

IZWI base TOWNSHIP



Strike of metal workers on the Reef

THE WORKERS DEMAND A LIVING WAGE

The capitalist class is gaining at the expense of the working class. This is **not** an accident. It is **not** something like bad weather. It **cannot** be explained by the word 'recession'. It is the policy of capitalists to get as much labour power from workers and to return as little as possible in the form of wages. They pay just enough to cover the cost of survival, sometimes less.

HEY! THINGS ARE BAD

3 Million workers in South Africa are out of a job. The cost of living keeps rising. Prices of bread, milk, eggs, coal and paraffin have risen steeply. Even the price of mogodu has risen. Putco fares have risen twice in one year. In most locations rents have risen.

These are not the only rises. Poverty has risen, so has hunger, disease, crime and resistance.

The press says it is the fault of recession. But this thing called recession seems to have a different consequence for the capitalist class. Over the past year South African companies have had **record levels of earnings**: they are making **higher profits**, while workers hardships are increasing. The stock exchange too is booming, so that whoever owns shares in these companies, is gaining a lot.

The black working class of South Africa is under attack. Their standard of living is being lowered. Even if some wages are rising, the increased money actually buys less than before, due to inflation. And workers without jobs are not getting wages at all.

If it were bad weather, it would change in time. If it were recession, it would change in time. But have the workers of South Africa ever had a reasonable standard of living? Have they ever been fully employed? Have they ever been able to survive without hardship, hunger and crime?

Only resistance will free the workers from exploitation: resistance in the workplace, and resistance at home: where they get their wages, and where they spend them.

This issue of IZWI seeks to clarify some matters relating to the conflict between capitalists and workers over the standard of living: and it seeks to show some of the ways the workplace relates to the locations, hostels and backyards, that are the workers homes.

The wage puts fire in the stove

People like to think that their work life is separate from their home life. They say: at the factory you belong to your boss, at home you belong to yourself.

This is a mistake.

The employer-class have studied matters carefully. They let the worker go home at 5 o'clock: but they don't let him go completely.

Workers, when they are in the factory, know they have to struggle with their employer over wages and work-conditions. And so they organise. But after the working day is over, these same people feel that they are now free to relax, and to make their own decisions.

This is a mistake.

The worker is **not** free when he gets home. He is tied to the system through the cost-of-living. Whatever the worker takes from his job in the form of wages, he spends on rent, food, clothes, transport — which are all things that make profits for the employer class again. The wage and the cost-of-living are linked together. If workers get a wage rise, the ruling class take this money back again by raising rents and prices. Thus the employers-class exploit workers in the factory through the wage and at home through the cost-of-living.

Halfway home is short

Workers are often successful in demanding higher wages, being organised in trade unions. But this victory is not effective if these same workers cannot protect themselves from rises in the cost-of-living. They are united at the factory, but not united when it comes to paying rent or transport costs, or for food and clothes, medical expenses, school-fees etc.

The employer-class uses both spheres, work and home, very cleverly. In many ways it is the link between these two, that helps them; for example the link between jobs and housing. A worker says, 'I cannot fight for higher wages, in case I get fired, then I will not be able to pay my rent and I will be evicted.' A resident says, 'I cannot resist the rent increase, because if we are evicted, how will I keep my job?' Ever the housing shortage itself is a strategy of the employers. It keeps workers unsettled and therefore relatively weak.

One defence against this, is to resist evictions. Just as trade unions say, 'No Unfair Dismissal', residents organisations might say, 'No Unfair Eviction.' But to do this requires residents to be well organised.

It is one and the same class capitalists who dominate workers at the factory and at home: so it must be one and the same class, workers, who resist in the factory and at home.

Organise or starve

There has been a massive build up of trade union organisation recently. Many thousands of workers have seen that it is necessary to join together, to be able to deal with the common problems they face; low wages, poor working conditions, unfair dismissal, retrenchment, social insecurity etc. Workers meet to discuss these questions: they have shop-stewards to deal with factory problems as soon as they occur: there are permanent organisers: unions are linked in federations, which, by multiplying the number of workers in one organisation, increase its strength. Workers have won the strength to negotiate and bargain with employers. No longer do they have to simply accept what they are offered, and do what they are told, as in the days of the 'liaison committee' system in factories. Trade union organisation is necessary for working class strength. Without it the workers would never be able to develop resistance to exploitation and oppression.

Organise or be homeless

However, the workers do not spend day and night in factories. After the working day is over, they go home: and their home life, too, is subject to oppression and exploitation. It is not only in factories that the capitalist class controls and cheapens

-MAIZE PRICE INCREASED BY NEARLY 16%.

Milk price rockets to 57c a litre

hundreds in Cape rent protests

Woman and 13 children evicted

Rise in Wrab charges

Clash at rent-like meeting

More raids in Cape

Outrage over rent hike

Putco fare rise shock

labour. It is also in the location, the compound, the reserve, the shebeen, the backyard and the shack. It is not only in the wage that workers earn too little. It is also in the cost of food, transport, rent, services, school fees, tax and fines.

Trade unions do not handle these issues, and although there are some forms of community organisation, they are not yet good enough.

1. Community organisations are often dominated by middle-class people, such as businessmen, teachers, priests, clerks etc. This is a class of people who are not always on the side of the workers. It seems that these middle-class people do not share workers' problems.
2. It often happens that community organisations make claims that they do not intend to carry out, and could not carry out. One hears certain leaders say, 'No-one will pay the increased rent'. But everyone goes and pays it, for fear of being evicted. To threaten and not carry out a threat, is bad strategy.
3. Communities have complex problems, and there are different and even opposed aims within any community. There is mutual exploitation, as for example, residents who charge high rents for shacks and zozos; shebeeners who over-charge for drink, etc.
4. In any community there are different groups of people, not just one kind as is usual in a factory. A factory unifies people, in that they are all 'workers'. But in a location there are workers, pensioners, children, cripples, professional people — even employers. In these circumstances it is hard to find a unifying factor, to keep the community solidly behind one policy.

These are real and difficult problems, and it is not surprising that workers are reluctant to get involved with the same energy they put into trade unions. Some say, 'Leave community issues alone, and let us concentrate on fighting for higher wages.'

Bad strategy

But this strategy allows capitalists to hide the connection between wage and cost-of-

living: between worker-at-work and worker-at-home. BOTH are important to the capitalist class, which uses BOTH to keep labour cheap. Therefore BOTH places must be where the worker resists: in both places the worker must demand value in return for his labour.

Middle-class mis-organises

Workers should not avoid the community struggle. They should not leave the middle-classes to run things in locations. They should take leadership of the struggle there as well as in the factory. The connection that exists between work and location must be recognised, accepted and emphasised by workers. At present this connection is an advantage to the employers, because it is hidden. It must be turned to the advantage of the workers, by being exposed.

Government misleaders

The impulse to organise has been recognised by the rulers, who do not want to see workers successfully organising in their townships as well as in factories. Therefore the state got in first, saying, 'Very well, we will organise for them.'

They created Advisory Boards, and then Urban Bantu Councils, after that Community Councils and soon it will be something else. The state did not itself create the Alexandra Liaison Committee, but it is quite satisfied with that body since it is almost identical to a Community Council.

The problem with these bodies is not only that they are puppets, but also that they are middle-class. Thus it is made to seem that township politics and administration is something for the professionals and clerical people in a location. Of course not all middle-class people are government stooges; some, like Motlana and a few others, are reasonably progressive. But

this does not change the fact that even opposition township politics seems to be dominated by the middle classes. In this way the all important LINK between township and factory is broken. Middle class people have different worries from

workers. They fight for business licences, taxi licences, shebeen licences. In Alexandra the ALC allows tennis courts to take up space that would be better used for worker accommodation, and they allow private enterprise houses that only rather wealthy people can afford. At the time of the Alexandra bus boycott, the middle-class leaders wanted to compromise, the workers stood firm; because it was the workers who felt most the burden of the extra transport cost, whereas the middle class leaders were themselves trying to get into the transport business.

The link

Middle class Community Councils, and also middle class opposition groups, both make it seem that the workers struggle in the factory, and the general struggle in locations are separate. They are not separate, and the link between them should never be hidden. The very people who fight for their wages at work, must fight to preserve the value of these wages, at home.

Dont relax

It is difficult for workers to organise in locations. But it is important that they do so. As long as they leave the struggle in other hands, their standard of living will be undermined by the ruling class. Workers, wherever they live, must join or organise local residents committees. These are the basic units for struggle over things like rent, evictions, clinics, schooling etc. So long as these residents committees are influenced by workers (as workers) they will keep the connection between wages and cost-of-living always clear.

A programme of worker demands in Alexandra should include:

1. No evictions
2. No demolition without alternative housing
3. Adequate housing for the people of Alexandra
4. Rent fixed no higher than 10% of wage
5. Free creche for working mothers
6. No private development in the township. All common facilities to be run by the residents themselves.
7. A better bus service.



RENT

79 Alexandra families will be moved from 11th and 12th Avenues, to make way for sports fields and schools. Most of them are pleased to move because the old houses and barracks of Alexandra are unliveable. The problem that they still have to face, is that of rent. They were moved without being told what rent they would have to pay in the new houses. A report in The Star claimed that rent for the 4-room houses would be R175 per month, and for the 5-room houses would be R200 per month. Someone from the Liaison Committee said that until February families would pay R9,50 per room (that is R38 for a 4-room house). After February the Liaison Committee and WRAB would decide on new rents. It was suggested that these might be determined according to what the household earns. Gert Steyn, the area manager, said, 'We do not want to announce at this stage how much people will pay, but it is definitely high.'

Alec Rabie, WRAB director of housing, said, 'People should understand that houses are expensive. The cost of building material has gone up.'

We know that costs have gone up. The cost of food has also gone up; so has the cost of transport and the cost of clothing. And these things must be paid for together with rent out of the same wage packet.

Loud sounding nothing

But perhaps it would be better to say, all those costs have been put up. Costs are not things that go up by themselves. Putting prices up, is the way the capitalist system takes value from the workers and puts it in the hands of employers and of the government. It is a way of distributing wealth so that a certain section gets it, and another section loses it. Alec Rabie has explained nothing. If he wants people to understand, he should try to explain why it is that rising prices don't bother one class of people, but only the working class.

Who pays?

It is argued by Africans that since the government denies them liberty and freedom of opportunity, and since it denies them the right to live wherever they want, pushing them instead into locations, then the government should bear the cost of this accommodation. However, the authorities try to make location dwellers pay to the full for their accommodation (such as it is), and even for the administra-

tion of locations. That means, the residents themselves pay to be harassed and maltreated by officials and by black-jacks; they pay for stooge councillors to administer incompetently and badly; they even pay for the Administration Boards to be able to give money to organizations like SABRA, which is a society of racist propagandists to which some of the Boards have donated money in the past.

Sources of funds to run locations come from fines, and from liquor sales (ie again from the residents). Some comes from employers who pay a 'levy' for each worker.

