

COSATU '97 SALHA 22a: COSATU 1996

COSATU EDUCATION CONFERENCE

8 - 10 NOVEMBER 1996

PROTEA GARDENS HOTEL

Conference Report

PROCESSED

DAY 1

Commission reports

TRADE UNION LIBRARY AND EDUCATION CENTRE

1. Women leadership and development

Key issues

Women leadership development should be a priority in all our training efforts, with an emphasis on training.

Affiliates should agree to a quota system for participants on courses.

Women development should be defined clearly and should target shop floor specifically for building of leadership at all levels. The programme should target not only a few women and should have specific focus.

Course areas

- Macro economic policy and all the policy matters from the government and as is discussed by NEDLAC
- Health, Safety and Environment
- Social, economic, and political issues be included
- Negotiations skills and
- Public Speaking and Assertiveness
- Organisational Management

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Process

- The problem of gender structures not being constitutional should be discussed in Cosatu.
- Training programmes which are aimed at developing women should be a priority
- Delivery should happen at all the different levels of DITSELA, COSATU and affiliate structures.
- Ditsela to provide menu of "specialist" courses.

2. Membership training

The need to have a strategy for training membership is critical; the lack of training is obvious as members do not understand their role in the federation and unions alike.

Training areas

- Socio-economic issues
- Political role that unions play in the society and our relationship with the alliance partners
- Globalisation of the economy and broad international issues.
- Economy
- How government structures operate
- Constitutional rights and labour rights
- Collective agreements
- The provision of ABET is critical in empowering workers to:
 - a) participate effectively in their unions
 - b) promote worker participation in decision-making in the workplace
 - c) to participate in the transformation of institutions and society as a whole

Process

- Revive our structures and ensure that they reach out to members.
- Engage in a campaign of paid time-off (PETL)
- Explore new strategies of using media for mass education and how to utilise the facilities available effectively and efficiently

3. Staff Training

Definition of staff: those functionaries that perform the tasks and duties of unions and federations daily. This definition will be inclusive of elected office bearers as well as national and regional secretaries in the labour movement.

Training

- There should be general compulsory induction training of every new staff member.
- Develop generic knowledge and skills.
- Develop organising and technological skills
- Line specific duties for different speciality areas i.e. international, health and safety, education and administration secretarial and project management skills.

Process

- Cosatu to assist affiliates with their needs re strategy development and training.
- Identify what education and training resources are available internally and externally
- The national office bearers of affiliates (in particular General Secretaries) must take responsibility for the creation of a learning environment in order that staff can develop and grow.
- Look at ways of coordinating affiliates that have expertise in particular areas to assist others - but this should not be an excuse for affiliates to shirk their responsibility to deliver education.

4. Leadership Development

The definition of leadership is broadly understood in this area as comrades appointed or elected to leadership roles within the labour movement. This target is mostly leadership at national, regional and local level.

Education and training areas

- Training on a wide range of communications skills, people skills and organisational management.
- Develop courses and understanding in economic policy, international trends and policy formulation.

Priority areas

⇒ Elected Committees

Constitutional committees

- Communications
- Organisational Management and development
- Policy formulation and Research
- Economics and industrial policy
- Gender studies
- Specialist committees members e.g. Health and Safety, Industrial Restructuring, Women and Finance etc.

⇒ Office Bearers

- Politics and Economics
- Labour law training
- Communications
- Peoples skills and organisational management
- Negotiations Skills

Process issues

- Involve outside training expertise in some areas and involve COSATU, DITSELA and affiliates on different issues and levels.

5. Stewards Training

Most new leadership in the Labour movement has not been schooled in the old labour movement. This necessitates that we look anew at what sort of leadership we need to see emerging.

There is also a need to train stewards in the new way given the changing global economic issues facing us.

Training areas

- Understanding Cosatu and union politics
- What are the duties of stewards and how to handle grievances
- Communications
- Workplace restructuring

Process issues

- All affiliates should make it their duty to train stewards.
- We need to take training on labour issues to schools as part of awareness for students as they are the future workers, this within the framework of their school curricular and as linked to SAQA..
- Look into the possibility of the Labour Department funding the Steward School that should be run in all the regions in the country.

Day Two

Commission reports presented and accepted by the house.

With regards to training it was noted that the senior leadership (GS's) must take responsibility for staff to develop and be trained, and that this process shouldn't just be left to the education department.

Mission statement

The house was referred to the 1991 mission statement and the additions proposed by the education secretary.

Accreditation

Introductory inputs-

LPRU:

Two main components of the NQF are standards and qualifications. Emphasis on doing and knowing. A qualification is made up of a range of different unit standards.

COSATU has been saying qualifications should allow for access, portability and progression. These are the key principles guiding the workings of the NQF.

To ensure this happens there are key structures in place. One of these is SAQA which is accountable to the Ministry of education and labour.

Two main bodies under this:

1. ETQA which monitors the quality. (Education training quality assurers).
2. NSB's (National standard setting body). Underneath these are the Standard Generating Bodies - to develop standards and feed them back to the NSB who checks that they meet the criteria set out by SAQA.

Decision around role ETQA will be playing has gone through a constitutional structure of COSATU. This included the finance and governing structure of training.

Standard generating: there have been workshops on how to generate standards.

The SAQA board has been established and has been meeting over the past four months.

A number of SGB's have also been established. Education department has set up SGB's in 8 learning areas. Under these SGB's the following areas have been working:

Learning area committees (LAC's)

Educator Trainer Development Practitioner (ETDP)

Engineering

Other pilots

SAQA is still deciding on the following areas:

qualifications

ETQAs

levels

Committees have been established to look into these areas.

What has to happen?

1. ETQA's and NSB's still have to be established in certain areas.
2. SGB's must develop and register standards which is a long and complicated process. But at the moment the employers are taking the initiative.
3. Providers and others must develop appropriate curriculum which will meet these standards.
4. ETQA's must accredit providers.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) - one of the principles of the NQF.

Different methods are used to test this prior learning. But it is important to have national standards against which to test people, and none of these have yet been developed.

Key Questions

1. How do we ensure involvement in process of standards setting etc.?
2. Criteria for accreditation for providers?
3. How do we ensure separation does not disadvantage certain industries?
4. Process forward?

2. Chris Bonner

see annexure B.

- Criteria of levels of shopstewards.
- All shopstewards must be trained. Second level would be shopstewards who are elected to leadership positions (including people who are specially delegated, as opposed to only office bearers).
- What mechanisms can we use to ensure guiding statements are strictly followed.
- Unions must be sure about this. Use normal implementation processes.
- Specialisation - at which level do we say a person is specialised.
- We as COSATU must identify areas where we want to train people to a level of specialist training.

3. Shele Papane - see Annexure A

Report back from commissions

ACCREDITATION:

Group 1:

What are our guiding principles - what do we want when we train our staff, the commission endorsed the guidelines in the paper on accreditation.

The commission agreed to a flexible approach to TU ducation - individuals can RPL themselves. We propose the establishment of a research project to look at international trends with regard to accreditation. It may be possible to learn lessons from other countries with regard to RPL and other processes such as module development.

Target groups: Looked at the two levels of s/s.

For general workers: ITB

Members and s/s can go through RPL

Higher levels such as those delegated, worker leaders, etc will have specialist courses on a voluntary basis.

What is our interim approach - we should formulate a data base on all insitutions ultised by affiliates - working towards one system which will lead to DITSELA seeking accreditation for all these courses. Affiliates should be more involved in processes. some affiliates did not participate effectively. All affiliates must attempt to develop the capacity to effectively participate.

Group 2:

Politics of accreditation

One of the main concerns raised is that we will lose people if we accredit courses. But generally it was felt that this is already the case, and we may lose more people if we refuse to accredit. The other concern is that this may also lead us to only recognising formal education which is what we have struggled against.

However, we should not turn accreditation into a principle, but rather we need to turn it into a struggle for accreditation so that it works for us. It was accepted that standard generating is a terrain of struggle and must be taken forward. One needs to ensure that there is worker participation in all structures. We must develop our capacity to engage in standard generating, and we need to accept the challenge of joint negotiations about standards.

We also need to campaign for PETL, as otherwise ABET and TU education cannot happen effectively. This is a real problem, this often means that people lose classes because of changes in shifts. There should also be tutors rather than teachers. The employers need to put more money into the ABET programmes. Thus the budget must shift away from only management training and towards ABET. There should be clear targets, and unions must be fully involved in all aspects of ABET provision. The unions must not just be watch dogs.

We also need to recognise our own strengths, as our TU programmes are of a high quality, and we should not allow this to be diluted. When we negotiate with other institutions we should not compromise on this quality, and should ensure that we maintain control over all aspects including facilitators. We should assert what we need, and the content that we want, and the manner in which we want the programme to be run. If the institution does not agree we should refuse to work with that institution. We need to take the gap that these institutions are searching for relevance. We also need to maintain our position about a class bias. This should be consistent with the principle that TU education should be independent.

We should not allow this arrangement to extend to employers providing s/s education. Although we may have demands around training and the employers must provide resources, but they should not run the training. If we feel that it is strategic to engage employers we should engage on the basis of policies, we should not just bow to pressure from employers. Otherwise we allow employers to begin to determine the role of s/s.

These arrangements apply to the second level of s/s, and the specialist training. It cannot apply to the bulk of the s/s training. This should only be assessed by ourselves, if at all. It was also felt that we should utilise the standards

(developed by the Educator Trainer Development Practitioner Project (ETDP) and pilot this in our unions.

Assessment must be fair and we need to develop policy around these issues. Existing assessment is not fair.

Key concerns as a result of affiliates current experiences - what struggles have they engaged in, what capacity do they have.

A concern was raised about us compromising our programmes if we engage with other structures.

Transitional arrangements:

* Internal panel should be established to assist, and give guidance, to unions with accreditation of TU education. This can be used to pilot the notion of a ETQA.

* S/S pilot project to ensure quality s/s training throughout the province. This should be used to develop curriculum and to test NQF ideas.

* Affiliates must establish committees to deal with these issues so that they can receive training and then play a support role within the affiliate. This must be seen as a priority.

DITSELA, COSATU AND TRADE UNIONS

Group 1:

ABET should be taken to almost all our members. What we find is that the resources to do this are insufficient. Unions must manage these resources. This should be external to TU education.

— Membership training should be DONE BY s/s supported by organisers.

Affiliates and COSATU must develop a strategy as to how they will support this through media, resources, training, and campaigns on education.

— Affiliates must give core training for s/s. They should also deal with issues such as restructuring and H&S which are more specialist courses. This should be delivered by affiliates but COSATU should give support, and in some cases should run the specialist courses directly. We need to recognise that some affiliates have the capacity to run the programmes by themselves, but others need more assistance. COSATU should take on those programmes that run across all affiliates.

— Staff: induction programmes should be delivered by affiliates. The specialist training should again be run by affiliates with assistance from COSATU.

COSATU Nedcom?

DITSELA should provide programmes, develop materials and run train the trainer programmes. Should also train MP's and MEC's. Should also use the NGO's insofar as they can deliver to the TU's, and that they work within our policies and strategies. Therefore we should promote some of their programmes if they meet this criteria.

Group 2:

What courses should we give at what level:

Affiliates must identify the needs. COSATU must play the role of keeping the ideological position. At DITSELA level we need to accept that there are other federations. DITSELA can run these programmes with COSATU playing a close role.

Train the trainer programmes should be DITSELA run.

At micro level affiliates must play a key role.

Affiliates must play a role in running membership programmes and s/s training, but COSATU must coordinate this area.

DITSELA can deal with certain issues such as Framework Agreements, but COSATU must shape it within their vision. For example other federations do not support the RDP.

Strategy:

There are principled agreements that state that COSATU and DITSELA must plan the summer and winter schools. COSATU must develop curriculum framework, COSATU must also guide the governance of institutions. There should also be mass education through technology and the media.

Questions for clarity:

Comments:

- Build the capacity of the affiliates to do education - few unions have education programmes.
- Cosatu should find a strategy to address the problem. Certain areas run across the affiliates, eg LRA - Cosatu should take charge of this. There is support for the notion that COSATU must take seriously the business of developing capacity. There are so many issues, and many affiliates do not have the capacity to deliver effectively. COSATU must take the challenge of building educators to deliver.
- Do we want to build COSATU if we refer so many issues to DITSELA.
- Live presentations on TV - should we form a drama group. COSATU should play a major role in this one. We can have programmes on TV,

where we have COSATU people on TV who can run educational programmes. This will reach the mass of membership.

- The challenge of the conference is to prioritise, we cannot just arrive at a shopping-list. What are the priorities for affiliates, COSATU, and DITSELA. One of the problems we have is that COSATU trains trainers, but then the trainers go back to an affiliate that does not have a programme, and does not have a budget.
- What role can COSATU leadership play with NOB's of affiliates to ensure that the senior leadership of affiliates take education seriously.

Day 3

Programme of Action

Trade Union Education

1996 - 11 - 08 to 10

The conference identified a range of needs that we need to enhance capacity and build the organisation. The following is a summary of the commissions discussions on content:

1. Trade Union Basics

Understanding trade unions
History of trade unions
Policies, constitutions

2 Essential Knowledge

Law
Economics
Politics
Gender

3. Policy Development and Formulation

Research around policy matters

4. Organisational Management and Administration

Technology

5. Organisational Development and Building

6. Specialist Areas

Women Leadership
Health Safety and Environment
Legal
Educator

7. Negotiations and CB skills

Negotiation Skills
"New" areas (restructuring, affirmative action etc)

All the above areas are underpinned by Communications and Numeracy Skills

Accreditation... Targets and Responsibility for Delivery

Accreditation	Target	Delivery
Use Skills for RPL	Members	Affiliates COSATU to co-ordinate
Use skills for RPL	Stewards induction core Staff Induction union specific	Affiliates Cosatu support/co-ord Ditsela Support
Some programmes accredited via NDF/ HED institutions	Leadership specialists const.comms office bearers NEDLAC Staff Specialist Advanced	Affiliates policy spec Cosatu policy capacity Ditsela systematic Advanced Support

Our education should be guided by principles and our organisational environment.

Prioritising our Programme

Issues of principle -discussion

- It was noted that there is no point in just delivering education programmes, we have got to develop a culture of development to enable change and movement forward within affiliates.
- Our programme should further be underpinned by our political principles and also to ensure that the leadership are in the forefront of developing an environment for development to enhance skills and capacity within Cosatu and its affiliates.
- We should go for a unified approach in accreditation as this might create tensions between those levels accredited and those not accredited. This might mean that there should be some courses accredited at the lower levels and some at a higher level
- Highlighted also was the question that we should not primarily focus on accreditation and we should also understand the collective and organisational role of trade union education; but this does not stop individuals from getting themselves accredited.
- Our educators should understand that stewards need education to be good leaders.
- We should determine standards and curriculum of our education and not leave it to anybody outside.
- Our programme should be geared at organisational building and recognised as such and not at skilling individuals.
- Our approach to trade union education should not be geared towards accreditation but should be ideologically driven. We should also not lose ownership of the process in developing standards.
- The principles outlined from the PRU on accreditation were also adopted with no amendments.

Priorities

- Stewards, organisers and educators should deliver education to membership and be given basic skills as educators.
- General meetings should be revived - and be attended by national office bearers
- We should also use media effectively to reach out to members, particularly media that we have at the moment.
- We should also define and train organisers as educators so as to build our capacity for training.
- Cosatu must assess the different programmes in different regions and also assist in building capacity of those affiliates.

The following areas should form the four priority areas of our programmes:

Trade Union Basics
Essential knowledge
Organisational management
Negotiations and Collective Bargaining

We should also note the following

- Develop a core of women leadership as trainers - not only the integrated approach.

Target groups

- ⇒ Prioritise leadership CEC, NEC et al.
- ⇒ Trade Union basics for membership to be done by affiliates
- ⇒ OMD and building organisation to be done by affiliates and COSATU
- ⇒ Essential knowledge for staff and leadership to be done by affiliates and COSATU
- ⇒ Negotiations and Collective Bargaining to be done by COSATU and affiliates.

The creation of an appropriate environment for staff development:

- It was noted that we have lot of good policies but there was a lack of implementation and we need to develop a special programme for leadership - it is primarily their responsibility to develop a climate for staff to develop.
- The capacity of unions to deliver must be addressed and we need to look into sending consultants (not outside but we can use DITSELA for this purposes) into affiliates to work on long term programmes.

- Regional centres should intervene in affiliates but we need to ensure their autonomy. Affiliates should be self-reliant.
- Deployment of human resources from one affiliate to another should be our centre-priority.
- COSATU and Ditsela should try to develop a group with expert skills to assist affiliates and to also establish an **Education Task Force** for this purpose.
- Use other institutions for some courses eg. computer skills.
- Affiliates should set aside a minimum of 4% of their income on education.
- Train organisers as trainers on a large scale - identify clearly what they are doing / what their job descriptions are; they can train and support shopstewards to provide education & training to members.

ANNEXURE D

GLASS CEILING

UNION GLASS CEILING
THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION
OF WOMEN LEADERS
IN COSATU

ROSELINE NYMAN

WHILE ALL NALEDI PUBLICATIONS ADOPT A
PRO-LABOUR PERSPECTIVE, THEIR CONCLUSIONS DO NOT
REPRESENT THE POLICIES OF COSATU.

