which has the only dentist but there is no chemist or optician.

Residents are very unhappy with the quality of the treatment.

Doctors are known to prescribe medicine without examining patients.

The day hospital is referred to as "die perde-hospitaal" by the residents.

### Gogga-dorp

Atlantis is sometimes referred to as "gogga-dorp".

The reason is that the ash bricks used by the Divisional Council to build the houses breed bugs which come out once the people occupy the houses.

A resident from Saxonwold, Mrs Harrison is angry because Council will not allow her to use a certain paint which will help to destroy the bugs.

Another irritation for all residents is the water of Atlantis. The water of Atlantis is "brak".

This means that soap does not lather easily.

It is thus difficult to wash oneself and do the washing.

It is also expensive because of all the soap and soap-powder used.

### Children

Atlantis only has one creche. The creche caters for 80 children.

Many mothers leave children at home with elder brothers or sisters.

Some are forced to send their children to relatives in other areas during the week so that they may work.

### Cut-off

"Hier in Atlantis bly ons in die bos".

These words people use to describe the isolation which living in Atlantis has brought into their lives.

They are cut off from family in other areas and cannot visit regularly because of the high bus fares.

Moving to Atlantis has also meant an end to sport and other cultural activities for most residents.

NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

# grassroots

SPECIAL AGM SUPPLEMENT - MARCH '82



*'Its got something in it for everybody. The news is something you can believe, its honest.'*

*'Close to the people and their problems. Read about things that you do not get in other newspapers.'*

*'Its got facts that we are ignorant of. It educates the workers.'*

*'Advice helps us save money. Else we have to go to the doctors and it costs money. Its very helpful.'*

*'Tells workers more about the rights in the factory and encourages people to fight.'*

### MESSAGE FROM CAHAC

*Grassroots helps to promote the work of organisations affliated to CAHAC and in so doing serves to strengthen our organisation.*

*We of CAHAC believe that Grassroots takes us into the homes of many residents whom we constantly need to keep in touch with.*

*It is the task of all our organisations to ensure that CAHAC and Grassroots continue to work together in the future.*

*- CAHAC Steering Committee*

### MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH

*Youth groups throughout the Western Cape support Grassroots. The folding and selling of Grassroots have helped to bring young people together, not only from one area but from many. By selling Grassroots with our civic bodies in our areas we are able to promote better relationships between the youth and parents. We hope other groups will also participate in activities to assist Grassroots. We support Grassroots and hope it will only grow stronger in the future.*

*'It gives a view of what's happening in our own communities and other communities.'*



GRASSROOTS Publications holds its second Annual General Meeting at the Mayland Centre in Bloubaan Park on March 5, 6 and 7th.

More than 100 delegates have been invited from civic, youth, worker and other organisations based in the Western Cape. Invitations have also been extended to delegates from publications groups in other centres.

At the congress we hope to look at our goals, our problems and to plan for the new year.

As Grassroots is a community newsletter, aiming at being the voice of the people, it is fitting that we report back to the people after a year's work. It is only in this way that we can claim to be a truly alternative newsletter.

The congress will help us to come to the people who write, distribute and read the paper. In this way we can strive towards doing better issues in the future. But only take place with the full participation of the people. Grassroots wishes to thank organisations for their hard work and dedication in making the paper such a success over the year.

We hope that the congress will be an

opportunity for all to recommit ourselves to strengthen Grassroots in the future.

The congress will be opened by a guest speaker on Friday night. And then, we will have to get down to hard work on Saturday and Sunday to cover a lengthy agenda. We hope that delegates will take this opportunity to express their views. They will be expected to report back to their organisations. As the congress draws nearer, there has been great excitement and messages of support have been received from the youth, the civic and some unions.

### Interest grows in community newsletters

DURING 1981 the interest has grown in and outside the Western Cape. The co-ordinator of our newsletter committee explained: "many organisations are recognising the importance of using newsletters not only as a means of informing the people, but also to help them in their organisational work."

GRASSROOTS has held four workshops to exchange skills on how to produce your own newsletter. We have not been able to meet the demand and hope to give greater priority to this in the coming year.

In large urban centres groups of people have expressed the need for a newspaper which focuses on the issues facing the communities and giving news coverage to the projects of civic and youth organisations.

Last year, the first issue of "The Eye" came out in Pretoria. We hope that 1982 will see the arrival of new community newspapers in other parts of the country!

## What is different about Grassroots news

- We write about the experience of our people and not that of the bosses.
- We try to explain to our readers how to go about solving problems in the community and at work jointly.
- We encourage organisations to write stories and to present news themselves.
- Stories about struggles waged by organisations are fully approved by them before being published.
- We encourage people to discuss their news in a group and to jointly decide on the content of the stories.
- At all times, Grassroots news is about the people, for the people and by the people.

# ROOTED

AS GRASSROOTS is entering its third year, there is no longer any doubt that it has not an important communications need in our communities.

A reader said: "When we read GRASSROOTS, it is as if all communities are face-to-face around a table sharing problems, experiences and ideas of what is happening in their areas."

This was one of the aims of the newsletter when it was born in January 1980. Not only did it hope to inform and educate, but also to help co-ordinate our activities.

The big commercial newspapers were found to give scant coverage to the problems and struggles of our people.

GRASSROOTS was started to fill this vacuum.

Although many troubling problems were experienced, it has emerged with a firm foundation.

To date, close to 80 organisations - youth, civic, unions, women's groups - are working closely with the newsletter. Without their active support, Grassroots cannot exist. When the newspaper was launched, there were very few community organisations in the Western Cape.

GRASSROOTS has grown as the organisations have grown. The problems of Grassroots are so different to the problems faced by other people's organisations.

It is two years ago that organisations en-



Preparing for a Sunday morning of door-to-door setting

# ... IN THE COMMUNITY

## Distribution - our link with people

doned the newsletter in the Western Cape.

It is two years since community and worker organisations started writing their own reports of activities in their areas as they saw and felt them.

And, it is two years since Western Cape organisations started distributing the paper in the areas where they live and work - using it at the same time to promote the work of their organisation and to get residents to talk about the issues highlighted in the paper. Close to 50 youths' residences hold and collate the paper when it is printed.

Our circulation has been stepped up from 5000 for the first edition to 20 000. And, over the past year, we have generated more than R20 000 income from advertising and sales.

The growth of GRASSROOTS has been possible because of the broad support that it has received.

But, participation in Grassroots goes further. Delegates from all the organisations associated with Grassroots serve on its general body and sub-committees.

In this way, they participate in the general running of the newsletter.

At commercial newspapers decisions are taken at the top and filtered to the bottom. At Grassroots, all decisions are taken democratically by all the community people and organisations involved.

Our road has never been an easy one. At the end of the first

year, our organiser was forced to leave his position at Grassroots because of a banning order. The authorities hoped to disorganise the project.

