

AR10




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SPEAK

THE VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY

VOLUME ONE NUMBER 2 Price 10c NOVEMBER 1982



SPEAK
 needs your
 support and
 participation

West Rand up in arms over rent increase

RESIDENTS in five West Rand Townships are up in arms about a West Rand Administration Board decision to raise their rents

Rents in the Dobsonville, Mohlakeng and Bekkersdal areas have been increased by up to R14. In Munsiesville, residents have to pay R21 more.

Kagiso residents who have been paying R15 per month, had their rents raised to R25 in November. Residents now face a further increase on the 1st January when rents will go up to R36. This is a total increase of over 100%.

Residents at mass meetings organised by

the Kagiso Residents' Organisation (KRO) and the Mohlakeng Civic Association (MOCA) have decided not to pay the increases.

"You should not allow these people to dig holes in your pockets. They should first clean these streets, tar them, electrify the township and make sure we earn enough," said a speaker at one of the meetings.

The Mohlakeng meeting was attended by over 3000 residents. Hundreds of people who couldn't get into the packed hall stood outside.

During the protest meeting, all shops in the area were closed.

Residents demanded to know why the 'local mayor', Mr. Alfred Thekwane was not at the meeting to explain the increases.

Mr. Thekwane had been invited to the meeting by MOCA. He refused to come, he said, because he was afraid for the safety of his life.

In Kagiso, residents mandated the executive committee of KRO to invite the Community Council to meet them to discuss the issue.

The Community Council did not attend the meeting and refused KRO the use of the local hall.

Residents decided not to pay the increases until the Community Council gave satisfactory reasons for the increases.

A petition protesting against the increases is being drawn up. The petition is to be handed to the West Rand Administration Board.

Shack families stand firm

2000 families in Orlando East have defied an order by the Soweto Council to demolish their shacks. They are continuing to occupy their makeshift homes despite threats of legal action.

The residents decided to ignore the November 10th deadline to demolish their shacks, at an emergency meeting called by the Orlando East Civic Association.

"We are prepared to die rather than demolish our homes because we are now nowhere else to go," said a resident at the emotion packed meeting. "The council would build new houses for us first. It is their duty to provide uses."

One speaker said the council had offered them shacks but they were beyond their incomes.

The shack dwellers say now be taken to court for illegally building shacks. If they are evicted, the council will demolish and remove the shacks and recover the costs from the owners.

The Civic Association plans to hold a mass meeting to discuss further action.



This picture told our story in 1977 — high food prices, high rents, low wages. Today nothing has changed

JSE tenants resist eviction

TENANTS of Arenal House, Johannesburg, have almost won their struggle for alternative accommodation.

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) has agreed to approach the Minister of Community Development to discuss alternative accommodation for the

tenants. This was said by representatives of the Tenants Action Committee after a meeting with the JSE.

The tenants live on property wanted by the JSE for a parking lot.

The JSE began breaking down the building while families still lived

there. The tenants vowed to continue staying in the building. They said that if they were evicted, they would camp outside the JSE building.

"We have lived in this building for nine years and have nowhere else to go," a tenant said. "There is such a

shortage of houses. We have looked hard for other places."

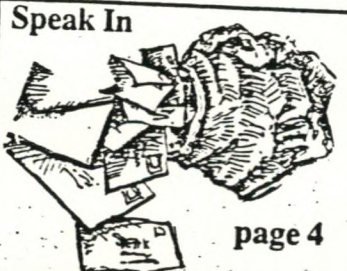
Tenants demanded that the JSE guarantee them alternative accommodation.

Many people and organisations came to the support of the tenants.

Including the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Committee, Actstop and the Federation of Residents' Association.

The JSE was forced to stop the demolition of the building, and has now agreed in principle to look for other homes for the tenants.

Inside



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C.R.A.C. fights rents

centrespread



No to Sri Lankan cricketers

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Management Comms prove ineffective

MANAGEMENT and Consultative committees in the "Indian" areas of the Transvaal are in disarray. The Consultative Committee of Potgietersrus and Warmbad have resigned, while in Laudium the Management Committee has prorogued itself until the housing crisis in the area is resolved.

The decision to remove "Indian" traders from the Potgietersrus own centre, prompted the entire Consultative Committee to resign. Mr A.B. Ismail, chairperson of the committee, expressed surprise at the move. "Especially since we enjoy a good relationship with supporters of the Nationalist Party", he said.

The chairperson of the Warmbad Consultative Committee, Mr Mohammed Cassim said: "We resigned because discussions with officials of various Government departments had not achieved anything".

These developments follow increasing pressure from communities for the scrapping of the Management Committee system and the resignation of its members.

The Transvaal Anti-SAIC committee (TASC) welcomed the resignation of consultative committee members.

Meanwhile in a leaflet distributed in Laudium, TASC slammed Mr Abramjee for not resigning from the Management Committee and the South African Indian Council (SAIC).

