



SPEAK

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

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KOTZE ANNOUNCES HOUSING CUTBACKS

Pen Kotze, the Minister of Community Development, recently announced a new housing policy affecting the "Indian" and "Coloured" people.

He said the government's task for providing housing in Group Areas was almost concluded. Houses will be built only for those earning less than R150 a month. In future the responsibility for the provision of housing will lie with the individual and with private enterprise.

Kotze made matters worse when he visited Actonville, Benoni for a meeting with the town's Housing Committee to discuss the rezoning of Dawn Park which is close to Actonville. He bluntly informed the Housing Committee, who is represented on the Management Committee, that Dawn Park will remain a "white area."

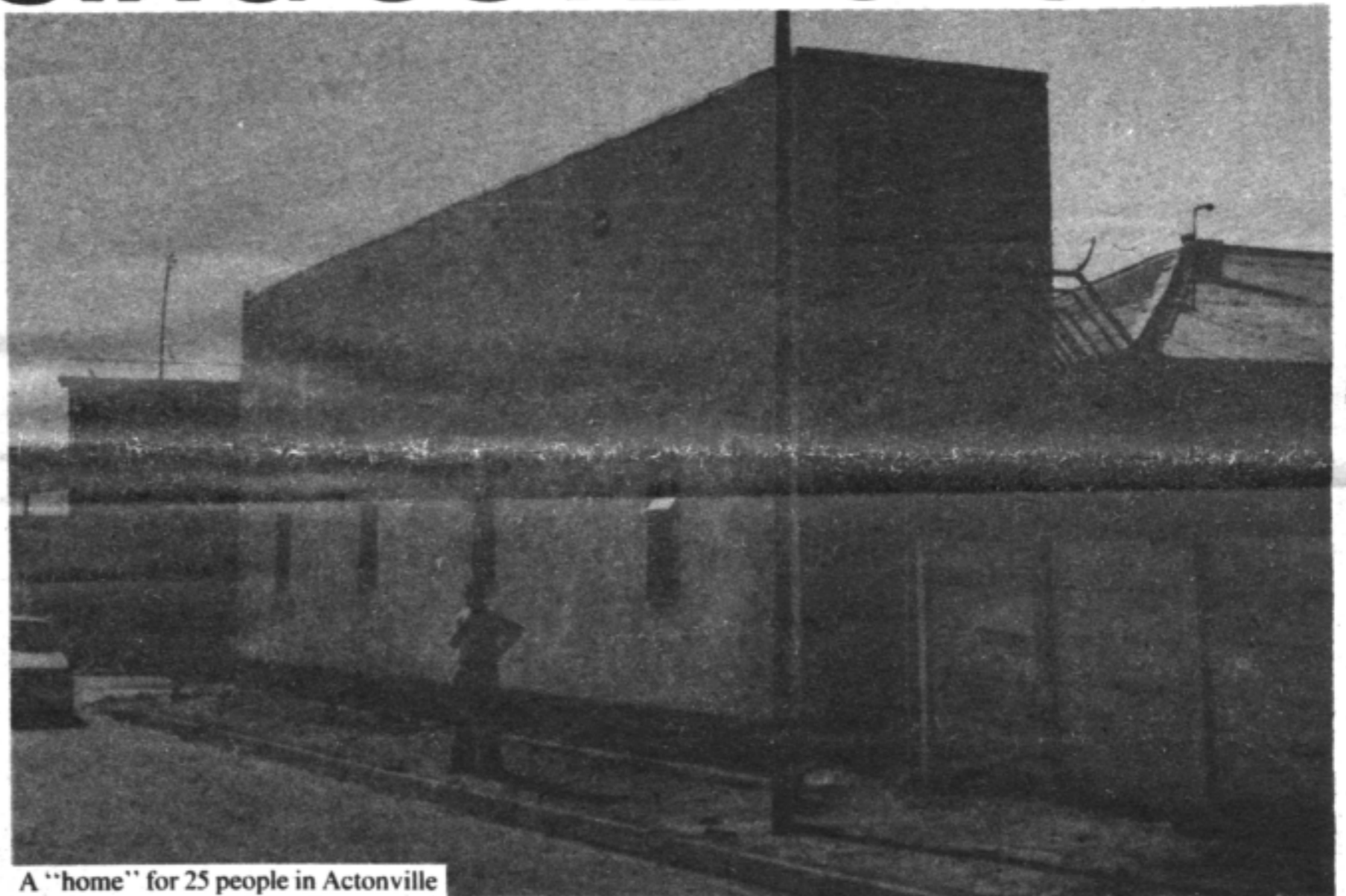
There is an acute housing shortage in Actonville because of the Group Areas Act. Actonville, which was designed to house 12 000 people is now believed to have a population of about 25 000.

The area is overcrowded and many people are forced to live in garages and outbuildings. In addition, people who live in council flats experience many problems and are forced to pay high rentals. With Pen Kotze's statements, there is now no prospect of relief.

His announcement sparked off an angry reaction from the local community. Dr Ismail Cachalia, Vice-Chairperson of the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Committee (TASC) and a local resident, said that the

announcement was "an indication of the contempt in which the Minister held the Actonville Community." He deplored "the attempt by the state to shift the burden for the provision of housing onto already depressed communities."

"It is the responsibility of the state to provide decent and secure housing for all its citizens at rates that they can afford," he said. Blaming the apartheid system for the housing shortage, Dr Cachalia said that the demand for housing is inseparably linked to the struggle for a democratic South Africa because the present government is incapable of providing for basic needs.



A "home" for 25 people in Actonville

Soweto Council slated over high rates

Soweto residents are angry because of the high rates they have to pay for electricity. Some people have been charged upto R400,00 for electricity.

The service is also not satisfactory. Often there are power cuts. In areas where electricity is still being installed, there are deep trenches lining the road. These are dangerous, five people have already died after falling in the trenches.

In those areas where cables have already been laid the process will have to be redone because of the 'improper laying of cables'.

