

## Time to renew subscriptions

Readers who took out subscriptions in April last year should remember that these subscriptions have now lapsed. Subscription forms and details of the new rates are on page 16 of this issue.

## Unions to defy law

SATURDAY, August 8 was a major day in the history of the workers' struggle in South Africa.

For the first time since the 1950's delegates from nearly all the non-racial independent trade unions met in a summit conference in Langa to discuss the government's labour policy.

Representing over 150 000 workers the delegations of 130 workers and officials from 29 trade unions argued well into the night for a united stand against the bosses and the state.

The basic theme of the conference was support for democratic struggle in the workers movement.

Delegates argued that it was the right of workers to organise democratically in their trade unions and factory committees.

All attempts by the state or the bosses to break or weaken democratic organisation of workers should be resisted.

Delegates passed resolutions against the present registration system, the industrial coun-

cil system, state attempts to control and interfere in the internal affairs of trade unions, banning and detention of trade unionists as well as the harassment of union officials and workers by the Ciskeian authorities.

The unions agreed to defy certain laws which blocked the workers struggle.

They said they would defy attempts by the state to stop unions giving financial assistance to striking workers.

Representatives also agreed to refuse to allow officials from the Department of Manpower entry to union offices if those officials were going to interfere in the unions internal affairs.

The conference was such a success that delegates agreed to meet again by November this year. The feeling of all the delegates was clearly that unity in the workers' struggle was very important.

Only with unity could the workers' interests be defended against the bosses and the state.

# 20 000 object to fares increases

THE people who packed the smart offices in the Nedbank Building, Fore-shore, came with a common message from their communities: "We can't even afford the present busfares - how can you still expect us to pay another increase?"

More than 150 representatives from 32 community organisations, churches and trade unions, had gathered to listen to the hearing by the National Transportation Commission to City Tramways' application for higher busfares.

Mitchells Plain Bus Service Limited and Associated Bus Service Limited also applied for an increase of between 12 and 28 per cent.

### Petitions

And to show they were not speaking for a few, the people handed in a petition signed by more than 20 000 people in the different communities.

"This is a grave matter. The people want to be heard," the people said.

And when they were heard, the people spoke with loud voices and drew applause from the others about their hardships in the townships, where they had been forced to move because of the Group Areas Act.

"Once we were all living near our places of work, but because of the law we today have to travel many miles by bus to get to work. We have to get up early and come home late at night," one said.

Mrs Anna Arendse, a pensioner speaking for the Clarkes Estate Tenants Association, said she would be forced to walk if the busfares went up.



• They came with a common message

"I won't even be able to go to hospital," she said.

A representative from the Hanover Park Civic Association said old people sometimes had to stand from Hanover Park to Cape Town in City Tramways' "cattle trucks" which brought in more money for the bus company.

A member of the Lotus River/Grassy Park Ratepayers and Tenants Association said they did not even have bus shelters in

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## Women meet and pay tribute

ON Sunday, August 9 1981, the 25th Anniversary of National Women's Day, thousands of women all over South Africa rededicated themselves to the struggle for a democratic South Africa.

In the Western Cape, close to 2 000 people - mostly women - attended a commemoration organised by the United Women's Organisation together with other

organisations including DWA, CUPC and Rape Crisis.

The crowd thronged the cinema in Elsie's River where the commemoration took place after it was forced to move from Crossroads.

Mr Nxobongwana broke the news that he was forced to ask the women to move, at midday on Saturday, 8th August, only a few hours before the meet-

ing would start.

The huge tent in which the meeting was to be held was already being put up when the chairman of Crossroads Committee, under threat from BARB officials, was forced to ask the Planning Committee to find another venue.

But it was clear that neither the change of venue nor the police

intimidation could break the spirit of the women.

Banners bearing the theme of the day "Izwe lethu", A place to live, welcomed women from all over the Western Cape and visitors from further afield.

There were posters in celebration of Women's Day and displays on women against passes, women against

evictions, women and housing, women and the violence committed against us.

The women sang their song, the words "Igama la makosikazi, malibongwe" (Let us praise the name of women) are a tribute to the hundreds of women who rallied to commemorate National Women's Day in Elsie's River.



**Victory for Lotus River Residents**  
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**Your rights when laid off from work**  
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**Mitchells Plain residents demand traffic control**  
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**Bread buttered on both sides**  
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**Crossroads protest against grievances**  
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**Evictions of the Langa people**  
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# Workers fight against Liaison Committee

WORKERS have scored an important victory at a fruit and vegetable freezing factory in Port Elizabeth.

Their battle for management to recognise their union, the African Food and Canning Union, and for better pay and working conditions, started earlier this year.

First contact with workers at Land Harvest Factory were made by Union representatives from East London.

Later Union officials from head office went to speak with workers at the factory.

## SLOWLY

The organising of the workers went slowly at first but later improved. The bosses got to hear about it.

They questioned certain of the workers.

The workers became anxious — they felt the Union should go directly to the bosses.

"We did what they asked and the bosses agreed to see us," explained a Union official.

## SPEAK

"We asked for permission to speak to the workers on the factory premises.

"They refused saying this would give us an unfair advantage over other unions — although we never discovered who these so-called unions were.

"He said we should first provide audited proof of our membership at the factory or that our support should be demonstrated by a vote among the workers.

## GATES

"We said in that case we would speak to the workers outside the factory gates.

"The workers streamed out to speak to us, clearly showing the support the union has. This

was on May 6 this year and from that time on we never looked back."

Soon afterwards, the workers, on their own, elected a committee and shop stewards and asked for a meeting with management — the union officials present.

The bosses replied that they wanted the union to provide proof that it had majority support of the workers.

## VOTE

The union said this could be proved by means of a vote between the AFCWU and the Factory's liaison committee.

The bosses said they were prepared to accept the outcome of such a vote because, irrespective of the vote, there

would still be a need for the liaison committee.

They insisted that the vote should be between the AFCWU and the "other Union" — which was not known by the workers.

By now the workers were on edge — after more than a month of deadlock.

On Friday June 26 the bosses called a meeting with the liaison committee.

## RELUCTANT

The committee was reluctant to meet with them as most of its members were also members of the union.

They eventually decided they could not refuse as they had been elected by the workers.

When the committee left for the meeting the workers all stopped working.

When this happened the bosses immediately started negotiating directly with the workers.

They told the workers the general manager was not in, but they should resume work and he would address them on Monday.

When the general manager spoke to the workers on the Monday he wanted to know what their main grievances were.

They said they wanted:

- the liaison committee scrapped
- recognition of their union

When he asked for a vote on this everyone

put up their hands.

He said he accepted this as proof that the union had majority support.

The workers were still not satisfied. They insisted that the manager phone the head office there and then in the presence of their committee to arrange a meeting.

He did this and only then did the workers start working again.

On Wednesday (July 1) union officials were in Port Elizabeth to meet with management together with the committee.

But the meeting was again to be delayed.

The manager said he could only meet the following day.

The workers saw this as a delaying tactic.

At a meeting with the manager in their lunch hour the workers demanded that the union officials be

allowed into the factory grounds to speak with them.

The union officials were sent for. In this way the union officials gained for the first time the right to speak to the workers on the factory premises.

At the meeting with management next day it was agreed that the union officials would have this right and the right to negotiate with management.

July 21 was set as the date for negotiations to start.

Four days later an agreement had been hammered out granting the workers a minimum pay increase to R31,50 from R16,50. The old attendance bonus of R3,50 was incorporated in the new scale.

Grievances such as hours of work and midnight dismissals were eliminated.

# Lotus River campaign brings results

THE Lotus River-Grassy Park Residents Association received a reply on July 16 from the Divisional Council after a petition demanding bus shelters in the area was delivered to the Council office on that day.