Commenting on the Government's decision to postpone Management Committee elections, a TASC statement

said it made no difference. "It is clear Government bodies are ineffective. They cannot solve our problems and they cannot be used to struggle for our demands. Our people will refuse to vote in any Management Committee election", it said.

HIGH electricity bills, rent increases, the inadequate bus services and other problems affecting the people of Diepkloof were discussed at a meeting called by the Diepkloof branch of the Soweto Civic Association.

The meeting held in mid-October was attended by about 200 Diepkloof residents.

The high electricity bills were condemned by Tom Manthata of the Soweto Civic Association. "How can one house receive a staggering bill of R900, and another larger house only pay R25 per month

Civic brings residents together

for electricity," he asked.

People who were being forced to pay absurd amounts for electricity were requested to bring their bills to the Civic Association. The Civic promised to take up the issue with the authorities.

A delegation from the Civic who had met with Putco officials about the inadequate bus service reported back to the meeting.

They had been re-

quested by the Civic to ask Putco to build shelters at bus stops and to make bus time schedules readily available. They had also complained about the high bus fares and warned that another increase would make buses too expensive for many people.

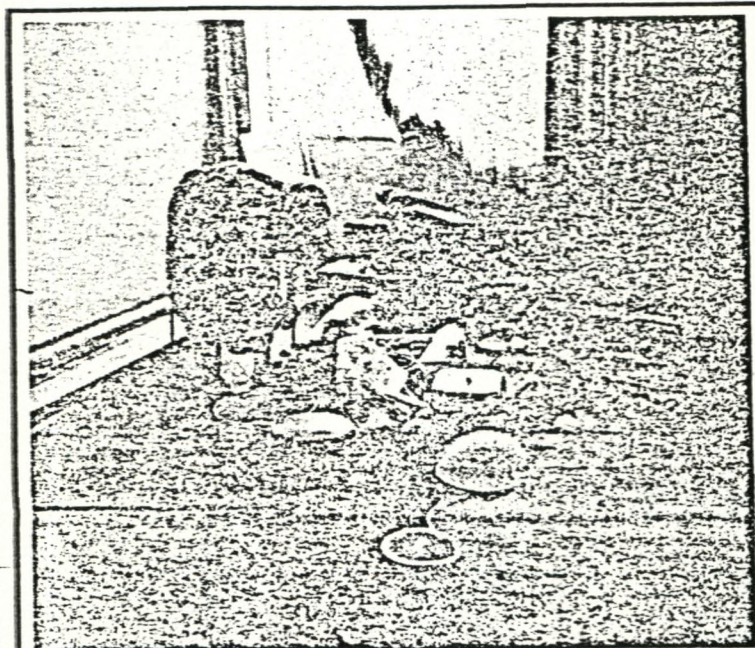
"Putco promised to come back to us and they have not. In addition we have seen in the press that fares are going to be increased."

The meeting man-

dated the delegation to approach Putco for a second time.

The work of the Diepkloof Civic Association was encouraged by a speaker from the General and Allied Workers Unions. Most residents are also workers, he said. "Although our trade union is primarily concerned with issues in the factories, we feel that we need to take into account the problems workers face as residents."

The meeting was informed of the recent establishment of the Anti-Community Council Committee. It was founded initially to oppose the Community Council elections, said Mr I. Mogahe, chairperson of the Diepkloof Civic Association. Although the elections have been postponed, he urged people to support the committee and actively oppose any future Community Council election.



A tenant of Arenel House gathers her belongings after the JSE began breaking the building down. The JSE has since stayed its plans to demolish the building.

Arac questions AMC over bills

ACTONVILLE residents are convinced the area's Management Committee cannot solve their problems. This emerged following a closed meeting between the Actonville Rents Action Committee (ARAC) and the Actonville Management Committee.

The meeting was requested by ARAC well over two months ago to discuss residents' high electricity bills.

Town Council members present at the meeting revealed that certain extensions in Actonville had their meters read for a six-week period instead of the normal four weeks. Residents were charged for the full six weeks.

The council refused to refund residents for the overcharge.

The council also admitted that where water meters were inaccessible, estimations were made.

"These estimations were well above the normal monthly use, and the estimated consumption could fill a swimming pool", said Mr Vicky Padotan, chairperson of ARAC.

The ARAC delegation said it was clear that Management Committee and Town Council members were unaware of the hardships suffered by the people.

"All the questions posed to the Management Committee were answered by council employees", said an ARAC spokesman. He condemned the Management Committee for refusing an open meeting and said it was a "clear example of the undemocratic way in which they operate".

- ARAC demanded:
- The council refund residents for the penalty they were overcharged.
- All meters be rechecked and regularly read.
- Residents be consulted on any increases.
- Residents be notified five days in advance of any electricity cut.

United action pays off at CNA

MEMBERS of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Worker's Union (Ccawusa) recently went on their fourth major strike this year — this time at the warehouses and stores of the Central News Agency (CNA).