Employers levy

Employers have asked for the levy to be scrapped. They say they would prefer to pay their workers higher salaries so that they can buy their own houses. This is not because employers are in a rush to pay higher salaries. It is just that they want to make sure that money for housing is spent only on those who are in jobs, not on some who are unemployed. It is also quite useful to employers if their employees are 'tied' by a house-loan of some kind. It makes them less likely to strike. The state, too, would like a greater involvement of the private sector in housing.

The business of raising rents, allocating the limited number of houses, evicting rent defaulters etc is so oppressive that the government has invented a way of getting out of trouble. It has set up bodies like the old UBCs and the Community Councils, which will later become 'municipalities'. These bodies are tempted by the illusion of power; and they become the ones who crush the people under the weight of high rents, incorrect electricity bills, harsh municipal police, bad services. John Knoetze of WRAB was pleased to say, 'Now its up to the Soweto Council to find ways of getting money, either from the residents or from employers, but definitely not from us as our resources are now dry.'

Consequently rents are going up all over the place. Recent rent increase announcements include Dobsonville from R30,63 to R44,43; Bekkersdal from R18,64 to R32,64; Kagiso from R15,66 to R36,66; Munsieville from R9,70 to R30,70; Mohlakeng from R17,66 to R32,63.

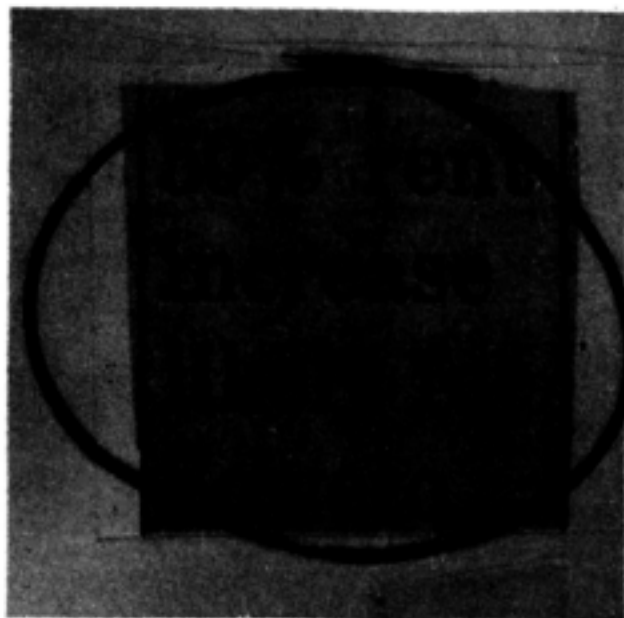
Resistance

Rents are raised in a few locations at a time, so that some people will believe that their location is 'repreived' or for certain kinds of houses only, so that always some residents will not have a direct interest in challenging the increases. Another trick is to postpone part of the increase, applying it only after a few months. There has recently been a struggle in Duduza: the Community Council postponed a R9 increase, while they looked for other ways of financing a sewerage scheme. Later they tried to get residents to pay this extra amount, and they neglected the sewerage hoping this would force people to pay.

Location residents have challenged rent rises almost everywhere in South Africa, at one time or another. Here are two recent examples:

In Ikageng, near Potchefstroom, hundreds of people joined in a protest against a rent rise of 150 percent. Even Community Council refused to support the increase. The Administration Board kicked two members off the Council, and took away the salaries of the others. It seems that Community Councils are not meant to block rent increases.

In Mohlakeng, near Randfontein, residents are fighting a R14 rent increase. Recently, 3000 residents came to a meeting called by MOCA (Mohlakeng Civic Association). One speaker said that residents should refuse to pay rents until the administration boards cleaned the streets, tarred the roads, electrified the houses and made sure that people earned enough to afford higher rents.



How is rent made up

Rent is made up of two portions: 1. The cost of building the house and 2. The cost of services. We will take these in turn.

1. Repayment of the cost of the house

If the house was built long ago, it probably cost only a few thousand Rands. This amount is paid back by the tenant in small amounts per month, over a long time, usually thirty years. In some cases in Soweto the repayment per month is quite low, sometimes only two or three Rands. But, as I say, it depends on the original cost of the house. Recently built houses cost more, and the monthly repayment is higher, about seventeen Rands in some cases. This is a fixed amount; it does not change and cannot be raised.

2. Services

This includes sewerage, rubbish removal, water, light, administration and so on. It is the day-to-day servicing of an urban area. Whoever governs a township decides what to charge for these services. If WRAB is in charge, WRAB decides. If a Community Council is in charge, the councillors decide. When rents rise, it is because residents are being charged more for these services.

Now let's put the amounts together in a list. An average Soweto rent would be made up like this:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 - Repayment of cost of house | R10,00 per month |
| 2 - Services: | |
| Administration | R 5,00 |
| Sewerage | R 7,00 |
| Refuse removal | R 4,00 |
| School levy | R ,40 |
| Roads | R 1,00 |
| Health | R 1,50 |
| Street Lights | R ,12 |
| Water | R9,00 |
| Planning | R ,50 |
| Electricity | R 2,00 |
| | R40,50 Total |

Every month this total of R40,50 is paid by the house-holder to the authorities. This rental income is used to run the township. Other sources of income for this business of running the place are liquor sales and beer-hall profits, fines, and the so-called levy, which is an amount paid by every employer who has a worker living in a township.

The service charges are sometimes called 'site-rent', and this is the amount that goes up from time to time. The authorities say that services cost more and that is why site-rent charges rise. It may be true that the Water Board charges more for water: it may be true that ESCOM charges more for electricity. But there are still problems that need to be examined. For example, who pays Thebehadi's salary of R13000 per year? Who pays the officials, white or black, who work in the townships? Who pays for the mayoral car, for the gold chain, for new offices erected at the cost of millions? Who pays to have new areas surveyed and developed? Who pays for electrical installations, whether every house gets electricity or not? One could also ask, why is there a school levy, when the quality of schooling is so bad? Why is there a charge for roads, when the roads are so bad? Why is there a charge for health, when health facilities are so bad?

Some people say that there can be no argument about rent. Houses cost a certain amount to build and services cost a certain amount to provide, so people must pay those amounts. This is the way Thebehadi argues: but it is an entirely false argument. Money to run any suburb in the world comes not only from rates (or rents), but also from other sources, eg government grants, business premises and so on. Even the black locations are financed with profits from beer - and liquor profits, from the employers levy and from fines.

Whatever Thebehadi may say the amount of rent charged is not due to the cost of services. Rent may be high or it may be low: it is a **political** decision, and the thing that influences it most of all, is the struggle between workers who want a reasonable standard of living, and capitalists, who want cheap labour.

RENT is not an isolated thing. We must see it as a relationship between wage (on the one hand) and quality of housing (on the other hand).

WAGE – RENT – HOUSING

It is usually assumed that shelter (that is, housing) will take a certain percentage of a persons income. Nobody can spend all their income on shelter, because money is also needed for clothes, food and other items.

A few years ago John Knoetze (of WRAB) said 'the trend throughout the world is that people spend 20 percent of their incomes on housing.' This has been shown to be untrue. The figure for Tanzania is 8,2 percent, for Brazil it is 9,5 percent and for the Soviet Union (Russia) it is 2,9 percent.

What percentages are paid in South African locations? If rent is R40 and the household earns R200 per month, then rent is 20 percent. If the family income is R400, then rent is 10 percent.

We must also consider the sort of accommodation that is provided, for the rent. If someone pays 10 percent of his income for a small, badly built house in a dangerous and unpleasant location, he is not getting as much as a person who pays 10 percent for a nice, spacious house in a pleasant suburb close to town.

Ba dla nombuso

When rent increases for Soweto were announced in April 1977, there was public outcry. The SSRC (Soweto Students Representative Council) demanded the resignation of the Soweto Urban Bantu Councillors, who were accused of collaborating with the apartheid government. Student leaders warned the councillors, saying that they were being used 'to oppress their own people'. By June 2, twenty three councillors had resigned, including Thebehadi. The Urban Bantu Council collapsed.

The Committee of 10 was formed. Its first objective was to prepare a 'blue-print' for a democratic and representative body to look after the interests of the people of Soweto.

The government, not interested in anything 'democratic and representative', ignored the Committee. The Urban Councils being discredited, Koornhof made up another name for the same thing and introduced Community Councils.

The first of these was introduced into Soweto in October 1977. It was rejected by the majority of people in Soweto. It was denounced by the Committee of 10.

In 1979, September, the Committee of 10 called a conference to plan a wider form of popular organisation. This gave rise to the Soweto Civic Association. There are now branches of this Association in many sections of Soweto; and it has links with associations in other townships; eg Mohlakeng Civic Association, Duduza Civic Association, Krugersdorp Residents Association, Port Elizabeth Black Civic Association (PEBCO) etc.

The difference

What is the difference between **Community Councils** and **Civic Associations**? The **Community Council** system was set up by the government. These bodies are the creation of baas Piet, and they have to do

what he says. The councillors get a salary (Thebehadi himself gets about R13 000 per year, in salary alone), and the pleasure of being stooges. The Councils are elected, but the elections are not serious. Only people with section 10 rights are allowed to vote: which disqualifies those thousands of Soweto residents who are called 'migrants'. Of those who are allowed to vote, only a few do so (about seven percent) because most people recognise the Community Councils to be agents of the government. There has in fact been a lot of resistance to the Councils, including violent attacks. Once a petrol bomb was thrown at Thebehadi; and recently the so-called mayor of Mohlakeng, Mr Thekwane, refused to attend a meeting of residents called by MOCA (Mohlakeng Civic Association), because 'the safety of his life and council was not guaranteed.' (Sowetan 1.11.82)

Civic Associations, on the other hand, are **not** government creations. As we have explained, they take their origin from the Committee of 10. They reject apartheid and its structures. They don't work with WRAB, or with Koornhof. They insist that apartheid must be abandoned. The function of Civic Associations is to look after the interests of residents, as far as possible. They oppose the Community Council system. Thebehadi hates them.

What is the ALC

Is the Alexandra Liaison Committee a Civic Association or is it a Community Council?

So far it has refused to become a Community Council, although Koornhof has requested it to do so. And it *says* that it is independent. But we must believe deeds and not words: and by its deeds, the Liaison Committee is very much like a Community Council. Rev. Buti likes to quote a popular song – 'Who's fooling who?' and he asks, 'Am I fooling Koornhof, or is Koornhof fooling me?' Our opinion is that both Koornhof and Buti are fooling the people of Alexandra.

Representing 10 percent

The Liaison Committee is elected in the same way that Community Councils are — that is, by the so-called 'legals' of the township, (if they are up to date with their rent!) As with Community Council elections, only a very small number of people bother to vote. Out of a population of 50 000, 4 500 voted for the Save Alex Party in 1982. That is less than 10 percent. Many people believe that the Liaison Committee does *not* represent Alexandra, and that it is used as a front by WRAB, to carry out government policy. Here are some of their reasons for this point of view:

1. The LC pressurised stand-holders to sell their freehold rights:
2. The LC collaborates with WRAB:
3. The LC threatens shack owners, and agrees to their shacks being demolished:
4. The LC accepts and implements the apartheid policy of passlaws, influx control etc:
5. Leader of the LC, Sam Buti has tried to suppress free thought and expression, by begging people not to read IZWI LASE TOWNSHIP:
6. The LC knows that accomodation is short in Alexandra, yet it accepts projects that take up space, like the tennis courts etc.