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SUMMARY

The development of women leadership has been a long-standing COSATU focus. Repeated resolutions have committed the federation to promoting women to participate fully at all levels. COSATU's 5th National Congress in 1994 resolved to break down practical barriers to women's full participation, and established a programme of action towards this goal with a four-year deadline.

Roseline Nyman's research report, 'Union Glass Ceiling: The Under-Representation of Women Leaders in COSATU' is a significant contribution from NALEDI's Women and Work Research Project that assesses the federation's progress halfway through the period of implementation mandated in 1994. The report is based on a recent survey of SACCAWU and SADTU members, as well as focus-group interviews with SACCAWU workers and officials. Nyman argues that little progress has been made as a result of complicated processes inside the unions and in society. She suggests a series of practical steps that may be taken towards overcoming these obstacles.

Though there are no reliable figures on the number of shop-stewards in COSATU, 1991 research indicated that only 14% (3 500) of shop-stewards are women, even though women make up 36% of the federation's membership. By the principle that representation in leadership should be roughly proportional to a group's overall numbers, there should be 9 000 female shop-stewards in COSATU, an increase of 250%. This under-representation is a serious problem, given the importance of the shop-steward position as the recruiting ground for all leadership positions in the affiliates and the federation. As a result, according to Nyman, 'Women's low representation as shop-stewards disadvantages them from being elected to constitutional leadership positions'.

Nyman shows that this is indeed the case. Women make up only 9% of delegates at COSATU's Central Executive Committee, where 'women's absence...affects both decisions and coordination of activities that have an impact on women'. These findings are reiterated in Nyman's case study of SACCAWU, a large affiliate with a large female membership and many women leaders. However, even in SACCAWU women remain 'grossly under-represented', and if this is true of one of the 'best' affiliate, then conditions at other affiliates must be no better.

In her detailed analysis of SACCAWU's leadership, Nyman discovered under-representation at all levels of the organisation. Just 2 of 6 national office bearers are female, as are 7 of 59 Central Executive Committee members, and 3 of 28 National Executive Committee members. Even more extreme patterns were present at the regional level, where 3 out of 31 regional office bearers are female, and not a single region is chaired by a woman. Though there are slightly more women representatives on SACCAWU locals (64 of 260, 25%), only one local has a female majority, and women hold only 6% (18 of 104) of local office-bearer positions. Indeed, half of SACCAWU's 26 locals have no women office bearers at all.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

In line with international trends, there has been an increase in women's participation in the labour market in South Africa. (Crankshaw, 1996) The growth in the female-dominated service sectors and the corresponding decline in the male-dominated manufacturing sectors have added to women's entry in formal employment. (United Nations Development Report, 1996) In consequence, there has been an increase in the level of women organised in the trade union movement. However, there has not been a concomitant increase in women's representation in leadership positions in the unions. Instead women come up against a 'glass ceiling' that for various reasons prevents them from rising into positions of power.¹

Historically, organising in South Africa was almost entirely focused around male workers and prioritised their needs and interests. South African unions have been slow in responding to organising around the needs of female workers while elevating men to positions of leadership. Instead, women's issues have been placed on COSATU's agenda as a result of struggles by women workers. The fight for more women leaders forms a critical part of this struggle.

Increasing the number of women leaders is important for various reasons. Women leaders are necessary to ensure that problems affecting women in the union and at work are taken up.² This involves placing problems on the union's agenda, ensuring appropriate action is taken and continuous monitoring occurs. A common criticism is that women leaders do not necessarily advance the interests of women. For example, Sweden's deputy prime minister, a woman, defended the government's plans to cut back on childcare benefits.³ While this criticism is valid, it does not apply to all women leaders. COSATU has a rich history of women leaders who have been at the forefront of fighting for the advancement of women. Furthermore, women leaders are necessary as role-models for other women. Finally women's role in society as nurturers and care-givers means they can instill a different leadership style in the organisation.

This research report covers formal leadership as reflected in trade unions as bureaucratic institutions.⁴ Shop-stewards are worker leaders elected by a defined constituency to represent them. Worker leaders normally arise organically through day-to-day shopfloor struggles and form part of the pool of workers elected to formal leadership positions.

The **research methodology** comprised of:

- a reference team of the Women and Work Steering Committee;
- a literature search;
- a survey of South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) and South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) members;
- focus-group interviews with SACCAWU workers and officials.

Part One stresses the importance of having women in leadership positions. In Part Two we trace the Congress of South African Trade Unions' (COSATU) struggles in the fight for gender equality with a special emphasis on the struggle for the election of women leaders. Part Three uncovers the gender breakdown in COSATU. Part Four investigates SACCAWU as a case study of the number of women leaders in a COSATU affiliate. Part Five examines the obstacles facing future women leaders expressed in the interviews and surveys conducted in SACCAWU and SADTU. Part Six analyses the solutions workers proposed in the interviews and surveys. Finally Part Seven suggests recommendations that include education and training, a quota system, childcare facilities, employment of female union organisers and the popularisation of the COSATU Sexual Harassment Code of Conduct and Procedure. Annexure A outlines the research methodology. Annexure B records the gender education and training provided by COSATU.

PART TWO: WOMEN'S STRUGGLES IN COSATU

Women's participation has been on COSATU's agenda since its 1985 Inaugural Congress. At COSATU's 1987 Education Conference delegates listed the lack of key promotions of women at work and the failure to be given leadership roles as part of the problems experienced by women at the workplace. A further problem listed was the negative attitude towards women shopstewards shown by male comrades. Women included 'lack of confidence' and 'lack of political education' as reasons for their under-representation. However, delegates failed to propose measures for solving the problems.

The first COSATU Women's Congress in 1988 represented a major step forward in that it offered women the opportunity to identify their problems at the workplace and in the union structures. While the thrust of the resolutions was on workplace issues, women's recognition of problems in the federation at such an early stage was significant. The Congress committed itself actively to promote the necessary confidence and experience amongst women workers so that they can participate fully at all levels of the federation.

The commitment was worded generally with no clear proposals on necessary measures to realise the commitments in practice. Women's under-representation at a leadership level was not specifically identified as a problem although 'full participation' could incorporate this issue. Congress' decision to pass a commitment and not a resolution on the issue meant that the problem was not seen as a burning issue.

At the 1989 3rd COSATU Congress, delegates took a further step by resolving to break down the 'practical barriers' to women's full participation in leadership positions by:

PART THREE: HOW MANY WOMEN ARE IN LEADERSHIP?

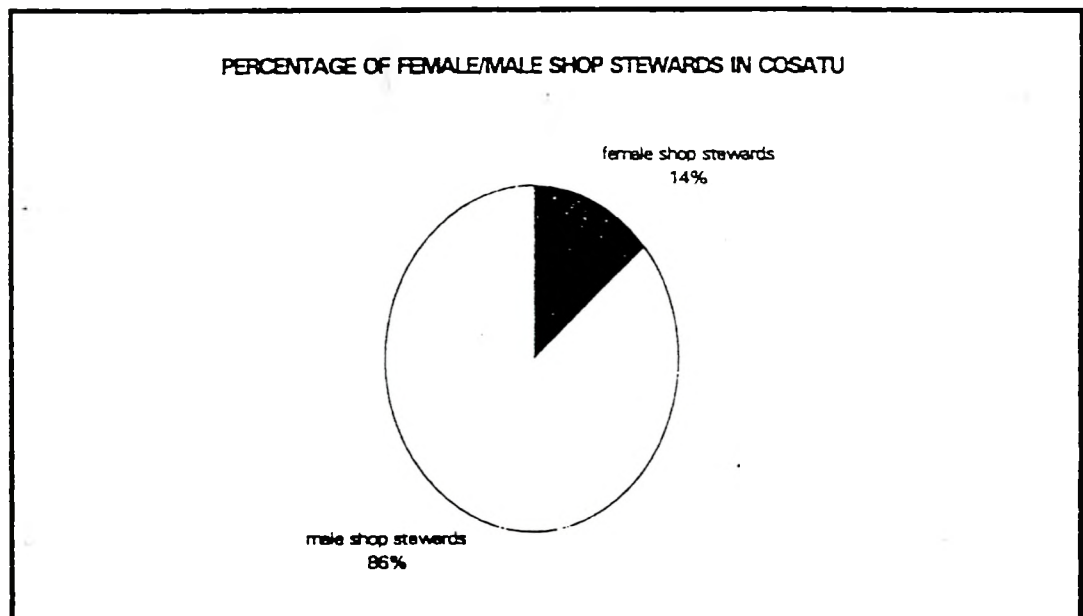
Part three provides a gender breakdown of the COSATU leadership as follows:

- number of shop-stewards;
- COSATU Central Executive Committee;
- COSATU affiliates' National Executive Committees.

Number of shop-stewards

At present, there are no official figures of the number of shop-stewards in COSATU. Pityana and Orkin estimated that there were approximately 25 000 shop-stewards in COSATU in an extensive survey conducted in 1991. Only a mere 14% (3500) of the shop-stewards were women, as reflected in Chart One.

CHART ONE



Source: Pityana and Orkin, 1992

The number of female shop-stewards is much lower than the number that should be reflected proportionally in terms of the female membership of 36%. If the number of shop-stewards were proportional to the number of female members, there would be 9000 women shop-stewards, an increase of more than 250%.

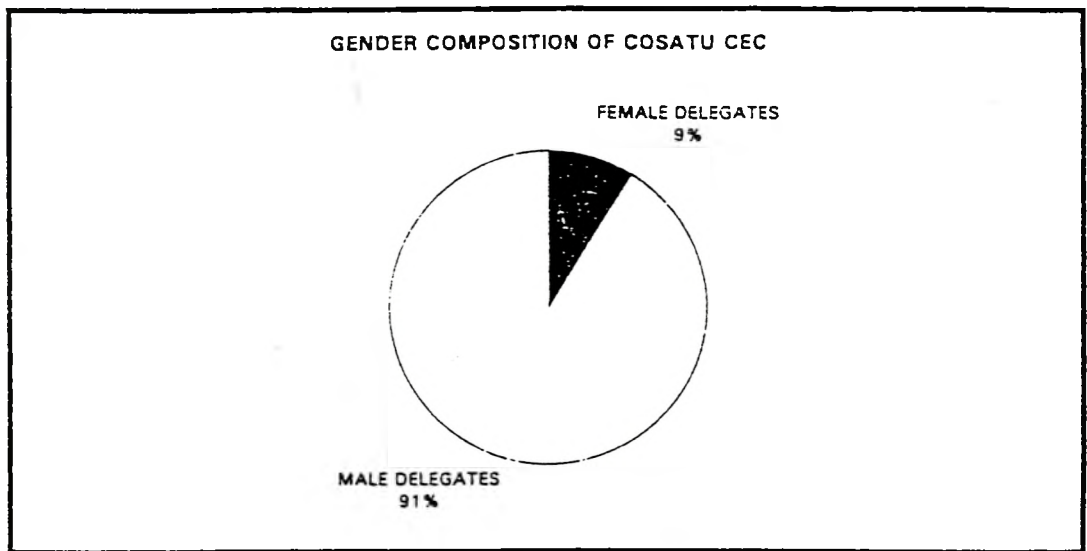
A shop-steward position is the first entry point to other union leadership positions. The tiers of representation within a union are illustrated in Diagram One:

COSATU Central Executive Committee (CEC)

The CEC is made up of 80 delegates from 19 affiliates and COSATU regions, including the 6 national office-bearers (NOBs).⁵ The NOBs consist of the president, first vice-president, second vice-president, treasurer, general secretary and assistant general secretary of the federation. Except for the first vice-president all the NOBs are males.

Attendance from affiliates at the CEC varies from one meeting to the next. However, if we look at the actual representation at the CEC, few women attend. At the CEC of 24 March 1995 there were 36 men and 6 women representing affiliates; at the CEC of 25 September 1995 there were 34 men and 3 women from the affiliates and at the CEC of 29 March 1996 there were 46 men and 4 women. All 8 COSATU regions have male regional secretaries. Women thus make up an estimated 9% (6) of the CEC while men make up 91% (76) as depicted in Chart Two.

CHART TWO



Source: Nyman and Naudascher, 1996

The COSATU regional chairpersons, regional secretaries and head office officials attend the CEC as observers with full speaking rights, but not voting rights. After the Congress, the CEC is the highest decisionmaking body in the federation: it takes major policy decisions and is instrumental in implementing the federation's resolutions and in coordinating its activities. This is especially the case in relation to gender resolutions. Women's absence from the CEC affects both decisions and coordination of activities that have an impact on women.

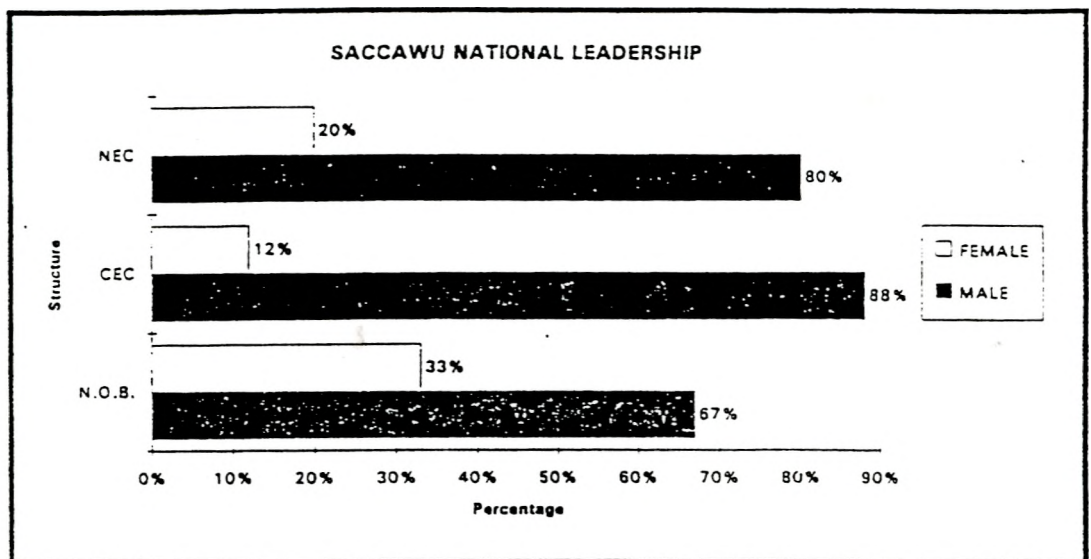
Nevertheless, if we examine the COSATU head office staff who attend the CEC then there is a big improvement.

Indeed, SACCAWU has more women leaders than any other long-standing affiliate, except for SADWU. However, in sharp contrast to this 'gender sensitive' culture and the greater representation by women, women are grossly under-represented in leadership positions at all levels of the organisation, if one assumes that the number of women leaders should be proportional to the number of female members.

National leadership

On the basis of proportional representation, women should make up 70% of the national leadership. However, the converse exists as illustrated in Chart Three:

CHART THREE



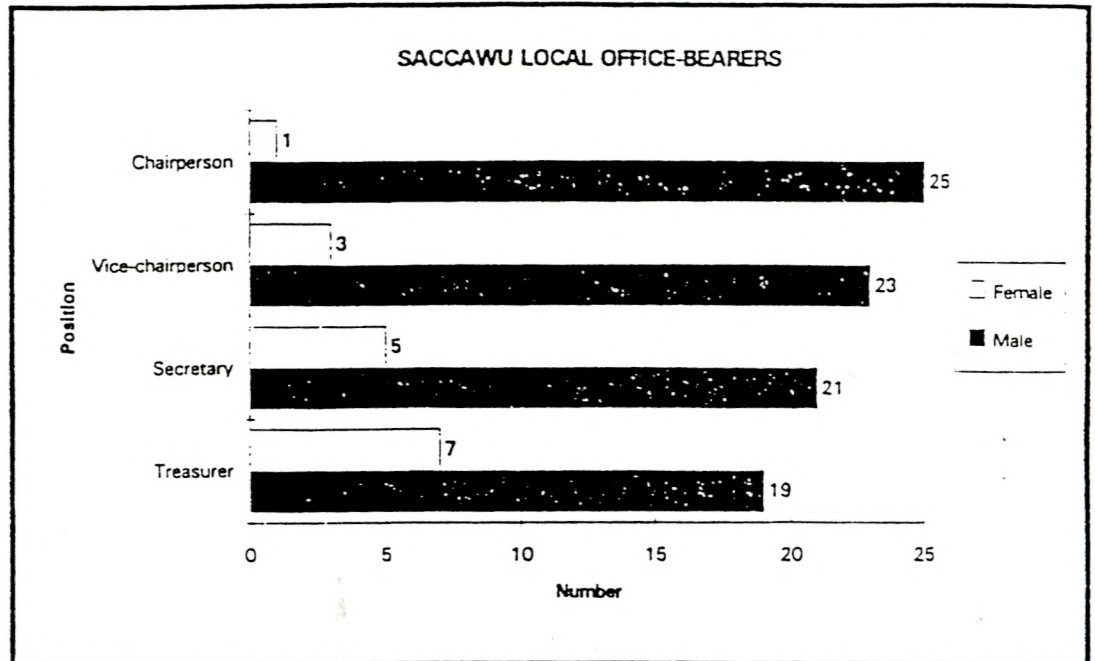
Only 2 of the 6 NOBs are female. While women, proportionally should represent 70% of the NOBs they represent only 33%. Of the 59 Central Executive Committee members, women make up only 7 members. This means that although women should proportionally constitute 70% of the CEC membership, they comprise a low 12%. Likewise, on the National Executive Committee, women comprise only 3 (10%) out of 29 members.