A spokesperson for the Soweto Civic Association said "Residents feel that the government introduced electricity to pacify people. It was a propaganda exercise to impress some people inside and outside the country. Most residents cannot afford electrici-

ty because of low wages."

Recently the "Mayor of Soweto" Thebehali received a house costing R150 000."

"People wonder whether the money from high electricity rates and high rents is used to pay the Community Councillors" said the spokesperson.

The Minister of Co-operation and Development Piet Koornhof

recently announced a 'New Deal' for urban blacks. This is seen as an attempt to give greater powers and credibility to Community Councils.

"The Community Council has no credibility. No wonder elections for the Council are being postponed for another year. The government realises that the people do not respect the council and so the government is planning to give them more powers. However, we will never accept Community Councils. We want democratic bodies and you cannot get democratic bodies in a fundamentally undemocratic society" said the spokesperson for the Civic Association.

IN BRIEF

• About 700 workers employed at the warehouse of the OK Bazaars in Johannesburg were dismissed this month after refusing to return to work. The strike started on August 17 over wage demands and a call for recognition of shop stewards of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa). OK's management said it was willing to discuss their demands only if the workers returned to their jobs.

• Several members of the Westbury Residents' Action Committee (Wrac) handed a petition to the housing department of the

Johannesburg City Council on August 18. The petition, signed by 600 Westbury residents, rejected a CMC proposal that the old houses in the township be sold to residents.

• A fifth person died after falling in a trench in Soweto this month. No precautions have yet been taken to avoid further deaths.

• The Actonville Residents' Action Committee (Arac) is conducting a survey of residents' incomes. This survey is in response to an income survey made by the Benoni Town Council. Residents expect a rent increase to be based on the council's survey.

WESTERN REJECTS CMC PROPOSALS
PAGE 3.



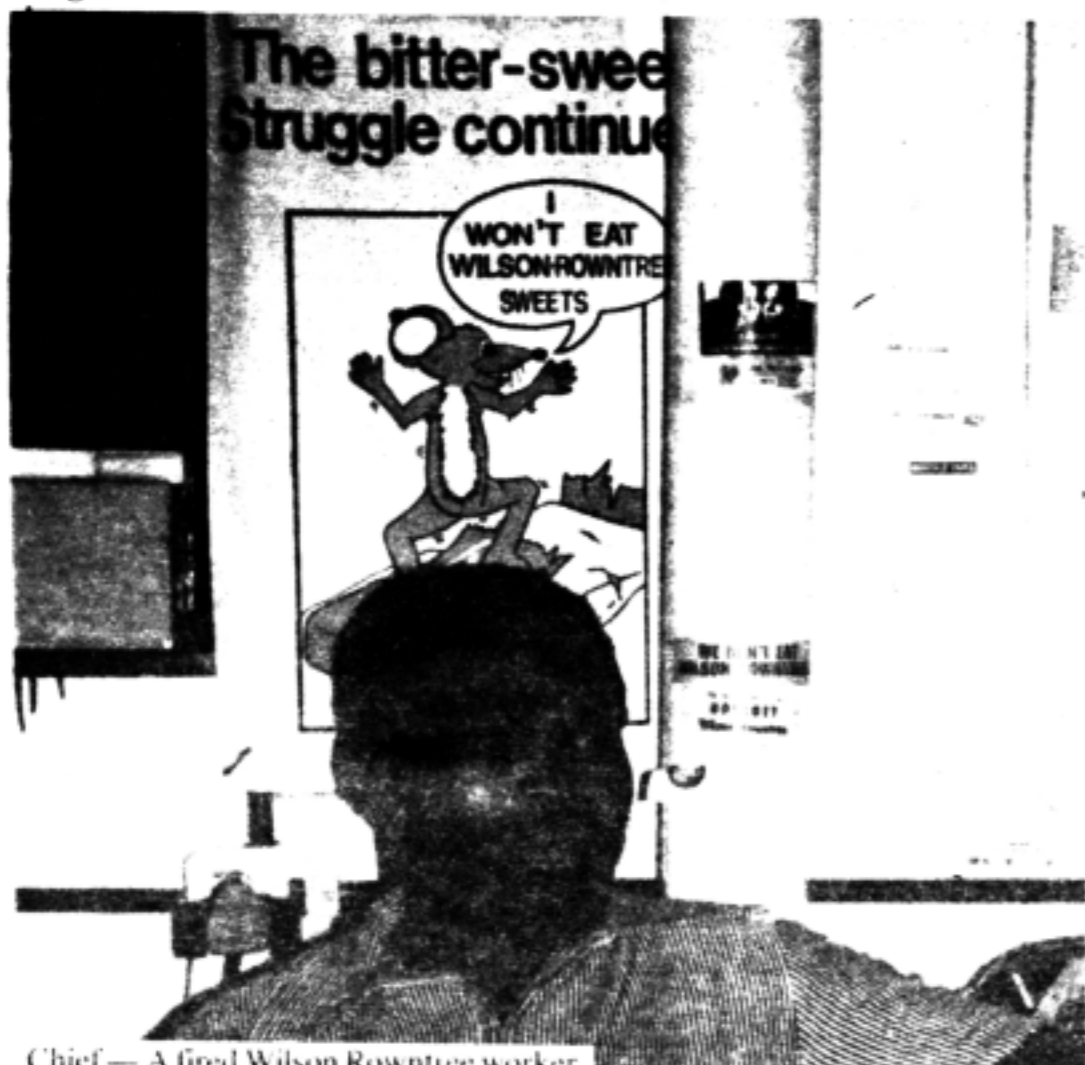
POLIO: CHILDREN ARE DYING.
PAGE 7.



LENASIA FAMILIES EVICTED
PAGE 8



HOW YOUR NEWSPAPER WORKS
PAGE 4-5



Chief — A fired Wilson Rowntree worker

PLIGHT OF DISMISSED ROWNTREE WORKERS

Alfred J. "Chief" Ndindwa has been unemployed for eighteen months. For many this is not unusual. But Chief is a fired Wilson Rowntree worker.