7. In 1980 the LC recommended and approved rent increases of 100 & 200 percent for hostel residents. "It was explained to us by WRAB that the rent increases were necessary, and we felt 'it's fine', Mr Makubiri said. (Star 3.7.80.)

These are just some of the reason why many people reject the LC. On the other hand there are people who still support and favour Buti's party. They have come to believe that in some way Buti 'saved' Alexandra.

Two classes not one

The problem is that people talk about Alexandra as if it were a thing. It is not a thing, but a place, in which there are people with different and conflicting interests. There are at least two classes of people in the township, the middle-class and the working class. Middle-class people are those who work as clerks, teachers, headmasters, priests, doctors, nurses, social workers, policemen etc. They are quite well off, and they have security in their jobs. Some of them are educated. These people are in favour of the LC, which includes the same kind of people (Buti a rev., Taunyane an educationist, Makwibiri a social worker, Mathebula in business and so on) and they have middle-class habits. Buti has said that he will establish a 'housing committee' to deal with housing problems in the township. But the people he wants on this committee are all middle-class people like himself: a teacher, a social worker, a policeman etc.

Better-class location

It seems clear that the LC and the government intend to make Alexandra a middle-class area, with quite expensive housing, parks, and so on. But the working-class is not represented by the LC; their problems are neglected. This is the class of people who suffer most from low wages and insecurity. Many are unemployed: many are 'migrants'. There are also elderly people, and people too sick to work, living in Alexandra. For these people the priorities are cheap housing, cheap and good clinical facilities, free education for their children, decent sewerage, light and water. These are the bread-and-butter issues that concern the working class.

Alexandra has been 'saved' for the middle-class. Workers will find it harder and harder to survive here.

Who's helping who ?

The government has always wanted a Liaison Committee to help them control Alexandra. It was a troublesome place when it had its own freely elected representatives on the Health Committee (1915 to 1958). As soon as Peri Urban took control, they appointed a Liaison Committee to help them in their job. However, the people of Alexandra, who had recently won the bus boycott of 1957, rejected this Liaison Committee and forced its members to resign. One member of the LC says that his life was threatened. When this stooge body collapsed, Peri Urban was angry, and began expelling the peoples' leaders.

What a different story today. The West Rand Board has the full co-operation of the present Liaison Committee: the LC members are satisfied with themselves: and people have been persuaded that the LC is helping them, when in fact it is helping the government.

We must be clear that everyone who supports the LC is supporting the government, by working for an organisation that helps implement government policy.

It should not be forgotten that there is a conflict between the people of South Africa and the government, and that any organisation that collaborates with the South African government, must be looked on with suspicion by the people. The Alexandra Liaison Committee is one such organisation.



Tricks to beware

- The 'mayor' of Mohlakeng township, Mr Alfred Tekwane, says that residents who cannot afford the new rent should immediately approach the authorities.
- Mr Bezuidenhout, WRAB's chief director, said that residents who were unable to pay the new rents could approach their local township managers, who would reduce rents where possible.

The trick here is to raise hope in people that they may be lucky individuals, and that the authorities will treat them sympathetically. This hope makes people avoid giving the authorities trouble. Instead of joining in resistance, they go quietly up to the rent office, and ask for kindness.

In the end they regret this, because obviously there will be no kindness for them. Once the office is strong enough to insist on the full rent, they will demand it, whether you are starving or not. That is how some families get evicted. They cannot pay, and they are thrown out.

- In June 1982 twenty five Soweto families occupied new houses in Chiawelo extension, despite the fact that the rent was still unknown. Later very high rents were announced; and it is said that several families had to leave their houses and go somewhere else.
- In August 1982, twenty families in Alexandra were moved into new houses, and their old homes were demolished immediately. Rents in the new houses were not revealed at the time. It seems possible that the new rents will be high, and some families may not be able to pay.
- In 1980, residents in Walmer, supported by PEBCO, fought against removal to a place called Zwide. In Walmer rents were between R12,00 and R16,00. But in Zwide they were R20,00. Families who had already been moved, found that they could not afford the new houses, and returned to Walmer and looked for places to lodge or built shacks.

The trick here is to tempt people with the offer of new houses, and later tell them of the high rents. Those who are unable to afford these rents, will leave and go away, either to a reserve, or to lodge with relatives, or build a shack.

Don't ...

DON'T move from your present house, until you know what rent you will have to pay in the new house.

DON'T agree to pay a rental you cannot afford. Rent should not be more than about 10% of your income. If you earn R200 per month, your rent should be about R20 only: if you earn R400 you could pay R40 in rent: and if you earn less than R100 per month, you should pay R10 or less in rent.

DON'T agree to exchange houses, once you have been moved into a new one. If you go back into the old Alex, they will never again allocate a new house to you, and eventually you will be forced out of the township.

DON'T believe anyone who tells you that WRAB or the Liaison Committee can help you, if you throw yourself on their mercy. They are there to do Piet Koornhof's dirty work, and they will do it. There is more safety in organising with your fellow workers and residents, and fighting as a united mass.

Insist on your right to remain and live, in a well built house, with a reasonable rent, in Alexandra township. Don't allow yourself to be sent to any one of the ruined 'homelands'.

Retrenchment

Retrenchment is a word that we are hearing often these days. More and more workers are being thrown out of their jobs as the economic crisis grows. Retrenchment is not the same as a worker being dismissed and losing his job; it happens when the boss says 'Business is bad', and dismisses a whole lot of workers, because he is cutting back on production. To workers it means that suddenly there is no pay-packet; rents cannot be paid; children go hungry; HP goods are repossessed. Even if you manage to keep your job, there are now thousands of unemployed waiting to take your place if anything should go wrong.

An excuse

Often retrenchment is an excuse used by employers, to restructure their factories, and to replace workers with machines.

Alternatives

It is not easy for workers to defend themselves against retrenchment. This is only possible where they are organised.

All over South Africa workers have been suggesting alternatives to retrenchment. For example, **Short Time**. This is a way of reducing production by reducing factory hours. Workers work fewer hours, and get a slightly lower wage, but in this way they share the burden. In Pretoria some motor-car factories are closed one day a week.

Another way is **Unpaid Leave**, where workers take turns in leaving the factory for a month or so before coming back to work.

To everyone a job

Another suggestion is a **Ban on Overtime**. It does not seem reasonable for a factory to dismiss workers, while others are doing overtime work.

All of these alternatives to retrenchment are in fact being used in various factories at present. The idea behind these worker suggestions is that everyone should have a job, and that if there really is an economic crisis, the whole working class should share the burden of lower wages equally.

But sometimes employers are determined to cut back on their work-force. In a Cape Town factory, Dorman Long, some workers who had Section 10 rights offered to be retrenched instead of workers who were on contract. They knew that those on contract would be endorsed out of the city, would not be able to get another job and would end up starving in the Transkei. This factory is well organised, the workers know the meaning of solidarity.

3 principles

Usually, when retrenchment is unavoidable, trade unions try to stick to the following principals:

- 1) 'Last In, First Out' – the workers with the shortest service should leave first. The bosses have to be prevented from laying-off workers who are getting old but who have given the best years of their lives to the company. Also, the bosses will try to retrench on the basis of the workers' work record. This is often an excuse to get rid of workers' leaders or someone that the foreman thinks is 'cheeky'. The Last In, First Out' system is the best defense that organised workers have.
- 2) Severance Pay should be given by the bosses. The workers should not simply be thrown onto the streets with no money. The bosses should use some of their profits from the boom to support the workers during the crisis.

- 3) Those dismissed should be contacted and re-employed if the company decides to employ more people again.

Workers under attack

Unfortunately, the workers are not always able to win these demands. They are fighting a defensive battle, often from a very weak position. For the workers, retrenchments are a sign that the capitalist system does not work. It is this system which has a boom one year and a crisis the next. During the boom the workers do not benefit and in the crisis they can be thrown out onto the streets. What can we think of a system which cannot assure people the right to work?

What is a shop steward ?

A shop-steward is a worker who is elected by other workers to represent them and their interests on the factory floor (ie in their place of work). The main function of a shop-steward is to take up a grievance from a worker as soon as it occurs, and present this to management so that the problem can be sorted out.

In large factories where there are different departments, the workers in each department elects their own shop-steward. Sometimes all the shop-stewards at the particular factory come together and form a Shop-stewards Committee.

These shop-stewards are an important link between the union and the workers at factory level.

Sometimes shop-stewards from different factories come together to form a Shop-stewards Council which represents all workers from factories located in a particular area.

Interview with a shop steward

A worker from Barlows in Kew talks to us about the procedures at that factory in retrenching people.

Worker: When we were told about retrenchment in our factory, we, as the shop-stewards committee representing workers at Barlows, demanded that if there is to be retrenchment at all, management should offer a lump sum of R700 so that whoever feels he can do with that money without a job, should take it and leave. We suggested this in an attempt to prevent the indunas, foremen etc from picking on those they don't like, or who they regard as cheeky, and firing those.

Izwi: *Why were workers retrenched in the first place?*

Worker: We were told by management that the economy is in crisis. Goods are not sold and so on. For this reason they had to lay-off some workers.



Izwi: What about production? Did retrenchment affect production?

Worker: This point confuses me, as workers come to me as chairman of the shop-stewards committee, to complain that the work is killing them, because now one worker does work previously performed by two or three workers. I haven't worked out if the target of production is the same as before, but I am inclined to say, yes, it is the same production.

Retrenchment was carried out twice. And now they claim that they do not retrench workers any more, but I think they do, by way of keeping a watchful eye on a worker to see if he does not commit any minor fault.

Or sometimes a worker may take a long time in the toilet, and when he comes back a warning is given. There are two warnings before a worker is taken to the disciplinary committee, ie to face the line management where one is fired there and then. This makes me think that people are still retrenched, but management doesn't want to pay R700 and that is why they like to pretend that it is a dismissal and not a retrenchment.

Q: How did you become a Trade Union shop-steward?

A: I came across a worker, and we were discussing generally about the problems of workers. He told me that we should go to the Union. At that time Union offices were near the factories in Kew. I was surprised and asked him what a union is. Anyway, I went with him and listened to what they said. And I felt this is what workers need, if it is really true that this union will stop bosses kicking us around, or from firing workers at will. I attended meetings and gradually I started to understand that the union calls for struggle. I mean, the union

doesn't get concessions by merely demanding them from management: they should put pressure by all means at their disposal, even strike, if negotiation fails.