Regional leadership

Women's under-representation is equally low at a regional level as revealed in Table Two.

the 104 positions: 7 local treasurers, 5 local secretaries, 3 local vice-chairpersons and 1 chairperson as depicted in Chart Five. Half (13) of the 26 locals have no women office-bearers. Women thus only make up 6% of local office-bearers.

CHART FIVE



The chairperson is the most important office-bearer position in the local and women's representation is lowest in this position. Women are concentrated in leadership positions that are less influential, such as treasurer. There is a direct correlation between the level of influence of the office-bearer position and the concentration of women: the higher the influence, the more likely the position will be filled by a man; the lower the influence, the more likely it will be occupied by a woman.

CHART SIX

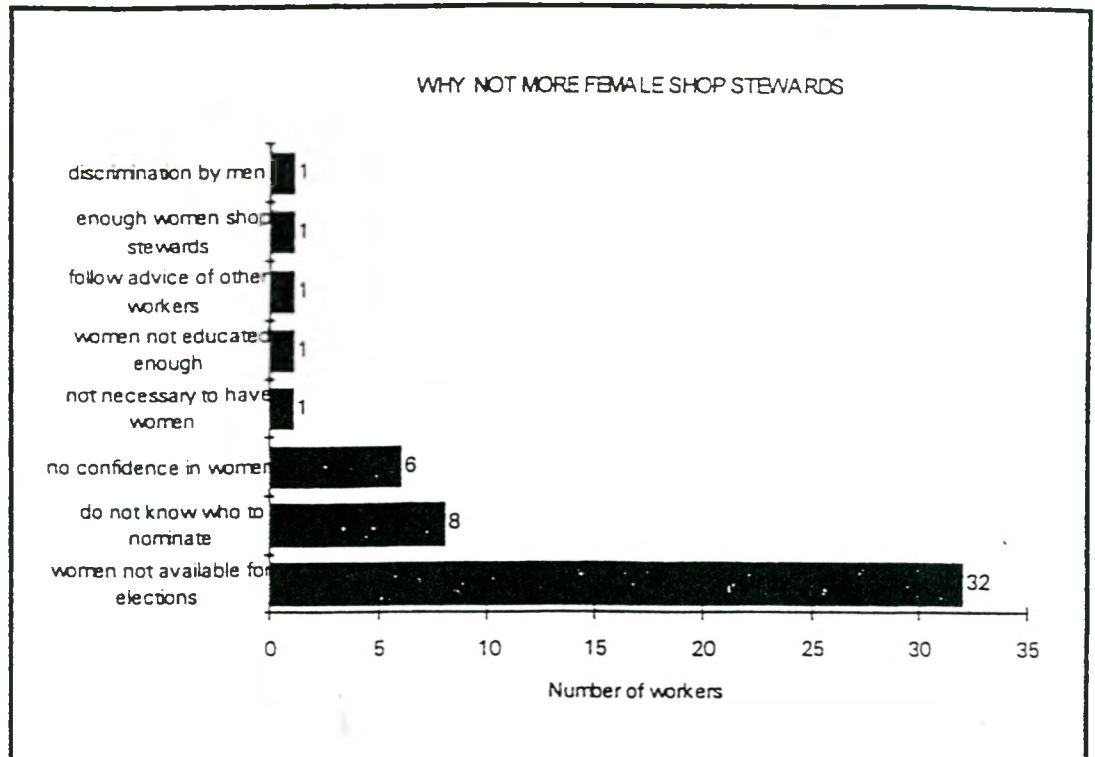


Chart Six reveals a staggering 32 women indicated there are not more female shop-stewards because women are not available for elections, while 8 workers indicated they do not know who to nominate. This means 40 of 51 workers do not vote for women not because they lack confidence in women, but because women are not available or they do not know who to nominate.

Why are women not available to stand as shop-stewards?

Women remain the primary childminder

Government's Green Paper on Minimum Standards suggests 3 days parental leave and is an important policy proposal to facilitate the sharing of childcare responsibilities by men. However, even though the need for both parents to be responsible for childcare has been an ongoing demand by the women's movement, in practice, women remain the primary childminders.

Increase in female-headed families

Increasingly single women raise their children without the presence of a partner. According to the 1994 World Bank-SALDRU Report, 26% of South African households are headed by single women. 'Single' women are composed of divorcees, unmarried and separated women.

negotiated the establishment of childcare facilities at the workplace. The NALEDI childcare research report (Naidoo, Nyman and Caga, 1996) was commissioned by SACCAWU to assist affiliates to negotiate childcare agreements with employers.

Another aspect of women's family responsibility is its role in the oppression of women. Research has revealed the patriarchal family plays a pivotal role in reinforcing women's oppression. Indeed, in researching women's struggles in the family, Campbell demonstrates that many women maintain and reinforce their own oppression. For example, women of single female headed families interviewed stated that only men could discipline their children. Certain abused women agreed they deserved to be abused by their partners. Linked to this, many women did not acknowledge their own oppression. (Campbell, 1990) The acceptance by many women of their oppression at home means they, like their male counterparts, take these attitudes onto the factory floor.

Nature of shop-steward work

Less time because of family responsibilities

The extensive responsibilities of a shop-steward are a big deterrent to women who already have to combine their homework with a job. The duties of a shop-steward include attending to shopfloor grievances and disciplinary inquiries, calling shopfloor union meetings, participating in wage negotiations, strike-handling and case handling. Shop-stewards have to attend a wide range of meetings with other shop-stewards, the company, the union and COSATU. Most of these meetings are held after working hours, both during the week and over week-ends.

Shop-stewards' wide range of responsibilities inevitably impinge on their family lives. However, male shop-stewards are in a better position than women to combine their family lives with their union work. The Pityana and Orkin survey indicated that 53% of the male shop-stewards interviewed had their wives do the cleaning and household chores while 14% had a relative do so. (Pityana and Orkin, 1992) In comparison, 51% of women shopstewards did the cleaning and household chores themselves.

Research conducted in 1992 amongst COSATU shop-stewards (40 women and 4 men), identified the following problems:

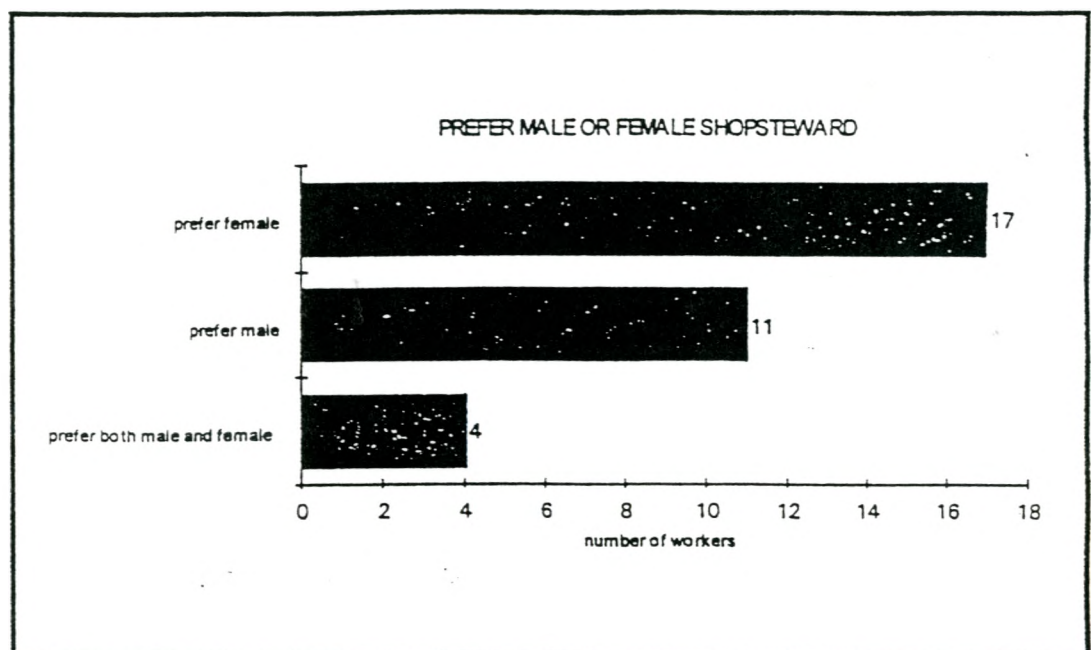
- trying to balance the needs of home life and union life;
- having to choose between a partner and union work;
- educating men about the importance of women's involvement in union work;
- finding themselves in service jobs in the unions;
- not being taken seriously by workers and male comrades;
- sexual harassment by male comrades in the unions;
- finding themselves trapped in lower leadership positions where their work is not acknowledged;
- building up the confidence to be leaders. (Lacom et al, 1992)

other women is more complex. For example one interviewer stated that women do not stand for leadership positions because:

The reason why there are such few women leaders is because a leader is elected by the people. People still have more confidence in men than women. They still think that women are not equal to men for leadership positions.

Chart Eight discloses results from the SACCAWU survey where female workers' indicated their preference for male or female shop-stewards.

CHART EIGHT



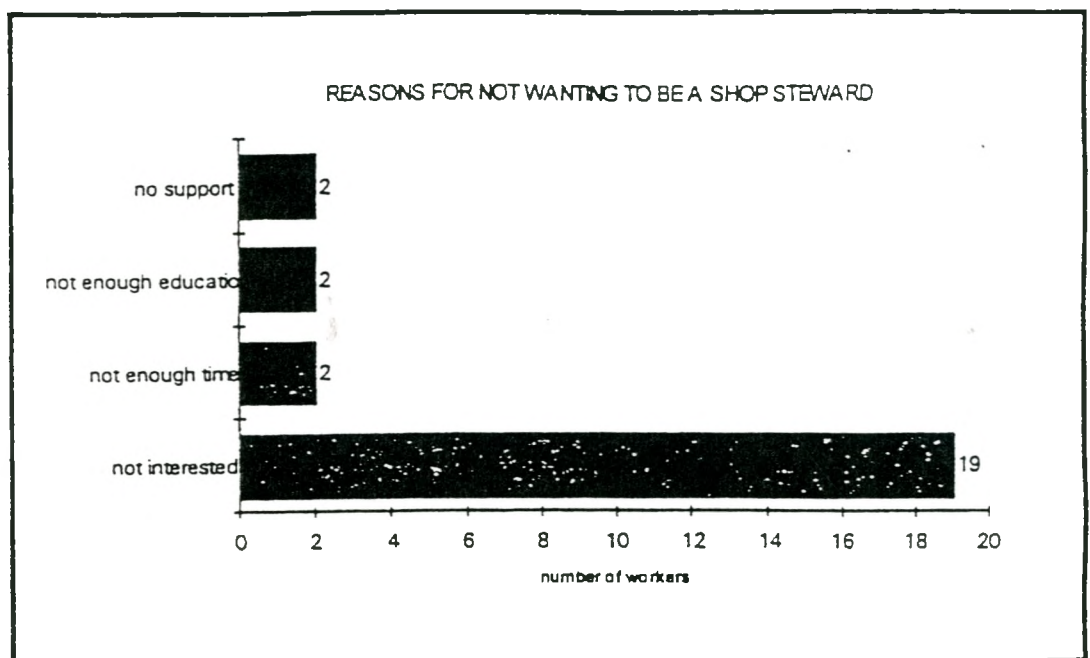
An unexpected result is the stark gender preference indicated by workers as only 4 workers indicated a 'gender neutral' response. The high preference for a male shop-steward is surprising given that both the interviewees and interviewers were female and that only 30% of workers are male. It is also necessary to take into account a 'lie factor' in that workers could have been sensitive to giving a 'politically correct' response in stating their preference for a female shop-steward. This points towards probably a higher than stated preference for a male shop-steward.

On the other hand, the majority preference for a female shop-steward does not explain why there is such a low level of female shop-stewards. In other words, why do workers not vote for female shop-stewards if a majority prefer female shop-stewards to male shop-stewards? This contradiction is reinforced by most women indicating that women are better shop-stewards than men, as reflected in Chart Nine.

Also workers regard the position of shop-steward as important. Literacy counts. You are expected to take notes. You can find that there is a strong woman, but she is not literate. For example there was a strong woman, we elected her, In one shop-steward meeting she said she wants to resign. She said she cannot read, write or speak English. She said she needs an interpreter and it makes her weak in the eyes of management. The nature of education does not necessarily mean formal education. In many cases women's level of formal education is indeed higher than that of men.

Chart Ten indicates the reasons stated by SACCAWU workers for not wanting to be shop-stewards.

CHART TEN



It is revealing that only 2 female workers advanced lack of education as an obstacle to becoming shop-stewards. A possible reason for this low number is that workers interpreted education to mean formal school education, where there is a negligible gap in school education between men and women. It is therefore evident that women have the same abilities in terms of literacy and numeracy as men to fulfill the functions as a shop-steward.

A compelling response is the high number of workers (19) who simply indicated that they were not interested in becoming a shop-steward. Likely explanations for this response are women's lack of interest in union activities and their own lack of confidence that they translate into 'not being interested'. It is therefore necessary to create the conditions in the union that encourage women to stand as shop-stewards.

Conditions under which elections take place

An important area that needs addressing are the conditions under which shop-steward elections take place. Union officials conducting the elections play an important agitational role in advising workers of the characteristics a shop-steward should have. A key consideration should be whether union officials are gender sensitive. If this is the case, s/he should stress the importance of nominating and electing female shop-stewards. As this is not the likely situation, gender-sensitive education should target shop-steward elections specifically. In addition, the employment of female union organisers should be prioritised. This is an area where the federation and affiliates can make an immediate impact.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment has been listed as a hidden problem in COSATU. Yet, no research has been done on the extent of sexual harassment and its impact on women in the federation or the affiliates. Furthermore, harassed workers are reluctant to report cases. COSATU was however central in establishing the Sexual Harassment and Education Project (SHEP). SHEP's work primarily involves providing assistance to harassed workers and holding education programmes.

The SACCAWU and SADTU surveys revealed that only 2% of respondents regarded sexual harassment as an obstacle to being a shop-steward. The low result can be attributed to the limitations of the questionnaire which did not allow for probing. During the interviews sexual harassment was stated as a problem by a union official:

We do not have proof that sexual harassment is a factor. However, existing shop-stewards have had problems with sexual harassment. The problem arises when a female shop-steward goes out with a male organiser or shop-steward and she gets ditched - as normally she is one of many women. This is an abuse of power. So not regarded as sexual harassment but as abuse of power: because of the man's status he gets sexual favours. Women however voluntarily agree to the relationship.

An ex-SACCAWU shop-steward gave a similar interpretation:

Sexual harassment demoralises women from being elected into positions. As a new shop-steward you get elected. As there is a new face (male) officials target women. When the woman get dumped they get demoralised. In that way they get demoralised and we loose good shop-stewards.

Although the impact of sexual harassment is still uncertain, it is clear that it does exist. COSATU has adopted a Code of Conduct and Procedure on Sexual Harassment for internal application. The Code is a sound starting point to create the conditions to make sexual harassment an organisational and not a private issue. It will be necessary to run education programmes on the Code's content to encourage workers to report cases of sexual harassment.

CHART TWELVE

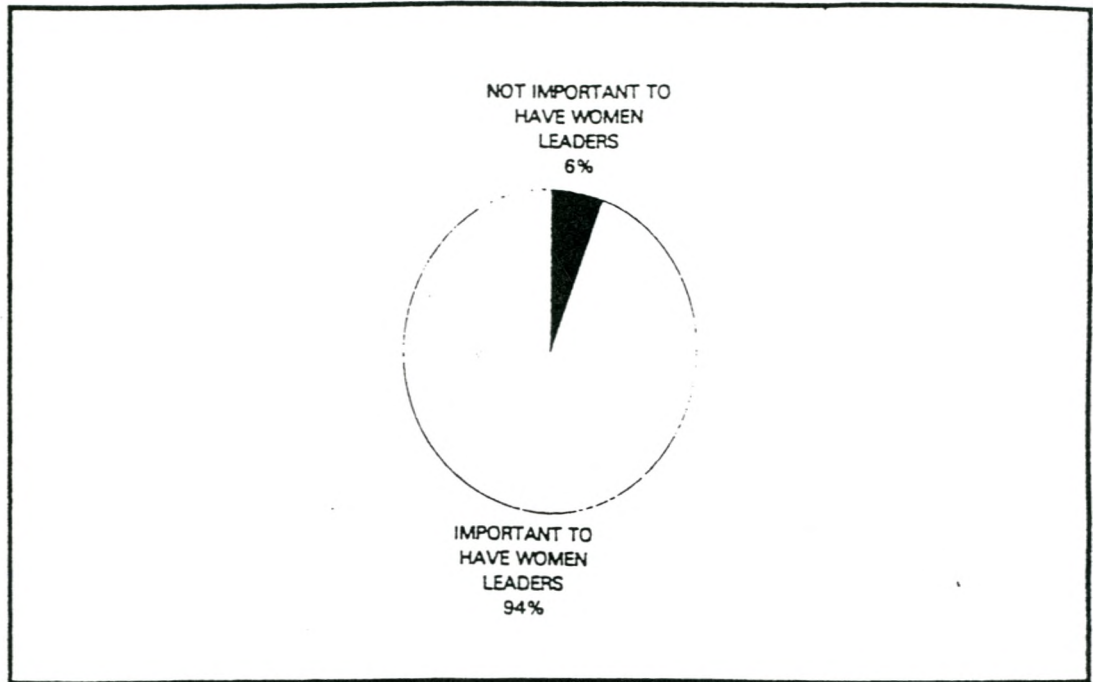


Chart Twelve reinforces the centrality of having women leaders: 94% stated that it is important to have women leaders. The significance workers attach to women leaders is based on the role they see women leaders playing in fighting for their rights as reflected in Chart Thirteen.

