

Guguletu meeting calls for unity

IN the spirit of unity, 1 000 residents from Nyanga, Guguletu, Langa and Crossroads called for the formation of one residents association for all these areas.

Amidst songs of "Lets Hold hands together", leaders from the different residents associations made an appeal for unity on civic matters under the umbrella of one central civic association. A speaker said: "For too long we have been divided and allowed our differences to keep us apart. The authorities have also exploited our disunity. We must be united and organised to take up the many problems facing our people in the townships."

The people talked about the many problems, poor maintenance, high rents, electricity, the lack of street lighting, facilities and amenities. "You name the problem, and it can be found here" a resident said.

Organisation

The meeting was called by the Nyanga and Guguletu residents associations, the Crossroads Committee, Parents Action Committee, the United Women's Organisation, and other community leaders and churches to make an appeal for unity and to start organisation on the civic front.

A speaker said: "we need one civic body that could truly carry the hopes and frustrations of the residents. Such a body must be elected by the people, for the people and of the people. We do not want community leaders who become overnight leaders of our day and age."

The meeting adopted the following proposals:

- that there shall be one uniting civic association for all the townships in the Western Cape.
- that the existing residents committees resolve and affiliate to the central civic organisation.
- that the representatives from the organisations involved in bringing about

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Support for Lavis electricity demand**ON THE MARCH**

CLOSE to 450 Bishop Lavis residents marched silently down Wale Street in Cape Town towards the offices of Citizens Housing League (CHL). Carrying posters and banners written boldly in red and black - "Electricity is a right not a privilege".

Shoppers and workers stopped to watch as men and women, old and young, mothers with babies in prams stood united and voiced their demand.

"CHL, ons wil lektriek hê". (CHL, we want electricity). The people are saying "for too long we have sat alone with our grievances, but today we have come to speak with one voice as a community".

The campaign for electricity in Bishop Lavis is growing and gaining mass community support with over 1 000 residents attending community meetings.

Support has also come from teachers, SRC's and churches.

On the night before the march, prayer meetings were held throughout Bishop Lavis.

Earlier this month, 250 residents marched on the local housing office with a petition signed by over 1 500 people and a memorandum stating their case.

The people are also saying: "We are tired of CHL's empty promises of the past 20 years. We want a definite date by when electricity will come to Lavistown".

"The lack of electricity in the area is an inconvenience and our people suffer from chest problems as a result of the fumes of using paraffin and gas. Fuel is not only expensive, but dangerous."

A resident said: "I have worked every day for 33 years, but today I have taken off to come to the League because they don't want to come to us."

"We spend R70 per month on candles, paraffin and gas. If we had electricity, it would cost us only R20. Why must we spend R50 more than those people who have electricity?"

"In a year, our bill is R600, now, that is a lot of money for a man who earns R200 per month, with a wife and five children to feed, clothe and send to school."

Another resident said: "Promises, it's all empty promises. We were told 18 years ago that electricity would come. Some of us bought 'lektriek' stoves and fridges which are standing like show pieces in our homes".

But the people are also angry because CHL is providing white old people with luxury flats in Epping Garden Village, while they are

living in the dark.

The Bishop Lavis Action Committee (BLAC) together with residents committees of Riverton and Greenlands are spearheading the fight for electricity.

Earlier this year, community surveys were done to prove to CHL that electricity will be cheaper than fuel.

When the people voiced their demand to

the League, they were told that there are no funds and that in future they must go through the Matroosfontein Management Committee.

At the demonstration, which was the highlight of the campaign, a delegation of twenty residents was elected to relay all these grievances to the League.

The people made it

quite clear that they reject management committees.

"We have not asked for them, neither did we elect them. We want to speak for ourselves," they said.

Under the pressure of a united community the CHL agreed to:

- negotiate with the people and their elected representatives, and

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Tafelsig residents say: 'OUR CHILDREN NEED SCHOOLS'

ALTHOUGH families only started to move into the new Mitchells Plain suburb of Tafelsig three months ago, residents have already started organising themselves.

"We were confronted by a crisis situation from the start so there was no time to delay," explained one of the new residents.

When residents started moving in they found to their shock that there was not a single school in the area. Most schools in the other suburbs of Mitchells Plain are already over-crowded.

There are few buses in the area and children who managed to get admission to Mitchells Plain schools were arriving two hours late.

Some parents tried to send the children to the schools in the areas they came from.

But most could not

afford the high travelling costs.

With the assistance of Mitchells Plain's Electricity Petition Committee (EPC) a house meeting was held and an Interim Schools Committee was elected.

This committee decided to call an urgent mass meeting in the community hall to discuss the burning schools issue.

The local soccer club has regular use of the hall every Thursday evening. The club agreed to allow the mass meeting to take place instead of their own scheduled meeting on September 10.

When the people arrived for the meeting they found that the hall was locked.

The club secretary arrived and told the nearly 300 people that somebody had complained to the council and council had sent

the club a notice banning them from using the hall that night.

The people refused to allow the council's action to prevent them from meeting.

A resident offered her house as a venue.

But this was far too small - although everybody did their best to squeeze in.

Eventually the meeting was held in the backyard.

The people were clearly very angry.

"Our children are roaming the streets during the day," said one. "What is going to become of them. We are decent people but our children are being turned into skollies by the government."

The meeting decided to appeal to all people intending to move to Tafelsig not to do so until enough schools were built for the children in the area.

The people also demanded that sufficient schools be built before the start of the next school year.

"We also demanded that the authorities provide a free bus service for children who have to attend school in other areas of Mitchells Plain," the people said.

There are many children of school-going age who are not attending school because their parents cannot afford the bus fares to send them to school.

"The Council must also provide us with one or two empty houses for those children who cannot be

accommodated at already established schools in Mitchells Plain."

The meeting also resolved to demand that the Council supply the area with a mobile clinic and also set aside a house to be used as a clinic.

The City Council refused to allow Tafelsig residents to have a meeting in the Community Hall. But, this did not stop them. Close to 300 people squeezed into the backyard of a resident where they held their meeting.



Residents threaten: 'We will come back with thousands more ...'

ANGRY Bonteheuwel residents marched in pouring rain to the local housing office to lodge mass complaints and demanded that the

council does the necessary repairs to their homes.

Close to 75 men, women and children

marched in an orderly way to the housing office calling on passers-by to support and join them in their fight for decent housing.

"We have complained about broken toilets, leaking roofs, damp walls and broken doors for years, but nothing gets done. Its

all promises", they said.

Residents told the District Housing Manager, Mr Hermanus, about the health prob-

lems in the area as a result of poor living conditions.

A pensioner said: "We are tired of complaining, they take no notice of us. So, we have come here today to speak with one voice and we are demanding to be heard."

The people crowded into the housing office, but the Housing Manager refused to speak to them.

Instead, he asked for a group of six residents to meet with him.

They agreed to this and handed in 165 complaint sheets from tenants in the area.

Mr Hermanus agreed to send the complaints to the Council and to inform residents of its reply within a week.

Force

This delegation is part of an on-going campaign which is being spearheaded by the Bonteheuwel Civic Association to force the City Council to do the necessary repairs in the community.

In July, close to 2 000 residents met at a protest meeting and called on the council to maintain their houses.

Since then nothing has improved, but the people are now determined to take this matter further.

Lead

Residents in the Assegai and Chestnut areas of Bonteheuwel have taken the lead.

They have had house meetings and went from door-to-door in their areas to get complaints.

Complaint forms were completed in duplicate.

The association keeps the copies and will be following the complaints up with the Council if the repairs are not done.

The people are now waiting for the Council's reply.

"If they don't fix our houses, we will come back with thousands more", an angry resident shouted as they left the housing office.



Bonteheuwel residents lodge mass complaints about the Council's failure to maintain their houses.

Evictions - a struggle for rights

IN the last issue Grassroots reported on the situation the Nyanga squatters were facing, and the attempt of many groups to organise around this issue.

After two weeks of daily raids, and arrests the squatters were 'offered' employment on Orange Free State and Transvaal mines - without their families.

The squatters refused this. Many were in full employment or self employed. Their demands were that they wanted to remain in Cape Town with proper roofs over their heads and that their wives and children remain with them. They insisted that families remain together.

On August 10 the early morning light brought with it another raid by the Administration Board officials. Shelters were razed and the squatters forced into buses and taken to Pollsmoor Prison. Later that day, without being allowed to go home, over 1000 people were forced into buses and driven to the Transkei.

Mothers whose children were left behind in Cape Town refused to remain in the Transkei without their children. "We can't just sit here (in the Transkei). We'd rather be arrested trying to reach our children than not try at all," they said.

But the women were unable to reach their children. All roads from the Transkei and the national roads inside S A were guarded. Buses and ordinary vehicles carrying black

'Squatters in the land of our birth'

passengers were stopped. Police, often with dogs, searched the buses while passengers stood outside in the cold, rain and hail. Some buses were stopped seven times on their journey. Before reaching Cape Town almost all of the mothers were shunted into prison cells or army camps and then deported back to Umtata.

In Cape Town those squatters who had not been arrested were given permission to stay on church ground in Langa. Again the Administration Board raided and arrested people. Tents provided by the International Red Cross were removed, more people were bused to the Transkei and those with rights to be in Cape Town were released and warned not to return to the same camp.

The squatters were now scattered and few in number. They were unable to meet together, unable to decide on any joint action.

Langa, Guguletu and

Nyanga were sealed off over the weekends and during the week. People were searched in the streets and workers returning in buses at the end of the day were stopped and their documents checked.