Then I had to go to my factory and try to persuade the people in the Liaison Committee to give way to the union, and this was difficult. We tried to kill it on several occasions, until the workers elected those of us who were members of the union (Metal & Allied Workers Union - MAWU) to represent them on the LC. So we tried to show the other Liaison Committee members that the LC is not truly representative of the workers' interests, but it took us time to get their support. Eventually they were convinced, as the majority who were sitting in the LC were union members. Only 2 were not. And then we decided to resign from the LC.

Most workers are now union members - except the clerks and some in the personnel department.

There are other factories besides Barlows where there is trade union membership: namely NuWorld and EEG. They have their own shop-stewards who represent them to management. I am the one who organised workers at NuWorld. A certain worker at that factory was told that there was a union at Barlows, and he came to me and asked what a union is. I explained to him, and told him that a union can be powerful only if it includes all workers in a factory; so I told him to come with another five workers to a meeting at my house. Each of the other five brought someone, so in fact there were about eleven workers. We then decided to hold meetings at Thabisong. At these meetings we discussed our common problems as workers. It was easy for us to agree on many issues, because we were all workers.

Worker participation

Workers organisations have different ways of ensuring workers control and workers participation. One of the most interesting developments in the Fosatu group of unions over the last 2 years is the way that workers have taken the responsibility into their own hands for organising workers in their area, and creating grass roots unity among the members of FOSATU'S unions. The main way in which this has been done is the shop stewards council.

Shop-stewards councils in FOSATU first developed in 1980 in Natal, but it was only in 1981-82 that they became common in other FOSATU regions. The reason for forming them has in most cases been the same. Shop-stewards in organised factories have been anxious to extend organisation to unorganised factories in their areas, but union organisers have been too few to carry out this task without the shop-stewards themselves lending a hand.

The pattern was set in northern Natal. With few organisers in the region a shop-stewards council was formed which took responsibility for developing the unions. Four sub-committees were elected to carry out particular tasks: an organising committee, an administration committee, an education committee and a planning committee. The organising committee's job was to visit new factories and organise workers into unions. If a union for the industry was not already active in the area, it was invited to establish a branch (in northern Natal, for example, Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union). By these means Fosatu unions grew at a tremendous pace, and workers control and workers participation were widened and reinforced.

Some of the most active shop-stewards councils to have grown up since then are based in the Transvaal. According to Richard Ntuli, who is the shop-stewards

council chairman in Katlehong, there were only 2 FOSATU factories in the entire Wadeville area in 1981. Also, little organisation was being undertaken by other unions, so workers were in a weak condition. Shop-stewards therefore decided to form a shop-stewards council to plan organisational drives. At first it met every month, and by the end of 1981 23 factories were attending council meetings, directly representing over 7 000 workers. As a result of this growth shop-stewards have had to take on other responsibilities as well, for example helping out in other factories problems.

Consequently the council now meets every 2 weeks, and a planning committee meets every week in between. Educational meetings take place on a monthly basis. Recently smaller township councils have been formed (known ironically as 'group areas'), as a means of consolidating the rapid expansion that has occurred.

Other locals in the Transvaal have followed Katlehong's example, eg Kempton Park, Johannesburg, Roodepoort, Brits, Witbank and Pretoria. Others already in existence have expanded their tasks. The Springs locals aims include:

- assisting workers and unions in their struggle by solidarity action
- forging links with the community organisations to encourage solidarity between the community and the workers struggle.

Worker democracy

These initiatives that workers have taken are a shining example to workers all over South Africa. They show the workers determination to build up worker democracy and to control their organisations. FOSATU has recently ratified the situation that had already developed at its Second Congress, by formally building shop-stewards councils into its structures and constitution, so that all areas will now establish shop-stewards councils.



NATIONAL UNION OF TEXTILE WORKERS

"We must not just fight to improve retrenchment procedures, but to understand the system," a spokesperson said. "Workers see that work is a right, not a privilege — their organised strength is the solution."

NUTW politicises its members about unemployment in a variety of ways: Publications, training seminars for shopstewards, general meetings with members to discuss retrenchment. Shop stewards explain and discuss retrenchment at lunch breaks.

"The fight is firstly for INFORMATION — we need the facts of what is happening in a factory. Then we must demand *consultation*, to find alternatives to retrenchment. Only lastly is there a fight for a more favourable deal for laid-off workers."

What is a Trade Union ?

A trade union is an organisation of workers which protects and represents their interests. It articulates their grievances and interprets their needs. It is also a function of trade unions to educate workers about their rights. The power of the union lies in the workers unity. Hence the union is responsible to its members.

There are many trade unions today in South Africa: Metal and Allied Workers Union; Engineering and Allied Workers Union; Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union; Glass and Allied Workers Union; SA Chemical Workers Union; etc.

Why have a trade union?

Factory workers are not usually successful when they ask for wage increases as individuals. It is also a fact that when there is competition among workers for jobs this puts them in a weak position, more so at a time of high unemployment, because this means that if a worker resists in the job, he can easily be replaced, for there are many workers waiting to take his place. This also helps the bosses to keep wages low.

What is the solution?

The solution is to form trade unions. When workers form these they get rid of the competition among themselves, and they thereby become powerful. Workers power lies in their unity.

Reports on Shacks

1977 May - Residents of Orlando East were ordered to demolish their shacks. They refused because these shacks were used to house adult family members who failed to get their own houses. The housing shortage in Soweto was over 20 000.

July - WRAB announced that residents should submit plans for approval, if they intended putting up extra structures.

August - 800 people were made homeless when their shacks were demolished in Clermont, Natal. It was said that the land had been bought by a Zulu businessman.

1978 July - Household in Duncan Village, East London, were ordered to demolish backyard shacks within 10 days. As there was no alternative accommodation, 1000 shacks were set up on vacant ground in the township. In August officials of the East Cape Administration Board (ECAB), assisted by police, raided these squatters, and most of the shacks were demolished by front-end loaders. 93 people were arrested.

- Hundreds of shacks at Richmond Farm, outside Kwa Mashu, were demolished by the board.

Oct - 42 shacks in Parkside and Buffalo Flats were demolished by ECAB. 200 people were arrested. After public outcry, Swanepoel, chief director of ECAB, ordered that the destruction of shacks should stop.

- The demolition of 5 000 squatters shacks, housing about 20 000 people in Clermont, Durban, was started.

- Residents in the Sishosana section of Katlehong were ordered to remove the shacks behind their two-roomed houses within 10 days. They were used to accommodate the families own children.

- 2 000 East Rand homeless families announced their intention to build shacks in Daveyton.

1979 Jan - Squatters were raided in East London; 21 people arrested.

March - Shacks in Frankfort, King Williams Town, were demolished and 150 families resettled in another area.

April - Daveyton residents set up shacks on open ground. This shantytown, called Phumlanqashi, was demolished 2 days later by police. Shadrack Sinaba (rebel Community Councillor, and leader of the squatters) was detained.

1980 Feb - Members of the Sinaba Party, demonstrated against the demolishing of their shacks. Sinaba called on residents to build back-yard shacks to accommodate homeless families.

- It was announced that shack-dwellers in Katlehong should pay not more than R10 per month. It was said that this was to protect them from being overcharged by landlords.

July - The Kimberley Community Council ordered residents to demolish 54 shacks in Galeshwe, and to remove derelict vehicles, within 10 days.

1981 July - WRAB started demolishing shacks in Kliptown.

- Shack-dwellers in Orlando East defied orders to demolish their shacks. The Soweto Community Council decided not to demolish these shacks until an extra room could be added to each house.

- It was reported that about 12 000 families in Katlehong live in backyard shacks.

1982 Jan - More than 500 Mamelodi, Pretoria, residents, organised by the Valamsho Vukani Peoples' Party, resolved not to demolish their shacks, as instructed by the Central Transvaal Board.

- The Liaison Committee in Alexandra threatened people who erected shacks. They promised that such shacks would be demolished.

Feb - In Duduza, Nigel, more than 200 shacks have been built by homeless families, in spite of the threat of prosecution by ERAB.

July - Mr F Marx, chief director of ERAB, said the Board had decided to provide families living in shacks in Braampan Old Location, with a temporary site in Tuakane, where they could have their shacks until the Board provided them with houses.

Aug - Mamelodi residents were assured that their shacks would not be demolished until the loan had been secured for the extension of their existing houses.

- 28 people will face charges relating to the erection of shacks in Evaton.

- More than 500 residents in Kwa Thema will ask the Board to be allowed to erect backyard shacks, as an alternative form of accommodation.

Oct - Demolition of shacks in Kagiso.

Nov - ERAB began a survey of the 30 000 shacks said to exist in Katlehong.

- Referring to the illegal erection of shacks in Evaton, an official said that any person who intended to build a shack should go through the correct channels. He agreed there was a housing shortage in the area.

- Orlando East Civic Association has called on all black organisations to help fight the latest ultimatum from the Soweto Council, that residents must demolish their shacks in 10 days, or face prosecution.

- ERAB demolished 18 shacks in Katlehong, on Friday 12 'because their owners do not qualify for residence on the East Rand.' (The Star 15.11.82) 'The number of shacks in Katlehong is now double the number of houses. There are 17 650 houses, and the number of shacks has increased from 25 000 at the beginning of this year, to 34 000.'

- 18th: About a thousand people - men, women and children - were picked up during a WRAB raid on shack dwellers, at 2 am, in Orlando East. Those who were found to be legal residents were released. Illegals were fined and released.

- 26th: The Soweto Council announced that it would allow the building of zoos in place of backyard shacks in Orlando East. This would bring relief to the townships 16 000 families staying in these structures.

Koornhof creates imikhukhu

It is said in Alexandra that when a WRAB policeman needs zinks for his place in the homeland, he looks for imikhukhu to demolish.

We don't say this is true; but we do say that it is possible. Bad laws produce tyranny and corruption, and the segregation laws creating ghettos for blacks in South Africa are bad laws.

However, this question of imikhukhu (shacks) involves more than petty theft. A shack demolished here or there in Alexandra is only the tip of the ice-berg. There is a massive and serious housing shortage. We must examine the question of shacks in the context of this problem of housing.

It is not because people like them, that they live in shacks, construction-pipes, in zoos, scrap cans, tents, under plastic, in cardboard shanties. It is because there is not enough housing. This is the case everywhere in South Africa.

A strange thing

If you study those reports carefully, you will notice that the authorities threaten shacks, but they don't always remove them: they demolish some, but leave others: they fine the owners for having a shack, but don't take the shack from them. Especially in Orlando East and in Katlehong there is this double policy of condemning shacks, but also allowing them.

Now that is very strange. Why do the authorities have this attitude? If they don't want shacks, why not get rid of them? Or if they are willing to allow shacks, why don't they leave them all alone?

A massive shortage

In February of this year there were about 50 000 backyard shacks on the East Rand. In Katlehong alone there are more than 30 000. That means there must be over 250 000 people living in shack accommodation in East Rand locations. Everyone knows that in Orlando, where houses are very small and stands quite large, almost every yard has a shack, or sometimes many shacks together. Obviously the people who live in such conditions are not comfortable. But we know that the rulers are not bothered about the peoples' welfare.