## Petition

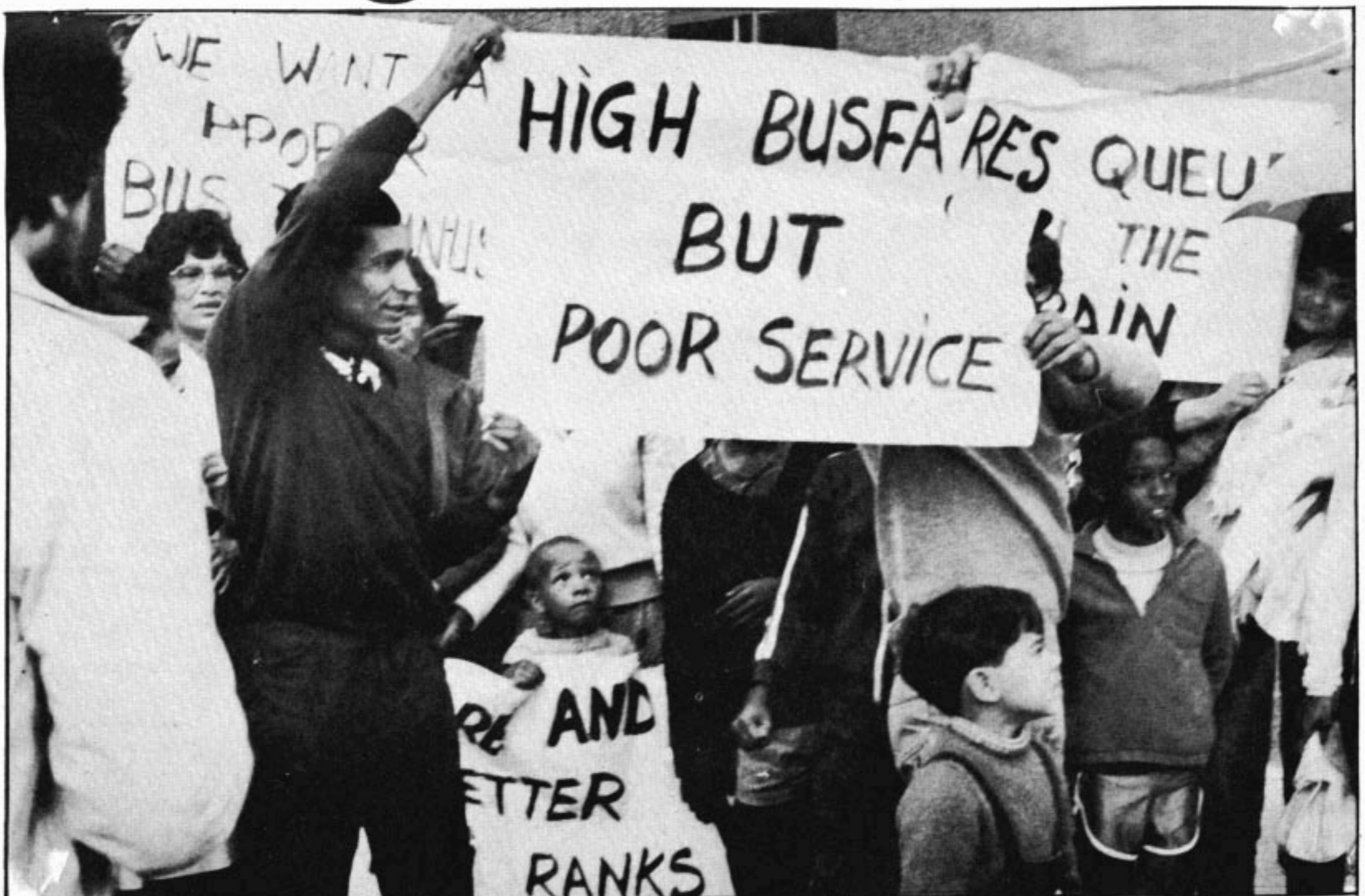
A member of the Association said that this was indeed a surprise as Council usually took up to two weeks to acknowledge receipt of a letter and even months to reply. This was in fact why it was decided not to post the petition and accompanying letter but to deliver it by hand.

## Hired

70 residents of Grassy Park and Lotus River went with a hired bus to the Divisional Council offices in Wale Street, Cape Town. There they were met by a Security Officer who was asked to call the Secretary.

Sometime later an Assistant Secretary of Council appeared. He was given the petition and letter by one of the residents and she demanded that the matter be given Council's urgent attention.

The Official became agitated when the delegates started talking at the same time, expres-



sing the great inconvenience caused by the lack of shelters at Buck Road and other bus-

stops in the area. The Official said the he could not guarantee a favourable or early

reply from Council.

He also said he did not understand why it was necessary to send 70 people instead of

one to deliver the petition. One of the

residents retorted that the matter affected all the people rather than one.

It seems however that the residents trip to Cape Town was successful, as the Asso-

ciation received an immediate reply in writing.

The reply stated that the matter would be handled by the Works Committee of the Divisional Council, who will

work out a structure and cost of the Terminus and that Council recognised the urgency and importance of the matter.

Since then residents

in the area have noticed the Divisional Council workmen busy erecting and repairing bus shelters in the area.

# NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

## Women call for organisation and unity

ON August 9, women in the Western Cape gathered in Elsie's River for a full day's programme of speeches, drama, poetry and singing.

The women raised high the spirit of the meeting as the crowd of 2 000 focused on the theme, a Place to live, Izwe Lethu.

The meeting paid tribute to the 20 000 women and their leaders who marched to Pretoria in 1956. "From their determi-

nation and courage, we learn how to organise ourselves in the present", one speaker said.

A mother with her baby cradled in her arms, was one of the hundreds of mothers who have been evicted from Langa and who now face eviction from Crossroads.

"Women who live in houses - even if they are zinc and cardboard houses - do not shut out the suffering of those who have nothing

but tattered pieces of plastic for shelter", she said.

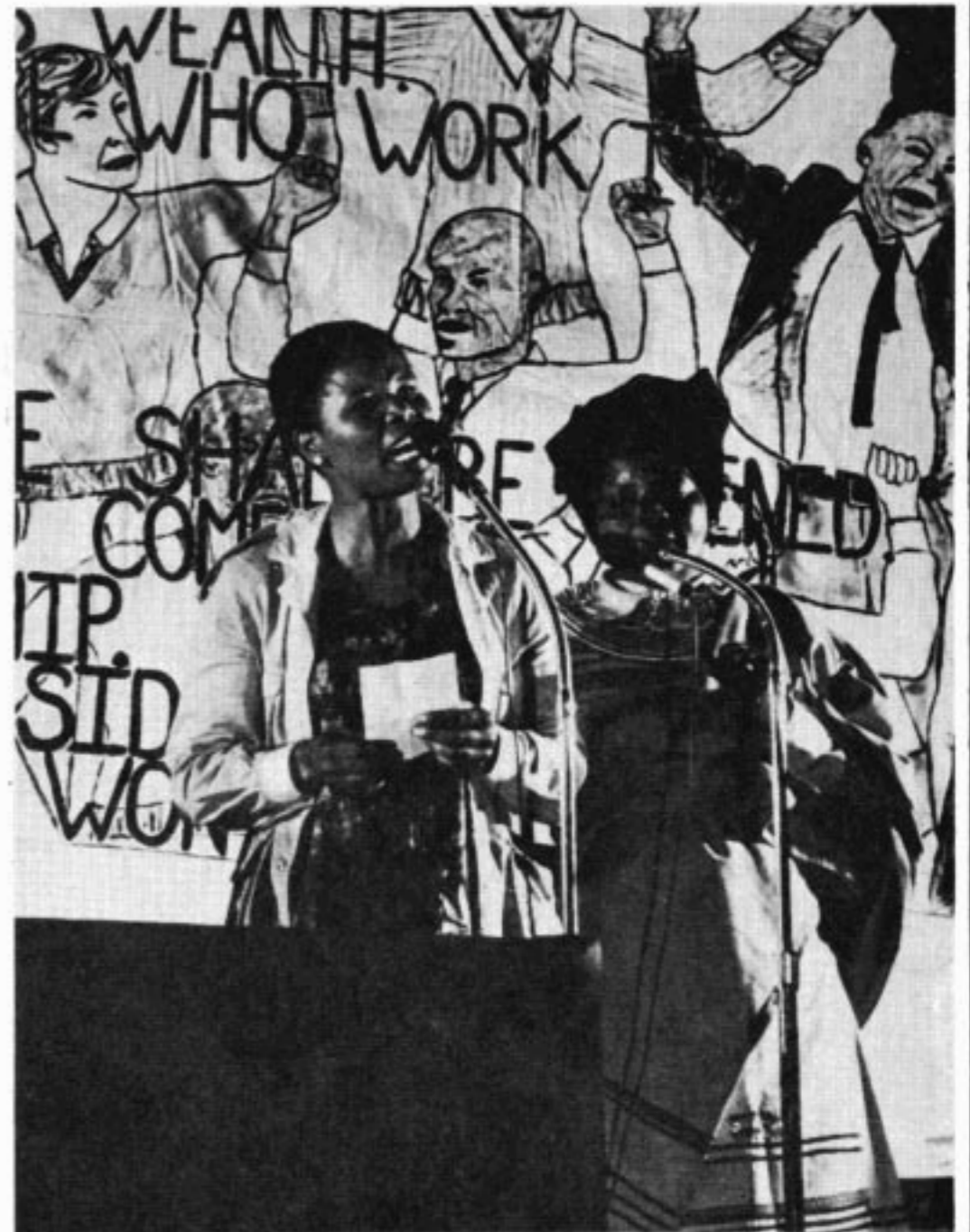
But out of this suffering and hardship, came the message of one mother, whose son is still in detention.

"When they took my son from me, they took the bread out of my stomach. There was no breadwinner in the house. I feared we would starve. But people whom I have never seen before, came forward and helped me. The United Women's

Organisation has been with me since my hardship began. When we unite, we are strong," she said.

### Leyland Workers

Messages and speakers from SAAWU, the Leyland workers and the workers of Wilson Rowntree saluted the women and the UWO which has supported the struggles of the workers for higher wages and better work-



ing conditions.

In turn, the SAAWU speaker urged the community to support the women.

"Do not undermine the women - they are leaders.

In the factories, women always get lower wages, simply because they are women.

We should remember that we are all human beings, regardless of colour, race or sex. We need to come together to fight common problems. To the women we say, the workers are with us today."

"A woman's place is in the struggle for a democratic South Africa", one speaker said. Many women are kept out of this struggle for different reasons: Women are kept out because they work long hours in the factory. Women are kept out by the practice that women's place is in the home. Women are kept

out by the lack of facilities for their children. Women in the homelands are kept there by laws that prevent them from going to meet others in the cities.

But, the speaker said, women have managed to overcome these problems. In 1956, many thousands of women came out to protest against passes. Our task today is to draw in all women through our women's organisations.

### UNITY

The guest speaker, on behalf of the Federation of South African Women, appealed to women from different organisations, women from the rural areas, women from the bantustans or so-called homelands, the domestic workers and the masses in general to be united.