In spite of problems, we were able to place the newsletter back on a firm footing and we are now stronger than ever before.

Last year, two editions of Grassroots were banned. The May edition after a success in the December, and the November edition after a success in the October. Our aim has been to be as strong as the other newspapers in the new year.

There are many areas which get few or no copies of Grassroots. Areas where organisations are not strong, we are poorly distributed and have few goals, if any. Such areas are also well represented on Grassroots' general body. Others are not. It is a reflection of the state of the community.

We have not been able to meet the demand for newsletter workshops. The sharing of media skills still remains a priority.

We still receive feedback on a haphazard basis. Without the feedback from readers, GRASSROOTS can never truly be the voice of the silent majority.

The newsletter is distributed through civic, youth, worker, women's and social service organisations. Also through subscriptions, mail orders and street sales. Civic are our largest distributors. Around 70 per cent are distributed in this way.

Our distribution system is co-ordinated by the office staff and a small group of volunteers who assist with deliveries.

Grassroots is printed every five weeks. This is how we go about planning the distribution for a particular issue.

Ten days before the paper comes out, all organisations are contacted to find out how many copies they will be taking.

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So, if your organisation has a problem in the field of health, trade unions, law, social work or education, contact GRASSROOTS office, and a member of the advice panel can go out to the community meeting to discuss the problem.

If we find a solution together, we can write about it on the advice page, so that other communities can share the benefit of our advice.

In this way, GRASSROOTS advice will become more democratic.

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MANY of our readers do not know how Grassroots sets about its work. Community involvement is central to the entire Grassroots operation.

Grassroots' chief decision making body is its general body. As many democratic residents and worker organisations as possible are represented at this level.

On a more permanent basis GRASSROOTS is run by an executive which is elected by the annual general meeting. The executive is answerable to the general body (which meets once every five weeks) whose members in turn are answerable to their democratically elected organisations.

Community and worker involvement in GRASSROOTS doesn't end at the general

meeting level.

The GRASSROOTS newsletter is produced in a five weeks cycle. The first important event in this cycle starts just two days after the previous issue is published.

It is the first news-gathering meeting. This meeting "gives birth" to the new fledgling issue of GRASSROOTS. All worker and community organisations are invited to send representatives to this very important meeting, so that the new issue can grow from the very grassroots of the people.

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Running parallel with the work of the news gathering committee is the Advice Committee. This is a committee of experts who put together articles on health, law, workers' rights and so on.

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Once the News Gathering Committee has finished its work, the process of bringing out an issue of GRASSROOTS is taken over by the Production Committee.

The News Gathering and Production Committees have at their disposal a full time staff member to assist them with his/her experience and technical know-how as required.

GRASSROOTS uses a printing process which requires the pages to be collated and folded by hand.

On printing day about 50 representatives of youth, civic, worker and other bodies come together to perform this task in a remarkable spirit of comradeship.

As soon as the papers are folded the full-time distribution official together with a small group of volunteers deliver the paper to all our distributors.

They sell the paper from door to door in their respective areas, using it as an opportunity to renew contacts with their readers and make contacts with potential members.

Aside from the two staff members already mentioned there are also another two. One's job is to administer the office and paper work (not to forget the insurance amount of figure work) that running GRASSROOTS entails.

The other, the Permanent Organizer, has the task of co-ordinating the entire GRASSROOTS operation.





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Ten days after the paper has been distributed, all contacts are followed to find out whether copies have been sold.

Where copies are unsold, it is redirected to other areas where there is a demand. The demand for Grassroots fluctuates depending on the level of organisation in the community.

Campaigns also account for an increasing demand for Grassroots. We are also affected by examinations, holidays and when organisations take up issues in their areas.

Where there are no organisations or where organisation is weak, distribution remains a problem.

While Grassroots is reaching the communities, we still do not know whether the paper is being read.

Little feedback is received from distributors.

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# GRASSROOTS NEEDS YOUR FEEDBACK

GRASSROOTS needs your feedback. Without your feedback, Grassroots cannot be our voice.

Early last year, a survey was conducted in Manenberg and Lotus River to find out what our readers think about the newsletter.

A workshop was also held with delegates from community and worker organisations. These are the findings of the survey:

- \* Does Grassroots get out to the people? Yes. The people are passing on their copies after reading it. In Manenberg, 56% pass on their copies and in Lotus River,

69% pass on their copies. Where the civic is stronger more people read Grassroots and get it through the work of the civic.

\* Who reads Grassroots?

In Manenberg, 3/4 of the readers are workers. In the tenant areas in Lotus River, it is the same. But in the home ownership areas of Lotus River, more people read Grassroots.

\* What do they think of Grassroots?

Most people thought it was good. The most popular news for Manenberg and the tenants of Lotus

River was worker news. But for the homeowners, the most popular news was civic news.

\* What do people think of the language?

Absolutely everyone thought that the paper was easy to read and understand. They were all happy with the language.

\* And the Price . . . ? 3/4 of the people interviewed thought it was fine, but 1/4

thought that it was too low!

At the Grassroots feedback workshop in March last year, we had a chance to discuss some criticisms and suggestions with community representatives. This, together with the survey results helped us to produce better copies over the past year.

What do you think, should we have another survey to find out what readers think of Grassroots?

## How to use your paper

- Selling GRASSROOTS promotes teamwork.
- Distribution is one of the tasks of the organisation.
- Door-to-door selling introduces organisers to new people in the area. In this way they can be drawn into the work of the organisation.
- Promote the work of your organisation by writing stories for Grassroots.
- Grassroots encourages discussion between people.
- It helps us to talk to people about what is happening in other areas.
- Use Grassroots to help build your organisation.

## Working with Grassroots



### FEEDBACK

- We welcome your ideas on the paper.
- Which stories did you like or dislike. Why? Is the paper readable?
- Give your feedback to the office or your GRASSROOTS representative from your organisation.

### DISTRIBUTION

- You and Your organisation can distribute the paper.
- Work out a system of selling Grassroots and using it in your organisational work. The office will be willing to help.
- If you are not selling, contact the office.
- Return unsold copies. They can be sold elsewhere.
- Please pay sales money before the next issue comes out.



## Working with Grassroots

### NEWSLETTERS

- Production meetings are open to community representatives to learn how to lay out a newsletter.
- If your organisations need assistance with bringing out a newsletter, contact Grassroots.

contact-letter, contact Grassroots.

### ADVERTISING

- You can help us by approaching businesses in your area to advertise in Grassroots.



### ADVICE

- Write to the advice committee about your problems with health, trade unionism, law and social welfare.
- Contact the office if you would like a member of the advice panel to come to your meeting to discuss the problem.
- If we find a solution together, we can write about it. In this way, other communities can learn from our advice.



## WESTAC organises

GRASSROOTS spoke to Westridge Action Committee about how they are using Grassroots.

WESTRIDGE Action Committee is one of Cape Town's newest civic bodies - it is barely two months old.