CHART THIRTEEN

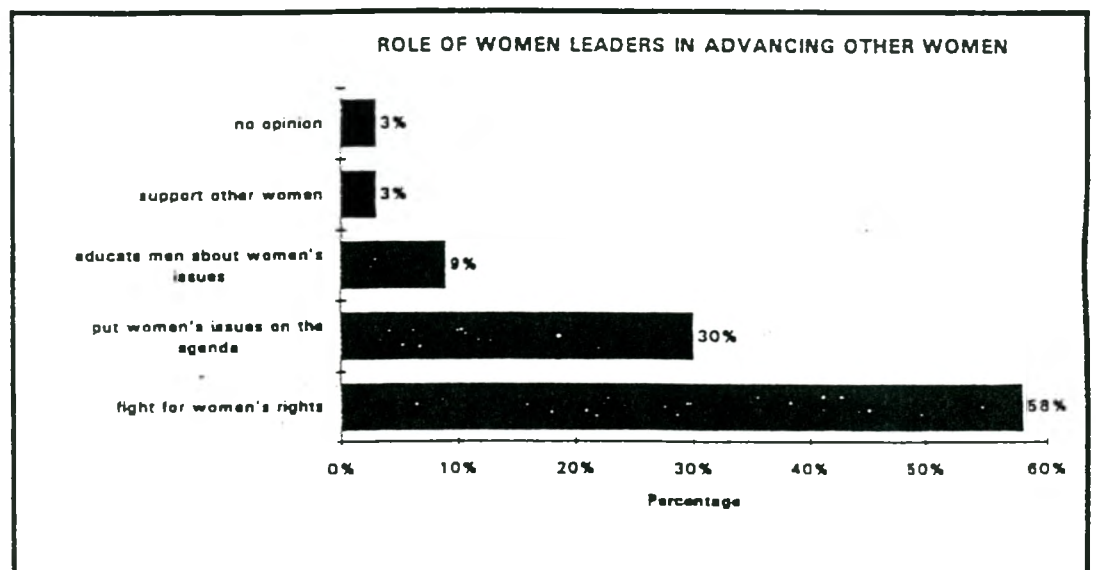


Chart Thirteen discloses that 58% of workers believe women leaders should fight for women's rights while 30% believe women leaders should put women's issues on the union's agenda. This means by far the majority of workers hold the opinion that women leaders should play a special role in advancing the interests of other women.

CHART FOURTEEN

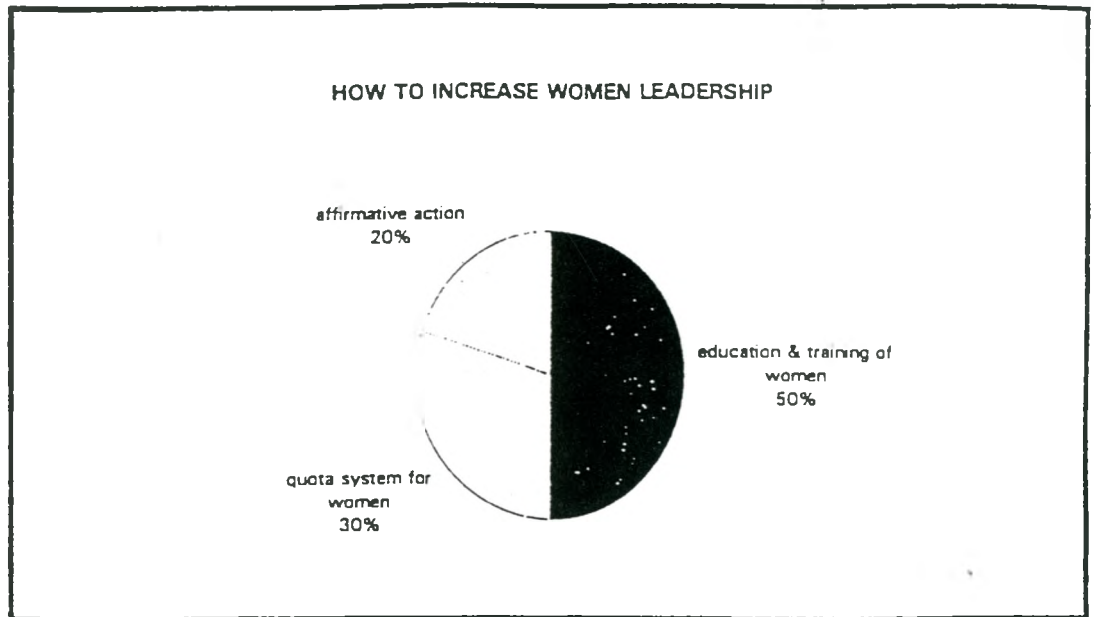


Chart Fourteen reveals 50% of workers surveyed are of the opinion that women leadership can be increased through education and training while 30% support the quota system and the remaining 20% support affirmative action. Women's level of support for the quota system is quite high as it is the most extreme form of affirmative action.

Workers' high degree of support for education and training seems to contradict their low support for education and training as an obstacle to electing women. A possible explanation is that women are not referring to formal education, but to the organisation linking affirmative action to informal education and training. In other words, workers view the different mechanisms as a package that complement one another.

The position is supported by an ex-SACCAWU shop-steward:

I agree with the quota system. Once it is compulsory, the federation will see to it that they are trained. Otherwise nothing binds it. If the quota system is implemented it will bind the federation....Education is important because we want women to have a real say - not just rubber stamps.

It seems in addition to gender-sensitive education and training for women, leadership education and training is required to equip women to lead. Furthermore leadership training will demystify the job of a leader and demonstrate to women that they have the talents and ability to lead.

PART SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS

Part seven outlines the following key recommendations:

- Childcare facilities;
- Quota system;
- Education and training;
- Employment of female union organisers;
- Popularise Sexual Harassment Code of Conduct.

Childcare facilities

COSATU should prioritise the negotiation of childcare facilities at the workplace and at all COSATU meetings to ensure women's full participation. As these recommendations are long-standing COSATU resolutions, the COSATU CEC should play a more active monitoring role and request report backs from affiliates on the state of childcare negotiations.

Quota system

COSATU should consider the implementation of a quota system at federation and affiliate level. The quota system should set certain targets for representation, e.g. 36% representation of women in leadership positions or representation in the federation in proportion to the number of women in an affiliate. Such a quota system should be phased in over a period of time (e.g. three years) to ensure the preparation and availability of women for those positions.

Education and training

Education is necessary to build prospective women leaders' confidence to stand for leadership positions. The nature of education should involve leadership skills and organisational issues. COSATU at federation level should continue with its trend of integrating gender issues into its education programmes. But the approach should be duplicated at affiliate level.

Employment of female union organisers

COSATU should evaluate its employment practices to ensure that more women are employed as organisers and negotiators and not only as administrators. Recruitment and selection practices should prioritise the employment of women. This recommendation is achievable as the unions have discretion in hiring organisers and negotiators, and filling such positions is not subject to the vagaries of elections and women's reluctance to stand as leaders.

Popularise Sexual Harassment Code of Conduct

The Code should be popularised in education programmes so that workers can identify and oppose sexual harassment.

ANNEXURE E

MISSION STATEMENT

COSATU'S DRAFT EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

296?

COSATU 's education and training has always been built around the empowerment of its membership. This has been a deliberate policy matter linked to our policy on worker control. The role that education played in building capacity to effect this resolution has ensured participation at all levels in decision making.

Attached to this has been the need to strengthen organisation and the development of leadership and capacity to deal with new issues facing the labour movement broadly. The changing political situation has also brought with it a diverse and dynamic terrain that necessitate a new look into the delivery of education and the reshaping of its content.

Our past programs have been located within an adversarial atmosphere and the politics of doing things were governed by that influence greatly. The local scene has changed and the global picture is also too complicated granted the multinational nature of how economic policy is developing and the business community position themselves. The issues affecting labour globally are also affecting us and are beginning to be harsher as our economy tends to be assimilated to the international scene.

Our education needs to therefore address these emergent needs and assist the organisation for an intervention and understanding of issues facing labour, that we look anew at our strategies and how best as linked to the overall organisation direction and perspective to facilitate capacity. Our strategies need to be dynamic and meet the present day challenges and assist in building a clear understanding of current day issues.

The mission of our education will there seek

- **To create an understanding of the changing political situation and context our organisation is operating within.**
- **To develop skills and critical thinking within Cosatu and its affiliated bodies.**
- **To develop leadership and organisational skills within Cosatu and its affiliated bodies.**
- **To support and address training needs within Cosatu and its structures and to also enhance capacity to deal with this new challenges.**

- To also ensure the delivery of a professional, planned and systematic education programs.

1991 EDUCATION CONFERENCE MISSION

- to develop leadership and organisational skills
- to promote analytical and critical thinking
- to empower membership to challenge and change their material conditions
- to support organisational objectives
- must be rooted in long term planning of education needs
- must co-ordinate and synchronise affiliates and federation education
- must be modular and progressive
- must be professional
- must be self financing

Missing annex a & b?

Shale Paper

Shale Banner 3 shopstew's
trans/spec

(Other annexes not referred to in report?)
(case)

ANNEXURE C

SURVEY

SURVEY OF COSATU AFFILIATES

	CWIU	PPWAWU	T&GWU	NUM	SACCAWU	POPCRU
Membership	48 000	63 000	62 000	357 196	140 000	_44 000
Shopstewards	_1 200	__500	6 000	1650	9 000	
Organisers	39		59	60		
Educators N	1	1	1	4	2	1
R	5	1	4	9 320 branch	26	2
Budget	R765 646	15% subs	5 % subs	R4 821 000	to be approved	
Programme S/S	B, I, A	B	B	Yes	B	No
Organisers	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Some
Management	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Special courses	staff induction; finance; LRA	s/s collective bargaining	staff induction; LRA	Leadership	Train trainers	
Structure	2 - level Nedcom	3 - level Nedcom	BEF - Nedcom	3 - level with a difference	3 - level Nedcom	No
Materials	Yes - reworking	No	Yes	Yes - reworked	yes - reworking	No



	SASBO	SAAPAWU	SAMWU	CWU	SACTWU	FAWU
Membership	75 000	30 000	115 645	23 400	156 000	160 000
Shopstewards	1 300	?	2 410	?	? 3500	280
Educators N R	2	1 15	1 8	?	? N 1 R 2	2 5 + 20 part-time?
Organisers	30	20	50		60	24
Budget	R120 000	no budget	R900 000	?	? R 1.2 MIL	R1 200 000
Programme S/S	B & some special courses	B	general course + menu	B	? BASIC INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP	B, I, A
Organisers Management	Yes No	No No	? ?		YES NO	Yes Yes
Special courses	Various	Educators; LRA	policy workshops	?	? VARIOUS	leadership
Structure	Single level	Single level	NEDCOM + REF	?	? NO SEPERATE EDUCATION STRUCTURES	NEDSec; RFU; BFU; LFU
Materials	Yes - in process	Only s/s	Yes - in process of development	Yes - manual Needs reworking	? YES	Yes

	IPS	NEHAWU	SADTU	SARHWU	CAWU	NUMSA
Membership	18 000	63 000	120 000	35 000	25 461	232 543
Shopstewards	400	800		3 000		12 000
Educators N R	0 0	0 0	1 9	1	1 6	2 9
Organisers				20		180
Budget	R0	R200 000	not defined	6% of subs	3% of subs	R1 000 000
Programme S/S Organisers Management	No No No	No No No	Yes No Yes	B	B No No	B Yes Yes
Special courses	No	No	Gender	LRA; Arbitration; Gender	No	Gender, Fulltime s/s
Structure		plans	Nedcom	Nedcom - 3 levels	plans	3 - level Nedcom
Materials	No	Yes - B, I, A	Yes - need updating	Yes -needs re-working	yes -updating	Yes - needs re-working

	SASBO	SAAPAWU	SAMWU	CWU	SACTWU	FAWU
Membership	75 000	30 000	115 645	23 400	156 000	160 000
Shopstewards	1 300	?	2 410	?	?	280
Educators N R	2	1 15	1 8	?	?	2 5 + 20 part-time
Organisers	30	20	50			24
Budget	R120 000	no budget	R900 000	?	?	R1 200 000
Programme S/S	B & some special courses	B	general course + menu	B	?	B, I, A
Organisers Management	Yes No	No No	? ?			Yes Yes
Special courses	Various	Educators; LRA	policy workshops	?	?	leadership
Structure	Single level	Single level	NEDCOM + REF	?	?	NEDSec; RFU; BFU; LFU
Materials	Yes - in process	Only s/s	Yes - in process of development	Yes - manual Needs reworking	?	Yes

Consolidated commission reports

1. Women leadership and development

Key issues

That the women leadership development should be a priority in all our training effort, with emphasis on training and ensuring that we agree to a quota system for participants in our courses.

Women development should be defined clearly and should target shop floor and to specifically for building of leadership at all levels. The programme should target not only a few women and should have specific focus.

Course areas

- Macro economic policy and all the policy matters from the government and as is discussed by NEDLAC
- Health & Safety and environment
- Social, economic, and political issues be included
- Negotiations skills and
- Public Speaking and assertiveness
- Organisational Management

Process

- The problem of gender not being a constitutional structure should be discussed in Cosatu.
- Training programmes which are aimed at developing women should be a priority
- Delivery should happen in all the different levels of DITSELA, COSATU and affiliate structures.
- Ditsela to provide menu of "specialist" courses.

11. Membership training

The need to train and have a strategy in training membership is critical, the lack of training is obvious as members do not understand their role in the federation and unions alike.

Process

- Cosatu to assist affiliates on their needs on strategy development and training.
- To also identify what education and training resources are available internally and externally
- The national office bearers of affiliates (in particular General Secretaries) must take responsibility for the creation of a learning environment in order that staff may be developed and grow.
- To look into a strategy of assisting affiliates with linking to those that have expertise on issues lacking in others but this should not be an excuse for affiliates to shirk their responsibility in delivery of education.

IV. Leadership Development

The definition of leadership is broadly understood in this area as mainly comrades appointed or elected in leadership roles within the labour movement. This target is mostly leadership at national, regional and local level.

Education and training areas

- The need to run training on a wide range of communications skills, people skills and Organisational management.
- To develop courses and understanding in economic policy, international trends and policy formulation.

Priority areas

⇒ Elected Committees

Constitutional committees

- Communications
- Organisational Management and development
- Policy formulation and Research
- Economics and industrial policy
- Gender studies
- Specialist committees members e.g. Health and Safety, Industrial Restructuring, Women and Finance etc.

⇐ Office Bearers

- Politics and Economics
- Labour law training

Trade Union Education CONTENT

Priority for '97

Trade Union Basics

- understanding tus
- history
- policies

1.

Essential Knowledge

- law
- economics
- politics
- gender

2.

Policy Develop- ment + Formulation

- Research

Organisational Development / Building

expansion of
capacity

3.

