

Rise in our cover price and subs

Second trade union summit meeting

UNIONS IN UNITY TALKS

Unity was the most important item on the agenda when 13 unions attended the second interunion conference that was held on April 4 in Johannesburg.

The conference was a follow up to the historic meeting of different unions held in Langa in August last year.

Although two unions walked out of the meeting, the 11 who remained included some major unions. The combined membership of the

unions was close to 200 000.

On the unity issue it was decided that delegates should take suggestions back to their unions and a working committee would meet in two months time to discuss the proposals from the different unions.

The unions present realised that the way ahead would be tough.

Different unions have different policies and many other problems exist.

The general feeling of the meeting was that while these differences created problems, they should nonetheless be respected.

All who attended the full conference were committed to co-operate with each other and to build a strong unity.

The unions who saw out the conference were: General Workers Union, Federation of South African Trade Unions, Food and Canning Workers Union,

African Food and Canning Workers Union, South African Allied Workers Union, Council of Unions of South Africa, General and Allied Workers Union, Orange/Vaal General Workers Union, Black Municipal Workers Union, Cape Town Municipal Workers Association, Media Workers Association of South Africa (Western Cape Region).

The two unions who walked out were the Motor Assembly and

Components Workers Union of South Africa and the General Workers Union of South Africa.

They said they were not prepared to work with registered unions.

Valhalla Park to Start Civic

THE Valhalla Park Residents Committee will be holding a public meeting on June 5, to launch a civic association.

A civic spokesperson said, "we call on the people of Valhalla to help build our organisation. It is only in this way that we can tackle the many problems in our area."

When the Council proposed a rents increase, the Valhalla Park residents committee was formed. They joined hands with CAHAC when the rents campaign was started.

Self-help

And when the Rents Action Committee (RAC) was instructed by all areas to send a delegation to see the Minister of Community Development, Mr Pen Kotze, the Valhalla Park Residents Committee decided to start a self-help project in the area.

The general feeling was that while waiting for the minister's decision, people were still being evicted.

The Committee decided that the purpose of the self-help project would be to help evicted families and at the same time build the organisation in Valhalla Park.

The committee is working hard to do the groundwork for the launching of the civic in the area.

FROM the next issue the price of GRASSROOTS will be increased by 5 cents to 15 cents.

The decision to increase the price was taken at the adjourned GRASSROOTS Annual General Meeting which was attended by 65 organisations - civic, youth and trade union.

After a long debate the eventual decision was unanimous.

Rising prices have affected the GRASSROOTS organisation and there was no way the increase could be avoided.

Also it was decided that GRASSROOTS would publish booklets on Advice and other relevant topics.

To do all this it will be necessary to employ more staff.

It was clear that a lot more money would be needed to cope with the planned expansion.

In an effort to solve our financial problems it was decided to double the subscription rates.

This was doubly

necessary because of the recent increase in the cost of postage.

The new subscription rates will be:

Individuals: R15,00 (South Africa), R20,00 (Africa) and R30,00 (Overseas).

Institutions: R25,00 (South Africa), R30,00 (Africa), and R50,00 (Overseas).

Dairy workers strike

MORE than 500 workers at Van Riebeeck dairy in Parow came out on strike earlier this month.

They complained their wages were far too low for the long hours they work. Drivers and delivery men said they work for 13 to 16 hours a day. They leave home at 1 am and often do not get home before 5 pm. There is no overtime pay for

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New umbrella Civic body

WITH the election of office bearers an umbrella civic body came into being at a meeting in the Guguletu Methodist Church on Sunday April 18.

Called the Western Cape Civic Association, it will have an important co-ordinating function.

Explaining the need for the new body a speaker said:

"In the past certain incidents took place which called for action on a broad united front, but this did not happen because of the scattered nature of the various communities.

"Because of this problem incidents such as the bus, meat and schools boycotts could not be confronted in unity.

"During the schools

boycott a Parents Action Committee was formed to work around this issue until the matter was sorted out.

"Because it was an ad hoc body the PAC had to have a cutoff point and a meeting was called so that it could wind up its function.

"It was at this meeting that the crying need for a proper peoples'

organisation was raised.

"The PAC was then asked to mobilise communities for this type of organisation.

"The result of these efforts led to the type of meeting we are having today."

Office bearers elected were: chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer.

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Parents angry after pupils taken on 'army camps'

PARENTS in Nyanga, Langa and Guguletu are deeply concerned about the Defence Force's role in organising "youth camps" for pupils "selected" from schools in these areas.

The week-long camps are run at Hermanus as part of a joint project by the Defence Force's Civil Action Department, the Administration Board and the Community Councils.

According to a mother of one of the pupils selected for a camp in March, parents were simply informed in a circular letter from the school principal that their children would be participating in the camps. There was no mention of the Defence Force's involvement.

'No one asked our permission. Nor were we ever informed of the facts.'

-GUGULETU MOTHER

in army trucks. I and many others were deeply concerned about this.

Camps

"We want to ask one simple question: "What business is it of the Defence Force to be involved in so-called educational and recreational camps for our children?"

Major Gert Britz, the head of the Defence Force's Civil Action wing has denied that there is anything "sinister" about the army's involvement.

Asked in a recent newspaper interview why the army was involved in such projects, he said: The army is highly organised and is perhaps in a better position than other organisations to undertake such projects. We have both the manpower and the means to do it."

Major Britz said that while on the camps, army instructors did "a form of talent scouting to identify leadership elements."

"The instructors keep in personal contact with these youngsters. Usually they come back to us. If they want to get a project going in their own community, we help them."

"The army is neutral. It is everybody's army. We are trying to make people realise this and to win their trust. And we are succeeding in doing so."

A Guguletu mother, whose 11-year-old son was selected to attend a camp, reacted strongly to these statements.

"We do not view the matter in that light. These remarks merely give more cause for concern about the motives behind these camps. Had I known

the defence force had anything to do with it, I would have refused to let my child go."

The mother, who asked not to be named, said that on his return home, her son told her of the activities at the camp.

"They were taken on hikes and taught to swim. They played soccer with Defence Force members. My son did not speak of any open indoctrination, but told us how one captain, speaking Xhosa, showed them how his gun worked."

"It all seems so innocent which in my opinion makes it more dangerous. It is part of a slow, subtle indoctrination process," she said.

Schools involved in the project in recent months are the Luzuko, Ntshinga and Vikukhanye higher primary schools in Guguletu, Walker Teka school in Nyanga and Moshesh higher primary school in Langa.

The groups consisted of 50 pupils chosen at the principal's discretion.

Major Britz said 20 similar camps had been run for "coloured" youths last year.

Demand for new route

THE Bonteheuwel Civic Association has written to City Tramways demanding a bus route between Bonteheuwel and Hanover Park.

Residents have complained that the only bus available is one on the Elsie River-Hanover Park route which runs through Bonteheuwel.

This bus is almost always full by the time it reaches Bonteheuwel, they say.

Some residents complained that they were losing their attendance bonuses at work because of contin-

ual late-coming.

In reply to the association's letter, City Tramways said that the problem had been noted and that two extra buses had been added to the Elsie River-Hanover Park route and that this should solve the problems.

However, residents still complain about the service. They feel that the only solution to the problems would be a direct bus service from Bonteheuwel to Hanover Park and back.

Informing

"No-one asked our permission. Nor were we ever fully informed of the facts. We simply received a circular informing us that our children had been selected to take part in educational camps and would be cared for."

"The next thing we knew, they were being taken from the school premises to Hermanus

More bus shocks

BUS passengers in certain communities are receiving letters like the one next to this article from City Tramways explaining the reasons behind the latest fare increases.

But there is a lot more City Tramways is not telling the thousands of people who use the buses every day to travel to and from work.

Profits

For example, there is no mention of the fact that the company's profits have been getting bigger every year and for the last three years, from 1978 - 1980, its average profit was 69%.

It doesn't tell you that the Government gives the company about R15-million a year of taxpayers' money to help run the bus service.

Last month, Grassroots published shock-

ing details of the huge profits made by the company that controls City Tramways. Now a lot more has come to light to give passengers a fuller understanding of why fares keep on rising.

The basic fact to remember is that City Tramways is owned by a bigger company called Tollgate Holdings that owns many other companies as well. Most of the profits from City Tramways and many other companies goes to Tollgate Holdings.

City Tramways runs the bus service in Cape Town. To do this it needs to buy things like buses, spare parts, tyres, fuel and rolls of bus tickets.

It buys many of these things from other companies that are also owned by Tollgate. This system has been severely criticised by people who point out that it can prevent City

Tramways from getting what it needs at the cheapest price available on the market.

If Tramways has to pay high prices, much of the profit goes to Tollgate Holdings the company that owns the smaller companies. But this profit is not reflected in the books of City Tramways.

Increases

Because Tramways is paying high prices for many of the things it needs to run a bus service, it can make a stronger case when applying for fares increases to the National Transport Commission.

Look at bus tickets, for example. One of Grassroots' sources, who has been investigating the company's affairs for years, said that when he last checked, he could get a roll of tickets from OK Bazaars cheaper than Tramways was paying

another company owned by Tollgate for them.

Another example: City Tramways buys its fuel from another subsidiary of Tollgate. Apparently this company puts a ten percent profit mark-up on it, which is almost double the mark-up that garages are legally permitted to put on their petrol. City Tramways may be paying high prices for its fuel, but what does this matter when the profit goes to its "parent" company through a subsidiary. The only people who lose out are those who have to pay the fares.

Buses

It is also interesting to look how City Tramways buys its buses.

It has at times bought second-hand buses from, among others, London Transport. Some of the buses were already 20 years old.

However, when calculating the depreciation for the purposes of fare increase applications, they were permitted by the NTC to base their figure on the replacement cost of brand new buses.

Service

What's more, sometimes, when buses have been virtually "written off" completely for City Tramways' Cape Town operation, they are apparently sent to country towns where Tollgate also runs the bus service.

So while Cape Town commuters may be riding around in second-hand buses and paying for new ones, they can count themselves lucky. Some commuters in Port Elizabeth and Oudtshoorn are paying the "new" fares for Cape Town's third hand "written-off" rattle-traps.

City Tramways

Limited - Report
TRAFFIC HOUSE, 5800 CANTON SQUARE, CAPE TOWN
TELEPHONE: 334 10 00

Date: 1 April 1982

Dear Sir

The fuel price increase announced last week has forced the company to increase all its fares with almost immediate effect from April 5 in the case of cash fares and April 8 in the case of clipcards.

Clipcards purchased before April 8 will still be valid for the full 14 days after the date of purchase. In other words, no clipcards carrying the old fare can be accepted after April 22.

We are sorry that the fare will be increased by more than 2 cents per journey. This will apply to the cash fare as well as to each of the 10 fares on the prebought subsidised clipcard. We will shortly send you a complete schedule of the new clipcard fares. Enclosed is a copy of the notice we have issued to passengers.

People who switch from paying cash fares to using clipcards will be able not only to avoid the effects of the increase, but will actually pay less than they were paying before.

In the case of increased fuel prices the Road Transportation Act allows a bus operator to recover the increased fuel costs immediately. We would like to point out that we have absorbed all fuel price increases since May 1980 as well as the increase in GST earlier this year. In that period our fuel bill has increased by 26%.

We regret that we have had no alternative but to pass on this latest increase. We trust that we may rely on your help in explaining to your staff that the increase is due purely to the fuel price increase.

Yours faithfully
CITY TRAMWAYS LIMITED

GENERAL MANAGER

A MEMBER OF THE TOLLGATE HOLDINGS GROUP IN THE VUE DE TOLLGATE, HANOVER PARK

City Tramways sends letters to bus passengers stating the reasons for the increases.

MAY DAY

Solidarity of Working People

THE first of May is when working people all over the world celebrate International Labour Day.

It is a day which commemorates and takes forward the struggle of the workers for better living and working conditions.

May Day started in Australia in 1856 when workers struck in support of a demand for an eight hour working day. But, it was only taken up as an annual workers' holiday at the end of the 19th century.

The first Labour Day in Britain was in 1882. Here too, the demand was for an eight hour working day.

In 1884, the American Federation of Labour issued a deadline to the bosses for an eight hour day. And, in 1886, they called a big general strike for May 1st, which affected almost every industrial city.

More than 350 000 workers in New York, Boston, Detroit and Chicago came out on strike. The Knights of Labour in America, a trade union whose

power came mainly from the skilled workers, had at first opposed the strike, but later played a leading role in its organisation and direction. More than 11 000 firms were hit by the strike.

Workers took a strong and united stand in support of their demands. In Detroit 11000 workers marched in an eight hour procession. In New York 25 000 formed a torch-light procession along Broadway, headed by members of the Bakers Union. In Chicago, more than 40 000 came out on strike. All the industries were paralysed and the railroad came to a standstill.

Some workers were injured and killed when the police tried to break up demonstrations. But, most of the workers won their demands. 185 000 were granted an eight hour day after the strike.