But already it has had considerable success, seeing to the setting up of street committees at the rate of two a week.

"We have found the sale of GRASSROOTS essential to our organisational strategy," said a spokesperson for Westac.

"In fact we open up our work in a street with the sale of GRASSROOTS door-to-door. But the actual sale of the newsletter is not our main aim.

"We talk to the people about the paper and other issues at the same time.

"GRASSROOTS gives the householder and us something in common. It breaks

down any barriers in communication there might be. GRASSROOTS also builds confidence. Before leaving we say we intend calling a meeting in the area.

"A day or two later we visit the street again handing out invitations for a house-meeting, introducing ourselves as the people from Westac who's sold Grassroots to them. We find that we are very well received and most people promise to come to the meeting.

"Often at the meeting people are keen to find out more about the workings of GRASSROOTS and we explain to them as best we can."

Westac is soon to conduct a survey in the area. Questions on GRASSROOTS will form part of the survey form.

## Working with Grassroots



### NEWSGATHERING

- There are three news meetings a month.
- Send a representative from your organisation to news meetings.
- Discuss your stories in your organisation. Write it yourself and bring it to the meeting. We will help you from there.
- Encourage group reading and group discussion on the content of the paper.

### FOLDING

- GRASSROOTS is printed every Fifth Thursday.
- Come to the printers, join in the spirit and help us fold Grassroots.



For further information contact GRASSROOTS, 329 South West House, Shortmarket Street, Cape Town. Tel. 43-2117

# OUR POLICIES AND CONSTITUTION

GRASSROOTS, initiated in 1980 by the journalist organisation, the Writers Association of South Africa (WASA), has never worked rigidly according to its constitution.

Instead, as the project grew, so new guidelines and policies evolved from the day-to-day running of the newsletter.

At first all powers in terms of the constitution were vested in a Board of Trustees, chosen to 'oversee' the project.

The the board played a small role and were not really needed. It was a handful of community people and

others with writing skills who carried the project through its difficult birth.

Scores of civic bodies, trade unions, social service and other community organisations were consulted and slowly became involved. They helped with story-writing and distribution of the paper.

It was thus inevitable that at the first Annual General Meeting (AGM), that the constitution was amended giving full membership to all actively involved and committed to the project.

Democratic community organisations and

trade unions also have membership in terms of the constitution.

The main aim in terms of the constitution is to publish newsletters and other media articulating the needs and aspirations of the community and undertake any other activities in furtherance of this aim.

Grassroots policies are no different to that of other people's organisations. There are broad policies which set guidelines for the general running of the project. Also specific ones pertaining to news, advertising, production, finance and distribution.

These policies were

decided upon at our last AGM, and when the project was first started.

Grassroots is committed to:

- full participation and involvement of the organisations associated with it.
- to promoting democratic organisation
- to becoming financially self-sufficient
- and not to support or promote separate government created bodies such as Management Committees, Community Councils and the government's homeland policy.

# LABOUR FOCUS

## Recognition agreements: Workers or bosses interests?

A NUMBER of unions are presently involved in negotiating recognition agreements with managements.

Officials of the African Food and Canning Workers Union and the Food and Canning Workers Union have urged that a certain amount of caution should be exercised when drawing up such agreements.

They say that it is essential for unions to get together to discuss what common approach to take towards the bosses.

Recognition agreements provide for the recognition of the union, including its committees and shop stewards, how negotiations are conducted, for union workers to meet workers on the premises of the factory and other such facilities, as well as procedures for discipline and grievances (complaints).

### Fighting

It may seem that such agreements are just what unions are fighting for – and in many ways they are.

But if union representatives are not careful, they will find that they have weakened their own organisation in the factory in exchange for a paper agreement, caution Food and Canning officials.

For, bosses across the country are saying that they will not deal with a union until it has entered into a recognition agreement with them.

As a rule, something the bosses want so badly from the unions can never be in the interests of the workers.

Recognition of the union as such is not really what the bosses want – they in fact want to use such "recognition" to bend the organisation to their will.

### Big groups

Recent negotiations with big groups like Premier Milling, which have many different types of factories, have shown that some other unions have entered into agreements which cannot be in the interests of their members or workers in general.

For where one union has negotiated an agreement which plays into the hands of the bosses, the bosses will tirelessly try to get the next union to agree to the same thing.

In fact the approach of the bosses to recognition of a union is poles apart from that of the workers.

### Bosses insist

• The bosses insist that the union must not question their right to make profit. They therefore ask the unions to subscribe to statements such as "it is in the interests of the employees (ie workers) as well as the employers (ie bosses) that the company be profitable" – when in fact unions are necessary precisely because the workers are opposed to the profit motive of the bosses.

• COMMITTEES: The bosses seek to limit and control the role of the committee elected by the workers by "recognising" it. The union's standpoint, however, is that

it is the workers' exclusive right to decide what sort of committee they want.

• NEGOTIATIONS: The bosses seek to limit the right of the union to negotiate on certain matters – such as "company policy". Housing is said to be not a union concern. The unions' standpoint is that anything that concerns the workers is the concern of the union.

• GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES: The bosses always devise procedures involving many stages. The worker with a complaint must go through each stage, from supervisor to foreman, to department head to manager, and each stage confirms the level of authority instituted by the bosses.

### Bypass

The union standpoint is to bypass these levels and go straight to the top management which has the say.

• DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES: Discipline for the bosses is a means to control workers. It suits them that discipline is applied strictly, that workers do not question disciplinary action and that offences are defined in language that the bosses understand best – like "gross insubordination".

What is gross insubordination to a worker? Certainly it does not mean the same thing as it does to his boss.

So the union's standpoint is that disciplinary offences must be offences which the worker accepts. There must be flexibility and the workers must be able to

question actions.

• ARBITRATION: For the bosses in any serious dispute there must be a last resort to avoid strike action. So if the bosses and the union are in conflict, they reason, the matter must be referred to arbitration. Arbitration is where an outside party, eg, government or academic or legal person, finally decides on the matter.

### Against interests

It is an idea which workers clearly see is against their interests, if anyone explains it to them. For at one stroke they are deprived of their only weapon, their unity, and an outsider decides for them.

• STRIKES: For the bosses the really important topic in a recognition agreement is strikes. They wish to prevent strikes by obtaining assurances from the Union that they will not support strikes or if strikes occur, the union will see to it that the workers return to work. But a union can never play policeman to the workers.

It can no more say strikes won't happen than the bosses can say they won't treat workers unjustly.

It can easily be seen that negotiating on these matters is full of difficulties. The bosses are at an advantage with complicated language and their experts.

This again demonstrates that it is more than ever necessary for unions to get together and discuss what common approach to take towards the bosses.

## Victory for hospital workers

ABOUT 18 months ago the General Workers Union started to organise workers in the hospitals. At the beginning workers faced many difficulties.