"We must unite and work on a common programme of action.

Let's work on tangible issues that affect black women and women in general.

"We must not let our differences deter us from fulfilling our obligations towards the struggle for a democratic South Africa.

### ORGANISE

"Let's organise women who are working as farm labourers

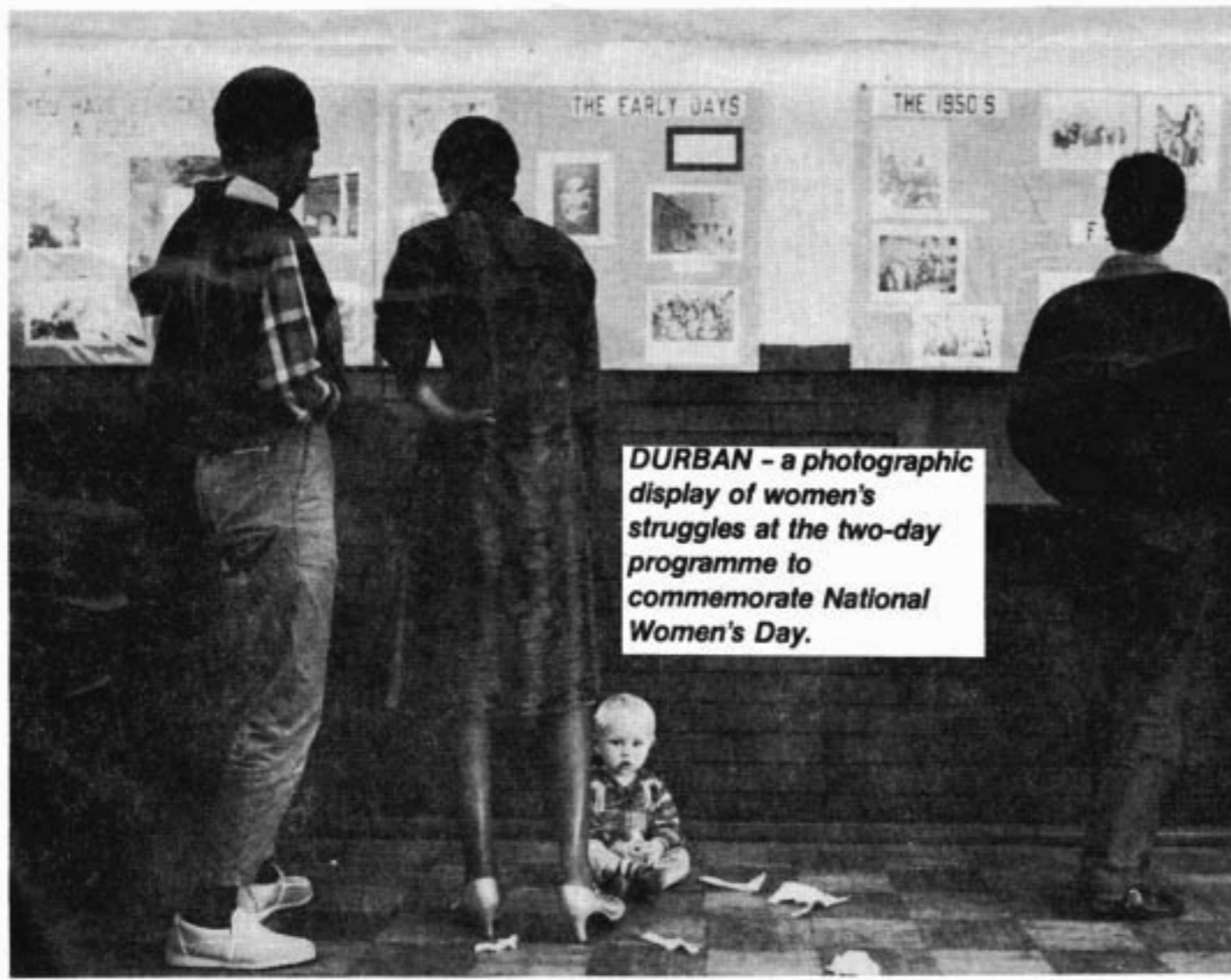
Let's organise women to be aware of their working conditions and their unhealthy situation in the working set-up.

Let's mobilize working women to see and know their rights

Let's organise women to join the trade unions.

Let's organise women to help our men who are migrant workers.

Let's organise women to fight the mass removals of people from places like Crossroads and Kliptown".



**DURBAN - a photographic display of women's struggles at the two-day programme to commemorate National Women's Day.**

## Council workers in pay dispute

THE demand of some 10 000 workers employed by the Cape Town City Council for higher wages has still not been met.

Reporting on the fact that conciliation proceedings had failed, one worker said that he has had enough.

He pointed out to GRASSROOTS that the law says that municipal workers may not

go on strike. "They say that we are an essential service and therefore we cannot strike.

"But what do they expect workers to do when they don't pay workers a living wage?"

Another council worker told GRASSROOTS that the position of labourers was becoming critical. "Most of the members of our union, the Cape Town

Municipal Workers' Association (CTMWA) are the lowest paid workers.

"How are we going to pay the higher rents, bread and bus fares?"

"Must our children starve?"

GRASSROOTS has been reliably informed that the parties, that is the CTMWA and the City Council met at a

Conciliation Board meeting but that no agreement could be reached.

This meeting took place on Tuesday 28 July 1981 and ended in complete deadlock. This means that if the union wants to take the matter further according to law, then it must apply for the matter to be resolved by the Industrial Court.

Questioned by GRASSROOTS, Mr J Ernstzen, Secretary of the Association, said that there was no other way out and there was no other legal procedure by which workers could take up their case. Mr Ernstzen refused to comment on press reports that the White workers of the City Council who do not belong to the CTMWA

but have their own organisation for Whites only, namely the South African Association of Municipal Employees (SAAME) had threatened to work according to rule.

This means that there was a threat by some White workers at least that they will not work overtime.

However, Council

workers generally say that if they cannot get a fair deal, then they will have to think what other steps they can take to get a fair deal.

In the meanwhile thousands of council workers and their families are anxiously waiting for the outcome of the arbitration proceedings for which the Association has already asked.



# Thomsville residents organise for better housing

Residents show their dissatisfaction with the houses in Thomsville.

The tiny two rooms that became the homes of people who once lived comfortably in Kliptown and other areas declared white, were far from adequate for the families forced to live there.

In some cases, close to 16 people were living in a two-roomed unit. Overcrowding led to increased crime, drug taking and drinking.

The authorities did nothing to improve the area. They told residents that Thomsville, which became known as "Two-Rooms", was only a transit camp and that

they would be rehoused soon.

But the years passed by and nothing changed.

By 1968, the medical officer of health declared Thomsville an area unfit for human life - a slum.

Individual residents continued to put their case to the authorities without success.

In 1976, residents sent a delegation to the Minister of Community Development, Marais Steyn. The result of this was that certain outspoken members of the delegation were given homes. Others re-

IN THE late fifties, hundreds of Johannesburg families affected by the Group Areas Act were resettled 32 kilometres deep in the veld, into disused army barracks at Lenasia.

Then in 1963, these 'camp people' were moved into a place called Thomsville where the houses consisted of only two tiny rooms, no bathrooms, no electricity and no ceilings. Taps and toilets had to be shared by four families.

The people were angry. For eighteen years they had to live in very bad conditions. A few months ago, they forced the authorities to rehouse them.

This is the story of their struggle for decent houses.

mained in the slum.

Then, in 1978, the Minister visited Thomsville and the houses were renovated. Residents were not satisfied with the renovat-

ions, because the walls were merely sand-bagged and painted and fences were erected.

They were beginning to give up all hope that anything was ever going

to change - that they were ever going to be rehoused.

Then in 1980, some of them realised they would have to unite and form a residents association. They felt for far too long the people had relied on others to help them.

This group decided to have nothing to do with the Lenasia Management Committee.

They called small meetings in every street to give everyone an opportunity to voice his or her opinion. At every meeting, two representatives were elected, and the Thomsville Residents Association (TRA) was born.

For the first time, people could elect their own representatives from amongst themselves in a democratic way.

By the beginning of this year, TRA was ready to go on a campaign for decent hou-

ses.

Members approached other civic, religious and student organisations for their support. A survey was conducted to find out just how overcrowded the area was.

House meetings, house visits and mass meetings were held.

In January this year 200 placard-waving residents marched on the offices of the Department of Community Development.

They demanded to see Mr D H Rousseau, the Regional Representative of the department to present him with a memorandum.

## Officials

Although the residents did not see Mr Rousseau, the memorandum was accepted by officials of the department. The demands were:

- the immediate rehousing of the people of Thomsville.
- this rehousing should take priority over the resettlement of people affected by the Group Areas Act.
- The TRA be recognised as representative of the people.
- The Department of Community Development responded within three days.

The Department's reply was that the actions of TRA were hasty and not well-founded since Thomsville will soon be redeveloped. The TRA should work through recognised channels," the letter read.

## Letter

But on the same day that the letter was sent off, officials of the Department of Community Development, the Johannesburg City Council and the Lenasia Management Committee decided at a meeting to make 100 homes available to Thomsville residents with immediate effect.

This was a victory for the TRA.

By June about 95 per cent of the original Thomsville residents had been given homes in Extension 10 and 11 in Lenasia.

## No Schools

There are no schools, roads, proper drainage, shops or transport facilities in these areas.

