

Council gets R400,000 on arrears

Anger over infill scheme

A MAJOR problem faces the people of Factreton. The City Council intends building an Infill Scheme in the area. This issue first arose in 1979 but was shelved when the people drew up a petition against the scheme.

Towards the end of last year, the threat of the Infill Scheme re-arose when Council workers started measuring plots in the area. When questioned by residents, as to why they were doing this, they informed them that maisonettes are to be built.

Also, members of the Management Committee have visited house-wives in the area to sell the idea of the Infill Scheme.

The people of Factreton are united against the Infill Scheme. They say that in Bonteheuwel where the Infill Scheme has been built, the community spirit was completely destroyed. New people will be moved into the area, and the crime rate will rise.

Their children will have no place to play and they will have no privacy in their houses.

The people also say that even though the Council promises to house their children in the maisonettes, this will never happen.

The Ratepayers & Tenants Association sent a deputation to meet the Council to find more information.

This deputation learnt that while the Council was not starting with the scheme immediately, it would still be built at some time.

The report from the deputation also informed the people that in terms of the law, it is not compulsory for municipalities to provide playgrounds in housing estates - therefore the Council can

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THE BIG LIGHTS RIP-OFF



A survey conducted in Mitchell's Plain has found that the City Council makes nearly R400 000,00 a year from the electricity account penalty. It also found that nearly all the residents interviewed want the due date changed to the 7th of the month.

The survey was done by the Electricity Petition Committee (E.P.C.) which is busy petitioning City Council to change the electricity account due date to the 7th of the month. The survey was decided upon to find out how many residents support the change of the due date. Presently, electricity accounts have to be paid during the third week of every month, at a time when most people have not been paid.

Of the 17 080 houses occupied in Mitchells Plain during December last year, 400 households were selected at random to be interviewed.

Of these, 93 percent wanted the due date changed to the 7th.

RESULTS

The survey found that for a year, based on the number of people who lived in Mitchells Plain at the end of last year, the Council makes about R385 000,00.

The areas surveyed were Lentegeur, Wood-

lands, Portland, Rocklands, Westridge and Strandfontein and the results were very much the same.

In Lentegeur the Council makes R5 022 every month; in Woodlands they make R1 926; in Portlands R7 675; Rocklands R7 339,76 and Westridge/Strandfontein R9 084,24.

In all the areas, up to seven out of 10 people paid their electricity accounts after the due date.

Almost all the people interviewed wanted the due date changed to the seventh.

The survey found that, out of every 10 people more than 4

people pay an average of R1,95 every month.

Commenting on the results of the survey, which were calculated by a computer, a spokesperson for the EPC said: "Now that more people are living in Mitchell's Plain the Council

is definitely making much more."

"The survey was conducted during summer and one can imagine what overdue charges people pay during winter when

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Mass protest planned

THE Electricity Petition Committee (E.P.C.) is planning a mass meeting to discuss changing the electricity account due date.

A campaign was started in September to demand that the Council change the due date to 7th of the month.

Since then, members of the E.P.C. have been collecting signatures for a petition demanding that the City Council change the due date.

House meetings were held all over Mitchell's Plain. Newsletters were also issued from time-to-time to explain what

the campaign was about.







A survey was conducted to find out how much money the Council made each month from tenants who pay their accounts too late. The E.P.C. also wanted to know what date the people prefer.

The results of the survey will be discussed at the mass meeting.

A memorandum and the signed petitions will be submitted to the City Council.

The meeting will be held at the Lentegeur Civic Centre on Thursday, 14th May at 8 pm.

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FOR many months the workers at H Blackman and company, a cement products factory in Cape Town, have been waging a struggle with their bosses over a problem of overtime.

The Blackman workers worked an illegal number of overtime hours for a number of years and were paid below the one and one-third rate laid down by the law for overtime work.

At the end of 1979 a number of Blackman workers approached the Western Province General Workers Union. They had many grievances from low wages to bad treatment. One of the most urgent problems was about the overtime. As the boss was breaking the law over this issue, it was a problem that could be taken up through the courts.

But the union explained to the workers

that legal action could only be taken hand in hand with solid factory-floor organisation.

Winning demands about most of the workers problems, such as general improvement of wages and working conditions, depends on the strength and organisation of the workers in the factory.

Even the workers' commitment and patience to continue fighting the case, when the courts take so long in dealing with workers' problems will depend on their strength and unity.

They joined the union, organised and elec-

ted a workers' committee to represent their demands to the management.

The overtime issue was taken up by the workers committee immediately.

After much negotiation the committee could not resolve this issue. The workers then informed the management that they would no longer be prepared to work overtime if they were not paid the correct rate.

Production was badly hit.

The boss, fearing, a loss of profits, agreed to pay the workers the correct rate, if they

would work overtime again.

The workers agreed but raised the question of back payment for the many long hours of overtime they had worked in the past, without correct payment. The bosses refused to pay the workers the back-pay owing to them.

The union lawyers wrote to the bosses threatening them with legal action, if they did not pay up. They also informed the Labour department that the boss was breaking the law and the labour department promised to investigate the case. But the figures worked out

by the Labour department on the money owing to the workers were way below that which the workers could prove was owing to them from those pay slips which they still had in their possession.

The Labour department said this was because they could only be paid for the legal number of hours worked!

The workers questioned the fact that they could be made to suffer without pay when it was the boss who forced them to work an illegally high number of hours overtime. The Union also

found out that the law does not allow workers to claim for overtime worked more than three years back, so the Blackman workers can only claim for the past 3 years.

It was now clear to the workers that the Labour department and the law is not sympathetic to the case of the workers. It was clear why in every struggle they would have to rely mostly on their own strength and organisation.

Throughout this long battle about the overtime, the bosses have tried to intimidate the workers into

dropping their demand.

For example at the end of last year the contracts of certain committee members were not renewed. But the workers have refused to give in. They are determined to stand firm on their demand for back-pay. They will take the matter to court, if necessary, even though they will only get a certain amount of the money owed on all the years they were underpaid. They realise that it is their unity and organisation which will give them the patience to win this demand and which will prevent the few rights granted to workers, such as overtime pay, from being taken away in the future.

It is also only their unity and organisation which will give them the strength to win the many demands which cannot be taken up through the law.

Baldwin Pokela is a casual worker who battles daily along Vanguard Drive for the odd job that will help keep body and soul together. He tells his personal story . . .



I AM a family man. My wife and children are in Transkei. Life is very hard for them, so I come to Cape Town to look for a job.

My story is one that is shared by a lot of the workers standing here and waiting for a job. I came to the city as a young boy when there was the defiance.

I have had a lot of contracts and have lived in many hostels. My body is tired and I am now very sickly. It is not easy to get a contract when you are no good to work.

The bosses are very choosy. So I have come back to Cape Town to help my wife and children who are starving. The drought has caused many problems and now we cannot grow food on our small piece of land.

I wait here every day for a job, sometimes I'm lucky. There isn't much money to send home, but maybe my luck will change. I have no rights (a pass) to be in Cape Town, so I can't find a good job.

The police hunt us. This pass business is very bad. The bosses also say that there are too many of us and no work.

Ask the men here, many do not have money for food or a place to stay. Sometimes we sleep in the hostels. We go to bed late at night and are up early in the morning because there may be a pass raid. Then, we also sleep in the location or on the side of the road waiting till morning.

Many times we talk of not living at all.

He shakes his head, "we have no rights".

'For us trucks mean work'

EARLY in the mornings, in wind, rain and sunshine, workers are standing on Vanguard Drive waiting and hoping that "today, I'll get a job."

Grassroots talked to the workers standing around in small groups talking mostly about the hope of getting a job. They exchanged news about families, sickness, gossip about the good luck of one and the bad luck of another.

But all the time, their eyes are fixed on the road, searching with hopes for on-coming trucks. "For us, trucks mean possible work", they said.

When these trucks stop, the workers charge to the drivers shouting in desperation their willingness to work. "I have not worked for two weeks, there is no money, my children are starving", one said.

Out of every forty or fifty workers, two will get a job for the day. These workers are so desperate, and the bosses know that they will get cheap, casual labour. Some bosses pay a pittance and sometimes they may get a day's food only.

As these workers are doing casual jobs, they are not entitled to benefits such as, Work-

man's Compensation, Unemployment and so on.

Many bosses prefer to employ casual workers as they are so desperate, and will settle for any wage. Unemployment is a major problem and is rising all the time.

Workers are hired and fired daily with large numbers joining the ranks of the unemployed. This problem will be here to stay while the driving force behind the bosses is their chase for profits.

Because of unemployment, these workers have walked the streets for days to find work. Their only

option now is to stand at the road side from five in the morning and at about midday they start moving on.

Another problem facing the workers is that they do not have "rights" to be in the city. This means that no boss will give them a job, as they can be fined R500.

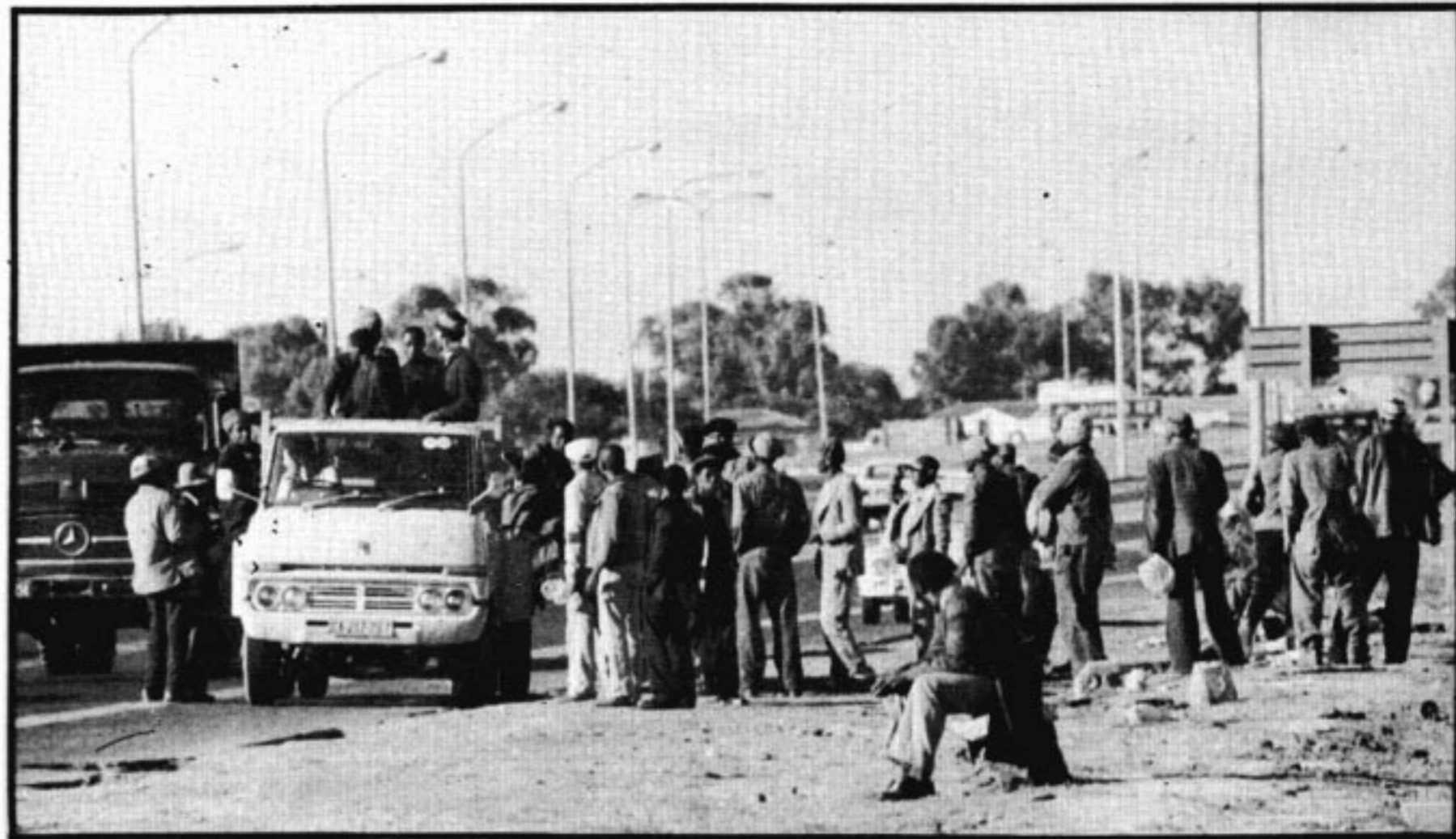
The pass laws are one of the ways that the government can get rid of unemployed workers in the cities. The government's fear is that mass unemployment will lead to unrest.