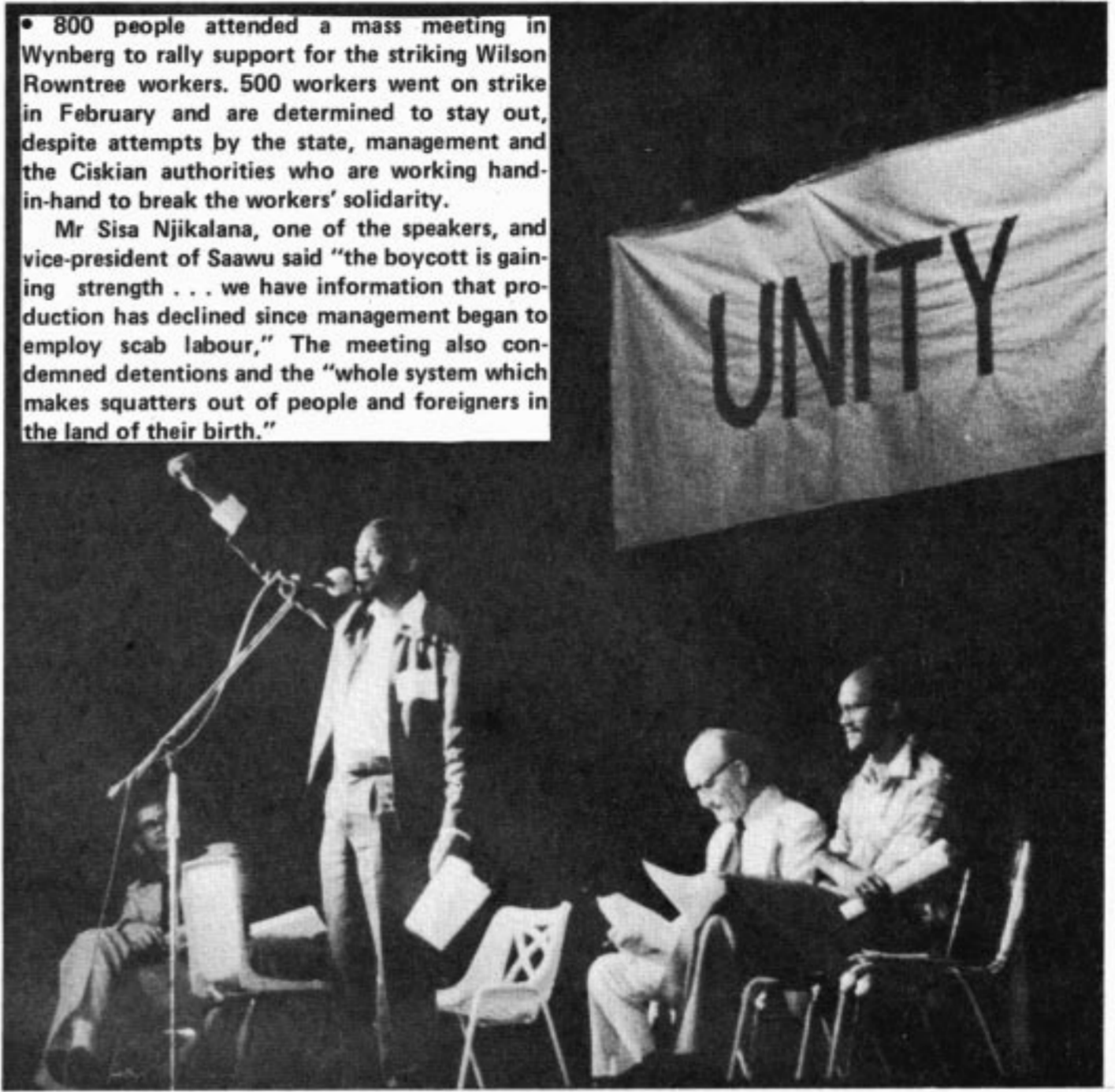
The treatment of the squatters was receiving daily local and international publicity. People from the broader communities, pressmen and Red Cross workers were refused entry into the townships. Supplies of food brought to the site were turned away at the roadblocks.

On the 20 August about 600 people carrying banners marched on Parliament in protest at the treatment of the Nyanga squatters. A memorandum was handed to a police officer at the entrances of Parliament.

At a mass rally at the Luxurama early in September one resolution stated: "We demand that all people should have the right to live with their families freely in the land of their birth, with adequate housing."

• 800 people attended a mass meeting in Wynberg to rally support for the striking Wilson Rowntree workers. 500 workers went on strike in February and are determined to stay out, despite attempts by the state, management and the Ciskian authorities who are working hand-in-hand to break the workers' solidarity.

Mr Sisa Njikalana, one of the speakers, and vice-president of Saawu said "the boycott is gaining strength . . . we have information that production has declined since management began to employ scab labour." The meeting also condemned detentions and the "whole system which makes squatters out of people and foreigners in the land of their birth."



'WE WILL NOT GO BACK'

MIRIAM D came to Cape Town from Cofinvaba in the Transkei in 1975.

"At the time," she said, "my third and oldest child was six years old and my husband and I thought it was time to have another."

"He was living in the single quarters in Langa, but he helped me put up a shack in Unibell."

"A son was born in 1977."

A year later the bulldozers moved in at Unibell and Miriam's home was demolished.

Luckily her husband managed to arrange shelter for the whole family at his place of work - the Divisional Council in Elsie's River.

But in 1979 her husband died.

And Miriam and her children were once more without a roof over their heads.

Her husband's sister came to their aid and took them into her Crossroads shanty, making the tiny shack home to four adults and nine children.

On August 19 this year Miriam was visiting friends at the Nyanga No Name squatters camp when the police

raided and she and hundreds of others were deported back to the Transkei.

Miriam was frantic because her children and all her belongings were left behind in Cape Town.

She caught a bus back to Cape Town.

However, this bus was stopped at a road block at Cradock and Miriam and others were re-

turned to Confinvaba in the back of a police van.

She managed to get a 14 day pass from a magistrate allowing her to return to Cape Town to fetch her children and belongings.

"I don't know what to do," she told Grassroots. "I am a char and have had several job offers."

"I must take a job soon because I am the family's sole support - but I can't work unless I get a permit to remain in Cape Town."

"I just can't go back to Cofinvaba because there is absolutely no work there."

"If we go back we will be going to our graves - we will simply starve to death there."

Communities reject dummy bodies

THROUGHOUT the country, communities are showing their rejection of dummy bodies, like coloured management committees, community councils and the South African Indian Council (SAIC).

In the Cape this rejection was shown by the majority of the people completely ignoring the recent management committee elections. This resulted in low polls in all the areas.

With the SAIC elections coming up in November, organisations throughout the country have called on people to stay away from the voting polls to show this body is not accepted by the community.

The elections are being treated like non-elections by the communi-

ties at a time when people have decided delegations and paid officials can do nothing. Only by standing together will the people achieve what they want.

With the polls being so low, the authorities will try to fool the people by making it seem more people voted.

The percentage people who voted is taken from the actual number of registered voters. Therefore, if only two percent of the people are registered the percentage who voted will seem much bigger than it actually is.

After heavy campaigning in Wynberg only 128 people in the area voted.

In Kensington, the poll was 7,6 percent of all registered voters.

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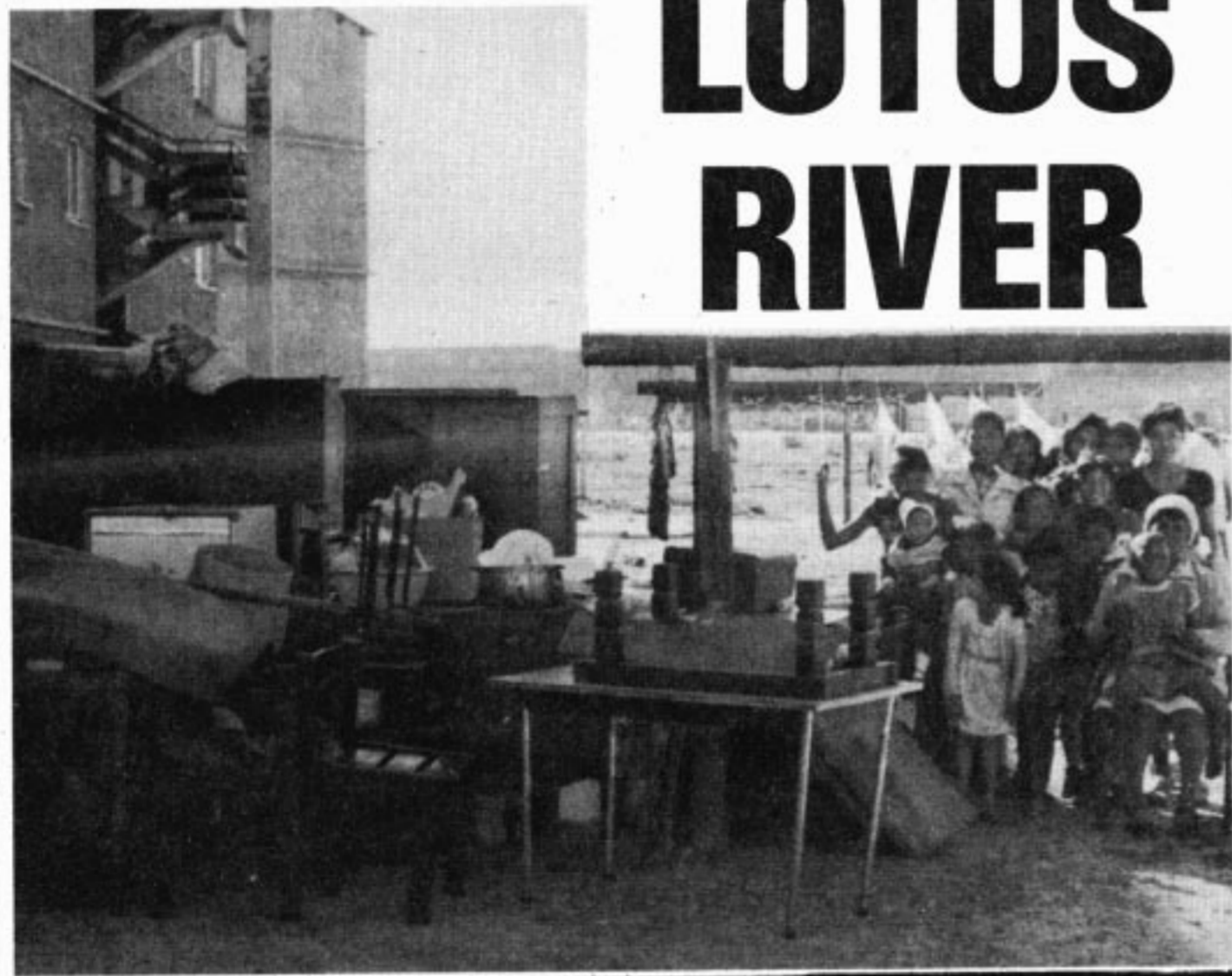
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FIGHT TO STOP EVICTIONS IN LOTUS RIVER

"We will no longer accept to squat in the bush... We have a right to proper housing for all people in South Africa."