In every new extension residents associations have been formed.

And so the struggle goes on.

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# Parents blame council for accidents

THE funeral of Shermiel De Water, the five-year-old girl who attended the Woodlands Day Centre has brought to the surface the anger of the people of Mitchells Plain against the high rate of children's deaths in the area.

Eisleben Road is known by residents as "Kill-me-Quick" and has claimed the lives of seven children. This year, 19 people have died on the Mitchells Plain roads with a marked increase in the number of children affected.

Fifty children from the Woodlands Day Centre staged a placard demonstration at the funeral of their friend, Shermiel De Water. Some of the posters read: "Involve us in road planning", "Poor road planning", "Pede-

trian Crossings are necessary", "Drivers and children are Victims".

The chairperson of the Day Centre said: "The City Council must be held responsible because they have constructed race tracks without proper warning signs or other safety precautions.

"We demand proper traffic control and supervision".

A parent commenting on the forced removals of people under the Group Areas Act said: "We were forced to Mitchells Plain. Must we also be forced to accept the high accident rate?"

Residents are blaming the Council and bad town planning for the high accident rate. Other causes of the problem are:

- Very little or no traffic control
- Too few stop signs, pedestrian crossings and traffic lights
- The few play parks that exist are often near busy areas and places where children have to cross roads
- Shops, libraries, schools and civic centres are situated where people are forced to cross many busy roads.

Parents from the day Centre spoke to many people about what can be done to improve the situation. They have suggested the following:

- Regular patrol by traffic police
- Setting up traffic stops, pedestrian crossings near schools, shops, libraries and civic centres.
- The slowing down of

Eisleben Road before it claims more lives.

- The appointment of pensioners who are paid by the Council to assist at pedestrian crossings near schools to ensure that the children cross safely at the end of the school day.

- Starting non-working parents' committees with the aim of helping children to cross the roads after school.

- Committees that would see to it that the Council and the traffic department get busy making Mitchells Plain a safer place for its residents.

The National Road Safety Council of South Africa, publishes charts and booklets on road safety for schools

and Day Centres.

But residents feel that this is not a solution as there are very few or no pedestrian crossings, stop signs and traffic lights in the townships.

The situation in other townships is not different to what is happening in Mitchells Plain.

## Higher

Compared to White areas, the townships have a much higher accident rate.

"We are only through half of this year, and already more people have died during this year than during the whole of last year. With more people constantly moving in, the death rate is going to increase unless the community does something to stop it", a spokesperson said.



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# comment

## Grassroots welcomes united stand

THE history of the labour movement in South Africa has been a struggle against attempts by the state and the bosses to control and divide the workers struggle.

In the 1950's they racially divided the trade unions and banned many of the officials.

After 1973, nonracial and independent trade unions with mainly Black workers as members re-emerged and grew in strength.

Finally, in 1979 the government was forced to recognise the right of Black workers to belong to trade unions.

Once again, the bosses and the government tried to divide and control Black workers and their unions by requiring them to register and come under the control of the Department of Manpower. The unions were bitterly divided in their approach to registration.

The recent conference of nearly all the independent trade unions is therefore of great historic importance. For the first time in 20 years, workers and officials met and took a united stand against their bosses and state control in the workers struggle.

We in Grassroots welcome this stand and hope that it is the beginning of even further unity in the workers movement.

The unity of workers, if it is based on democratic control and organisation, can only be a step forward in the struggle in South Africa.

Furthermore, the decision to form regional committees to promote solidarity and cooperation between different unions is of importance to the community.

We have long supported joint community and worker struggles. If the unions can now achieve the aim of uniting the mass of their members in solidarity struggles, Grassroots organisation will undoubtedly be advanced.

## The poor suffer most

THE public has been burdened with major price increases in essential goods during the past few months.

Now, working families are faced with a 33 percent bread price increase which they can ill afford. With this increase, there will be very little money left to buy other nourishing foods such as, meat and milk.

The government has once again sided with the bosses — the farmers, the millers and bakers — by allowing an increase in the price of bread in the first place. They have refused to increase the subsidy so that working people can afford to buy a loaf of bread. After all, subsidies are there to aid low-income people and not the rich.

Seventy million rand cannot be that much when the taxpayer's money is wasted on enforcing the Group Areas Act, other vicious laws, festivals and white elephants that are not even used by the majority of the people in this country.

Instead, they have passed the extra costs on to the consumers so that the bosses can make their profits.

Why should the rich be kept happy and the poor forced to bear the greatest burden of the rising cost of living?



## LETTERS

# 'We must carry on going forward'

I WANT to tell all readers of Grassroots and all women everywhere how we spent National Women's Day in Elsies River.

Although the meeting had to be moved to a new venue at the last moment, people came

in floods to the cinema in Elsies River.

It was on Saturday evening, when a few of us had gathered to cook food and to make banners and posters for the meeting that somebody came to tell us that the venue we

had prepared for the meeting would not be available.

That was bad news. But it didn't let us down. We stood up and made other efforts.

Early the next morning we put posters around the bioscope

and prepared the creche as we had invited people with their children. Buses were sent to the various areas to collect people who were waiting.

I didn't expect to see many people because of the change of

venue at the last moment but I was surprised to see that there was not a single seat empty and others were standing around the walls.

The youth started singing freedom songs for a warm-up until the meeting was declared open.

### Speaker

Our programme consisted of a guest speaker and many other speakers on behalf of workers and on the high cost of bread, rent and transport. There were plays and poetry-reading, with freedom songs in between.

Many thanks to those who partook on Sunday. I could hear the messages delivered by the speakers that people are prepared to work and organise. We are calling for the unity of the women.

It's through their help that we can go on. We need to organise ourselves everywhere. All people must stand together.

We must carry on going forward.  
Thandie Matlhare

## Union puts record straight

YOUR article on the Fattis & Monis strike (July 1981 issue) contains a statement we feel should be corrected.

It says the Food & Canning Workers Union was not represented on the support committee formed to boycott Fattis & Monis products.

It suggests that the Union made the mistake of handing over the organisation of the

boycott to other organisations.

This is not true at all.

It was the Union that convened the support committee. This was long after the strike, and the boycott, had started, when we saw the need for organisations to co-ordinate their efforts. Several workers on strike were on this committee, and represented at all its meetings.

More important still, the Union was almost solely responsible for checking how strong the boycott was.

In short, although our Union did not publicly claim responsibility for the boycott, it did a great deal of the work.

Our thinking was then — and still is — that community organisations and not the Union should take the lead in the boycott.

For us, the boycott

was support action, to force the bosses to negotiate with us.

If we had claimed responsibility for the boycott, it would have been that much more difficult for the bosses to negotiate with us.

Our strength was to be able to say that the boycott was a response of mass support, on the part of a wide range of people.

Secretary  
FCWU

# Bread and the Bosses

**WORKING families** have been hit the hardest by the sharp rise in food prices, transport and other basic necessities.

Recently, there has been a great outcry against the sharp increase in the bread price. Bread was once, and still is a staple food, but it has been priced

out of the reach of most working people

On this page GRASSROOTS tries to explain why there has been this increase and who will be affected most by it.

THE recent sharp increase in the bread price came about because the government was not prepared to increase the bread subsidy.

A subsidy is a payment by the government to producers, such as farmers, to keep prices lower so that working people can afford to buy it.

Usually, staple foods such as bread, milk, sugar and grain are subsidised. The aim is to lighten the burden of buyers and to help the poorest people achieve a decent standard of living.

Historically, in South Africa, subsidies were not granted to benefit the shoppers but to benefit the farmers. Subsidies keep prices low, in this way more goods can be bought and agriculture expands - farmers can then make more profits.

So, we see that subsidies are not there to benefit working people.

Last year, the government subsidised the bread price by R162 million. This year, the price of bread has shot up by 11 cents for white bread and 8 cents for brown bread.

Why has the price increased so drastically?

The price of bread is made up of farming costs, milling, baking costs and transport costs.

Earlier this year, the S.A. Chamber of Baking, the National Chamber of Milling and the farmers have demanded higher profits to offset rising costs.

Because of the bad wheat crop, the Wheat Board will be recommending higher wheat prices to the government in

October.

Faced with the demands of the Farmers, the Bakers and the Millers, the government had to decide how to handle this situation. They had three choices:

\* The government could have refused meet their demands and prevented the price from rising. But, this would have angered them as their profits would be cut.

\* Or, the government could have increased the subsidy - that is, more money could have been set aside to keep the prices down. To do this, the government would

have had to add R70 million to the subsidy.

\* Instead of setting this money aside to keep the bread price down, they chose a third option of making the people bear the cost by paying higher prices.

Why was the government not prepared to spend the extra R70 million? Let us look at where the government gets its money from. It comes from profits of big companies, tax on income and sales tax.

To raise this extra money, taxes would have had to increase.

Over recent years the government has decreased the taxes on company profits and income taxes on high income earners by a large amount.

## Subsidy

At the same time, they imposed the general sales tax which hurts low income people more.

There is now an extra 1 cent G.S.T. on white bread. It means that bread buyers will be paying an extra R5m G.S.T. per year to help pay for last year's subsidy. This means that the subsidy has in fact decreased.

If income tax had to be increased to subsidise bread it would have made big companies and the rich unhappy.

So we see that the bread price has increased to keep farmers, producers and the rich happy.

They are being sheltered from the effects of the rising cost of living while the workers who can least afford it, have to bear the burden.