Their solution is to export unemployed workers to the home-

lands. Through the pass laws, the government helps the bosses by ensuring that the supply of labour to the bosses is enough to meet their needs.

MIGRANT WORKERS

Many of the workers on Vanguard Drive are also migrant workers who do not have contracts. The conditions in the homelands are so bad that people are forced to come to the cities to work in white South Africa for low wages. The migrant labour system has caused great misery to the workers and their families.



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Students suspend boycott

'THE struggle against inferior education continues', a statement issued by the Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga students body, the Regional Committee, last week said.

The pupils suspended the boycott indefinitely after a deadline they set for the government to meet their demands had passed and a few demands were met.

The statement said that they - the pupils - had come to realise that the intention of the government was to keep them uneducated and they had decided to suspend the boycott and resume studies.

Different tactics would be used and pupils would react to a situation as it arose.

We must not react to provocation by the authorities in the way they want us to, but should normalise the abnormal situation', the statement said.

Many pupils were trickling back to classes and at some schools ser-

ious lessons have started.

The students have said that they were still waiting for the government to meet their demands.

About three weeks back the students held a demonstration after some of their leaders were detained during the suspension of the boycott.

More than 1 000 pupils marched at Fezeka High School singing freedom songs and carrying placards.

A pupil spokesman said that whereas they did not achieve all their demands the boycott managed to politicise a lot of pupils.

'The boycott also had a radicalising effect on many pupils as they got practical experience of the struggle,' he said.

The pupil said a lot of work was still be done within the pupils ranks and in trying to build up unity with all the oppressed pupils and workers.



"The only way we get things done is when we stand together."

Lotus River residents show the way

DTA organises

A NUMBER of students from the University of the Western Cape, under the guidance of the Duinefontein Tenants Association are helping organise a residents association in Manenberg.

Part of Manenberg, the area known as Duinefontein, already has its own association, the DTA. It is felt that there is a need for one association to represent the entire area. In order to work towards the building of such a residents association, the area has been sub-divided and house visits and meetings are being held.

The main problem facing the people is increased rents and the fact that residents will now have to pay for maintenance of their houses.

At house meetings, it is explained what a residents association is and how people through standing together will be able to change their conditions.

Street representatives are elected at house meetings, and these representatives will then serve on a broader committee.

DTA fact-sheets are also distributed in canvassing the area to inform people about how it is organised. This is to motivate people to get organised into a residents association.

The DTA street representatives also run an advice service to the residents in their street

to assist them with individual problems. These are grants and pensions, housing and many others.

The representatives have also had a basic community health training and assist residents in this way. Through the advice service, the street representatives keep in touch with the people, what their problems are and in this way they can feed more people into the association.

WHEN tenants of Lotus River received electricity accounts on Tuesday, March 10, Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th with instructions to pay three days later on Friday March 13, they immediately began organising around the issue.

This organisation was co-ordinated by the Lotus River and Grassy Park Residents Association.

Our Rents and Housing sub-committee has representatives in every street and block of flats," an official of the Association explained.

"The representatives were asked to speak to the residents in their areas and report back to us."

The reports were unanimous - the people could just not get the money together in time.

They were also all in favour of strong action being taken.

On Monday a busload of more than 50 residents, some of them mothers with babies in their arms, arrived at Divisional Council offices in Wale Street and "occupied" the payments counter

lobby on the ground floor.

They were stopped from going upstairs.

They demanded to see a senior official in connection with their accounts.

While we waited for the official to come from upstairs", GRASSROOTS spoke to residents.

They were all angry. Said a pensioner: I only get my pension money on the 20th. I use that money to pay rent and my lights. How can I be expected to find lights money a week before pension

day.

"I am terribly worried. If we don't pay our lights on time, they not only cut the supply but threaten us with eviction as well."

Another protester said she was also having problems with her rent.

"We have to pay R11,00 a week rent," she said, "and my husband isn't working."

"They keep promising to reduce it. But that's all we get... promises."

"And now we have this terrible problem

with our light account. I just don't know what we are going to do."

One of the residents who came along to be part of the protest does not even have electricity.

"My electricity was cut some time ago, but last week I got an account saying that I had used R20 worth of electricity in the time it was cut."

"I just don't know what is going on. The council is driving me out of my mind."

The official "from upstairs", Mr J G Gittens, arrived after about half-an-hour.

Spokesman for the residents outlined their problem.

According to Mr Gittens, "the computer" which had given problems over the festive season was the real culprit.

"If you would like me to change the payment date to the 31st of the month I'll arrange it straight away."

There was a murmur of agreement and Mr Gittens issued the new instruction to his assistants immediately.

As the residents filed out of the building one of them said: "It's true. The only time we get things done is if we stand together."

The local office was visited immediately after arriving from town.

The clerks present were aware of the instructions, and assured tenants present that all those who had already paid the interest on Saturday and Monday morning early, would be credited the following month.

FACTS TO BACK THE CASE

A SURVEY to find out how much money the City Council is making from the 10% penalty being paid by the residents of Mitchell's Plain who cannot pay their electricity account by the due date has been conducted by the Electricity Petition Committee (E.P.C.).

The results of the survey will be released according to a spokesperson for the E.P.C.

Four hundred households have been chosen from the 16 500 houses in Mitchell's Plain. The survey was conducted over a period of six weeks.

For this big task the E.P.C. managed to get the assistance of three young organisations from outside the area. Students from the University of the Western Cape also assisted with the interviewing of residents.

Two university academics also assisted with the drawing up of the survey. The answers are presently being computerized.

The survey looked at

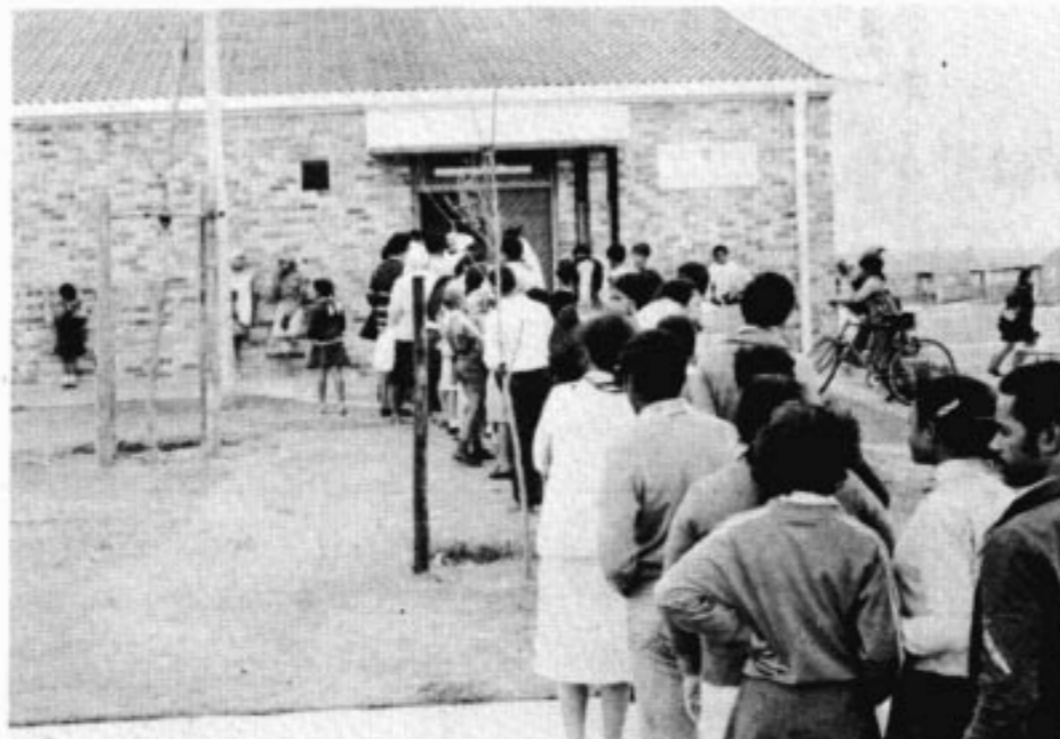
how the residents paid their January electricity account; what it amounted to and whether they managed to pay it by the due date.

"This would give us a good idea about how much money the Council makes every month," a member of the committee said.

Other questions were:

- How many times their electricity was cut in the last six months.
- How many times did they pay overdue in the last six months.
- When do they get paid.
- Is the 7th of the month the best time to pay or if not, which other date.
- Do they experience problems to pay on a weekday instead of a Saturday.

"From the information which the survey will provide the committee hopes to back its case to have the due date of the electricity account changed, which causes serious financial inconvenience in the area", said the committee member.



A scene at Westridge pay office on electricity due date day.

IN townships all over the country, people live under poor conditions. Houses are overcrowded, badly constructed, and too few. Not only is housing bad but also there is a lack of roads, parks, community halls and other facilities to make life decent.

The people are struggling. While rents, water and electricity accounts go up, wages remain the same.

In a newsletter sent to tenants, the City Council says they will no longer pay for the repair of houses. They say rents will be increased in January next year.

The Council makes decisions without consulting with the people. And when Mr Jones goes and complains about the cracks in his ceiling, the Council ignores him.

They ignore him because he stands alone. They can ignore him because he

is only one person. But if people stand together it will be difficult for the Council to take no notice of them.

Many people have slowly realised that they must come together and start fighting for their right to live decently.

In Guguletu, Mitchell's Plain, Facretton and many other areas, people have formed Residents Associations to represent them.

In this article, Grassroots will look at how these associations have come together to form a co-ordinating body, the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC).

The problems faced in all areas are the same. By coming together in CAHAC, people can share their experiences and together find solutions to common problems.

CAHAC pulls communities together

CAHAC organised a workshop for people working in community organizations last month.

For a full day, 54 representatives from 15 residents associations in the Western Cape learnt how to organize themselves and others to fight problems daily facing them.

The day's programme started with a slide show of the bad conditions on the Cape Flats - evictions, overcrowding, poor roads and badly constructed houses were shown on the slides.

After seeing the slides, representatives formed themselves into five groups to discuss how and why they had become involved in their organizations.

The reasons given for getting together and forming an organization were the high rents (Duinefontein), the schools boycott (Hanover Park), overcrowded houses (Guguletu), the lack of toilets (Vrygrond) and the due date of electricity accounts (Mitchell's Plain).

Most people had become involved either through being invited to attend meetings by their neighbour or by initiating meetings themselves.

The activities that most representatives were busy with were petitions, surveys or questionnaires, house visits and deputations.

At the workshop, people also discussed how they saw organizations in the future.



Residents discussing community problems at the workshop

□ All residents in an area had to be involved in civics.

□ Residents should control their own organizations.

□ Organizations had to take up issues affecting the people directly.

The second session of the programme dealt with the organizational process - how one starts to organize in an area.

The guidelines suggested were:

▪ First get a few interested people together.

▪ Discuss the main problems experienced by the community.

▪ Choose the area in which you will start.

▪ Go to the people's homes and speak to them about their problems.

▪ Arrange to hold house meetings.

▪ Select representatives to form a committee which would decide what problem to

tackle.

At the workshop, people discussed how they would decide on what problems needed to be tackled.

They examined different ways (pamphlets, house visits, house meetings) through which residents could be informed of the need to solve a problem.

They also realised that it was important to involve everybody in decision-making.

Together all the people must decide what action they want to take.

After discussions on the organizational process, each group was given a practical task to tackle.

GROUP 1 had to plan an agenda for house visits and house meetings.