In Chicago 45 000 won the right to an eight hour day, the night before the strike took place. The bosses were afraid of the organised power of the

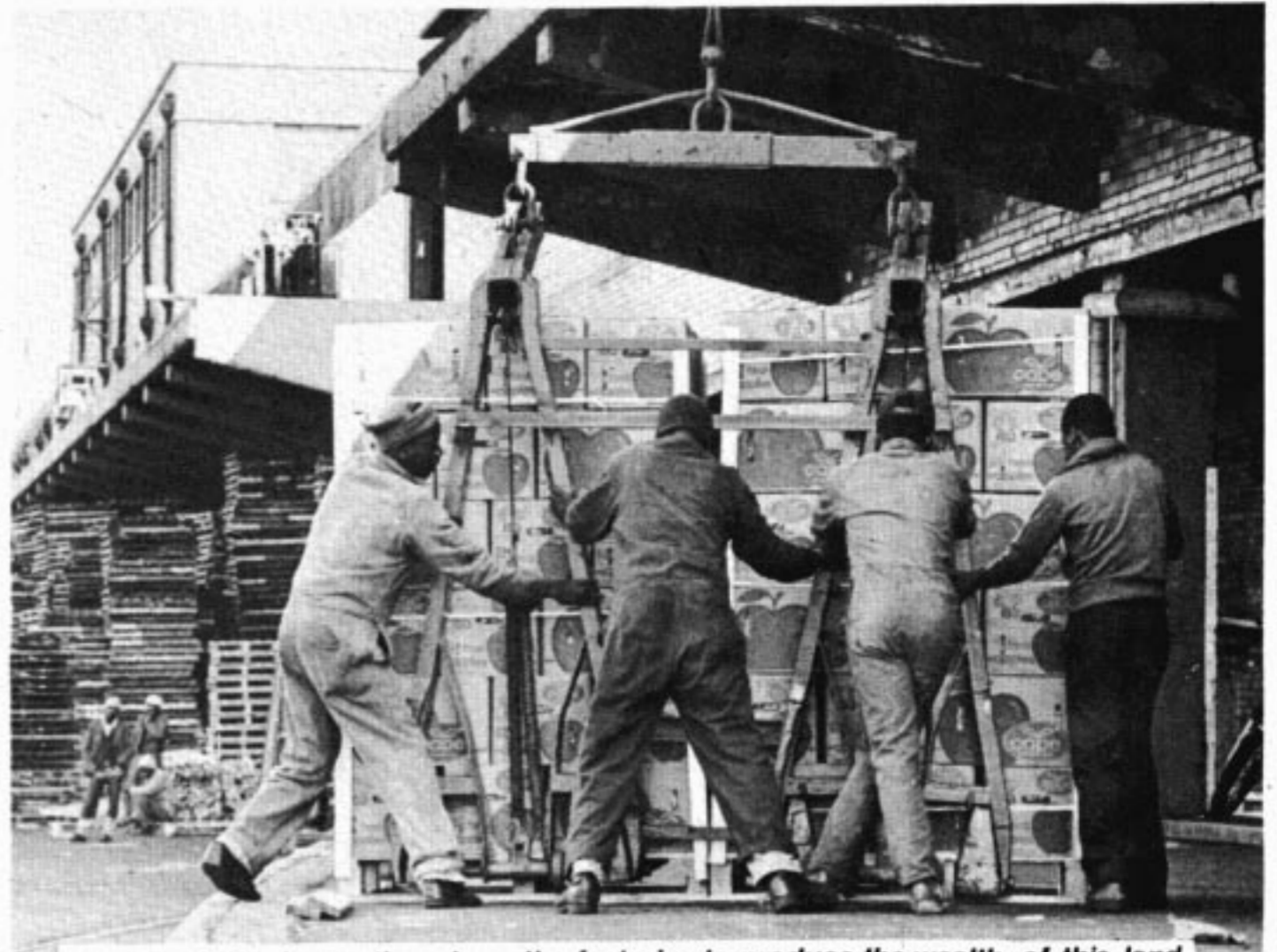
workers.

In 1890, the Second International took up May Day as an International Workers' Solidarity Day all over Europe.

In South Africa, the first time May Day was celebrated was in 1890, by workers in Johannesburg. In 1906, Cape Town workers joined them in their celebrations.

Probably, the most important May Day celebrated in South Africa was in 1950. Thousands of workers in the Transvaal stayed away from work in protest against the oppressive policies of the Nationalist Government and in support of worker demands.

The Transvaal branch of the African National Congress, the Transvaal Indian Congress, the African People's Congress and the Congress of Non-European Trade Unions organised a conference after worker leaders had been banned. From this came the call for a general stayaway on May 1, 1950. More than half the workers in the Wit-



They work the farms, the mines, the factories to produce the wealth of this land.

watersrand region supported the call.

Later, in confrontations with the police, who tried to break up workers' meetings, 19 workers were killed and more than 30 injured in various townships on the West Rand.

In many countries workers have won the right to celebrate May Day as an official trade union holiday.

May Day is an expression of the workers fight for a better life. It symbolises the strength which can come from solidarity among workers.

In South Africa a spirit of May Day, the independent trade unions are moving towards unity and solidarity with one another.

Forward with May day Tradition

ABOUT 600 young people attended a rally in Athlone to support the workers and to carry forward the tradition of May Day among youth in the Western Cape.

A spokesperson for the ad-hoc action committee which was formed by youth groups, trade and other bodies, said: "May Day is an important day in the lives of the working people not only in South Africa, but all over the world. We wanted to bring this awareness to our young people. A large percentage of the members of

our youth organisations are workers."

Trade Unionists addressed the meeting. The Mitchells Plain Youth Movement, the Hanover Park Youth and Kensington Facticeon Youth presented poems and a play to show how to 'remake the world'. Songs and poetry were also presented.

A speaker from the trade unions gave a history of May Day and the importance of workers to be organised into democratic trade unions.

In assessing the programme, a member of the action committee

said that the programme was too short and was not very well organised.

They also felt that many more could have attended the rally, but that it was organised at short notice.

He said: "a lesson we can learn from this is that we should be organised well in advance to allow for greater participation in the planning and structuring of the programme.

In spite of these difficulties, the rally was important, because it was the first time that May Day was celebrated since the 1950's.

Program to Educate Workers

ON SATURDAY May 1 the Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA) Western Cape Region celebrated May Day.

The intention of the May Day programme was to educate workers on the importance of worker unity and solidarity, not only internationally, but most important in our own country.

At the meeting the chairman of the Allied Publishing Limited Workers Committee spoke about the importance of worker unity and the importance of building strong worker controlled unions.

He also referred to the Unity Summit held in Johannesburg.

Also present were members of unions who

belonged to the Western Cape Interunion Solidarity Committee.

Another speaker spoke about the history of May Day and what it meant to workers nationally and internationally.

She pointed out that some of the demands made by workers more than 100 years ago had until today not been met and that some workers still worked a nine hour day.

A third speaker spoke about a further purpose of the meeting. He said that at MWASA's regional congress during March they realised that members were not fully involved in the running of their union and workers needed to be educated on the importance of them playing an active

role in the day to day activities of their union.

After congress the union formed an Educational and Training committee to organise seminars, film shows and other programmes which MWASA hope will help them to achieve greater worker participation in the union.

MWASA said in a statement: "The programme on

May Day was but the first and we hope to follow this up by having these educational programmes whenever possible.

"About May Day itself, the turnout was fair if we consider the work situation of our members. While the programme was being run, most of our members were working and only attended during breaks."

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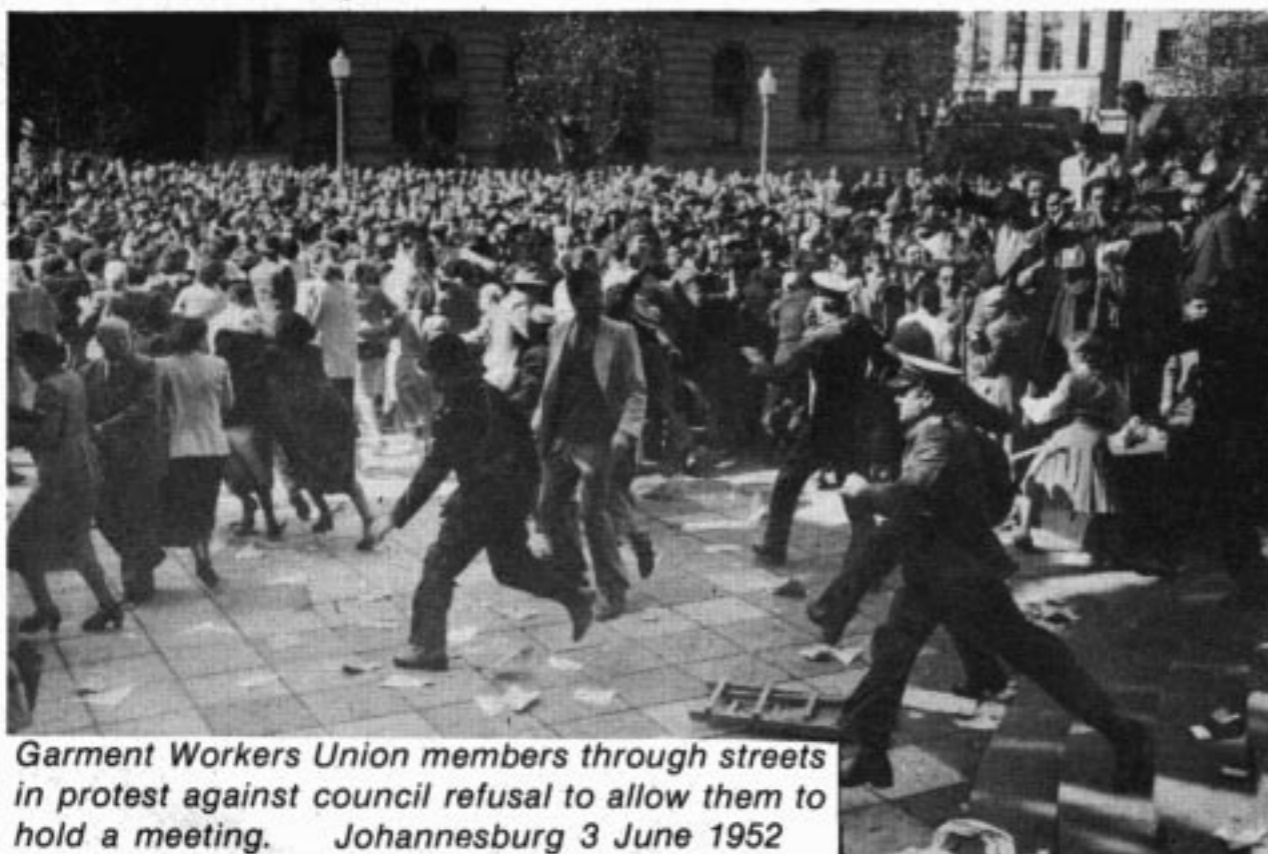
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Garment Workers Union members through streets in protest against council refusal to allow them to hold a meeting. Johannesburg 3 June 1952



Garments Workers hold mass meeting Police charge with baton sticks and chairs May 1952

Let us write the people's history

How you and your organisation can help to build up our own history

ORGANISATION did not start in 1982. People have always fought for their rights and opposed injustice and oppression. We must not let the history of this fight — our history — be forgotten. We can learn from the experiences of our parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents. We can use these lessons in our struggles today.

But how can we find out this history? We all know that the school history books do not tell the full story. The books are about prime-ministers and presidents, about the government, about wars and treaties. They do not talk about people's organisations.

People's history has not been written yet. The best way to find it out is to talk to the people who were involved in it, to the people who made the history. Then we can write it down and build up our own history. We must not let it die and be forgotten.

Problems

Anybody who can write can take part in building up our history. We all know older people — our grandparents, the pensioner neighbours, our parents. All of them have something to tell us. All of them had to live through and struggle against problems. We can find out how they tackled the problems in their days, and about their successes and failures.

Sometimes we may be surprised. We will find that the quiet old man down the road has an exciting story, that he was a fiery trade union leader. But even if the people you interview were not leaders, their stories are still important. The leaders can't win their demands without the support of the rest of the people. It is important that we know what these people thought and felt about the struggle. It is important to know why and, in some cases, why they did not take part in organisation.

Factories

Interviewing is fun. It is like listening to a story. But is a true story, where the actors are people we know, and the actions take place in places we know — on the Parade, in the factories, in District Six, Woodstock and Langa. And we can learn a lot from these stories that will help us with our problems today.

For example, we are not the first to set up creches. During the war, and even before, many women were forced to go out and work. Creches were set up in Blaauwvlei, Langa, Nyanga and other places. Peoples plays are also not a new idea. Below you can read how big plays were organised in Cape Town over 40 years ago. Night schools, book clubs, boycotts, petitions, marches — they have all been used before in the struggle. By talking to older people about their experiences, we can get ideas for today and also avoid making the same mistakes that they made.

History

In the next few issues of Grassroots we want to run a series of articles about history. Some of them will be about individual people. Some will be about specific organisations — womens groups, trade unions, community organisations. Others will look at specific campaigns and problems. But we know very little so far. What we need is for you to tackle the problem and help to build our history. We will start with a few stories we know. But we hope that in a few weeks we will be able to print stories that you have found out.

Youth Group

The best way would be to set up an oral history group. Some of you in a youth group, for example, could get together and decide to interview the people in your area. Or you could decide to investigate a specific issue or topic in which you know people were involved.

Struggles

First you could find all the written material that there is on the subject. There are a few books which tell about peoples struggles — Eddie Roux's "Time longer than rope" is one of the better ones. You can also find old newspapers in the South African Public Library in the Gardens. After reading all you can find, you can come together and share your findings — and then comes the really exciting part — with the knowledge you have found, you can go out and talk to people further.

Anybody can interview, but

there are some skills and tricks you can learn that make your interviews more successful. If you can get hold of a tape recorder, and the person you are interviewing doesn't mind, then you can tape the interview and write it up later, rather than writing during the interviewing. You can try talk-

ing to a few people who were involved in the same things all together. They can all contribute and one will remind the other of what he or she has forgotten. You can ask people if they have old pictures or letters from the times you are talking about. As you get experience in interviewing, you

will get many new ideas. We would like to hear about your ideas and difficulties, so that in our next issues we can share our experiences with others who are also interviewing.

Oral history is an important project. We must not let our history die. But it is also fun!

Rose Ehrlich: A belief in people's unity



WE spoke to Rose Ehrlich in 1976. She was then 94 years old. But her mind and memory were still as sharp as needles.

Rose's great love was drama and acting and she wanted everybody to share this interest. First in Bloemfontein, and then from 1939 in Cape Town, she tried to bring theatre to the people.

During the war Rose produced two very big plays. The 'Peoples Pageant' was held in aid of war funds, and was about the Russian Revolution. It ended with Cissie Gool's daughter and Gregoire Boonzaier, the artist, holding hands in the middle of the stage. To Rose this was a symbol of the unity of all the people in the world, a dream which in 1976 she still had not seen come true.

Her other big play was a biblical pageant, held in the City Hall. Rose did not use trained people in her plays. The actors were ordinary people who wanted to act. Friends designed the stage scenery and made the music. Workers from clothing factories made the costumes. Rose and her friends got material for the costumes by collecting scraps from factories.

Rose did not only put on plays in ordinary theatres. She produced plays in the City Hall and the Alhambra Theatre. But she also produced plays in the Bishops School Chapel, in the streets of the town, in Joburg Cathedral, and in her own

house. One time the traffic police stopped the traffic for one of her plays! She also worked with school children and produced pantomimes with them.

