

Housing: Community leaders give firm 'No' to Pen's plans

Government's responsibility to provide decent and adequate housing for its citizens.'

In the case of lower income groups, he said 'the government must subsidise housing so that tenants are not forced to sacrifice basic necessities to afford rentals. 'We must unite against the government's unjust policies in general and its housing policy in particular,' he said, calling on residents to 'resist the government's attempts to shift the burden of housing onto the community which is already finding it difficult to make ends meet.'

Dr A S Carrim, chairperson of Actonville's Housing Committee, said the Dawn Park issue was an 'open acknowledgement of the government's concern for its white electorate and not for the people of South Africa as a whole.'

COMMUNITY LEADERS in Actonville, Benoni, have fiercely criticised the government's new housing policy, outlined by the Minister of Community Development, Pen Kotze, in his recent visit to the area.

According to a statement issued by Kotze, his department's housing commitment is 'almost complete' and 'it is now the responsibility of the individual and private enterprise to provide housing, as Government funds will not be available for this purpose in the foreseeable future'.

'Our first priority is to ensure that land and infrastructure be made available to all persons who can with their own financial resources, that of their employers, financial institutions and by private means accept the responsibility for constructing their homes,' said Kotze.

As far as housing for the poor is

concerned, he said the department would consider making funds available for housing projects for those earning less than R150 a month. Such loans would, however, be restricted to those unable to get financial assistance from any other source.

In response to a request by the Actonville Housing Committee to proclaim Dawn Park in Boksburg an Indian area, the minister said Dawn Park would be kept for whites affected by extensions to Reiger Park, an overcrowded 'Coloured'

area in Boksburg.

With an estimated 4,000 people on the housing waiting list in Actonville, outbuildings and garages are being converted into homes in some cases sheltering two families. Tenants complain of exorbitant rents and exploitative landlords, and families are forced to separate to find accommodation.

With the granting of approximately 1,000 stands in Actonville extensions 4 and 5 and Kingsway the problem is a long way from being solved.

Reacting to the Government's decision, the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Committee of Benoni said, 'The Kotze meeting has convinced us that the government is not sympathetic to our real problems. To talk of reform (through the President's Council) on the one hand, while ignoring the day to day needs of our people on the other is nothing but trickery.'

'It has become clear that the present government is not only unwilling but unable to deliver the goods,' he said. 'We believe it is the

Thousands will be evicted from Inanda homes

ABOUT 135,000 people in Inanda, just outside Durban have been told they are to be systematically evicted over the next 12 to 18 months.

While the commissioner for the Verulam area, Brian Durant, has publicly said the vast majority of these people have alternative houses in KwaZulu and are recent arrivals in Inanda, the facts are very different.

- Those from rural KwaZulu have been forced into Durban's metropolitan area through overcrowding, poverty and starvation in their 'homelands'.

- Many of the people have been forced, by the chronic shortage of housing and subsequent gross overcrowding in the townships around Durban, to find plots of land for themselves in Inanda and to erect their own houses.

- Many people have lived in Inanda for a number of years have contributed to the community and have permanent jobs in Durban.

Already over 20 residents have been charged under the 1936 Trust and Land Act and the 1951 Illegal Squatting Act.

The policy to evict people from RA 33 (Released Area 33) in Inanda contradicts earlier government statements to develop the area.

Following the 1980 typhoid outbreak in Inanda, a water tanker supply scheme was introduced by the SADF and the Department of Water Affairs. This was taken over by the Department of Co-operation and Development which stopped the water supply in October 1981.

The public outcry that followed caused the Department to resume supplies. In 1982 money was appropriated for the purpose of installing a bulk water supply system and standpipes for R.A. 33. The technical division of the Department of Co-operation and Development briefed engineering consultants to install the system. It was designed

and was due to be operational by June 1982.

There have also been positive statements in Parliament regarding a sub-economic structure plan for the entire area, involving upgrading the present squatter settlements and installing basic services and facilities.

The Department's actions in continuing with the evictions flies in the face of any permanent stabilisation plans for the area.

There has been a confusing series of orders and counter-orders from the Commissioner's office in Verulam regarding evictions. Varying tactics have been used against both the landlords and tenants.

In the face of what is clearly a potentially explosive issue, Mr Durant is attempting to set the black and Indian communities against each other by prosecuting or threatening to prosecute Indian landlords in order to force them to evict the tenants on their land. Indian landlords have also been pressurised to draw up lists of their tenants showing personal details and employment status. This presumably is being done in terms of Section 35 of the 1936 Land Act.

These tactics create racial tension and divide the community itself.