## WHO BEARS BURDEN OF PRICE INCREASES

The Minister of Finance, Senator Horwood said that the increase will not hit the lower income groups hardest. He said: "When you are subsidising bread to the extent that we already are, how can you say that we are burdening the poor? After all, what does bread come to a month?"

Despite this, it is the workers that suffer most. Because of low wages, workers are forced to eat more bread than people with higher incomes.

As the price of meat, offal and other food has been rising, less and less of these foodstuffs can be afforded and therefore more staples such as bread is being eaten.

Now that the price of bread has gone up by so much, there will be even less money left over to buy food to eat with the bread.

Although wages have been rising, it has not kept up with the rising cost of living, of which bread is the latest.

The Minister also argued that lower income groups had seen

their incomes rise at higher rates than those of other groups.

But this means very little to the worker if he is told that his wages have gone up by 15 per cent while his boss' income has only gone up by 10 per cent.

15 per cent of R200 is R30. 10 per cent of R1 500 is R150.

## 'STARVING US TO DEATH'

MR Bernard Smith, 64 of Factreton, spends more than 20 per cent of his monthly income on bread.

"And I can count myself as one of the fortunate ones," he said.

"I have a small family - there is only my wife, a step-daughter and her 13-year-old son. We can make do with only two loaves a day. But this works out to 84 cents a day or R25,20 a month."

Mr Smith is a retired street sweeper. His monthly council pension is R120,60.

His bread bill almost matches his combined expenditure on rent, electricity and water, which is R27,60.

"It's really a battle to make ends meet. As things were we could seldom afford to eat meat. With the bread price increase we will meat on our table at all."

Mrs Mary Jeptha of Steenberg said:

"We use 4 loaves a day. There is just no way I can afford the increase."

"This means I will have to buy less. Hunger pangs will just have to

become more part of our lives than before.

"I think the government's plan is that we should all slowly starve to death."

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Homelands - the dumping grounds for women and children, the old, the disabled and unemployed.

THEY stand on that vacant piece of land on the border of Crossroads - hundreds of men, women and children without homes. More than a thousand have been arrested, jailed and fined over the last weeks, but still they refused to return to the homelands. They have come to Cape Town to work, they say, because there are no jobs in the homelands. They choose to face the long days in jail and the hardship which the rain and cold bring rather than dying without food. But the government says they are here illegally, without permission. And daily, van-loads of people are arrested and charged with entering Cape Town illegally. Why are people in this country not allowed to live where they want to? Why are people arrested and told they cannot remain in Cape Town? In this article, Grassroots will look at some

of the reasons. **Land laws and taxes** Before 1913, Africans could buy land in any part of the country. But after laws were passed in 1913 and 1926, only 13 percent of the land was set aside for Africans. This land today makes up the homelands. It was impossible for the people to plant enough food on this land - they could no longer feed themselves or their cattle. **Homeland conditions** Today, 121 out of every 1000 children die before the age of five in the homelands compared with 98 out of 1000 in the urban areas. At that time, the government also introduced taxes. The people had to pay tax on their huts and cattle. For this, they needed money. To get money, they were forced to go to the towns for work. In this way, workers were forced into the mines and factories of

this country. **Machines and unemployment** The time before when factories are using more machines and need fewer workers. Unemployment is soaring daily. It is estimated that there are presently 25 million unemployed. The people are not only unemployed in the towns, but also in the homelands. And while in the towns they have hope of getting an odd job to help keep their alive - in the homelands there is nothing. And so people keep coming to the towns. To have control over the number of people coming to the towns, the government introduced the pass laws. **Pass Laws** In terms of Section 10 of the Bantu Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945, no African may remain in more than 72 hours in an urban area unless he has worked for the same

employer in the area for ten years or lived there continuously for 15 years, or has been granted permission by a labour officer to stay and work. Africans who want to go to the towns, have to go to the nearest labour bureau where labour officers decide on their future. But very few people today are given permission in terms of these laws to come to the towns. **Housing** In Cape Town, the Bantu Administration Board has provided housing for some of the men who have come to work here. It is cheaper for them to provide only for the working men and not their wives and children. And so the pass laws gave permission for men to come and work but not for women and children to live with them.

In this way, families were broken up to serve the labour needs of the few who control this country. While housing was provided for the man who worked, he soon found himself in the cold when he retired. As soon as the worker was too old to work, he was evicted and forced to return to the homeland. The people do not have the right to decent housing. That remains the privilege of those few who find jobs in the towns. And those who cannot find jobs in Cape Town, are being chased back to the homelands. Over the years, many thousands have been chased away but the poverty in the homelands have forced them to return. The people are now saying "We are here to stay, we want our rights in Cape Town. It is the duty of the government to provide houses and jobs for all."



Mr. Nkhokha, a meat worker who lost his job said, 'In Transkei everything is nothing.'

# EVICTIIONS



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## MODDERDAM STRUGGLES: Lessons from the past

BEFORE looking at the organisation around the Langa evictions, it is important to see what lessons can be drawn from similar struggles in the past. One clear such example is the building of the Modderdam squatter camp in 1978. When the mayor of Bellville called on the government to demolish the 'illegal squatter camp', it drew response from many people from outside. The people's committee - which had up to then acted very democratically (they had regular mass meetings where the people decided what to do - was unopposed by the sudden and unexpected support which included money, food, clothes, a soup kitchen and a crèche. **Grassroots** The committee forgot the importance of grassroots organisation and saw the solution to the problems in the promises and plans put forward by outside organisations and "anti-help groups. The people's spirit of self-reliance and unity weakened. Legal advice was called in and lawyers tried to fight the evictions because of loopholes in the law. The people placed even greater confidence in the power of the law and the need for grassroots organisation was overlooked. Organisation is often weakened when there is a reliance on press campaigns and the law. These weapons are limited and could sometimes be used, but they should never be the main weapons. The government uses many different laws and means to divide and rule the lives of people. In Modderdam, they created disunity when 'Coloured' families were encouraged to accept land at Skerries, while 'illegal' Africans were railed to the homelands. In Cape Town's townships today, we see how the government is forcing divisions between the people. - Those with section 10 rights who are in urban areas eg. allied and those who have no rights. It is only through united action that the people can fight the government's 'divide and rule' tactics.



A member of the support committee said "organisations need to assess and know the amount of time which is needed of them before they take up new issues."

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CHILDREN must learn from an early age to play and work together. This is the view of the Hanover Park Civic Association and its Youth Wing who are running a children's Group in the area every Saturday afternoon.

At the moment, between 50 and 80 children attend the group weekly.

Programmes include group games, painting, singing and educational films.

Sometimes the group is divided up in order of their age groups and they then discuss many things that happen in the community.

In this way, many children shed their shyness to talk in groups and they also get to know the children in the group who are their age, better.

The Group started out last year with children from one area in Hanover Park only.

However, very soon children from all other areas started to come.

And the Children's Group is still growing.

**Children learn to work together**

# Putting down roots in Ocean View



IT IS Friday afternoon and I have a free hour or two from the household chores. Armed with my copies of GRASSROOTS I decided to tramp the bleak roads of Ocean

View. I feel strangely elated, thinking in this manner the people of the isolated township, this artificially created island, with its teachers, dockyard workers and naval personnel, should

read about the struggle of our people to live and exist in decency and dignity.

At the first street corner I meet an old fisherman and his wife. I tell them about the

paper, that it is about our people and their struggle. Without hesitation she takes twenty cents from her knotted handkerchief and then readily buys two copies. One for their friends

living in the bush they tell me! They also enquire if I can let them have the following issues and I reassure them that I will keep copies for them. Feeling encouraged, I am on my way up Saturn Way.

I knock at the door of the nearest house. A little boy runs in to call his mother. After a while the mother appears.

"Good afternoon, lady. Would you like a copy of Grassroots? There is something about the Electricity Due Dates fight in this issue." You're just the one I want to talk to!"

Taken aback, "Oh?" "I don't want that paper in my house again! Someone told me not to buy it, cause it's a boycott paper. I don't want trouble".

I feel the colour rising in my face but I pretend not to be ruffled.

"No, this paper is about our people and their problems.

Everything in this paper is the truth!"

"I look to God for the truth. I don't need your paper."

"God doesn't believe in justice. Look how we are treated, it cannot be his will!"

All this time she was looking among some books and papers in a cupboard.

"I don't know what I did with last month's paper. I hid it somewhere."

### Townships.

"Hid it? They sell thousands of this paper in the other townships. Alright I'll go".

Once again rejected and let down, why is it so difficult to organise anything here?

Determined to spread the word, I hesitantly approach a group of mothers chatting and laughing with babies on their arms and in tattered prams on their way to the clinic.

They have never heard about Grassroots.

"Are they the creche people?"

"No. Its the people's newspaper. Read about the advice for babies, cooking in a box and many other useful hints to stretch the budget."

### Friends

Soon we are talking like 'old friends about bread and food prices and the hardships of life in Ocean View.

They are interested in the newspaper, and after borrowing money from each other, they all rush off armed with Grassroots and promises that they will read it.

Filled with excitement, I set off hopefully knocking on the next door, more determined now to spread the word.

There is the knowledge that: We still have people who are afraid.

We still have people, so cowed . . . . . blinded by the truth.

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## ADVICE BUREAU

## Hints on how to beat food crisis



IN our previous issue there was an article of how to cut down on the electricity bill by cooking in a box. GRASSROOTS had requests for more hints on how to economize at home.

