

'We can't pay higher busfares'

THE government intends building even cheaper houses for low wage-earners in future.

The houses they plan will no longer have bare essentials like fences, washing lines, floor covering, ceilings, paint on inside walls or electricity.

This will mostly affect all those earning less than R150 a month.

At the moment houses built by the government are inadequate and people in all areas have emphasised their demand for adequate houses and for comfort and security.

The idea to build the cheap houses was told to local authorities by the Department of Community Development.

They said that the National Housing Commission, the government body that controls the money for the building of homes, has a shortage of money.

Community organisations are asking: "Where is the money we spent on rents and rates all these years? The government spends millions of rands on defence and sport. Why can't they spend more money on a basic right like housing?"

People say they are already suffering under the present housing conditions.

"The new houses will just mean many more problems for people already struggling to survive," a Bonteheuwel man said.

HOUSING CUTBACK

Government plans to lower housing standards

"The government has already been made aware of the problems we have with the present houses in the townships. As the houses get old, they fall to pieces and the authorities refuse to maintain them.

"How can they still build cheaper houses that will fall to pieces quicker and need much more maintenance, if they can't even maintain our houses now?"

"And if they expect the people to maintain the houses themselves, they must really want to see our people suffer even more. Where will people who can't even afford to buy food, still find money to maintain these houses?"

FLASHBACK TO 1980



Motor workers have taken up the fight for a minimum wage with great determination and militancy.

10 000 workers on strike

MORE than 10 000 Port Elizabeth motor workers walked off their jobs during the second week of July after management refused to raise their wages.

The workers, all members of the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU), demanded an increase from R2 an hour to R3,50 an hour.

They went on strike when an Industrial Council meeting between the three motor employers, Ford, Volkswagen and Gen-

eral Motors and their union had reached deadlock.

Workers have since changed their demand for R3,50 an hour to R2,50 an hour with increases up to R3,50 over the next 18 months.

However, the bosses have refused to budge from their offer of R2,15. At an Industrial Council meeting this week, they refused to negotiate until the workers returned to work.

At a packed workers meeting of about 3 500 later that day, workers

roared their disapproval when the shop steward reported back the attitude of the bosses at the Industrial Council meeting.

The Chairman of the branch committee of Ford, Mr Douglas Slingers, said the fight was for a decent living wage for all workers.

He said the workers had shown they were prepared to meet the asking for R2,50 instead of R3,50.

But the bosses were still taking a hardline. He said the workers would "Test" the

OVER 100 people representing 23 residents and trade union organisations have met to decide how they should respond to the latest busfare increases asked by City Tramways.

If the increases are granted, bus passengers will have to pay between 5 and 10 cents more for a ride. Last year the bus company made an after tax profit of over R3 million.

People present were quite angry. A spokesperson for Lavender Hill said "busfares are already very high. Our people are at the moment finding it quite hard to make ends meet. Does City Tramways want to see us starve?"

A spokesperson for one of the trade unions said:

"We did not choose to live in areas like Mitchells Plain and Guguletu. We used to live near our places of work. But then the government passed the Group Areas Act, and they began moving us left, right and centre."

Another speaker added "Since the government moved us against our wishes, they are responsible for the big transport costs and should bear the brunt."

Unite

The people present called for positive action, with a representative of Mitchells Plain saying "Only the people can fight the busfare increases. It is very important that all the people be united behind their organisation."

A BBSK spokesperson added: "Already wages are too low and we cannot afford the high rents and the price of basic foodstuffs. Any increase in busfares will mean less money for food."

After much discussion it was decided that all organisations present should lodge objections at the offices of the National Transport Commission.

Objections

The meeting felt it important to ask trade unions who were not present and the church organisations to support this decision and support the campaign against busfare increases.

The demands of the people were spelled out by a resident of Valhalla Park.

"The people must control the transport system. It must not be provided by private bus companies to make a profit. People should be charged a fare they can afford."

On Friday July 23, 1982 over 20 resident, trade union and church organisations including CAHAC, CTMWU, FCWU, GWU, lodged objections at the offices of the National Transport Commission.

Get involved -says CAHAC

CALLS for people to become more involved in their civic organisations were made at the first annual general meeting of the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee this month. Cahac, officially launched a year ago, presently represents 21 civic bodies.

In addressing the close to 200 delegates and observers present, Cahac chairperson, Mr Wilfred Rhodes, said it was very important that as many people as possible be involved in making decisions.