"A SERIOUS disease, called evictions, is spreading rapidly throughout South Africa, affecting all Black communities".

This is the view of tenants in Lotus River who are uniting to fight the 'disease' under the banner of their organisation, the Grassy-Park - Lotus River Residents Association.

The government has recently promised to house all people in ten years. If this is so, why are families in Mitchells Plain, Macassar, Crossroads and other Black areas being evicted.

A tenant threatened with eviction said, "it seems that the Divisional and City Council understand housing to mean that people who are now squatting should live in houses for a few years, while those living in houses should take their turn to squat.

"If this is so, then we fully understand why they are evicting people".

Grassy Park - Lotus River is one of the areas

being hit with evictions. According to the rents committee of the residents association, families are being evicted at the rate of 1 or more per week. The association is determined not to take this lying down. "People are being evicted for petty reasons, such as, being too noisy or because of the inefficiency of the council.

"A tenant was threatened with eviction because she was supposed to have an 'illegal' tenant.

"But this 'illegal' tenant's name was later found to be on the council's list", a member of the association said.

The rents committee investigates the cases of families being evicted and takes up the problem with the Council.

Recently, a group of 60 mothers were determined not to let the council evict Mrs Lottering and her five children.

When the council came, they saw the crowd of women and

turned back.

In this way, they were prevented from evicting the family.

Grassroots was also told of the case of Mrs Solomons who found all her possessions on the street when she got home.

When this was taken up with the council, it was found that she was not served with a seven day notice.

This mother was waiting for a grant.

Association members together with Mrs Solomons, went to Coloured Affairs, got her grant fixed up and wasted no time in getting her back into her house.

While the Divisional Council continues to feel that the eviction disease should spread, the tenants have found a cure.

They realise that Unity is the answer to the problem and will fight to halt all future evictions.

"We will no longer accept to squat in the bush", said one tenant. "We have a right to proper housing for all people in South Africa."

Reinstatement - A victory for Food & Canning workers

NEGOTIATIONS which began at midnight and lasted until four in the morning ended in victory for the workers and their union at the Sea Harvest factory in Saldanha.

Trouble started on Monday August 31 when 10 of the workers were given notice, including two members of the local committee of the union, the Food and Canning Workers' Union.

Some of those sacked were on leave at the time and the dismissal

notices were delivered to their homes.

The workers were aware that there was less work at the factory, but at the same time new workers were being taken on.

The committee then met with management who were uncompromising saying that in fact more workers were likely to be sacked because there was no work for them.

And the fact that the dismissed union committee secretary had eight years' service

didn't count for anything.

The committee found this strange because in the past management had always said it valued length of service.

Because of this the committee felt the management's action was aimed at the union - and to replace old members of the staff with new workers for less wages.

They told management that they would call a general meeting of the factory's workers.

It was decided to hold the meeting in Vredenburg - the workers at the factory are drawn from Vredenburg and Hopefield as well as Saldanha.

The factory supplies buses to transport the workers home.

When the day shift finished on Wednesday, September 2, the workers refused to get into the buses in their capacity as Sea Harvest employees.

The same buses were then hired by the union and the workers clim-

bed in and were taken to the venue for the meeting.

The meeting was attended by about 600, including many night shift workers. Union officials from Cape Town head office were also present.

It was decided to demand that the sacked workers be taken back (re-instated).

If this didn't happen all the workers would go on strike.

At the end of the meeting the committee chairman received a

phone call from the factory manager who complained that only 48 of the 300 night shift workers had arrived for work on time.

A meeting between management and the Union officials and committee members was arranged for mid-night.

After a long meeting management agreed to re-instate all the workers except one. It agreed to take this

worker back as soon as a vacancy occurred.

Management also undertook that no workers would be dismissed in future before an attempt was made to find alternative work in other departments.

New workers would be dismissed before those with long service. No workers would be given notice while on leave and reasons would be given for all dismissals.

The meeting ended at four in the morning.

Organising around the electricity problem in Bishop Lavis



THE fight for lights in Bishop Lavis was started early this year when the residents committees of Riverton and Greenlands took up the issue.

The campaign did not gain much ground and did not involve all the residents in the area. But, it was the early

efforts of the residents' committees that set the pace for the struggle today.

Bishop Lavis Action Committee (Blac), a youth organisation committed to community involvement, took up the fight together with the residents' committees.

They were determined to make the people of Lavistown aware of the problem and to involve them in a more active way.

In this story, they talk about the campaign and how they set about organising in the community.

To make the community aware, we set about holding house-meetings. This was very hard work. We worked in shifts to cover the entire area. The scholars took the afternoon shift, while the workers and parents of the youth did the night shift. From the house-meetings we found that 98% of the residents were strongly in favour of having electricity. We learned a lot and obtained many facts to back our case.

It was at the house-meetings that our street representatives were elected. Once we had street reps., they set about organising house-meetings, handing out pamphlets and keeping

people informed. In this way, they were able to bring in many new people who became actively involved.

We also held meetings of streets reps only, to discuss what action to take — such as, whether we should call a meeting, have a march or what the next step will be.

At the house-meetings, the different plans are discussed and then only a decision is made. In this way, the people could be involved in making decisions. It also helped to keep our ears to the ground and know what the people wanted.

When we decided to march on the Housing League offices in Cape

Town, we had to collect money to pay for the buses. Here again, the street reps together with the people in their streets collected a total of R500 in a few days.

As the campaign was growing and gaining strength, there was a need for a co-ordinating body of residents. We formed an interim civic body consisting mainly of street reps who will spearhead the campaign and move the civic organisation forward in Lavistown.

We see this as a great victory for the people of our community. For too long we have been disunited and unorganised.

But the time has come for united action.



DIARY OF FIGHT FOR LIGHTS

'A home without electricity is a living hell.'

23rd Aug. A mass meeting attended by 350 people is held to rally support. Petitions are signed by over 1 500 residents.

The meeting decides to:

- march to the local housing office to demand an answer of when electricity will come
- to hand over the petitions and a memorandum

26th Aug. 250 residents march to the housing office with placards stating "we must study in the dark", "CHL, we are fed with your empty promises" "Flood lights, but no electricity" and "A home without electricity is a living hell".

Mr Van Vuuren, the Vice-chairman of CHL said the matter is not in his hands and that they are waiting for a loan from the Department of Community Development.

But, the people demand an answer and gave the League one week in which to reply.

27 - 30 August Support is mounting in the community. Schools, Churches and Mosques issue statements of support. Letters are written calling on the League to install electricity.

3rd Sept. A mass meeting is held attended by over 1 000 residents. CHL officials are invited to address the people. They refuse to come. The people are determined. "If they don't come to us, we will go to them."

5th Sept. Hundreds of residents telephone the League jamming their switch board, demanding to know "when electricity will come".

6th Sept. Churches and mosques dedicate their mid-weekly services to the struggle for electricity.

7th Sept. Five busloads of residents march to the offices of the League in Cape Town. Police prevent them from entering the building and they seek shelter in St. Georges Cathedral.

CHL still refuses to address the people but is willing to meet a delegation of 20 residents. The people elect a delegation.

The outcome — CHL will let the people know by the end of September of their talks with the Dept. of Community Development. But that is not all, they agree in future to negotiate with the people and their elected representatives rather than the management committee.

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comment

The fight for lights

THE people of Bishop Lavis have stood up and stated their demands loud and clear. For too long they have suffered alone in the dark. They are demanding that electricity be installed in their homes and that Citizens Housing League (CHL) give them a definite date as to when electricity will come.

Over the past few weeks they have convinced the people of Bishop Lavis and of the Western Cape of the reasonableness of their demand. The lack of electricity is not only an inconvenience, but it has left the community with serious health problems and financial hardships. A community survey done by the people themselves proved that electricity will be cheaper than the use of fuel.

If Citizens Housing League claims to understand the frustrations of the people, why do they not accede to their demands? Instead, they are passing the buck to the Department of Community Development, who claims that it does not have the money. The people pay taxes to the government from their hard earned wages, how can the Department of Community Development now claim not to have funds?

But this is not all. Citizens Housing League has tried to force the Matroosfontein Management Committee upon the people by refusing in the past, to negotiate with the people and their democratically elected representatives. After the recent demonstration and negotiations with CHL, they agreed to negotiate with the people directly. The people have won this round through their organisational strength and the boldness of their approach. Not even the presence of the police at their demonstrations could stop them.

They have rallied the support of the entire community and have made great gains. Already, an interim civic association has been formed in an area which has remained unorganised for a very long time.

The struggle of the people of Bishop Lavis for electricity is not separate to the struggle of the Nyanga Bush people or of the people of Bonteheuvel — it is the struggle of an oppressed people for what is rightfully theirs. So, we say to CHL, the eyes of the entire community are upon you. Electricity is the right of a people not a privilege.

We demand to speak for ourselves

COMMUNITIES throughout the country have once again shown their rejection of dummy bodies.

The management committee elections in the Cape were ignored by most people, while in other parts of the country the opposition to the SAIC elections is mounting.

The people do not want paid officials to speak for them. They want to speak for themselves.

We applaud this move towards proper people's organisations.



LETTERS

IS THIS ANOTHER RENT INCREASE?

THE Divisional Council Letting Scheme area in Mitchells Plain namely Woodlands has again been served with an in-

come survey form, which ultimately means an increase in rent for the majority of tenants. The only informa-

tion required by the Divisional Council is the gross income.

made for the deductions on the salary, transport, hire purchase, food, the recent un-

announced increase in electricity, and the amount of children in the family.

It has become obvious to the tenants that whatever increase in ones salary it is surely to go to the Divisional Council.

A portion of the rent goes to the Community facility fund, yet there are no such facilities in the area. Another portion goes to maintenance, yet during the rainy season, the general problem is water seeping through the front door.

The civic association in the area recently issued residents with a notice to a meeting to discuss that the City Council has taken over the area — If so why the pending increase from the Divisional Council?