Now that bread - The People's Main Food - has gone up so much, the struggle to make ends meet will be worse than ever before. Our panel called on a few mothers for advice.

## BUYING IN BULK

Three Hanover Park families have decided to club together to buy groceries in bulk at a wholesaler in Athlone.

They take turns to do the driving and buying and save considerably in this way.

## MORE VALUE FOR MONEY

The meat bill eats a big chunk into most people's food money.

Mrs Stevens from Hanover Park told us how she cut down on her meat bill.

"Before, I used to buy bones, but now I know that bones contain only fat and no other food value.

"So I ask the butcher to weigh the meat off-cuts on the chopping block - in this way I get my money's value

in meat instead of bones.

Mrs Stevens told us how she uses legumes, such as beans, peas, lentils and soya pro-

ducts to "stretch" or replace meat.

"I've got such tasty recipes that my family doesn't even mind about not getting meat

every day. GRASSROOTS tasted her Bean Bobotie and got the recipe for our readers: How important is meat for one's health? This is

## BEAN BOBOTIE (8 - 10 Portions)

3 slices brown bread  
1 cup milk  
2 medium onions  
1 tablespoon oil  
2 cups cooked beans  
3 teaspoons curry powder.

1 teaspoon tumeric  
3 tablespoons vinegar  
2 tablespoons apricot jam  
2 tablespoons raisins  
1 tablespoon Worcester

sauce  
3 teaspoons salt  
½ teaspoon pepper  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
3 bay leaves  
1 egg

Soak bread in the milk, squeeze out the milk and crumble the bread. Fry the chopped onions in the oil, when brown remove from the stove.

Mash the beans and

add all the other ingredients except for one egg and the bay leaves.

Mix well, spoon into a greased baking dish and press the bay leaves on top. Bake for 20 minutes in a moderately hot oven (170°).

Beat the milk (squeezed out from the bread) and the remaining egg, and pour over the dish. Bake until the egg is set. Remove the bay leaves before serving.

the answer we got from a doctor: "It is often said that the protein in meat is higher than in plant sources, or that meat contains complete protein whereas plants don't.

The truth is this - Proteins are made up of amino-acids. Twenty amino-acids make up the protein our bodies use. Of these twenty, eight have to come from the food we eat. These eight are called "essential amino-acids". "Complete protein foods contain all eight amino-acids. Animal products - eggs, milk meat - provide all eight essential amino-acids. Eggs come closest to the ideal "combination"; milk is a close second and meat follows.

"Soybeans are almost as good as meats for protein quality. Beans, lentils, peas, nuts and whole grains are also good sources of protein, but each lacks one or more of the essential amino-acids."

## HOW TO COMBINE PLANT PROTEINS

Plant proteins can be made more "complete" by combining them with a grain or with an animal protein. Here are a few examples.

Milk products should always be served with grains, for instance Cereal with milk, Bread with milk, bread with cheese, macaroni with cheese, rice with milk (rice pudding).

Legumes should always be served with grains, for instance, Beans with samp, Lentils with rice (breyani), Bean Soup, Pea Soup, Lentil Soup with bread, Soya products with rice, peanutbutter with bread, Dahl with rice.

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## ADVICE BUREAU

# 'Will I have a healthy baby at age 40?'

Dear Doctor, I am 40 years old and got married for the second time last year. I have three children and my first husband died of TB. My second husband and I would like now to have a baby but I am afraid to become pregnant because I have heard women over 40 have mongol babies. I want to have a healthy baby. What must I do?

A woman of any age can have a "mongol" baby. The proper name

for this is a "Down's" baby.

As you know, these babies are as lovable as normal babies but when they grow up they cannot look after themselves.

As a woman grows older, she has a greater chance of having a "Down's" baby.

A young woman has very little chance of having such a baby. When a woman reaches the age of 35, the chances become greater. When she is 40 years

old, the chance is one in forty. By this we mean if there are 40 pregnant women and each of them is over 40, one of them will have a "Down's" baby.

But this should not stop a 40-year-old woman from becoming pregnant.

When a woman is pregnant, there is a test which can show if the baby is a "Down's" baby or not.

This test is done when the woman is about 16 weeks pregnant.

You have to wait four weeks for the result. If it is found that the baby is a "Down's" baby, then the pregnancy can be taken away.

Therefore if you are a healthy 40-year-old woman, there is no reason not to fall pregnant, and ask for the test.

It is a good idea for all women over 35 to consider having this test.

## Your rights when laid off from work

RETRENCHMENT is the name used for getting rid of workers when there is no longer enough work. But sometimes retrenchment is used as an excuse when a boss wants to fire some workers for another reason.

What can workers do about this?

There are no laws to stop bosses dismissing workers when they want to.

It is important that workers should have some control over retrenchments in their factories.

### Organise

Workers can only get this control by being organised and united. Only then can the workers be sure that the bosses will listen to their demands.

Workers can insist on some demands such as:

- Bosses must give notice to workers or their committees before they retrench them.
- Workers to be retrenched should be those who have been working the shortest time.
- When the company later wants to employ more workers they should first offer jobs



to retrenched workers before employing new people.

If workers get bosses to agree to these de-

mands - in practice as well as in words - then they can make sure that workers are retrenched only when there really

is not enough work. Then bosses will not be able to dismiss workers and say they were retrenched.

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## ADVICE BUREAU

# Constitutions: The rules of the organisation

**COMMUNITIES** that are voiceless and voteless have learnt that they must get organised. This is the only way they can bring about change and achieve results.

This was borne out by the Electricity Petition Committee (E.P.C.) of Mitchell's Plain who fought to change the due date of the payment of the electricity account and won!

What is an organisation?

An organisation is a group of people working together for a specific object such as civics, sports and so on.

The organisation is governed by a constitution setting out rules which regulate the organisation.

We will discuss certain basic rules which govern an organisation.

**PREAMBLE:** This clause sets out the reason or motivation for the establishment of an organisation, such as "A need has arisen for the people of Athlone to organize themselves on a civic level."

**NAME:** This clause provides for the name by which the organisation is to be known, e.g. Athlone Civic Association (ACA).

**OBJECT:** This clause briefly sets out the main aims of the organisation and how they can become members, e.g. Membership shall be open to all residents of Athlone and application shall be made in writing to the Secretary.

**OFFICIALS:** This clause provides for the office-bearers of the Association and their functions, e.g. Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer.

**ADMINISTRATION:** This clause provides how the organisation is to be administered, e.g. "by an executive committee comprising the officials."

**FINANCE:** This clause regulates the funds of the Association and provides for the opening of a banking account, what financial statements are to be kept and how money should be paid out.

**MEETINGS:** This clause provides for the type of meetings to be held and when it is to be held, e.g. Annual General Meetings are to be held once a year, an ordinary General Meeting to be held once a quarter or an Executive

Meeting to be held once a month.

**QUORUM:** This clause provides for the number of members to be present at any of the meetings before it can start, e.g. 20 members shall form a quorum for a General Meeting and 5 members shall form a quorum for an Executive Meeting . . . . .

**REPORTS:** This clause provides what reports must be submitted to which meetings and by

whom, e.g. the Chairman shall submit a Chairman's report at the Annual General Meeting or the Treasurer shall submit a financial report at all General Meetings.

**DISSOLUTION:** This clause provides for when and how the organisation is to be dissolved and what must be done with the assets of the Association.

**AMENDMENT:** This clause deals with the

question of when and how the Constitution can be amended, or altered.

The above provisions of a Constitution only provide a guide and is not exhaustive. Other rules can be added or some can be left out. It depends entirely on the requirements of a local organisation.

In the next issue of Grassroots, we will provide a draft Constitution which can serve as a basis for your organisation.



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# Ravensmead residents face eviction, but they say . . .

## 'WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED'

THOUSANDS of Ravensmead residents are being threatened with evictions by the Parow Municipality. The people are determined to stay and are saying "we shall not be moved."

Ravensmead is about 20 years old and many of the people staying in the area came from Vasco and Goodwood where they were affected by the Group Areas Act.

Since the Department of Community Development has put a freeze on the buying and selling land, about 12 000 people face eviction. This is 1 500 families.

Parow Municipality is saying that the people will have to move because there is not enough land on which to build houses.

But the people are

saying "why did they not think of that when they planned Ravensmead?"

Residents feel that they have been living under poor housing conditions for too long and are demanding proper housing.

"Give us proper housing. It is dehumanising to stay in these wet shacks", they said.

The Parow Municipality intends housing people in Belhar, but

the residents are dissatisfied as they will not be able to afford it.

According to the Ravensmead Students Organisation, (RASO) it has been found that out of the 1 500 families affected, 75 percent

will not be able to afford the new housing.