To build strong democratic organisations meant more than a show of hands at meetings, he said.

"It calls for greater involvement by all affected people," he said.

The task was not for those with confidence to make decisions on

their own. Rather their job was to reach out and involve others in day-to-day work, he said.

"It is this collective involvement in decision-making and action which will be the real measure of how successfully we are organising," he said.

In his report as secretary, Mr Trevor Manuel, stressed the need to commit more people to the organisation.

"Truly people's organisations must provide a home for everybody in the commu-

to page 3



Women in focus -page 8-9



Garbage problem -page 4



Old age pension -page 12

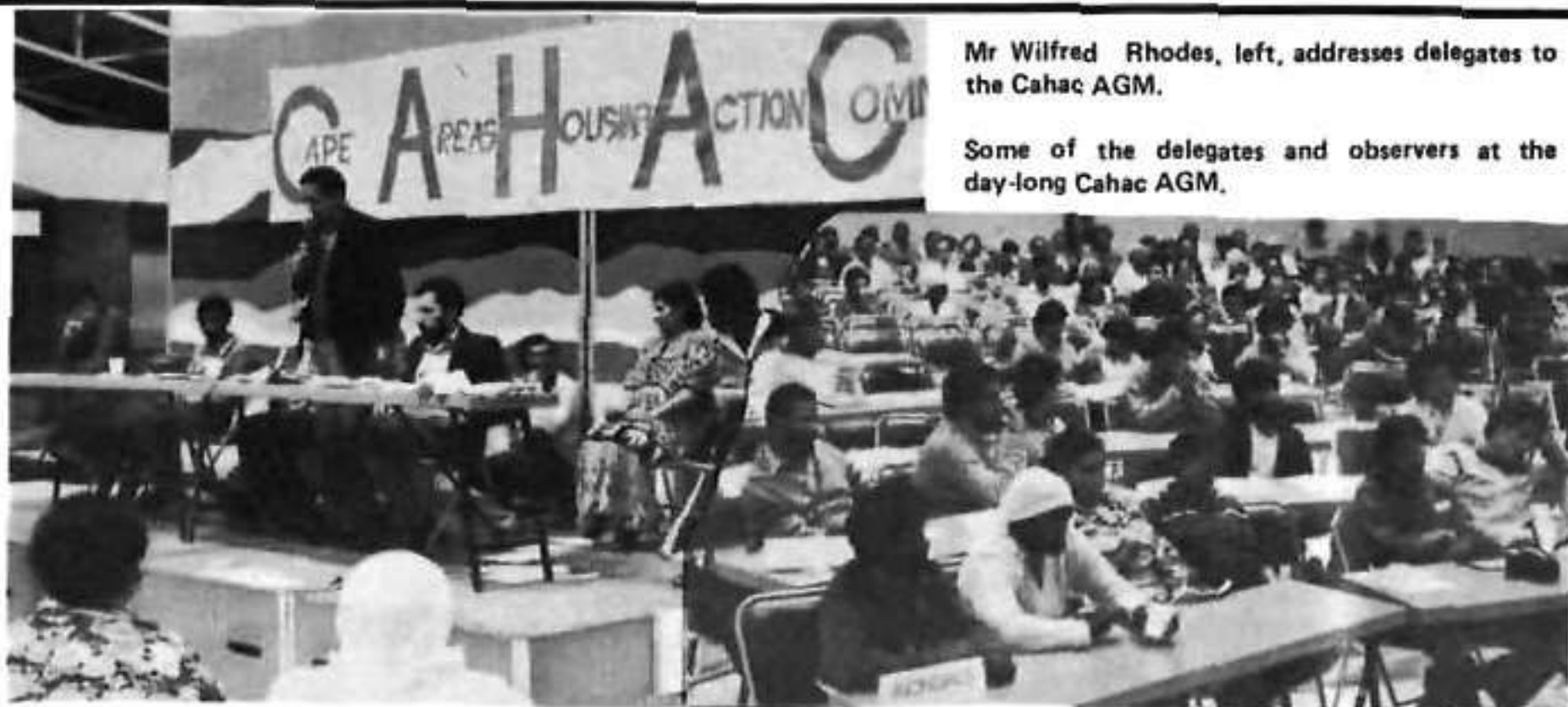


Education Charter -page 16

Build our organisations

Sunday, 11 July was a historic day for the umbrella civic body, Cahac. The first annual general meeting of the organisation, representing 21 civic bodies, was held in Lentegeur, Mitchells Plain. Newly formed committees in Parkwood Estate and Hout Bay applied for membership. With time, it is expected that other committees presently working in areas will seek membership. *Cahac can only grow and should grow - this was the message at the day-long AGM.*

By joining your local civic organisation, you are joining Cahac because this organisation is our parent body.