The strike came in the wake of strikes at three other major chainstores — Woolworths, Greentmans and OK Bazaars — and at a time when Ccawusa is showing a dramatic growth.

Its membership is now estimated at 20 000. Ccawusa has been recruiting at CNA for a few months, and decided to arrange a meeting with CNA and a delegation of two union offi-

cial and three CNA workers.

The company initially agreed, but then wrote back in October to say only the officials could attend. The CNA workers then subsequently met and decided to go on strike.

In a surprise move, CNA agreed to give all workers a full month's pay despite the strike — an indication of how seriously it was taking the workers' demands.

CNA agreed to recognise the union, but has asked to be given until November 15 to look at the workers' minimum wage demand of R2.50 an hour.

It has not yet given Ccawusa a specific figure, but its members feel that recent increases have been unsatisfactory. The strike has been a victory for the workers up to now.

Firstly, striking workers will not be penalised if they return to work, and secondly, they have won recognition for their union.

Members of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Worker's Union (Ccawusa) recently went on their fourth major strike this year — this time at the warehouses and stores of the Central News Agency (CNA).

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Youth dies after white hospital denies help

A 20 year old youth from Roshnee, Shiraz Databhai, was involved in a motor accident on Sunday 31 October.

He was seriously injured and rushed to the nearest hospital — a "white" hospital in Vereeniging.

Shiraz was refused admittance and got no medical treatment from the staff at the hospital. Suffering and in pain, he had to be rushed to a hospital for black patients in Sebokang, nearly 10 kilometres away.

The journey proved too long, and Shiraz was certified "dead on arrival".

"Shiraz would probably have lived, if he had been treated at the 'white's only' hospital," a member of the Roshnee Students' Movement said.

"It is only a probability, but it could have saved so much of pain and heartbreak."

"How many more lives will the Apartheid policy forsake?" she asked.

Unionist gets support for taking stand

AT a recent meeting workers of the JMCEU voted against the expulsion of their colleague, Mr. Terry Jeevanantham. Mr. Jeevanantham has been at the centre of a storm surrounding the election of the Executive Committee of the Johannesburg Combined Employees Union.

Mr Jeevanantham was expelled from his union because he criticised some of the members of the Executive. He was likely to lose his job because the union has a closed shop agreement with this employer, the Johannesburg City Council.

The closed shop agreement means that all workers must join the union when starting a job with the council. And they can not resign from the union unless

they resign from the council.

The incident began during the Executive Committee election campaign. Mr Jeevanantham was standing for re-election, and in his campaign letter he called for changes in the union.

He promised genuine representation, more contact between members and the union, and better participation of members in the affairs of the union. He called for the money in the Union Loan Scheme to be spent for the benefit of all members and suggested that a Bursary Fund be started to benefit the children of union members.

Mr Jeevanantham's letter was well received by the workers. But the chairperson of the Executive Committee, Mr Huntley, reacted very differently. He accused Mr Jeevanantham of being an "immature young upstart" with obnoxious tendencies and denied points made in Mr Jeevanantham's letters.

Mr Jeevanantham took legal action against Mr Huntley who was forced to apologise. At the union's Annual General Meeting, the election was fiercely contested, and new people were elected to the Executive.

However, the vice-president of the old Executive

Mr Brian Isaacs, took the ballot boxes home and recounted the votes alone. This was contrary to the voting procedure adopted by the AGM and the union's constitution.

Mr Isaacs alleged that the votes had been incorrectly counted and hastily attempted to arrange for a re-election for one position. An urgent interdict to the Supreme Court prevented this illegal action.

However Mr Huntley, and the old Executive did not let the matter rest. They began engineering the expulsion of Mr Jeevanantham from the union and thus



Terry Jeevanantham the loss of his job.

A general union meeting was called where the expulsion bid of Mr Jeevanantham was to take place.

Supporters of Mr Jeevanantham criticised the fact that the meeting was

called on a week day in central Johannesburg. They said it was a deliberate obstacle. Union members would experience problems in getting off work to attend the meeting.

The week before the meeting, residents of Lenasia came out in support of Mr Jeevanantham, and called on the union to stop its expulsion bid.

Mr Jeevanantham is a senior librarian in Lenasia, and has worked for the City Council for nine years.

The meeting however ended in failure for Mr Huntley and the old executive.

Members voted against Mr Jeevanantham's expulsion by 119 votes to 40.

"This is a victory for democracy," Mr Jeevanantham said. He said he stood for what he believed in, and the correctness of what he believed in was shown by the outcome of the meeting.

"This despite their intensive efforts to swing the vote," he said.

It has been learned that Mr Huntley is now considering giving shop stewards a vote.

"Stop stewards have never had a vote," a past secretary of the union said.

Supporters of Mr Jeevanantham said they viewed this move with suspicion.

"Provide for the homeless" — FRA calls



Virgil Bonhomme DHAC

Speakers from the various affiliates of the FRA stressed the need for people to unite and to participate in their organisations.