GROUP 2 drew up a questionnaire to find out what the problems

were in a particular area.

GROUP 3 had to plan the publicity for a campaign against rent increases. They drew up a pamphlet.

GROUP 4 drew up a plan for a mass meeting, while GROUP 5 planned how to carry out decisions taken at a mass meeting.

This activity was followed by a video on a survey done in Bishop Lavis which was thoroughly discussed by delegates.

The day ended with an evaluation of the workshop.

Those present said they had all learnt a lot by coming together and sharing experiences.

They looked forward to more such workshops being organized.

**FIGHT, WIN.....
THEN NEGOTIATE!
FIGHT, WIN
THEN NEGOTIATE!**

How it all began

IN May 1980, people in City and Divisional Council areas were informed that their rents were to be increased on June 1. At this point, parent-student committees existed in most areas. Twelve organisations, both residents associations and parent-student committees met to tackle the problem of increased rents.

This new organisation was called the Umbrella Rentals Committee (URC). Councils were then forced to drop the increases because of the community involvement in the schools, bus and meat boycotts. In June, all meetings were banned. For this reason the URC could not function.

In September, the URC regrouped. It was decided the problems were not only rentals but the whole housing situation. The organisation then changed its name to the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee.

When the situation became quiet, Councils again pushed for huge rent increases in October. This led to 25 areas coming into CAHAC to tackle the problem.

DECISION

Again, increases were postponed, this time to January 1. In November, a decision was taken by delegates at CAHAC to tackle the increases.

Together communities decided on a pamphlet to be used in all areas to unite people against the rent increases. This was co-ordinated by CAHAC.

Many organisations called mass meetings to discuss the issue. Here the truth was revealed. Communities were too poorly organised to tackle the issue. CAHAC itself was weak, not because the ideas were not right, but because the organisations in areas did not have the support of all the people.

When CAHAC regrouped in February, only eight areas attended the meeting. The major task of CAHAC was to assist in building

up the organisations in different areas.

ORGANISATION

Many delegates reported at this meeting that while communities did exist in their areas, they did not know how to attract all of the people.

The meeting resolved to organise a workshop which took place recently on community organisation. People felt this should be the start of solving the problem.

Follow up programmes for the building of strong organisations and stronger contact between areas as well as more workshops are being worked at.

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'SCRAP INFERIOR COURSE'

OPPOSITION in Manenberg to the practical course at the local school is mounting.

Parents claim that the course does not qualify their children for work of any kind.

A petition demanding the immediate abolition of the course and the transfer of students into the academic course is being organised.

The decision to launch the petition was taken at a joint meeting of the Concerned Parents Committee, religious leaders and community organisations.

The petition will also demand that extra teaching be provided by the Department to make up for the harm done to the students.

On Saturday and Sunday, May 9 and 10, petition stands will be set up at various points in Manenberg. A mass meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, at the Methodist Church Hall (opposite Druiwevlei Terminus) in Manenberg Avenue to decide what further action should be taken.

The course has been described as a "monster of even lower educational standard".

To qualify for the practical course the student had to fail one standardised IQ test. Until very recently parents knew nothing about the test and the pupils treated it as a joke.

The test which is given to Std 5 pupils at primary schools, grades "failures" as slow thinkers.

They are then forced into the 'practical course' irrespective of what the child's ambitions require or demand.

Parents, unaware of the initial grading stop, are then enlisted by the "public relations officer", a teacher, who points out the child's aptitude for a career as an artisan or technician.

An application form is then produced to be completed and signed.

A spokesman for the Concerned Parents

Committee said the course was designed for pupils from standard six to standard eight who could not complete the ordinary academic course.

Manenberg Secondary School was the only school in the Cape where such a course was offered since other schools had refused to put such a course into operation, he said.

He said parents were told their children would be trained in

technical skills. However, he said, what actually happened was that children did all the ordinary academic subjects in a very simple form and they got no technical training at all.

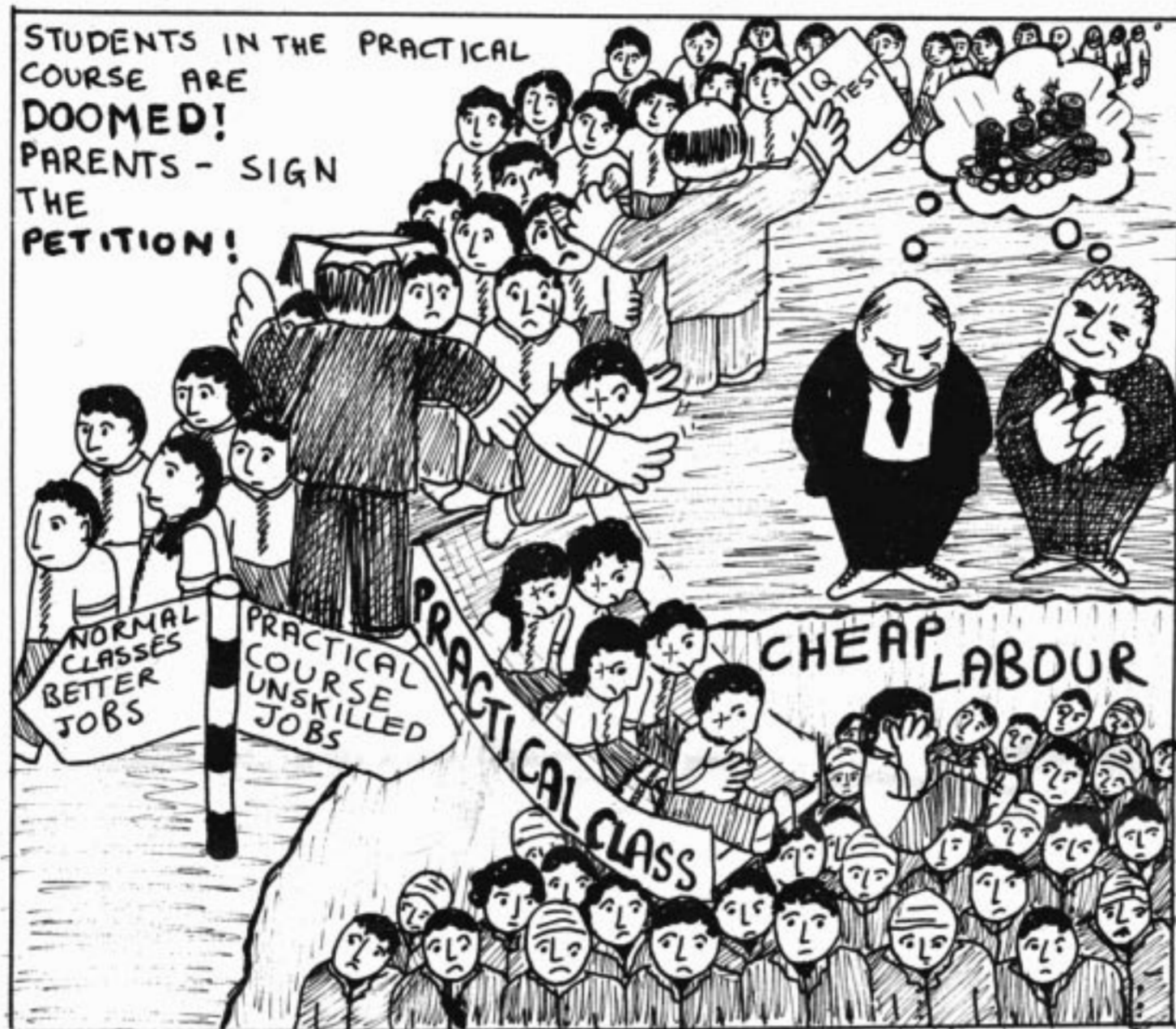
There are no text books for the course and teachers have no special training.

The results of this course are only becoming apparent to us now as the children go out and try to get work," he said.

"My son is trying to get an apprenticeship and I realise that he has no chance of getting it with a qualification like that."

He said that no private company recognised the qualification as a standard eight certificate.

Many of the children developed inferiority complexes because the other children called them stupid.



Council repairs washing lines after protest

FRERE Court residents in Lavender Hill last month sent a petition to City Council is demanding that they repair their washing lines. And they won.

At the weekend, council workmen came to fix the lines after it had been in a state of disrepair for more than two years.

During this time, a number of the residents had complained individually to the council about the problem but nothing was done about it. Some people wrote letters while others went personally to the council offices.

The battle began when a few residents spoke to the recently formed Lavender Hill Committee about the problem.

The committee, which consists of a group of concerned residents, is working towards starting a residents body in the area.

Members of the committee went around to each of the 48 flats in the court to discuss the problem with the people and ask them what they wanted to do.

All the residents agreed that a letter should be sent to the council demanding they repair the lines.

They believed united action was the only thing that would work. They realised that complaining individually had not solved the problem.

LETTER

The committee, together with 6 of Frere Court residents, then

drew up the letter at its weekly Thursday meeting.

At the end of that week, the letter was read out in the court and signed by many of the residents.

Committee members then visited the residents who were not present at the meeting. Most of them approved of the letter and signed it.

Of the 48 flats in the court, only four tenants did not want to sign it.

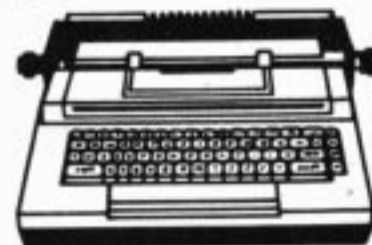
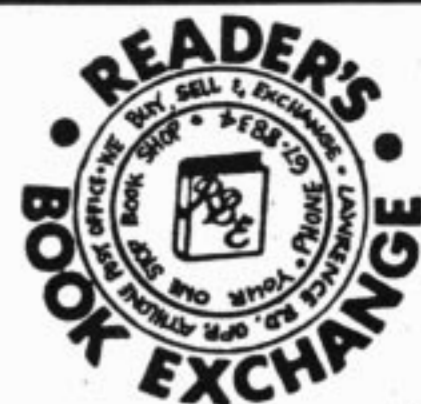
The letter was sent off and within two weeks, the lines were repaired.

"Our committee is getting things right," shouted one resident as she watched the

workmen repair the lines.

But the committee believes they can do much more if people join and work to form a strong organisation.

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STRENGTH
UNITY IS STRENGTH



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comment

COUNCIL, LISTEN TO DEMANDS

IN the last few editions we have written about the demand of the Mitchell's Plain people to have their electricity due date changed to a more convenient time.

At the end of 1979 the residents publicly stated that the due date was grossly inconvenient.

The results of the survey conducted in Mitchell's Plain shows how seriously this matter affects the residents.

It would be interesting to know what City Council uses this money for; whether the inconvenience caused by late payment justifies this big rip off.

The people of Mitchell's Plain have been forced to live so many miles away from their places of work. Arriving there they found themselves called home-owners. In fact they are ordinary working people who are getting ordinary working wages.

The money required to live in Mitchell's Plain is outside the reach of the people there.

Any extra financial demand on the people, as shown by the survey findings, make it unnecessarily difficult for them.

The City Council should listen to the demand of the people of Mitchell's Plain.

The people themselves should know what is best for them.

PEOPLE'S RIGHT

THE City Council is now calling "infill schemes", "extension schemes." But this has not fooled the people of Factreton. They have decided to fight the infill scheme which will bring further overcrowding in the area - whatever name the Council may call it.

And they must fight it! The people have a right to decent housing. And decent housing does not just mean a house that is comfortable for a family, but it also means that there must be facilities such as parks, crèches and community halls.

It is not right for the City Council to build flats on every piece of land where the people live.

By taking action together, Factreton residents will show the Council that they believe they have a right to live decently.

People will not be fooled

IN the past, the City Council has not consulted with the people. They make decisions and force these on the people. It is therefore surprising that the Council has now suddenly sent out a newsletter to explain their case.

The "Housing News" which came with the people's rent slips last month tells us that the Council has no money to do repairs, and that the rents will go up in January next year.

The people will not be fooled by this newsletter. It is only there because the Council is realising that the people are beginning to stand up for their rights.

They will no longer accept that they have no say, no voice. The Council must not send out newsletters to explain to people what they have already decided.