He is no newcomer to factory work. He is also no stranger to the struggle for workers' rights.

From 1951 he worked at the Meat Board for eight years. He was fired because he wanted the bosses to pay the workers for their overtime.

Experience has taught Chief that the only way workers conditions can improve, is by acting together in trade unions.

Chief is an organiser for the Wilson Rowntree

workers committee and for the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU).

Five hundred workers were fired from the Wilson Rowntree factory in East London, where Chief worked. They refused to work because three fellow workers had been dismissed. These workers are still on strike today.

After they were fired from the Wilson Rowntree factory in February 1981, they called for a boycott of all Wilson Rowntree products.

The situation is not easy for these workers. Like many, Chief faces the uncertainty of not knowing if he will have enough money to feed his family or keep his

children at school. He will also lose his house if his rent payments fall too far behind.

Some workers try to find casual jobs in the harbour. But many go home empty-handed.

"Jobs are scarce in East London," says Chief. "Employers look at the reference book, and see Wilson Rowntree. They say 'sorry, no job's even if there is work.'"

SAAWU uses some of its funds to help the workers. Fellow workers give up to five rand a month to help the unemployed.

"They know that there is no alternative," says Chief. "They have a strong feeling of solidarity for their fellow workers, who are stranded and penniless."

STUDENTS PLAN EDUCATION CHARTER

A campaign to draw up a charter which would set out demands for a democratic system of education is to be launched.

The education charter campaign has been initiated by two national students organisations. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and the Azanian Students Organisation (AZASO). Cosas is an organisation which represents school students, while Azaso represents students at university.

A Cosas executive committee member explained why such a charter should be drawn up. "For a long time we have wanted to outline an alternative system of education based on our problems." He said that the present system of education has been rejected by the community. "Parents, students and teachers do not have a say in how schools are run. We are taught to look down on our communities. We should instead be taught how we could serve

them." He pointed out problems like the serious shortage of qualified teachers and inadequate facilities which led to high failure rates. Other problems were the high school fees parents had to pay and the age limit law. He added that when students want to organise S.B.C.'S to take up these problems, they are prevented from doing so.

"Problems like these affect all members of the community. We should therefore all

come together to discuss what relevant and democratic education should be like. The education charter campaign will bring people together," he said.

"We will consult with trade unions, community organisations and other student and youth groups." He made a call on the community to participate in this campaign, "for it points the way forward to a non-racial and democratic education system for us all."

FLAT DWELLERS FORM ORGANISATION

Flat dwellers in Actonville, Benoni have received notice of a possible rent increase as from October. Already burdened by high rents, tenants decided that some form of action be taken.

Tenants in Lahore, Aloe and Primrose Court organised flat meetings on every floor. At these meetings, problems common to all flat dwellers were discussed and suggestions were made on how the

problems could be tackled. Each floor elected a representative.

The representatives make up the flat committee. A representative said that through his regular contact with tenants, "every person is able to be an active member of the flat committee."

Realising the need for a strong organisation, tenants formed an ad-hoc committee, the Actonville Rents Action Committee (ARAC), to

head the struggle against high rents.

ARAC is to conduct a survey to be used in a memorandum outlining the grievances of flat dwellers.

The chairperson of ARAC, Mr Victor Padotan, said that a basis for unity has been created. "We must now encourage maximum participation of all flat dwellers in order to achieve any victory," he said.

Another death in detention

The death in detention of 21-year-old student Ernest Dipale was condemned country-wide this month.

Mr. Dipale was found hanging by a strip of blanket on August 8 in his cell at John Voster Square. He was the 53rd detainee to die in detention.

His death comes shortly after South African Allied Workers' Union official Mr Eric Mntonga was admitted to the Johannesburg Hospital after apparently taking a drug overdose.

He was also being held at John Vorster Square.

The Dipale family's lawyer, Mr Graham Dyson, said an attempt had also been made to kill Mr Dipale on August 2 — two days before he was detained.

The Detainees' Parents Support Committee held a protest meeting on August 11. Among the speakers were Mrs Jill Berger, sister of Dr Neil Aggett who died in detention on February 5.

Mr Dipale was buried on August 14. The traditional night vigil and feasting was not held, and a Johannesburg magistrate placed several restrictions on the funeral.

More than 500 people attended the funeral, and ignored the restrictions not to sing political songs and raised clenched fists in defiance.

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President's Council proposals rejected

More than 1 500 people unanimously passed a resolution rejecting the proposals of the President's Council at an Anti-South African Indian Council meeting in Lenasia this month.

"The PC has been projected as an instrument of reform which is supposed to bring about meaningful change for the coloured and Indian people," said Anti-SAIC Committee chairman Dr Essop Jassat.

"It is however nothing more than an attempt to create the impression that the Botha Government is interested in bringing about real change."

"The vast majority of the country's people have been ignored. Homelands are provided for the African people. The proposals are thus merely a sophisticated form of divide-and-rule tactics."

Dr Jassat said the PC was an undemocratic body because the people serving on it were hand-picked and represented only themselves.

"Another reason why we reject the PC proposals is because it provides for a State President with dictatorial powers," he said. "Political power will be removed from parliament."

"The executive president will select the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. This is dictatorship as I see it."

The PC also recommends that each residential area has its own local councils. "These councils will have no real power," said Dr Jassat. "They will deal only with administration."

"This means we have to solve the many prob-

lems which we are not responsible for in the first place. It also diverts responsibility for housing from the central government."

He attacked the PC's proposals for retaining the Group Areas Act. "It does not reject the principles of compulsory segregation," he said.

"The Group Areas Act is the very cornerstone of the policy of apartheid. Instead the proposals recommend a Group Areas Act Board."

Dr Jassat said the limitations of the proposals were thus clear: "It is proposing nothing more than a powerless and ethnic parliament."

He said the demands of the people were made known long ago by the Freedom Charter drawn up in 1955 in Kliptown at the Congress of the People.