The guest speaker, Mr Virgil Bonhomme of the Durban Housing Action Committee, said he brought a message of unity from over 70 organisations in Durban.

He blamed apartheid for the housing problem, and said "it was designed to make us sub-human".

"Basic essentials are increasing while wages remain the same. This is a deliberate manoeuvre to break the resistance of people. They want a situation where when they give you a piece — you will die for that piece," he said.

The meeting received statements of support from Dr Essop Jassat, chairperson of the Transvaal Anti-SAIC Committee, and Mr Anthony Morgan of the Coordinating Residents' Action Committee.

Other resolutions condemning the Sri Lanka cricket tour of South Africa, and the bread price increases were unanimously adopted.

MORE than 300 people called on the Government to "scrap its housing policies" and to "take steps to meet the desperate needs of the homeless", at a meeting in Lenasia last month.

The meeting was called by the Federation of Residents' Associations (FRA) to protest against the Government's housing policies and to express support for the residents of Thomsville.

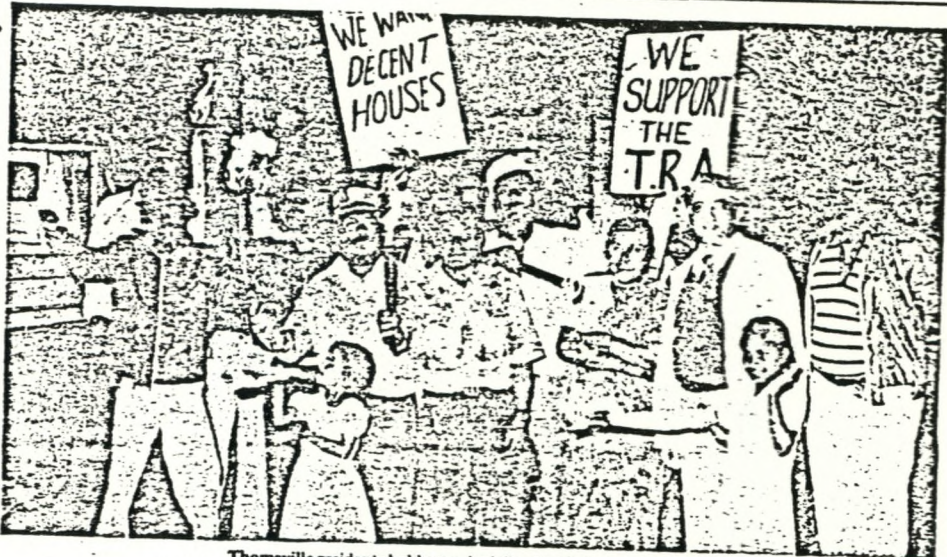
Dr R.A.M. Saloojee, chairperson of the FRA slammed "corrupt practices" in the allocation of homes; and accused the department of Community Development for sanctioning this.

He spoke of the misery caused to people through "absentee landlords, backyard tenancy and rent racketeering".

Dr Saloojee called on people to join Residents' Associations and to "organise for that which is right".

Mr S. Pillay of the Thomsville Residents' Association spoke about life in a Thomsville slum. He said "life in two-rooms is unbelievable. You sleep with your wife on the floor, in a crowded house with no facilities".

He urged people to resist such a life by uniting.



Thomsville residents hold a torch vigil to highlight housing plight

Thomsville residents get houses

ABOUT 30 Thomsville families have been allocated homes over the past few weeks, following the Thomsville Residents' Association's (TRA) campaign for rehousing.

On 30 August, 200 torch-bearing residents lined a street in Thomsville to demonstrate their opposition to the evictions that had taken place two weeks earlier, and to highlight their demand for decent homes.

People carried placards calling on the Lenasia Management Committee to resign. "Housing is a human right" and "We support the TRA", were slogans on other placards.

The TRA conducted a survey after the demonstration and submitted a memorandum to the Department of Community Development.

The memorandum demanded:

- Every family be

- re housed.
- That both income and family size be taken into account in the allocation of homes and calculation of rentals.
- That the TRA be recognised as the representatives of the Thomsville people.

The Department refused to recognise the TRA by claiming it did not have the mandate of Thomsville residents.

A petition signed by 90% of residents man-

dating the TRA to represent them, was then submitted to the Department.

The Department still refused to deal with the TRA and insists that they channel their demands through the Lenasia Management Committee.

A TRA spokesperson said, "Our memo states very clearly our rejection of the LMC. The Management Committee represents nobody

but itself."

He said there had been many allegations of

irregularities in the allocation of homes. "We have tangible evidence which implicates certain people in bribery and corruption."

Some 20 families still remain in the "two-room" area. Unofficial sources said these families would be rehoused too.

Police surprise city tenants

ON the 26th of October, tenants in a block of flats in Wanderers Street, Johannesburg, were surprised by policemen who stormed the building.

Tenants said the police abused them, threatened violence, and forced some of them out of bed.