Does the Divisional Council want to laugh all the way to the bank (at the expense of the people) before handing over to City Council or is the rent increase one of the conditions by City Council to the Divisional Council before the takeover?

All this ball throwing again at the expense of the people!

No consideration is

Why confinement

I sit alone here
In this four cornered room
And everywhere I look
I see a wall
A wall that forms a barrier
A barrier all around me
A barrier to confine me
To a space confined to me.

There is no way out of this space
No way beyond the barriers
No door
No window
No way to freedom
No way to liberty
No way because a barrier prevents me.

And as I sit
I wonder in confinement
Why confinement confines me
Why me.

Why confinement.
Why barriers.

Why in this country barriers.
Confinement.
Prevention of freedom.
Of speech.
Of movement.
Of love.

Why me.
My parents.
My family.
My friends.
And the majority of my countrymen.
Why us.
Oh! Oppression! Answer me
Tell me
Why.
I must know

By: Marc Matebe

Workers thank community

ON behalf of the National Union for Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers of South Africa (NUMARWOSA) representing the workers of Leyland, I wish to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all those wonderful and

concerned people who so generously supported the workers during the strike.

The support in all forms was a source of great encouragement to the workers.

It clearly demonstra-

ted to one and all that the struggle was not first a Leyland one — but that it was part of the much broader struggle which involves all the oppressed and exploited people of our country.

We are sure, and we go forward in the belief,

that the people in the Western Cape will continue in the future to assist workers in similar situations.

Once again thank you.

J. Foster
(Branch Secretary)
NUMARWOSA

"Watchful Eye"
Woodlands
Mitchells Plain

COMMUNITY SUPPORT STRENGTHENS LEYLAND WORKERS STRUGGLE

THE Leyland workers have waged their struggle for a living wage with great determination. Major gains were made and many lessons learned through united action of the workers and the community.

All but 50 out of the 550 workers who remained out on strike for the entire period have now been reinstated. For twelve weeks the workers and the community stood firm until management was forced to back down and open

negotiations with the workers through their trade union. An agreement was reached with management to phase in the workers over a period. The workers were phased in over a period of seven weeks. The phasing in was closely monitored by the union.

Since the workers started returning to work at the end of July, they have signed up over 700 new union mem-

bers. The workers realise now that there is a great task ahead of them. "We must rebuild the strength of our union on the factory floor so that we can be strong when we force the bosses around the table for the next round of negotiations."

Grassroots talked to the executive members of the union, Numarwosa, about the strike, its gains and problems.

GRASSROOTS: How did community support help the workers in their struggle?

UNION: The Leyland workers strike has proved once again that community support can only strengthen the position of workers. Without this support, both morally and financially, we would have found ourselves in a much weaker position.

Close to R20 000 was raised by community, worker and social service organisations which helped to keep the workers out for the entire period.

GRASSROOTS: Could you tell us how support was organised.

UNION: Supportive action was in the hands of the workers at all times, but coordinated by the union.

-Support committees were formed in the areas where the workers live. The committees were most active in the areas where there were large numbers of workers.

These committees met regularly to assess their strength, build morale and distributed funds and food.

GRASSROOTS: How did the workers go about organising the anti-scab campaign? (That is preventing workers from taking the jobs of the strikers).

UNION: This campaign was a task of the committees and a unique aspect of the strike. In other strikes, the community could be asked to boycott a product, but we had to ask them not to take the jobs of the striking workers.

Public meetings were held, over 100 000 leaflets were distributed, housemeetings were held and door-to-door house visits to rally support. The message which was taken to the community was clear: to scab, is to take the bread out of the workers' mouths.

GRASSROOTS: Many scabs were employed. Why did this campaign not succeed?

UNION: One of the main reasons is the high unemployment rate in the Western Cape. The result was that the unemployed workers who had walked the streets for months looking for jobs found employment at Leyland. Of course we have to explain to workers that the causes of unemployment lie with our economic system



and the bosses chase for profits.

Another reason why the strikers were not all able to hold out, was that the funds that they received were too little to sustain them over this period. The result was that many drifted back to work. Management, by holding out for so long in spite of huge losses, wanted to starve workers back to work.

GRASSROOTS: What were the greatest gains that were made during the strike?

UNION: The workers gained organisational experience. They raised the awareness of the community about the workers struggle and the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa.

They also realised that the problems that they have at work and in the places where they live, are one.

But more important, the workers know now that the struggle for strong trade unions in which they have a say and which represents their interests, not that of management, must continue to be fought.

In spite of these gains, there were many problems that we had to deal with.

GRASSROOTS: What were these problems?

UNION: Throughout the strike, workers had to assess and rethink their position. One of the major problems was keeping the workers and the community informed of the situation. The workers were scattered in different areas. Because of this, they could only have weekly meetings. The committees in the areas had the task of keeping members informed. In some areas this was better coordinated than in others.

Management used this to sow disunity and confusion among the workers.

GRASSROOTS: How was this done?

UNION: Management used every tactic on the book to break the strike and the union through mass pamphleteering and claims that production was back to normal. They sent telegrams to workers and cars to collect them. The radio and the commercial newspapers were used to spread their message.

But the workers know that the radio and the commercial newspapers are not there to serve their interests. Many press statements which were handed to the newspapers were not printed.

GRASSROOTS: What means did the workers use to exert pressure on management?

UNION: Every means at our disposal. We also set out to publicly embarrass manage-



ment. After all, Leyland bosses are paying their workers the lowest wages in the motor industry in the country.

Pressure had to be put on management so that production could be affected. Secondly, support had to be generated in the community and from other sympathetic trade unions. But, support did not only come from the oppressed community in this country, but also from workers all over the world. The British workers in particular, threatened not to handle parts being sent to South Africa.

GRASSROOTS: Why did the union decide to take management to court for illegally dismissing the workers?

UNION: In spite of exerting pressure in many different ways, management still refused to open negotiations. Legal action against Leyland South Africa was seen as one of the means to achieve our goal.

It was said repeatedly at meetings that



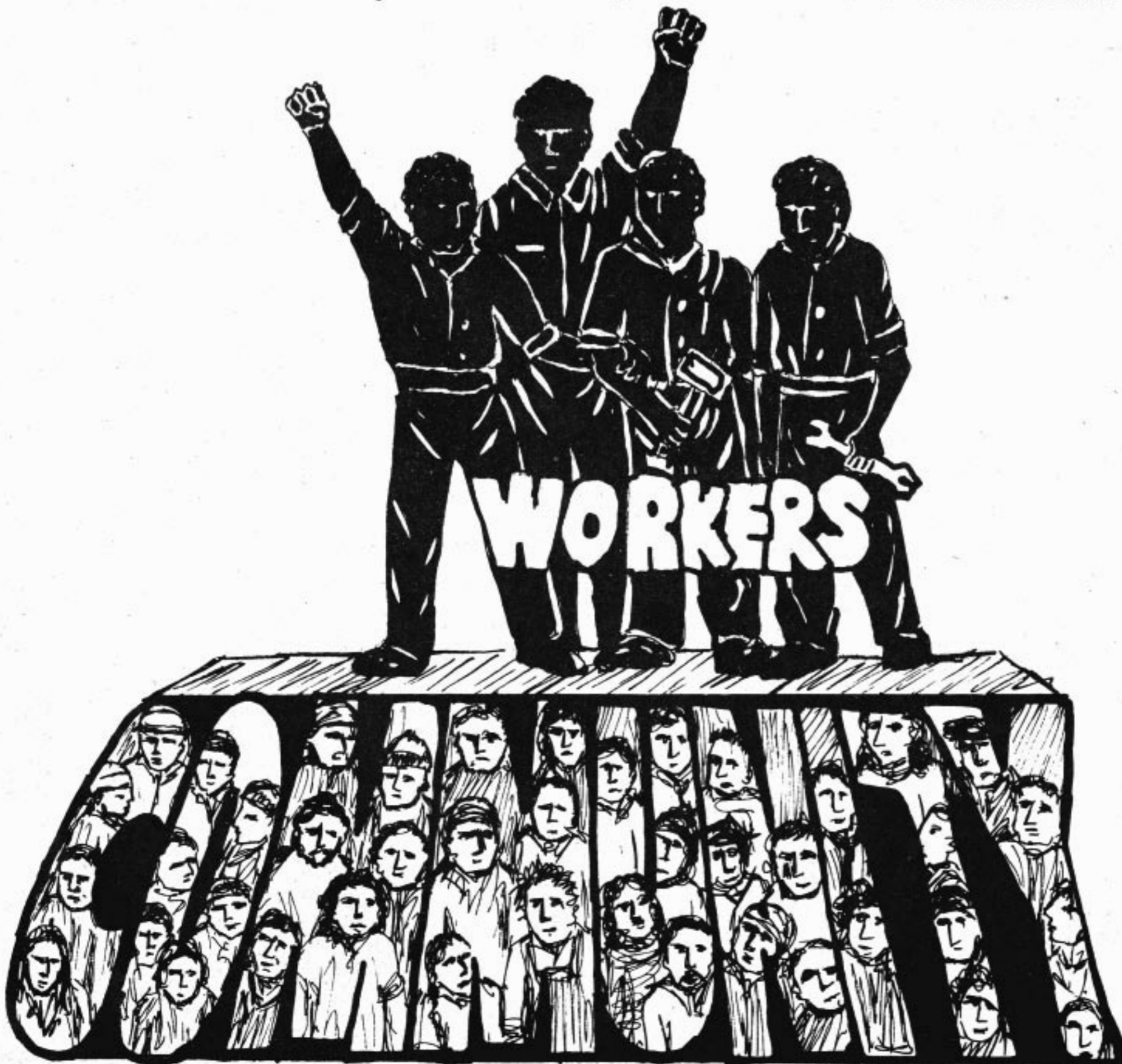
"our struggle is at Leyland and not in the courts". To date, there has been no judgement on the urgent application which was made to the Supreme Court.

GRASSROOTS: Why do you think that management backed down and began to negotiate after twelve weeks?

UNION: In the end it was only because of the organised strength of the workers, and the support that they were able to rally which forced management to yield under the pressure of a united people. Without this, reinstatement would not have taken place.

GRASSROOTS: But the workers did not get a wage increase?