For example there were serious divisions between Coloured and African workers.

After many months of continuous work the workers joined the union and overcame these difficulties.

Then the managements of the hospitals delayed matters even further. But the longer the workers had to wait the more united they became.

The South Peninsula Hospitals Group consists of the following hospitals:

Victoria Hospital, Princess Alice Orthopaedic Hospital, Lady Michaelis Orthopaedic Hospital and the Eaton Convalescent house.

The workers at these four hospitals elected their committees in November 1981. The management agreed that they would meet the representatives of the workers to discuss all problems the workers experience.

On Tuesday February 16 1982 the first meeting was held

between the committee and the management.

The meeting was very successful and management agreed to resolve the grievances the committee brought forward from the general members.

Management also agreed to meet with the committee on a regular basis.

The problems raised by the committee were about the bad treat-

ment of workers and leave.

The management responded in a favourable way to these problems. The workers are very encouraged by this response.

"We hope that this victory will encourage other workers in the hospitals and the public sector to organise themselves under the union," one committee member said.



## Media workers congress

MEMBERS of the Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA) are eagerly looking forward to the body's first major Western Cape Regional Congress.

The congress will be held in the Lutheran Youth Centre at the corner of Eighth Avenue and Adventist Street, Athlone, on March 13 and 14.

MWASA's membership in the Western Cape (mainly Cape Town) has mushroomed

from 30 to more than 500.

Many of the new members work for Allied Publishers who distribute most of the big newspapers in Cape Town.

"I am looking forward to the congress," said one of the members from Allied.

"When you are a member of MWASA you know that you are an important part of the organisation.

"We feel we are part

and parcel of the union. It's not like in other unions when just a few people at the top take all the decisions. In MWASA the members know everything that is going on.

"And we know our officials are getting on with the job. In the past we had to go cap in hand to the bosses over everything and we had no job protection. Now we know that if a man is fired unfairly he has a good chance of

being re-instated through MWASA intervention.

"In the past our drivers had to pay the expenses of all accidents. MWASA soon put a stop to this.

"I have been working for eight years and now for the first time the workers themselves are going to take part in negotiations with management for higher wages – in fact these talks have already begun."



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## ADVICE

UNEMPLOYMENT Insurance (U.I.F.) is social security provided by the government to unemployed workers. At a time when unemployment is widespread in the community this social security is important.

But the benefits available from U.I.F. are very limited — both in the amounts and the length of time that they will be paid out for.

Although race discrimination has been removed from the U.I.F. Act, farm workers, seasonal workers (such as

fruit packers), domestic workers and contract workers cannot receive U.I.F. benefits.

The contract workers that the Act excludes are those "foreigners" who enter South Africa for a contract of service.

Because Transkeians and other "independent homeland" citizens have been made foreigners under South

African law they have lost their rights to U.I.F. benefits.

The procedure for claiming U.I.F. pay is usually quite simple, and is handled by the Department of Manpower. It is important for workers to know their rights when they are facing the officials.

GRASSROOTS explains these rights, and gives examples of how the General Workers Union complaints service helped two members with the problems they had with U.I.F.

## Unemployment insurance:

# Workers rights and how to claim benefits

### WHAT IS UIF PAY?

IT is pay for workers who are unemployed. It is supposed to help you while you are looking for a new job. You can't get UIF pay if you have retired or if you go on holiday. You can only get UIF pay if you have paid into the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

### HOW DO YOU GET YOUR UIF PAY?

You must take your blue card to the office of the Department of Manpower and register with them.

It is very important to register as soon as you are unemployed. Otherwise you will have to wait longer to get your UIF pay. YOU MUST TAKE YOUR BLUE CARD WITH YOU TO REGISTER. Even if you don't yet have your blue card you must still register. You will have to go back and sign the register again while you are unemployed. It is very important to do this AS OFTEN AS THE OFFICIAL AT THE OFFICE TELLS YOU TO.

If you miss a time you will have to start your wait for UIF all over again.

### WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR BLUE CARD?

When you start work for the first time the boss must fill in a blue card for you. He must keep it until you leave the job.

If you had a card and lost it then your boss must fill in a new one.

When you leave the job the boss MUST give you your card. If he doesn't give it to you, you must ask for it. This is very important because you can't get UIF without it.

It is a common problem that the bosses do not provide the card as soon as a worker leaves

• Mr N. came to the General Workers Union complaints service because he did not get his blue card when he left his job. He had found another job and wanted his blue card to give to his new employer.

After two letters from the Union to the previous employer the card was sent to the Union and they gave it to Mr N.

• Mr G came to the complaints service because after registering for U.I.F. pay he had not received any money.

The complaints service contacted the Department of Manpower and found that Mr G was still able to get his money.

Mr G had thought the benefits would be sent to him in the post.

He was told by the complaints service that he had to go and sign the register and to collect the money himself.

the job.

### Blue card

WHAT MUST BE ON THE BLUE CARD?

- Your name (check that the spelling is right);
- Your identity number;
- Your address;
- The date when you started working in each job and when you left;
- How much you were earning when you left the job;
- The reason why you left the job.

CHECK THAT THE BOSS HAS FILLED IN ALL THESE THINGS PROPERLY.

The reasons the boss can fill in are:

- 1) The worker has resigned;
  - 2) The worker is redundant (this means the boss is employing fewer workers and some workers were dismissed);
  - 3) Any other reason.
- If you resigned, you will not get UIF pay for the first six weeks. After that you will get UIF pay. The same applies if the boss fills in number 3 (any other reason).

It is very important to see that the boss fills in the right reason.

### HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU GET?

You get just less than half (45 per cent) of your weekly wages when you become unemployed. For example if your wages were R30 a week you will get R13,58 a week UIF pay.

If your wages were R40 you will get R18 a week. This money is paid in cash.

### HOW LONG MUST YOU WORK BEFORE YOU GET UIF PAY?

You must work for at least 13 weeks in the year before you lose your job.

### Paid

### HOW LONG CAN YOU GET UIF PAY?

You can get one week UIF pay for every six weeks you have paid UIF contributions in all the time you have been working.

You can get UIF pay for up to 26 weeks in one year if you paid UIF contributions for long enough.

This means you could get 26 weeks UIF pay if you had paid contributions for three years or more.

### CAN A MARRIED WOMAN GET UIF PAY?

Yes. If a married woman loses her job she can get UIF pay. It doesn't matter if her husband has got a job or not.

### DEDUCTIONS FOR UIF.

### Wages

Every week your employer takes a certain amount of your wages for UIF. The amount deducted from wages begins at 10 cents a week for the lowest paid workers.

The maximum amount deducted is 65 cents for those earning R130 a week.

If you are a Transkeian contract worker and deductions are still being made from your wages for UIF then you can claim a refund of your contributions.

### EXTENDED BENEFITS FROM UIF.

Under certain conditions it is possible to get UIF for longer than 26 weeks.