About thirty people, including visitors who had come to see friends, were arrested and taken to the Hillbrow Police Station. They were charged with trespass-

ing and asked to pay admission of guilt fines. Some paid the fines and were released. Others were jailed and appeared in the Hillbrow Magistrates' Court the next day. Charges against all the tenants were withdrawn.

Tenants were angry and were considering taking action against the police.

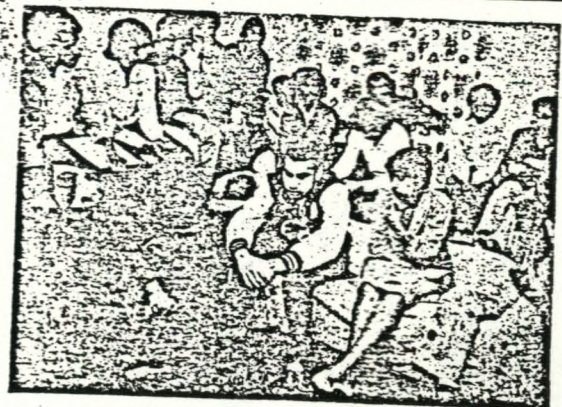
As they are considered to be living illegally in the central Johannesburg area, tenants live in daily fear of

being evicted.

Reports of police harassment have also been received from other parts of Johannesburg, including Hillbrow and Mayfair.

Tenants allege that the police are working with landlords in an attempt to intimidate them into leaving the premises.

"We are also forced to pay unscrupulous landlords large deposits and exorbitant rentals", a tenant said.



Tenants meet to discuss the police raid

SPEAK

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

THE response to the first issue of SPEAK has been enthusiastic. Many people feel that it is necessary to have a community newspaper like SPEAK to talk about our problems and how we attempt to overcome them.

The hardships we face seem to have become greater over the last few months. The price of basic foodstuff like bread has gone up. Wages are not increasing and so many of us are losing our jobs.

Of particular importance now, is the big rent increases affecting many different areas. In many instances there have been no explanations for the increases.

We cannot afford such increases. Our communities are already far overburdened.

But as the burden increases, so will our struggles.

To achieve good health, comfort and security, we need to reject the suffering we experience and make demands for a better life.

These demands will be achieved only through our unity and involvement in democratic organisations of our own.

SPEAK aims to help in developing that unity of our people. This can only be done if SPEAK has the support and participation of the people.

A community-based newspaper such as



Share your ideas, comments and suggestions.

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Congratulations

CONGRATULATIONS! At last we have a newspaper that we can call our own.

I was extremely happy when I saw the first issue of "Speak". Such a newspaper, reflecting our everyday problems in the townships, is long overdue.

Now we can read about the real issues affecting us — at school, at work and in the wider community. It is important for us to know how people in different townships are taking up these problems.

We have been fighting our individual battles for far too long. It is important for us to join hands and tackle these problems together.

Your paper being a community paper. I feel

"Speak" will make this so much easier. To the people who took the initiative of launching it. I wish to say — keep up the good work.
 M. Khan
 Newclare

I HAVE read the first copy of your newspaper and I was very happy about it.

It did not take me a minute to know that I have a definite interest in your paper.

I like your working structure and am keen to join in.

I belong to a group of not more than 10 people who are involved in community development.

The first issue had articles laid out haphazardly all over the show.

entitled to write to you and establish some communication and also have a deep feeling that one has to be involved in a newspaper like "Speak" as a community worker.
 Richard
 Tshiawelo

THE first issue of "Speak" looked extremely exciting. It covered topics which are often ignored in other newspapers.

I wish to make certain suggestions however which could help to jack-up "Speak" even more. Articles on the same topic (labour, for example) should be used on the same page if possible.

The first issue had articles laid out haphazardly all over the show. This made reading very clumsy. Articles on labour, housing problems and student topics were all lumped together.

I also feel that there should be an Advice Page similar to the one "Grassroots" has. It can be used to give medical tips, explain labour legislation, etc.

Another suggestion is that "Speak" has a regular column — what commercial newspapers call an editorial — to give guidance or ideas to the community.

The idea of an "editorial" might sound arrogant, but I feel "Speak" should make its stand clear about certain vital issues affecting the

community. A children's page would also fit in well. Children have been neglected for far too long as part of the community. I hope "Speak" things seriously about these suggestions.

Sharon
 Bosmont

WE at Grassroots in Cape Town welcome Speak.

Speak is part of the growing people's press in our country. This year community newsletters were started in other parts of the country. Gone are the days when we were silent and alone.