UNION: That may be so, and for some this was hard to accept. But the workers were forced to lower their demands and push for reinstatement. They won the first round. It is a great step forward in the struggle of the oppressed and exploited masses in this country.



CULTURE • ADVICE • HEALTH

TRENGTHEN ORGANISATION SUPPORT

regulations that makes living almost a nightmare.

But an advice service can do this, and much more. It can keep the organisation informed of common problems and the need for community action. It can also be a useful way of promoting the work of the association, and in this way, build and strengthen it.

The Duinefontein Tenants Association has street representatives who are trained in giving advice on housing, rents, grants, pensions and health. In Ravensmead, the students are preparing to start an advice bureau.

Health

That old woman in District Six who once had a remedy for every common illness has long since passed away. But

still bad health is an issue which requires attention for it affects everyone.

Overcrowded dayhospitals are common in many areas while others have none at all. In Elsie's River hundreds of children use bucket toilets which not only cause sores but also diarrhoea and worms.

Bad and overcrowded housing means that infectious diseases like TB, flu and measles could spread from one person to another. People cannot be healthy when living and working conditions are bad.

When a large number of people are suffering from a particular illness or are being cared for inadequately, a local organisation cannot ignore this. These are things they can do something about.

ADVICE BUREAU HELPED TO BUILD UNION

Grassroots interviewed a person involved in running an advice office started in 1973, which led to the establishment of the General Workers' Union.

Grassroots: "Why was it decided to start an advice bureau?"

• An organisation was needed to advise workers on their rights. In 1973, a group of trade unionists got together and started an advice office to do this and with the long term aim of establishing a trade union.

Grassroots: How did you get started and how were you able to finance this project?

• Our rent was at first paid by donations. The International Council

of Free Trade Unions also assisted us financially. Later we were able to levy our members with a fee of 25 cents.

Grassroots: Were you able to reach the workers effectively?

• Before the bureau was started, people were already coming to us for advice because of our trade union experience. There was therefore no problem in getting people to come to our office.

The service was also advertised in a regular paper "Abasebenzi" distributed amongst workers. Another effective way of advertisement was by word of mouth.

Grassroots: What kind of assistance were you

able to give?

• We were able to train workers to organise, negotiate and deal with the problems they encountered in the factories. We advised them on matters such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund, overtime, workmen's compensation and their right to voice complaints. Later, this led to committees being formed and later to the establishment of the union.

Grassroots: Describe some of the problems you encountered?

• One of our biggest problems was that the law did not protect the workers' rights. We were educating workers on their rights which the laws did not cover.

Grassroots: Looking back, what would you say was the effect of the bureau?

• It was extremely effective in organising the workers and a complete success. The General Workers' Union as it is today is proof of this. Without the advice bureau, there would be no Union today.



Advice helps educate workers on their rights.

Ravensmead offers advice

In Ravensmead, a group of people are preparing themselves to run an advice bureau for residents in the area.

The group, belonging to the Ravensmead Students Organisation, are working towards building a strong organisation in the area and have realised that

the people are faced with many problems. At the moment they are collecting information to be used when their bureau opens in three months time.

When the people come streaming into the office they want to be ready to help them.

"We do not want people to come here

and find that we do not have the ability to help them," one of the organisers of the project told Grassroots.

"We are therefore taking some time to train ourselves to run the office.

"Members of the General Worker's Union have agreed to show us how to conduct inter-

views and how to run the office.

"We believe that an advice office will be of service to the community and hope that many people will make use of it," he said.

The office will be run on Saturday mornings and legal advice will be given on Wednesday evenings.

Organise for a healthier future

AS long as the people of Elsie's River are still forced to use the bucket system, for as long as the walls of the Cape Flats houses are damp, for as long as wages remain low with prices rising constantly, the community will never enjoy good health.

It is only when we organise ourselves to fight these problems that there can be a healthier future for all.

The struggles of communities for better living conditions and of workers for higher wages and better working conditions, are also struggles for better health.

We are just begin-

ning to see how community and worker organisations are taking up the fight for better health care and building strong organisations.

The F & CWU runs a clinic in Paarl which is administered by a management committee elected by the workers.

The Union has a medical Benefit Fund to which workers contribute from their wages.

The clinic is not only an important service to the workers, but it will help the union to organise workers around health problems on the factory floor.

Johanna Julies, a member of the union

said: "We have great hopes for the clinic... we believe it will make the union strong."

The Bishop Lavis residents in their fight for electricity are using very important facts to back their case.

They have told the Housing League about the health problems caused by the lack of electricity and the use of fuel.

A resident said: "The people in Lavistown are always complaining about chest problems and poor eyesight. Now that we are fighting for electricity, we have the answers."

At a mass meeting in Bonteheuvel, residents talked about the chest problems caused by the poor maintenance in the area.

Residents through the Bonteheuvel Civic Association have lodged mass complaints about the council's failure to maintain their houses.

The people are saying that the walls are damp, the houses are cold and draughty.

They know that they cannot enjoy good health when living under bad conditions.

A resident said: "At house meetings, we talk to people about the maintenance problem and how it affects our health."

Grassroots also found that many women come together in small groups to learn about nutrition, budgeting, first aid, breast-feeding and family planning.

Some have had some basic training to assist residents in their community.

In these Groups members can talk about their living conditions and what is wrong with them.

In this way, they can also share experiences and try to find ways to solve the problems through organising in their communities.



Thousands of Cape Flats residents still use bucket toilets.



Workers and Unions unite against

Ciskeian detentions

"WE are sick and tired of this Sebe acting like a dictator. If the Ciskeian authorities carry on detaining and harassing workers, trade unionists, Community workers and all opposition to Bantustan politics then they must know that they will feel the anger of all the people."

That was what one speaker said at a recent meeting in East London protesting against the detention of 205 workers by the Ciskeian authorities. The workers were coming back from a trade union meeting in the city.

They were singing freedom songs in the buses when they were stopped and detained in Mdantsane. Mdantsane is East London's black township which falls under the Ciskeian authorities.

Under the South African governments policy of Apartheid the Ciskei is said to be one

of the homelands of the Xhosa speaking people. So the government says they must go and live in the Ciskei and be citizens of the Ciskei, not South Africa. But the majority of the African people reject the Ciskei as their special homeland. They say they are South Africans.

Ciskei, and therefore Mdantsane, is a part of South Africa they say. Most of them live and work outside of the Ciskei. They do not accept this division of their country. They do not accept Sebe and the Ciskeian authorities as their leaders.

Political life has been made very difficult in Mdantsane over the past few years. Now that the Sebe brothers and the small group of

people who run the Ciskei have decided to accept the South African government's offer of "independence" all progressive opposition to the Ciskeian authorities has been brutally crushed.

The detention of these 205 workers from SAAWU, the African Food and Canning Workers Union and the General Workers Union has focussed attention and protest against Ciskeian "independence".

The workers in East London sent delegations to their bosses demanding that pressure be put on the Ciskei to release these workers.

At a meeting in protest against the detentions, many workers called for a general strike in East London to force

Sebe to release the workers.

"If the South African government wants to give independence which brings no good to us workers then they must also feel the anger of the 'peoples opposition', said one speaker summing up the mood of East London blacks.

"First they take power from the people, then they take 'independence', then they take our South African citizenship away from us, and now they take our comrades off to prisons. It is enough now" said another speaker.

When the Australian stevedores heard about the detentions of these workers by Sebe they decided to refuse to handle any goods com-

ing from or going to South Africa for a week.

More pressure was put on Sebe by the anger of the trade unions in Cape Town. They condemned the detention of workers in East London and demanded their release immediately. An urgent court case was sought by the three unions involved to get these workers released immediately.

In the face of all this opposition, and particularly given the anger of the East London workers, Sebe hurriedly released a few of the workers and charged the rest under the Riotous Assemblies Act.

The workers were released on R50 bail.

But releasing these

workers will not stop the opposition to Ciskeian independence. In Cape Town the General Workers Union, the African Food and Canning Workers Union and the Food and Canning Workers Unions, Federation of South African Trade Unions and the Municipal workers Association have decided to support a campaign against the forthcoming Ciskeian "independence".

Meeting

To launch this campaign they have called a meeting of all workers, particularly those affected by Ciskeian and Transkeian "independence", for Saturday 26th September in St Francis Cultural Centre, Langa. The meeting will

start at 2 p.m.

One of the workers that Grassroots spoke to put his opinions very clearly: "We want there to be no mistakes about this. For us blacks independence means freedom. It is the same thing. There is no freedom in the Ciskei now, so how can there be freedom after Ciskeian independence. It is only 'independence' for Sebe and his friends, not for the workers."

In any case how can the workers in the Ciskei be free when the rest of South Africa is not free? We have already seen what freedom this is in the Transkei. It is freedom for the people who support the Sebe's and Matanzima's to act like pigs in a flower garden. But once you let a pig into a flower garden it is ruined. He eats everything and anything he sees."

Communities unite for better living conditions



CAHAC rallies communities around housing problems.

THE Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC), was formed in September 1980 when several community organisations came together because of the bad housing conditions in the townships.

Not only were houses overcrowded but there were also too few and these were badly built.

Besides the very poor housing situation, there was also a lack of decent roads, parks, creches, community halls and other facilities.

Today with rents increasing and transport and other costs going up, the situation is very much the same.

Residents Associations were formed in the various areas to fight the problems facing

residents.

People in Hanover Park, Mitchell's Plain and Steenberg had the same problems as those in Lavender Hill, Bonteheuvel and all the other townships.

People saw the need for different areas to come together and fight their common problems.

It was then that CAHAC was formed.

At a recent meeting a number of its affiliates accepted a set of guiding principles.

These guiding principles will steer CAHAC as it strives towards better living conditions.

The guiding principles are:

1. We believe that all people have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed and to raise their families in comfort and security.

Recently there was a pass raid at Cross roads.

Hundreds of people, including women with their little babies were arrested and their homes were broken down.

Some of the people were later released and built makeshift structures on a muddy field in Crossroads.

The place was regularly raided and the houses broken down each time.

Later busloads of people were herded to Transkei.

The Group Areas Act has resulted in hundreds of thousands of people being moved to areas far from their

place of work.

Settled communities such as District Six were broken down.

Now these people are scattered in townships where the state of housing is very bad, rents, water and electricity charges are high and the crime rate is getting worse.