The people must have nothing less than a direct say in the City Council.



LETTERS

CALL TO IGNORE 'REPUBLIC' FESTIVAL

AS a National body concerned with the material and spiritual welfare of young Christian workers we have been called upon to give the standpoint of the movement on the "Republic Day Festival."

1. According to the definition: "a Republic is a state or a form of political constitution in which the supreme power is vested in the people or their elected representative."
2. In South Africa to-

day there is no Republic in the above sense defined by the dictionary. This is because the supreme power is not vested in the people or their elected representatives. The supreme power

is vested in a fraction of the people; which elect their representatives. Therefore in South Africa today the political constitution of the country has usurped the name of Republic.

3. The regime known as "republic" of South Africa by turning a blind eye on the suffering and exploitation of workers cannot draw any sympathy from the rank of workers.
4. Therefore the South African YCW advise its members not to spend any time, money, or energy on celebrating a "republic" which is a misrepresentation of the republican ideals.

National Committee
Young Christian
Workers

Where's our money?

I have lived in Bridgetown for the past 24 years and I would like to tell you about the conditions of the brick houses when we first moved in.

The walls were unplastered internally and externally.

There were no doors separating the rooms inside.

The ceilings were made from cardboard.

There were no baths but these were later installed.

The kitchen, bathroom and lobby walls were of cement.

The inside walls were flush making plastering impossible.

Each house had only one power plug.

In those early years, the Council did maintain our houses. We were given a yearly supply of 2 packets of coloured distemper to paint our houses. Broken panes were replaced and electrical repairs done after a long period of waiting. But repairs

were done.

Today we have to wait forever for repairs while the council must have money. All rent they get from me today is profit. I estimate that my cottage could not have been very expensive 25 years ago.

I have worked out that it cost about R1 800 which I com-

pleted paying about five years ago.

In the last years when we complained about repairs, the reply was always - the rent you are paying is being used to build other townships the same as your homes were built from the rent of tenants in other areas.

The authorities

always load their answers to give white rate-payers the impression they are subsidising the rentals of our homes.

I believe that if the figures are made public, we will find that the Council is making a tidy profit from this deal.

Where is all our money going?
a Bridgetown resident

Together we are strong

BEING a regular reader of GRASSROOTS for the past year, I want to thank all concerned at GRASSROOTS for your wonderful newspaper.

It is very encouraging to all communities and people.

I have something to tell GRASSROOTS as well:

I joined CAHAC just a few months ago, having no idea what it was all about. I was completely bored at their meetings until I atten-

ded one of their workshops, in fact CAHAC's first workshop, and it was there that I learned what CAHAC was all about.

In fact, I learned how to share and make the people of Lavender Hill aware of what's happening to them and still is going to affect them if they don't stand together.

Unity is strength and all people are aware of this, but have you ever tried standing together if a problem

affects us all?

Through the CAHAC workshop, I made many friends, in fact, I got to know people as they are and they got to know me as I really am.

We are all human and without unity there is no strength.

I am proud to be a member of CAHAC. Thank you all who made CAHAC. You are all wonderful people.

Mrs Hester Benjamin

Thanks for help

FIRSTLY I want to thank you for publishing the fire we had at Mountview creche.

I want to thank all the people who have sent donations. I am sure all those who donated, knew it was for a good cause.

We, the staff and children of Mountview, are very pleased and grateful to GRASSROOTS for all their kind work in getting people to show so much love and concern towards the creche.

Thank you,
(Mrs) Hester Benjamin

It's the PLAIN truth

SO you're broke. Just been evicted. Raise a hundred rand deposit and buy a house in Mitchell's Plain. The council is doing us a favour. Houses have never before been so cheap. Only R80 per month for 30 years. No sweat. We'll worry about that when the time comes. Hand to mouth, day to day is the way we live.

At least we've got hot and cold water and

a roof over our heads. With inflation and all, that's good enough for R100. What more do we want?

Mr Abrahams leaned against the wall and the wall came tumbling down. The wall belongs to the union, you see.

It's only supposed to keep the roof up. Mr Brown knocked a nail in the wall to hang a picture over some moss.

The block fell out moss and all. That wall belongs to the union too.

Mr Jones opened his door to step outside. The wind blew the door away.

Seems it belongs to the same 'only keep the roof up' union.

Want to go to the bathroom in a hurry? Better not be in too much of a hurry because the light switch is in the bedroom.

Last man puts the light out and stumbles from the bathroom to the bed.

One thing for sure, you'll overcome your fear of entering a dark house by putting your front room light on in the back room.

One more piece of electrical advice. Don't put on the kettle while watching T.V. because the lights might blow. And that's a fact.

So what if the crime rate is high? for R120 you can burglar bar your whole house. Then nothing can come in except the rain, the wind, the sand, and a few cockroaches.

But the burglar won't be put out of business. He lifts a few tiles and comes in through the roof.

The one burglar worked for the builders and has a duplicate key.

The other one built the houses with the front door swinging outwards.

So he knocks the pins out of the hinges and takes the door out of its frame.

No more cutting his hands or glass or coming through the bathroom window.

So what if my bedroom furniture can't go up the narrow staircase? Hired a crane and took it through the bedroom

window.

Knocked out the window frame 'cause my brother-in-law is a plasterer.

He'll put it back, better'n new. The council will have to bring a plasterer along when they come to evict us.

Well, what do you expect? You don't get much for R100 nowadays. Plus R80 per month for 30 years.

PLAN TO REVIVE PEBCO

THE Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (Pebco) was formed in October, 1979 at a time when there was very little leadership or organisation among the people in the townships. The Eastern Cape, and Port Elizabeth in particular, has had a long tradition of highly organised political activity. The area has also experienced the most severe state attacks on the people, but the spirit of resistance still remains.

Early in 1979, the township communities of New Brighton, Kwazakele, Zwide, Kwaford and Thembalethu started residents' associations to fight common problems such as water, rents, electricity increases, housing conditions and the provision of recreational and sporting facilities. To avoid overlapping, the need for a broadly based organisation was recognised to co-ordinate civic activities in the townships.

Later that year the associations combined to form Pebco and elected an executive under the leadership of Thozamile Botha. Pebco immediately drew a great deal of support with at least 9 000 people attending the first rally, where the organisation adopted its aims.

These were:

- To fight for equal civic rights for all the people of Port Elizabeth.
- To fight all Apartheid laws
- To encourage people to decide democratically on all matters affecting the people of South Africa
- To fight homeland citizenship and the loss of South African citizenship.
- To fight for the right to buy land under freehold.

Pebco draws 10,000

Pebco also took a strong stand of non-cooperation with government created bodies such as community councils, the East Cape Administration Board and the homelands governments. After its founding, Pebco rallies grew and grew in size— at times drawing about 10 000 people. The meetings were attended by residents, workers, professionals, businessmen, students and even a section of the migrant workforce from the Ciskei and Transkei.

Pebco took up the fight to stop the planned removals of Walmer residents to Zwide. Walmer township lies close to one of Port Elizabeth's wealthiest white su-

burbs. The people have been threatened with removals to the northern areas, where the other townships are located.

Support for workers

It was at this time that Thozamile Botha was fired by his bosses, the giant United States Ford Motor Company, for his community involvement. 800 workers walked out of the Ford plant in sympathy with him to begin one of the most important strikes in South Africa's labour history.

For Pebco, the Ford strike showed clearly that just as political issues could not be separated from civic problems, the struggles in the townships could not be separated from the struggle in the factories. Throughout the strike, Pebco stressed that it was not a trade union and hesitated in becoming directly involved in the strike.

The strike was co-ordinated and controlled by the workers themselves through their democratically elected workers committee. Pebco gave support to the Ford workers' committee which was affiliated to it. They supported the workers by raising strike funds and calling on the community not to take their jobs.

It was not long before the state began to take action against the leadership with the aim of crippling the organisation. The organisation was hit hardest by the banning of Thozamile Botha who was a very popular community figure.

Pebco was thrown into a further state of crisis as many conflicts began to emerge. Differences existed between people at a leadership level and those who felt that the organisation should move along a more moderate path.

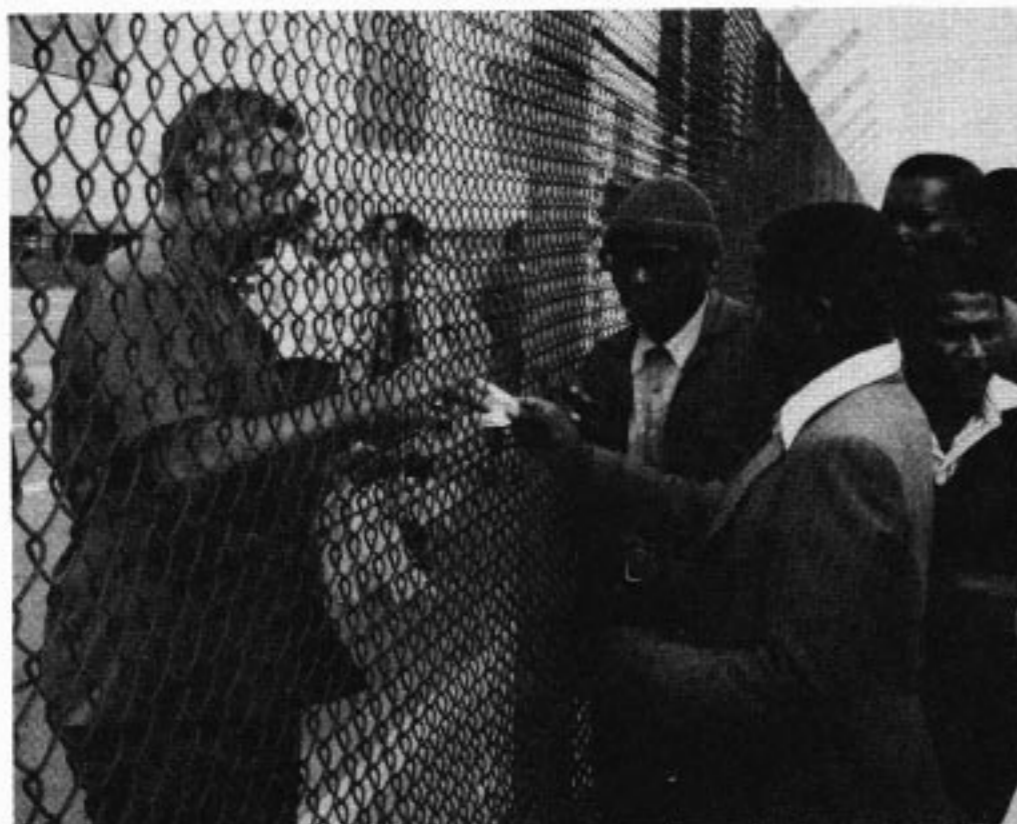
The crisis within the organisation worsened as one executive was changed for another. The result was that discussions and co-ordination between the branches weakened as Pebco became less active and began to lose support.

A new executive has once again been elected. It is said to be an interim body and aims to revive Pebco and its affiliates. The rent increases is an issue which it hopes to take up.

If Pebco is to be revived, it will have to solve its leadership problems and return to its beginnings as a mass based democratic organisation, in order to regain the active support of the community.



Spirit of resistance remains



Workers being paid off by bosses

'Workers united in 80s'

IN February this year more than 8000 people packed the Centenary Hall in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth for the first congress of the Motor Assembly and Component Workers' Union of South Africa. (Macwusa)

During the strike last year, the workers were opposed to the United Automobile Workers Union because of its pro-management position.

The workers formed their own democrati-

cally elected workers committee to negotiate on their behalf. This committee was affiliated to Pebco.

It is out of the Ford Workers Committee that Macwusa was launched.

The rally organised around the slogan "Workers United in the Eighties" was attended by representatives from the South African Allied Workers Union and the Food and Canning Workers Union.

These trade unions are all opposed to government registration.

The message throughout the congress was one of unity and the firm link between community issues and the factory floor.

Speaker after speaker stressed that the worker was a member of the community and as such the two could not be separated.

"If there is a problem in the community, we will be involved",

said organising secretary, Government Zini to cheers from the audience.