The black working class does not have the vote, and the government is therefore indifferent to their comfort. The point is not comfort or lack of comfort; the point is usefulness: and it seems that shacks actually have a usefulness for the authorities. Though shacks are very easy to knock down, there are many thousands in use, not only on the Witwatersrand, but everywhere in the whole country. Obviously they serve a function, and the authorities are willing to let them continue to serve that function.



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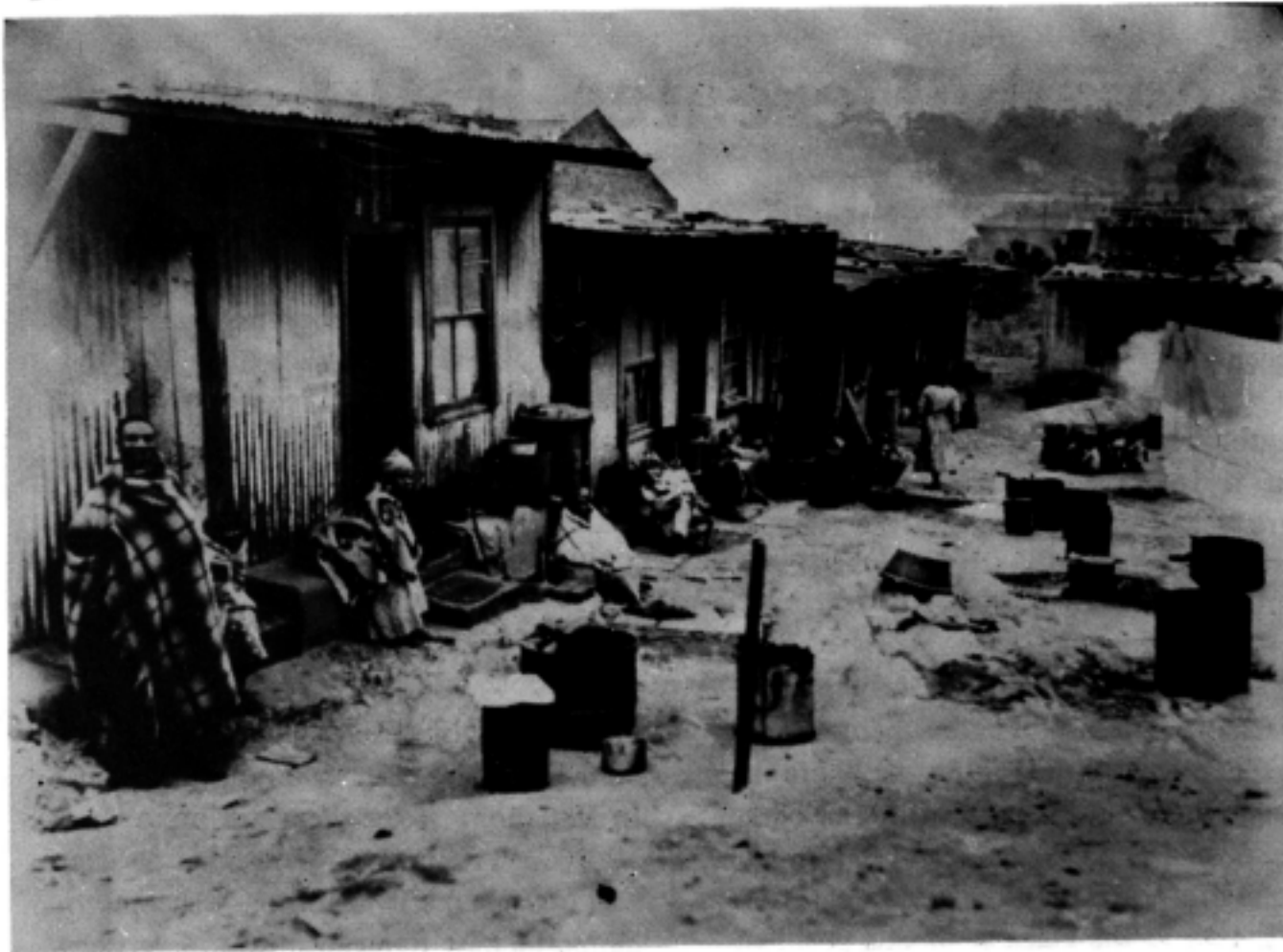
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What is this function?

Black housing policy is used to control the working class:

1. Cheap housing makes it possible for employers to pay low wages, and thus keep profits high.
2. The housing shortage can be used to control influx from the reserves.
3. Competition for houses makes workers divided and insecure.

56/6

The typical location house (it is officially called a 56/6) was designed to allow the smallest possible living space for a family, to be the easiest to mass-produce, and to have the cheapest possible building materials. Workers can survive in these houses, without causing epidemics of disease.

Lack of housing forces many people to double up in their small houses. This makes labour even cheaper, because you may have several families paying a single rent!

The discomfort and crowding is a cost to the workers.

Secondly, it is possible to prevent workers entering a prescribed area unless they have 'approved' accommodation. In this way the authorities can let in many workers if they are needed; and, when they are not needed, can force them out of the loca-

tions. A location is like a sponge: it can absorb people, or you can squeeze them out. Shacks are very useful in this; for they can be allowed or dis-allowed, depending on your policy of the moment.

Thirdly, the insecurity of people, who do not own their houses and may be forced out of them, keeps them tame. Few people will take action that might lead to them being evicted. This is a way of controlling workers.

So we see that the housing shortage, the doubling up in houses, the existence of shacks etc, are of use to the authorities in one way or another. Sometimes they want shacks and sometimes they don't.



Shacks in Orlando East 1982. The spirit of James Mpanza is getting restless.

Sometimes they allow doubling up, sometimes they don't. It all depends on the needs of industry and commerce. Whenever there is trouble over shacks, we must ask ourselves what the authorities are trying to do. Are they getting rid of people because there is unemployment? Are they relocating people? Are they short of money and trying to get fines? Are they making people unsettled and afraid? Are they trying to get people to accept that they must pay 'lodger fees'? Whatever the circumstances, the authorities themselves must not be believed, because they usually lie.

Are rents high

We must not think that the housing question is simple. We have explained that employers want rents to be low, because that allows low wages. But the location authorities (WRAB, Thebehadi etc) want rents to be high, because that allows location income to increase. Capitalists want low rent for workers; the government wants high rent from the workers.

or low?

How do they solve that problem? Actually it is quite easy. They make the rents HIGH IN RELATION TO THE QUALITY OF ACCOMMODATION. That means the rent is high when you consider that the houses are small, horrible to live in, and that the services are inefficient, the locations dangerous and overcrowded, facilities like schools and clinics are low grade, and so on. Residents pay rents that are LOW if you compare them to rents in white suburbs: but HIGH if you look at what the rent is actually buying.

In this way, the rents are low for capitalists, who pay low wages; but high for the lousy service you get from Thebehadi.

When you look at it like this, you see that shacks are of use to capitalists, because people can stay in shacks for quite low rentals: but not of use to Administration Boards, because they do not produce rent. So sometimes there is a struggle between the employers and the administrators. Employers say, 'You can't tear down these shacks, where will my workers sleep?' While Thebehadi says, 'We must tear them down because they harbour illegals.' This is what may have happened in the Port Elizabeth area, when ECAB attacked shacks, and the City Council defended them.



It is nothing new for people to shelter under scrap zinks. A photo taken in 1960.

A right to a shack

In Daveyton the Sinaba Party (which is an 'opposition' party within the Community Council) insisted on the right of people to have shacks in their backyards, owing to the lack of alternative housing. It is said that previously the Council found resistance from residents when rents were raised, but since shacks have been left alone, there is no longer such resistance.

Presumably people can now afford the rent, since they charge their shack dweller tenants enough to cover rent (or even possibly more). There are many residents who take advantage of the shortage of housing to exploit their tenants. As we said earlier, a bad law leads to corruption. We must not think about housing as if it were something that the **authorities** should provide for the **people**. It is rather

a matter of conflict between two classes, capitalists and workers, and housing has a place in this struggle. Workers strive for reasonable housing, the employers use housing as a weapon to cheapen and control workers. For workers obviously the struggle cannot be waged successfully in terms of complaints and requests. Only when workers unite and force concessions, will their housing conditions improve.

In 1930 the (Anglican) Church of the Province in Johannesburg tried to find out from residents in Alexandra, why they had come there. Here are some of the answers:

- A: "I lived on the farm Sterkspruit for eleven years. In 1928 I noticed a great change in the treatment by my master. He complained about the number of cattle I had. I decided to buy a plot of ground at Alexandra Township, so I left the farm and settled out here."
- B: "I was once rich in livestock, but owing to the trouble of the farmer, I am now a poor man. He could not allow me to possess any cattle, so I sold all the cattle I had and bought, in October 1929, two freehold stands out here."
- C: "I lived on the farm Roodebank in the district of Heidelberg. I had to leave the farm because the master did not allow me to own any cattle. He said I should keep one milk cow. Besides, he allowed me to plant 20 rows of 40 yards each with mealies for my children, and as this was insufficient, we starved a great deal, so I decided to come to the Rand for work. Fortunately now I have bought a stand out here. In fact when I arrived here, I was ragged."
- D: "I lived on the farm N. . . . in the district of Standerton. I arrived here on 21 December 1930. I left the farm because my master did not allow me to own any cattle — he told me to sell all except one. I had to work on the farm with my wife and children from morning till evening and I was not paid, so I decided to leave the farm for Alexandra. I have just bought a freehold stand and am going to build on it."

**Reprieve
for
shack
dwellers**

By MZIKAYISE EDOM
and
JEFFREY NKUNA

MORE than 600 backyard tin shacks in Daveyton, near Benoni, will not be demolished until the Site and Service Scheme plan for Holfontein farm is under way.

Sow
8/12/82



BoMmadikitchi

People in domestic jobs are workers. Like other workers they do not own businesses or farms or whatever; they have to find wage-work to live.

Why, then, are these workers called 'servants', and why is their work called domestic service?

We must see the difference between a home (where the domestic works) and a factory, if we want to understand why domestic work is different. Factories need workers to operate the machines and keep everything going, to produce goods for sale. The boss has to employ workers, he cannot do everything in the factory himself. The workers co-operate: one does this, another does that, and their work is put together in a product, which can then be sold. It is from this process that the boss gets his income.

This has to go on all the time, and every worker is necessary. If a worker leaves, his machine will be idle, and that will interrupt production. So the boss becomes worried about his income.

This is why factory workers have some strength: if they have a grievance, they can threaten to strike. A strike interrupts production, and the boss does not want work to stop, even for one day. So he is often willing to talk things over with his employees before there is a strike.

Of course domestic work is also necessary. Someone has to clean house, cook food, look after children and so on. But unlike factory work, it is not necessary to employ workers to do these things. Housework can be done by the people who live in the house: in most places in the world that is how it is usually done. And this is really the difference between factory work and housework — in a business wage-workers are necessary, but in a home, the housework can be done by whoever lives there, and wage-workers are not necessary. A domestic worker is a servant because she is doing work IN THE PLACE OF her employer. To have a domestic servant is a luxury for the employer, because she is now free from work that she doesn't want to do. When she has a domestic, the employer can do whatever she prefers doing — she can go shopping in the Mall, play golf with her friends, she can study or she can even go and get a job. But in this case she will earn a far higher salary than she pays her maid.

