

RIVERLEA EXTENSION - A G

HOUSING

In our society, the minority own the farms and factories and mines where production is carried on. The majority own nothing except their ability to work and turn raw materials into useable products, thereby producing the wealth of this country. They are paid to reproduce their lost strength and feed, clothe, house themselves and their families so that they can be fit to work another day. The bosses, in order to make a maximum profit, have to pay workers a minimal wage. Because we live in an apartheid/capitalist state, everything possible is done to lower the costs of black labour. So black workers are generally housed in the cheapest possible ways.

GROUP AREAS

Because of the Group Areas Act, most of the residents in Riverlea Extension were forced to move into these two and three-roomed sub-economic houses where up to thirty-one people occupy one house. The Johannesburg Municipal Council, which administers Ext., constructed the houses there according to the National Housing Code requirements—houses without inside toilets, ceilings and electricity.

There are absolutely no recreational facilities. A single understaffed non-governmental clinic which opens only twice a week exists for the thousands of residents. Although there are many single working mothers in Riverlea Extension there isn't a single creche.



A single working mother with her three children.



A typical toilet in Riverlea Extension.

RENT

More than twenty years after the township was built, the Council "generously" decided to supply the residents of Ext. with "bathrooms". They installed bathtubs in a CORNER of the already minute kitchen of the peoples homes. Since then, peoples' rent have increased dramatically. Rent in Ext. used to be R6.50—this included water and maintenance expenses. Residents now have to pay rent according to their wages—the more you earn, the more you pay. Many residents have to pay up to R60.00 a month for rent alone. Most residents are in arrears with their water accounts, which is now charged separately.

WATER

Some of the bills exceed R1000.00. These ridiculous charges exist, because:

1. The Council has not replaced any of the water-meters since the township was built and they are now faulty (the average lifespan of a water-meter is seven years)
2. Water-meter readers earn such low wages, they are inefficient—they don't even lift the lids off the water meters to gauge the amount of water a household would use. Many of the water-meters are covered with so much



ETTO IN THE 'CITY OF GOLD'

dust and dirt, that a reading would be an impossible task.

It is also a well known fact that a lot of the water pipes in the area leak. Yet the people of Ext. are forced to pay these exorbitant costs.

ELECTRICITY

Two decades have passed and still the Ext. community has to get along without electricity. Most residents feel that the cost of electricity would be much cheaper than the costs they are presently incurring for wood, coal, candles, etc.



COSTS:

EXCLUDING WATER

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Coal | R32.00 |
| Paraffin | R13.00 |
| Candles | R5.60 |
| Gas | R20.00 |
| T.V. Battery | R40.00 |
| Radio Batt. | R32.00 |
| Wood | R12.00 |
| | <u>R154.60</u> p. month |
| | + G.S.T. 10% |

(PENSIONERS ONLY EARN R93.00 PER MONTH)

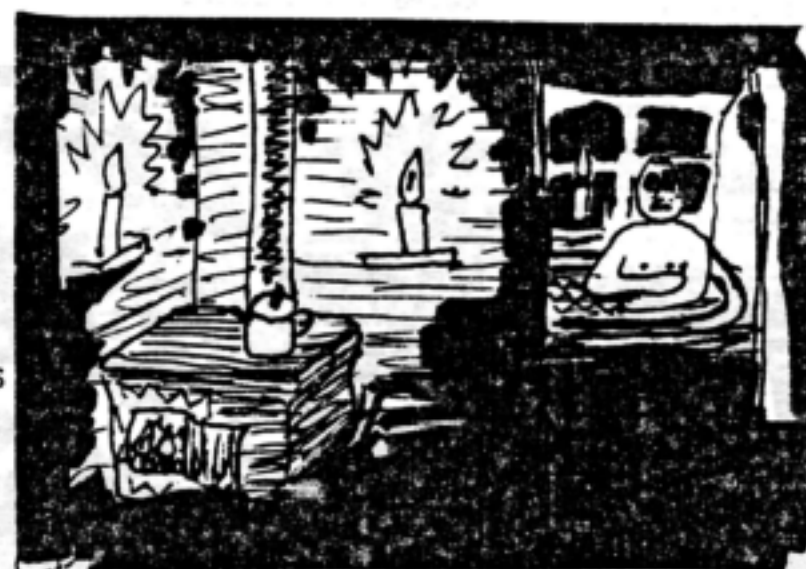
This lack of electricity has caused severe health problems with many residents suffering from respiratory diseases and poisoning from commonly used household substances. Burns from coal stoves, cooking fires and boiling water are common.

Despite the peoples continued protests about the lack of electricity, the Council's reply has always been the

same: NO MONEY ! Yet a few kilometres away, the Council is pumping millions of rands into building a model village as part of the Johannesburg Centenary Festival.

CIVIC

It is clear that the wealth of this country is being used for the benefit of a few, and that the laws of this country are designed to oppress and exploit the majority of people at every turn. We must continue our struggle to eradicate all injustices that have been flung at us by actively organising ourselves into sports, community, youth organisations in our areas. Concerned residents in Riverlea Extension have come together and are presently engaged in organising a civic association in the area.



YOUTH



An exciting development in Riverlea Extension has been the establishment of a youth group. To instill self-confidence and a sense of purpose in our youth, young people from Riverlea, Bosmont and Fordsburg decided to form a youth group in Riverlea Extension.

Every Friday evening at 8 o'clock, young people participate in a programme which so far has included video shows, discussions, singing, games and plays. The videos and discussions have focussed on topical issues while the drama presentations (skits) portrayed life in places like Extension.

Due to insufficient recreational facilities as well as existing hardships, our youth have resorted to crime and drug abuse. The aim of the youth group is to encourage individuals to develop their talents and abilities so that they can express themselves in a more meaningful way.

Join us so that together we can build one proud nation free from exploitation and oppression.