We hope Speak will grow from strength to strength. That it will bring people together and help build people's organisations.
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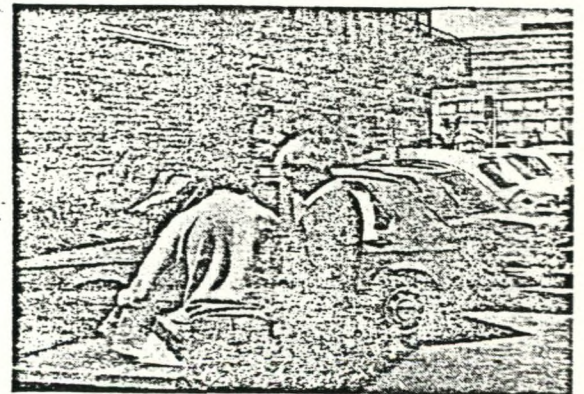
Our first issue of Speak was distributed and sold by community organisations, in shops and at stations. If you would like to help us get Speak to the community, contact us.

Our paper must reach the people

Video winner

THE lucky person to win a video machine in our raffle competition, is V.D. Mattura of Azaadville. She correctly answered that a commu-

nity newspaper represents the people. Speak would like to thank everyone for their generous support.



ARAC sells Speak at their fund raising cake sale

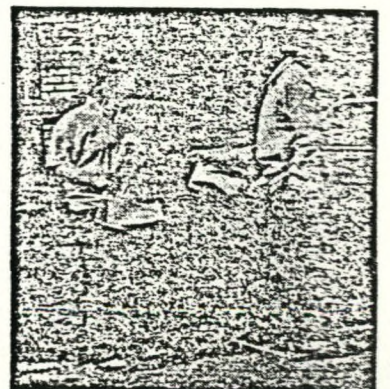
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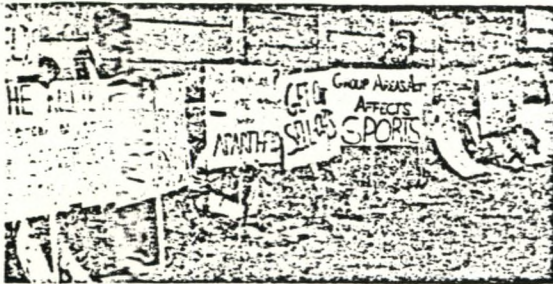
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A protest in 1980 against the renaming of the Lenasia Stadium to the Varachia Stadium

Community hits out at "ban-busting" Sri Lankans

PROTEST against the rebel-tour of South Africa by the Aransa Sri Lankan cricket team is mounting.

At a press conference called by the Transvaal Cricket Board (TCB), Mr Ahmed Mangera, president of the TCB labelled the Sri Lankans as "international mercenaries". He said their only reason for coming to South Africa was the huge amount of money they were to receive. Allegedly up to R100 000 each. He criticised wealthy businessmen who were sponsoring the tour.

Many organisations are supporting the campaign to oppose the tour. These include the Transvaal Anti-Saic Committee, Federation of Residents' Association, Tracos, Western Residents' Action Committee, Azapo, Cosas, Azaso, Black Students Society, Benoni Students Movement, and the Wits SRC.

Thousands of stickers and leaflets are being

distributed all over the Transvaal.

A joint leaflet issued by the Transvaal Cricket Board and the Transvaal Anti-Saic Committee, points to Apartheid as the reason why the world refuses to play sport with South Africa. "Apartheid is responsible for the sporting backwardness of the oppressed masses," it reads.

The leaflet warns parents of "unscrupulous" school principals who are taking school children to meet the Sri Lankans. Principals have been called upon to deny the Sri Lankans access to schools.

Explaining why black cricketers are not happy with the white cricket bodies, Sacu and the Transvaal Cricket Council (TCC), the leaflet says:

"Sacu is only interested in promoting professional top class cricket. As a result, amateur and community cricket is neglected. Only a handful of pri-

vilged black cricketers benefit. Sacu is using black cricketers to get back into international cricket."

The TCB said it believed all South Africans should have the opportunity to participate in sports.

"The control and administration of sports must be democratic."

The Sri Lanka government and people have also strongly condemned the tour, calling the cricketers "the disgraced fourteen" and "lepers". The Sri Lanka Cricket Board has banned the cricketers for 25 years from all competitive cricket.

In London, the President of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee, Mr Samba Ramsamy, has urged the Sri Lankan government to confiscate the money received by the cricketers.

The Transvaal Cricket Board has called on all non-racial sportspersons to boycott the "ban-busting tour".



Hitting out against overseas tours

Attack on Sacos slammed

A STATEMENT by up to 10 organisations, condemned the "malicious attack" on the South African Council on Sport by the South African National Olympic Committee (Sanoc) in the Sunday Times last month.

"We find it insulting that such cheap methods are resorted to to sell racist, unrepresentative organisations to the public," the statement read.

The statement said the advertisement is part of a campaign against

non-racial sportspersons, students and workers.

"One questions who the real authors of the advertisement are."

"It is Sanoc's intention to discredit Sacos and the adherents of true non-racialism; to present themselves as the champions of sportspersons in order to gain admission to international sport."

The statement asks if the advertisement "is perhaps not a precursor to state action" against non-racial sportsperson.