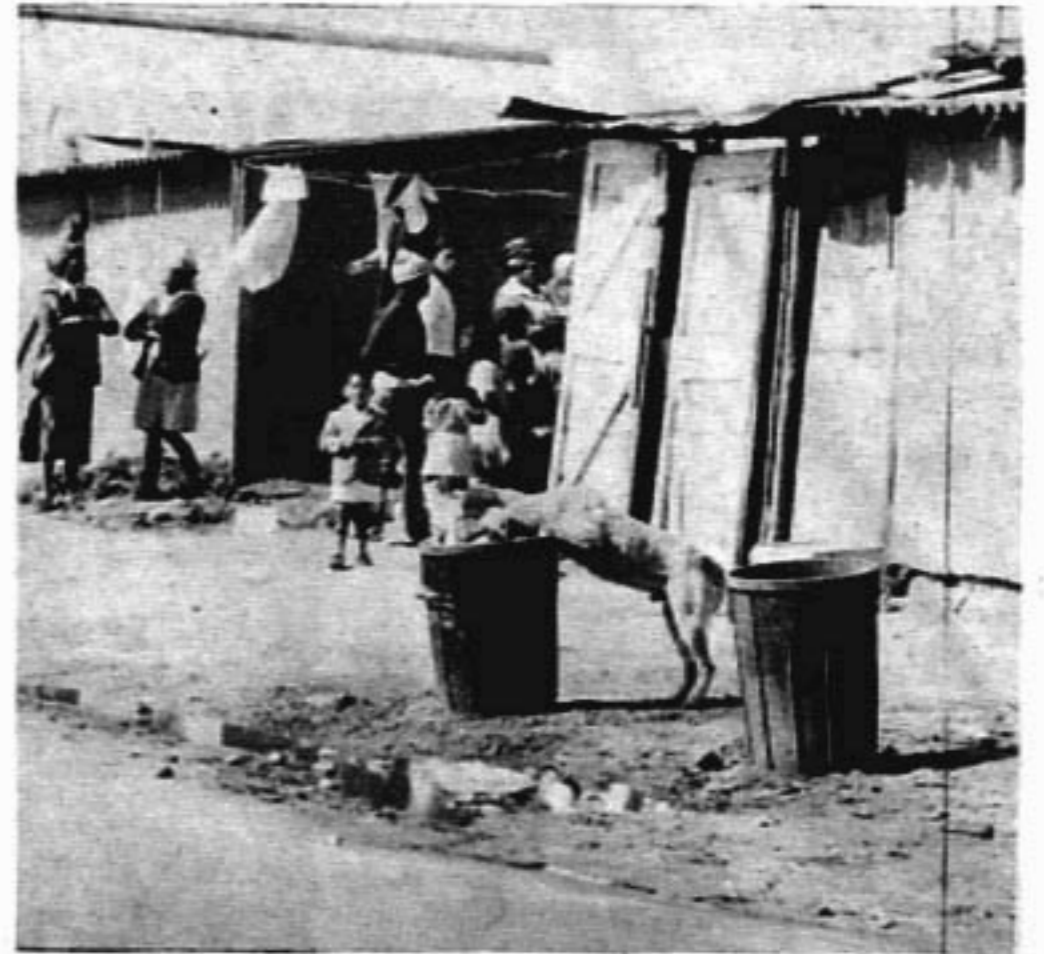
"We are already earning such low wages, how do they expect us to give them the last cent that we have?" a mother asked.

"It is right, we shall not be moved", said another resident.

"It will mean that we will have to travel and spend more money on transport. Also, the students will be moved and the community spirit will be broken".

RASO is hoping to help fight alongside their mothers and fathers in their refusal to be moved.

So the cry is quite clear. Ravensmead, we stay - we shall not be moved.



## Avonwood needs creche

AVONWOOD Residents Association are a small group of Avonwood Residents in Elsie's River, who are concerned about their community.

The lane running across Avonwood, which is a hive of gang activity, lack of playing space for the children and the high crime rate in the area are but some of the problems that they are faced with every day.

Last year they tried to do something about the high rentals people have to pay.

However, they did not succeed in doing this. People also started losing interest. The group dwindled and lost courage and hope.

This year they decided to tackle something else to get more people involved.

They are planning to have a big public get

together at the Avonwood Sports Grounds where demonstrations, sports, games, marches and fund raising activities will take place on the 3rd October 1981, at 8.30 a.m.

The money raised at the occasion will be used for the needs of the pre-school children and the old people in Avonwood.

The area has no creche yet hundreds of children are running around.

The association would like to take the old people out on outings and make life easier for them.

Furthermore, after the 3rd October 1981, they wish to become involved with other things that concern everybody as tenants of the council. But for this they need to organize more people in Avonwood.

## Trade unions issue joint statement

Twelve trade unions who met in Cape Town on August 8 have issued a statement setting out their attitude to certain aspects of the new law covering trade union activities.

The statement says: We accept that trade unions are public bodies and accordingly we do not object to providing information with respect to our constitution finances and representativity.

However, we refuse to subject ourselves to control by anybody

other than our own members.

We therefore resist and reject the present system of registration insofar as it is designed to control and interfere in the internal affairs of the union.

The meeting specifically agreed to support each other in defiance of any abuse in the powers of investigation given to the authorities by the Industrial Conciliation Act.

The meeting also agreed that unions would support each other in defying the restrictions on supporting striking workers.

It is an internationally recognised right of workers to withhold their labour.

Moreover, under present conditions and legislation, strikes happen so frequently because of low wages, inadequate bargaining procedures and com-

pletely unworkable official dispute procedures.

Workers therefore have no alternative to strike action outside of the law.

It is, in any event, the duty and function of unions to stand by its members in any circumstances including the payment of strike pay. The prohibition on financial support for strikers will not be obeyed.

**Resolution - Industrial Council:**

The meeting rejected the present Industrial Council system as an acceptable means of collective bargaining.

The meeting recommended that unions that are not members of Industrial Councils should not enter any Industrial Council and requested that participating unions refer this back to their respective

unions for endorsement.

The unions agreed to support each other in the event of any union resisting participation on the Industrial Council.

**Resolution - Ciskei:**

The meeting noted the severe difficulties created for workers by the homeland authorities and in particular by the current situation in the Ciskei, where union members and officials are subjected to severe harassment and constant detentions.

The meeting resolved to send a delegation to Chief Minister Sebe to express our extreme displeasure at his anti-union stance, and to obtain assurances about the security of the workers after the so-called Ciskeian independence.

**Resolution - Banning and Detentions:**

The meeting resol-

ved to continue resisting banning and detention in any way possible and warned that continuation of this practice could only worsen the already deteriorating industrial relations situation.

**Resolution - Solidarity Action:**


To give effect to the resolutions at the meeting the unions resolved to establish ad hoc solidarity committees in each region.

These committees would discuss and initiate solidarity action arising out of our co-operation.

The meeting also resolved to convene again by November.

The following trade unions were present at the meeting and endorsed the statement:

The General Workers' Union; The Food & Canning Workers' Union; African Food and Canning Workers' Union; The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU); Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA); South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU); NACWUSA (Motor Assemblers & Component Workers Union of S.A.); The General Workers Union of SA (GWUSA); The Black Municipal Workers Union; CCAWUSA (Commercial, Catering & Allied Workers Union of SA); The Orange Vaal General Workers' Union; General & Allied Workers Union (GAWU); Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association.



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# Crossroads school protest

ON Monday July 27th a few hundred residents from Crossroads, together with the school-children from Sizamile and Noxolo schools, staged a sit-in at the school in New Crossroads in an attempt to make the education authorities take note of their grievances.

This decision to demonstrate was taken at a mass meeting held on Sunday July 26th which was attended by parents and local residential and school committees.

The main issues concerned were:

1. the appointment of 4 teachers and a principal at the new school without consulting the school committee and
2. the uncertain job position of the teachers at Noxolo who are residents of Crossroads.

While the sit-in was taking place (children and parents were taken in lorries and busses from early in the morning) the chairman of Crossroads, Mr Ngxobonwana, went through to Mr Scheepers, the chief circuit inspector for schools, and advised

him that he should come down to the school and hear what the people had to say.

When Mr Scheepers arrived he was faced with singing women, men and children and he agreed to meet with them in the community hall.

### Voices

At the meeting residents aired their voices and because of the confusion surrounding the schools Mr Scheepers proposed to close down the school at New Crossroads until 800

students were registered, and a new school committee elected. (The present committee was not elected in the presence of government officials, according to regulations). The school to re-open August 17th.

Large general meetings have been held since that time in New Crossroads, as well as Crossroads, and a new school committee is to be elected August 16th.

Another problem which has surfaced during the schools issue is a clear indication that some residents in New

Crossroads have taken a reactionary position and are meeting officials with no mandate from the community or school committee members to do so.

It was therefore decided at a general meeting held Sunday, August 9th in New Crossroads that in addition to the election of a school committee in New Crossroads the following elections will take place: a working committee in New Crossroads to work alongside the existing Crossroads executive, and a working committee of wo-

men in New Crossroads to work closely with the chairwoman of the Women of Crossroads.

It is clear from the manner in which Crossroads people are dealing with local community issues that some re-organisation and community strength is being re-built.

### Interviewed

The period since Dr Koornhof intervened in their struggle has not been an easy one. It is clear that their struggle to maintain their community and the stu-

dents organisation which they themselves built up is a long and difficult one.

The issue of the schools remains a crucial one since it tests the new reality of Crossroads being under strict government control and regulation, as opposed to the decision-making community processes which the Crossroads people have become accustomed to in the past few years.

For Crossroads the struggle is far from over.

# Nurses blame shortage on Government policy

THERE has been a great outcry about the shortage of nurses in the country. The poor conditions under which our people have to live and work has resulted in many health problems.

The need for good health services remains, but because there is a shortage of nurses, hospitals are cutting down on the number of beds for patients.

In Johannesburg alone, 130 beds have been closed at the new local hospital.

Recently, the government announced that black nurses will in future be allowed to work in white hospitals as a means of overcoming the crisis.

But this only means that Black nurses would be paid less for the same work.

Nurses have for years expressed their dissatisfaction with their low wages and poor working conditions.