Rose held regular play readings in her own house for over twenty years. Anybody could come and she often had 50 people. If children came with their parents, they could either take part or sleep in another room. When they did not have the props and scenery they needed, they used their imagination instead. Rose told us that when they did Bertold Brecht's 'Mother Courage', they tied ropes to her bed and pulled it along as the ox-wagon!

Rose wanted everybody to enjoy plays as much as she did. She believed plays could be used to educate as well as to entertain. She preferred to teach and entertain lots of people rather than a few. So she worked with organisations and chose plays with meaning. She tried to involve all sorts of people from all places, black and white, in her plays.

Rose Ehrlich was a fascinating person. We were lucky to be able to know her and talk to her. Her ideas and the things she did provide us with a lot of ideas as to how we can use drama and plays in our organisations today.

Sports action

ON MONDAY April 26 the Schotches Kloof Civic Association held a successful meeting with sporting clubs, representing about 2 000 sportsmen in the area, and with churches and mosque committees.

Most representatives came to the meeting with a mandate from their organisations to work with the Civic Association.

Facilities

The main point discussed was the complete absence of sporting facilities in the area.

So far the civic has sent a total of 10 memoranda to the Council, Provincial Administration and the Department of Community Development.

Each time the reply was there was no money.

It was decided to launch a collective campaign to force the authorities to provide the much needed facilities.

The Civic is also going to bring out a newsletter, called Bo-Kaap News, to keep in contact with the people.

Residents are welcome to contribute to the newsletter.

The Civic is organising a public meeting to discuss what action the people should take after the Minister of Community Development said there was no money to provide any facilities or to build extra houses.

WORKERS suffer more than middle class people or employers from most diseases.

But it is often said that there are some diseases which mainly affect upper class people, like heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer. Some people say that these are upper class diseases and that workers get other diseases, like TB and chest diseases.

This is not really true, as a recent medical survey of stevedores in Cape Town showed. Workers carry most of the burden of ill health, even of the so-called upper class diseases.

The stevedores' union, the General Workers' Union, arranged for all the stevedores to be tested for high blood pressure last year.

This was because the employers were trying to increase the stevedores' work load, by reducing the size of the gangs in which they work.

Workers were unhappy about having to work even harder than usual. They thought it would have bad effects on their health.

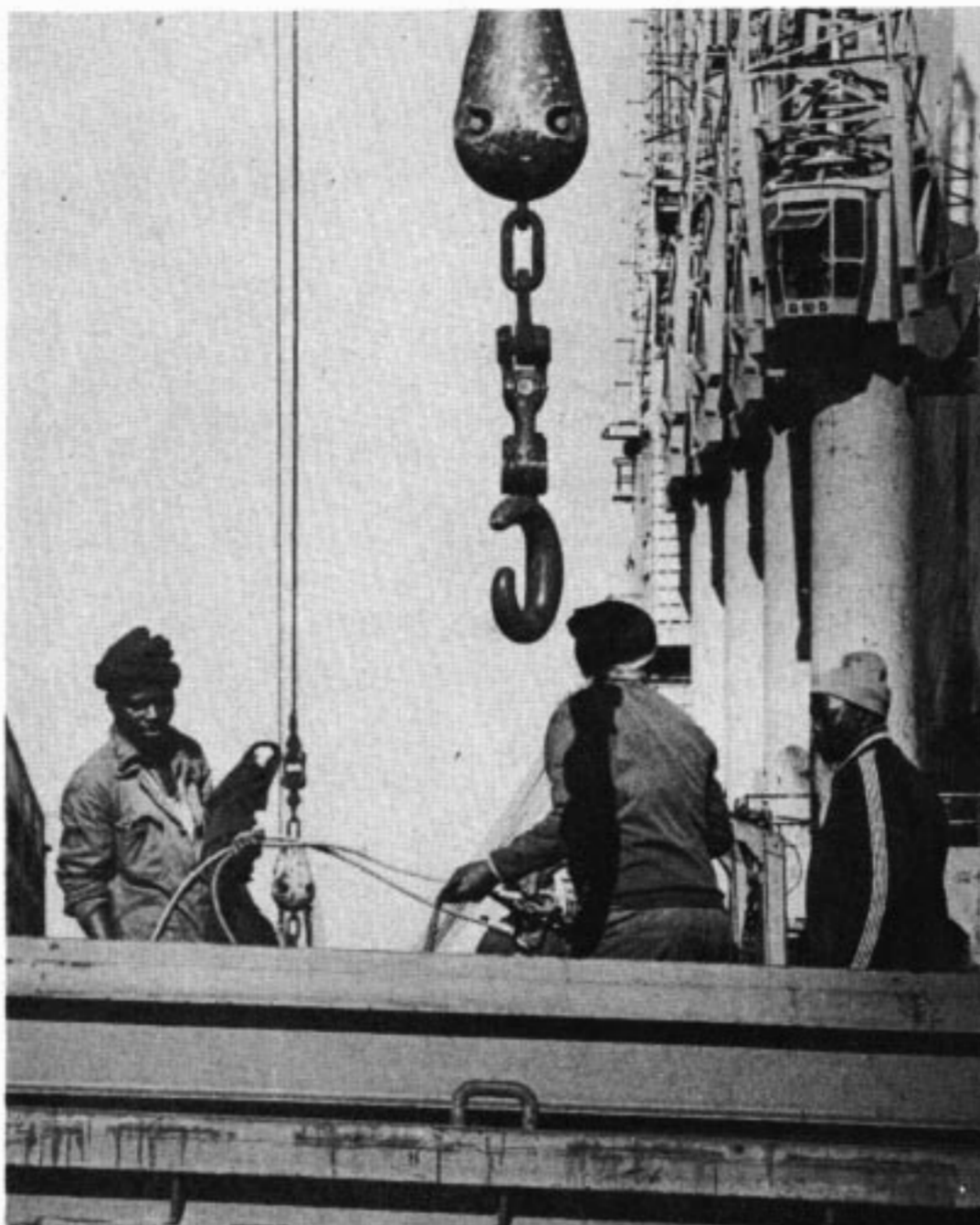
The stevedores already work very hard under dangerous conditions and this has already affected their health.

The survey showed that nearly half of the stevedores had high blood pressure. This is a very high figure.

One way of explaining this high figure is by looking at the effect of their work on the stevedores' blood pressure.

It has been shown in studies done in other countries that heavy work loads and certain

WHO SUFFERS ILLNESS MOST?



types of work affect one's blood pressure.

People who have to do a lot in a limited time at work, people who rush on the job, people who work in dangerous conditions where accidents can happen easily, or people work in dusty, cold, or noisy conditions suffer stress at work.

This stress causes their blood pressure to go up. Also, people who don't control their conditions at work — most workers — suffer from stress, especially when the work load is heavy.

The stevedores' work has a lot of these disadvantages.

They often work in

cold, noisy or dusty conditions.

They load in or out of holds of ships with cranes working overhead.

This makes their work dangerous.

They do not have much say in the kind of work they do or how fast they must finish

their work.

The survey also showed that working actually sends their blood pressure up. People examined after work had higher blood pressures than people measured before work.

High blood pressure is a dangerous illness. It can lead to heart, kidney, and brain illnesses such as heart failure or strokes.

But it is very easy for a doctor to tell if a person has high blood pressure, and it can be treated easily.

The trouble is that doctors don't often look for high blood pressure in workers. This is because the doctors think that high blood pressure is an upper class disease, or because little attention is paid to workers' health anyway.

The survey showed that less than one in ten of the stevedores with high blood pressure were being treated already at the time the survey was done.

Sickness is generally treated in our society as illness in one person. It is thought that only the sick person is concerned with their illness. But many illnesses are caused by the work that people do, or the conditions in which they live.

It seems that the work of the stevedores has caused the same sort of illness — high blood pressure — among many of the workers.

High blood pressure is then not the problem of one person, but concerns all the workers, like low wages, bad conditions, or any other problem at work.

Sport builds unity

RAVENSMEAD has got its own athletic club — the Ravensmead Amateur Athletic Club. It was formed toward the end of last year and has been accepted as an affiliate of the Western Province Amateur Athletic Union.

Its athletes compete regularly at Vygieskraal stadium.

Said a spokesperson for the club: "The purpose of taking part in these athletic meetings is not merely for the sake of competing against others and each other.

Meet

"It also enables us to meet others — and this is in fact the main reason we decided to form the club. We want to make people aware of each other.

"In this way the club also serves as a means of communication for people who had never seen each other before. Here we learn that we all need each other."

One of the club's problems is that the people living in the shanties in the area had been moved to houses in Skietbaan and were lost to athletics as there were no facilities for them there.

FOSATU'S EIGHT POINT PROGRAM

AT the Easter Weekend FOSATU held its second triannual congress at Hammanskraal in the Transvaal.

The main issues discussed were:

- the roll of trade unions in the community.
- trade union unity.
- possible advantages and disadvantages of participating in Industrial Councils.

In the keynote address, FOSATU's general secretary, Mr Joe Foster, stressed that building up organization on the factory floor was a major priority.

"The base of the organization is located where workers have most power and authority and that is where production takes

place."

Turning to the roll of trade unions in the community, he said: "Our aim is to use the strength of factory based organisation to allow workers to play an effective role in the community."

On the issue of trade union unity, the congress passed a resolution pledging to continue with the aim of building up a united working class movement on the basis of an eight-point unity programme.

These points are:

1. To seek out worker organisations that broadly share a common purpose with FOSATU's programmes and policies.
2. To discuss ways of moving towards

Grassroots decides on policy

THE question of whether GRASSROOTS should change its policy and carry more news of an openly political nature was thoroughly debated at the Grassroots adjourned Annual General Meeting in Athlone in April.

Eventually it was decided that the time was not ripe for such a change in policy. The full resolution on this issue reads

• That GRASSROOTS does not change its policy on overt political news content and that where issues are not clearly political or non-political, it be left to the newsgathering committee and the executive, the criterion being that the news items are relevant to organisational work of communities and trade unions.

The issue of whether

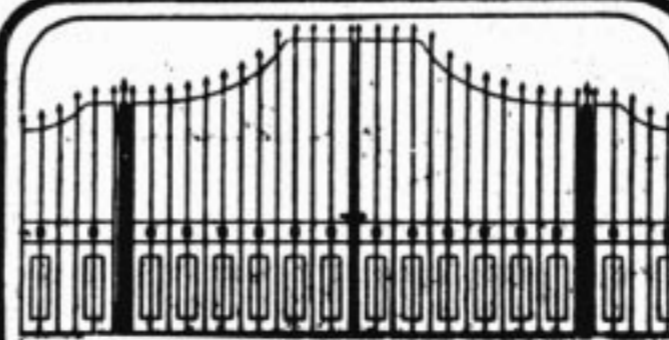
people's names be published gave rise to a motion and a counter motion.

The motion was that names should be published subject to the community organisation or the individual approving, and the counter that names should not be published.

The counter motion was adopted by a two to one majority.

closer common purposes.

3. To begin possible discussions of the organisational requirements of "disciplined" unity.
4. To draft constitutional structures jointly.
5. To plan for the merger of existing unions.
6. To continue working for a disciplined non-racial democratic movement which has the structures to ensure mass participation in a genuine manner.
7. To dissolve FOSATU if it is apparent to the unions that this would further greater unity in line with the aims and objects of a disciplined, democratic union movement.



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COMMENT

Search for unity

IN the weeks since the latest issue of Grassroots, we have seen important events for the people of South Africa and elsewhere in the world.

The main message of these events is UNITY.

The celebration of the first of May as International Workers' Day, stands for the unity of workers all over the world. At a number of these meetings in the Western Cape and other parts of the country, people have showed their desire and need for greater unity between all working people.

In Johannesburg, the Independent Trade Unions held another summit conference which was a success and a step forward to unity for the trade unions.

The trade unions realise that the poor economic climate and the government's harsh attack on them places new needs and demands upon them. This points to the need to build strong relations between trade unions to defend themselves against such attacks.

The unions know that this can only be done by standing together on common issues which unite them. Unity is more important than the differences that have divided them in the past.

In our pages, we are carrying an article by a union on the relations between workers and the community. And, as the rents campaign has come to an end the RAC (Rents Action Committee) which consisted of civics, unions, religious and other organisations, speak of the problems, gains and lessons of the campaign. Some of the difficulties experienced in the relations between organisations in such a campaign are also highlighted in the newspaper.

Working together

In working together, trade unions and community organisations have experienced many problems. This has arisen because unions and community organisations organise at different places and have different members. Because of this, their needs, priorities and strategies may be different too.

The working relationship between unions and community organisations is still a new one. A long road will have to be travelled in working together on common issues to arrive at the best ways and means of working together.

After the meat boycott, an assessment was done by the union spearheading the boycott and community organisations, to look critically at the problems which were experienced.

There have been many examples of unity between the community and unions over specific issues like boycotts and rent struggles. We can learn from such experiences to help us in our approach to the future.

On going Debate

We must not be afraid to differ. We must not be afraid to debate issues. But this should be done in a disciplined way through our organisations.

There will always be different ideas between organisations. Democracy means that it is important to be able to express these differences without it becoming divisions. It is only in this way that we can take stock of our problems and press ahead in a spirit of unity.

We have carried these stories because we hope it will be the first in an ongoing debate in Grassroots about the relations between trade unions and the community. This is another example of the search for a wider unity among the people and their organisations.

This debate is important because we believe that the struggle of workers is not separate from the struggle of the community. It is the struggle of an oppressed people for democratic control over their lives.

We have learnt from our experience that the workers need the support of the community. In turn, the community needs the support of the workers. It is only when we are organised on the factory floor and in the places where we live, and when our organisations come together that we will be truly strong to press forward in our struggle for a free and democratic South Africa.



TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF GRASSROOTS

TO all the members of Grassroots...

My name is Gillian Chan-Sam. I know my surname is very funny, anyway I won't worry about that now.

I am writing to you because I want you to do me a few favours. But let me first introduce myself.

My age is 12. I am in St 5 English Medium. My description: Dark brown eyes, dark brown hair, 1,4 metres tall.

I would like to be a tomboy very much. I belong to a group of girls called the "Tiger Kids". Our leader, Ursula, is good at almost anything.

Favour

I want you to do us a few favours. The favours are:

- Tell the people more about the Wilson Rowntree Boycott and tell them what not to eat that's Wilson's.
- Try to put in a corner for pen pals.
- This is a favour for you. I will tell my family in Cape Town to buy Grassroots.
- Have a page or two for children so they can paint or send poems or stories in.
- Please try to have a small comic for the kids, too, with crosswords

whirly-words, colouring-in page and a fairy story.