"Macwusa stands for the treatment of all working people with dignity. And that dignity extends from the workplace to the community environment," he said.

Macwusa hopes to extend its support by becoming a General Workers Union and an Unemployed Workers Union.

WOMEN SHOW THE WAY

THE CONFERENCE OF THE WOMEN

"I AM a mother, I am a worker, I am a woman." This is how the special hardships of women have been described.

Not only do we bear and raise our children, we are also the first teachers of the new generation to come. In caring for our children and households, we face many problems.

High rents, badness, food prices, poor housing and lack of services

such as creches, weigh heavily upon our shoulders as we try to make ends meet.

Many of us are the breadwinners of our families and are forced to work to earn a living.

There are many laws which add to our burden. As wives of migrant workers we cannot live and work in the cities. With our children we face a life of hunger

and disease in the rural areas.

Our children are denied the opportunities of schooling.

Our daughters are often taken out of school to take care of the younger ones at home.

This forces us to do unskilled work in the factories, on the farms and as domestic workers where the lowest wages are paid to women.

As workers we suffer many disabilities. Our women serve as one of the cheapest sources of labour to the bosses.

Wages are kept low so that the bosses can make huge profits from our work.

When there are many new jobs which cannot be filled, we are employed in large numbers. Even in these times women have fewer chances of getting

jobs and some of us are forced into selling liquor, prostitution and a life of misery. But when jobs are scarce, we are the first to be laid off.

In times when jobs are scarce, prices rise and many women are forced to go out and work to keep their families from starving.

In many factories, we are forced to take family planning such as

the injection, if we want to keep our jobs. If we get pregnant we are unfitted to get our jobs back. There are often no maternity benefits and services such as creches for the care of our children.

All these hardships hold back women from becoming actively involved in their local community and worker organisations to solve these problems. Also as

women are taught from an early age to think of ourselves as inferior to our men.

This also makes us believe that we cannot make decisions with our men. In this way many women come to believe that their place is only at home and not in the world outside.

It is clear that we women need to stand up and get organised. These are some of

the special problems facing us as women and workers. We women share these hardships, but there are many battles that we bear with men. Our struggle for freedom is not separate to that of our men, for they too suffer oppression and exploitation.

We will only be able to change our conditions at work, at home in the community

where we live and raise a new generation to continue with this struggle if we are united and organised.

But we as women cannot fight for our freedom as women only, we must fight for the freedom of all oppressed men and women across this land. A people can never be free while their women are in chains.



DORA TAMANA says: 'You must go forward'



DORA Tamana, the oldest member of the United Women's Organisation opened the road for the conference. As guest speaker, 82 year old Dora Tamana spoke with fire in her heart. She called on everyone present to speak out:

"You who have no work speak. You who have no homes, speak. You who have no schools, speak. You who have to run like chickens from the vultures, speak. Let us share our problems so that we can solve them together. We must live our lives. Men and women must share house-work. Men and women must work together in the home and out in the world. There are no creches and nursery schools for our children. There are no homes for the aged. There is no-one to care for the sick. Women must unite to fight for these rights. I opened the road for you, you must go forward."

Mothers, release yourselves

live happily until our country is free. And remember, too, that we women are equal with our men. When the women came together in the Federation days, men did the cooking and cleaning."

The Federation led 20 000 women to Pretoria. The march was a protest against the Pass Laws and the rising cost of bread. Then, as now, women could not keep their children alive. Living conditions were hard and they are hard now.

The F.S.A.W. was a child of its own time, one speaker said. It was organised in the way it was, as a Federation to which other organisations belong, because of the conditions in which it was born. This is the lesson to be learned from the Federation: A strong women's organisation must be a child of its own time with a deep understanding of the people's past.

We know the F.S.A.W. as the organisation of women in the active years of the past. After this child of the people was crippled, the women looked around, wait-

ing once more to stand up.

The time for the women to stand up came in the late 1970's.

This was a time of high rents, badness, high food prices, high electricity, no electricity, low wages and families being forced to move from one place to another, with no proper places to live.

"We live in stables for horses", one speaker said. "There are no ceilings, no doors, no floors in these houses, but the rents are high." Another speaker said that the "Group Areas break us up. It is difficult for us to know each other. We are made to quarrel with each other to weaken us".

BIRTH OF U.W.O. In these conditions, the women felt they had to find a strong organisation to fight for their rights. The Federation of the 50's had paved the way for the organisation of women in the '70's and 80's.

That organisation was born in the Western Cape as the United Women's Organisation.

"Now that we are strong", Dora Tamana said, "Call the women. Build the organisation. Mothers, release yourselves."

The Organisation moves forward

The United Women's Organisation started a group of strong women in the township. The women met regularly and set to work in the community.

The organisation took up all the burning issues of time.

They organised women against the high rents. They gave their support and help to worker and community organisations throughout the late 70's and early 80's.

In addition to support work, the UWO started a number of new projects. They started working towards a creche in the townships and put a lot of time into trying to find a venue.

When the women in the townships called for First Aid lessons, the U.W.O. responded by

setting up classes in one area.

In these classes, the women plan to look at health problems in their area.

Classes will be extended to other areas if more women come forward to help.

The U.W.O. steering committee set to work on preparations for a regional conference and numbers in and outside Cape Town were invited. Meetings were held in many areas to contact women about the organisation and to work with them to form branches.

The conference was held on 4th and 5th April. More than 400 women from the Western Cape region packed the hall and pledged their support for the constitution of the U.W.O.



Aims of Organisation

- * to participate in the struggle for full and equal democratic rights for all
- * to work on practical activities which affect the day-to-day problems of people in oppressed communities
- * to involve themselves in solving problems that affect them in the community and at their places of work
- * to struggle for the removal of all racial and sexual discrimination

THE U.W.O. DEMANDS

- * free, compulsory and equal education for all
- * clinics, creches and nursery schools throughout the country
- * the right to live and own a house in any part of the country
- * proper public transport at prices the people can afford
- * proper houses at reasonable rents with water, lights and other modern amenities
- * jobs for all with just wages and proper training for all
- * the right for all workers to full Trade Union rights
- * that the state pay adequate and equal pensions to all men and women.



The conference hall was alive with the spirit of the women, ready to take part in the organisation. Footers and onlookers stood out on the walls of the conference hall, taking the women back into the struggles of the past and urging women in the struggles of the present.

The conference was not all women. The women drew together all sections of the community. Many men came forward as volunteers to help with the activities of the conference. They worked for the conference and so helped to build the organisation. "Together, women and men will go forward."

Saturday was the time of the introduction of the U.W.O. Delegates from all areas met each other, joined the organisation and entered the spirit of the conference.

They talked about their own lives and the problems facing them. The speakers called for the organisation to take up these problems.

Proper Housing and Fair Rents "I have been moved with my children as if we were animals. They put us in places where there is no school, no hospital, no clinic and no warm water nearby. The promised proper houses and pushed us into Langa barracks. We paid R5 per month in Langa barracks," one speaker said.

Another speaker told members at the conference about her suffering. She said, "I can hardly speak from the suffering in my heart. I have been evicted many times, living in penitentiaries and hiding in bushes all my life. They move us around like dogs."

Electricity in Our Homes "We must take up the struggle as the people of Lotus River did. They marched on the Electricity offices and demanded that the electricity due date be changed. In these times, electricity is a right."

A Place in Our Country "When we complain about our problems, they withdraw our permits and send us to Transkei. We have no mother and father there. Why must we go to Transkei? We refused the tickets so they threw us into prison

with our hungry, crying children. But we are not moving. This country is ours."

Care for Our Children "Our daily lives are hard. Mothers are forced to work while their children are ill-treated at creches or sick at home with nobody to care for them. We women must do something about this bitter situation. We women can learn from our children, but we must also protect our children. In the towns there are no jobs. Young women become prostitutes and alcoholics."

Lower Prices for Bread, Meat and Paraffin "We cannot feed our children, the prices are rising every day."

Cheaper Transport "The cost of transport gets higher and higher every day. People had to boycott the buses to get the fares lower."

End Job Reservation "Because of job reservation, there are few jobs for the people, so people cannot even help themselves," said one of the women.

Morgan Workers "The women said that "because of the pass, we can't get jobs in factories. We are forced to become domestics. We domestics workers are victimised, ill-treated and chased away." Women told the conference that they do the same work as men, but that they are paid less. "We have no maternity leave" they said.

The Farm workers put on a play. Their message was: Organise women in the factories. Fight for better working conditions. Stop the bosses taking all the profits. Fight for higher wages.

We stand with Our Children "Women, our children need us. They assist trust us. We must not stand far from them in the struggle. Women workers and mothers stand up. Let us go forward together." This was the call from the women.

WHERE TO NOW?

OVERWHELMING support for the aims of the U.W.O. was pledged at the Conference.

Now, the Organisation will go out to the women in their communities, in their homes and in the factories.

Wherever two or three women can come together, they can form a working group to build up a branch.

Branches have now begun to identify the needs of women in their areas and the tasks

which they must tackle.

A Policy Meeting will be called soon. Women in all areas need to prepare for this by talking with women so that all (women) bring forward their ideas. Women come forward!

We want to hear your footsteps with us.

We want to join forces with you. Let us build our organisation.

Let us work for our freedom.

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In times when jobs are scarce, prices rise and many women are forced to go out and work to keep their families from starving.

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BIRTH OF U.W.O.

In these conditions, the women felt they had to find a strong organisation to fight for their rights. The Federation of the 50's had paved the way for the organisation of women in the 70's and 80's.

That organisation was born in the Western Cape as the United Women's Organisation. "Now that we are strong", Dora Tamana said, "Call the women. Build the organisation. Mothers, release yourselves."

setting up classes in one area. In these classes, the women plan to look at health problems in their area. Classes will be extended to other areas if more women come forward to help. The U.W.O. steering committee set to work on preparations for a regional conference and numbers in and outside Cape Town were invited. Meetings were held in many areas to contact women about the organisation and to work with them to form branches. The conference was held on 4th and 5th April. More than 400 women from the Western Cape region packed the hall and pledged their support for the constitution of the U.W.O.

When the women in the townships called for First Aid lessons, the U.W.O. responded by



The Organisation moves forward

THE United Women's Organisation started a group of strong women in the township. The women met regularly and set to work in the community.

The organisation took up all the burning issues of time.

They organised women against the high rents. They gave their support and help to worker and community organisations throughout the late 70's and early 80's.

In addition to support work, the UWO started a number of new projects. They started working towards a crèche in the townships and put a lot of time into trying to find a venue.

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setting up classes in one area. In these classes, the women plan to look at health problems in their area. Classes will be extended to other areas if more women come forward to help. The U.W.O. steering committee set to work on preparations for a regional conference and numbers in and outside Cape Town were invited. Meetings were held in many areas to contact women about the organisation and to work with them to form branches. The conference was held on 4th and 5th April. More than 400 women from the Western Cape region packed the hall and pledged their support for the constitution of the U.W.O.

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Aims of Organisation

- to participate in the struggle for full and equal democratic rights for all
- to work on practical activities which affect the day-to-day problems of people in oppressed communities
- to involve themselves in solving problems that affect them in the community and at their places of work
- to struggle for the removal of all racial and sexual discrimination

THE U.W.O. DEMANDS

- free, compulsory and equal education for all
- clinics, crèches and nursery schools throughout the country
- the right to live and own a house in any part of the country
- proper public transport at prices the people can afford
- proper houses at reasonable rents with water, lights and other modern amenities
- jobs for all with just wages and proper training for all
- the right for all workers to full Trade Union rights
- that the state pay adequate and equal pensions to all men and women.

MORE than 400 people - women and men - members, delegates, supporters and volunteers gathered at the beginning of the conference on 4 April, 1981. People arrived from all over the Western Cape in buses, on trains in coaches, in cars and on foot.

The conference hall was alive with the spirit of the women, ready to take part in the organisation. Footers and smokers stood out on the walls of the conference hall, taking the women back into the struggles of the past and urging women in the struggles of the present.