Necessary ?

Like other luxuries, having a domestic is not absolutely necessary. People can manage quite well without servants. And that is why it is said that domestic work is not necessary. What is really meant, is that the domestic worker (the one who does this task for a wage) is not necessary.

This is why domestics are in a weak position, and cannot bargain for higher wages very easily. The factory worker is necessary for production, and the boss does not want to interrupt production, but the domestic worker can be dismissed, and there is no loss to the employer. She can do the work herself, or wait for a replacement servant. Thus the domestic cannot really bargain, and just has to take what she is offered.

Who decides?

We said that housework itself is necessary. Someone has to do it: it may be a 'makoti', it may be a 'housewife', it may be a 'slave'. Who decides that this person or that person must be the one to do this kind of work?

This is the sort of thing that is decided by the social system of a country, more especially by the rulers. Sometimes it is decided with the consent of the workers, at other times without their consent, by forcing them to do a certain kind of work, whether they like it or not.

Trapped workers

We therefore have to discuss the social system under which we live in South Africa. This will help us understand why there are so many domestic workers in this country; why it is women rather than men who do this work; and why it is African women not white women who are domestics. We must say straight away that African women do not do domestic jobs because they want to, or because they are uneducated, or because of bad luck. They do it because they are TRAPPED. They cannot get other jobs, so they are forced into domestic employment. We will now go on to explain how.

The system we have in South Africa is based on the use of machinery which is operated to produce goods continuously. Those who own the machinery are called capitalists, those who work for wages are called workers. These are the two main groups, or classes, in the capitalist system.

Before about 1920 the capitalists found it hard to get people who would work continuously for a wage. Africans were used to a different system, based on farming. People with land, cattle, crops etc prefer to stay on the land, growing food for their own families. Sometimes they would go and work for a wage, but only to pay tax, or buy clothes or weapons. As soon as they had enough cash, they would leave the job and go home: or perhaps they had to go and sow crops or reap them. But they could not be persuaded to stay in a factory full time.

This was not useful to capitalist employers, especially after diamonds and gold were found in South Africa. Mining needs steady workers who will produce continuously.

The colonial powers capitalists decided therefore to drive Africans off the land. They invaded the Kingdoms and Chiefdoms under which Africans lived, and so caused the African system of production to collapse. This forced men (and later women) to leave the land and go to work for wages in mines, on farms and in factories.

The old system being smashed, everyone in South Africa is now involved in the capitalist system. Thus capitalism has caused people to become wage-workers, that is people who have no means of getting an income except by taking a job for wages.

Now there are not enough jobs available for the people who need to earn money. This is not a problem for the employer-class (capitalists). In fact it is quite good for their business, because it means that workers will accept low wages. But for those who are without employment, it is a serious thing. They face starvation.

What is the cause ?

There are so many African women who work as domestics, that it has come to seem **natural** for them to do this. Some (white) employers would be surprised if you asked them why they employ an African woman to do their housework, instead of doing it themselves. And some (African) domestics takes it for granted that it is the right sort of job for them. But in fact, it is **NOT** a natural situation. In most



countries this does not happen at all. Only where there is a big difference between some being wealthy and others being poor, do you find domestic service as we have it in South Africa. It is here because our society is so unequal.

It has not always been African women who worked as domestics. In the early years of Johannesburg, the mine-owners brought women and girls from England to be house-keepers and nannies. Also, until recently, it was quite usual to find domestic jobs being done by men (Zulu 'house-boys'). In fact, in some places it was unusual for African women to go into domestic service for whites.



Passes for women, 1956. A womens' defiance meeting

We could say that once there were no African women domestic servants, and in the future again there will be none. In the meantime, there are many; and we must ask what is it that drives them into such work? We have said that they are **TRAPPED** workers. How does the trap work?

We have seen why it is that people can no longer live on the land, and that they must find jobs. But it is not clear yet why some women go into domestic work and not into factories or offices.

The main reason is that the pass laws prevent people from getting the sort of jobs they want. These laws make it hard for people to move freely and look for higher paid work. Pass laws keep people in one place or another, making them do whatever work is needed by employers. If a man from Transkei works as a miner for a year, that is the only job he will be able to get from then on. If you won't take mine work, you won't get a job at all. Women from Bophuthatswana are not allowed to look for industrial work in Johannesburg area. Only if they take domestic work, with their passes be put in order.

Another problem is the shortage of housing for blacks in urban areas. Women who do not have a house or a lodger permit in a location, often take domestic work just to get a room to live in.

A third reason is (as we have already explained) that there are too few jobs available: that is, unemployment. This makes many women grateful to get a domestic job, even if it is horrible.

A luxury

Domestic work is necessary, as we said; but it could be done by the people living in the house. Nevertheless, out of the profits they get from their businesses, or because they earn high salaries, ruling-class people get workers to do their housework, and they pay them wages. For the employer this is a luxury. It frees her to do things that she prefers doing. This luxury is quite important to employers. It makes their life easier. It enables them to provide care for their children, husbands and friends. It keeps their family life orderly and pleasant. It enables the wife to study, to get skills that will be useful. It enables everyone in the household to get high paying jobs, while they know that the house and the children are being looked after during the day, by maids.

At whose expense

This may be a pleasant way to live, but it is lived at the expense of the domestics. To look after madam's children, she must neglect her own. To support the home-life of her employers, she must not have a home life of her own. To enable the missus to get a good job, she must herself do the boring and hard job in the house, and get a low salary for it. The employer class lives well, comfortably, and they are able to develop their characters. The domestics live uncomfortably, and get poorer all the time. Their family life is broken and their children suffer. Domestic work is a sign of the inequality of the social system in South Africa.

From slave to servant

- 1658 The Dutch who settled in the Cape, brought slaves from West Africa. Some of these were made to do domestic work: they were listed as 'inferior domestics'
- 1792 The Landdrost of Graaff Reinet was ordered to encourage the capture of Xosa prisoners, to be distributed among the Boers as servants, or sent to the Slave Lodge in Cape Town.
- 1809 By this date most of the Khoi-koi (hottentots) were servants of the colonists, because they had lost access to the land that used to be theirs. 'They were almost completely at the mercy of the farmer for whom they worked, since if he withheld their wages they had no means of enforcing payment, and if they left his service they were treated as runaways.'
- 1825 "Our servants consist chiefly of Hottentots. They live in a straw hut erected by themselves, at a little distance but concealed from the house." Mrs Philipps, in a letter home.
- 1823 A refugee tribe of Mantatees was attacked and scattered by Griqua and Bechuana fighters, leaving many dead, and women and children abandoned. Missionaries arranged for them to be sent to Graaff Reinet, pointing out, 'They will make good servants.' By 1825 there were nearly fifty adult Mantatees apprenticed in the district of Graaff Reinet, and probably more wandering about or in informal service.
- 1833 The year slaves were freed. This was only completed by 1838, after which servants were 'apprenticed' rather than bound in slavery. It often made no difference. A certain Mr Kidwell, once seeing a slave woman put up for auction at the Grahamstown market in 1830, bought her for seven pounds ten, intending to set her free. 'But liberty had no value for her as she had nowhere to go. She followed Mr Kidwell and served the family faithfully for many years. . .'
- 1890 On the new gold-fields of the Witwatersrand, there was a demand for white female domestics in the homes of mining capitalists. At the same time 'house-boys' were employed for rough work. A visitor writes, 'Raw Kaffirs, who till a few months before had not seen the inside of a house, were pressed into service. . . The best one could hope for was an inferior type of Cape boy.'
- 1897 'Since the reduction of mine-boys wages, there has been a larger supply of kitchen boys.' The Star 3.5.1897.
- 1902 'The Municipal Compound Manager has reported that many of the natives have given notice to leave the service of the Council, as they can get higher wages elsewhere as house-boys . . .' Johannesburg City Council Minutes, January 22, 1902.
- 1904 Unlike other parts of South Africa, in the Free State female domestic workers were standard. The 1904 census showed that 90% of domestic workers were women. This was no doubt a carry-over from platteland farms, where wives and daughters of farm workers, worked in white households as domestics. (Julie Wells)
- " . . . our locations are full to a large extent with Kaffir women loafing about making kaffir beer and living on prostitution. This law (Municipal Corporations Act of the Orange River Colony) has enabled the police to make them go to work . . . there has been a great outcry for the want of Kaffir maid-servants, and I think that this law is very effective." Statement to the Native Commission in 1904.
- 1905 . . . the Commission feels that it is highly desirable that every measure should be adopted which would encourage the employment of Native women in domestic work. This would, particularly in Natal and the Transvaal, release large numbers of men and boys for employment in occupations more suited to them." From the Native Commission Report, 1905.
- 1906-8 Drought, Cattle diseases, etc caused thousands of black women to seek work in cities. This began the steady process by which domestic labour was taken over from 'house-boys', who were mainly Zulus. It soon became a field of employment for women.

Legal rights

1. MONTHLY PAID DOMESTIC WORKERS ARE ENTITLED TO ONE MONTH'S NOTICE
2. NO DEDUCTIONS MAY BE MADE FROM THE EMPLOYEE'S WAGE FOR DAMAGE OR BREAKAGES CAUSED BY THE EMPLOYEE
3. THE EMPLOYER MUST TAKE CARE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE EMPLOYEE AT WORK
4. A DOMESTIC WORKER IS ENTITLED TO ONE WEEK'S PAID SICK LEAVE PER YEAR.

Wages/Conditions

Some domestics get less than R30 a month. Others get more than R130 a month. It depends on the employer. The average is about R65 per month, in the Johannesburg area. Food and accommodation also vary a lot. In some places it is quite good, in others it is very bad. A domestic worker who stays on her employers premises should be given adequate cooking facilities, running water, toilet and washing facilities, enough light and fresh air.

Complaints

Many domestic workers are dismissed unjustly. Sometimes they can take legal action against the employers. One hears that a worker has been dismissed for breaking something in the house, or for getting pregnant, for taking time to go to a funeral, for returning from holidays late, for being ill — and so on. An employer is able to dismiss a worker at any time, but must give notice, or pay in place of notice. Wages must not be deducted for broken things etc. If any worker feels she has been treated unjustly, she may seek advice from one of these agencies:

DWEP or SADWA — 27 de Beer St, Braamfontein, Telephone 39-6757

Hoek Street Law Clinic — 8th Floor, METRO BUILDING, 268 Bree St Johannesburg.