Dr Jassat said the demands were:

- * a national convention;
- * the release of all political prisoners, the return of exiles, and the unbanning of people and organisations;
- * universal franchise in a single parliament;
- * decent housing for all;
- * the right to live where we please;
- * free, non-racial and relevant education; and
- * equitable land distribution.

Dr Jassat said the PC's proposals do not even meet these minimum demands.

Western Residents angry at CMC decision



Children in Western slums

Residents of Western Township are angry over the proposals by the Coloured Management Committee (CMC) which recommended that the City Council should stop building new houses in Western Township.

Instead the old slum houses should be sold to the people. When the present residents moved into the houses of the then Western Native Township, they were already in a poor state. The residents were told they would only have to live in them temporarily. However, they have now been living under slum conditions for more than twenty years.

Only one person on the CMC, Mr Speedy Banded, is from Western Township. Residents said it was wrong for

other CMC members, who live comfortably outside Western, to have made such an important decision for them.

"These people are selling our lives," said one resident. Another resident said that Mr Banded and his supporters could afford to buy and improve their houses. "What about the people who do not have the money? Must the poor continue to suffer? Surely they also have the right to decent housing," she said.

Three months ago Western Resident's Action Committee (WRAC) conducted a survey in the township. 75% of those interviewed said that they wanted new homes.

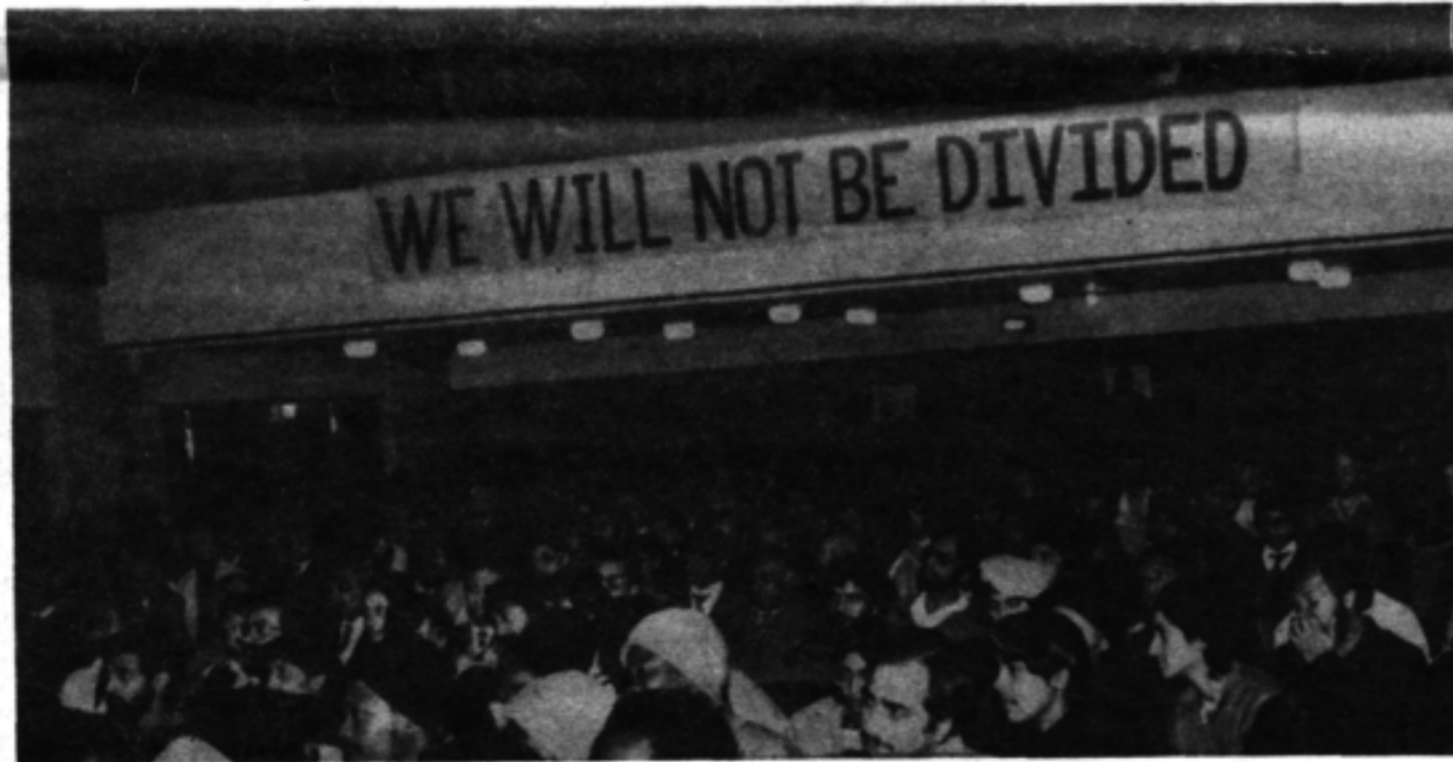
"It is clear that the majority of people do not agree with the CMC

proposals," a WRAC spokesperson said.

The WRAC has arranged house meetings in the area over the past few weeks. All those who attended meetings agreed that a petition be drawn up stating that the decision to sell the houses be halted until the people in Western have been consulted. The petition is to be taken to those people who did not attend meetings.

WRAC is planning to present the petition to the Johannesburg City Council as soon as possible. A mass meeting will then be called up to report on the response of the Council.

WRAC in the meantime continues its house meetings at which street representatives are being elected.



Part of the crowd at the Anti-SAIC meeting

Victory for Woolworth's Workers

The week-long strike by 300 black workers at Woolworths stores in Johannesburg this month ended in victory for the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa).

The workers had demanded a minimum increase of R50 a month — an increase of 22,7 percent for the lowest-paid worker.

"We had also demanded the removal of a senior official at the company's City Deep warehouse," said Mr Sello

Mthembu, an official of Ccawusa.

"Woolworths initially told us that all the strikers had been fired and that they would have to reapply for their jobs. During the negotiations, however, they agreed to reinstate the workers unconditionally."