Widespread support for bread petition

"THE Government has once again demonstrated that it is more concerned with the interests of white farmers and food companies than with the genuine needs of the majority of our people," said a statement issued by the Federation of South African Women, after the bread price increase in October.

The Women's Federation said that many people were suffering from malnutrition and starvation. "Workers are also losing their jobs and cannot afford these increases."

Supported by community, student and trade union organisations, the Women's Federation issued petitions to be signed by members of the public opposed to the increase. The organisations formed an ad hoc bread committee.

The petition condemns the increase and calls "upon all people to resist rising prices". It demands that the government subsidise bread and scrap the present increase.

Presently the ad hoc bread committee is collecting petitions which they are planning to send to the Minister of Finance. They have so far received 15 000 signatures.

"We appealed to people to sign the petition as a warning to the government that we are no longer prepared to ac-

cept high prices and continual increases. One day it is bread, the next day it is bus fares," said a spokesperson from the committee.

"Although we know the government won't do anything, we can't just keep quiet and accept it. If everybody stood up, then something could happen," said Sarah Mousili from the Women's Federation.

Petition forms were distributed in many areas of the Witwatersrand. In Benoni, over 1 000 petitions were signed at the annual Soccer Tournament of the Benoni Student Movement. From one of the stands flew a banner calling for "bread prices we can afford".

The petition campaign is nationwide. In Durban, the ad hoc bread committee has collected over 90 000 signatures. Their campaign against the high bread price included many mass meetings, and culminated in a mini-conference and a mass rally.

9 000 signatures were collected in one day in Eldorado Park and Lenasia. At the University of the Witwatersrand, student collected 1 000 signatures.

In Cape Town, the United Women's Organisation called a mass meeting, and in Paarl workers marched to the Sasko Flour Mill in protest against the price hike.

"The campaign is rounding up at the moment," said a spokesperson for the ad hoc committee. "We appeal to people who have petition forms to return them as soon as possible to the Federation of SA Women."

Bread hike is an expensive bite

THE bread price increase has hit the poorer people hardest.

The 6c increase of brown bread from 29c to 35c a loaf and the 11c increase of white bread from 42c to 53c is a far cry from the 9c paid for a loaf of bread ten years ago.

Bread price rises are decided by the Wheat Board and are sent to the Minister of Agriculture for approval.

All farmers have to sell their wheat to the Wheat Board which sets how much they will be paid, as well as the trading price of bread.

The members of the Wheat Board are farmers and government officials. The majority of people who eat bread are not represented on the board and have no say over prices.

The Wheat Board says that the reason for the recent bread increase is that it is costing farmers, millers and

bakers more to produce bread.

The government contributes towards paying some of the costs involved in producing bread. This is called the bread subsidy.

However this year, the government has refused to increase the bread subsidy and so consumers have to pay the increases.

Presently the government only subsidizes 5 per cent of the cost of white bread and 20 per cent of brown bread. Before the price hike they were subsidizing white bread by 12 per cent and brown bread by 34 per cent.

The bread subsidy ensures that farmers can still make handsome profits. It is important for the government that the white farmers are satisfied since they need their votes at election time.

Many people have

complained about the bread subsidy. They say it is unfair; bread is a staple diet and should be fully subsidized.

They point to the high defence budget and to the fact that since General Sales Tax has gone up, the government will be receiving an extra R350 million.

"Why can't this money be used to increase the bread subsidy", they ask.

A recent look at the government budget has pointed out that the government spends as much as eight times more on defence than on bread and housing together.

Shop keepers say that people are buying less bread, especially white bread. More people are going to Pick 'n Pay and Checkers where bread is being sold at lower prices. However most people do not live or work near these large stores.

Poor people are most affected by the bread price hike. Rich people, says the Department of Statistics, spend 2 per cent of their income on food. Poor people spend 36 per cent of their income.

It is not only bread prices that have gone up. People are having to pay extra for other food, rent and transport. At the same time, wages are not increasing and many people are losing their jobs.

"We all work and so there is no cooking at home, the only food is bread - bread for breakfast, bread for lunch and maybe we cook some pap in the evenings when we come home," said Sarah Mohololi from the Federation of SA Women.

"Everything has gone up. Sometimes we just drink black tea", said Edith Mohohlo, also of the Women's Federation.

One solution that has been suggested is to bake bread yourself. However it is not much cheaper and most people work all day and don't have time to bake bread. Hostel dwellers do not have the facilities. It is only an option for some housewives who are already overburdened with housework and

child care.

If people cannot afford to buy bread they are forced to eat less. More people especially children will die of starvation and malnutrition, between three and four children die of malnutrition every hour in South Africa, according to a Natal Paediatrician.

IMMO'S SUPERMARKET

First Shop to service

ext 9 and 10
Lenasia

SWEETS
FRUIT
VEGETABLES
CIGARETTES

BREAD
MILK

UNILEVER
SABO
WAG
AND
HOLE
Etc 10

From Corrie to Eldos — v

Residents set to defy rent increase on January 1st

IN September, the Johannesburg City Council decided to increase rents in the 'coloured' areas of Johannesburg by up to 60%. This decision was met with massive opposition.