In an effort to discourage settlement, new structures on rented land have recently been demolished by the Department, in some cases affecting both new and old structures. People have been selected at random for prosecution, despite the Department's stated intention to evict 'new squatters'.

This tactic destabilises and demoralises the community.

There are several cases pending in the Verulam Magistrate's Court. In the likely event of conviction the people will be evicted, their houses demolished and they will be transported jobless and without possessions to the rural slums of KwaZulu.



Thousands flocked from all parts of Western Cape to protest against high rents.

The house that Cahac built

ADDRESSING THE first Annual General Meeting of the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (Cahac) the secretary said 'Cahac has become a household name. People identify Cahac with being at the forefront of their struggles.'

Today, residents associations representing 21 areas in greater Cape Town are affiliated to Cahac and two more have applied for affiliate status. But the best indication of Cahac's growth lies in its assessment of the problems and direction needed to carry the organisation forward. This emerged at the recent Cahac AGM attended by 40 delegates and over 150 observers.

In reviewing its work Cahac emphasised the need for 'a new approach which will ensure that the people who come into our organisation can become committed to its work. This will build organisations that are both lasting and effective.'

Over the past year Cahac's prime activity has related to campaigns around issues such as rents, maintenance and busfares. Work has primarily focussed on

immediate issues which has meant people have flocked to organisations during times of crisis and have drifted out almost as quickly at the end of campaigns.

Now Cahac believes that it needs to go beyond defending the little that people have already. It will advance demands that go beyond campaigns and enable organisation to continue.

In the words of Wilfred Rhodes, chairperson of Cahac: 'We must see the increasing rents, busfares and electricity charges as being only the smoke. Our work must be geared to extinguishing the fire that causes the smoke. Our goal must be to eliminate from this society all the causes of our hardship.'

But, says Cahac, if lasting and effective organisation is to be built, then it must not be built in the air — organisation must be rooted in the community. This means a greater emphasis on drawing in more ordinary tenants, both at area and Cahac level, to fill positions of work and leadership.

Since the organisation's growth in the early 80's many civic

organisations have relied too heavily on the experience and understanding of young activists schooled in the mass upsurge of recent years. Cahac has now committed itself to breaking down this reliance.

This calls for greater involvement by all affected people. Not everyone in our community understands things equally well. Some have more experience and confidence. It is the task of those with confidence not to make decisions on their own but to reach out and involve the others in day to day work.

The task of drawing in ordinary tenants will be done by:

- Opening up Cahac to ordinary membership by holding general meetings in different areas. Host areas will be encouraged to bring as many observers as possible;
- Establishing ad hoc structures along regional lines, along lines of common issues or along lines of common local authorities;
- Emphasising education and organisational training through holding regular workshops and setting up education sub-committees around issues such as housing, transport, resources and publications.

Cahac has committed itself to establish working relationships with other progressive organisations.

In particular, it has resolved to establish a firm relationship with the trade union movement, recognising the close link between the struggles workers face in their workplace and in their communities.

Supporting this move, a spokesperson from the Cape Town Municipal Workers Association said: 'Our members in the trade unions are also the tenants in the communities. We must encourage our members to join unions. It is essential that people are organised in all aspects of their lives.'

Administration Board ignores influx case

A CONTRACT worker's breakthrough in being granted permanent rights to live in Cape Town by the Cape Supreme Court is being ignored by the West Cape Administration Board in its application to hundreds of similar cases.

On May 3 Totosi Stanford Booii, a Fattis and Monis worker was granted a court order entitling him to Section 10 1b rights in Cape Town because he had worked for one employer for more than ten years.

Many people saw this as a test case opening the way for hundreds

of contract workers with the same 'qualifications' to gain these rights which mean they can live with their families, change jobs freely and not have to return to the homelands when they lose their jobs or retire.

But the administration board has been refusing to grant permanent residence rights to the over 500 workers who have applied for Section 10 1b rights since Booii's case.

The board says it is still waiting for the appeal against the Rihhoto case. Last year a Germiston contract worker Mahlolo Tom Rihhoto in a

similar case to Booii's was granted Section 10 1b rights at the Rand Supreme Court. The judge held that Rihhoto had worked 'continuously' for one employer for ten years even though in terms of a government regulation he had to renew his contract yearly.

It is this regulation published by the Department of Bantu Administration in 1968 which has enabled administration boards to systematically refuse residence rights even if people had worked for more than ten years.

The Rihhoto case was the first challenge to the regulations and his victory meant that many thousands of other workers could also gain permanent residence. But the West Rand Administration Board appealed and the outcome is still being awaited.

However Cape Town lawyers said the Rihhoto case had no bearing to the Western Cape and the Administration Board was making a mockery of the law by refusing to grant Section 10 rights to applicants who had the same rights as Booii.