Mr Mthembu also said the company told them it was not opposed to recognising Ccawusa. "We then dropped our demand for the removal of the official, and accepted their offer of

a R40 increase," he said.

"We regard it as a victory for the workers. It shows the power of the workers if they stand together."

All the strikers will be paid for the first three days of the strike. Workers earning up to R300 a month will receive an increase of R40 as from the beginning of September. Those earning R300 and upwards will receive an increase of 12,5 percent on the same date.



'SPEAK' Voice of the Community

- Why a different paper -

All forms of media like the radio, television, newspapers, posters or stickers shape our ideas and influence our lives.

It is also aimed at making big profits and is undemocratic. Commercial newspapers are owned and controlled by big business, so its main aim is to make profits.

Decisions are taken by a handful of people at top and then passed onto those at the bottom. In this way it largely ignores or glosses over the real problems and struggles of the community.

There is thus a serious need to present life in the community as we see and experience it. A newspaper like "Speak" is one of the ways through which this can be done.

It can present relevant news and look critically at the problems we face in the community. It can also

look at ways in which these problems are being taken up.

This is possible because a newspaper like "Speak" is controlled democratically by the people in the community themselves. It is not aimed at making money.

Instead, the people decide what goes into the newspaper. In this way the people can highlight the problems and experiences of their daily lives.

It is a democratic newspaper in every way. It acts as the voice of the community, and is always in touch with the community.

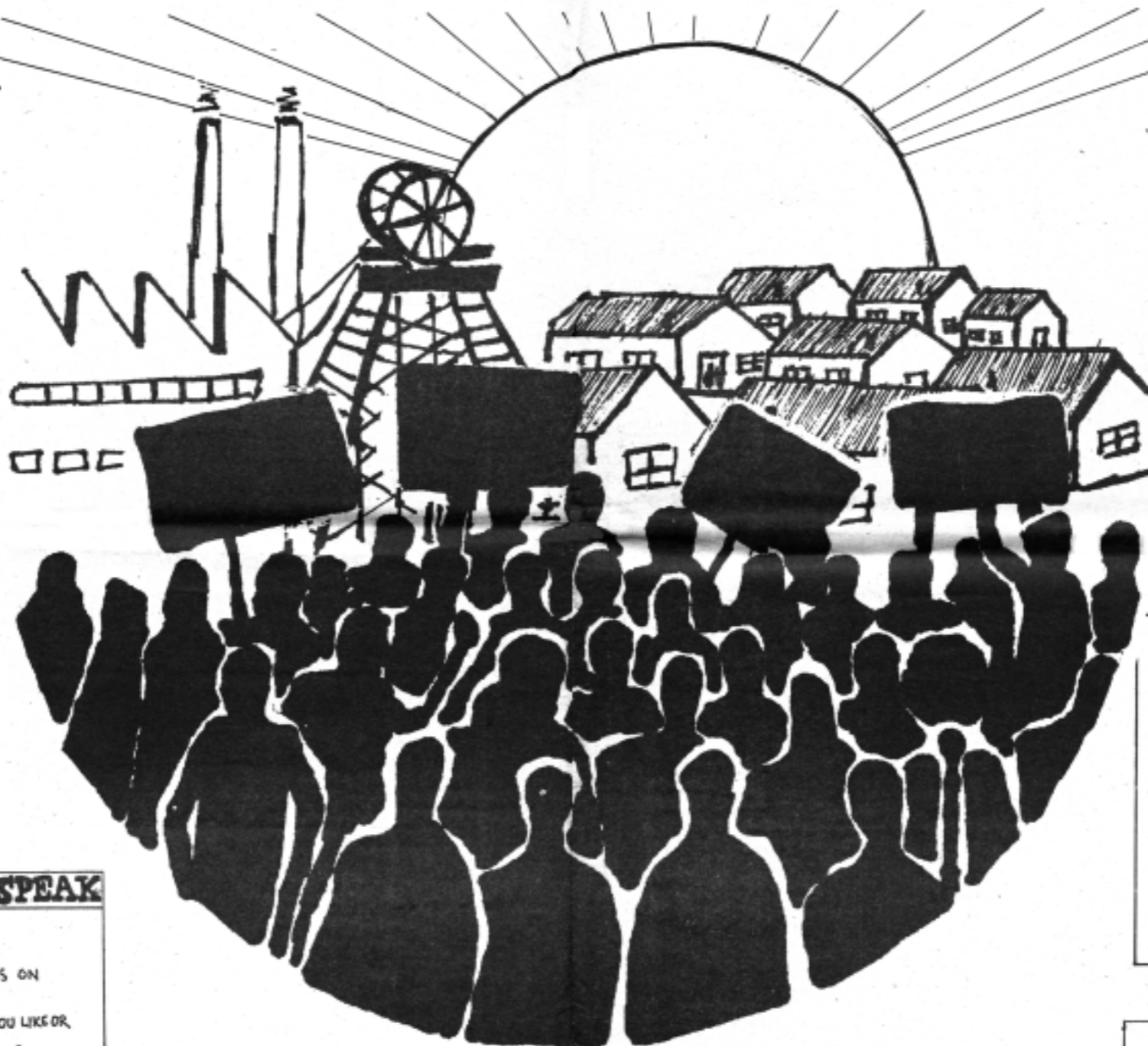
"Speak" will thus express the ideas and wishes of the community at all times. It will also look at the shortcomings of the present system in South Africa.

In this way it hopes to play a role in the community's struggle for a more democratic way of life.

What is different about speak

Speak:

- Writes about experiences and struggles which are of direct concern to our people
- Explains the problems in our community
- Encourages the exchange of ideas between different communities
- Encourages organisations to work together
- Makes known the problems of people in one area to the rest of the community
- Is written by the people, about the people, for the people



PLEDGES OF SUPPORT

These organisations have already pledged their support for the newspaper:

- Westbury Residents' Action Committee (WRAC)
- Soweto Civic Association (SCA)
- New Nancefield Residents' Association (NNRA)
- Federation of Residents' Association (FRA)
- Eldorado Park Youth Group
- Lenasia Youth League (LYL)
- G streets
- Ukusa
- Actonville Residents' Action Committee (ARAC)
- Krugersdorp Residents' Association (KRA)
- Heiger Park Ratepayers and Tenants' Association
- Bononi Students Movement (BSM)

Competition

The draw date for the community newspaper competition for a video machine has been extended to 31 August 1982. The winner will be announced in the next issue.

