

RATIONALE:

The Black Worker's Project emanated from a resolution taken at the 3rd General Students Council held at Hammanskraal last year(1972). This resolution was born out of the Black Worker, who although constituting almost 80% of the labour force in South Africa, was open to exploitation by employers because of his lack of proper machinery to cater for his interests.

Thus the resolution, mandated the Permanent Organiser to look into the effectiveness of establishing a Black Worker's Council. In line with the resolution, this agency, called the Black Worker's Project was established to work towards the establishment of this council, the purpose of which would be:

- (a) To act as a co-ordinating body to serve the needs and aspirations of the Black Worker's;
- (b) To unite and bring about solidarity of black worker's;
- (c) To conscientise them about the role and obligation to ward black development and liberation.
- (d) To run clinics for leadership, in-service training and imbuse them with pride and self-reliance as people and about their potential as workers.

The modus operandi used by the Black Worker's Project is to identify trade unions(that have anything to do with black workers) approach them, establish new trade unions wherever necessary and meet employers. All this is done with view to establishing a council by the end of 1973. It is envisaged that this council will be much wider than in scope than a trade union, although organisation will stem from the formation of industrial unions.

Once established, the envisaged council will concern itself with all areas of the black worker's existence. A few examples of intended projects are:

Collective bargaining in matters relating to the worker's wages, hours, benefits and protests against illtreatment and prejudice in-service training to improve skills of workers; literacy programmes in conjunction with voluntary student groups to understand his situation better; conscientisation programmes through seminars in leadership and dissemination of material on worker's rights and responsibilities; recreation facilities and culture; representations could be made about problems facing the worker e.g. housing, transportation etc. A counselling service will be established to advise the worker on legal matters, health, education etc. Benefits include sick-fund, co-operative discounts, travel discounts, funeral benefits and a social Welfare service for the workers and their families.

PROGRESS:

PROGRESS:

Since its inception on 1st September, 1972, more emphasis was mainly laid on organisational work. Contact was established with leaders of existing trade unions dealing with blacks. These include, inter alia, the National Union of South Africa, and the African Laundry Workers' Union (a coloured union). The responses from these unions to the Black Workers' Council proposal varied between indifference and enthusiastic acceptance.

A number of unions with a coloured/asiatic membership have also been approached and some have indicated their willingness to involve themselves with the organising of African Unions. Some of them are affiliated to the trade Union Council of South Africa but none have definitely committed themselves to a Black Workers Council whilst still with Tuesa.

To date 3 fully-fledged unions have been established; namely, Allied and Transport Workers Union, Union of Black Journalists and the Black Union of Shop and office workers. Efforts are being made to establish as many branches as possible in all cities and towns in the country. At present plans are under way to formally launch the Black Workers Benefit Fund which will meet the needs of workers in their home and work situations. The immediate benefits envisaged are Funeral, legal and medical benefits. Members of the funds will also get advice on their "legal rights". From this it is hoped that more Unions will emerge and workers from all walks of life will have a platform to voice their problems and decide on joint solutions.

Another programme under plan is the establishment of the Black Workers' Advisory Bureau, Social Workers, Articled clerks and other persons in professional spheres have been contacted for this purpose. It is hoped that this will first function on Saturdays where workers are off-duty.

Four unsuccessful meetings have been held with the Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU), with the aim of creating a closer working relationship between Black Workers project and them (BAWU). But unfortunately they were all not a success because of differences in strategies. There is still some hope that a fruitful meeting can be held again.

Contacts have also been established with Dairy Workers, University Workers, Newspaper Workers and Domestic Workers who were motivated into forming themselves into unions by August or September.

Small meetings were held with interested people where participants were given assignments on labour legislations and techniques in organising. Report backs were held where these were discussed and information sheets were prepared on their findings.

PROGRAMMES:

The proposed programme of action for the coming six months are as follows:

BLACK WORKERS' BENEFIT FUND:

Needs of Community:

1. There is a need for a unified work-force, - i.e. Black Community to work together on common projects.
2. To promote self-reliance and solidarity in the Black Community.
3. There is a need for some form of security for emergencies in the Black Community which is invariably under-paid.
4. Need to keep black money circulating in the black community.
5. To form basis for co-operatives.
6. Need to promote administrative skills and organisational abilities.
7. To bridge the artificial gap between the different classes and categories among Black Workers.
8. To intergrate the economic and social aspects of the black workers' life with that of the black community.
9. To involve the churches more directly in the socio-economic problems of the the black community, as well as other black organisations.
10. To provide and promote leadership among black workers and to heighten their sense of social consciousness.

The object and expectation of the Fund is to meet all or some of these needs.