The conference was not all women. The women drew together all sections of the community. Many men came forward as volunteers to help with the activities of the conference. They worked for the conference and so helped to build the organisation. "Together, women and men will go forward."

Saturday was the time of the introduction of the U.W.O. Delegates from all areas met each other, joined the organisation and entered the spirit of the conference.

They talked about their own lives and the problems facing them. The speakers called for the organisation to take up these problems.

• Proper Housing and Fair Rents "I have been moved with my children as if we were animals. They put us in places where there is no school, no hospital, no clinic and no warm water nearby. The promised us proper houses and pushed us into Langa barracks. We paid R8 per month in Langa barracks," one speaker said.

Another speaker told members at the conference about her suffering. She said, "I can hardly speak from the suffering in my heart. I have been evicted many times, living in penitentiaries and hiding in bushes all my life. They move us around like dogs."

• Electricity in Our Homes "We must take up the struggle as the people of Lotus River did. They marched on the Electricity offices and demanded that the electricity due date be changed. In these times, electricity is a right."

• A Place in Our Country "When we complain about our problems, they withdraw our permits and send us to Transkei. We have no mother and father there. Why must we go to Transkei? We refused the tickets so they threw us into prison

with our hungry, crying children. But we are not moving. This country is ours."

• Care for Our Children "Our daily lives are hard. Mothers are forced to work while their children are ill-treated at crèches or sick at home with nobody to care for them. We women must do something about this bitter situation. We women can learn from our children, but we must also protect our children. In the towns there are no jobs. Young women become prostitutes and alcoholics."

• Lower Prices for Bread, Meat and Paraffin "We cannot feed our children, the prices are rising every day."

• Cheaper Transport "The cost of transport gets higher and higher every day. People had to boycott the buses to get the fares lower."

• End Job Reservation "Because of job reservation, there are few jobs for the people, so people cannot even help themselves," said one of the women.

• Women Workers "The women said that "because of the pass, we can't get jobs in factories. We are forced to become domestics. We domestics workers are victimised, ill-treated and chased away." Women told the conference that they do the same work as men, but that they are paid less. "We have no maternity leave" they said.

The Farm workers put on a play. Their message was: Organise women in the factories. Fight for better working conditions. Stop the bosses taking all the profits. Fight for higher wages.

• We stand with Our Children "Women, our children need us. They assist trust us. We must not stand far from them in the struggle. Women workers and mothers stand up. Let us go forward together." This was the call from the women.

WHERE TO NOW?

OVERWHELMING support for the aims of the U.W.O. was pledged at the Conference.

Now, the Organisation will go out to the women in their communities, in their homes and in the factories.

Wherever two or three women can come together, they can form a working group to build up a branch.

Branches have now begun to identify the needs of women in their areas and the tasks which they must tackle.

A Policy Meeting will be called soon. Women in all areas need to prepare for this by talking with women so that all (women) bring forward their ideas. Women come forward!

We want to hear your footsteps with us. We want to join forces with you. Let us build our organisation.

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DID YOU KNOW?**DID YOU KNOW THAT:**

- An advertisement published in Afrikaans newspapers boasts that the average expenditure on each White child was R810 a year as against R91 for each Black child.
- The cost of living increased by nearly 16 percent last year, but for lower income groups it was up by more than 20 percent and food prices increased by nearly 30 percent.

If inflation continues at this rate, a person who retired aged 65 last year on a pension

of R300 per month will find that pension worth only R88 in four years time (Source: Mr Ken Andrew, PFP candidate in Gardens).

- The Prime Minister says: "We in the National Party need the support of reasonable and rational people. The message I bring is addressed to rational people. Unreasonable people will not understand it."
- Nine people have been found guilty in the Langa Commissioner's Court for being in the Peninsula for more than 72 hours without permission.

Their appearance followed an early morning raid by Western Cape Administration Board officials on the Langa Barracks.

- A new bus service has been introduced from Eureka Estate to Mowbray.
- The Teachers Action Committee has called for a boycott of the Republic Festival next month.

TAC asked people to recall the pain and death of 1976 and the tragedies of 1980.

'Electricity for all'

"WHEN electricity comes to Bishop Lavis it must come for all". This is the feeling of the vast majority of the residents of the township.

The owners of the township, the Citizens Housing League, have now given residents the assurance that electricity will be provided. When this will be done is not known at this stage.

The problem is that certain sections of Bishop Lavis will get lights, while others will not. The company claims that all the people will not be able to afford it. This means that those areas where people cannot afford it, will be excluded.

Surveys conducted by residents in the township have proved this claim to be false.

The first survey in

the section known as Riverton showed that the average monthly expenditure on alternatives to electricity, such as paraffin, candles and gas, was R42,00.

A survey in the Greenlands area puts this figure at R46,00.

In both cases it is more than double the likely monthly electricity bill.

"Electricity will save us money on our fuel bill said a resident. "This money can go towards food or other essentials.

"But it would be terrible if only the better off benefitted from the saving that electricity would bring. We are all in the same boat out here in Lavis and we are determined to sink or swim together.

Organising the surveys in Riverton and Greenlands led to the

establishment of Neighbourhood Councils in the areas with 60 street committee representatives on each.

The surveys will also be conducted in the other areas, Ramsey, Hillside, Gardendale and Bergville, and it is hoped that Neighbourhood Councils will be established in these areas before the end of the year.

An umbrella Tenants Association will be formed out of the Neighbourhood Councils.

Another issue around which the residents plan to organise is that of rents.

They have been faced with four increases in the past nine months.

In some cases rents have risen by 100 percent.

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THE VALUE OF GOLD

QUITE clearly I now remember that the courtroom was packed that morning. Mama and my teacher came to testify to my good conduct and they left the room after sentence was passed. I remember crying out to my mother as I was led down the steps beneath the court. Even now his words still ring in my ears: "You were accused of stealing a bottle of cough syrup and you got off." "Yes sir, but my Grandmother was very sick at home, coughing all the time."

"You got off then, but I am afraid this time"

As I scrubbed the office floors, my thoughts kept returning to that day. I tied the khaki doek tighter around my head as the wardress came towards me like a soldier on parade. "Come on, come on," she shouted, "You haven't got all day and change that water. Sies, maar jy is morsig!"

TRAPPED

I looked up at her but continued with the same water as soon as she left. As I scrubbed the cement floor my mind strayed to the times I spent at the 'big house.' On Saturdays, when the late sun shone on their swimming pool, the blue water sparkled like diamonds. Sue and Jane, the two young 'mistresses' of the house always drank tall cooldrinks at the pool. Always relaxing, and having fun. Often I would be taken in by all the luxury around and pretend to be one of them rich folk. Saturdays was always great fun for me at the 'big house'. Now I hate the place with all its so-called beautiful people and its beautiful surroundings when I compare our little Council flat to theirs.

Mama was what they call the Cook/General for this family for many years. She saw the two white girls grow into beautiful young women, the same women I attended to at the poolside on sunny Saturday afternoons. However, I disliked their mother intensely. How Mama could tolerate her I don't know. She was very arrogant; would never greet us, and always talked down to us.

Mama loved the girls as if they were her own. A lot of her time was spent with this family, too much time! My grandmother kept house for us as Mama wanted to see me through matric. She was forced, like so many of us, into a job in which she was trapped.

Thinking back now I realise she never spoke of my father and I never asked her for fear of hurting her.

PRIVILEGED PEOPLE

She would take me with her to spend Saturdays at the 'big house'. I'm sure she wanted me to see how the privileged people lived, so that I too would become a 'lady' like those two girls. Sunning at the poolside in my cast-off bikini, I often felt envious of them and always wondered how these people became so rich. Yes it all comes back now as I wipe the floor tiles till my head feels dizzy.

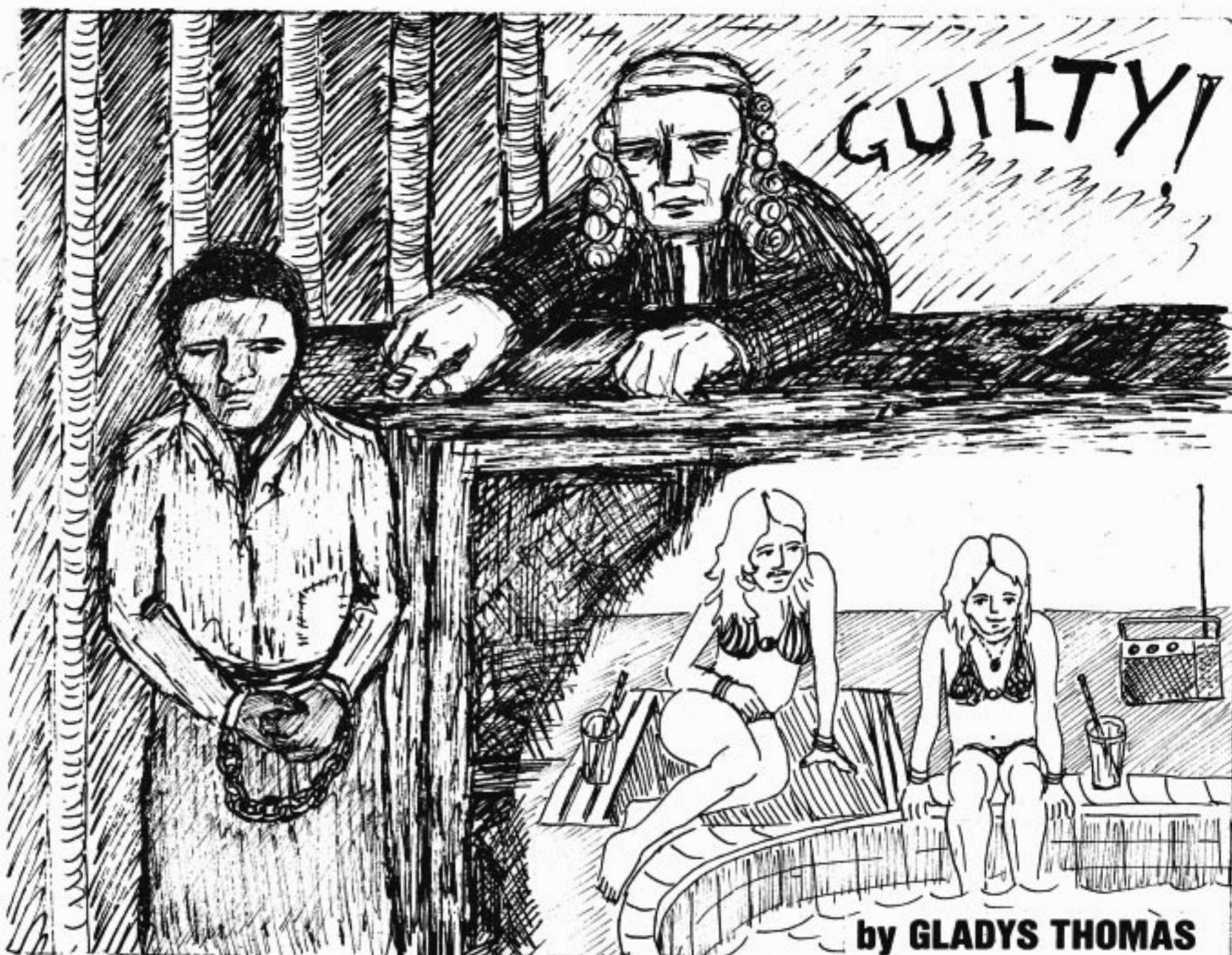
At the pool that day the girls came over to me and I had to rub them with sun-tan lotion. We talked about our schools and I told them about my friends back in the Township, and what we did in our spare time. Soon it was time for tea and Mama came to call me to help her serve them. I pulled on my 'Jeans' and followed her to the kitchen where she fussed and wiped the cups and saucers several times for all her worth.

"Don't spill!" she warned me as I carried the tray to the patio. I placed the tray on the wrought-iron table near the pool and returned to the kitchen. I piled my scones high with fresh cream which upset Mama visibly: "Goodness girl, if Madam sees that cream you won't hear the end of it."

"Can we take some scones for Ouma?"

"Here, hide these in the room. Quickly!"