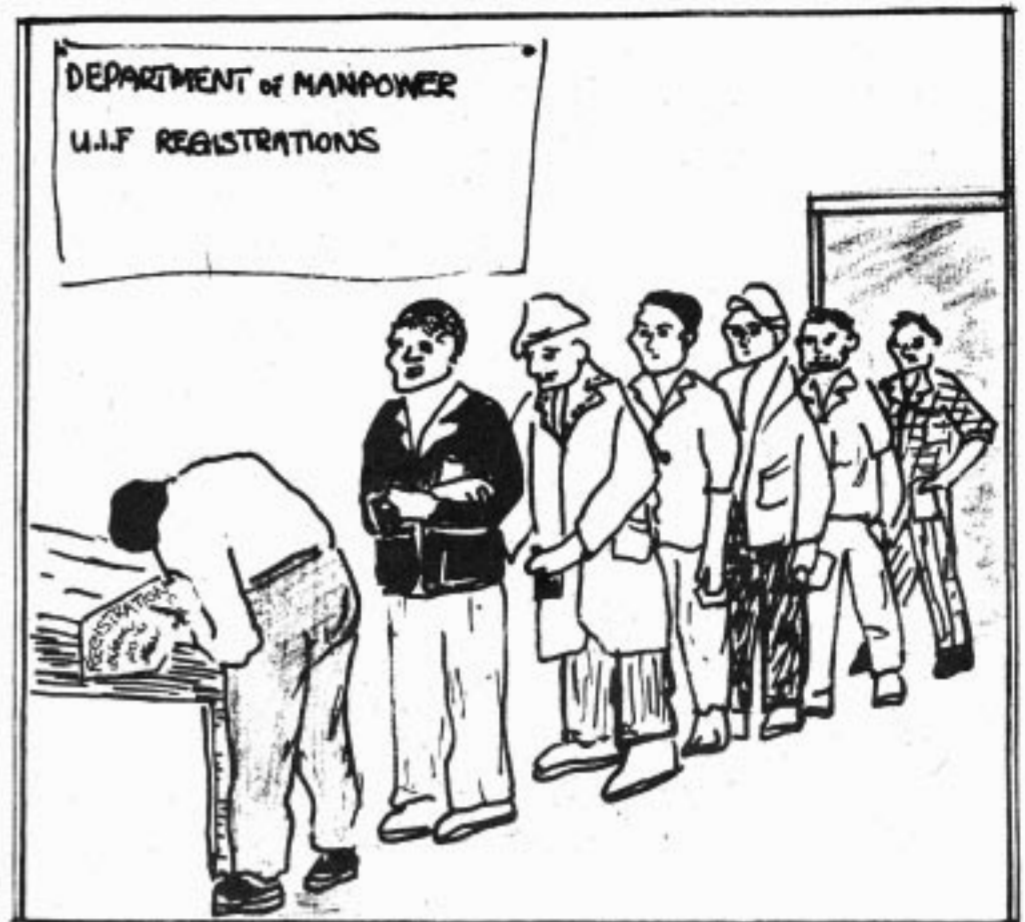
For this you have paid into UIF for a long time. You must have worked for at least three months in the last year.

You have to visit five different employers and get signatures from them saying that they do not have a job for you.

### How to get assistance

We can help if you have problems.

1. Your trade union.
2. Athlone Advice Office, 5 Long Str., Mowbray.
3. Citizen's Advice Bureau, CTC Building, Plein St., Cape Town.



## Where to register

TO Register: Department of Manpower, Thomas Boydell Building, (opposite Caledon Square Police Station), Cape Town Central. Phone: 45-7110. To sign and collect U.I.F. pay: Cape Town: Depart-

ment of Manpower, Thomas Boydell Building. Women on Monday afternoons, men on Thursday mornings. Southfield: Civic Centre Library, corner of Casino and Victoria Rd., on Tuesday mornings. Elsie's River: Civic Cen-

tre, Halt Rd. opposite SHAWCO on Wednesday morning.

Atlantis: Civic centre library on Friday mornings.

Other areas: at the local magistrate's office and Administration Board office.

## Bosses control

UIF is an important right for workers but what it provides is clearly not enough. It does little to help those who are unemployed for a long time and must pay the rent and buy food for the family. In Britain the workers receive unemployment pay for as long as they are unemployed.

Just as UIF is a concession to the workers, so is it a means of control and communication between the bosses.

If a worker with a number three

(Any other reason) on his or her card applies for a new job then this alerts the new employer. He will then contact the old employer to find out the reason why the worker left that job. In the past this method has been used to refuse people jobs and to victimise workers for trade union activities or taking part in strikes.

UIF also provides benefits for sick pay and for maternity pay. These will be explained in the next issue of GRASSROOTS.

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## ADVICE

Boys  
talk  
about

## girls, and relationship problems

IN our last issue girls had the opportunity to tell readers how they feel about relationships with boys.

They spoke about problems that girls face and what can be done to improve relationships between boys and girls as well as between young people and their parents.

Now you can read how boys feel about the same issues. For this article we spoke to boys who are members or leaders of youth groups.

Some reactions to the girls' views published last month:

• "Girls say that we are jealous and possessive, but I feel that they make us behave like

that by flirting with other guys."

• "Girls say they don't want to be used by boys. The same applies to us. For instance, a girl goes out with you to a scene and after you've paid for her ticket she spends the rest of the night dancing with other guys."

• We asked a group of boys what qualities they admire in girls. Here are a few of their responses:  
"She must have principles." "She must be well built." "She must not play with my feelings."

The views of boys and girls on relationships with parents are very much the

same.

Boys agreed that very few parents feel free to answer their children's questions on personal and family relationships.

One boy said that parents who talk about these things are parents who care about their children.

"Some parents seem to avoid the boys that their daughters bring home.

"It's just a quick hello and goodbye and then they go to another room.

"I think it is a pity, because the only way a girl's parents can get to know a boy is by checking his manners and not his looks!"

The boys agreed that parents cannot be blamed for being shy to talk; it is often because of the way they were brought up and because of home circumstances.

Some boys said they were very concerned about the fact that so many girls get pregnant.

They felt that girls have a tougher deal than boys and usually suffer most when it comes to teenage pregnancies.

## Views of youth leaders

"Bad relationships between girls cause a lot of problems in our youth groups and I think something must be done about this problem.

"But it is not an easy thing to deal with. When this topic comes up, people tend to start joking instead of really talking and listening to each other.

"I think very few youth leaders have the experience to handle these matters and that is why we can't come to grips with the problem".

Another leader said nothing can be solved if

boys and girls start blaming each other is a childish attitude".

We should help each other understand why relationships are so difficult.

"I think it is the way we are brought up and the effect of the kind of films, magazines and advertisements which show women

as sex objects rather than persons.

"In any relationship one of the two - either the girl or the boy - will be more domineering than the other partner.