Because of the high cost of living and low wages, people find it hard to pay the high rents.

Evictions have therefore become common in the townships.

It is clear that besides not being able to live decently and where they choose, people cannot raise their families in comfort and security.

2. Rents, Rates, Electricity and water charges must be determined by what people can afford.

At a recent meeting in Bonteheuvel, an elderly woman spoke out against the high rents in the area.

She said that she received a disability grant of R63 a month of which R31 went towards rent.

This left her with R32 to buy food, clothing and other necessities.

3. The/True/Legitimate organisations of the people must be consulted. We therefore reject all forms of 'dummy representation' including management committees and community councils.

The very low poll in the recent management

committee elections shows clearly that people are rejecting 'dummy bodies'.

People are building their own organisations where decisions are made by everyone in an area.

They no longer want to be represented by paid men who have been placed there by the government.

4. We can only achieve this if we have a direct say in the affairs that affect our lives and in particular, there must be direct representation for all people in central and all other levels of government.

In order to assist it in bringing areas together in fighting the common problems facing them, CAHAC has drawn up a set of aims and objectives.

These are:

1. To assist with the establishment of community organisations where these are non-existent and to strengthen all community organisations.

2. To act as an inter-community forum.

3. To act as a reference centre for communities.

4. To strive towards unified action on housing and related issues affecting communities.

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In July CAHAC organised a mass meeting in Bonteheuvel to protest against the fact that Council does not repair people's homes.

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ADVICE BUREAU

HERE'S A DRAFT CONSTITUTION

IN the last issue of Grassroots, we discussed what a Constitution of an Organization should provide. In this issue we are reproducing a draft Constitution which can be used as a guide and adapted to the specific needs of an Organization.



CONSTITUTION

1. PREAMBLE

The residents of Athlone saw the need to organise themselves in order to improve their quality of life.

2. NAME

The name of the Organization shall be the ATHLONE CIVIC ASSOCIATION.

3. AIMS & OBJECTS

3.1 To work and strive for improvement of the quality of life of residents of Athlone particularly and other residents generally.

3.2 To work and strive for the civic needs of the residents of Athlone.

3.3 To co-operate; liaise and affiliate with other bodies with similar aims and objects.

4. POLICY

Individuals, institutions or bodies which practice racial discrimination or socio-economic exploitation.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Membership shall be open to all interested in the aims and objects as laid down above.

5.2 Membership shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

6. OFFICIALS

The officials shall be as follows:—

6.1 Chairman

6.2 Vice Chairman

6.3 General Secretary

6.4 Assistant Secretary

6.5 Treasurer

6.6 Assistant Treasurer

7. DUTIES OF OFFICIALS

7.1 Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Association and in his absence the vice-Chairman shall preside.

7.2 General Secretary and Assistant Secretary
The Secretary shall be responsible for the proper and effective administration of the Association and shall be assisted by the Assistant Secretary.

7.3 Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the finances of the Association and shall be assisted by the Assistant Treasurer.

7.4 Trustees

The Trustees shall be responsible for the assets of the Association and shall represent the Association in all legal matters.

8. ADMINISTRATION.

8.1 The business and affairs shall be managed

and conducted by the Executive Committee which may delegate any of its powers, functions and/or duties to one or more sub-committees.

8.2 The Executive Committee shall consist of

2.2.1 All the Officials, who will be elected at the Annual General Meeting

2.2.2 Four (4) Ordinary executive members who will be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

8.3 All officials and executive members shall hold office for a period of one (1) year.

8.4 Should any vacancy arise in the interim the Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt a member to such vacancy until the next General Meeting and such General Meeting shall have the right to elect a member to fill such vacancy until the next Annual General Meeting.

FINANCE

9.1 All monies of the Association shall be banked to the credit of its banking account as soon as reasonably possible.

9.2 The banking account shall be operated jointly by the Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer. In the absence of any one or more of the aforesaid officials one or both the Trustees may act as signatories.

9.3 Two auditors shall be appointed at the Annual Meeting and shall have access to all books, records, funds and assets of the Association for the purpose of preparing an Annual Audit.

9.4 An audited financial statement and balance sheet shall be submitted to the Annual General Meeting.

9.5 An amount of R10,00 (Ten Rand) shall be disbursed to the General Secretary as petty cash as and when required.

9.6 All disbursements shall be authorised at an Executive Meeting.

10. MEETINGS

10.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be held during the month of September of each and every year.

10.2 An Executive Meeting shall be held at least once a month on a date to be decided by the Executive Committee.

10.3 General Meetings shall be held at least every three months on a date to be decided by the Executive Committee.

10.4 The quorum of any meeting shall be one-third (1/3) of the Constituent Membership.

11. REPORTS

The Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer shall submit reports to the Annual General Meeting.

12. AMENDMENTS

Any amendment in or addition to the Constitution shall be made at any General Meeting specially convened for that purpose. Any such amendment in or addition to the Constitution shall be valid if approved by a two-thirds majority of members present at the aforesaid meeting.

13. DISSOLUTION

In the event of the Association not functioning or serving its purpose then a Special General Meeting shall be called to discuss the question of dissolution and if two-thirds of the members present at such meeting agree to such dissolution then the Association shall be dissolved.

In such event the assets of the Association after paying its liabilities shall be given to a body with similar aims and objectives.

In the next issue we will discuss standing orders which set out rules and procedures concerning the conduct of meetings.

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ADVICE BUREAU

MANY children in our country are underweight. Some are so badly underweight that they have to be admitted to hospitals. But many more children suffer from "hidden underweight" - that means that parents do not know that their children are not growing properly. These children's health is in danger.

Mrs Peterson of Marnenberg told Grassroots how she found out that her 4 year-old son is underweight.

Check-ups

"I took Trevor to the doctor because he couldn't get over this bad cough.

"After examining him the doctor told me that Trevor's real problem was that he weighed too little for his age.

"That is why he gets sick so often. I was very upset to hear this.

"In fact I didn't want to believe it. We do struggle to make ends meet but we do our best for Trevor!"

The doctor treated Trevor and sent Mrs Petersen to the local clinic.

"This was the first time I went back to the clinic after Trevor finished his baby injections. The sister read the doctor's letter and asked me to bring Trevor to the clinic for weekly check-ups."

Up to now Trevor was eating like this:
Breakfast - bread and jam. Mug of tea.

Lunch - left over food, cool drink.

Afternoon - Sweets or chips or biscuits.

Supper - cooked food.

His appetite was poor and he had to be forced to finish his plate of cooked food.

Skimmed Milk

The Sister said that Trevor will have to drink at least 2 cups of milk per day.

"Well, as you know milk is a luxury these days. That's why we go without it.

"Sometimes we bought the special creamer for tea and coffee - that is all we can afford. The Sister must have seen the look on

Stand together and fight 'hidden' dangers of underweight



my face because she said I could buy skimmed milk from the clinic at a special price".

"I had my doubts about this milk too - I heard that it gives children runny tummies and what's more, Trevor never wanted to drink milk from a cup."

Mrs Petersen didn't have the courage to tell the sister about her doubts, took the packet of milk and felt very depressed.

"My neighbour was the person who really helped me to cope with this problem. Two of her own children were also underweight and were attending the same clinic.

"It was such a relief to talk to someone with the same problem."

The neighbour had more time than the clinic staff and could explain much better because they could talk freely about the real problems: low wages, high food prices and having to rely on others to look after children while parents are at work.

All this happened two months ago. Mrs Petersen feels much better now because Trevor has gained weight, has a better appetite and is much stronger. She has learnt a lot about underweight and how to cope with it

and would like to share the following hints with GRASSROOTS readers.

Children over a year need at least two cups of milk per day. This can be made from four heaped tablespoons of milk powder. Don't worry if your child doesn't want to drink the milk. Some children prefer to eat the milk-powder with a spoon. Other mothers sprinkle the milkpowder over porridge or other food.

It is unlikely that skimmed milk will cause loose stools if it is taken in its' dry form with other food.

Skimmed milk is cheapest - try to buy it from your local clinic

or buy it bulk from a supermarket. The fat is removed but not the proteins.

Because their stomachs are small young children need to eat smaller meals more frequently. Here is an example of Trevor's new mealplan:

Breakfast - One cup of mealie meal porridge with two heaped tablespoons of skimmed milk powder.

Mid Morning - Brown bread, peanut butter sandwich. An orange.

Lunch - Left-over food and a boiled egg.

Mid-afternoon - Brown bread sandwich and a fruit.

Supper - Cooked food, e.g. Beans and Samp.

Before bed-time - Skimmed milk shake (two heaped tablespoons of milkpowder, one teaspoon red jelly powder, water).

Cut down on "luxuries". Trevor's appetite improved when his mother stopped giving him sweets, biscuits, chips and cool drinks.

"It is not easy to convince the family and friends that luxuries are bad for an underweight child. They used to think I was cruel, but now they are beginning to understand". "Luxury" money is now used for extra fruit and milkpowder.

Check on your child's weight.

The local baby clinic caters for children up to schoolgoing age. Take young children there to be weighed regularly. In this way you will find out whether they are growing normally.

Many parents are not aware that their children are underweight for their age. They may only discover this when their children are ill or when they cannot cope at school.

Our people are learning to stand together in the struggle for higher wages and better living conditions. Our children are our future. Let's stand together and make our neighbours aware of the "hidden" danger of underweight children.

POOR HOUSING - THE CAUSE

A CONCERN of all people is the provision of shelter for protection against the weather.

People also need a house for providing for privacy for the family.

Recent community struggles around the housing - rents, electricity maintenance - have made more people aware of the need for

proper housing to have good health.

But it is very difficult to make direct connections between poor housing and sickness.

The reason for this is that bad housing usually goes with poverty, unemployment, lack of food leading to poor nutrition, and general lack of medical care.

All of these may in-



fluence health.

So, although linking housing and health is difficult, it is not impossible.

Housing may affect health in three ways:

- Increasing infectious disease (that is diseases spread by germs).

If the water people have to drink is not clean, or the toilet is broken, more people in

ADVICE BUREAU

LUNG DISEASE: DANGER FOR TEXTILE WORKERS

It often begins with wheezing, tightness in the chest and a persistent dry cough. It can often lead to crippling shortness of breath and an early death. This is the illness called byssinosis (nicknamed "brown lung" in the United States).