After tea I cleaned up. The girls came to the kitchen to ask Mama to press their 'Jeans'.



by GLADYS THOMAS

"Open the ironing-board. Quick girl! Mama ordered me and later when they had dolled themselves up they came to the kitchen for compliments. Mama enthused and told them unashamedly how beautiful they were.

"You two make me feel real proud," she said.

THEM AND US

They, however, did not even think of thanking me for ironing their 'Jeans' and left without saying goodbye. I thought sadly of our intimacy at the pool and realised that for them there is a limit to closeness with us.

We sat in the servant's (Mama's) room till supper-time. Mama rested for a while on the bed while I laid at her feet. For the first time she looked tired and worn to me.

"Mama, I don't want to come here any more," I said. "It was different when I was small but now I don't care for them any more. I prefer my friends at home. Why must we spend tonight in this cold room?"

"You prefer that hole of ours to this? You young people are so ungrateful! Sue and Jane like you very much. This is our second home."

"But I hate this place. There is nothing here for me. I'll always feel out of place here."

"Look inside that wardrobe. There is a parcel of clothes the girls sorted out for you. Perhaps that will make you feel better."

I took the parcel from the cupboard. It contained 'Jeans', sweaters and a blazer which caught my eye immediately. I tried it on and posed in front of the mirror. I slipped my left hand in the pocket and immediately felt something hard and heavy. I turned away from Mama and looked at what it was. It was a heavy gold bracelet with many gold charms which dazzled my eyes.

Quickly I slipped it back into the blazer pocket.

"I'll thank them tomorrow, Mama."

That night I slept behind my mother's back, but unable to sleep I kept thinking if I should return the bracelet or keep it. I've never owned anything so beautiful or of

such value. They're so rich they won't miss it! What if the madam had put it there deliberately to test me? I've heard that sometimes they test their servants in this way. Thinking that it was a possible trap made me so restless, that I could not sleep.

Sunday I awoke with a headache, my mind in torment. Perhaps if I returned the bracelet they would reward me with a few rands? I needed some hardcover books so badly! Finally I decided to return the damned thing which immediately gave me a feeling of relief.

I got dressed for home and went upstairs to say goodbye to Mama and to return the bracelet. I found Mama picking up their nighties, and even their panties. They threw everything on the carpeted floor.

"Bye, Mama. I don't want to be late for church."

"Bye, child," she pecked me on the cheek and hurriedly went on with what she was doing, hardly looking at me.

"See you next Saturday, Mama."

When I left the gold bracelet remained firmly in my pocket.

As I helped my grandmother dress for church I said to her, "I won't leave you alone again, Ouma."

"That's alright, my girl. Come let us go. We don't want to be late for church."

I had locked the bracelet in the sideboard drawer before we left.

As we sat in the pews, I knelt down and prayed to be allowed to keep the bracelet. I've never owned anything so beautiful. After church, while my grandmother slept, I took out the bracelet. The golden lucky charms were beautiful - there were charms of a horse, a bird, a fish, and so on; I was thoroughly fascinated by the piece of jewellery.

Monday morning I telephoned Mama. However, I was interested to hear if they had missed the bracelet.

I could not wear it to school. Someone would surely ask where I got such an expensive gift. Also, everyone will want to wear it. The girls at my school always wore each other's rings and necklaces. I shall have to find a hiding place!

The next Saturday at the 'big house' I found everyone sulking and even the girls tried to avoid me. This time they did not invite me to the pool.

"What's wrong here, Mama?" I enquired.

"They're looking for a gold bracelet."

"Maybe one of the girls pinched it to show-off to their friends I suggested.

'I'M NO THIEF'

"Madam says that it could never be one of her girls. Now they suspect me and you too I suppose. But I told master that I'm no thief."

I was glad to get away from the house. I felt scared and visualized the police coming to school to arrest me. At home, Ouma soon realized that something was affecting me for after a few days I became fearful and nervous. I even broke a plate when there was a sudden knock at the door. I neglected my schoolwork. Now, even if I wanted to, it was too late to return the bracelet! Several times Ouma shouted at me during that week, "What the devil's wrong with you, child!"

After a week, coming home from school, I found Mama at home with all her clothes and things which she had at the 'big house'.

'WHAT'S HAPPENED?'

"Mama, why are you at home?" What's happened?"

"They accused me of stealing that gold bracelet and asked me to leave," she started to cry. Seeing my mother cry I resolved definitely not to return it to them.

Later the police arrived with the 'Master'. They searched the house thoroughly and found the bracelet in the drawer.

I can still hear my mother's pleas - "What about her schooling, master. It will kill her grandmother! Please she's too young for gaol."

My mother begged and pleaded that day but I remained unmoved by the situation.

"You don't know the value of the bracelet. It belonged to my late mother."

"Please I will do anything, but don't lock her up."

"But you don't realize the value of gold."

ADVICE BUREAU

Dear Grassroots, I was put off from work and have two children to support. Its very hard to come out on the little money I get from char jobs.

The problem is that the father of one of my children has stopped paying support.

The father of my second child has disappeared and we haven't seen him for two years.

What can I do to get support? I feel that their fathers should pay something.. Why must I be the one to struggle alone?

Desperate Mother

You are right. It is as much the father's responsibility to provide for the children. This is a big problem for single mothers as many fathers refuse to help support their children.

Perhaps you could speak to the father first and find out why he is not helping. Maybe, the two of you could come to some agreement.

If this does not work,

Both parents are responsible for support

your only option left is to go to the non-support office at the magistrate's court. A summons will be made out to the father and a date will be set for both of you to appear in court.

The magistrate will rule that the father pays a fixed amount either weekly or monthly depending on what is suitable for the father. The amount is based on what he can afford and your needs for the child. If you are not satisfied with the amount, you must make this clear to the magistrate.

You and the father must also decide how the payments will be made. He can give the money to you directly, or through the non-support office at the court. You must collect the money at the court.

CHILD'S RIGHT

Many single mothers do not want to go through all this trouble and are often scared of appearing in court. Remember, it is your child's right and it is also the responsibility of the father to help raise his children.

Since the father of your second child has disappeared, the only thing that you can do is to go to the police station and report that he is missing. If the police have not been able to trace the father after

three months, they must give you a letter stating this.

You must take this letter plus your identity papers and the birth certificate of the child to the Administration of Colou-

red Affairs. In the case of Africans, you must go to the Department of Co-operation and Development. The only condition is that the child must be at school if he/she is of school going age, and under 18 years.

This is a long process. Do not get despondent. You pay sales tax and PAYE. This money goes to the government. It is your money that you are asking for.

You also say that you have been put off from work. If you have payed unemployment, you must take your blue card to the labour bureau and draw your unemployment money.

HP: can seller repossess goods?

Dear Grassroots, I have read your article on the Hire Purchase Act and wonder whether you could advise me on my problem.

My husband bought certain furniture on hire-purchase.

He lost his job and was unable to pay the instalments. The furniture was taken back and my husband was summonsed to appear in Court to pay the balance.

Can they take the furniture back and require my husband to pay the balance?

MRS JACOBS

Your Husband has the right to return the goods and cancel the hire-purchase agreement.

The Seller must have the goods valued and give you credit for such amount.

The Seller can then hold you liable for the balance and sell any other goods belonging to your husband to recover the balance.

The Court cannot make an order against your husband to pay the balance off.

The Court also cannot order that your husband's employer deduct the amount from his wages.

The Seller other than recovering the amount from your hus-

band's belongings, cannot force your husband to pay the balance.

Sir, I bought a car from a garage. The owner of the garage guaranteed the car for a month or 1000 kilometres.

Two weeks after I had the car and while the car did less than 500 kilometres, the engine seized up.

When I approached the garage, the owner pointed out a clause in the Hire-Purchase Agreement which read that the car was sold "Voets-toets". He refused to honour the guarantee. What can I do?

A DANIELS

The clause in the Hire-Purchase Agreement to the effect that the car is sold "Voets-toets" or "as is" is invalid and the dealer cannot rely on it.

You can call upon the dealer to repair the car and if he fails, you can cancel the hire-purchase agreement and demand the repayment of the deposit on tendering the return of the car to the dealer.

It is suggested that you complain to the Motor Industry Federation and if you do not receive any satisfaction you consult a lawyer.

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PEP

VALUE FOR MONEY

New method of keeping residents informed

THE Lotus River and Grassy Park Residents Association has adopted a new method of informing members of meetings.

They have had an attractive-looking calendar for the first six months of the year printed.

On the calendar the monthly general meeting dates have all been ringed.

Members, if they wish, can also ring the dates of other meetings - such as those of sub-committees on which they serve - on the calendar.

The cost of printing the calendar was met by a sponsor.

It is estimated that the calendar saves the Association several hundred rands in postage costs (assuming that they had to post meeting notices each month).

ADVICE BUREAU

HOW TO BEAT ASTHMA ATTACKS: BE PREPARED

"ESTHER was 11 years old when she started to get asthma. That was a few months after she had measles. It is one of the most frightening things to watch your child struggling for breath."

Mrs Peters told GRASSROOTS of their family's struggle with an asthmatic child.

"The worst attacks always started at about four o'clock in the morning - just when it was impossible to get her to a doctor.

"A few times we had to get the ambulance to take her to Casualty department for an injection. The day afterwards

she usually had no energy to go to school".

FRIGHTENING

Esther is now a healthy looking young woman. We asked her whether she remembered those hard times.

"It was very tough - especially for my parents who sat up with me many nights. I still wonder how I managed to pass my exams at school. I used to feel scared when I felt an attack coming on. And I dreaded the sports period at school because I was too shy to ask permission to sit out, so afterwards I usually had a tight chest."

Asthma is usually caused by an allergy to plant pollens, feathers or pets. But the commonest cause is house dust which contains thousands of very tiny mites, about one third of a millimetre long, which are invisible to the naked eye. These mites are found everywhere people are found. Bedding and upholstery are particularly full of them. A great deal can be done to free a house from mites or dust. Interested readers can write to GRASSROOTS for a sheet with special instructions.

LEARNED HOW TO COPE

Esther's health has

improved a great deal during the last few years. She will probably always be an asthmatic but she has learnt how to cope with the condition and how to look after herself.

She would like to share some of this knowledge with GRASSROOTS READERS - many of whom also suffer from asthma.

"I've learnt that it is easier to prevent attacks than to treat them. I now use my special pump three times a day, as ordered by my doctor. In the past I was scared to use a pump, but now I know that it is much safer

than tablets when used correctly. I have to collect my pump monthly at the hospital and am careful never to go anywhere without it. A sudden change of temperature can cause my chest to tighten. Therefore I always carry a jersey or scarf in my bag - specially when the South Easter blows. It is not always possible to avoid harmful things. My family are very helpful and will never smoke inside the house. This is of course quite different when I travel by bus - if only people realised how difficult they make life for others."

WHAT TO DO

Esther very seldom gets an asthma attack. Now that she knows what to do she doesn't panic as before. The best thing to do is to take your medicine or pump in good time. Then sit down at a table, lean forward on your folded arms or a pillow and concentrate on your breathing as

Try to breathe in slowly by mainly using your belly muscles and midriff, breathing when your chest is clear and then you will know how to do it in cases of emergency. An asthmatic really has to take every cold and flu to a doctor. We asked Esther why this is necessary. Infections can make asthma much worse and should be treated before it turns into bronchitis."

Esther seems to have learnt a lot about helping herself and knowing when and where to find help. Readers with asthma problems can write to her at GRASSROOTS.



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National solidarity call

SINCE last year the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) has been organising workers at the Wilson Rowntree sweet factory in East London.

This has been a great uphill struggle.

Not only has the management refused to negotiate with the committee which was democratically elected by the workers, but the management also tried to bring in the Sweet Workers Union and impose it on the workers.

They were clearly hoping to undermine the organisation of Wil-Wilson Rowntree workers in SAAWU, the union of the workers' choice.

DISPUTE

In October 1980, three workers at Wilson Rowntree were asked to repair a broken belt in a machine they were working with. They were later reprimanded for damaging the machine.

They were told never to repair any faults of that nature in any machine in the future.

Only fitters were to be allowed to repair such faults.