STRUCTURE:

- Benefits: i) immediate benefits
 ii) funeral benefits

Adults		R130
Above 18	Under 21	R115
15	18	R100
12	15	R 85
9	12	R 70
6	9	R 55
3	6	R 40
Under	3	R 25

Stillborn

R15

ii), Potential benefits.

Legal Aid;

Because of this country's myriad of oppressive and discriminatory laws, Black workers are often arrested and convicted without proper and trained defence being available to them resulting in the disruption of the economic and social well-being of the Black worker and his family. The effects also spill over to the general society's economic and social well-being.

The axiomatic effects of the provision of proper defence are a reduction in the prison population and therefore an improvement in the social content of the Black Community and also a greater sense of confidence in the black community about its ability to defend itself.

This is an educative process in the black community about its plight and the process of law.

It is proposed that the fund pay the first fifty rand(R50) towards legal defence of members and the possibility of reduced costs of legal defence can be bargained for. The bail bond can be provided by lawyers, avoiding unwarranted admission of guilt.

The availability of legal defence will make possible civil action for unlawful arrests, (arising out of acquittals), assaults, crimen injuria, injuries, etc. As much as possible, black lawyers are to be employed and/or firms employing black lawyers and/or clerks.

Discount Schemes for Members:

The fund will make arrangements with Black traders individually or through their associations to grant substantial discounts, e.g. 10% to members of the fund. This will result in money circulating within the Black community and thereby creating a spirit of inter-dependence among members of the black community. Higher sales turnover can lead to availability of cheaper goods and food thereby curbing malnutrition, etc. .

This scheme can become an embryo of traders' and consumer co-operatives.

Illness Benefits can be introduced at a later stage, depending on the availability of funds as well as relief services (e.g. rent subsidies during incapacitation due to illness, arrests or unemployment).

Financing:

The need for the fund to be a self-reliable project necessarily means that it cannot be linked in any manner whatsoever with the established insurance companies -- which are white businesses, and capitalistic in return. The people must control their own money and use it in the best manner which they deem suitable to meet their needs.

However, an initial capital is necessary to launch the fund. This is to serve as a guarantee against claims in the early stages of the fund's existence.

We believe that an amount of R1,00 would suffice to ensure the safe launching of the fund, against any such contingencies. It was proposed that B.C.P. should make this money available, in the form of any interest-free loan to be repaid as and when the fund has accumulated sufficient funds.

From the experience of other funeral benefit schemes run by African Unions in conjunction with Homes Trust, where members pay forty(40) cents a month towards the scheme, such schemes have shown a profit which is shared with the unions -- after deductions have been made for administration costs.

In the case of the B.W.D.F. the "profit" is even much greater, considering the fact that premiums are proposed at one rand(R1) per member, per month.

Problems Envisaged:

1. REGISTRATION:

It is not yet clear, whether there is any offence in operating a benefit fund of this nature. There are numerous funeral benefit "societies" operating in the Black community; some very small but others quite expensive, e.g. "The Great North Burial Society" is an example of the latter.

Nevertheless if for any reason it becomes imperative to register the fund either in terms of the Friendly Society's Act or any other relevant legislation, then such action will be pursued.

We do believe however, that the urgency for the speedy establishment of the B.W.D.F. overrides the 'perhaps necessary' pre-occupation with the system's interference.

2. FRAUD:

In the proposed system of pre-selling stamps we believe that the problem has been greatly minimised. However, since it will be impossible to demand burial or death certificates when the claim is made, members will be required to produce such certificates within three(3) months of claim being made. There is an obvious risk of unscrupulous people taking advantage of this leniency. The only possible remedy in this case would unfortunately have to be legal action being taken against such people.

Nevertheless it is our hope that the extensive and attractive nature of the benefits and services will act as a deterrent against any members or member making false claims.

It is our belief that the S.C.P. would expect the fund to repay the loan after sufficient 'profits' have been accrued, e.g. when they have accumulated about R3,000.

This could easily be attained if the fund can attract about 1,000 members on the assumption only forty(40) cents out of one rand(R1) is actually necessary to run the fund.

Needless to say, the growth of the fund will depend to a great extent that the enthusiasm of the agents/agencies and members in recruiting others. But we believe that the 10% commission would be sufficient incentive in this regard.

The potential membership of the fund can at least be about 5,000 within a year.

Membership:

Will be restricted to all Black workers from any walk of life in South Africa.

Evaluation:

It is envisaged that at the end of the year a conference of the members of the fund will be organised, wherein the members would implement the structure to that has been recommended. The fund would then be completely dependent.

A SURVEY OF WAGES PAID TO BLACKS

Purpose of the survey:

The object of this survey is to make an intensive study of wages and salaries paid to all Black people and to reflect these figures in a publica-

tion by.....

tion by the B.C.P. which, it is envisaged, will serve as some authority on the subject.