Brown lung is a slow-developing lung illness that affects people working in the dusty areas of cotton or flax textile factories.

Almost nothing is known about the problem of brown lung in South African factories, though many people work in dusty conditions.

In 1976 a Government Commission into industrial health could trace no statistics on the number of workers with brown lung. This report was very similar to a United States health report in 1947 stating that brown lung among cotton workers was hardly known to exist.

Brown lung in the U.S.A.

Today, in the states of North and South Carolina, it is known that more than 18 000 workers have been disabled by brown lung. A further 390 000 workers continue to work in dusty conditions.

The struggles of textile workers in the United States for safer working con-

ditions have attracted much public support.

People suffering from the illness have joined together to form the Brown Lung Association.

For the past 13 years this Association, the workers' trade union and sympathetic scientists have put great pressure on the U.S. government and the textile manufacturers to clean up the textile mills.

This year they finally succeeded in getting a tough new law accepted. This will force the manufacturers to spend more than R600 million in controlling the dust in their factories.

New Law

The new law was the result of a long, hard struggle - using the courts, the media, boycotts, strikes and scientific research.

Brown lung in the R.S.A.

In South Africa there are more than 70 000 textile workers.

In the Western Cape more than 15 000 people work in textile factories. Some of them are working with man-made fabrics such as nylon but many still work with cotton, and wool.

But not one single case of brown lung has ever

been reported in Cape Town. In fact only one person in the whole country has ever received compensation payments for



brown lung.

Ellis's story

In 1972 a worker named Mr Ellis won a court case appealing against a decision not to give him compensation for his damaged lungs.

He had worked for nine years in the carding room of a textile factory in Port Elizabeth and was almost totally disabled.

Because Ellis won his case brown lung was added to the list of illnesses caused by work for which people can be paid compensation.

Mr Ellis's compensation amounted to almost R24 000. But since then not one other person has been recognised as having brown lung and compensated for it.

Brown lung is not recognised.

One reason why brown lung is not recognised is that very few people, including doctors, know very much about the illness.

Another reason is that brown lung is difficult to tell apart from other chest illnesses such as asthma or bronchitis.

It takes five to ten years before cotton dust damages the lungs badly and this also makes the illness difficult to recognise.

People who work in textile mills know about the dust - it flies around the factory and gets in their hair or over their clothes. In the dustiest places - such as the blow-room or the carding room there is also a lot of finer dust.

Harmful dust.

This fine dust is the most harmful dust. Fine dust causes the feeling of tightness in the chest that is the first sign of brown lung.

Cotton dust also makes a person's throat very dry. Because of this workers often ask their bosses for milk to help them with the dust. It takes much, much more than a glass of milk to make workers safe from cotton dust and brown lung.

Write to Grassroots

The Advice Bureau welcomes letters from its readers. Write to us if you work in the dust. If you are interested or concerned about the problem of brown lung or any other health problem at work we can send you further information. Write to: Grassroots Advice Bureau, P.O. Box 181, Athlone 7760.



OF ILL HEALTH & SUFFERING

the house can get diarrhoea.

Further, the crowding of many people, especially small children, into a house encourages germs to spread.

This is made even worse if ventilation is poor.

These problems are troublesome enough when the house is well-built and in good repair.

But they become worse when the buildings are dilapidated and broken down.

• The house may not provide comfort.

This includes warmth clean air to breathe, no dampness, enough light and not too much noise.

In Cape Town most houses do not provide these comforts, and so people's health is af-

fectured.

For example, if the house is cold and draughty, people may have to close up their vents to make it warmer.

So they do not have clean air to breathe and their chests may be affected by germs coughed by others in the house.

• Injuries and accidents may be caused by bad

housing.

Broken steps and unpaved yards are dangerous not only for children but also for old people.

Many authorities do not check electrical fittings and so people may get shocks.

Another problem which is common on the Cape Flats is that people light galleys to

keep the cold out of their houses. This often results in burns and even deaths from gas-sing.

So there are many ways that housing can cause illness.

In the next few issues of GRASSROOTS we will look at some of these aspects and relate them to what is happening in Cape Town.

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Valhalla demands electricity

TENANTS - LET THERE BE LIGHTS

The people of "Dark City" in Valhalla Park are standing together and demanding electricity in the area. Petitions are being circulated and already many have signed.

Residents are paying the Council R2 per month for the past four years to have electricity installed.

Nothing has happened, and the people are demanding to know what the Council is doing with their money.

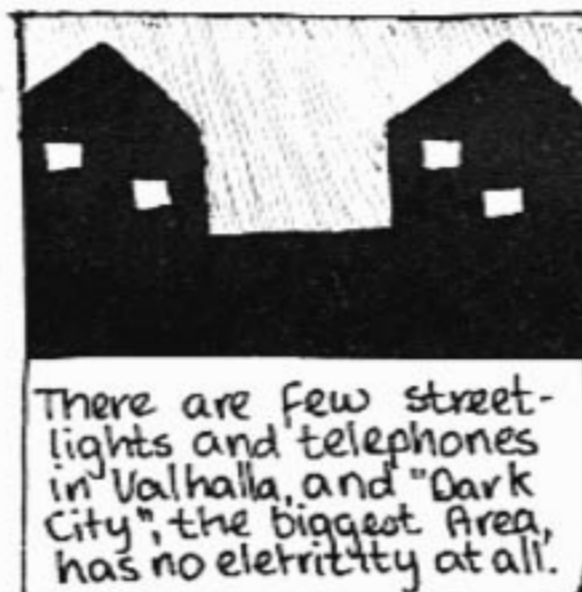
A member of the Valhalla Park Electricity Petition Committee (VEPC) said, "with the rising prices and low wages paid to us, we cannot afford to spend R20 - R30 per month on paraffin, gas and candles".

The people are angry and they are saying that fuel is not only expensive, but dangerous.

Already, four houses have burned down leaving the families homeless.

In 1980, the Valhalla Park Residents Committee was formed to try to solve some of the problems in the area.

The residents committee was changed to the Valhalla Park Peti-



There are few street-lights and telephones in Valhalla, and "Dark City", the biggest Area, has no electricity at all.



As individuals, we are powerless...

tion Committee to organise around this problem.

The committee has also collected clothes

and other necessities to assist the families who lost their things in the fire.

A member of the

Tupperware and Sementdam residents - fed up Living in the dark for 20 years.

We are demanding

That the housing league

Install electricity in the areas immediately.

And without any cost to the residents.

We have had enough of the promises,

We are not prepared to sit for another 20 years

Without electricity

Residents spoke about the health problems Caused by paraffin.

And the difficulty of the children

Studying in the dark.

I said people should stand together In all areas.

We won't get anywhere...

We were sleeping when they came

With their promises.

And I think some people

Are still sleeping today.

We, the people of today, must

Think of our sons and daughters of tomorrow.

Think about the prices of candles and gas

Increasing today.

Look at the people of other places

Standing together.

So why can't we

Do the same.

I think we in Bellville

need a strong ORGANISATION.

RUTI



And people pay between R20 and R30 per month for gas and paraffin.



But if we UNITE, we will make our demands heard!!

committee said: "In Bishop Lavis people have been trying for twenty years to get electricity. If the peo-

ple of Valhalla Park don't stand together then they will also be without electricity for twenty years."

Spring school organised for Mitchells Plain Youth

MITCHELL'S Plain Youth Movement (MPYM) have organised a Spring School for the September holidays. The school is for students in Standards eight, nine and ten.

The idea arose out of a need coming from the student half of the youth for assistance in preparing for the final exam.

The Spring School will be from September 18 to October 2 at the Westridge Civic Centre from 12 noon until 5.30 each day.

Problem areas in the following subjects will be covered: Maths, Biology and Physics, with additional History for Std. eight, and the setwork for the matrics.

These seem to be the subjects with which most students have difficulty.

Another problem which students, especially the matrics at this time of the year, are faced with is "what do I do when I leave school?"

To assist students in making their choice, and to give them information about specific careers, bursaries and so on, a careers guidance workshop will be held at the Portland Senior Secondary School on September 29, starting at 11 am.

It is hoped that stu-

dents will begin to realise their potential, how they can use it and how their community can be made to benefit from it.

But that is only the student youth.

As one of the aims of the MPYM is to co-ordinate activity between working and student youth, this week of activity will not stop at the academic programme.

Every evening (except Tuesday) open social evening will be held at the Westridge Civic Centre from seven until nine o'clock.

Social and cultural

activities will be organised. Every one who is interested is welcome to attend.

Activity will not stop after the Spring School, but will continue along in the same vein.

The MPYM consists of three branches in the various suburbs.

Their meeting times are: Lentegour library activity hall on Mondays (6 - 8 pm); Rocklands library on Mondays (6 - 8 pm); and at Westridge library on Wednesdays (6 - 8 pm).

The MPYM assisted the Electricity Petition Committee (EPC) in

their recent successful campaign to change the electricity due date.

They also regard the selling of Grassroots in the area as an important community activity.

The MPYM tries to discourage, especially among its members, the tendency to live isolated and self-centred lives, which is so easy in a place like Mitchells Plain. The area is so large, and people coming from different townships to live there often don't get around to knowing each other.

Manenberg shows the way forward

MANENBERG residents are showing the way forward in working towards greater unity in the area.

At a meeting in July attended by members of the Manenberg Tenants Association (MTA) and the Manenberg Educational Movement (MEM), a decision was taken to work together on a new constitution which would unite the two groups.

Differences existed between the two and at times, it threatened the unity.

A member of the group said: "this was easier said than done, but somehow we managed to seal the cracks and keep together."

A lot of talking was done in an effort to come to an agreement on problems in the new

constitution.

But when action was needed on the recent busfare increases, "we had to stop talking and start working", said a resident.