We were living in Cape Town. I was a Capetonian. But then my father was getting paid too little and then

we moved up to Jo'burg in 1977.

We are still living here. I went to Durban once but only for a long weekend. I've never been to Cape Town since 1977.

For five whole, bor-

ing, dry years we've been in Jo'burg.

For five whole, boring, dry years we've been in Jo'burg.

I miss the sea very much. My father is earning much more nowadays and we are

living in a grand house with a car and insurance and everything.

But I don't want the money. I just want to come back to Cape Town.

Gillian Chan-Sam

Rise in hospital fees - A great burden

SINCE 1st February, hospital fees in Cape Town have doubled. The new fees structure in the day hospitals (and outpatients and at the big hospitals) is

Income per month	Fee charged	Old fee
R0 - R50	50c	50c
R50 - 100	R2,00	R1,00
R100 - 200	R4,00	R2,00
R200 - 300	R8,00	R6,00
R300 - 400	R9,00	R6,00

Pensioners are supposed to receive free treatment. People have to pay the fee each time they visit the hospital, although after the first two visits in a month, any more visits in the same month are free.

Grassroots inquired about the high charges, and were told by officials that although the fees appeared high, they included many services; consultation with the doctor, assistance from the nursing staff, X-rays, medicine and physiotherapy. One would not get these free from a private doctor.

However, not everyone needs all these services, and the full fee is charged even if you only have a five minute consultation and nothing else.

Grassroots was also told that no one who cannot pay is turned away, and that many people get free treatment.

"Doctors are supposed to treat the sick, and not make money," an official said.

But is this followed in all the hospitals?

Grassroots spoke to patients of two hospitals, The Red Cross Hospital in Rodebosch and the Hanover Park Day Hospital. At Red Cross patients who said they had no money were given free treatment by the staff but at Hanover Park Day Hospital patients said they had to pay their fee before they saw the doctor and if they could not afford it, they were sent away.

Mr and Mrs Essau of Hanover Park both have to attend the Day Hospital at least once a month, for chronic illnesses. Their only income is Mr Essau's pension of R74 a month. Mrs Essau has many times, applied for a disability grant, as she cannot work because of severe back pain, but has been refused.

R2 a visit to the Day Hospital really stretches their budget but when Mrs Essau tried to explain that they could not afford it, she was told by the sister to 'take in ironing and earn some money'.

Mrs Essau's pain means she can't even stand up to do her own ironing at home. If this type of thing is happening at some other hospitals, then the increase in fees is a serious problem.

Trade Unions and Community Organisations

SEARCH FOR A WORKABLE RELATIONSHIP

On this page the F & CWU opens the debate on the working relationship between community organisations and trade unions.

We hope that this will be part of an ongoing debate in Grassroots.

THE townships and locations in the Cape Peninsula face big rent increases. In what way should a trade union involve itself in the fight for decent housing and lower rents? The government is trying to force an apartheid body, the Indian Council, on the so-called Indian people. What stand should a trade union take in the broader struggle for democracy in South Africa?

Questions such as these have been discussed in our Union and have raised further questions.

How does the struggle of workers for higher wages and a say over their lives in the factories fit in with the struggles community organisations are fighting? What is the difference between trade unions and community organisations? When and in what way does a trade union co-operate with such organisations?

Organisation

There are no simple answers to these questions. Among trade unions there are different approaches. Some unions close their eyes to anything that happens outside the factories. Other unions involve themselves in each and every issue in the community. In the same way, there are different approaches among community organisations to these questions.

Some suggestions are therefore put forward here, from the viewpoint of the Food and Canning Workers Union and the African Food & Canning Workers Union to try to create a better understanding of these matters.

Our viewpoint is that a Union should not split the struggle of workers in the factory from struggles outside the workplace, on community and political issues. We do not believe that the problems of the workers in the factories are separate from the problems in the areas where they live. Nor can we ever say that it is no concern of workers that they have no say in the government of the country.

However, we do believe that separate forms of organisation are needed for these struggles. A trade union is not a community or political organisation. A union which tries to be a community or political organisation at the same time cannot survive. It can also not afford to neglect the problems and organisation of the workers for wider issues. This means that the problems and organisation of workers must be foremost. And, whatever community or political issues are taken up, must be fully discussed with the workers first.

But, such discussions with workers at different factories take time. The Food and Canning Workers Union and the African Food and Canning Workers Union have never disregarded community or political issues.

It is not only for political reasons that we draw a line between the trade unions and community organisations. What is important is that the members of a trade union are workers, and that a union should be led by workers.

A trade union brings together workers who are divided in so many different ways, because they are an oppressed class and share a common oppressor. The trade union achieves unity by offering workers a specific form of organisation.

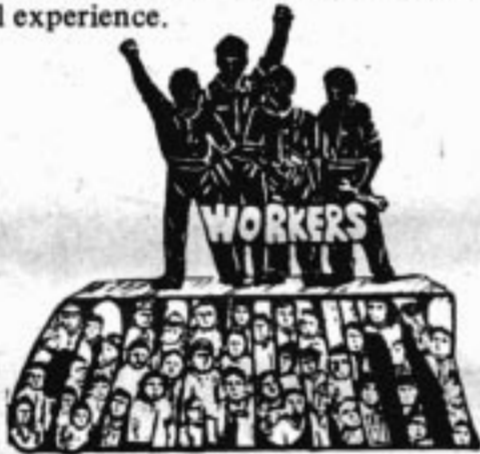
In our union, this form of organisation begins in the factory. Organisation then develops along industrial lines. For the strength of the union in one factory is greatly increased if workers in an entire industry are organised. At each factory, the workers elect a committee to deal with factory problems.

At a branch level, workers are elected who control the affairs of the Union. This gives the workers strength and a knowledge that it is their organisation. In turn, they will organise other workers into our union or other unions.

Community organisations on the other hand, are open to workers and non-workers. In most cases the leadership in these organisations are intellectuals or people with more education.

At this point, community organisations do not have a strong base of worker members. The workers who do participate do not always feel that they have a major part to play in such organisations.

This is bound to happen in an organisation open to worker and non-workers. Especially, where workers lack organisational experience.



Workers are workers because they are deprived. They are conditioned to accept that they can only do the least skilled work. In the factory they are forced to accept the authority of the supervisors, foremen and managers. These people have more education, and are less deprived than the workers. And, when workers meet this same class of people outside the factory, they are bound to leave decisions to them.

The apathy of "Coloured" workers in the Cape Peninsula is, in our experience, a major stumbling block to organisation. One reason is that the working class is dominated and made to feel inadequate in almost every way - whether it be at school, church or at home. This difficulty does not exist in the rural areas of the Western Cape, where a larger proportion of these communities are ordinary workers.

There are people who do not want to recognise that there are class divisions among the oppressed. For us there can be no lasting alliance between workers organisations and community organisations unless this division is understood.

With this in mind, let us look at the way in which trade unions can ally with community organisations. If this alliance involves union officials and community spokespersons only, it can serve little purpose.

If unions call for the support of the community, to stop scabs from taking the jobs of striking workers, or to boycott a company's products, what matters is the extent of community organisations' support. This support seems to be weak amongst the working class.

Similarly if community organisations call on the support of trade unions, the sympathy of trade union officials is of no help. If people are fighting for lower rents or busfares, that call must reach the organized workers. An alliance between trade unions and the community must involve the ordinary membership for the strength of an organisation does not rest on its leaders alone, but on the enthusiasm and initiative of its members.

Problems

Unfortunately community organisations and workers outside the trade unions often approach unions in a way which diminishes the role of the members, and increases the problems we have to overcome.

1. Leaders are sought out and treated as celebrities. Now the leader in a workers' organisation is only a spokesperson. Leadership is more easily corrupted in a workers organisation. More so, when such persons are treated in this way. It does not follow that because a person is a leader in a Union that he or she should be a leader in a community organisation. Each organisation and each struggle should generate its own leadership.

2. Certain unions are sought out as being progressive unions. We must admit that a large part of the trade union movement has actually become an obstacle to the progress of the workers, particularly in the Peninsula.

A certain amount of debate is a good thing. But, it must be born in mind that the workers and not the community must judge the unions in the end. Further, once certain unions are singled out, there is the potential for friction between unions. At a time when trade unions must unite we cannot afford this. Unrealistic expectations are also placed on unions whether they can fulfil them or not.

3. Unions are often invited to attend meetings or support campaigns, at notice which does not give union officials time to consult the membership. Unions take time to reach decisions. If they are not given enough time then it is the officials alone who can be involved. This also creates a separation between officials and the membership.



4. A trade union should not be asked to take part in a community organisation as such. We have more than enough to do organising workers than to want a finger in every pie.

Rather the members of our union who can belong to a community organisation, should be referred to that organisation. We would hope our members would be in the forefront of community struggles - not because they are union members, but because they know the value of organisation.

Where there are no organisations in a community, the trade union can encourage its members to establish one. So too, we would like community organisations to refer workers to trade unions.

5. The involvement of trade unions should not be sought if they are not to be involved, or informed, in full of the programme. It can happen that unions are invited to attend a meeting, which it turns out, implicates us in activities which the authorities regard as illegal, about which we were not consulted. The police may raid our offices, but the members know nothing about it.

6. Trade unions must be allowed to determine their own priorities. The organisation of the workers and the unification of the trade union movement are of the first importance.

Strengthen

There ought to be a greater understanding of the enormous demands that are made on unions. There should be no moral or political pressure on trade unions to become involved in community issues with which they are not able and ready to cope.

These are only some of the issues that come to mind, if the trade unions and community organisations are to establish more solid and lasting links. We hope that this article will be criticised, by trade unions, community organisations or anyone else; and that this may assist in strengthening both community and trade union organisations.



We still demand

WHEN the rent increases were announced early in December, CAHAC immediately called a meeting of its affiliates. The problem caused by the rent increases was discussed and we learnt how most areas would be affected. A decision was taken to establish a Rents Action Committee, which would draw in other groups like trade unions and religious organisations.

In this way, relationships between the organisations could be strengthened. The RAC decided to form sub-committees to share the work-load. In December, decisions were also taken to organise a petition and to hold a mass rally. As most people were unaware of the fight, much publicity had to be made through the papers and CAHAC pamphlets. This work

was important to get the campaign off the ground.

Organisations in the different areas worked together to ensure that the campaign had the support of the people. The 41 000 signatures to the petition and the attendance of 2 000 people at the rally were evidence of the work done. At the start of the campaign, the mass rally served to create solidarity and unity among the people.

And, as the people's organisations continued to exert pressure upon the authorities, the Divisional Council admitted that they misinterpreted the rents formula. About 14 000 householders' rents had been miscalculated. This was a major gain for the people and a lesson of

what could be achieved through united action.

The next major decision taken by the RAC, was to take the problem to the Minister of Community Development who is ultimately responsible. At first, he refused to meet a delegation. The RAC decided to put pressure on him through a Day of Action.

Again, the hard work of the organisations was seen by the great success of the Day of Action. It was as a result of this pressure that the Minister agreed to meet RAC's delegation.

The Minister refused to stop the increases and to listen to the demands of the people. Many people may ask, what did we gain by seeing the Minister?

Representatives felt that the meeting and its outcome exposed people to the Minister's attitude towards their hardships. Many people who had placed faith in his judgement were shocked into the reality of having to depend on their own strength and their organisations.

This position was reached early in February. House meetings and smaller mass meetings were held in different areas. But, as the people waited for the Minister's reply, there was little activity in the communities. It was at this time that the campaign began to loose its spark.

Why did this happen? Was organisation becoming weaker? Were the people involved becoming tired? Did we run out of ideas? We in RAC decided to look at all these questions.

Demands: Backbone of campaign

THE demands of the campaign were:

- All rent increases be stopped.
- Rents we can afford. Bigger state subsidies. The Central government must take full responsibility for housing.

Why did we have these demands? How did the people respond to it? What other options did we have? The organisations represented on the

RAC fall under seven different councils and administration boards.

Each of these applies the rents structure differently. The rents also varied from area to area. It was important to put forward demands

which would apply to all areas.

These four unifying demands represented what people saw as the solution to high rents. As such, it became the backbone of the campaign.

But, our organisations were not strong enough to take these demands through to the end. We saw that the Minister was not prepared to concede to any of these demands.

In any campaign, we can make short-term and long-term demands. Short-term demands are usually specific and can be met fairly immediately.

For instance, the Elsie River Residents decided to take up the problem of illegal evictions when they saw that the Minister would not answer to the RAC demands.

Our campaign has

taught us that our demands should be specific and concrete to bring some immediate relief.

At the same time, long-term demands are important since the rents struggle is a long one and is not separate from our struggle for a better life in South Africa.

Further, in putting forward our demands we should also try to understand how the strength of our organisations affect the outcome of our campaign. An assessment of our organisational strength will not only help us to have demands which are realistic, but also to formulate realistic means to achieve our ends.

The question that we could ask is, why have our demands been met in some cases and not in others?

We need stronger organisations

THE events of the past few years have taught us that we will not achieve anything unless we are prepared to fight for it.

We have learnt that we cannot rely on Management Committees and Community Councils to solve any problems.

These bodies are useless not only because they make Apartheid work, but also because they try to decide for people, not with the people. We have also seen that a few individuals cannot change anything.

It is the united action of the people that change things. For united action, we must be strong and well organised. Mass campaigns are a weapon in our struggle.

No campaign can or should therefore be taken lightly. With campaigns, we work to draw as many people as possible into the fight.

The people drives in mass not only because of our organisation's strength. They must be involved in the making of all decisions. This is the democracy we want.

The organisation of campaigns like the rents campaign, are always very difficult. In this campaign, one of the biggest problems has been that some areas were better organised than others.

that there was not much time for the various organisations involved to fully discuss every point with all its members. We should all bear in mind that besides having all these meetings, the actual work of organisation in the areas had to continue.

This shows us that our organisations need to be stronger to be able to participate in campaigns successfully.

This will only come with time and effort.

Campaigns are not only useful for fighting to achieve results which the people consider important.

It is also the best way to learn. We learn about our organisations and the organization of those responsible for our hardships.

We also learn to test the strength of the methods we use and to develop new methods for future battles.