Organisational Management + Administratⁿ

- technology

Specialist Areas

- Women 1/ship
- HSE
- Legal
- Educator

4. Negotiations + Collective Bargaining

- skills
- "new" areas

Communication ← Numeracy

ACCREDITATION

use skills for RPL

use skills for RPL

Some programmes accredited via NQF/Hed Institutes

Guided by PRINCIPLES

TARGETS

MEMBERS

SHOP STEWARDS

- Instructional
- Core

LEADERSHIP

- Specialist
- Concl: Comm
- CRs
- Medial Call centers

STAFF

- Instructional
- Union specific

- Specialist
- Advanced

DELIVER

- Affiliates
- Cosatu Coordination

- Affiliates
- Cosatu support/coord
- Ditselart support

- Affiliates
 - Policy
 - Spec.
- Cosatu
 - Policy
 - Capacity
- DITSELA
 - Systematic
 - Advanced
 - support

organisation environment

COSATU '96

PROCESSED

**TRADE UNION
LIBRARY AND
EDUCATION CENTRE**


Cosatu Education

National Planning Meeting

25 and 26 January 1996: Kempton Park Conference Centre

Present: Shakie Museve (CTUC); Shele Papane (Cosatu); Susan (Cosatu); Chris Bonner (CWIU); Arnause Mohlala (CWIU); Wilfred Makhaya (CWIU); Livingstone Matiwane (CWIU) Siphon Khubeka (PPWAWU); Babsy Nhlapo (CAWU); Dumisani Mbanjwa (NUMSA); Bobby Marie (NUMSA); Monde Mthembu (T&GWU); Evan Abrahams (SARHWU); Albert Moshoi (SARHWU); Philip Nyongwana (FAWU); Johnny Malebo (SACTWU); Lando Sam (POPCRU); Mandi (SASBO); Aubrey (SADTU); Edwin Pasha (SAMWU); Sekoati Mokoena (SACCAWU); Bheki Mbatha (SACCAWU); Rose Makwane (NWSC); Thabang Tseladimitloa (SAAPPAWU); Patricia Appolis (NWSC)

Apologies: SADWU; POTWA

1. Shele Papane opened the meeting
2. Shakie Museve spoke on Cooperation on Trade Union Education in Southern Africa.
3. Susan Westcott recapped on the previous educators meeting of 23 November 1995, and reminded participants of the objectives of the meeting
4.  Dumi Mbanjwa presented some ideas on **educator training**. Discussion followed:

- generally agreed that 2 levels was a good idea, with the 2 day beginner workshop reaching large numbers of people who are then in a position to assist educators with their programmes and dealing with principles of trade union education and some basic skills
- advanced educators course needs to be longer than 5 days
- other organisations to draw in: TURP. Sached. UCT (Linda Cooper), University of Natal

FAX to: All Affiliates
 FAX NO: 339 5080 PAGE: 1 OF: 13
 ATTENTION OF: _____
 FROM: Susan DATE: 30/1/96
 COMPANY: Cosatu
 FAX NO: 339 5080

- need for a level 3 programme for people like those present who plan, design and manage education programmes - possibly ILO could send somebody out here to run such a course (contact Enrico Cairola) Local flavour and South African context should be ensured - committee should define this closely

- Level 3 course should include gender coordinators in target group

Team: Susan, Dumi, Pasha
Edwin
Westcott Mbanjwa SAMWU → REC
COSATU NUMSA

First meeting

5. Chris Bonner presented a possible outline of a **collective bargaining course**. Discussion:

- Cosatu collective bargaining course could only reach limited numbers, so shopstewards would have to be dealt with separately

- focus should be specific - Nedlac negotiator, organiser or shopsteward

- course should be a 2 weeks general introduction to issues faced by organisers, with specialist courses to develop each area

- one specialist area could be the Styrex programme on information disclosure and workplace forums

- first course could not cover everything, would need to prioritise: Health, Safety & Environment; ABET; Restructuring; Affirmative Action

- Political Economy course from TURP needs to be modified to include public sector and a section on social systems and socialism

- other issues to be looked at:

-restructuring of local government/ government incl. subcontracting, staffcode (LRA), commercialisation

-recognition agreements and the LRA

-workplace forums

- child labour (SAAPPAWU) Law & different sectors
- information disclosure
- multi-skilling/ multi-tasking
- training & grading
- RDP
- task-based payment system
- gender issues

Team: Chris, Shirley, Bobby, Evan, Aubrey, Sam (include Swop and Turp)

First meeting 19 and 20 February (further details to be arranged)

6. Shele Papane presented an outline of the contents of the **Foundation course**. Discussion:

- LRA training on a large scale should be separate to Foundation course, and should target all organisers, rather than just new ones
- Gender studies should include men in the target group
- Political Economy course from TURP needs to be modified to include public sector and social systems and socialism - could draw in SACP party school. One way of dealing with this could be to cover the international history of trade unionism and worker struggle - up to an assessment of what is happening around the world today. This section of Foundation Course would then have to be longer than 3 days
- Foundation course should target organisers and leave shopsteward training to affiliates
- gender section should be linked to collective bargaining

Team (also for organisation building): Shele, Monde, Philip, Rose and Siph

First meeting

7. Siphon Kubheka presented his ideas around **organisation building**. Discussion followed:

- this is a programme rather than a course, and the same team should work on this area for additions / modification to Foundation Course as well as creating separate courses or specialist courses

- organisational development and management - there is an existing course that can be looked at and linked with Siphon's suggestions

- Health & Safety needs a separate specialist course that needs development. Shirley Miller and Zimbabwe CTU are resources for this. Possible other specialist courses:

- legal & paralegal specialisation
- ABET
- arbitration
- researcher training

- administrators course (link with Lauren at Cosatu & CBDP course)

Team: (also for Foundation Course) Shele, Monde, Philip, Rose and Siphon

First meeting 5 February

8. Babsy Nhlapo presented some ideas on **civic education**. Discussion:

- Constitutional Assembly has a large budget for civic education

- budget process should be included - UCT does course or workshops on this

- include organisers in regional workshops (targeting mainly ROBs)

- need to select areas of focus in the constitution rather than the whole thing. Which issues need to be dealt with needs to be taken forward by group - Khanya college have a summarized version and ANC office could have resources.

- for constitution-making May is the deadline, so timing is important
- start with working draft of constitution
- implement Exco decision on constitution-making
- we should be clear about the aim of each course or workshop so that we can define the target group
- RDP resolution from congress should be included in the course
- 3 days may not be enough, although not intended to be an in-depth course
- human rights, democracy and language policy must be covered
- 2 separate workshops: CA, constitution and bill of rights in one and budget process and RDP in other
- explore mass education with videos and other means
- look at including a field trip to the provincial legislature or parliament in workshop

Team: Babsy, Pasha and Aubrey

First meeting

9. Susan Westcott presented some ideas on a programme for development of shopsteward training including a generic manual
Discussion:

- material produced could either be in the form of a file which is easy to update and add to, or in the form of a printed manual
- booklet "Guide for shopstewards" could be produced separately
- other booklets eg: LRA summary could also be produced
- assistance with some affiliates training programmes also needs to be evaluated and developed

- need to start with an assessment of needs within affiliates then link this with the process
- objectives of programme should be broader than the manual: assist in designing material for affiliates; help develop educators for the running of the programme; designing actual training programme for affiliates
- involve regions and stewards in the process
- first meeting of coordinators to deal with the needs analysis and process

Team: Jerry, Babsy, Susan, Bobby, Sekoati, Mandi, Sam, Pasha, Aubrey

First meeting 1 February 09h00 - Cosatu 4th floor

10. Rose Makwana presented an outline for **gender training**.

Discussion:

- no clarity yet about ILO course on Womens Leadership
- other NGOS eg TURP and GETNET can provide SA context
- integrate gender training into other courses

Rose, Gino, Shele, Chris and Susan

First meeting 12 February 14h00 at Cosatu 4th floor

11. A programme for the year was drawn up:

Month	Target	Course/ Programme	Coordinators
February	National (teams) Regional (organisers & senior shopstewards)	Planning - all sub- committees LRA workshops	Cosatu Education Cosatu Education
March	National Regional (RECs)	Nedcom (progress reports) C.A process workshops	Babsy
April May	National (organisers & shopstewards) administrators beginner educators	Collective Bargaining Foundation Course Administrators Course Educators workshop - 1	Chris Shele Sipho Pasha
June			
July	Regional (organisers & senior shopstewards)	LRA	Cosatu Education
August September	National (everyone) National (secretaries & HODs) National (educators) National (women)	Gender studies Organisational management & Development Educators course -2 Womens leadership development course	Rose Sipho Pasha Rose
October	National (educators)	Evaluation	Cosatu education
November			

12. Other issues were raised relating to the programme:

- Nedcom to finalise the shopsteward training programme and add to year programme

- questionnaires should be sent to affiliates, responses condensed and tabled at the march Nedcom (on shopsteward training in affiliates)

- civic training should be ongoing given the volume of content in this area. We need only cover CA process once but the rest needs to be ongoing

- Level 3 for educators should be decided at a later stage

- Nedcom to consider the reports on all modules and a day should be set aside for this

- Dates, venues and report to be sent to all affiliates before 2 February 1996

Collective Bargaining TRAINING FRAMEWORK

(1)

Specialist

- HSE
- ABET
- LRA

Mass

- LRA

Modular Course

- Collective Barg. in new Context
- Pol. Economy
- New Issues
- Practical skills



Foundation Course

- Negotiating skills
- Pol. Economy



Action

- Induction
- Experience

ABET

- Policies / Programmes

HSE



Negotiating skills

Recognition

Restructuring & Retrenchment Wages

2 Collective Bargaining in the New Context

- NEED - Extensive Programme
- INTERIM - Two weeks in Semester Programme incorporating Reorientation
- TARGET -
 - Regional/Local orgs
 - Educators
 - Previous participants

To provide resource in their union/region
- OBJECTIVES -
 - knowledge/understanding of context
 - Collective Barg. issues
 - skills
 - Basis for further dev.

③

C. Bargaining PROGRAMME OUTLINE

W. V. ...
culture

1. Political Economy Reorientation
→ New Context
• Information

2. Key Issues for Collective Bargaining

→ AS&T

→ Affirmative Action

→ Restructuring Workplaces

→ HSE

• Information } Unions local &
Research } international.

3. Collective Bargaining at the Workplace

→ Above issues : Case Studies •
Practical skills

4. Guideline Reports

- Reporting
- Implementation

4

The LRA.

s/s detrolling

Union Programme

- Information :
- Special 'Flame'
 - Document Package
 - Inputs at Branch Forums

- Policy Positions :
- NEC Workshop
 - Branch Workshops

- Skills :
- Organizer Workshops
 - Special s/s Training

Shop Steward Programme

5

Day One

The Context

- Challenges - including UEA overview
- Meeting Challenges - role of s/s

Day Two

Individual & Collective Issues / Disputes

- Dismissals / Retrenchments
- Disputes under new Act
- Arbitration

Day Three

Organisational Rights

- Threats & Opportunities
- Recruitment
- Recognition / Representativity

Day Four

Restructuring the Workplace

- Restructuring overview
- Workplace Forum

CAMPAIGNS BULLETIN



FOCUS ON THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS BILL

A CALL TO ACTION

Since April last year, labour, business and government have been negotiating around the new employment standards law. But there are still fundamental areas of disagreement between the parties.

Deadlock was reached as far back as August last year and there have been no further negotiations since November.

As workers we know that, without action, our voice is too easily ignored. So far negotiations have not delivered the results.

The time has now come for workers to show they mean business.

Since last year Cosatu's unions and regions have been discussing how to push the negotiations forward. Cosatu's February executive committee (Exco) pulled proposals together and announced a programme of action to mobilise workers around the key demands. The Exco also decided that Cosatu should seek an urgent meeting with the ANC on the issue.

The Exco looked afresh at Cosatu's negotiating position and set its minimum demands as follows:

Maternity leave: Exco agreed on a bottom line of six months maternity leave with four months paid for. Two months should be negotiated with employers at the Bargaining Councils.

Hours of work: Cosatu has reaffirmed its demand to a 40 hour work week.

Only worker mass action will break the deadlock in negotiations around a new employment standards law.

Cosatu's programme of action

- 22-23 February** Cosatu regional executive committees and regional shop-stewards councils will meet to decide on appropriate action for their regions and locals.
- 24 Feb-5 March** Activities in industrial areas nationwide, including pickets, marches and rallies.
- 10-20 March** Cosatu affiliates will lead marches, demonstrations and pickets.
- 24 March-6 April** Rallies and marches in major centres
- 7-10 April** Cosatu's Central Executive Committee will evaluate the negotiations process. If insufficient progress has been made, the federation will mobilise for a general strike on 12 May 1997.

The federation agreed that this can be phased in over a five year period. Legislations is required to do this.

Variation: Cosatu has stood by its position that the new law should outline basic standards which can be improved but never made worse. Cosatu is opposed to downward variation proposed by government and business as this will lead to the derailment of most minimum standards in particular of unorganised workers.

Sunday work pay: Cosatu argues for current BCEA provisions for Sunday

work to be extended to all workers. In particular Cosatu demands at least double pay for Sunday work. Government wants workers paid at the rate of time and a half. Business wants Sunday to be treated like any other working day.

Child labour: Cosatu says 16 years of age should be the threshold for entrance into the labour market. Government proposes 15 years.

Night work: Cosatu says that shifts starting from 18h00 should be defined as night work. Employers want to

Let's make Masakhane work for us

The Masakhane campaign is about involving communities in developing their areas and making decisions about the kind of services that are delivered to them. As part of its election manifesto, the ANC promised to consult and involve people to make sure their councils served their needs.

The broad aims of the campaign are:

- To transform local government so that it is able to ensure development and service delivery;
- To involve people in local government decisions about plans, projects and budgets;
- To build a partnership between the council, other levels of government, community organisations and business for effective delivery;

- To build a strong ANC, Alliance and MDM with accountable councillors.

One of the most important tasks of the campaign is to involve local residents in deciding what their needs and problems are and discussing the solutions they want. The local council budget is the key to local development and different ways can be used to make sure the community participates in deciding what the spending priorities are.

Week of action

The Cosatu leadership will participate alongside the Alliance leaders in this campaign, starting on 21 March 1997 until the end of that week.

Join the alliance partners and participate in these activities in your area.

Swaziland solidarity

Cosatu has thrown its weight behind the struggle for democracy in Swaziland by calling for a blockade at the country's border posts on 3 March. This follows a call by the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordinating Council (Satucc) after a mission to Swaziland.

The call comes after four Swaziland Federation of Trade Union (SFTU) leaders were arrested on the eve of a national strike on 3 and 4 February.

The four, SFTU president Richard Nxumalo, vice president Themba Msibi, general secretary Jan Sithole and assistant general secretary Jabulani Nxumalo, were later charged and have appeared in court.

Despite a massive security clamp-down by the Swaziland government, the strike went ahead and was reported as most successful among plantation and agricultural workers. While the strike had initially been called for two days only, the SFTU called for it to continue pending the release of their leaders.

Since last year Cosatu has supported SFTU demands for basic trade union rights and for the move towards democracy in a country where political opposition is banned.

Cosatu staged a picket and presented a memorandum to the Swaziland High Commission in Pretoria, calling for their release.

During the two-day strike, Cosatu called on its members to go slow in

Back the border blockade — 3 March 1997

Cosatu calls on all its members and supporters to ensure a total shutdown of all Swazi borders on the 3 March 1997. Let's ensure that no traffic, passenger or goods transport, moves to or from Swaziland on that day.
BORDER POSTS: Komatipoort, Jeppes Reef, Bilembu, Oshoek, Nerston, Nahamba, Cavumisa.

handling goods to and from Swaziland. Some Cosatu affiliates which have members at companies which also invest in Swaziland have written to the companies warning them about the situation.

Cosatu is also part of Satucc, which called on President Nelson Mandela, as SADC chairperson, to intervene in the Swaziland situation. In a meeting with Swaziland's King Mswati, Mandela reportedly urged the king to release the detained union leaders. However, so far the Swazi government has refused to give in to any of the demands. It instead accused Cosatu of interfering in the country's affairs.

Cosatu pointed out that the federation remains committed to international solidarity. Solidarity knows no borders when trade union rights and human rights are violated.

Cosatu has backed the following demands put forward by the SFTU:

- The immediate and unconditional release of SFTU leaders;
- The creation of a climate for free political activity;
- The immediate repeal of legislation preventing the free exercise of trade union rights and the normalisation of the operation of trade unions in line with ILO conventions;
- The immediate repeal of the 1973 decree outlawing democracy and opposition parties;
- A transparent and representative National Convention to agree on constitutional reform and to lead the process of democratic transformation.

Satucc mission

The Satucc Mission visited Swaziland on 13 and 14 February. According to the delegation, pressure exerted on the Swaziland government to date has not been sufficient. Satucc has called for pressure on the Swaziland government to be stepped up. Satucc announced 3rd March as the day of Southern African union solidarity with SFTU and called for action to be directed at the Swaziland High Commissioners and border gates. This should include blockades, protest, marches, pickets and the refusal to handle goods to and from Swaziland.

Our members in Mpumalanga Province have a crucial role to play in this campaign.

Cosatu declares war on crime

South Africa has one of the highest crime rates in the world — murder, rape, child abuse, car hijacking, domestic violence, robberies and house breaking.

The whole country is discussing crime. But the time for complaining or hoping the problem will go away is over. The question is: what can we do about it? This is exactly what Cosatu's Exco discussed in February.

The Exco decided to confront the problem head on. And on 8 March Cosatu will launch an anti-crime campaign to mobilise all working people in the war against crime.

Cosatu has identified key aspects of the campaign:

● **Join Community Policing Forums:** All members are called on to join the Community Policing Forums (CPF's) in their areas.

The role of the CPF's is to police the police and to make sure that the police are accountable to the communities which they are supposed to serve.

Shopstewards and other workers can bring in valuable organisational experience into the CPF's and help empower them in the fight against crime.

Station commanders should report to the CPF's on a monthly basis on cases reported, arrests made, progress in court and convictions.

CPF's can also receive complaints from residents about police inaction and discuss plans to rectify the situation. In this way, they can help identify and remove corrupt policemen.

● **Enrol as police reservists:** All Cosatu shopstewards are called on to enrol as police reservists. Cosatu is involved in discussions with the safety and security ministry to ensure resources are made available for training.

● **Support "Operation Mpimpa":** Workers and their communities are called on to become proud informers by reporting on criminal activities in their areas. By being the eyes and the ears against criminals in the community, we can help stamp out crime.

● **Form a partnership with law enforcement agencies:** The police belong to us. They are our police. Our taxes go to paying their salaries. It is in the interests of our communities and our country as a whole to work hand in hand with those who are

Anti-crime campaign launch: 8 March 1997

Cosatu has chosen 8 March, International Women's Day, to launch an anti-crime campaign. The focus of the day will be on violence against women, rape, child abuse, domestic violence and other serious crimes. This day will mark the beginning of an ongoing campaign involving workers in the fight against crime. Cosatu will link the anti-crime campaign to worker rights and struggles for the rights of women workers in the workplace, for example, against sexual harassment, in support of six months maternity leave, for a 40-hour working week and so on.