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- TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS AT WORK, WITH THE LAW, WITH YOUR HEALTH, IN YOUR COMMUNITY. IN THIS WAY WE CAN SHARE OUR ADVICE.

NEWSGATHERING



- SEND A REPRESENTATIVE FROM YOUR ORGANISATION OR AREA TO NEWS MEETINGS.
- DISCUSS YOUR STORIES IN YOUR ORGANISATION, WRITE IT YOURSELF AND BRING IT TO THE MEETING
- ENCOURAGE GROUP READING AND GROUP DISCUSSION ON THE CONTENT OF THIS NEWSPAPER.

PRODUCTION



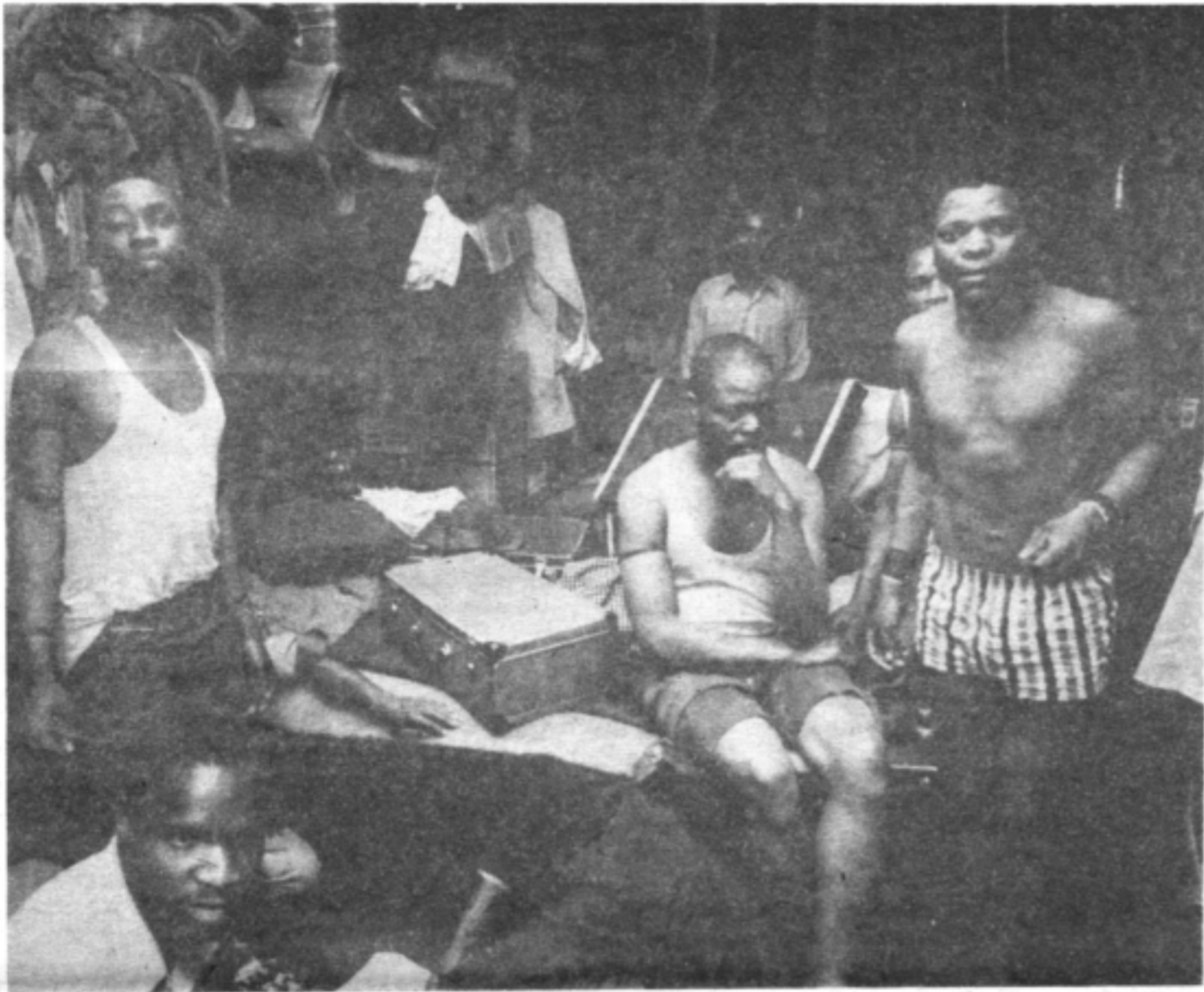
- PRODUCTION MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY.
- LEARN AND SHARE SKILLS e.g. LAYOUT, CARTOONING, ETC.

DISTRIBUTION.



- YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION CAN DISTRIBUTE THE PAPER.
- WORK OUT A SYSTEM OF SELLING SPEAK IN YOUR AREA. USE IT TO BUILD YOUR ORGANISATION.
- RETURN UNSOLD COPIES - THEY CAN BE SOLD ELSEWHERE.
- PLEASE PAY SALES MONEY BEFORE THE NEXT ISSUE COMES OUT.

UNREST ON THE MINES



Migrant workers live in appalling conditions in mine compounds

Approximately 70 000 miners were involved in strikes and unrest which broke out following low pay increases offered to Black mine workers. In suppressing the unrest, 10 miners died, many others were injured and thousands of workers were dismissed as "agitators."

The unrest began when workers were asked to accept a pay increase of 12% which was lower than the rate of inflation. In other words they were being asked to accept a drop in the value of their wages. The new minimum starting wages which the bosses offered, were R129 per month for underground workers and R100 per month for surface workers. Not surprisingly, the workers refused to work. Gold Fields (GFSA) and General mining were the hardest hit by worker action.