On February 9, a night shift foreman instructed these three workers to repair a similar fault. The workers reminded the foreman about the reprimand they had received in October. They asked him to give them written authority to do the repair, to avoid

possible trouble about it.

After some argument the three workers were dismissed.

The company's grievance procedure was ignored by the foreman and senior Wilson Rowntree management staff in dismissing these workers.

After this, workers in other departments started being dismissed because of the same issue.

These dismissals were also carried out without paying attention to the company's grievance procedure.

By now 500 Wilson Rowntree workers have lost their jobs. Violence has erupted between newly employed workers and the 500 dis-

missed workers, and three workers are in hospital as a result of this.

REACTION

The East London workers have called for support.

They have resolved:

1. to demand that the Wilson Rowntree

management review its decision and reinstate all the dismissed workers unconditionally.

2. to approach their various managements and request them to write to the Wilson Rowntree management stating the workers' deploration of Wilson Rowntree management's high-handed action.

3. to boycott all products manufactured by Wilson Rowntree.

4. to decline to handle any raw materials delivered to Wilson Rowntree.

5. to approach their various unions to support the struggle of the Wilson Rowntree workers by whatever means at their disposal.

A call for national solidarity support has come out from SAAWU. "On behalf of the dismissed workers of Wilson Rowntree, we appeal to other workers and all organisations in South Africa to support those workers in their struggle by whatever means at their disposal.

'WE HAVE PAID FOR HOUSES'

AFTER a series of meetings at street committee level residents of Oceanview have decided to go along with the Divisional Council's offer to allow them to buy their homes.

But they have done so with some reluctance.

Most of us have been living here and paying rent for more than 10 years and feel that we have more than paid for these houses already," a resident explained.

The houses are being sold for between R4 000 and R5 000.

Repayments are over 30 years and residents will end up by paying about R10 000 once interest is included.

What is forcing the people's hand, however, is the fact that the repayments will be far lower than the rent being paid at present.

For instance a resident paying R41 rent would only face a monthly instalment of R23 should he decide to buy his house.

Said a resident: "If I had an alternative I would think twice about buying here because of the isolation of Oceanview.

"This isolation is becoming unbearable and it is destroying the character of the youth. The young people are terribly frustrated.

"The only time they get out of the township is when they go to work.

"They can't go out at night - even to night school - because the last bus leaves Fish Hoek for Oceanview at 9.30 p.m."

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GRASSROOTS SURVEY: THE PEOPLE SPEAK

GRASSROOTS has successfully run a survey in two communities. Together with replied from the questionnaire in our last issue we have got much feedback from the community - the real grassroots.

The two communities surveyed were Lotus River which has a strong and established civic association and Manenberg which has a younger and less established civic.

Here are the results:

DOES GRASSROOTS GET OUT TO THE PEOPLE?

The answer is yes. For Manenberg three times as many people have read GRASSROOTS than one would expect. For the number of copies going there each issue we find that GRASSROOTS is read three times more widely. Readers have read

an average of two copies of Grassroots.

For Lotus River four times as many people have read GRASSROOTS than one would expect. Readers have read an average of four copies of GRASSROOTS.

About three people in each house where it is read, read GRASSROOTS.

This shows three things:

1. GRASSROOTS is getting out to the people!
2. The people are passing on their copies after reading them. (In Manenberg 56 per cent pass their copies on and in Lotus River 69 per cent).
3. Where the civic is stronger more people read GRASSROOTS and get it through the work of the civic members.

HOW DO THE

PEOPLE GET GRASSROOTS

Half the people in both areas buy it from other people. In Lotus River about a quarter have it delivered to their door.

In both areas readers would like to buy the paper from people in busy areas or at their doors. In Manenberg people prefer busy areas, while in Lotus River people prefer buying it at their doors.

WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE READ GRASSROOTS?

In Manenberg 3/4 of the readers are workers. The tenant areas of Lotus River are the same as Manenberg. In the home ownership areas of Lotus River more people (one in five) read GRASSROOTS.

So it seems that many people read

GRASSROOTS. In Lotus River it seems more home owners than tenants read GRASSROOTS.

WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE THINK OF GRASSROOTS?

Manenberg and the tenant area of Lotus River thought that GRASSROOTS and all its different parts were good. The home owners in Lotus River were more critical.

The most popular news for Manenberg and the tenants of Lotus River was worker news, but for Lotus River home owners the most popular news was civic news.

The home owners were more critical of the comics than the others, but even the

workers had some criticism.

Many people, as many as 1/4 in both areas, could not remember the advice page well enough to comment. But here it was mainly the home owners who were critical.

The workers in both areas who remembered these pages thought they were good.

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.

WHAT ABOUT THE PRICE?

3/4 of the people interviewed thought it was fine, but 1/4 thought that it was too low!

VOLUNTEERS TO HELP DISTRIBUTE GRASSROOTS?

Almost half of all Lotus River readers interviewed wanted to help get the paper out. They all wanted to do this for free. They saw it as a service to the community. Three quarters of these people were happy to sell GRASSROOTS door to door in their area or place of work.

The rest wanted to sell GRASSROOTS in a busy area like outside a shopping area or station at rush hour.

So we know that -

1. GRASSROOTS gets out to you, the reader.
2. The average reader likes what we write.
3. There are many people in the community who want to help us get the paper to even more people.

Help us and help the community find out more about itself by -

- Passing Grassroots on when you are finished.
- Distributing it yourself.

At the GRASSROOTS evaluation workshop on 21.3.81

we had a chance of discussing some criticisms and suggestions with community representatives. This, together with the survey results, will help us produce better copies that people like even more in the future.

We thank you all in the community for helping us find out exactly how we can serve you better and for spending your free time answering our questions.

Footnote: If there is anyone who reads the paper and who wants to join in the distribution effort, phone 43-2117 to arrange to do so.

Social Service Workers unite

A MEETING was held recently by the Social Service Workers' Association (SSWA) about the R21,00 registration fee that social workers have to pay to the Council for Social and Associated Workers.

This Council is governed by Act of Parliament, and social workers must register if they want to work as social workers.

Social service workers are angry that they have to pay this fee to the Council as they see it as a means of controlling them.

A service worker said that "we have not asked for this Council, and now they are asking us to pay R21. What are they going to do with our money?"

Many service workers have not paid the fee and are finding that they have been scratched from the role and cannot work as social workers. Others have written to the Council asking what the money will be used for.

DISSATISFACTION

The meeting, which was attended by about fifty social service workers decided to circulate a petition stating their dissatisfaction with the registration fee.

As this Council will in future register people employed in the social services who are not social workers, the association wants to know whether such workers will also have to pay a registration fee.

"At this point, we do not even know who the associated workers will be and this Council is in existence a year already," said one of the members of the association. The petition is being circulated at all social service organisations, many people have already signed it.

The association is urging people to sign it. The petition is part of a campaign to take up the issue of registration.

The SSWA was started during the boycotts last year when people began to feel that there was a need for service workers to be organised.

CHILDREN

"The school children have showed us how to stand together," said a member at a one-day stay-away meeting last year.

The stay-away was organised in protest against the detention of fellow social service workers.

It was the first time that service workers united around a common issue in this way.

It was at this meeting that the basis was laid for the formation of the association.

The SSWA is open to all persons employed (including volunteers) in the social services such as, creche workers, those employed in children's homes, homes for the aged, the handicapped, welfare organisations and community health.



'We did not ask for this council'

The aim is to unite service workers under one organisation representing their needs and concerns.

The association will take up issues affecting wages and working conditions of service workers, problems in providing services such as, discrimination in grants and pensions.

WORKSHOPS

Further, workshops will be held to expose issues of concern and to encourage service workers to become more actively involved in taking up issues in their places of work and the communities where they live.

The association has been slow in getting off the ground, part of the

reason is that the members are scattered all over Cape Town.

A member of the association said: "During the boycotts we have had great support, but now it requires hard work to get people involved."

Issues have been taken up to build the organisation.

To bring more people into the organisation especially, those people who are not professionally trained, the association is conducting a survey to find out what the wages and working conditions are of its members. "In this way we hope to build our organisation and to improve our conditions" said one of the members of the association.

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Schotsche Kloof rejects CRC member

SCHOTSCH KLOOF Civic Association started its Annual General Meeting on 24.3.81 divided but ended in unity and with renewed enthusiasm.

The Association became divided at a previous general meeting when a former Coloured Representative Council (CRC) member was co-opted onto the Executive Committee. Because of this two executive members disassociated themselves

from the association.

At the AGM it was recalled that the association had a policy of non-collaboration with any body that supported separate development. This included the CRC and management committees. Various people from the floor expressed their support for this unconditionally.

The committee was declared defunct. An entirely new executive committee was elected

to deal with the grievances of the people.

The meeting resolved that the new committee should do everything in its power to solve the problems of the community. These problems include high rentals, lack of facilities, poor maintenance. The resolution gives the committee the right to plan any form of action that will reduce or solve the problems of the people of Schotsche Kloof.

From page 1

per tenant on the average for a year towards maintenance. To put in a lavatory pot costs us R43,00.(laughter) We would also like to point out to this delegation that tenants in Divisional Council areas, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Johannesburg City Council tenants pay for maintenance themselves. It is therefore not unreasonable for us to expect Cape Town tenants to do the same.

BBSK:

We feel that this argument does not make much sense to us. How can the Council not have enough money when millions of rands have been spent on white elephants such as the Cape Town Civic Centre and Good Hope Centre. Could this money not have been used to pay for maintenance? If so much money is being spent on maintenance and repairs, we see very little of this in our area. Our question is, what is being done with our money?

COUNCIL: We can only agree to look into the matter. The government has refused to increase the rents so that we can get a bigger maintenance allowance. This leaves us with very few options.

Tenants could pay for internal repairs to their houses. This would include outside doors and windows.

BBSK:

If this is the case, we want to make it clear that we refuse to pay for internal repairs to our houses. Already our standard of living has dropped so much. This is an extra financial burden that we will have to bear. We simply will not have enough money to pay for repairs.

COUNCIL: Well, maybe we should think of other ways of solving the problem. But, we want to let you know that a lot of damage is done wilfully by tenants and we will not pay for that type of repairs.

BBSK: Our survey showed that because of the poor quality materials which have been used to build these houses, a lot

Council meets BBSK

of repairs and maintenance is needed because of wear and tear. It is not simply a case of wilful damage. There are many tenants who have had to pay for repairs which were not their fault.

COUNCIL: We will look into the matter, that's all that we can say at this stage. We do not have the funds.

BBSK: We would like to state this quite clearly that we will refuse to pay for repairs ourselves, there must be a satisfactory solution to this burning issue. If the Council cannot afford to foot the maintenance bill, neither can the tenants. The government would be in the best position to do so.

COUNCIL: We can of course make this request from the government. Our position is a difficult one. To get more money we would have to increase rates. This would make the ratepayers unhappy. Or, tenants could pay for internal maintenance.

BBSK: We are not prepared to do so. If tenants cannot pay for repairs themselves, then we will leave.

COUNCIL: Well, at this point we are left with only one option. We will leave the maintenance position as it is at the moment and use what little money we have to do the most urgent and necessary repairs.

BBSK: This seems like a better solution to our problem. But we want Council to know that a poor maintenance service can only lead to slum conditions. We are sure that this is not what council wants.

Our major concern is that the present lease is not changed.

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Langa families evicted

MORE than 120 people have been evicted from the Main Barracks at Langa because the Western Cape Administration Board says they are in the area illegally.

However, the people argue they have a right to be in the area and blame the Board who promised them houses when they were moved from places like Hout Bay and Table View

where they stayed for a long time.

The people - full families, including women and children - moved into the barracks last August and

are now left with no accommodation.

About 60 women and children who were evicted from the barracks recently, are being housed in the St

Francis Cultural Centre in Langa while the men had moved into the classrooms of a school attached to St. Cyprian's Anglican Church in Langa.



Empty promises

From page 1

young man, said:

"In the past many delegations have gone to Council. Many of them have come back with promises. Most of these promises have never been fulfilled."

BBSK says: "We must ensure, by our actions, that the same will not apply to us."

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