Mr Wilfred Rhodes, left, addresses delegates to the Cahac AGM.

Some of the delegates and observers at the day-long Cahac AGM.

UMBRELLA BODY FOR PLAIN

MITCHELLS PLAIN has at last got a people-based umbrella body which will co-ordinate the struggles of all those who live in the huge Group Area township.

The body is the Mitchells Plain Co-ordinating Committee

(MPCC) and has a loose Federal structure.

Each of the Plain's seven mass-based residents' bodies in the seven areas - Eastridge, Lentegeur, Portlands, Rocklands, Tafelsig,

Westridge and Woodlands - elected from their ranks two members on the MPCC.

One of the two area representatives is "permanent" - which means he serves a full term of office of about a year.

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Elected

The other is rotating - the areas are able to change this representative from month to month, or even from meeting to meeting, to enable as many people as possible to gain experience at MPCC level.

The local residents' groups keep their autonomy and will seek direct affiliation to CAHAC and to GRASSROOTS.

The 14 member (the number will grow as new areas are opened up) Co-ordinating Committee elects six working officials. These are secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, Grassroots sales co-ordinator, Publications Committee convenor and Workshop Committee convenor.

The first elections for these posts were held on July 6, 1982.

An earlier structure set up for Mitchells Plain, the Combined Mitchells Plain Resi-

dents Association (COMPRA) was not accepted by the people because it was undemocratic and many of its officials were eager to work with the enemies of the people.

It also refused to take up issues affecting the people.

On such issue was the Electricity Due Date. Council demanded that electricity accounts be paid a few days before most people received their salaries. Late payment led to a 10 percent fine. Because of the inconvenience of the payment date most people had to pay the fine, giving the council lots of extra money.

Campaign

The Rocklands Residents Association, who had withdrawn from Comprá, the Portlands Residents Association which was never an affiliate, and a number of concerned individuals decided to tackle the problem of the due date.

They formed themselves into the Electricity Petition Committee (EPC).

EPC waged a tireless and determined campaign from page 1

Motor strike

Macusa is opposed to Naawu's participation in the Industrial Council system.

The system has been criticised by a number of independent unions.

There is a difference however in the PE motor industrial council - the union participating ensures full involvement of workers on the factory floor in decision-making.

campaign which ended in the council scrapping the system of fines, in all areas, more than had been asked for.

After the victory celebration the question remained: What now?

What now?

Because such an effective organising group had been established, it was decided to continue until a mass-based representative body could be established.

Soon EPC was officially representing Mitchells Plain on organisations like the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC).

Democratic peoples organisations were started in Woodlands, Westridge and the new areas, Eastridge and Tafelsig.

They joined EPC and the stage was set for the EPC to convert into the MPCC.

But there were a number of issues to be settled first. What should the name be? Should the umbrella body have unitary or federal structure?

A unitary structure would mean a strong centralised body with binding decision making powers and who would have branches under it in the various areas.

A Federal structure would be a grouping of autonomous mass-based bodies who carried full responsibilities in their own areas. These people's organisations would come together on a regional basis to

discuss and co-ordinate matters affecting Mitchells Plain as a whole.

EPC organised a week-end long workshop to tackle the structure question.

At the end of the meeting opinion was heavily in favour of the Federal structure but no decision was taken as it was felt that the matter should first be discussed by the areas.

All the area committees came out in favour of the federal structure. On June 18 a joint meeting of area representatives formally adopted the Federal structure for the new body.

The next week the name Mitchells Plain Co-ordinating Committee was adopted.

On July 8 the first election was held.

from page 1

CAHAC AGM

nity around matters which are important to people."

"We are not trying to build a fancy Cahac structure somewhere in the air - organisation must be built in the community," he said.

Mr Rhodes said the goal of organisations must not only be to fight high rents and bus-fares. "We must see these problems as being

only the smoke. Our work must be to put out the fire which causes the smoke. We must wipe out from this society all the causes of our hardship."

At the end of the all-day meeting held at the Lentegeur Civic Centre in Mitchells Plain, nine people were elected to serve on the steering committee.

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