Mines have always been a centre for worker dissatisfaction. The largest organised strike by Black miners occurred in 1946 over the question of wages. On that occasion the workers were forced to return to work at gunpoint and their union was crushed. In the early 70's, there was much unrest on the

mines. Workers succeeded in winning some wage increases and improvements in their living conditions, but these victories were won at great costs. At least 100 miners are believed to have died during this period. The worst incident was at Carletonville in 1973 where 12 miners were shot dead.

The latest unrest shows that despite the responses to their legitimate grievances, workers have not stopped struggling.

What are the main grievances the workers?

The wages which black miners receive are far lower than in industry. Most miners earn around R200 per month.

They are forced to accept these wages for extremely heavy and dangerous work. The heat is exhausting and the work is hard. Deaths and injuries from rockbursts are common.

Workers oppose the discrimination which leads to white miners earning six or seven times the wages of black miners.

Workers are against the long hours they have to work. Black miners are sent underground first and brought up last. "If it takes you 10 hours from start to finish,

you are lucky!" said a miner. "No overtime is paid if you are kept underground longer."

98% of the workers are forced to live in hostels which are heavily controlled. Up to 20 men live in a typical hostel room. "Zulus" might live in one room while "Xhosas" in another.

The workers are against the whole contract labour system which means they cannot live with their families. Visiting wives are kept out by tight control at compound entrances.

The other side of miners grievances are the high profits made by mining companies. Workers saw very few benefits when the gold price was shooting up to the \$1000 an ounce mark. Now, with the drop in the gold price, miners are expected to "tighten their belts." A young worker asked if the bosses were tightening their belts? In the last year alone Gold Fields made a profit of R602 million after-tax!

"The miners have understood that everything is a struggle," the worker continued. "To get higher wages is a struggle and to improve conditions is a struggle. Mine workers have shown that they are prepared to struggle despite being blacklisted or facing death. As such they are an example to everyone."

F.R.A. tackles community problems

The Lenasia community is affected by many problems. As in other Group Area Townships, housing is a serious problem, and the lack of essential facilities and amenities is encountered daily.

These problems are most serious in the newer extensions. Children have to walk long distances to school. Shopping and recreational facilities do not exist and rents continually seem to be rising. People in these areas have therefore formed Residents Associations to confront their problems. Early last year the associations joined to form the Federation of Residents Association (F.R.A.) A member of the Thomsville Residents Association, which waged a successful struggle for housing, explained why; "We saw that many problems were common to people in other areas and we knew that by coming together we would be stronger."

One of the problems tackled under the leadership of F.R.A. was the increase in bus fares and the bad quality of the transport service. Together with the ANTI-SAIC Committee, the F.R.A. held meetings to discuss the issue with commuters. A petition was drawn up which demanded the Director of the bus service agree to meet community representatives. The Director made certain concessions at the meeting. He promised not to increase bus fares for the next 3 years. The F.R.A. would in future be consulted on matters affecting people who travel by bus.

People in the extension 10 area now have buses which operate directly to Johannesburg. They see the granting of such concessions as a direct result of the campaign the F.R.A. waged.

The F.R.A. continues to closely watch the bus service, and information is being collected

to present to the authorities. People believe the government should subsidise an efficient bus service, because they moved people over 30 km from work. A spokesman for the F.R.A. explained that the F.R.A. was committed to building the unity of the community. "Each affiliate is presently strengthening itself by encouraging maximum participation from people."

He explained that the F.R.A. was not a charitable organisation which pretended it could take on all the problems of Lenasia and solve it for the people. Rather it is an organisation of the people, stressing the need for people to involve themselves in solving their own problems. "Besides being democratic, it is the only way our problems can be effectively resolved," he said.

Actonville residents oppose high rates

Residents expressed their anger at unfair and arbitrary increase in their electricity accounts at a meeting called on August 9 by the Actonville Rents' Action Committee (ARAC).

The electricity accounts were increased by 50 percent and even as much as 200 percent for July in Extensions 1 and 2 in Actonville.

Mr A Sumsok, a resident of Ext. 1 also complained that no prior notice of the increases had been sent to residents.

Mr Vicky Padotan, chairperson of ARAC, said: "We must organise ourselves so that we can have a representative voice. An organisation must voice the real grievances of the people."

"When the water supply was cut off during the mornings at Lahore Court, the flat committee made a representation to the town council and it was rectified."

"The council can refuse to listen to or ignore an

individual but certainly it cannot ignore hundreds of people."

Mr Padotan said that the council seems to be in the process of raising money. "They cannot claim the money will be used for the new street lights they have installed," he said.

"We want to know what the money will be used for."

The organising secretary of ARAC then outlined the problems facing residents living in State-owned flats and the history of flat committees and ARAC.

"The council's response to our problems clearly illustrate the inability and unwillingness to deal with our problems," he said. He then read out the aims and objectives of ARAC.

The 250 people present elected a six person Ad-hoc Residents' Committee that would work with ARAC in investigating the electricity increases and represent the views of residents in Extensions 1 and 2.

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Residents hit out at slum conditions

Two years ago Kliptown was declared an industrial area. Many residents in the area were relocated in what is called the "New Nancefield Complex".

The area was built for pensioners, but because of the pressing need to get people out of Kliptown many large families were sent to this area. The conditions in this "new area" fall far short of the peoples' housing needs. It is not fit for pensioners let alone large families. A pensioner complained, "Hulle haal ons uit een slum, en sit ons in 'n ander slum. Ons het bygedra tot die opbou van hierdie land, nou moet ons ons laaste jare in duisternis eindig."

There are no lights, no hot water, no street lights, no post-boxes; people are not allowed to put fences around

their yards and when the drainage pipes are clogged, they have to wait days before these are repaired.