But, we cannot learn from our experience in campaigns if all we do is rush around to 'get things done'. We cannot now say that campaigns must be run more slowly to ensure that all this takes place. Campaigns will always be waged under pressure.

It is therefore, our responsibility to build strong democratic organisations which can best be done when there are no major campaigns.

THE rents-campaign brought to light some of our organisational strengths and weaknesses. It also raised important questions of what action to take. The outcome of the campaign, the gains and losses are all results of our organisational strength. We acknowledge that most of our organisations are still weak. In this story, the RAC draws on the lessons of Maccassar and Tafelberg in the fight for lower rents.

In November last year, tenants in Maccassar were hard hit by the rent increases. As a result, the Maccassar Civic Association was forced to take up the issue. Because of the long housing waiting lists, the newly formed organisation felt that it was not strong enough to boycott rents.

After the Minister's refusal to stop the increases, the people decided to take up the fight in a different way. "We pay for maintenance and facilities, but we get nothing in return", the people said. They decided to make more specific demands.

In Tafelberg, at a mass meeting, tenants decided not to pay the increases. The people could not carry out this decision. The idea of a boycott flunked out.

What we can see from Maccassar is that the decisions taken by the residents, though not necessarily the most militant, were able to be carried out by the organisation. Even though the people were badly affected, the organisation was not strong enough to take hard line action. The organisation grew because its decisions were the realistic decisions of the people.

In Tafelberg, on the other hand, although the decision to boycott



IN March the Rents Action Committee (RAC) decided that the rents campaign should not continue. Why was this decision taken when our rents have not been reduced? GRASSROOTS asked RAC to explain some of the reasons that led to this decision and also to look at the gains and problems of the campaign. RAC does so on these pages.

Weaknesses and strengths

Gains and losses of the campaign

IN assessing our losses and gains made through the campaign, we need to look at our organisations and try to find answers to a number of questions.

Have more people been drawn into community organisations in a more active way?

Have new democratic civic organisations emerged as a result of the campaign?

Have we gained organisational and technical skills? Are organisations better equipped to tackle local and mass campaigns in the future?

The different community organisations are in the best position to give answers to these questions.

In some areas where the increases were small,

the rents campaign was used to draw new members into the organisations.

In other areas, committees which did not exist, are being built because of the rents campaign.

But, it could be asked, whether these new members will continue with the work or whether their involvement was temporary.

Through the campaign, many areas were drawn into working under the umbrella of CAHAC.

These included Altona, Maccassar, Elsie River, Schotcheskloof, Worcester, Belhar and Veldhuis Park. With more people behind it, CAHAC was made stronger.

Not all areas were equally well organised. There were some areas that needed encouragement. RAC was not in a position to do so. This can be seen as a shortcoming of RAC.

A major gain has been that many different community organisations have worked together in the campaign. The strength of the organisations varied greatly.

The weaker newly formed organisations have learnt much from the stronger established organisations.

Skills have been shared. In turn, stronger organisations learnt from working with newly formed organisations. In this way, our organisations are always growing.

But, it is unrealistic to think that organisations always move forward.

There will be ups and downs.

The question we could ask ourselves is: Has this campaign placed us in a better position to take up both local and mass campaigns in the future?

We must build organisations

THE rents campaign has come to an end. Many may be disillusioned because there was no immediate relief to their problem. While this has been hard to accept, we have learnt very important lessons.

Many organisations are questioning why we have lost and why we win some of the battles.

The government, councils and administration boards only take decisions when it is in their interest. A decision to reduce rents will only be taken when they feel weak and threatened.

In 1980, the Department of Community Development decided on rent increases for most areas. At that time, there was much activity throughout the country around the schools, bus and road meat boycotts.

Rent increases were therefore postponed to October. By then, the government's position had not improved. The increases were postponed again to January 1981.

Last year, the Durban Housing Action committee organised a successful boycott against the rent increases. In Cape Town, we were too weak to lead support to them.

But, although DHAC was strong enough to call a boycott, it did not bring down the rents.

We see then, that there are many factors which determine whether we will win a struggle or not. Our organisational strength is our greatest weapon. But, by itself, this does not mean victory. As shown by the examples, other factors, such as the political and economic climate also

influence the outcome of a campaign.

Our struggle is a long and hard one. There will be times that our demands will be met, but also times when we will have to retreat while we are still strong to fight another day.

Although our demands have not been met, no campaign is ever really lost. We have reached a higher stage in our struggle. We have learnt a lot, how to build strong democratic people's organisations. We have gained valuable experience and through this, raised our awareness.

There will be rents campaigns in the future, just as in the past. There will be rent increases for as long as our people are exploited by the bosses and do not have a democratic say in our country.

It is for these reasons that the RAC decided to call off the campaign and to take a hard look at our work. The organisations involved in the campaign have decided to go back to their areas and to continue with the fight by building strong mass based local organisations.

It is only in this way that we will be strong enough to carry the struggle forward in the future. Our organisations should look at when and why we win. It is therefore important to look at the rents campaign and to understand what we have achieved and where we stand now. We must recognise what our organisations need and use this to organise for victory.



Unity against high rents

SOON after CAHAC was started, the Rents Action Committee was formed.

The Rents committee was set up separate from CAHAC to draw in groups such as action committees, civics, trade unions and churches. This brought together a number of organisations which had not worked together before.

However, there were problems. Mainly, because we were not able to draw on past experience of joint action. Another problem was that supportive action was not clearly split out. Groups not directly affected by the high rents were not clear about what their role should be in the campaign.

It taught us that only through working together for some time can this relationship between civics, churches, unions and other bodies be built.

United action of all these bodies is our strongest weapon and we have made great progress by working together on the rents campaign.

The RAC had to set up a number of sub-committees to ensure that the work was being done during the campaign. These committees were finance, publications, organising and churches. The com-



A problem of this committee was that people were not eager to serve on it. They seemed to feel that they had more important organising tasks to do.

This committee brought out a number of publications to promote the campaign. CAHAC Speaks was started as a result of the campaign and future CAHAC Speaks will be published.

The committee was small. Although a larger committee would have meant greater participation,

..... Rents we can afford

We still demand

WHEN the rent increases were announced early in December, CAHAC immediately called a meeting of its affiliates. The problem caused by the rent increases was discussed and we learnt how most areas would be affected. A decision was taken to establish a Rents Action Committee, which would draw in other groups like trade unions and religious organisations.

In this way, relationships between the organisations could be strengthened. The RAC decided to form sub-committees to share the work-load. In December, decisions were also taken to organise a petition and to hold a mass rally. As most people were unaware of the fight, much publicity had to be made through the papers and CAHAC pamphlets. This work

was important to get the campaign off the ground.

Organisations in the different areas worked together to ensure that the campaign had the support of the people. The 41 000 signatures to the petition and the attendance of 2 000 people at the rally were evidence of the work done. At the start of the campaign, the mass rally served to create solidarity and unity among the people.

And, as the people's organisations continued to exert pressure upon the authorities, the Divisional Council admitted that they misinterpreted the rents formula. About 14 000 householders' rents had been miscalculated. This was a major gain for the people and a lesson of

what could be achieved through united action.

The next major decision taken by the RAC, was to take the problem to the Minister of Community Development who is ultimately responsible. At first, he refused to meet a delegation. The RAC decided to put pressure on him through a Day of Action.

Again, the hard work of the organisations was seen by the great success of the Day of Action. It was as a result of this pressure that the Minister agreed to meet RAC's delegation.

The Minister refused to stop the increases and to listen to the demands of the people. Many people may ask, what did we gain by seeing the Minister?

Representatives felt that the meeting and its outcome exposed people to the Minister's attitude towards their hardships. Many people who had placed faith in his judgement were shocked into the reality of having to depend on their own strength and their organisations.

This position was reached early in February. House meetings and smaller mass meetings were held in different areas. But, as the people waited for the Minister's reply, there was little activity in the communities. It was at this time that the campaign began to loose its spark.

Why did this happen? Was organisation becoming weaker? Were the people involved becoming tired? Did we run out of ideas? We in RAC decided to look at all these questions.

Demands: Backbone of campaign

THE demands of the campaign were:

- All rent increases be stopped.
- Rents we can afford. Bigger state subsidies. The Central government must take full responsibility for housing.

Why did we have these demands? How did the people respond to it? What other options did we have? The organisations represented on the

RAC fall under seven different councils and administration boards.

Each of these applies the rents structure differently. The rents also varied from area to area. It was important to put forward demands

which would apply to all areas.

These four unifying demands represented what people saw as the solution to high rents. As such, it became the backbone of the campaign.

But, our organisations were not strong enough to take these demands through to the end. We saw that the Minister was not prepared to concede to any of these demands.

In any campaign, we can make short-term and long-term demands. Short-term demands are usually specific and can be met fairly immediately.

For instance, the Elsie River Residents decided to take up the problem of illegal evictions when they saw that the Minister would not answer to the RAC demands.

Our campaign has

taught us that our demands should be specific and concrete to bring some immediate relief.

At the same time, long-term demands are important since the rents struggle is a long one and is not separate from our struggle for a better life in South Africa.

Further, in putting forward our demands we should also try to understand how the strength of our organisations affect the outcome of our campaign. An assessment of our organisational strength will not only help us to have demands which are realistic, but also to formulate realistic means to achieve our ends.

The question that we could ask is, why have our demands been met in some cases and not in others?



In March the Rents Action Committee (RAC) decided that the rents campaign should not continue. Why was this decision taken when our rents have not been reduced? GRASSROOTS asked RAC to explain some of the reasons that led to this decision and also to look at the gains and problems of the campaign. RAC does so on these pages.

Unity against high rents

SOON after CAHAC was started, the Rents Action Committee was formed.

The Rents committee was set up separate from CAHAC to draw in groups such as action committees, civics, trade unions and churches. This brought together a number of organisations which had not worked together before.

However, there were problems. Mainly, because we were not able to draw on past experience of joint action. Another problem was that supportive action was not clearly spelt out. Groups not directly affected by the high rents were not clear about what their role should be in the campaign.

It taught us that only through working together for some time can this relationship between civics, churches, unions and other bodies be built.

United action of all these bodies is our strongest weapon and we have made great progress by working together on the rents campaign.

The RAC had to set up a number of sub-committees to ensure that the work was being done during the campaign. These committees were finance, publications, organising and churches. The com-



A problem of this committee was that people were not eager to serve on it. They seemed to feel that they had more important organising tasks to do.

This committee brought out a number of publications to promote the campaign. CAHAC Speaks was started as a result of the campaign and future CAHAC Speaks will be published.

The committee was small. Although a larger committee would have meant greater participation,

this was not possible because not many people have the skills. This needs to be developed for future campaigns.

ORGANISING The organising sub-committee's mandate from RAC was to give assistance to organisations which asked for assistance. Asking for help is not easy. Looking back, the committee feels that the mandate should have included reaching out to struggling organisations.

RELIGIOUS BODIES The religious bodies endorsed the campaign. The mandate of this committee was to rally support through local churches and mosques for the campaign. Financial assistance also came from the churches and mosques.

The committee faced difficulty in getting local religious bodies to participate in a more active way. Again, the problem was a very small one. These sub-committees were involved in fund-raising, bringing out the newsletter organising support from bodies such as churches and mosques.

It is the united action of the people that change things. For united action, we must be strong and well organised. Mass campaigns are a weapon in our struggle.

We need stronger organisations

THE events of the past few years have taught us that we will not achieve anything unless we are prepared to fight for it.

We have learnt that we cannot rely on Management Committees and Community Councils to solve any problems.

These bodies are useless not only because they make Apartheid work, but also because they try to decide for people, not with the people. We have also seen that a few individuals cannot change anything.

It is the united action of the people that change things. For united action, we must be strong and well organised. Mass campaigns are a weapon in our struggle.

No campaign can or should therefore be taken lightly. With campaigns, we work to draw as many people as possible into the fight.

The people drives in mass not only be showpieces of our organisation's strength. They must be involved in the making of all decisions. This is the democracy we want.

The organisation of campaigns like the rents campaign, are always very difficult. In this campaign, one of the biggest problems has been that some areas were better organised than others.

The only way to overcome some of the problems was to have as many RAC meetings as possible, sometimes even two a week. This meant

that there was not much time for the various organisations involved to fully discuss every point with all its members.

We should all bear in mind that besides having all these meetings, the actual work of organisation in the areas had to continue.

This shows us that our organisations need to be stronger to be able to participate in campaigns successfully.

This will only come with time and effort.

Campaigns are not only useful for fighting to achieve results which the people consider important.

It is also the best way to learn. We learn about our organisations and the organisation of those responsible for our hardships.

We also learn to test the strength of the methods we use and to develop new methods for future battles.

But, we cannot learn from our experience in campaigns if all we do is rush around to 'get things done'.

We cannot now say that campaigns must be run more slowly to ensure that all this takes place. Campaigns will always be waged under pressure.

It is therefore, our responsibility to build strong democratic organisations which can best be done when there are no major campaigns.

Weaknesses and strengths

THE rents campaign brought to light some of our organisational strengths and weaknesses. It also raised important questions of what action to take.

The outcomes of the campaign, the gains and losses are all results of our organisational strength.

We acknowledge that most of our organisations are still weak. In this story, the RAC draws on the lessons of Maccassar and Tafelberg in

the fight for lower rents. In November last year, tenants in Maccassar were hit by the rent increases. As a result, the Maccassar Civic Association was forced to take up the issue.

Because of the long housing waiting lists, the newly formed organisation felt that it was not strong enough to boycott rents.

After the Minister's refusal to stop the increases, the people

decided to take up the fight in a different way. "We pay for maintenance and facilities, but we get nothing in return", the people said. They decided to make more specific demands.

In Tafelberg, at a mass meeting, tenants decided not to pay the increases. The people could not carry out this decision. The idea of a boycott flunked out.

What we can see from Maccassar is that

the decisions taken by the residents, though not necessarily the most militant, were able to be carried out by the organisation. Even though the people were badly affected, the organisation was not strong enough to take hard line action. The organisation grew because its decisions were the realistic decisions of the people.

In Tafelberg, on the other hand, although the decision to boycott

was taken by the residents, it could not be carried out. This was a definite weakness and it retarded the growth of the organisation.

What we see in the above examples applies to the broader Western Cape. The campaign gained ground by the presence of organisations in the areas, however small, which could act in the interest of the people.