The city council, without even informing the Coloured Management Committee, decided to increase rents for flats and houses, and also to increase "service charges" — that is, charges for rubbish removal, water supplies, sewerage, etc.

The council claimed that it has to put up the rents because the Department of Community Development had increased the interest on loans it made to the council for building the houses.

Why, residents demanded to know, should they be made to pay if one Government agency decided to charge another agency more?

The protests that followed showed how effective united community action can be.

"The high rents would deprive our families of the basic necessities of life," a East Rand community leader said.

"We will be depriving them of food and education. The increases are inhuman. Many workers have already been retrenched," he said.

• In early September residents from Riverlea

Extension 2 held a mass meeting. Over 500 residents packed the church hall and resolved not to pay the increases. Signatures were collected for a petition condemning the increases.

• In Eldorado Park, up to 1000 people called on the council not to implement the increases. Many house meetings followed and the Eldorado Park Action Committee was formed.

• Mass meetings in Coronationville, called by the Westbury/Western Residents' Action Committee, unanimously rejected the increases. A call was made for the breaking down of artificial barriers between English and Afrikaans speaking people as part of the move for unity. A Coronationville Ad-hoc Committee was formed to steer the struggle in that area.

• Over 600 residents of Geluksdal voted not to pay the "abnormal increase". The women's League of Geluksdal decided to seek legal action against the increases as one form of action.

Facing such opposition to the increases, the City Council postponed all rent increases until January. It also gave an undertaking that it would make all houses available for purchase



by tenants in December. But it refused to back down on the 'service charge' hikes.

The community had achieved a temporary victory.

Many more mass meetings followed, and residents rejected the increase in service charges.

"What service charges," one resident asked, "Must I pay R30 more for just two plastic bags?"

• Residents at a meeting in Riverlea, decided to march in groups to

the rent office and pay their old rents.

• On the 19th of September, community organisations from all the affected areas met to discuss the formation of a united front against the council.

They resolved to continue building their organisations and to aim for greater unity. The formation of the co-ordinating Residents' Action Committee (CRAC) followed two days later, to co-ordinate the rents

struggle.

• CRAC drew up a memorandum and marched on the City Council offices to present it.

The memorandum stated the communities' opposition to the increases and demanded that:

- rent increases be scrapped unconditionally.
- the people be allowed to scrutinise the calculation of rentals
- rents paid to date be viewed as part payment on the purchase

price of houses

- all houses be sold at cost price

- the sliding scale system be reviewed

- CRAC be recognised as the legitimate representatives of the people.

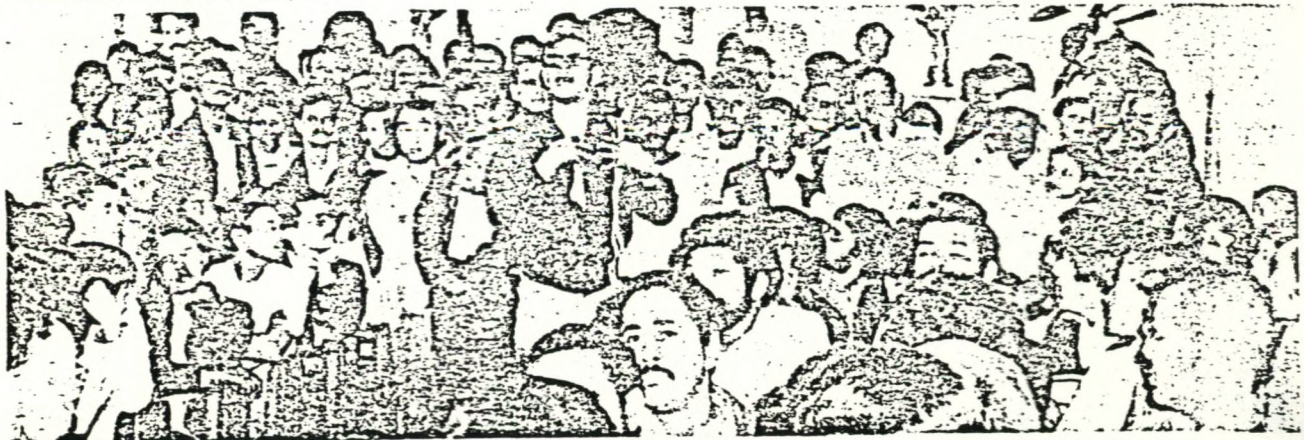
The council certainly did not foresee that its action would unleash such opposition and protest.

which united the community and halted the council in its tracks.

"People are no longer prepared to passively accept their lot," a spokesperson for CRAC said.

"A community that is united and organised can be successful. We have laid a basis for this. We must now build on it."

"The struggle is not over. The increases have been postponed until January; we are preparing for the 'big fight'," he said.



Riverlea residents voice anger over rent increases

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