Discuss in your local and region how the campaign should be sustained. The March the 8th launch should be seen as the beginning of Cosatu's war against crime not just an event.

working to stamp out crime.

● **Reclaim the streets, reclaim the nights:** Crime often flourishes most effectively under cover of darkness. Many people, especially women, fear going out at night. Residents can set up night patrols in their streets to guard the community while they sleep. Workers can also organise marches in their areas to claim back the streets.

● **Support victims of crime:** Even once a crime is committed, there is a lot that can be done to ensure that the perpetrator is brought to justice. In addition, residents can mobilise around the granting of bail in serious cases.

● **Crush the culture of crime:** Crime is unacceptable, irrespective of the racial or ethnic background of the victim. Don't buy stolen goods. Don't turn a blind eye to women and child abuse.

We have the right to an environment where children are protected, an environment free from child abuse and domestic violence.

We cannot allow criminals to replace apartheid's curfews and house arrests with their reign of terror!

from page 1

define night work as work starting from 23h00. They also oppose a night shift allowance and ignore the issues of safety and the availability of transport for night workers. These are just some of the many issues on which no agreement has been reached during the negotiations.

The employment standards green paper will affect every worker directly. It will impact on basic working conditions which workers have won through long hard battles over many decades.

Workers nationwide — the organised and the unorganised — stand to gain or lose — depending on which way the negotiations go.

There are forces within business who complain that workers' wages "are too high" and are calling for Thatcherite-type labour market flexibility.

Mass action is now needed to shift the balance of power in favour of workers.

In 1995 we saw that action speaks louder than words when we marched for and won a worker-friendly Labour Relations Act. We saw it again in 1996 when we won the exclusion of the lockout clause from the country's constitution.

In 1997, we are again left with no option but to join hands in our tens of thousands to ensure our voices are heard!

Message from COSATU national Office Bearers

The programme in this campaign bulletin as adopted by the February 1997 EXCO is one of the most important campaigns ever undertaken by COSATU.

This campaign is going to be the third major campaign since the democratic order. The first campaign was for a worker-friendly Labour Relations Act, the second was around the new constitution. We had the support of the democratic government for most of our demands in these two campaigns. What makes the campaign for a better Employment Standards Act different from the previous campaigns is that

this time around demands are directed to both government and the employers. This is what makes this programme of action to be extremely important.

The stakes are very high. If COSATU fails, this may lead to the end of COSATU and the broad labour movement's influence on government policies, not just on labour-related. It will mean that COSATU can be ignored by business and government. Nobody will ever take us seriously again.

Secondly, the proposed Employment Standards Act is one of the most

important pieces of legislation. It is the law that will affect every worker. It is the law that must protect the vulnerable workers, in particular the unorganised workers. This is the law that will determine whether or not South African workers are valued and given minimum protection in line with the RDP and the new constitutional provisions.

COSATU national office bearers call on every union leader, union official, shop steward, and member to work tirelessly and ensure that this and other campaigns are a success. The stakes are too high we dare not fail!

MAY DAY Celebrations

Extensive discussions took place at the COSATU Executive Committee held on the 11 & 12 February 1997. This is a follow up on discussions which took place at the September '96 COSATU Central Executive Committee around participation of workers and their families in May Day events.

From the previous evaluation, lessons were drawn and policies developed on how we should prepare for successful May Days that include the following;

Preparation to start very early which include mobilisation, deciding on venues, speakers, budgets, etc.

Theme: Socio-economic policy for employment creation!

All regions should as far as possible have decentralised rallies.

COSATU therefore calls on all workers and their families to remember the importance of May Day and celebrate it accordingly with the respect it deserves. There will be activities in all Provinces/Regions and workers should approach their unions and COSATU offices for more information regarding time and venues for the

celebrations.

All affiliates have agreed to provide transport for their members to these rallies. COSATU calls on all workers to participate in great numbers so as to make inputs and give further mandates on our mass action.

Regions should have close co-operation with the Alliance, Labour and Local Government, etc.

May Day history dates back to the 18th century when American workers took to the streets to demand a 40-hour working week.

In 1997, workers in South Africa will celebrate May Day as they continue to struggle for a 40-hour week.

DECLARE WAR ON CRIME!

DIARY OF ACTION

22-23 February

Cosatu regional executive committees and regional shopstewards councils will meet to decide on appropriate action for their regions and locals on Employment Standards

24 Feb- 5 March

Activities in industrial areas nationwide, including pickets, marches and rallies on Employment Standards

3 March

Blockade at Swaziland border posts as well as pickets, demonstration etc at Swazi High Commissioners in Southern Africa

8 March

Launch of Anti-Crime campaign, International Womens Day

10-20 March

Cosatu affiliates will lead marches, demonstrations and pickets on Employment Standards

12 March

Public sector unions march to parliament to call for a people's budget

21 March

Masakhane Campaign starts

24 March-6 April

Rallies and marches in major centres on Employment Standards

7-10 April

Cosatu's Central Executive Committee will evaluate the Employment Standards negotiations process. If insufficient progress has been made, the federation will mobilise for a general strike on 12 May 1997

1 May

May Day celebrations in regions and locals

12 May

National general strike if no progress on Employment Standards negotiations

DECLARE WAR ON CRIME!

FAX TO: DESMOND LEWIS
COMPANY: _____ PAGE: _____ OF: _____
FAX NO: _____ DATE: 09/04/97
FROM: Martin
COMPANY: TUCEC PHONE NO: _____
FAX NO: _____ **Post-it** FAX PAD 7551

Flexibility Arrangements

The ESA proposals which follow aim to introduce more flexible work arrangements. These proposals range from being more flexible around the length of the working day, length of the working week and compensation for overtime worked.

Provisions of the BCEA

Flexible working hours are restricted under the BCEA.

ESA Proposals

The Compressed Working Week

This permits workers to work extended hours on some days in the week, in order to reduce the hours in another day in the week. It will be possible for workers to work, for example, in a 40 hour working week, 10 hours a day for 4 days and thus have an extra day off a week.

- a) A collective or individual agreement may permit workers to work up to 12 hours of **normal** work on any day.
- b) A worker whose hours of work are regulated by such an agreement may not work on more than 4 days per week.

Averaging of Working Time

In the BCEA, the Farming and Domestic Sectors may average out working hours over a longer period than 4 weeks. Both sectors can average out over a year.

Limitations are set as to how many hours a week extra farm workers can work and for how many successive days a domestic worker can work longer hours. These provisions of averaging of working time do not apply to other sectors.

ESA Proposals

- a) A collective agreement may permit normal working hours to be calculated over a cycle of longer than 1 week

b) An agreement may not:-

- permit an averaging period of longer than 4 weeks
- permit workers to work an average more than 45 hours per week over that period

Compensation for Overtime

The BCEA allows only for paid compensation for overtime worked. The ESA proposes an additional option whereby a collective or individual agreement can provide that workers receive paid time off in exchange for overtime worked.

Discussion:

The various flexibility provisions of the ESA hold only dangers for workers and no benefits.

Averaging of the working week means workers can be made to work up to 48 hours normal working hours in some weeks. This is facilitated by the provision of the ESA that agreements can be made for workers to work up to 12 normal working hours per day. This means they will not be paid overtime since in subsequent weeks they will work fewer than 45 hours in order to average out 45 hours over 4 weeks.

The problem for workers, however, goes way beyond just not being paid for the longer hours worked in some weeks, although of course this is problematic in itself. The intensification of work that results from working longer hours will lead to a far greater incidence of health problems for workers over time, which fewer hours in subsequent weeks cannot rectify. Regular working of longer hours will lead to much greater incidence of repetitive stress injuries among workers and will ultimately lead to a shortening of many workers' working lives. This is the growing trend internationally.

The compressed working week will have exactly the same effect. The ostensible benefit to workers of saving on transport can be put down as an unintended joke when weighed up against the potential dangers this arrangement holds for workers.

Apart from the danger of shortening their working lives, the flexible work arrangements proposed by the ESA also pose many social problems for workers. The disruption to their family, social and cultural existence will be incalculable. It will also have a direct impact on workers' participation in their organisations and hence their political activity as well.

For bosses, workers working longer hours means longer production runs, cheaper unit costs and thus greater competitiveness and profitability. Longer production runs also translate into a more rapid amortization of capital equipment, which again translates into greater profitability. It is no surprise therefore that **the Bill proposes an averaging of a 45 hour week over 4 months**. This is in line with what the bosses in other countries have been demanding.

Discussion on Overtime:

Under the BCEA, overtime is viewed as voluntary, even though employers tie up individual workers to work overtime in their contract of employment. Overtime is also limited to 3 hours per day and 10 hours per week. There is no annual limit to overtime worked.

Cosatu has long campaigned for a ban on overtime as a means of forcing bosses to create more jobs. The GP increases the rate of pay for overtime from time and a third to time and a half and limits agreements on overtime work to 12 months in an attempt to limit overtime work. However, its provision that agreements can be made whereby workers work 12 normal hours per day completely undermines these attempts to limit the amount of overtime worked.

The GP, despite its commitment to job creation, also speculates about annual limits on overtime but then makes no concrete proposals on the issue.



DEFEND YOUR GAINS!

EXTEND WORKERS' RIGHTS

Cosatu has been involved in negotiations with government and business on the Employment Standards Bill since April 1996. No agreement has been reached on the main issues.

AREAS OF DISPUTE

■ **40-Hour week**

Cosatu demands a 40-hour week, within a period of five years. Government and business are stuck on 45 hours.

■ **Maternity leave**

We demand six months maternity leave.

Government wants four months and business wants three months unpaid maternity leave.

Cosatu rejects the notion that women should pay for maternity leave.

Forward to gender equality.

■ **Sunday work**

Cosatu demands double pay for Sunday work.

Government has refused to go higher than time and a half.

Business wants Sundays to be treated like any other day.

■ **Eliminating minimum standards(variation)**

Labour is demanding that there must be minimum employment standards. Changes must only improve - not worsen - workers' standards. Government and business want to make it possible for these standards to be reduced in a way that will erode most of the minimum standards.

Other issues in dispute include:

- Child labour threshold age
- Child minding facilities for working parents
- Safe transport for nightshift workers and medical regulations of nightwork
- Definition of continuous service to deal with the problems of lock-outs.

The success of these negotiations depend on you! We will not win unless you mobilise and make your voices heard! We call on all our members to discuss these issues and a programme of action to make sure we win our demands.

Advance and Defend Worker's Rights!

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS NEGOTIATIONS

The following are the events affiliates are engaging in to push the campaign.

19 March 1997

Focus:

Activity - Human Chain

- All areas under negotiations including Niel Barnard
- Demonstration at Mitchell's Plain Court regarding Child Abuse Case.

26 March 1997

Focus:

Activity - Sticker Day

- 40hr working week + May Day
- All workers who support 40hr working week to wear stickers.

2 April 1997

Focus:

Activity - Placard demonstrations at plants

- Non Variance Minimum Floor of Rights & May Day
- Union Bargaining Issues

9 April 1997

Focus:

Activity - Factory and Public demonstrations

- Maternity leave and May Day

16 April 1997

Focus:

Activity - Industrial areas Activity

- Deadlock in Negotiations & May Day
- Joint Factory Action

23 April 1997

Focus:

Activity - Mass gatherings in Industrial Areas

- Labour Demands & reportbacks & May Day
- Rallies in Industrial Areas

1 May 1997

Focus:

Activity - May Day

- Mass gatherings
- Details to be announced

3 May 1997

Focus:

Activity - Faxes demanding labour Position

- Government - Tito Mboweni fax: (021) 462 2832
- Business - Raymond Parsons fax: (011) 762 1344



These actions will take place in all factories. Shopstewards will receive placards and details from their union offices.

Forward to a 40 Hour working week, forward!

PROCESSED

SEPTEMBER COMMISSIONTRADE UNION
LIBRARY AND
EDUCATION CENTRETHE CAPE TOWN
TRADE UNION
LIBRARY**INTRODUCTION:**

This is the first report regarding the work of the September commission. The commission was established by the Cosatu CEC last year to look into the future of unions. The CEC elected the following comrades to serve on the commission:

Connie September (Chairperson), Mxolisi Nkosi, Sheila Sikiti, James Motlatsi, Sipho Kubheka, Herbert Mkhize, Enoch Godongwane, Fredi Magugu, Sam Shilowa, Nelson Ndinisa, Philip Dexter (observer), Susan Shabangu (observer) Jeremy Baskin (Coordinating secretary) and Abraham Agulhas. Carl Von Holt has been appointed to do Jeremy's function due to his workload. A. Agulhas has been elected as vice chairperson by the commission.

The commission had two meetings for this year which mainly dealt with planning and our work programme. Some of the commission members are consistently absent.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The terms of reference of the commission is to do research work around the possible future of unions, which include dealing with current challenges facing the labour movement. The commission will develop various scenarios regarding the future of unions. The commission's report will go to the unions for discussion in preparation for the 1997 congress of Cosatu. The commission have one year in which to complete it's work.

WORK PROGRESS:

Not much have been done up to now. The first meeting did some brainstorming around issues that we have to deal with and a possible workplan. Time frames have been work out. We agreed that the first main topic for discussion will be the issue of globalisation. Research papers will be prepared by Naledi as well as commission members.

We also agreed to consider a method of scenario planning. A consultant will make an input at our next meeting.

Notes of the first meeting is attached.

PROCESSED

CONCLUSION:

I will appreciate it if CWIU members can contribute towards the first topic, Globalisation. This is very important since we have to deal with the Neo Liberal agenda of the capitalist confronting the working class. Regular reports will be given.

COMPILED BY:

AGULHAS. A.

"The Future of the Unions"

A joint COSATU – NALEDI Project

PO Box 5665
Johannesburg
2000

Tel: 011-4002122
Fax: 011-403-1943

Notes of first preparatory meeting of the commission 7 February 1996

Present -- Connie September, Susan Shabangu, Philip Dexter, Abraham Agulhas, Jeremy Baskin, Sipho Kubheka, Sheila Skita, Freddie Magugu.

Apologies -- Mxolisi Nkosi, James Motlatsi.

Enoch Godongwane indicated he will be unable to serve on the commission. Connie will follow this up.

It was agreed to discuss the commission's work at this preparatory meeting under three headings:

- * terms of reference
- * methods to be used
- * practical arrangements

1. Terms of reference and purpose

Jeremy explained the background to the project (see basic document). Various commission members then raised comments, omissions and concerns as follows:

- a) Issues related to the alliance, socialism and a workers party can be discussed under politics.
- b) Regionalisation, Southern Africa and the impact of international financial institutions (eg World Bank) can be discussed under economics section.
- c) It was agreed that it is important to draw on international experiences and internal union debates.
- d) We should invite non-COSATU unions to make inputs. Investigate the questions:
 - * why do workers join other unions?
 - * why do workers not join unions?
 - * why do workers not join COSATU unions?
- e) In the area of service questions should include:
 - * what is proper service?

Commission members: Connie September (chair), Mxolisi Nkosi, Sheila Skita, James Motlatsi, Sipho Kubheka, Herbert Mkhize, Enoch Godongwane, Freddie Magugu, Abraham Agulhas, Sam Shabangu, Nelson Nomisa, Philip Dexter, Susan Shabangu, Jeremy Baskin (coordinating secretary)

- * the role of benefits?
- * the role of shop stewards?
- * type of training
- f) It was agreed that if we simply end up recommending more training we will not have done our job properly.
- g) We must examine union structures and constitutions
- h) There may be merit in looking at different problem clusters -- manufacturing, public service, services, mining, transport, etc. Each faces different economic challenges and servicing problems.
- i) Unions should also examine their public image
- j) Full-time presidents and similar should be explored under structures section.
- k) What is the role of women in COSATU? -- their representation, issues affecting them, their place in the economy, the specific place of domestic workers. This last point should link to the current Exco examination of the future of domestic unions
- l) The issues under structures should include
 - * internal democracy -- are mandates and report backs working?
 - * the role of leadership -- to lead or to voice?
 - * one industry, one union -- mergers and the future

2. Methods

- a) Some of the commission's activities should occur through sub-groups. A work programme breaking into groups might be involved in visiting locals and speaking to members.
- b) We should investigate the validity of the scenario approach -- someone should be invited to talk on this issue at the next meeting.
- c) Jeremy should start commissioning some of the research (see list of possible research topics attached to meeting documentation)
- d) the commission will have to think carefully about publicising its work to unions, members, and the general public.
- e) It was agreed that wherever possible we should frame concrete questions which need to be solved. Examples include:
 - * why do workers cease to be union members when they are dismissed, retrenched or retired?
 - * why are unions not growing?
 - * why do we not have enough skilled unionists?
 - * Is there a growing gap between what those at the top of unions and those at the bottom of unions do?
 - * why are unions losing skilled personnel?
 - * why are nurses reluctant to join Cosatu?
 - * why does Cosatu fail to have adequate numbers of women on its structures?