The campaign has taught us that the weakness of individual units could be overcome by acting collectively in RAC.

The rents committee had to weigh up all the strengths and weaknesses of the individual units, and then decide collectively on action which would advance the campaign. In this way, joint action could be taken which was realistic and moved at the pace of the organisation.

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was taken by the residents, it could not be carried out. This was a definite weakness and it retarded the growth of the organisation.

Gains and losses of the campaign

IN assessing our losses and gains made through the campaign, we need to look at our organisations and try to find answers to a number of questions.

Have more people been drawn into community organisations in a more active way? Have new democratic civic organisations emerged as a result of the campaign?

Have we gained organisational and technical skills? Are organisations better equipped to tackle local and mass campaigns in the future?

The different community organisations are in the best position to give answers to these questions.

In some areas where the increases were small, the rents campaign was used to draw new members into the organisations.

In other areas, committees which did not exist, are being built because of the rents campaign.

But, it could be asked, whether these new members will continue with the work or whether their involvement was temporary.

Through the campaign, many areas were drawn into working under the umbrella of CAHAC.

These included Altona, Maccassar, Elsie River, Schotcheskloof, Worcester, Bellair and Veldhuis Park. With more people behind it, CAHAC was made stronger.

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We must build organisations

THE rents campaign has come to an end. Many may be disillusioned because there was no immediate relief to their problem. While this has been hard to accept, we have learnt very important lessons.

Many organisations are questioning why we have lost and why we win some of the battles.

The government, councils and administration boards only take decisions when it is in their interest. A decision to reduce rents will only be taken when they feel weak and threatened.

In 1980, the Department of Community Development decided on rent increases for most areas. At that time, there was much activity throughout the country around the schools, bus and road meat boycotts.

Rent increases were therefore postponed to October. By then, the government's position had not improved. The increases were postponed again to January 1981.

Last year, the Durban Housing Action committee organised a successful boycott against the rent increases. In Cape Town, we were too weak to lend support to them.

But, although DHAC was strong enough to call a boycott, it did not bring down the rents.

We see then, that there are many factors which determine whether we will win a struggle or not. Our organisational strength is our greatest weapon. But, by itself, this does not mean victory. As shown by the examples, other factors, such as the political and economic climate also

influence the outcome of a campaign.

Our struggle is a long and hard one. There will be times that our demands will be met, but also times when we will have to retreat while we are still strong to fight another day.

Although our demands have not been met, no campaign is ever really lost. We have reached a higher stage in our struggle. We have learnt a lot, how to build strong democratic people's organisations. We have gained valuable experience and through this, raised our awareness.

There will be rents campaigns in the future, just as in the past. There will be rent increases for as long as our people are exploited by the bosses and do not have a democratic say in our country.

It is for these reasons that the RAC decided to call off the campaign and to take a hard look at our work. The organisations involved in the campaign have decided to go back to their areas and to continue with the fight by building strong mass based local organisations.

It is only in this way that we will be strong enough to carry the struggle forward in the future. Our organisations should look at when and why we win. It is therefore important to look at the rents campaign and to understand what we have achieved and where we stand now. We must recognise what our organisations need and use this to organise for victory.

..... Rents we can afford

THEME TO UNITE US

THIS question was asked at the UWO Conference earlier this month when representatives of 18 branches and invited organisations came together. 80 year old Aunt Dora Taman as guest speaker, challenged the women: "Instead of becoming fewer, our problems are increasing. Prices are up. Rents are up. The hospitals are full. What does your neighbour say? What do those who are hungry, say?"

And the women spoke out. As members of the community, issues - from blocked drains to unemployment, from the shortage of creches to the high cost of living.

But two issues came up again and again at the Conference. Clearly, the women want to tackle high prices and unemployment on the one hand and child care on the other.

"We are deeply affected by both these issues, we cannot choose between them," one speaker said.

These are the issues that the UWO will work

on at a special workshop to be held soon to discuss a theme to unite all the branches of the organisation in a common programme of action.

The call for a workshop of this kind came out of the conference, for, as Aunt Dora said:

"We must not sit back.

"How can we sit back when we see that our children are hungry and sick?

"How can we sit back when we see that our children are hungry and sick?

"How can we sit back when the enemies of the people are busy oppressing the poor?

"We must all come forward to help each other.

"Let each one of us say, I must also help where I can.

"We must learn from each other. Any person who has knowledge, must share it."

And so Conference decided on a workshop where branches of the UWO will work out plans on how they will carry out these issues in

their areas.

For example, the workshop will look at how even a small group of women in one area can tackle the high prices of basic foods such as bread, milk and meat.

Branches will talk about who makes the prices and how they are made and how we can try to change the prices that burden us.

Other branches feel that it is the problems of having no child care facilities in their area that will unite their branch and bring more women to the UWO.

So, the workshop will discuss how to start a creche or perhaps how to start a playgroup. Some members want to talk about how to form a parents committee to have some say in the running of a creche already existing in their area.

Other branches want to discuss how they can work with the civic on these issues.

These are the kinds of problems that are



discussed and acted on in the UWO. The UWO is open to all women and in many areas of the Western Cape there are already branches or working groups.

The UWO tries to encourage every member of the organisation to participate fully in the decision-making and in the work of building the organisation.

One of the visitors at the conference put it like this:

"I like the spirit of this conference. It is honest. It is open. And people are really serious, they are really trying to work together to tackle our problems."



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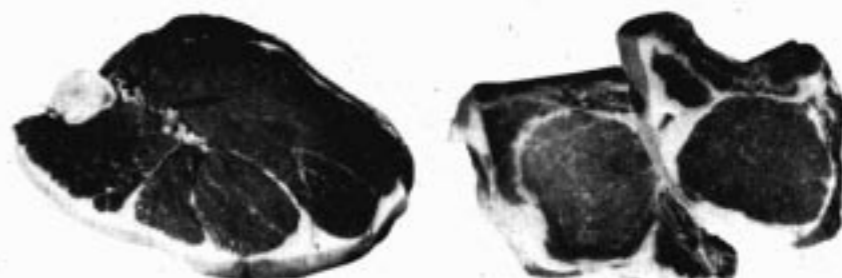
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ADVICE

SICK PAY: YOUR RIGHTS

IN this issue of GRASSROOTS we deal with the third kind of benefit — SICK PAY — that workers can claim from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (U I F) that is run by the Department of Manpower. In previous issues we dealt with the other two benefits and the problems that workers experience in claiming them — UNEMPLOYMENT PAY and MATERNITY PAY.

The benefit schemes are inadequate. Firstly, many workers such as farm workers, domestic workers, food and canning workers and contract workers are excluded from receiving these benefits. Secondly, the amounts that workers receive

from U I F are always just less than half (45%) of their weekly wages.

The sick pay from U I F can only be claimed after you have been off work for three weeks or more. For the first part of their illness or for shorter illnesses workers must claim sick pay directly from their employers or from their sick pay fund if they belong to one. We will also briefly explain workers' rights to this ordinary sick pay.

Claiming U I F sick pay is usually quite easy. If you have a problem and need help then the social worker at the hospital where you are being treated should be able to help you.



How to Claim UIF

U.I.F. sick pay is for workers who are unemployed because of sickness or have used up their ordinary sick pay.

The rules for U.I.F. sick pay.

Most of the rules are the same as for U.I.F. unemployment pay.

- you must have worked (and paid into U.I.F.) for at least 13 weeks in the year before you get sick,
- you can get one week of U.I.F. sick pay for every 6 weeks that you have been working and paying into U.I.F.
- you can claim U.I.F. sick pay for up to 26 weeks in one year if you have paid U.I.F. for long enough (for 26 weeks U.I.F. sick pay you must have worked for 3 years).

Remember

- to claim U.I.F. sick pay you must have been off work for at least 3 weeks at one

time.

- you will be paid just less than half (45%) of your weekly wages.
- it is sometimes possible to get an extension of sick pay if you are still sick after 26 weeks.

How do you get U.I.F. sick pay?

If you have been sick for 28 days or longer, you must collect your UIF blue card from your boss. You must then take the blue card to the Department of Manpower (at Thomas Boydell Building, opposite Caledon Square Police Station in central Cape Town).

They will then give you a blue form (UF 86) that must be filled in by the doctor who is treating you.

You must fill in the first part of the form with your own name and address. The doctor will fill in the part about your illness and

why you are off work.

The doctor must fill in two dates — the date when your illness began and you left work, and the date when you are likely to return to work.

Check to see that the first date is correct.

It must be the day after the date that is written in your UIF card — that is the first day that you did not work because of sickness.

If it is not correct may have to get the form filled in again or you may lose part of your sick pay.

Once the blue form is filled in then return it, together with your blue card, to the Department of Manpower. Anyone can take the form and card for you or you can post it.

Your sick pay cheques will then be sent to you in the post by the Department of Manpower.

ALL workers have the right to be paid for the days that they are off sick. These rights are laid down in the Factories Act and the Shops and Offices Act.

The number of days sick pay that a worker can claim each year depends on how many days a week he or she works:

- people who work a five day week can claim 10 days sick leave a year;
- people who work a six or seven day week can claim 12 days sick leave a year.

These days of sick leave are given at full pay and the money is paid directly by your employer.

By law you only have to produce a doctor's certificate after you have been off for three days or more, though many employers demand a certificate from their workers after only one day off sick.

Workers who are in their first year in a job cannot claim the same amount of sick leave. Instead, the amount of

sick leave adds up as they work for longer:

- people who work a five day week can claim one days' sick pay for each five weeks that they have worked;
- people who work a six or seven day week can claim one days' sick leave for every four weeks that they have worked.

Workers in factories are only allowed the number of days sick leave per year that we have explained above. Workers in shops and offices are allowed to add up their sick leave over a three year period so that they can claim up to 36 days sick leave on full pay during a three year cycle.

Many workers belong to sick pay funds and have amounts deducted from their wages for these funds.

The amounts and the length of time that workers can claim from these funds varies, but whatever they are they should never be less than workers' rights to ordinary sick pay that we have stated above.

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ADVICE

WHEN GRASSROOTS organised a discussion with young people about SRCs it seemed that there was not enough time for everybody to say all that they wanted to say. The young people felt that they wanted more discussions like these. They wanted to speak about SRCs, youths and civics. They had many questions to ask and many problems to share.

This article is a summary of a second discussion meeting of youth from Athlone, Langa, Bokmakierie, Belhar and Vanguard Estate.

The first question which the young people wanted to discuss was whether SRCs are the best way of organising the youth.

• One person felt that youths in the community have no real contact with SRCs and that "there was, therefore, no contact between the community and the school." He felt that the SRC could help to form these links.

Involved

• Another young person asked "can SRCs reach all the youth?"

• "SRCs were not the best. Students don't all get involved. It is difficult to organise students at school. There is a fear of intimidation from teachers," said a student from Athlone.

• On the other hand, a student from Bokmakierie argued that SRCs could work, but that they should be aware of the danger of becoming an elitist body. He felt that this could be overcome if the "SRC played an active part in community issues, for example, the rent issue."

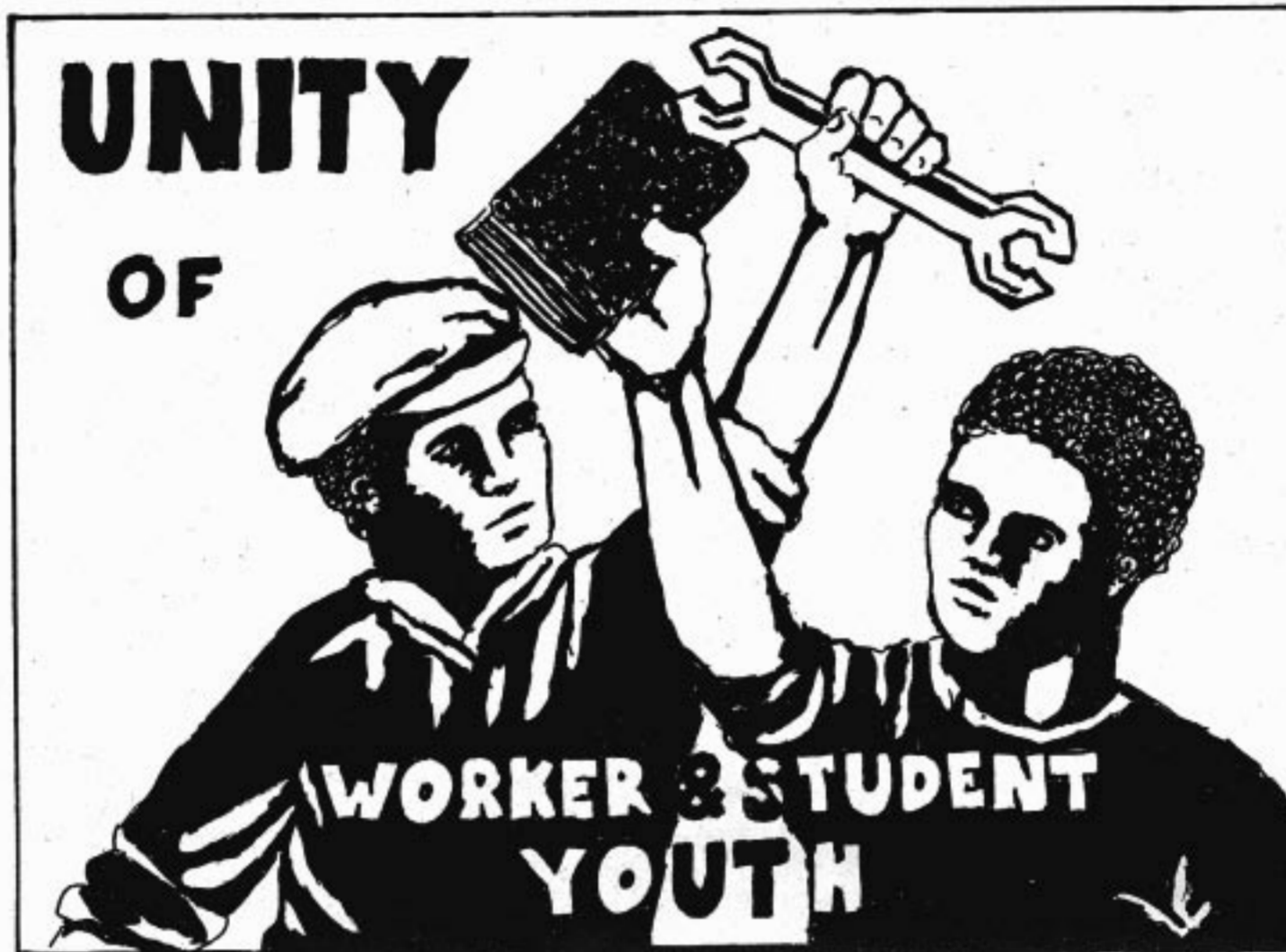
• A student from Langa felt that SRCs at some schools were not working well. "They have just been introduced. The students are suspicious, they don't like them because they think that SRCs are looking for trouble-makers."