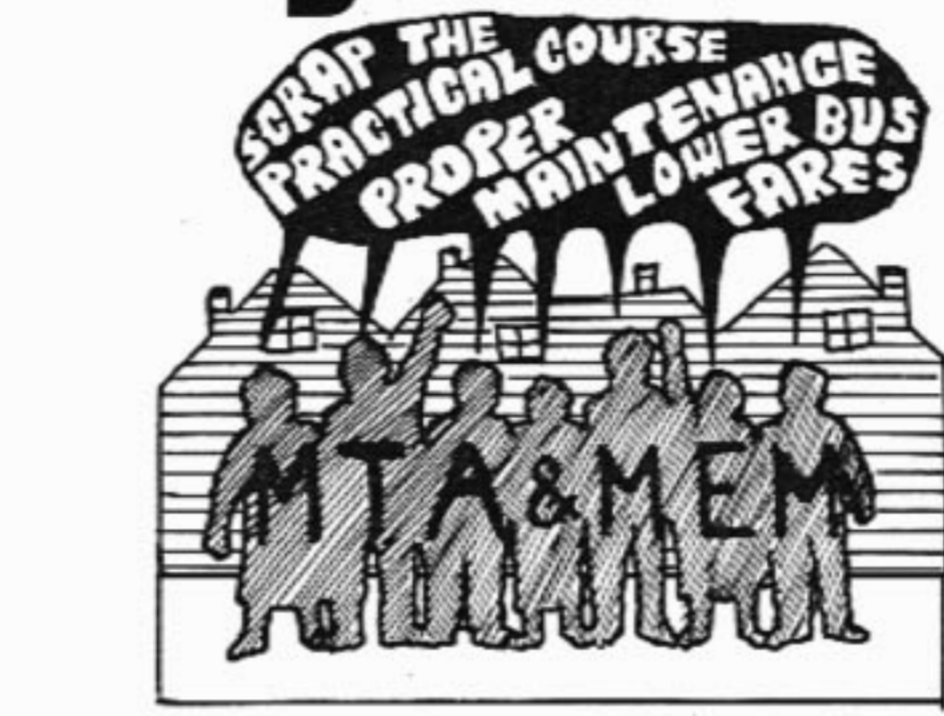
Petitions had to be signed and objections lodged. This was their first joint venture and members feel that it helped to cement their working together.

Problems

The people of Manenberg experienced many problems over the years in starting an organisation in the area.

There were many differences between the people as to how they were going to take up the problems.

In 1979, the Duinefontein Tenants Association was formed.



Later it became the Manenberg Tenants Association.

This organisation did a lot of work in a small section of Manenberg, while the rest of the area was uninvolved.

The schools boycott and community action last year generated a lot of new ideas.

There was also the growing awareness of the need for a strong

organisation which would be the voice of the people of Manenberg.

Earlier this year, the Manenberg Educational Movement was formed to take up the problem

of practical classes in the schools. The people were opposed to this system because they saw it as a means of training young people for inferior jobs.

Differences

The people won this battle when the Administration of Coloured Affairs decided to scrap the practical classes.

"The position was this", a resident explained, "we had two separate organisations in the area duplicating work. It was also seen as a way of working against each other."

"Divided we would only end up in scratching the surface in our community. We had no option but to sort out our differences and work together".

Members of the two organisations now agree that the needs of the community must be their greatest priority.

Residents are now determined to work towards the formation of the Manenberg Civic Association.

The Council's failure to maintain the people's houses, is one of the most pressing problems in the area.

Groups of members are holding house meetings and talking to residents about the maintenance problem and what is to be done.

"The task facing us now is to build support, talk to residents about the need for an organisation and to begin to work actively on the problems affecting the people. We must be united and organised."

Manenberg Education Movement has a tuition program for high school students to help them prepare for the forthcoming examinations.

Place: Roman Catholic Church, Manenberg Avenue.

Time: Every Saturday morning from 9 am to 12 noon.

HOSPITAL WORKERS ARE

ORGANISING

THE unskilled workers at many of the Peninsula hospitals have been struggling for many months for the recognition of democratic committees to represent them.

Ablut 18 months ago a number of workers from different hospitals approached the General Workers' Union.

Complained

The workers complained bitterly about the conditions under which they are forced to work in the hospitals.

Workers are faced with very low pay, long hours and great job insecurity.

Many workers, after years of service are still employed on a 24-hour notice basis.

Leave and time off are considered to be a privilege, not a right.

According to a union official, workers are not even covered by the minimum conditions laid down by the factories act.

There are also no channels through which workers can take their grievances.

They are usually left to the mercies of the matron and foreman who often sack a worker after years of service with very little reason.

The union told the workers that their problems cannot be solved individually.

Also that the strength of the union to win any demands depends on the strength of the workers in every factory or institution

where it is organising.

A union official said: "the union is not just an office to which grievances are brought and letters of complaint written."

It is an ORGANIZATION of workers. It is only the organised strength of workers that can win demands.

The workers were advised to elect a representative committee which would take their demands to the superintendent, and act as their mouthpiece. But, organisation at the hospitals has been long and difficult.

Many problems were experienced. A union official said, "there are problems with the attitude of workers. They

feel scared because they work for a government body. In the hospitals, workers seldom come face to face with the people who take the real decisions about their lives. The result has been that workers are afraid to take up issues themselves. They expect the office to put things right for them."

A lot of time was spent explaining to workers that nothing could be put right without their own strength being used. After a long time, the workers began to understand what was being said and joined the union.

But, the hospital management was determined to discourage

organisation of the workers.

They tried to divide the workers along racial lines. But, the workers did not allow this to destroy their unity.

"In the hospitals, African and 'Coloured' workers have organised TOGETHER to fight for their rights."

When the workers were strong, the union approached the hospitals with the demand for the recognition of the workers' committees.

The hospital management used delaying tactics.

They took a long time to reply to the union's letters and when they did, they gave no definite answer.

Petitions

"At first this made some of the workers very despondent", a union official said, "but now they know that they have to prove to the authorities that it is the workers themselves that are standing behind the demand for committees".

At a number of hospitals, the workers have signed petitions calling on the superintendent to grant their request.

They now hope with the determination and patience they have shown in the face of many difficulties, that they will make a breakthrough in some of the hospitals and open the way for further organisation.



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THE MODERN FOOD STORES

School sports tournament called off

A SPORTS tournament in Cape Town townships sponsored by Mobil Oil Company (SA) was called off after teachers and students refused to take part because of the involvement of Government bodies.

The tournament was organised by the Administration Board and Guguletu Community Council.

The Western Cape Students' Regional Committee (WCSRC) and the Western Province African Schools Sports Associations (WEPRASSA) — a body controlling sports in the high schools — said in a statement, it had instructed students not to participate because the policy of the Board and Community Councils are not in agreement.

These bodies are there to suppress the aspirations of the community.

The statement said Mobil Oil had refused to sponsor club members of the Guguletu Football Association which is affiliated to the South African Council of Sport (SACOS), a non-racial body which totally rejects the government's policy of multiracialism.

The chief Superintendent of the Admi-

nistration Board, Mr E C Dockel said he was 'disgusted' that a group of politically motivated people wanted to achieve their aims at the expense of innocent children.

"These young children have been deprived of once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of playing in a sponsored sports tournament.

The Board is always accused of doing nothing, but when we try, we are caught up in a political web", Mr Dockel said.

Commenting on the Sacos stand, Mr Dockel accused them of what he called 'selective discrimination'.

"Why do they use clinics and schools? Because they are government bodies. Why don't they use SACOS schools and clinics?" he continued.

A spokesman for the students said: "If Mr Dockel regards voicing of legitimate grievances as a political move, then we are politically motivated."

A spokesman for Mobil said, "the cancellation of the tournament was disappointing and that the company had used 'legitimate channels' to promote sports in the townships."

THE PEOPLE AND HEALTH WORKERS

WHILE the people of Mitchell's Plain wait for their long-promised day hospital, the doctors watch proudly as work proceeds on the R160 million extension to Groote Schuur hospital.

Disease

While about 150 000 people suffer from tuberculosis in S.A. — a disease that's been wiped out in countries less rich than South Africa — the professionals have just decided to reduce funds

available for T.B. treatment.

While many sick Transkeian children are refused treatment at hospitals in Cape Town, medical professionals proudly perform operations on children from Rumania, Britain and other countries.

While the health of thousands of workers is ruined by dust, noise, long hours and dangerous machinery, the professionals turn a blind eye and the government seldom forces the

bosses to make the workplace safer.

These were some of the contradictions that were exposed at a conference on ill-health in S.A. held in Cape Town last month. The conference, attended by students, nurses, community workers, doctors and other health workers, was called "The People and the Professionals".

The professionals are the "Medical experts" or "specialists" who make important deci-

sions that affect the health of millions of people without consulting the people.

While doctors explain that germs are what make people sick, they don't explain why some people get sick more often and more seriously than others.

They don't explain, for example, why it is rare for a rich child to die of measles while many undernourished children still die of it.

They also cannot explain why life-expectancy of Whites is 65 years and only 51 years for "Coloureds".

This situation is similar to one that occurred in Britain some time ago. It was proved there that the most important reason for this decrease was improved

housing, working conditions, sanitation and water supplies. The improvement in health had very little to do with the discovery of better drugs.

It came about through mass struggles of the workers.

This being the case, it is no wonder that the masses in South Africa suffer so much ill-health.

Speakers at the conference urged health workers and community leaders to examine the true causes of ill-health in our communities rather than to blame people for their sicknesses. While medicines are important for curing some sickness, they cannot ever be enough to make our communities really healthy.



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Civic body for townships

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unity, be given the task of electing a steering committee. The purpose of this committee is to draw up a draft constitution and that the steering committee plan a general meeting of residents of all the

areas to discuss the draft constitution.

"Hopefully, democratic elections can be organised after the constitution has been adopted", a member of the committee explained.

The people's hopes and expectations are

high in the townships. A resident described the spirit of the meeting when she said, "there is great excitement about the meeting. Our hopes are high. We have not seen anything like it in years."

As the people walked home in the cold

winter night, their spirits were high as they continued to sing songs of unity which could be heard throughout the townships.

Lights campaign

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to give the residents an answer by the end of September of the outcome of their talks with the Dept. of Community Development for a loan to install electricity. CHL claims not to have the money and is negotiating with the Dept. of Community Development for a loan.

And so the people of Bishop Lavis are eagerly awaiting the reply of CHL to their demand.

In the meantime, residents are stepping up their campaign, and as one mother said: "we cannot give up now, I can feel victory is in the air. The fight must continue."

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