"But it is up to the more mature person to help the other one realise his or her mistakes. This is the only way in which

their understanding of each other will grow."

## Same feelings

It is beginning to look as if boys and girls often experience the same kind of feelings when they deal with the opposite sex and with their parents . . .

But it is not easy to talk

openly about such things:

After all . . . it means taking the risk of being laughed at!

In the next GRASSROOTS it is the parents' turn to air their views on relationships. Write or 'phone us if you want to join the discussion.

All you want to know  
about meeting procedureFollow the Grassroots  
series on constitutions

IN this article we will deal with actual meeting procedures. This could serve as a guide to a chairperson or persons who attend meetings frequently.

## CONVENING

Meetings are convened in terms of the Constitution.

If the Constitution does not provide for special meetings, these are convened by the secretary in consultation with the chairperson.

## NOTICES

Meetings are called by means of notices to

someone to move the adoption of the minutes and someone to second the proposal.

The minutes are then accepted if there is no objection.

## ARISING FROM MINUTES

The next item on the agenda are matters arising from the minutes. The chairman asks if there are any matters arising from the minutes which require discussion.

If there are, such matters are discussed. If not the meeting proceeds to the next item on the agenda.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Secretary is then called to read the correspondence.

Someone moves and someone seconds the acceptance of the correspondence and takes a decision on matters raised in such correspondence.

## FINANCE

The treasurer is thereafter called upon to submit a financial report and a financial statement of income and expenditure.

The statement must reflect the financial transactions from the previous meeting to the present one.

The chairman then calls for someone to move and someone to second the acceptance of the financial report and statement.

The treasurer then submits a list of items to be paid, and the meeting must authorise such payments, by someone seconding a proposal for such payments.

## REPORTS

A meeting sometimes entrusts an Official or member with a specific task. Under the item on the agenda on reports, such person must inform the meeting whether he has carried out the task.

All reports are also moved and seconded for acceptance.

## GENERAL

The last item on the agenda is "General." Under this item, any matter can be discussed which requires the attention of the meeting.

Either the Chairman could raise the matter, or any member of that meeting could raise the matter.

After the matter has been discussed, a motion is taken and voted on.

## VOTING

All motions are voted on by a show of hands, unless the meeting decides otherwise. If the meeting decides otherwise, a vote is taken by ballot, that is in secret.

Voting slips are handed out to members who indicate on the voting slip whether they are for or against the motion. The name of the member does not appear on the voting slip.

## VOTE OF THANKS

After the business of the meeting is complete, the Chairman thanks the members and declares the meeting closed.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE WE WILL DISCUSS HOW TO START AN ORGANISATION.

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# DAY OF ACTION ON RENTS

## *The power of united action*

THEY walked firmly towards the rent office, determined to state their case. The minister's refusal to meet with their organisation, CAHAC, was not acceptable to them.

As they neared the rent office, they unfolded placards spelling out their demands — "Pen Kotze, meet Cahac — we want rents we can afford."

They stood for a few minutes in silent protest and then quietly walked in a procession through the rent office with placards held high.

Leaving the placards scattered across the fence, they quickly moved down the road toward their homes.

As they walked, they were closely surveyed by police in vans. But the people were not afraid. "We came here to speak about our rents and not to riot," they said.

This scene in Steenberg was typical of the action taken in more than nine townships on the Cape Flats on the morning of February 4.

The people, led by their organisation, had decided to show their rejection of the minister's refusal to see Cahac. They acted together on one day and at one time, 9 a.m. and forced the minister to agree to meet Cahac.

The call to act on February 4 was followed in Hout Bay, Steenberg, Mitchells Plain, Bishop Lavis, Lavender Hill, Facticeon, Belhar, Elsie's River, Hanover Park and Atlantis.

While residents in these areas marched on to the local rent offices, members of other organisations also belonging to the Cahac rents action committee, telephoned the secretary to the minister to voice their dissatisfaction with his decision.

"I told him that we are suffering because of these rent increases," a member of the General Workers' Union said. "We see the people struggling to feed and clothe their children," a local priest said.

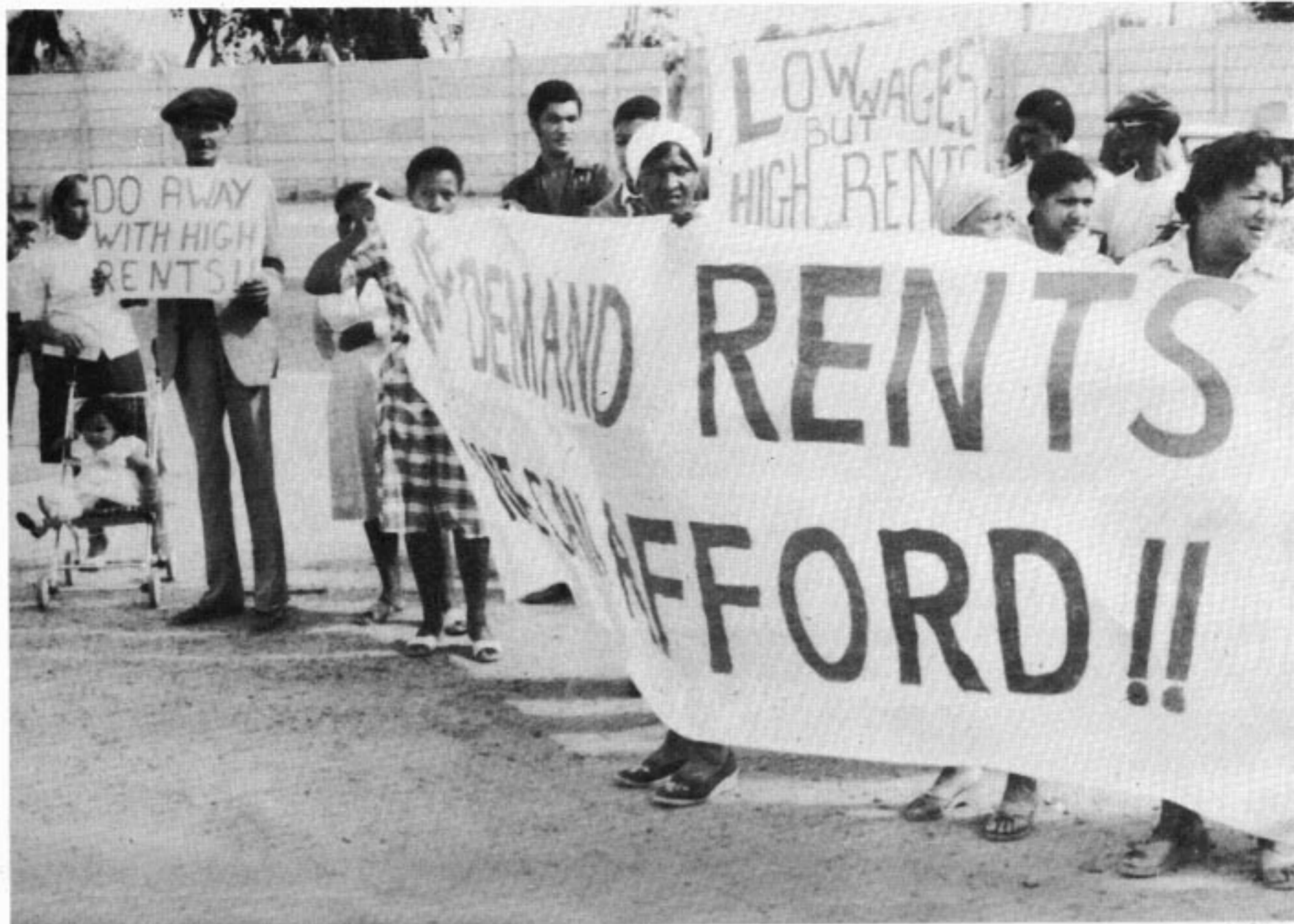
"The minister must meet Cahac," they told the secretary.