She explained that some students felt that some SRCs were brought into being to replace the prefect system and that because of this "students don't want to be involved, they want to form their own organisations."

Many young people felt that there was a need for SRCs to be involved in the community. One young person felt that students were part of the community,

Youth speak out:

Working with SRC's Youth and civics



that students should reflect their community's interests. A student from Belhar argued that "SRCs should work with youth organisations and civics. But some youth organisations are not interested in 'relevant issues', rather in youth outings and so on." He felt that perhaps SRCs could fill the gap by introducing "relevant issues."

This led the discussion onto youth organisations. Some people felt that there were many problems with the way in which the youth were organised.

• One person felt that while it was agreed that a youth movement "was there to get all the youth in an area together to discuss particular community issues under sub-committees, the sub-committees tend to

become sectarian. For example, the cultural sub-committee members look down on the others."

• It was also felt that while attempting to keep contact with the community, "many youth organisations are there just to keep people busy, so that they don't cause trouble."

• Another person from Athlone, felt, however, that the youth should entertain as well as discuss.

"The social part will attract people because most people are not naturally interested in political issues. This will then enable one to get people together for more serious activities."

• Another problem in the youth organisations seemed to arise

from differences between working youth and students. One person felt that lines were being drawn between students and workers.

"During the boycotts there was no effective way in which workers could participate. There was no discussion between workers and students. This was a problem."

• Another student felt that working youth were "more serious about community issues than students. Working youth tend to work much harder than students in youth organisations. They know social problems better than students do."

• A different view was expressed by another student. He felt that "there was a lack of sym-

pathy with students from working youth. The working youth asked of the students during the boycotts: "What do you expect to gain?"

The working youth felt that students were too impulsive. In one youth, for example, differences between working youth and students caused the organisation to be dissolved.

• A student from Belhar felt that the views of working youth and students were not different.

• A young person from Bokmakierie felt that it was not enough to say that working youth and students had differences. He felt that it was important to understand why differences existed.

He said: "The split represents class differences. One should look at people's economic backgrounds. Working people have to go to work early. They have completely different social experiences. Students and working youth cannot always perceive each others problems clearly."

Conclusions

He felt that these kinds of differences were created by the government causing working youth "to look down on others saying 'you are only at school. You don't appreciate the seriousness of the situation.'"

• Another point of view was that there were other serious problems too, "more important than the split between the working youth and the students. There are differences between youth and civic organisations. The civic people tell the youth 'you have no problems. You have no sense of responsibility.' The older people did not want the youth 'to get involved'. It was felt that there should be mutual decision-making between the youth and the civic. "Nobody should dictate."

The following conclusions were reached in the discussion.

- Youths and SRCs have a right to exist;
- There should be strong links between SRCs, Youth and Civics. The youth can form the links between the other two.
- It is important to set up contact between the different areas in the Western Cape.

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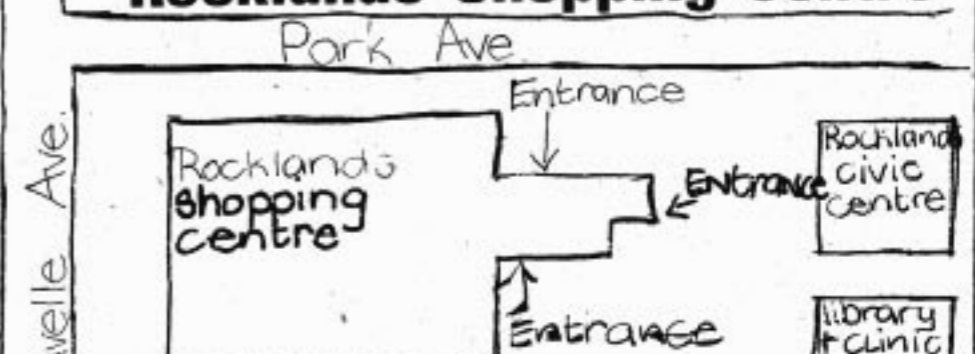
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ADVICE

DOCTOR MUST EXPLAIN YOUR ILLNESS

"DR JONES said that I must have my womb taken out, but he didn't tell me why. I'm too scared to ask him," said Mrs Fredericks, who spoke to GRASSROOTS a few weeks ago.

"What must I do?" This is a familiar story. People often go to the

doctor who gives them treatment without explaining what is wrong with them. Like Mrs Fredericks, they are too scared to ask questions. They feel that they may be taking up the doctor's time. They may even feel that the doctor may get cross with them. So they don't ask.

You and the doctor

But — who is suffering? Because Dr Jones

didn't tell Mrs Fredericks why she must have her womb removed, she is probably thinking that her sickness is so bad that he doesn't want to tell her. She is thinking the worst is wrong with her, and she will worry about it all the time. Many doctors are busy. But the extra

little time that they take to help their patients to understand their sickness better can help to prevent a lot of worrying.

If, when Mrs Fredericks goes to Dr Jones next time, he explains to her what is wrong, and why she must have the treatment, she will feel better. Now she

knows that he is not hiding anything from her that may be serious, and she'll be better prepared for her operation.

Mrs Fredericks, like everyone else who goes to the doctor, has a right to ask whatever she wants about her sickness or her treatment. If she doesn't understand him, she

must ask him to explain in simple language, or to make a drawing, which often helps.

Like Mrs Jones, if you are ill, you have a right to know about your sickness — it's your body, so feel free to ask whatever you want to know. Your doctor must tell you about it.

Democracy - rule by the people

The next in our series on how to form organisations



THE word democracy means "rule by the people". It is a form of administration in which those who administer, are elected by the people and are responsible or answerable for their action to the people.

The basis of democracy is one person, one vote.

Democracy takes place on two levels. On the one all the people meet to decide on an issue.

On the other representatives of the people meet to decide on an issue.

A democratically constituted organisation is based on the principal of democracy. It is ruled or governed by its members. Both levels of democracy are applied in such an organisation.

On the first level democracy takes place at the General Meetings of such an organisation. All the members have the right to take part in the deliberations at such meetings and all the members have a right to decide on a motion. The decision of the majority of the members is binding on such an organisation.

On the second level

democracy takes place at the Executive meetings of such an organisation.

The executive members are elected at the General Meeting by the democratic process and such persons represent the General Membership at the Executive meeting. The decisions taken at the Executive Meeting are therefore binding on the General Membership.

The Executive members and office-bearers which are elected at a General Meeting of members are responsible or answerable for their actions to the General membership at a General meeting.

The General Membership is kept informed of the actions of the officials by means of reports which must be submitted by them to

the General Meetings.

The General Membership has the ultimate and final say on any issue. The General Meetings set the policy, direction and guidelines of the organisation and the officials, including the Executive, must work within such framework.

The General meeting can take any official on the Executive to task

for working contrary to the interests of the organisation.

It is clear that in a democratically constituted body, the ultimate power is vested in the General Membership and such power is exercised at a General Meeting.

In a democratically constituted body, the principal of one member, one vote applies.

Each member has

the right to cast his or her vote on any motion that is to be decided upon at a meeting of the organisation.

The community should promote and encourage the establishment of democratically constituted bodies to serve its needs and interest. In this way it will create effective instruments to realise its objectives.

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PRESSURE ON SAAWU CONTINUES

EAST LONDON workers affiliated to un-registered unions, South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU) and General Workers Union (GWU) have been constantly harassed by the South African and Ciskeian security police, and the bosses.

There has also been a long campaign to evict unions from offices. They have had to

Evicted

move three times. Now SAAWU is operating in an Indian residential area and the other two in Indian business areas.

However, they are still not secure.

Landlords evicted them after their offices had been frequently visited by security police and Co-operation and Development Department officials.

In November last year the three unions were evicted from their

shared office in town. The office in town was within convenient reach of workers from local factories.

Although the present offices are much further away, the workers have not been discouraged.

They often visit the new offices to have

their problems solved.

In mid April the AFCWU branch secretary was visited by four special branch policemen.

They said that they had come to pay him a friendly visit.

The secretary had just been released after serving a 12 month sentence for refusing to give evidence as a state witness in a trial last year.

Two days later, they received another so-called "friendly" visit from the special branch.

Reforms Divide Workers

A WORKER interviewed in East London said:

"Workers in East London are used to constant harassment by both the South African and homeland governments. They see what is happening as proof that the bosses and the state are working together.

"This makes the workers look beyond bread and butter issues on the factory floor.

"These acts of aggression lead to the antagonism between the bosses and the workers.

"It is also why the laws, whatever they may be, are looked at with suspicion by the unions. When all these things are being done against the workers, it seems that these laws are an attempt by the government to bring

the unions under its control.

"This is why they have been constantly rejected by the unions, especially the unregistered ones.

"The labour laws introduced by the government are mainly meant to defend the interest of the bosses. The so-called reforms have also been introduced to lure the unregistered unions or the workers to join the registered trade unions.

"We see the Ciskei and S.A. state as trying to divide us. We also see the bosses and the so-called labour reforms as doing the same. We need to unite against apartheid and fake labour reforms which divide us."

Workers fight unfair sacking

A DECISION by workers at Fattis and Monis not to work overtime led to a sacked worker getting his job back.

On Friday, March the worker received short pay and went to complain at the wage office. He was told to come back on Monday.

After starting work at two o'clock on Monday, he was given permission to go to the wage office to sort out his pay problem.

On the way he met

one of the managers who asked him his name and then took him to an office where he was given a breathalyser test.

After the test, members of management said that it had proved that he was drunk.

According to disciplinary rules a member of the union committee should have been present during the test.

This did not happen. The only non-management person present to

witness the test was a caretaker. He is one of three workers at the factory who are not members of the union (Food and Canning Workers Union).

The worker was fired without the local committee chairman or his deputy being informed - which was a breach of the rules of the agreement between management and the union.

Overtime

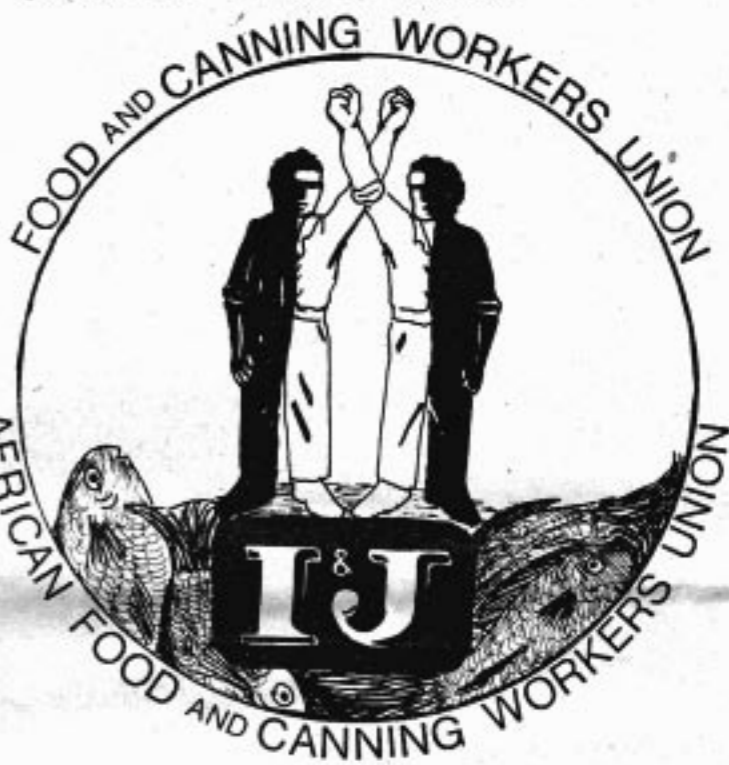
After a number of unsuccessful meetings with management, the committee reported back to the workers who decided not to do any overtime until the matter was settled.

On April 14 Fattis and Monis head office officials held a meeting with union officials and committee members.

It appeared that members of the management delegation were divided and asked for time before announcing their decision.

On April 21, management agreed that the rules had been broken.

The worker was taken back and the workers started working over-time again.



No jobs for workers

DISMISSED Wilson Rowntree workers in East London are still determined to carry on with the organisation of the sweet boycott for as long as management refuses to give in to their demands.

They want all the sacked workers to be

given their jobs back.

Workers who have resigned from Wilson Rowntree cannot get jobs with other companies.

The companies say they cannot take them until they have settled the dispute with Wilson Rowntree.

Workers have been evicted from their homes because they were behind with their rent.

In such cases rent was then paid by SAAWU.

The last time worker representatives approached Wilson Rowntree management they were referred to the Sweet Workers Union, an affiliate of the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUUSA).

The workers refused to negotiate with SWU because, they say, they were not sacked by this union but by Rowntree.

Three top SAAWU officials (National President, Vice-president and East London Branch Chairman) were detained in November last.