3. Workplan

- a) the next meeting should focus on the following
 - * a draft workplan

- c) scenario input
- d) an input on globalisation
- e) tasks should be set for commission members to perform between meetings
- f) we should write a short piece for The Shoobsters outlining the commission's purpose

4. General

- a) It was agreed that Connie will follow up on raising funds for the project.
- b) It was agreed to appoint a vice-chair at the next meeting
- c) It was agreed to get someone to assist with research and writing. The commission favoured getting Karl von Holdt but asked all commissioners to suggest names and send in CVs of other people before the next meeting. Connie and Jeremy would follow-up this matter.
- d) A list of meeting dates for the next few months was agreed. These are 1st March (since cancelled), 25 March, 29-30 April and 14 June. Further dates will be finalised at the next meeting
- e) Jeremy should draft a possible set of tasks for each commission member and present this at the next meeting

J Baskin
7 March 1996

c:\jeremy\...ufutr2.doc)

Commission members: Connie September (chair), Mxolisi Nkosi, Sheila S. - (James M. - (Mrs. Spho Kubheka; Mercedes Mkhize; Enoch Godongwana; Freddie Magugu; Abraham Aguihas; Sam S. - (Mrs. Leeson Ndunisa; Philip Denter; Susan Shabangu; Jeremy Baskin (co-ordinating secretary)

COSATU PRESS STATEMENT on decisions of the Central Executive Committee - 14/09/1996

The COSATU Central Executive Committee met in its second ordinary session from 12 - 13 September 1996. The meeting reviewed the work of the federation since the last meeting which was held in March 1996. A wide range of issues were discussed including major policy and legislative development. Among the areas debated and resolved taking into account our policies, those of the alliance and the current situation at a political, organisational and socio-economic level were the following:

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC

1.1 Macro-Economic Framework

The Federation remains opposed to the basic thrust of the government's macro-economic framework (Gear) which was released in June this year. We are concerned at the impact that a drastic cut in the fiscus can do to programmes such as health, education, social benefits, housing, and delivery by the state. This does not in any way suggest opposition to debt management, but to the government's chosen route.

The same would apply to other areas such as the so-called "labour market flexibility" and acceleration of removal of trade tariffs. We remain of the view that the South African labour market is more flexible as was shown by Guy Standing's ILO report. Any attempt at wholesale exemption of small and medium enterprises from collective bargaining would be resisted. Again this does not imply that we are insensitive to the plight of small business and the need for development. We are however opposed to them becoming prosperous at the expense of exploitation of workers and denial of worker rights.

The Executive resolved that despite our positions, we should continue our interaction with the government and our allies on this matter. Our approach will be to concentrate on targeted strategic areas that are of importance and concern to the working class. These will relate to Trade and Industrial policy, labour market, social wage public housing, public health and public transport among others. We will pursue and continue to popularise our positions on the need for the establishment of a housing parastatal, national health system which moves away from a privately owned medical aid to state owned where the majority can benefit.

Furthermore, we will continue to develop policies for discussion in the alliance and to guide our engagement with the legislature.

1.2 Restructuring of state assets

The CEC discussed this matter guided by our current policies, negotiations in the NFA and the Discussion Document which was earlier circulated to our structures.

The meeting reiterated its opposition to wholesale privatisation of state assets since this is usually driven by greed, the need to push the state out of production and to subject delivery of certain basic services as outlined in the RDP to the laws of profit. We acknowledge that the RDP envisages a role for the private sector. But equally it envisages the role of the state in production. We therefore believe that the debate cannot be one sided. In other words it should consider all forms of ownership - nationalisation, privatisation where necessary), joint venture, opening of new entities and partnership between the state and private sector (depending on the situation).



In this regard it was agreed that:

- There may be state assets which should never have belonged to the state sector in the first place, whose retention does not benefit the majority of people or helps perpetuate the apartheid divide. These would need to be identified and sold.

- Others may require the involvement of private sector capital (in a limited form), based on the need for more capital, new technology, enhance delivery etc. Where there is a compelling case for such an approach, the Federation is willing to consider them. In such situation, the state should remain the majority shareholder rather than withdraw from such a sector.

- We are of the view that in pursuit of the need to involve the state in production, new enterprises and sectors need to be established. An example would be in housing and health, where the current system is failing.

- Furthermore, as envisaged in COSATU'S 1992 Economic Policy Conference and the RDP, where the balance of evidence point to the need for strategic nationalisation, there must be political willingness to follow this route.

In this way, the debate shall focus on the role of the state in the productive sector rather than its withdrawal. The CEC also identified sectors which should be in the state sector. These are post office and telecommunication, electricity, public transport, housing, health, water, state forests, municipal services, education and roads.

It was agreed that all affiliates should participate in the formulation of alternatives based on the above. The Federation will also ensure that resources that come through the sale of assets, are redeployed for infrastructure or new assets. This will ensure expansion of infrastructure, service delivery and job creation.

We will continue to fight for employment security, training and redeployment of workers, implementation of affirmative action and respect for labour standards and worker rights. To this end, the EXCO have been mandated to approve positions emerging from sectoral teams. They will constitute our negotiating positions with the government.

The above positions will be conveyed to our membership, society and our allies. This will ensure the broadest possible mobilisation behind these positions.

1.3 Employment Standards Bill

The CEC received a report on the ongoing negotiations between Labour, Business and Government. COSATU seeks to improve the provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. In COSATU'S view the statute must establish a human floor of rights in the workplace which should be wide in its coverage. This floor of rights should be capable of being improved through collective bargaining processes.

COSATU is in dispute with both the government and business on the following key strategic areas:-

1.3.1 Variations

COSATU is opposed to the model of variations contained in the Bill in that it will have unintended consequences of permitting an erosion of basic standards under the guise of flexibility.

COSATU seeks to permit parties to negotiate the reconfiguration of the rights in each section, provided that the package which they agree on is more favourable than the provisions of the Act.

1.3.2 Hours of work

The CEC rejected the model in the Bill which merely encourages the parties to reach the goal of 40 hours working week.

COSATU agreed that there should be a gradual reduction of hours in five years. However COSATU seeks a definite achievable 40 hours working week without loss of pay. Parties should be allowed to agree on a schedule of the reduction of working hours in the next five years.

1.3.3 Maternity leave and other leave

COSATU must continue to fight for a six months paid maternity leave.

The mechanism of payment should be a maternity leave fund possibly using the administrative capacity of the UIF. A levy should be introduced to all employers to pay for the cost of maternity leave.

The CEC gave negotiators a flexible mandate on mechanism of payment of maternity leave.

The CEC further gave a flexible mandate on paternity, family responsibility and compassionate leave.

1.3.4 Other important areas

We are more comfortable with the current provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act on some areas and seek to improve provisions of the issues listed below.

- a) Sunday Work
- b) The night shift premium and facility
- c) Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms
- d) Operation and terms of the Employment Standards Commission
- e) Erosion of the role of trade unions
- f) The age threshold for child-labour and the clear regulation of exemptions

1.4 COSATU RDP Contributions

COSATU as an organisation which was involved in the drafting of the RDP sees it necessary for its members to contribute to the success of the plan. This serves to ensure that we build the economy of this country. We acknowledge that the ANC led government inherited enormous problems. Therefore it is important for the workers to contribute to the betterment of our peoples' lives. One of the mechanisms to do so will be to contribute to things like housing, electricity and water.

The CEC believes that the credibility of the RDP will be measured against the government's performance in implementing it. We also believe that its implementation is not only the burden of the government, labour has a role to play.

The CEC took a decision that all COSATU affiliates should contribute

to the success of the RDP and mandated the next COSATU Executive Committee Meeting (which will take place in November 1996) to identify a (symbolic) day whereby all COSATU affiliates will encourage their members to work as a way of contributing to the implementation of the RDP.

Day of Action

On this day all the COSATU affiliates will contribute according to the following agreements in their specific unions

NUMSA

NUMSA members have identified the 24th of September 1996 as their day of action. Workers will go to work as usual and contribute the days salary to the RDP Fund that will be set up by the union. The same will be required of the company's proceeds.

(Please note : that the date for the National Day of Action has not yet been selected. NUMSA has taken a pro- active decision and identified the above date for its members. But they will also be part of the National day to be identified)

NEHAWU

NEHAWU regions and branches will contribute to a fund. Each region or branch will identify its own needs and the money from the fund will be used on those needs. 2. Will be engaged in health projects. A pilot project has already been started in Thembisa where the mayor Mr Isaac Mahlangu is also participating.

CAWU

Workers from the productive sector of the industry took a decision to contribute with their labour by producing bricks and cement out of the material that will be contributed by the management.

CWIU

Will contribute through investing to the RDP housing bond.

FAWU

T a decision to concentrate on food security for the people who find themselves being victims of disasters like draught.

NUM

The focus will be on housing. The project will be decentralised.

T & GWU

Each member will contribute R1.00 to the fund. They are busy negotiating with the employers to ask them to contribute to the plan.

The rest of the COSATU affiliates are still deliberating on the matter. In principle they have agreed and are waiting eagerly for the National Day of Action.

2. POLITICAL

The meeting discussed the need to strengthen the alliance and to ensure that it remains relevant in the current political and socio-economic situation. The CEC reiterated its position that the alliance is the only force capable of guiding the transformation process.

The Federation need to identify key issues that impact or could

accelerate transformation for discussion in the alliance.

The CEC called on its affiliates and its structures to ensure that our structures and those of the alliance partners and the MDM are strengthened. This should be accompanied by the need to build our capacity to develop policy and influence various legislatures. In this regard the Federation have agreed on the need to develop a programme for implementation by the alliance. This does not replace the RDP, but gives content to our approach to transformation.

It was further resolved that it is in our interest to ensure that the current democratisation and transformation process does not fail. In this regard, we cannot be bystanders to the current proceeds. We have a duty to influence and defend it.

The COSATU Secretariat have been charged with the responsibility to draft a discussion document which will articulate such a programme and help shape debate in COSATU leading to the 6th National Congress.

3. ORGANISATIONAL

3.1 SADWU

The CEC took note of the decision of the S.A. Domestic Workers Union to dissolve itself. Affiliates were asked to debate the request to integrate domestic workers into one of the affiliates.

3.2 COSATU National Congress

The CEC endorsed the dates of the next tri-annual COSATU National Congress as 16- 19 September 1997. A time table for submission and discussion of resolutions was agreed. This include a discussion of other business to be dealt with in the congress including leadership.

4. OLYMPIC BID

The CEC gave a conditional support to the Cape Town Olympic Bid for 2004. COSATU shall develop a charter of minimum demands which should be incorporated into the bid. These include such areas as creation of jobs and infrastructure development. COSATU shall in particular co-operate with the committees established by other groups.

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ANNEXURE D

GLASS CEILING

*is how integrated into
Ed conference (no ref to this
annex?)*

to

UNION GLASS CEILING

THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN LEADERS IN COSATU

ROSELINE NYMAN

WHILE ALL NALEDI PUBLICATIONS ADOPT A
PRO-LABOUR PERSPECTIVE, THEIR CONCLUSIONS DO NOT
REPRESENT THE POLICIES OF COSATU.

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A:/PMS/WOM-LEAD

SUMMARY

The development of women leadership has been a long-standing COSATU focus. Repeated resolutions have committed the federation to promoting women to participate fully at all levels. COSATU's 5th National Congress in 1994 resolved to break down practical barriers to women's full participation, and established a programme of action towards this goal with a four-year deadline.

Roseline Nyman's research report, 'Union Glass Ceiling: The Under-Representation of Women Leaders in COSATU' is a significant contribution from NALEDI's Women and Work Research Project that assesses the federation's progress halfway through the period of implementation mandated in 1994. The report is based on a recent survey of SACCAWU and SADTU members, as well as focus-group interviews with SACCAWU workers and officials. Nyman argues that little progress has been made as a result of complicated processes inside the unions and in society. She suggests a series of practical steps that may be taken towards overcoming these obstacles.

Though there are no reliable figures on the number of shop-stewards in COSATU, 1991 research indicated that only 14% (3 500) of shop-stewards are women, even though women make up 36% of the federation's membership. By the principle that representation in leadership should be roughly proportional to a group's overall numbers, there should be 9 000 female shop-stewards in COSATU, an increase of 250%. This under-representation is a serious problem, given the importance of the shop-steward position as the recruiting ground for all leadership positions in the affiliates and the federation. As a result, according to Nyman, 'Women's low representation as shop-stewards disadvantages them from being elected to constitutional leadership positions'.

Nyman shows that this is indeed the case. Women make up only 9% of delegates at COSATU's Central Executive Committee, where 'women's absence...affects both decisions and coordination of activities that have an impact on women'. These findings are reiterated in Nyman's case study of SACCAWU, a large affiliate with a large female membership and many women leaders. However, even in SACCAWU women remain 'grossly under-represented', and if this is true of one of the 'best' affiliate, then conditions at other affiliates must be no better.

In her detailed analysis of SACCAWU's leadership, Nyman discovered under-representation at all levels of the organisation. Just 2 of 6 national office bearers are female, as are 7 of 59 Central Executive Committee members, and 3 of 28 National Executive Committee members. Even more extreme patterns were present at the regional level, where 3 out of 31 regional office bearers are female, and not a single region is chaired by a woman. Though there are slightly more women representatives on SACCAWU locals (64 of 260, 25%), only one local has a female majority, and women hold only 6% (18 of 104) of local office-bearer positions. Indeed, half of SACCAWU's 26 locals have no women office bearers at all.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

In line with international trends, there has been an increase in women's participation in the labour market in South Africa. (Crankshaw, 1996) The growth in the female-dominated service sectors and the corresponding decline in the male-dominated manufacturing sectors have added to women's entry in formal employment. (United Nations Development Report, 1996) In consequence, there has been an increase in the level of women organised in the trade union movement. However, there has not been a concomitant increase in women's representation in leadership positions in the unions. Instead women come up against a 'glass ceiling' that for various reasons prevents them from rising into positions of power.¹

Historically, organising in South Africa was almost entirely focused around male workers and prioritised their needs and interests. South African unions have been slow in responding to organising around the needs of female workers while elevating men to positions of leadership. Instead, women's issues have been placed on COSATU's agenda as a result of struggles by women workers. The fight for more women leaders forms a critical part of this struggle.

Increasing the number of women leaders is important for various reasons. Women leaders are necessary to ensure that problems affecting women in the union and at work are taken up.² This involves placing problems on the union's agenda, ensuring appropriate action is taken and continuous monitoring occurs. A common criticism is that women leaders do not necessarily advance the interests of women. For example, Sweden's deputy prime minister, a woman, defended the government's plans to cut back on childcare benefits.³ While this criticism is valid, it does not apply to all women leaders. COSATU has a rich history of women leaders who have been at the forefront of fighting for the advancement of women. Furthermore, women leaders are necessary as role-models for other women. Finally women's role in society as nurturers and care-givers means they can instill a different leadership style in the organisation.

This research report covers formal leadership as reflected in trade unions as bureaucratic institutions.⁴ Shop-stewards are worker leaders elected by a defined constituency to represent them. Worker leaders normally arise organically through day-to-day shopfloor struggles and form part of the pool of workers elected to formal leadership positions.

The **research methodology** comprised of:

- a reference team of the Women and Work Steering Committee;
- a literature search;
- a survey of South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) and South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) members;
- focus-group interviews with SACCAWU workers and officials.

Part One stresses the importance of having women in leadership positions. In Part Two we trace the Congress of South African Trade Unions' (COSATU) struggles in the fight for gender equality with a special emphasis on the struggle for the election of women leaders. Part Three uncovers the gender breakdown in COSATU. Part Four investigates SACCAWU as a case study of the number of women leaders in a COSATU affiliate. Part Five examines the obstacles facing future women leaders expressed in the interviews and surveys conducted in SACCAWU and SADTU. Part Six analyses the solutions workers proposed in the interviews and surveys. Finally Part Seven suggests recommendations that include education and training, a quota system, childcare facilities, employment of female union organisers and the popularisation of the COSATU Sexual Harassment Code of Conduct and Procedure. Annexure A outlines the research methodology. Annexure B records the gender education and training provided by COSATU.

PART TWO: WOMEN'S STRUGGLES IN COSATU

Women's participation has been on COSATU's agenda since its 1985 Inaugural Congress. At COSATU's 1987 Education Conference delegates listed the lack of key promotions of women at work and the failure to be given leadership roles as part of the problems experienced by women at the workplace. A further problem listed was the negative attitude towards women shopstewards shown by male comrades. Women included 'lack of confidence' and 'lack of political education' as reasons for their under-representation. However, delegates failed to propose measures for solving the problems.

The first COSATU Women's Congress in 1988 represented a major step forward in that it offered women the opportunity to identify their problems at the workplace and in the union structures. While the thrust of the resolutions was on workplace issues, women's recognition of problems in the federation at such an early stage was significant. The Congress committed itself actively to promote the necessary confidence and experience amongst women workers so that they can participate fully at all levels of the federation.

The commitment was worded generally with no clear proposals on necessary measures to realise the commitments in practice. Women's under-representation at a leadership level was not specifically identified as a problem although 'full participation' could incorporate this issue. Congress' decision to pass a commitment and not a resolution on the issue meant that the problem was not seen as a burning issue.

At the 1989 3rd COSATU Congress, delegates took a further step by resolving to break down the 'practical barriers' to women's full participation in leadership positions by:

PART THREE: HOW MANY WOMEN ARE IN LEADERSHIP?