Agencies

1. Oxford Synagogue, 20 North Road, Riviera (near Killarney). Only Mondays from 1 to 3 pm.
2. St Johns Church, Benmore Road, Parkmore. Only Wednesdays from 11 am to 2.30.
3. Readymaid Services, 5 Floor, Fleetway House, 208 Bree Street, (corner Simmonds). Telephone 838-2788.
4. Moppit Char Services, 71, 16 Street, Parkhurst: telephone 447-3853. This is an agency for part-time domestics.
5. Jet Maids, Craighall, telephone 78702607. This is mainly for part-time domestics.

iWorkmens' Compensation Act

I—Workman's Compensation Act umthetho onikeza abasebenzi ilungelo lokuthola isinxephezelo uma belimele emsebenzini. Imali ethola ngumsebenzi yi-3/4 yeholo lakhe elijwa yelekile lokhu kusho ukuthi uma umsebenzi ethola R60 eholweni elijwaye lekile kufanele athole R45 njenga sinxephezelo se—WCA noma uma ethola R45 kufanele athole R33,75c.

Uma umsebenzi alahlekelwe ngamandla okusebenza njengokusho kukadokotela umsebenzi kufanele athole iphesenti elithize yemadlana ebuya kuWCA. Esifanele ukukwazi ukuthi iWCA ayikhokheli izinhlungu nokunye ukulimala okungabonakali ngisho ukuthi okungana — nxeba.

Kodwa akusibona bonke abasebenzi abanaleli lungelo. Amaphoyisa nabasebenza emakhishini abanalo lelilungelo. Kanti futhi nalowomsebenzi ozothi uma etsheliwe ukuthi angenzi okuthize ngoba kuyingozi, bese yena akwenza ngaphandle kwesizathu noma umsebenzi ozilimaza ngamabomu akanalo lelilungelo lokuthola isinxephezelo sokulimala.

Isebenza kanjani ?

Lomthetho usebenza njenge intsholensi (insurance). Abaqashi bakhokha njalo imali ethize bayithumele ePitoli amahovisi awongamele lomthetho ka WCA. Emahovisini kakomishane lemali bayifaka esikwameni sika WCA, ngalendlela abasebenzi bathola isinxephezelo sokulimala emalini ebuya khona ePitoli.

Ungenza njani ukuba uthole lemali

Umsebenzi ufanele azise umqashi noma induna ngokulimala kwakhe ngaphandle kokuchitha isikhathi. Umqashi kufanele aphuthume agcwalise ifomu ebizwa ngokuthi yi-WCL 100. Lelifomu umsebenzi kufanele ayenalo kudokotela, udokotela uzogcwalisa ifomu lapho efanele ukusho khona ukuthi umsebenzi ulimala kangakanani. Ekugcineni lelifomu kufanele umqhashi alithumele e-Pitoli ukuze azise umnyango ophathelane nesinxephezelo sokulimala komsebenzi.

Okwesibile yikuthi uma umsebenzi ahlale amalanga athize angasebenzi kufanele umqhashi agcwalise ifomu elibizwa ngokuthi yi-RESUMPTION STATEMENT lokhu kusho ukuthi isitatimende esizosho ukuthi umsebenzi uhlale izinsuku ezingakhi engasebenzi.

Umsebenzi angaya kunoma yimuphi udokotela. Kodwa kuvamile ukuthi uthole kwamanye amafektri kube nodokotela bakhona ababhekene nakho ukulimala. Nase Baragwanath kukhona odokotela ababhekana nakho lokulimala emsebenzini.

Uma umqhashi enqaba ukugcwalisa ifomu lokhu kusho ukuthi wephula umthetho. Ungamulwisi ngoba angahle akuxoshe ongakwenza yikufuna iseluleko kubantu abangakunceda kanti futhi bakumele. Izinhlangano ezazikabanzi ngomothetho ezimela futhi zinceda abasebenzi yilezi ezingenzansi. Umbenzi angayakuzo ukuyofana uncedo ngaphandle kokukhokha imali. Lezinhlangotho yilezi:

1. HOEK STREET LAW CLINIC
8th Floor, Metro Building
268 Bree Street, Johannesburg
2. INDUSTRIAL AID SOCIETY
4th Floor York House
Room 415
57 Rissik Street, Johannesburg

Ukunganeliswa

Abasebenzi abaningi bayakhononda bathi lemadlana abayitholayo ayibagculisi.

Abasebenzi bazandla yibona abathinteka kabi.

Okokuqala abasebenzi bezandla (Manual workers) bathola iholo eliphansi lokhu kusho ukuthi isinxephezelo sibancani kakhulu ngoba isinxephezelo siyangokhuthi umsebenzi uholo malini njengoba sichazile.

Okwesibili ukuthi abasebenzi bezandla uma belimele balahlekelwa yisandla noma ngumunwe babasesimweni esenza kubenzima ukuba bathole omunye umsebenzi.

Abasebenzi abalimele kodwa kungabonakalisi ukulimala kwabo bezwa nje izinhlungu abatholi lesisinxephezelo sika WCA.

Lokhu kwenza ukuthi abasebenzi bezandla banganeliswa kodwa akusizi ukukhala ingozi seyenzakele ngoba kungcona ukuvikela isifo kunokweselapha.

Bangazivikela kanjani abasebenzi

Abasebenzi kufanele bazivikele ngokuba ngamalunga enyunyana (Trade Union)



ngalendlela abasebenzi bangaphoqelela abaqhashi ukuba benze amafemu noma amafektri aphephe kungabi nezingozi Noma zibeyivelakancane. Ngoba umakungenjanlo ingozi mayivela ivelela abasebenzi kwasinye isikhathi kuba yingozi enkulu lapho umsebenzi elahlekelwa yingalo ngumunwe noma yisiphi isitho somzimba esizokwenza umsebenzi alahlekelwe ngamandla okusebenza.

Uma umsebenzi elahlekelwa ngamandla usezoxoshwa emsebenzini ngoba abaqhashi abafuni umsebenzi kodwa bafuna amandla akhe okusebenza uma eselahlekelwe yiwona akasadingeki.

Okungenzantsi okwashiwo umsebenzi:

Lapho ebengisebenza khona bengisebenza nomunye umsebenzi ebengi-mcedisa. Lomunye umsebenzi nguyena owaye qhuba umshini. Mina bengifaka amaweldingrods emshinini yena bese eqhuba umshini. Indlela engalimalangayo yeza kanje: sithe sisebenza kwa-fika umlungu wakhulumisana nalona omunye. Lomsebenzi akabange acaphelisisa lokhu ebesikwenza. Mina ngalesosikhathi izandla zami zaziphakathi emshinini ngizama ukufaka kahle amarod, uthe esuka lapho wayeseqhuba umshini ingalo yami yabambeka emshinini ngalimala kakhulu. Ngayo kudokotela, udokotela wathi ukulimala kwami kudale i-dislocation of corporal bones okuchaza ukuthi amathambo engalo asuke esimweni esifanele.

Isinxephezelo noma inzuso engayithola ayinginelisanga. Emavikini amthathu ngathola R20 kubaqhashi kwathi kulanamabili okugcina ngathola R22 esihlangane yonke yi-R104.

Ekubuyeleni kwami emsebenzini banginika umsebenzi olula kodwa sasihlala silwa nenduna kanye neForeman. Bathi kangisebenzi noma ngihlala isikhathi eside endlini-encane. Lokhu kwenza ngacange ukuthi angisafunwa kulomsebenzi. Langathize ngalwa nomunye esasiesebenzanaye. Ngasengixoshwa ngibona sengathi ngangivele ngizoxoshwa ngoba ngokucabanga kwami ngangingafanele ukuxhoshwa ngoba besingalwelwi emsebenzini. Kodwa kude nasemsebenzini.

U-Dompasi



Kukhona umthetho omusha osavivinywa wepasi kanye nenhlalo yabantu abamnyama. Lomthetho, obizwa ngokuthi Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill uphakanyiswe ngu-Ngqongqoshe Wobambiswano Nentuthuko umnu Piet Koornhof. Lomthetho usafanele udlule ezandleni ze-Select Committee kanti futhi uthulwe nasezithebeni zepalamende ngaphambi kukuba ugcizelelwe noma usetshenziswe.

Okubalulekile

Umphakathi kufanele wazi kanti futhi uqondisise ukuthi lomthetho uthini noku-uthi uzothinta kanjani abantu abamnyama. Uma sichaphelisisa sibona ukuthi amathuba okuba abamnyama bonkana babenamalungelo aphelele okuhlala emadlobheni (urban areas) ayangokuncipha. Lokhu kuzobonakala uma siqhathanisa lomthetho omusha nalona omdala osetshenziswa okwamanje

Okokuqala sizobheka lomthetho kadompasi osetshenziswa okwamanje. Lomthetho yilowo Urban Areas Act (1945) ogcizelwa okwamanje uthi:

1. Ukuze umuntu ahlale edolobheni (urban area) kufanele kube ngomuntu ozalelwe khona ozoba nelungelo le Section 10(i)(a).
2. Noma kufanele kube ngumuntu ohlale khona ngokomthetho emephemiti ngaphezu kweminyaka engu-15. Noma umuntu osebenzele umqhashi oyedwa kufikela eminyakeni engu-10. Ubanelungelo lokuthola Section 10(i)(b).
3. Noma ungunkosikazi womnyeni onelungelo le Section 10(i)(a) noma (b). Inkosikazi eyalomyeni ithola ilungelo le Section 10(i)(c).



THE rights of blacks to live and work in urban areas is already being curtailed by Government officials along the lines of the draconian Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill, which has been referred to a select committee in an attempt to make it less offensive.

And Mrs Sheena Duncan, national president of the Black Sash, said yesterday she expected the authorities to continue tightening up on influx control "in the spirit of the Bill". In the past year the Black Sash had noticed a pattern along these lines.

In a recent development which was causing "major problems", officials were refusing to accept affidavits for the issue of birth certificates from people born in urban areas and entitled to Section 10(1)(a) rights.

This left these people in limbo, and meant that 16-year-olds could not be issued with their first reference books and could not have their 10(1)(a) rights recognised, she said.

The latest issue of the Black Sash magazine lists other developments which indicate a tightening of influx control regulations in apparent anticipation of the new law.

Abantu abamnyama abangenawo lamalungelo angenhla ngabantu bekontilaki abangabasebenzi abemukayo (migrant workers) be Section 10(i)(d). Kodwa basanalo ithuba lokuthola i - Section 10(i)(b) okuyilungelo elingabanika invume yokuhlala nokuthola indlu elokishini elisedolobheni. Uhulumeni uzimisele okuli vala lethuba ngoba uma engalivali lokhu kusho ukuthi izinkulungwane zabantu abasebenza ngekontilaki banethuba lokuthola amalungelo aphelele. Okuhlala emadolobheni uma besebenzele umqhashi oyedwa ngaphezu kweminyaka eyi 10 noma sebhalele edolobheni ngokomthetho wesingili phemiti ngaphezulu kweminuako engu-15.

Lomthetho we Urban Areas Act noma usicindezela, usiphuca namalungelo ethu aphelele njengazakamuzi zalapha e Ningizimu Africa ungcono uma siwuqhathani sa nalona umusha osavivinywa. Asiquondanga ukuthi ungcono ngokwequile ngoba thina abamnyama sifanele sithole amalungelo alinganayo njengezinye izinhlanga. Asikho isizathu sokuba singabi namalungelo lawo ngaphandle kokuthi siphucwa lamalungelo ngoba kuhloswe ukusicindezela, ukusichaphaza nokusigqilaza.