The lack of lighting in the area has resulted in a high crime rate. The residents of New Nancefield are not prepared to accept the bad conditions under which they are forced to live. They decided to form a Resident Association to express the grievances of the people. In a memorandum and petition to the Department of Community Development, they stated:

"Ons die ondergetekendes, inwoners van die "New Nancefield Complex" glo dat dit 'n menslike reg is om te verkies waar om te woon en dat alle gesinne, die reg het tot ordentlike behuising."

A member of the Residents' Association said that:

"As pensioners and working people, we are the victims of a society which is not worried about seeing to the needs of the majority of the people, but is concerned with giving benefits and privileges to a small section of the people."

Working people have no choice but to live in overcrowded and slum conditions because of low wages and the Group Areas Act.

Many of the demands of the residents have not yet been met. So far they have only succeeded in making the authorities put street-lights in the area. But they are determined to stand together and fight for their rights.



POLIO kills 45 children

Over the last few months there have been over 43 deaths from polio, and over 250 children admitted to hospitals with paralysis from polio.

Polio is an infection which affects the nervous system and results in paralysis or death. However not all people who are infected become paralysed or die. The majority of people who are infected have

only flu-like symptoms.

Polio affects children but sometimes it can affect adults. The infection gets into the body from the mouth. It is spread from the faeces of people, who have the disease which is why spreading is so rapid in areas without toilet facilities.

Once the disease has entered the body there is no medicine to cure it.

However, polio can be prevented. It could be wiped out through adequate immunisation.

Polio, like measles and TB can be prevented by giving immunisation to children. The polio vaccine (immunisation) is very effective and safe to use. It is not painful. People who have had all their vaccines almost never get infected.

Mothers themselves identify the poor living conditions as the cause of polio. One mother said "The clinics are too far away, and there are no transport facilities to the clinic." She therefore could not immunise her children.

The incidence of diseases like Polio, Cholera and other diseases like TB and malnutrition is very high in the rural black areas and the homelands while it is very low or totally non-existent in the urban white areas, where the living conditions are much better.

The other way to prevent polio and other diseases like TB and malnutrition is by providing better facilities.



Train-like houses in Nancefield

family

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Clinic in Reiger Park

The Reiger Park Rate-payers and Tenants Association have formed an advice clinic to assist residents with legal problems.

The clinic, which has been operating since last November, has already won several cases in court. "Our main problem at the moment is that we do not have an office," said Mr George Du Plessis, the association's secretary.

Mr Du Plessis said if a problem requires professional attention, it is referred to the Legal Resources Centre or to Legal Aid in Johannesburg.

"Hire purchase problems, unemployment and pension problems, third party and insurance claims, and rent problems are among the most common complaints," he said. "There are cases where furniture is repossessed without

a court order."

"We want to stop this. Residents have certain legal rights which they have been unaware of for too long. Furniture dealers and other Businesses take advantage of them."

The Reiger Park clinic meets every fortnight with members of advice clinics from Zola, Noordgesig, Eldorado Park and Soweto. At these meetings lectures are given on interviewing and processing of files.

Mr Du Plessis said they are planning to have a clinic which can operate the whole day throughout the week. He appealed to the community, especially the youth, to become involved in the clinic.

"We are hoping to play a vital part in the community once we have an office," he said.

15 FAMILIES EVICTED IN LENASIA

Angry residents of Thomsville, Lenasia, have protested against the eviction of 15 families by the Department of Community Development. The families were evicted from houses that are to be renovated.

Department officials and a member of the Lenasia Management Committee, Dennis Pillay, said the residents were living in the area "illegally".

Last year the Thomsville Residents Association (TRA) successfully struggled for decent homes. They demanded that the Thomsville slum be cleared and that the area be renovated for pensioners.

Most families were given new homes after the TRA campaign. The people who were not given new homes, continued to live in the slum.

The Department then began breaking down the old houses for renovation. The fifteen families evicted on August 12 were living in these houses.

A resident asked how they could be living in Thomsville illegally when many of them were born there. "Don't we have a right to homes?" she asked.

Most of the residents have lived in Lenasia for more than fifteen years. Some residents felt they were "tricked by certain people" and made to believe that they would be given homes.

Dr. R.A.M. Saloojee, chairperson of the Federation of Residents'

Associations (FRA) — umbrella body on which the TRA is represented — explained that a lot of corruption seemed to have taken place. "We intend uncovering and exposing this," he said.

A spokesperson for the TRA said their demands were not only for the evicted families.

"The Department is moving families into the small renovated homes. Some of these people are paying rents for their one-bedroom houses which is more than what they would pay for three-bedroom houses," he said.

"The Department of Community Development is recreating a slum. We demand decent homes at rents we can afford."

An elderly woman complained that she had been told to share a renovated home with another pensioner. There are two holes on either side of her house. The Department is building on both sides.

Mr Sadha Veeran, a former chairperson of TRA, explained her plight: "At night she has to place newspapers over the holes to keep out the wind. What right does the Department have to do this?"

In the meantime, the evicted families have temporary accommodation in the area. Their fate is uncertain.

Residents are now in fear of being evicted a second time. The FRA has called on all people to support the Thomsville residents.



A protest last year by Thomsville residents

Women's Day commemorated



Federation women presenting petition in 1956

Meetings to commemorate National Womens Day were held all over the country.

August ninth is National Womens Day. On August 9 1956, 20,000 women of all races, from all parts of the country marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the extension of passes to African women. Amongst the huge delegation were Lilian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph.

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Youth hold health seminar

The need for community involvement around health issues was stressed at a seminar held by the Lenasia Youth League on 21 August.

Several speakers related health to broader economic and political factors in South Africa. The most common diseases are caused by poor socio-economic conditions. Poverty and inadequate housing facilities do not only cause physical illnesses like TB, cholera and malnutrition, but also alcoholism and delinquency, which are social

diseases. In order to improve health, it is necessary to improve living conditions as well.

The need to involve residents in screening programmes, where several residents could acquire basic knowledge on how to detect certain diseases before they become serious, was emphasized by several speakers.

It was therefore suggested that a health monitoring group be formed in order to publicise and take up health-related issues in the community.

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