The importance of this survey cannot be over-emphasised, especially in view of the controversy which has recently arisen in the Black worker ranks. The numerous strikes which are escalating all over the country are to a very large extent, caused by claims of starvation wages paid to the bulk of the Black labour force. It is therefore in the interests of all parties concerned that an in-depth study of wages be made and be brought to light. It is envisaged that a publication of this nature will precipitate action in the direction of bettering the situation in the labour sphere thereby averting strikes and unrests among Black workers and therefore ensuring economic stability in the country.

It is also hoped that this publication will serve as a guide-line to prospective Black workers when choosing their careers, to understand what their careers have in store for them in terms of remuneration.

Areas to be covered:

The areas that are to be covered are the following:-

1. Mining
2. Manufacturing--food, beverages, tobacco, textiles, clothing, footwear wood and cork furniture, paper and products, printing leather and products, rubber products chemicals and products, non-metallic minerals products, machinery, electric machinery, transport equipment, diving miscellaneous.
3. Electricity (private establishment and uscom)
4. Laundries and Dry Cleaning service
5. Control Boards
6. Wholesale Trade
7. Retail Trade
8. Insurance Companies
9. Baking institutions
10. Building Societies
11. Transport - S/N & H
 -- Private Sector
12. Construction
13. Building trade
14. Communication - Post Office
 -- Posts Telegraphs and Telephones, Engineering

Civil Servants:

- Central govt. - police - S.A.P.

0/ -S.A.R. police.....

- S.A.R. police
- Municipal police
- Traffic cops
- Provincial Admin.
- Local Authorities

III.

Professional Groups:

- Teachers
- professors
 - senior lecturers
 - junior lecturers
 - technical assistance
 - secondary and primary school teachers

- Doctors
- govt. paid
 - medical practitioners
 - Dentists and Pharmacists

- Nurses
- general nurses
 - Prov. Admin. - midwives
 - health visitors
 - physiotherapists
 - marriage counselling
 - radiographers
 - nurse aids
 - sister tutors
 - matrons
 - auxilliary nurses
 - nurses in private sector

- Lawyers
- Senior prosecutors
 - junior prosecutors
 - magistrates
 - attorneys and advocates.

- Social Workers - Employees of B.A.D. and other related Govt. Depts.
- private sector

Journalists

IV. Voluntary Organisations

- White organisation :
- Nusas
 - S.A.I.R.
 - Black Sash
 - Christian Inst.
 - Bureau of Literature, etc.

Black Organisations:

! /.....

Black Organisations:

-B.P.C.; -B.C.P.; - SASO; -- AICA; etc.

Domestic Workers

Farm labourers.

APPROACH:

Category I

The approach that is to be employed in this case is to refer to Industrial Agreements and Wage Determinations under which these industries fall and make a thorough study of the minimum wages laid down for Black workers. A sample of five firms in each industry will be taken and on average of the wages paid to Blacks will be out in respect of:-

- (i) Clerks
- (ii) Skilled labourers
- (iii) Unskilled labourers
- (iv) Semi-skilled labourers.

As case study of one or two workers in each category to determine the workers' needs and to what extent these needs are being met by these wages.

Category II

The information relating to teachers' salaries can be obtained from the various universities and also from the personal Officers of the various governments as well as from the publications issued by these govt. departments.

Teachers' associations such as ATASA and other such relevant associations might prove to be very helpful in this direction.

Concerning doctors' salaries, an approach will be made to the Provincial Administration for salaried doctors and the S.A. Medical and Dental Association. Interviews will be conducted with doctors who are running surgeries to determine their income. Doctors' association such as The Medical Discussion Group will also be approached.

To determine the salaries of lawyer employed arisces staff members of B.C.P. in other parts of the country may be requested to give some assistance, such as interviewing in their immediate vicinity, an individual or an office-bearer in a particular organisation.

Materials on domestic workers can be collected through social workers who have programmed for the domestic. Here Miss Daphne Masckala and Miss Pustso Letlabika the Nigel Fellowship Centre may be singled out. The reason for this is simply that they travel extensively in domestic worker circles in the context of their work. Additional information may be obtained by the field worker devoting half a day for one week to this particular aspect of the research.

Regarding farm-labourers the field worker can spend a week moving from one area to another, alternatively a part-time employee may be useful in this regard. Distant areas such as the Cape can be taken care of through the regional offices.

Time:

It is estimated that a survey of this nature will take two months to be carried out, assuming that such man-power as recommended will be available. This includes collecting and collecting of material.

Expenditure:

Much of the money will be used on travelling, correspondence telephone accounts and a payment of part-time employee.

The estimated cost will be about R1,000.