Umthetho Umusha

Makesibheke ukuthi lomthetho omusha uthini. Lomthetho omusha uchitha lona ka Section 10 ngoba kuzokuba negcosana yabantu abasobizwa ngokuthi ngama-permanent urban residents (PUR). Lababantu yibona abazobanemvume yokuhlala kuma urban areas. Iningi labantu lizohlala emakhaya (Homelands).

Ukuze lababantu okuzothiwa ngama PUR, bahlale emadolobheni kufanele babenendlu efanele. Ukuthi indlu ngiyefanele noma cha kuzoshiwo ngabaphathimuza noma iBantu Areas Administration Board, uma indlu kuyindawo wena ohlala kuyo uyibona ikufanele akukhathalekile uma bona bethi bayi bona ingafanele ungaphucwa amalungelo.

Okunye okushiwo yilomthetho yikuthi:

1. Umuntu umnyama ongenamvume yokuhlala emadolobheni akufanele abekhona phakathi kwa 10pm no 5am.
2. Umuntu ohlalisa umuntu ongenamvume phakathi kwa 10pm no 5am uzojeziswa ngokomthetho ngenhlawulo ebiza R500 noma avalelwe ejele izinyanga ezingu-6.
3. Abaqhashi abaqhasha abasebenzi abanganamvume bazojeziswa ngenhlawulo ebiza R5000 noma bavalelwe ejele izinyanga enzigu-6.

Abantu abazokuba namalungelo okuba ngama permanent urban residents kuzokuba yilabo abalandelayo:

1. Labo abanamalungelo e Section 10(i)(a) no (b)
2. Izingane zabo nabomdeni (dependants).
3. Umuntu omnyama oyisakhamuzi salapha Eningizimu Africa, ngamanye amagama umuntu ongesiyena walama-Homelands athole uzibuse afana no Bophuthatswana, Venda, Transkei ne Ciskei. Umuntu kufanele ukuba abe ngamuntu osehlale iminyaka eyishumi ngokomthetho Ukuze athole amalungelo ukuba PUR.

Isaziso

Umphakathi uyaziswa ukuba wazise labo abanamalungelo ka Section 10 (i)(a) no (b) angakagcotshwa kudompasi ukuba basheshe ukuwalungisa isikhathi sisasekhona.

Labo abahlushwa ngudompasi bangafuna uncedo neseluleko kulenhlangano engazansi ngaphandle kokukhokha imali.

THE BLACK SASH

Khotso House

42 De Villiers Street, Johannesburg
2001



Statistics are published twice a year, showing what it costs for a family to survive in the major urban areas of South Africa. This used to be called a **Poverty Datum Line**. Like most academic work, it has political significance. For example, it can be used by employers to structure wages, so that workers will only just survive. On the other hand, the same statistics can be used to show that the working class is forced to get income by illegal means, if it wishes to survive. What the Household Subsistence Level indicates, basically, is the cost of living: but we must not suppose that this cost of living is automatic or inevitable. It comes about through struggles between the working class and the capitalist class. Producers try to charge maximum prices for their goods: consumers go for cheapness, thus forcing prices down. In some cases, like rent, the workers have to struggle politically, with rent-strikes etc. In other cases they struggle economically, by choosing to buy cheap goods rather than expensive ones, or they simply buy less.

The HSL has limited usefulness. But, such as it is, it may be found interesting by our readers. We print only some statistics that relate to the Johannesburg area, for September 1982.

The PRIMARY HSL measures required food, clothing, fuel/light/soap. An average family is said to include parents and four children of different ages.

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Man | R40,31 |
| Woman | R32,97 |
| Boy | R39,88 |
| Girl | R32,12 |
| Child | R27,07 |
| Child | R27,07 |
| Household | R20,28 |
| Total | R209,70 |

Then there must be added an amount for rent, R42,05; for transport, R9,96. The total now comes to R271,71.

There are many things left out, including medical expenses, tobacco, education, fines, insurance, home-improvement and repairs, furniture, church, charity, TV and recreation, books, holiday travel, and so on. It has been said that a more meaningful statistic (called **EFFECTIVE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL**) would be reached by adding another fifty percent to the HSL. The figure would then be R407,56.

This means that an average family in the Johannesburg area needs R407,56 to live for a month. What happens to families whose income is less than this? What happens to the unemployed? What happens with widows, with single parent families? What is the case with migrants? These are all questions that the HSL does not raise.

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Letters

IZWI

I write this letter to find out how I can get hold of future issues of your magazine. I once bought an issue when they were sold at Saturday tuition at Wits. Since there are no more tutorials I don't know how I will get IZWI.

The copy on Education was the only I have seen so far. And I must say I found it interesting hence I wish to read more from your magazine.

I will be pleased if you can send me the future editions.

Yours faithfully,
P.M

We have printed a subscription notice in this issue. Post it to us and you will receive the next 4 issues – Editor

IZWI

I am writing this letter to express my views. I must say I am quite impressed with your paper, and would like to congratulate your organisation for the work and effort.

There is one point, however, where we may differ in opinion. I am an 'Indian' and I feel that many 'Africans' do not realise that the struggle is also ours. We too are oppressed.

The article that prompted me to write to you is in your August/September issue on page 20, column 3. The interview there stated, '... I started working for Indians in Wynberg, but this job is always the same, you become like a child.'

I strongly recommend that your organisation look into the Indian side of the story and I hope then you will enlighten your readers, and try to correct this misunderstanding.

F.S.

We appreciate your response to IZWI generally and to the article you complain about in particular.

We think the misunderstanding lies in the fact that you seem to think that the comment made by the woman was racially motivated against 'Indians'. Superficially it might appear to be racial, but in reality it is not. You should remember that the woman who made the comment might not look at the South African situation

along class lines. But basically she was referring to middle-class people in Wynberg, who happen to be Indians and who employ domestic workers, and labourers in their shops.

As you may have realised, the interview was with a poor working-class woman, who felt exploited.

It is along this line of class analysis that we should look at the conflicts that exist in South Africa. – Editor

IZWI LASE TOWNSHIP is published by Ditshwantsho tsa Rona. It offers notes and views about events of today and of the past. Though mainly concerned with Alexandra, because that is the home location of Ditshwantsho, we hold that Alexandra is but a part of South Africa, and shares in the general struggle in this country. We reject the ghetto status of the township, and we reject strategies that attempt to divide it from other parts of the nation.

It is necessary to understand society in order to change it. We invite the public to participate in this paper, by carrying out research and by contributing discussion.

Letters, articles, comments and enquiries should be sent to our address:
PO Box 720, BERGVLEI, 2012.

Pensions

Pensions for Africans were increased from November. The new amount is R49 per month. This is better than the previous amount of R40, but it is still a very low pension. Whites get R138 per month, and Indians get R83.

At the end of November, pensioners in Alexandra found R107 in their packet: but no-one took the trouble to explain to them how this amount was made up. Many old people thought that it was the old pension plus Christmas bonus. We show in the following chart how the amount is made up. We ask everyone who is responsible for elderly people, to explain these figures to them.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Pension for October (old amount) | R40 |
| Pension for November (new amount) | R49 |
| Bonus | R18 |
| Total | R107 |

From now on the pension after two months will be R98,00. That is the amount pensioners can expect to receive. There will be another bonus of R18 in about six months time.



Collecting her pension

Protesters stone black buses

Mail Correspondent

DURBAN. — Three buses were stoned in Clermont yesterday morning after the Durban Transport Management Board (DTMB) re-implemented its full bus service to the township.

Putco 'useless'

Teargas used to disperse rioting bus boycotters

Mail Correspondent

DURBAN. — At least 40 buses and five police vehicles were damaged in stone-throwing incidents during a boycott in black townships after the Durban Transport Management Board's 12% increase in bus tariffs yesterday.

PUTCO FARES JUMP

By ZB MOLEFE

PRETORIA — The Government has given Putco permission to increase bus fares on the Reef and in

Pretoria by between 13 and 17 percent from December 16.

This end-speculation that fares were due to go up on Monday.

The Department of Co-Operation and Development's go-ahead to Putco came on Thursday, which means the

Putco's Germiston bid fails

PUTCO'S attempts to take over the Germiston City Council's bus service which caters for thousands of commuters in Katlehong and Thokoza townships daily, have fallen through.

Putco raised fares on the Alex/Noord Street route from 25c to 35c in April; and now again in December from 35c to 45c. It appears that these rises will be frequent. However, not everyone is getting used to inflation. In Durban there have been riots and a boycott, in reaction to bus-fare hikes.

In November PUTCO published a lengthy supplement in the Rand Daily Mail, trying

to explain why it had to raise fares.

The company is in a difficult position. On the one hand it has to make profits for its shareholders (and salaries for its directors): on the other hand it suffers damage from angry passengers, if it charges more than people are willing to pay. So it must try to satisfy both, shareholders and passengers. However, these parties are totally opposed. Nothing can satisfy them both.

PUTCO.

PUTCO has to pretend to be the 'peoples' friend', to protect itself from stones and boycotts. But we must not allow this fraud to confuse us.

Let us ask, therefore, what people are really objecting to, when they attack a bus company. We must accept that a firm like PUTCO is a business, and that its job is to make profits. The local butcher also makes profits, and no-one stones his shop.

Yet people feel spontaneously enraged with PUTCO and with the bus, and with the driver, and they throw stones, break windows, they walk. But, after reflection, it must be admitted that it is not really the bus that causes anger. The profit-making system itself puts people in a fury when they feel frustrated by it. People can go without meat; but they **must** get to work on time, and so they must use transport. You can avoid the profit-making in the case of meat, you can't avoid it in the case of PUTCO. Therefore, when PUTCO raises the fare, you feel the pain of your wage being even lower again.

It is capitalism that bleeds workers of value of their wage, at the same time that it bleeds them of their labour power. But it is hard to throw stones at a system, which is everywhere and yet invisible. It is easy to find a brick, and see a bus!

When the pension is paid out by the paymaster, the amount written on the pensioner's card should be read aloud. If the pensioner does not hear the amount, he or she is entitled to insist that it is read aloud, so the amount can be checked in front of the paymaster. If anyone feels that the amount paid is short, he or she must make a complaint. Nobody need fear that if they complain they will lose their pension. There are organisations, such as the Black Sash and the Hoek Street Law Clinic, which are able to assist anyone who might be robbed by officials.

The HOUSEHOLD SUBSISTENCE LEVEL statistics show that an adult man needs (per month) R26,78 for food; R11,58 for clothing; R1,95 for candles, soap etc. This comes to a total of R40,31. A pensioner who gets R49, has about R9 to spend on rent, transport, tobacco, medical expenses, entertainment, repairs, church subscriptions and fines.



'Signing' for his pension

We acknowledge The Sowetan for photographs on p 1 & p 11