And the phone calls continued the whole day. For every half hour, from 8 a.m. members of three different organisations had to job to phone in.

By the end of the work day — 4 p.m. — members of all 33 organisations belonging to Cahac had contacted the secretary.

There was no way that he could ignore their message.

On this page, the organisations speak about the day of action and how they are organising in their areas.



## 'We fight for what we want'

MORE than 100 Worcester residents marched on to the local Municipal offices three weeks ago to protest against increased rents and bad housing conditions.

They handed the town clerk a petition signed by 1 420 demanding the increases be stopped.

When he referred them to the management committee, they said "We do not deal with these people, because they do not have any power and do not represent us."

For the first time in years the people of Worcester were again acting in an organised way. For too long residents had relied on individuals to put their case to the autho-

rities. Now they were learning that the people must take the lead in fighting for what they want.

The fight against high rents started two months ago when some residents got together and started to run house meetings. In the flat areas of Roodewal and River-view, the people came forward eagerly. In some cases as many as 20 people attended out of the 23 flats invited. It was decided to draw up a petition which was circulated by some of those who were present at house meetings.

At the first public meeting held in the area on December 17, more than 80 people agreed that they should deal directly with

the municipality and not with the management committee.

It was decided there to work with more residents before taking a decision to go to the authorities.

To inform all residents about the problem, a "Christmas card" calling on people to unite in their fight against the Municipality was circulated in the area.

This was followed by a second public meeting in January where the Worcester Housing Action Committee was formed. About 30 people volunteered to serve on the committee.

On February 11, the people met again. They decided to march to the municipality.

## Ocean View demo

FOR the first time the people of Oceanview saw protest — when a group of women staged their placard demonstration.

A few weeks before the day of action a group of Oceanview housewives decided that it was time to get together to help with the civic problems in the area.

As the township was as isolated as Atlantis and Macassar the need for a body was long overdue as there was no other body representing the people of Oceanview.

There are many problems at Oceanview.

There are no facilities such as playing fields, or any outlet for the youth.

The bus service is poor and expensive and young people cannot

leave the township over weekends.

The last bus from Fish Hoek is at 9.30 p.m. from Monday to Sunday.

Those are only some of the day to day problems of being so isolated.

The women meet once a week in various homes and the group is growing slowly but steadily.

A major problem is that most of the women's husbands work for the Navy or the Simonstown dockyard.

Because of this they "don't want to get involved for their husbands' job sake", as they put it.

"But it is time we few must pull our weight and stand together," a spokesperson for the group said.

"The Day of Action

protest went off well — we protested at the bus terminus and at the rent office. There were 20 of us and we stood holding up our placards for one and a half hours."

Some of the placards read:

- High rents, no food and clothes.
- Low rents for pensioners.

MORE than half of the people of Avonwood, Elsie's River, are boycotting the rent increases.

Before the Day of Action a protest meeting was attended by 400 residents.

Every night house meetings are being held in the area to discuss the rent crisis.



## Avonwood residents stand united

So far nobody has been evicted for failing to pay the increases — in fact no one has even received a warning letter.

In the past you only had to be overdue a few days and the letters were arriving.

"If we all stand together the Council can't evict 400 people," is

what the residents believe.

On February 14 the residents staged a silent protest as a show of unity and solidarity.

Many people are complaining about life in the flats.

Said one woman: "I regret the day we moved into the flats. Living here you lose

your human dignity and your privacy."

There is no recreation for the youngsters in the area. They can be seen roaming the street.

There are no creches. Mothers need to work so families can eat, out where can they leave their small children.

The residents have

formed an organisation named the Avonwood Tenants Association affiliated to CAHAC to fight the high rents.

Its meetings have been well attended.

Residents who would like to contact the association can speak to Mr Alberts, or Miss B Petersen.

THE compulsory R1,40 tax for domestics classified as casual workers is another cruel example of how the government exploits Black workers."

This comment was made by a social worker who works among Black domestics in Cape Town.

Most chas, even if they are fully employed, are classified as casual labourers for tax purposes.

## Tax burden for domestic workers

Whether they work or not they have to pay R1,40 a month tax or lose the registration that entitles them to seek work.

"What makes things even more difficult for us," an elderly char-

lady told GRASSROOTS, "is that it is payable on a six-monthly basis.

"This means that we have to find R8,40 every six months. I have never heard of anyone being arrested or

taken to court for not paying this tax but the alternative is almost as bad. "What happens is this. If you go to BAAB for something like a house or to register a birth then they look up your file and see that

you are in arrears with tax.

"You will get nothing out of them until you have paid all the outstanding tax. That is why we all do our best to see that our tax money is up to date."



## Kewtown residents keep hammering

UNITED action by the people of Kewtown towards the end of last year has already brought some results.

In December 1981 the Kewtown Residents Association sent a delegation to the City Roads engineer to complain about proper road signs in the area which had led to a number of accidents. They also wanted pavements improved.

1 200 signatures were collected to support the demands. Well attended house meet-

ings were held. Many people joined the KRA.

On January 24 this year the traffic department sent men out to put up traffic signs.

"This is a small, but important victory," a spokesperson said. "However we must keep hammering away. We still have many demands such as maintenance, cheap electricity and rents we can afford.

"But we have seen that if we stand together we can win our demands."

## Lotus residents forced DIVCO around table

A DELEGATION of 11 people from the Lotus River - Grassy Park Residents Association was recently told by the Divisional Council that they (the Council) have no method of sweeping roads and cleaning but merely "operates from crisis to crisis".

Following a memorandum to Divco and a protest demonstration at a Council monthly meeting last year, Council finally agreed to set up an ad-hoc committee to meet the Association.

The issues for discussion were ROADS; STREET - LIGHTING and ELECTRICITY; HEALTH; TRANSPORT; MAINTENANCE; FACILITIES; HOUSING; FINANCE; MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES.