The discrimination in salaries has always been a major source of frustration and bitterness among nurses.

"We have the same qualifications, we do the same work and much more, why can't we earn equal pay?" asked one of the nurses.

Black nurses have met recently in the Western Cape and expressed great dissatisfaction with the discrimination in salaries, and the lack of job and training opportunities for African nurses.

"Because the Western Cape is a 'Coloured' preferential area, we find it difficult to get jobs in the Western Cape", they said.

"More often than not, we are forced to get permits when we are accepted for jobs at places such as Red Cross and Conradie Hospital."

African nurses may only work and train at St. Monica's Hospital in Cape Town.

One nurse said: "Sometimes we have to wait 3 - 5 years to be accepted at hospitals in other parts of the country. These hospitals take on local people for training and we have to wait for the chance vacancy."

The nurses feel very strongly that the shortage is not such a great problem, but that there are many trained nurses in the Western Cape who cannot get jobs because of the government's policies. "A lot of resourceful people are wasted, they are fully trained but cannot find work," a nurse said.

Others are forced to go and look for jobs in industry because of low pay and poor working conditions.

"How can the government claim that there is a shortage of nurses, when so many are qualified and denied the opportunity of working, simply because of their skin colour?"

The S.A. Nursing

Association is a body which is supposed to protect the interests of the nursing profession.

It consists of 29 members, of which 10 are elected by nurses, while the remaining

members are appointed by the Minister of Health.

It has been said that the Nursing Association plays an important part in maintaining racial


separation, and does not represent the real interests of nurses.

The nurses undertook to send a delegation to the Nursing Association to make their voices heard. They

have asked: "Why should the Minister of Health announce that government is recruiting nurses from Taiwan when they have qualified people in South Africa?"



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# 'TRAMWAYS RIP-OFF'

THE following are some of the arguments presented by the lawyers of the people objecting to the bus fare increase.

We hear that City Tramways want to increase their fares yet again. Once again they are telling us that they are not making enough profit and that their shareholders, Tollgate Holdings, are suffering.

From what they say it sounds as though they are running a charity for the people of Cape Town.

But when we look at the profits that Tramways are making, we can see that they are definitely not running a charity.

Let us have a look at how much Tollgate Holdings, the 'poor' shareholders, have received from City Tramways.

In 1975 the amount of capital Tollgate had invested in City Tram-

ways was R5 million. This capital is now worth more than R10 million. Thus they have made a profit of over R5 million. They have also received the following dividends from City Tramways:

1976 R0,75 m i.e. 15%  
1977 R2,67 m i.e. 53,4%  
1978 R2,63 m i.e. 53,2%  
1979 R2,00 m i.e. 40,0%  
Total R11,05 m

We can see that in the last five years, the 'poor' shareholders have received more than R16 million on their investment of R5 million.

This means that they have received interest of 47% per year on their money, a profit so big that other capitalists can only dream about it.

Now City Tramways wants to make the people of Cape Town pay another R3 million in bus fares so that they can keep on making bigger profits for their 'poor' shareholders.

From the figures

above it is clear that the people of Cape Town have already paid much more than R3 million for City Tramway's profits over the last few years.

It will be scandalous if City Tramways is allowed to make even more profits at our expense.

Even this is not all the profit that Tollgate makes from City Tramways.

If we look at the other Tollgate companies we see that almost all of them make their profits by providing services to City Tramways and the other bus companies. Here are some examples.

1. Tours and Services buys all the supplies for the Tollgate group and then sells it to the bus companies. It buys the fuel for all the buses and then sells it to the bus companies at a profit - in fact a greater profit than allowed to garage owners.

It also services the buses and builds bus bodies which is sold to the bus companies.

This company makes about one tenth (9,6%) of all Tollgate's profits - more than R1 million from servicing the buses.

2. Another company, Moving Media makes all its profits from selling the advertising space on the buses.

3. The Tollgate Computer Centre makes its profits from doing the computer work of the bus companies.

4. The Tollgate Property Corporation makes almost all its profits from letting its properties to the bus companies. It makes about 5% of Tollgate's profits.

It is very clear that the business and profits of all these companies depend very much on City Tramways and the other bus companies.

Although Tollgate tells us that these companies are completely separate from the buses,

we can see that this is not true.

Why then does Tollgate tell us that these companies are not part of the bus companies? Because people get

angry when busfares are increased and because increases have to be approved by the Local Road Transportation Board, it is better for Tollgate to pretend that they are not making a

good profit from the buses. This they do by spreading the profits from the City Tramways over as many other companies as possible.

## L/Hill resident speaks

MRS Hester Benjamin of the Lavender Hill Committee interviewed a resident who had maintenance problems. This is her story...

I AM a resident of L/Hill for almost 1½ years. When we first heard that we were going to get a flat, we were overjoyed, knowing we were going to move from a shanty, into a brick and comfortable house. We were indeed grateful to move, little knowing, what was awaiting us.

When my family and I moved into what was supposed to be a better dwelling we found the pipe under the bath broken.

This caused the bathroom to be continuously overflowing with water, which also flowed into the kitchen because it was the outlet pipe.

The water also seeped down, to the tenants bathroom below, and caused great concern because the tenants kept complaining of water coming through into their bathroom and causing dampness because of our leakage.

Two room-fittings were also broken, which meant that we couldn't use globes in these rooms and had to use candles.

I complained to the Council four times,

about these damages, because we found it in this condition when we moved in.

It was then almost a year later that the Council said I had to pay R24 to have the bath fixed and R8 to have the fittings installed. Because I couldn't afford this, after having paid my advance and deposit etc., and having to pay doctor and hospital bills, because my children were sick with bronchitis and other chest complaints, due to the wet and damp bathroom, I had to live in this condition, for all this time.

One day I got to hear about the "Lavender Hill Committee".

I visited their house meetings and lodged my complaint.

They immediately wrote a letter to the Town Clerk with my consent, explaining the whole situation, also reminding the town clerk that being an old tenant why they thought it was the Council's

duty to do all maintenance free of charge.

Within a week we received a letter to say that the matter would be investigated. Two weeks later, six council men were sent to my house to fix the bath and fittings free of charge.

The next day I was asked to come to the council office to point out who told me to pay this amount. The council lady apologized for what had happened and said, she would talk to the man because he should not have charged me.

I am very happy and proud to be a member of L/Hills committee and I say to all people in L/Hill support the committee of L/Hill, because they are ready to help us all and make us a happy and united community.

The committee's question and concern is if such an incident happened to one resident, how many other tenants have paid, when they really should have had their houses/flats maintained free of charge.

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# Communities organise against fares increases

In July, more than 20 community organisations and trade unions met to decide how to voice the objections of the people.

When they met they decided to draw up a pamphlet to explain why the bus increases were unnecessary.

The pamphlet showed that Tollgate Holdings, the company to which all the bus companies belong, made so much money that they could afford to pay each of their five top directors R5 800 per month.

Members of the organisations distributed thousands of pamphlets in their areas. A few days after the distribution, petitions were taken from door.

Without hesitation, men and women, young and old, signed to give support to their organisations' objection.

"Everything is going up - we cannot afford the increase," said residents as they signed the petition.

"We can't let them get away with it every time. We must do something," they said.

When the commission first sat on July 12 000 signatures had been collected.

By last week, many thousands more were added.

And from every organisation, five people were prepared to give their evidence.

They were ready to tell the commission how they were moved far from their places of work through the Group Areas Act, how their wages remained low, while the cost of living increased continually, and how it would be impossible for them to afford the bus fare increase.

The more than 100 people who crammed into the room in the Nedbank Building where the National Transport Commission sat, listened in disbelief as Mr Selwyn Selikowitz, the bus company lawyer, told the commission passengers had to

pay more because some people "stole" rides.

"What has that got to do with us," the people asked as a ripple of angry whispers flowed through the room.

"How can they say we steal," some said.

Mr Selikowitz argued that the bus companies had to face increased costs like everybody else.

"If fares were fixed according to what the poorest person could afford, they would be very low," he said.

This was not possible because a certain amount of money was needed to operate the service, he said.

"While it is in our interests to have as low a bus fare as possible, the company must make a profit for the service to be efficient," he said.

As he spoke of the importance of profit, a man jumped up and shouted "It's all lies. You are lying to us."

The Chairman of the commission, Mr H C van Zyl, asked the man to leave and adjourned

the hearing. But the man continued to shout "You are lying: You can speak English, Afrikaans or an African language, but I say you are still lying," he said.

### Organisations

The organisations who met were the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee, the Bonteheuvel Civic Association, the Electricity Petition Committee (EPC), the Hanover Park Civic Association, Bakery Employees Union, the Federation of Cape Civics, the Cape Municipal Workers Association, the General Workers Union, the Food and Canning Workers' Union, the United Women's Organisation, the Lavender Hill Committee, the Steenberg Committee, the Nyanga Residents Association, the Grassy Park/Lotus River Residents Association, the Thornhill Residents Association, the Clarkes Estate Committee, Avondale Committee, the Atlantis Civic Association, the Co-ordinating Civic Council, BBSK Residents Association, Kensington/Factreton Rate-payers and Tenants Association and the Ravensmead Students Organisation.

## Bus fares hikes

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their area but still Tramways wanted an increase.

The Cape Areas

Housing Action Committee called on the commission not to allow the increase.

The bus service

should not be run by companies for profits. The government or the Council should run the buses," they said.