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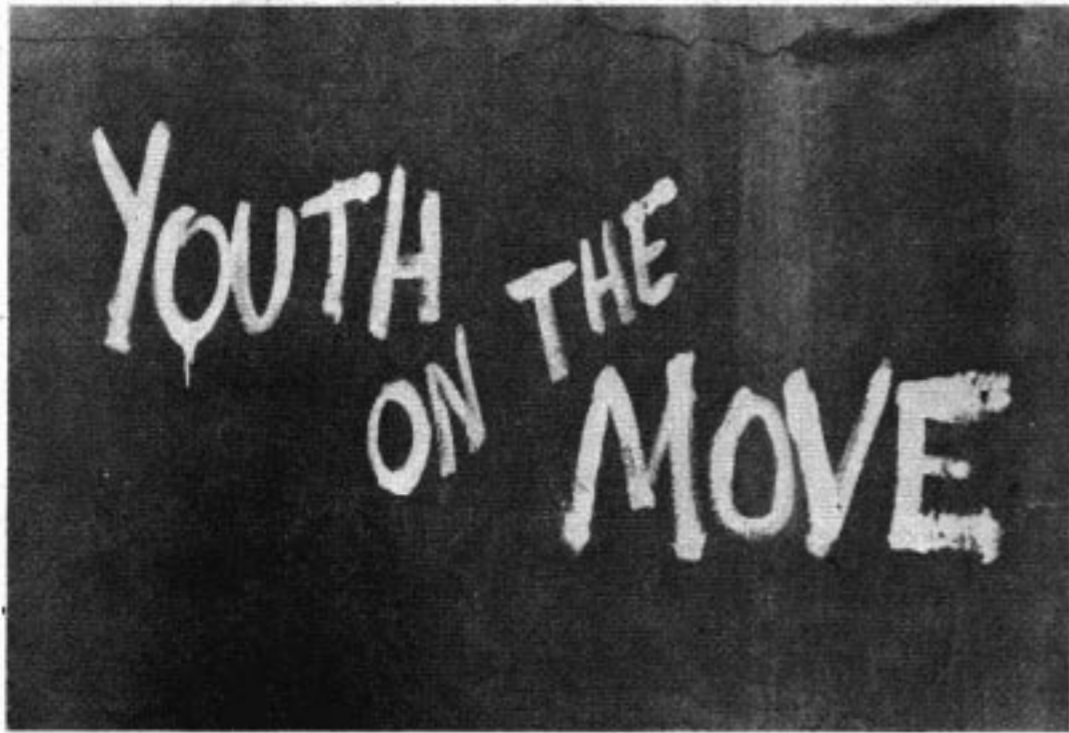
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YOUTH FOCUS



New Youth in Lavender Hill

A GROUP of young people in Lavender Hill have come together to form a youth Group in the area.

The group, which will attempt to cater for the needs of the many youth in Lavender Hill, has already had a few activities.

The first activity was a games evening which was held at the Community Centre and attended by more than 150 young people.

The number of people who attended indicated there was a definite need for a youth Group to cater for the needs of the youth in the area.

The young people responded very well to the Games evening. Everyone took part in the various games available.

These included volleyball, snooker, darts, table tennis and kerrem. One of the youth present said they had been waiting for a youth group like this for a very long time.

In preparation for the games evening, a group of youth walked through the courts of Lavender Hill to inform the others. They

laughed and joked as they walked along, knocking on doors and inviting their friends and others to the games evening.

The Group then had a meeting on April 4 — a week after the games evening — and this was attended by about 40 people.

They have met in the community centre every Wednesday after this at 8 p.m. and will continue to do so for some time.

At the first meeting, the youth present divided into groups and discussed various things.

They discussed what they thought the reasons for a youth in the area must be.

They said that a youth must be there to build a strong community spirit and to cater for the needs of the young people.

At this meeting it was also decided to go on an outing to Table Mountain on Easter Monday where the youth got to know each other better.

At present the youth are very much in need of funds. They have

therefore decided to have a bazaar. The bazaar will be held on Saturday May 22 at the Lavender Hill Community Centre.

Bazaar

Fruit, vegetables, groceries, clothes and lots of other things will be sold at the bazaar. A male modelling show will also be held which promises to provide a lot of fun and laughter.

Inroads into the community

THE cost of living continues to rise almost daily. It is the workers who feel it the most. Being organised into a strong youth organisation therefore becomes necessary.

The youth (workers and students) of Steenberg clearly do not have sufficient recreational facilities for their use.

Often after a hard days work the youth have to stand on the street corners to relax because of this.

Now the government is attempting to take away what meagre facilities we do have by giving control of it to dummy bodies like the Management Committee.

The residents of Steenberg are also hard hit by the unfair increase in rents, transport fares, lack of maintenance and low wages.

Out of necessity, therefore, the STEENBERG INTERIM COMMITTEE was formed.

They organise peo-

ple on a day to day basis around problems such as high rents etc.

Out of this committee was born the idea, which was popularised, of a community youth in the area. They have since organised regular youth gatherings and activities in the area — games evenings, silkscreening of tee-shirts; interesting films; a jog-along; discussions

of topical issues like Ciskei "Independence"; Neil Aggett's death in detention; Leyland and Wilson Rowntree strikes and non-racial vs multi-racial sport.

The selling of Grassroots is also a regular feature of the Steenberg youth.

They have experienced many shortcomings and have learnt many lessons along the way.

Their youth gatherings have often been boring mainly because of the inexperience of most of the members at organising.

The Steenberg Youth sees its role as: building up of a strong community by means of:

- (1) supporting struggles against unfair rents and transport fare increases, lack of maintenance, unhealthy conditions etc.
- (2) supporting the workers (some of whom are our parents) in their struggle for higher wages and the recognition of their democratically elected unions.
- (3) providing recreati-

onal facilities for the youth of Steenberg. (4) developing skills — silkscreening, newsletter production and organisational skills etc.

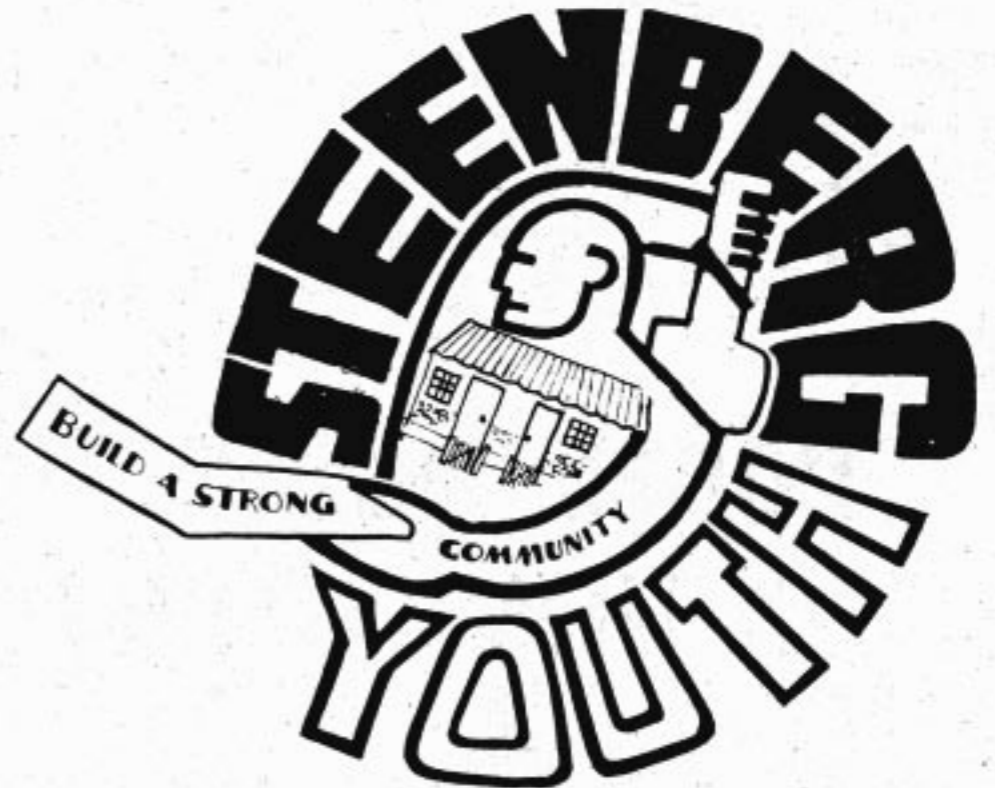
(5) building up a strong relationship with sports clubs in the area.

(6) providing programmes for learning about broader social issues.

They hope to fulfil these aims and objectives through the sub-committees which have been set up — Sports and Recreation; Art and Drama; Education and publications.

Two members of each sub-committee serves on a co-ordinators committee. This ensures that sub-committee programmes do not clash. Close co-operation exists between the sub-committees with some members contributing to more than one sub-committee.

In conclusion the Steenberg youth has realised that by doing things together, whatever it may be, life becomes much more meaningful.



Children get together

BECAUSE so many children were roaming the street in Bonteheuwel the local Civic Association saw the need for a children's group in the area.

They asked the youth movement to get one started.

The first children's meeting was due to be held in the Netreg Community Centre on February 27, but at the last minute they were refused permission.

But the organisers did not let this setback put them off — they went ahead with the



meeting in the open space outside the community centre.

At the moment meetings are being held in the Kalksteentfontein Methodist Church.

The childrens group now has about 70 members.

Among the group's aims are object are:

- To develop self confidence;
- To promote the co-operative spirit of working and playing in a group.

Recently a big walk was organised for the group with the accent being placed on the importance of taking part and not of winning. About 50 children took part.

Attempts are being made to involve more parents in the group, so that they can get to know each other and be part of what their children are doing.

Let us use halls

THE Mitchells Plain Youth Movement has written to the City Council to ask for the use of halls in the area for youth activities.

At the moment three of the five branches use small library halls between 6 pm and 8 pm.

Where community halls are used by the other two branches, they have to pay a lot. At their recent AGM in Rocklands, attended by about 150 members, the MPYM expressed their anger at not being allowed to use the halls.

"We have asked to use the halls at convenient times at a low cost. In fact, why can't they



let us use the halls for free?" the members asked.

A new structure was adopted at the AGM. This means that the branches will be more autonomous and will link up through a co-ordinating committee.

A secretary and treasurer were elected at the AGM and it was decided to have a rotating

chairperson.

The representatives of the various branches to the Co-ordinating Committee were introduced at the AGM.

Members at the AGM said afterwards they had an enjoyable afternoon and were glad to meet so many people from all the other branches.

During a thirty minute break, the members were able to mix and talk to each other about the activities in the different areas.

The hall was brightly decorated with a banner 'MPYM welcomes you' and pictures of the youth's activities during last year.

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Contraception workshop

ON Sunday 2nd May more than forty people from 9 community organisations came together to discuss family planning at a workshop organised by the Health Care Trust. These people, mainly women, had come because of their concern about many issues that affect people who practise contraception.

The organisers used drama to show what happens when women visit a family planning clinic. The visits of five different women were

acted out. They showed the difficulties that face women when they want information or if they have problems. The play helped to get discussion started and many women agreed that they had experienced the same difficulties as those shown in the play.

Many issues were discussed. Among these were the wide use of the injection, Depo Provera. One person listed more than 20 side effects that came from using the inject-

ion. Others questioned why the state is pushing family planning with adverts on the radio, T.V. and posters on buses? Why are family planning services the most free and easily available of all health services? Does a smaller family really mean a bigger future? Who controls information about family planning and do people have enough information to make free choices?

During the last session, people considered ways in which some of

these ideas can be spread for wider discussion in the community. Representatives from organisations said that they would pass the ideas on. Some were interested in getting the play to their own area and having their own discussions on family planning.

The Health Care Trust said that they will produce a booklet on birth control. Apart from useful information it will have a full report on the workshop.

PORTLANDS GETS A NEW CRECHÉ

BECAUSE of the pressing need for pre-school care and education in Mitchells Plain, a meeting was called for parents on 17th January 1980 in Portland.

The Merrydale Nursery School committee was elected to investigate every aspect of pre-school care and

education with the view of establishing a nursery school. The parent body pledged their support.

The committee gathered information and had discussions with people involved in pre-school activities. A suitable venue was sought and the Council

was approached for the use of the Portland Community Centre which was almost completed, or the use of houses.

Regular meetings were held with the parents and newsletters were distributed to keep the community informed.

In the meantime, for the desperate working mothers seeking day care for their children, playgroups were arranged whereby mothers in the community cared for the children of those desperate parents pending the opening of the nursery school.

The committee and parents continued to engage themselves in fundraising activities such as a rummage sale, braai and games evening, a dance in 1980, and a dance held in 1981 together with 2 other creché committees in Mitchells Plain.

The venue remained the main problem.

Because the committee could not report on the progress made, the parents became despondent.

They began to doubt whether the nursery school would ever be ready for the coming year. They were no longer as eager to fund raise.

In April 1981 the Council finally offered a house at 16 Hawaii Way, Portland at a rental of R194. p.m.

The Committee felt that they could not afford this high rental. The Council agreed that the house could be leased at a nominal rental and that the Committee could apply for a grant in aid.

The Nursery School was opened on Monday 3rd May 1982, more than two years after our initial meeting with the parents. Grassroots Educational Trust is equipping the school.

The Health Authorities are only allowing fifteen children to be accommodated at the Nursery School. The fees generated therefore will not be able to cover the costs of running the nursery school and the parents and community will be involved in fundraising.

Our aim is that the nursery school will become a community project, where people in the community will become involved in every aspect. Already the parents helped in cleaning up the house before the school started.

They pledged their services and donated whatever they could.

AFTER this year's increase in rent, many Elsie River tenants who are unable to pay the high rents, have received eviction notices.

Although the Housing Act states that the eviction notice must be handed personally to the tenant, it was in fact thrown into letterboxes and some tenants even found theirs on the grass.

Because of the bad administration at the local rent office people are allowed to be more than R500 in arrears before they receive an eviction notice. They are then expected to pay the whole amount within seven days.

There have been

ELSIES FACES EVICTIONS

many problems as far as rent is concerned. In some cases it was found that two families who live in one house, both pay rent to the Council.

One tenant asked the Council for a smaller house because she could not afford the high rent. She was eventually transferred but her rent was increased instead of decreased.

One tenant remarked in a house meeting; "Ek was beter af in my sinkhok, maar hier moet ek betaal vir klam mure en verstoppe toilets. Ek het my hunaan digniteit in die flatse van Avonwood verloor."

In Elsie River people are faced with lots of problems and lots of organising needs to be done.

No to consultation

MORE than 90 workers have been on strike since April 30 at Parow Galvanizing General over management's refusal to agree to a clause in the constitution.

Workers downed tools after the bosses refused to agree to a clause obliging management to consult with

the workers' committee before dismissing workers.

The General Workers' Union, which represents the workers said this was a perfectly reasonable clause which was agreed to by many other bosses in firms where they organise.

Dairy Strike

FROM PAGE 1

these workers. The basic starting wage was R175 a month. The workers were asking R300 a month as a starting wage.

After sitting outside the dairies most of the day they went home in the afternoon. Management sent a message to

Nyanga where the workers live, offering them R200 a month as a basic starting wage. The workers accepted this offer, but many interviewed by Grassroots the next day said they still thought the money was too little for the long hours they work.

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