On arrival of the delegation a long argument took place on the pavement outside Divco buildings. They only wanted to see five people. Eventually they

agreed to meet the whole 11-strong delegation.

The ad-hoc committee of Divco consisted of 16 members of Council, representing all their committees.

The Association had prepared nine detailed memoranda covering all the area's problems and grievances for discussion.

The key issues common to all problems which emerged was FINANCE, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES and the lack of REPRESENTATION.

The Association wanted to know the following from Council:

1. Who decides on how funds are to be spent in the area?
2. Who decides which services and amenities should be provided in the area, and how are these decisions reached?
3. Why are the residents of the area not consulted about all decisions?
4. Why is the Grassy

Park and Lotus Area as a whole in such a bad state?

Divco gave the following reply:

1. The full Council decides on the allocation of funds and on the order of priorities in consultation with the Mancoms. Divco said they had to consult with Mancoms because that was the law of the country and they had merely to obey and carry it out.
2. Grassy Park did not raise enough funds and the Administrator of the Cape had to be approached in connection with more funds and representation.

When asked why the area was so neglected the Chairman of Council said "Grassy Park can have diamond-studded pavements if they are willing to let the rates go through the ceiling."

Divco promised the Association that over the next five years they would build about 3km of road per year and that they would complete all sewerage works in the area by 1983.

The delegation told Council they were dissatisfied with Council's workage on, among other things; "Coloured garden competitions (R6 300 p.a.), walls and ornamental pools at the bird sanctuary (R43 500).

The delegation intended raising many more issues with Divco but the Chairman of Council insisted on closing the meeting after an hour and ten minutes.

It is obvious to the Association that Council clearly realised that they were unable and unwilling to listen to further complaints, or to answer the questions of the people.

The Association intends to report back to residents in the area and furthermore calls on all areas that fall under Divco to put joint pressure on Council to heed the voice of the people.

## Clubs can beat high prices

HOUT-BAY Harbour is an isolated community and is very far from big shopping centres. Most of the people do their shopping in Wynberg, and it costs them R1,30 return per bus. There is a small supermarket in the Harbour, but the prices are very high.

The shop closes at 7 o'clock at night.

### Pensioners

Only Fridays and Saturdays are they open till 9 o'clock, and Sundays it is closed.

The people that are most affected by these high prices, are those who can't afford bus-fares.

The pensioners find travelling difficult. The factory workers who are working overtime are the ones who suffer



most.

We must be aware of these different prices and work out a solution. If our people are well organised, they would stop buying from the expensive

local shops.

"People should get organised by getting somebody to do their shopping in Wynberg - if you can't get there yourself, maybe the pensioners can organise

themselves by forming clubs by getting to Wynberg by taxis.

"We must stand together to help each other, to make living in our community easier," a resident said.

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# Fun at the UWO fete

THE United Women's Organisation held a very successful fete in Silvertown on February 27.

The purpose was twofold: to raise funds and to promote the UWO.

There were food stalls, hair plaiting, face-painting and pony rides for the young ones.

Rape crisis produced a play aimed at preparing potential victims to defend themselves.



# Townships to launch civic body

A mass meeting attended by 400 people was held in Guguletu on Sunday February 28 to discuss the formation of a single civic body for Cape Town's African townships.

The meeting was held in the Nonzwakazi Methodist Church.

A draft constitution was tabled, but it was decided to refer it back to the zones for the people to comment on it.

The comments are to be collected by the Zone chairperson and brought to a mass meeting to be called in three weeks' time where it is hoped to finalise the constitution and formally launch the civic body.

Speakers from CAHAC (Cape Areas Housing Action Committee), Port Elizabeth and the Soweto Civic Association addressed Sunday's meeting.

# LOGRA road race

LOTUS River/Grassy Park (LOGRA) Youth are having a seven kilometre road race on Saturday March 13.

The race will start at the Grassy Park Library at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The signing-up session takes place at St Clemens Hall, Lake Road from 7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. on Wednesday March 10.

Kensington/Factretton Youth Association are having a 6 km run on Saturday March 6.

The race will start at 2.00 p.m. from the 14th Avenue field in Factretton.

Everybody from the community is invited to take part.

People interested in running should be at the field at 12.30 p.m. on Saturday.

## Rents campaign continues

From page 1

living in their areas. They should explain to them the outcome of the meeting with the minister and find out from the people how they feel the campaign "for rents we can afford

should be carried on from here".

### Organise

This should be done through house meetings, general meetings and pamphlets.

The Rents Action Committee will then meet towards the end of March to work out a way forward with all the people and organisations involved in the present rent campaign.

ties of the voteless majority of South Africans."

There was no doubt that Lavistown residents would take up the issue again and would not be satisfied with vague promises.

"Assurances will not heat the peoples' homes

## Bishop Lavis lights

From page 1

in Winter when they won't have enough money for fuel," he said.

From page 1

## Delegation meets minister

was not the state's responsibility, but that of the local authorities, like the City Council, Divisional Council and Administration Board.

The local authorities said they were also not responsible for the high rents people pay.

CAHAC asked that the subeconomic limit after which people's rent up drastically, be raised from R150 a month. It has been found that the bare minimum people needed to survive was R209. Many families earn less than this.

If people's wages went up from under R150 a month to more, their rents also increase

drastically. CAHAC asked that the present rents structure be revised, and that the high costs of housing, which has to be faced by the poor, be investigated.

A system must be worked out whereby people's rents would not be pushed up out of control by service charges. The State should provide bigger subsidies for housing.

"People are rehoused and forced to pay the higher cost of housing, which is a direct result of the Group Areas Act, Cahac's memorandum said.

The Divisional Council admitted at the meet-

ing that they had made a mistake when they sent people notices of rent increases at the start of the year.

However, people have said that they did not receive any notices telling them that their rents would be coming down again or be the same as it was before the increase.

The City Council also apologised for not understanding the rent structure properly and overcharging people on their rents.

Cahac handed the Minister a petition signed by more than 41 41 000 people who cannot afford to pay high rents.

The Minister asked if the petition was signed by schoolchildren.

He said it was not his responsibility if people could not pay high rents. "They must ask their bosses for more money," he said.

### Investigation

The six-person Cahac delegation said the Minister told them he did not force people to live in houses.

He said that a committee had been appointed to look into a new rents structure. This committee will probably release their findings within the next few months.

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This Newsletter is printed by Esquire Press (Pty) Ltd. Vanguard Drive, Athlone Industria, from artwork supplied by Grassroots.

Grassroots Community Newsletter is published by Grassroots Publications of 328/9 South West House, Shortmarket Street, Cape Town 8001.

## SSWA

THE Social Service Workers Association (SSWA) will be holding a general meeting on March 9 at the Lutheran Youth Centre in Athlone, starting at 7.30 p.m.

All social service workers are invited to attend.

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