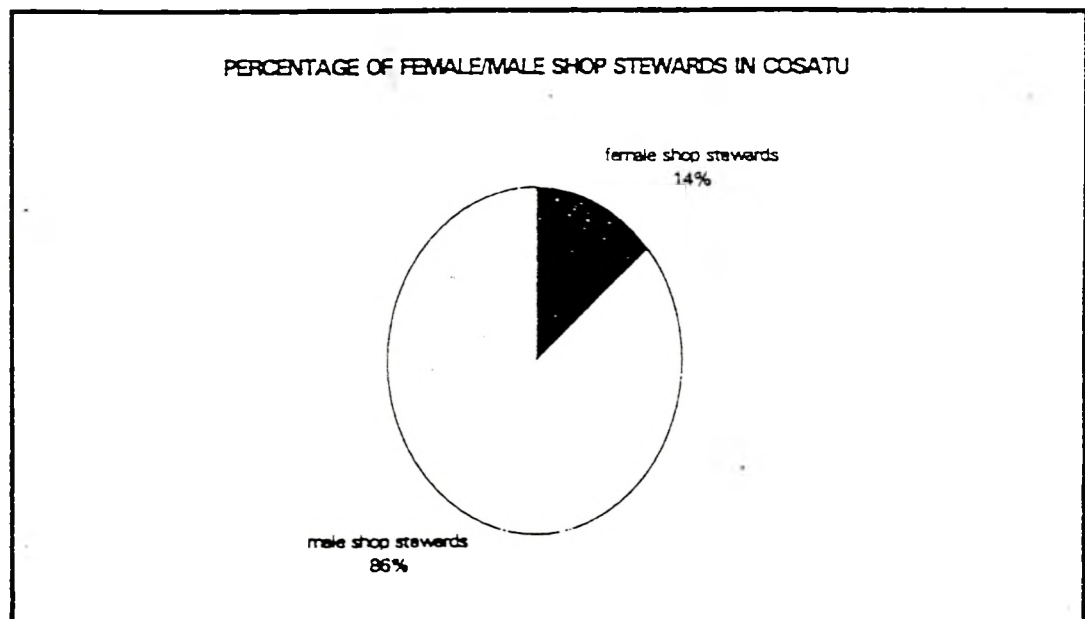
Part three provides a gender breakdown of the COSATU leadership as follows:

- number of shop-stewards;
- COSATU Central Executive Committee;
- COSATU affiliates' National Executive Committees.

Number of shop-stewards

At present, there are no official figures of the number of shop-stewards in COSATU. Pityana and Orkin estimated that there were approximately 25 000 shop-stewards in COSATU in an extensive survey conducted in 1991. Only a mere 14% (3500) of the shop-stewards were women, as reflected in Chart One.

CHART ONE



Source: Pityana and Orkin, 1992

The number of female shop-stewards is much lower than the number that should be reflected proportionally in terms of the female membership of 36%. If the number of shop-stewards were proportional to the number of female members, there would be 9000 women shop-stewards, an increase of more than 250%.

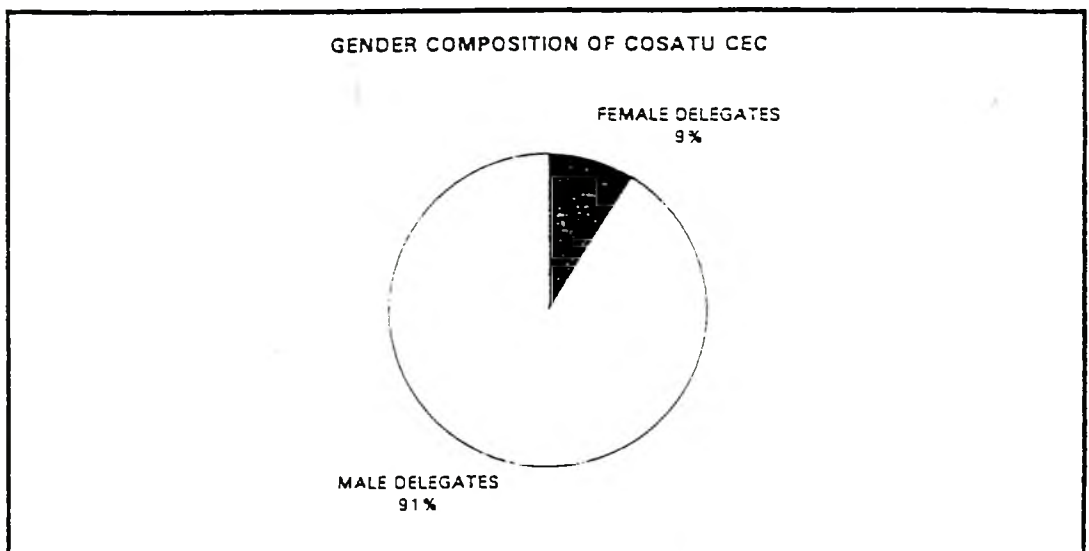
A shop-steward position is the first entry point to other union leadership positions. The tiers of representation within a union are illustrated in Diagram One:

COSATU Central Executive Committee (CEC)

The CEC is made up of 80 delegates from 19 affiliates and COSATU regions, including the 6 national office-bearers (NOBs).⁵ The NOBs consist of the president, first vice-president, second vice-president, treasurer, general secretary and assistant general secretary of the federation. Except for the first vice-president all the NOBs are males.

Attendance from affiliates at the CEC varies from one meeting to the next. However, if we look at the actual representation at the CEC, few women attend. At the CEC of 24 March 1995 there were 36 men and 6 women representing affiliates; at the CEC of 25 September 1995 there were 34 men and 3 women from the affiliates and at the CEC of 29 March 1996 there were 46 men and 4 women. All 8 COSATU regions have male regional secretaries. Women thus make up an estimated 9% (6) of the CEC while men make up 91% (76) as depicted in Chart Two.

CHART TWO



Source: Nyman and Naudascher, 1996

The COSATU regional chairpersons, regional secretaries and head office officials attend the CEC as observers with full speaking rights, but not voting rights. After the Congress, the CEC is the highest decisionmaking body in the federation: it takes major policy decisions and is instrumental in implementing the federation's resolutions and in coordinating its activities. This is especially the case in relation to gender resolutions. Women's absence from the CEC affects both decisions and coordination of activities that have an impact on women.

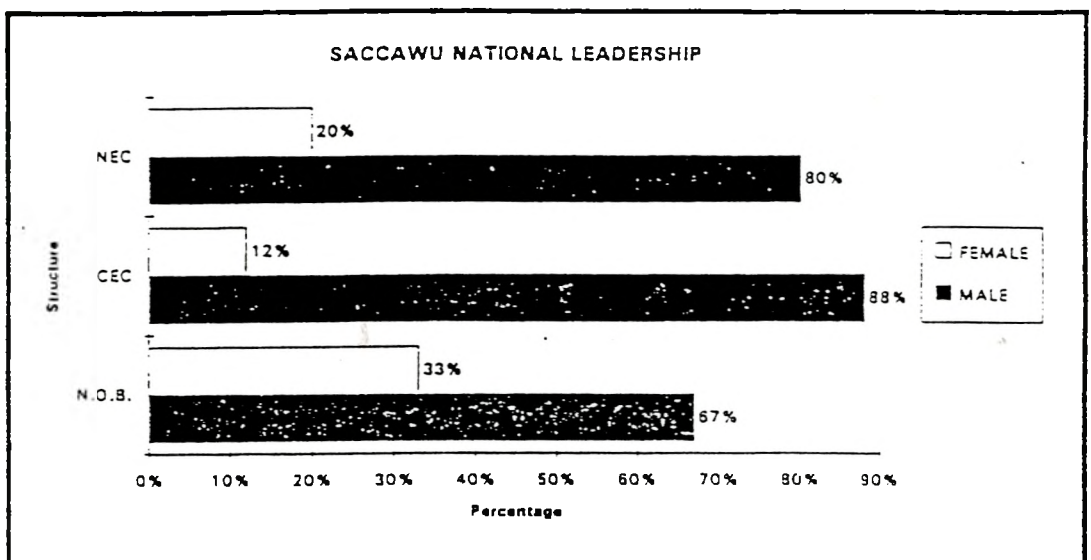
Nevertheless, if we examine the COSATU head office staff who attend the CEC then there is a big improvement.

Indeed, SACCAWU has more women leaders than any other long-standing affiliate, except for SADWU. However, in sharp contrast to this 'gender sensitive' culture and the greater representation by women, women are grossly under-represented in leadership positions at all levels of the organisation, if one assumes that the number of women leaders should be proportional to the number of female members.

National leadership

On the basis of proportional representation, women should make up 70% of the national leadership. However, the converse exists as illustrated in Chart Three:

CHART THREE



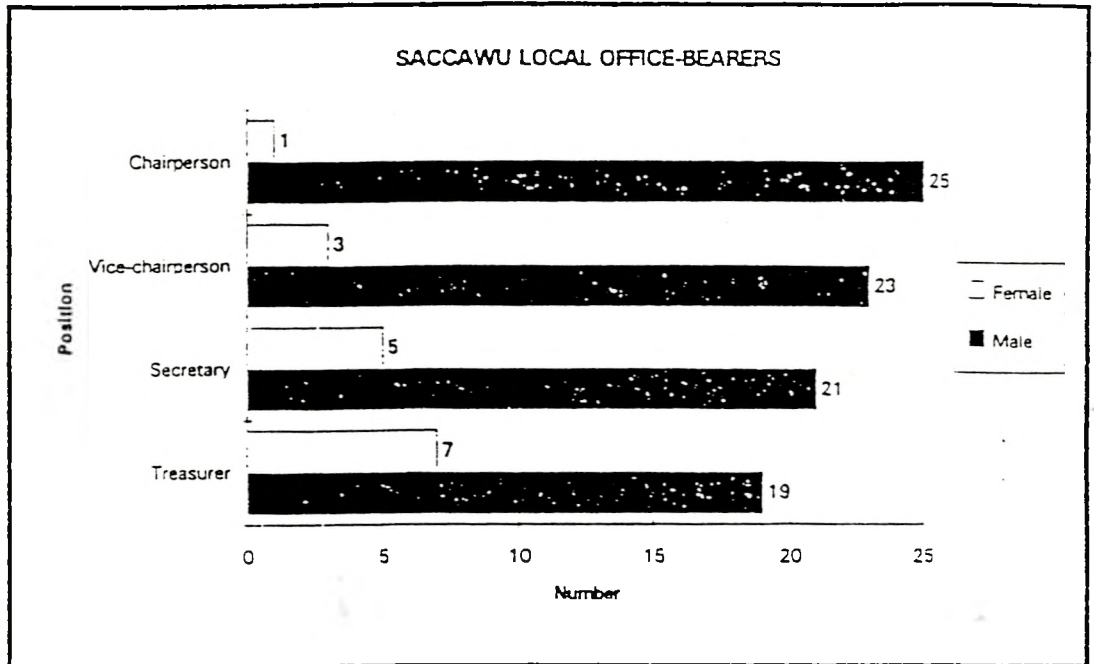
Only 2 of the 6 NOBs are female. While women, proportionally should represent 70% of the NOBs they represent only 33%. Of the 59 Central Executive Committee members, women make up only 7 members. This means that although women should proportionally constitute 70% of the CEC membership, they comprise a low 12%. Likewise, on the National Executive Committee, women comprise only 3 (10%) out of 29 members.

Regional leadership

Women's under-representation is equally low at a regional level as revealed in Table Two.

the 104 positions: 7 local treasurers, 5 local secretaries, 3 local vice-chairpersons and 1 chairperson as depicted in Chart Five. Half (13) of the 26 locals have no women office-bearers. Women thus only make up 6% of local office-bearers.

CHART FIVE



The chairperson is the most important office-bearer position in the local and women's representation is lowest in this position. Women are concentrated in leadership positions that are less influential, such as treasurer. There is a direct correlation between the level of influence of the office-bearer position and the concentration of women: the higher the influence, the more likely the position will be filled by a man; the lower the influence, the more likely it will be occupied by a woman.

CHART SIX

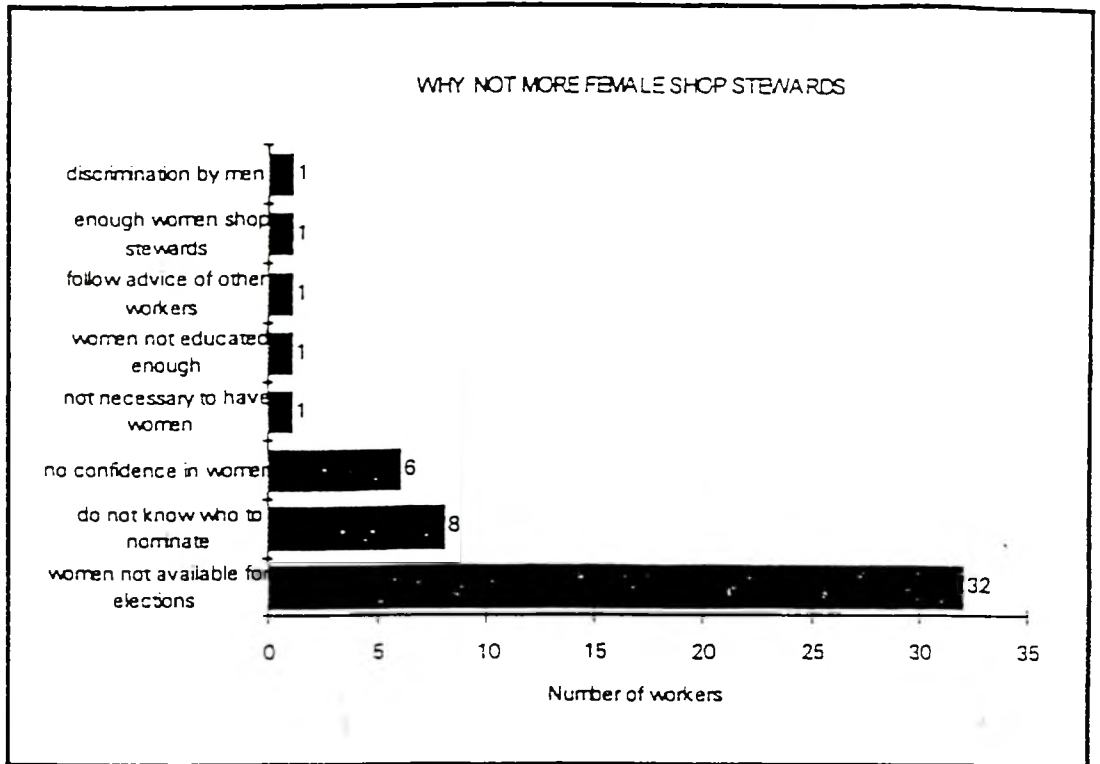


Chart Six reveals a staggering 32 women indicated there are not more female shop-stewards because women are not available for elections, while 8 workers indicated they do not know who to nominate. This means 40 of 51 workers do not vote for women not because they lack confidence in women, but because women are not available or they do not know who to nominate.

Why are women not available to stand as shop-stewards?

Women remain the primary childminder

Government's Green Paper on Minimum Standards suggests 3 days parental leave and is an important policy proposal to facilitate the sharing of childcare responsibilities by men. However, even though the need for both parents to be responsible for childcare has been an ongoing demand by the women's movement, in practice, women remain the primary childminders.

Increase in female-headed families

Increasingly single women raise their children without the presence of a partner. According to the 1994 World Bank-SALDRU Report, 26% of South African households are headed by single women. 'Single' women are composed of divorcees, unmarried and separated women.

negotiated the establishment of childcare facilities at the workplace. The NALEDI childcare research report (Naidoo, Nyman and Caga, 1996) was commissioned by SACCAWU to assist affiliates to negotiate childcare agreements with employers.

Another aspect of women's family responsibility is its role in the oppression of women. Research has revealed the patriarchal family plays a pivotal role in reinforcing women's oppression. Indeed, in researching women's struggles in the family, Campbell demonstrates that many women maintain and reinforce their own oppression. For example, women of single female headed families interviewed stated that only men could discipline their children. Certain abused women agreed they deserved to be abused by their partners. Linked to this, many women did not acknowledge their own oppression. (Campbell, 1990) The acceptance by many women of their oppression at home means they, like their male counterparts, take these attitudes onto the factory floor.

Nature of shop-steward work

Less time because of family responsibilities

The extensive responsibilities of a shop-steward are a big deterrent to women who already have to combine their homework with a job. The duties of a shop-steward include attending to shopfloor grievances and disciplinary inquiries, calling shopfloor union meetings, participating in wage negotiations, strike-handling and case handling. Shop-stewards have to attend a wide range of meetings with other shop-stewards, the company, the union and COSATU. Most of these meetings are held after working hours, both during the week and over week-ends.

Shop-stewards' wide range of responsibilities inevitably impinge on their family lives. However, male shop-stewards are in a better position than women to combine their family lives with their union work. The Pityana and Orkin survey indicated that 53% of the male shop-stewards interviewed had their wives do the cleaning and household chores while 14% had a relative do so. (Pityana and Orkin, 1992) In comparison, 51% of women shopstewards did the cleaning and household chores themselves.

Research conducted in 1992 amongst COSATU shop-stewards (40 women and 4 men), identified the following problems:

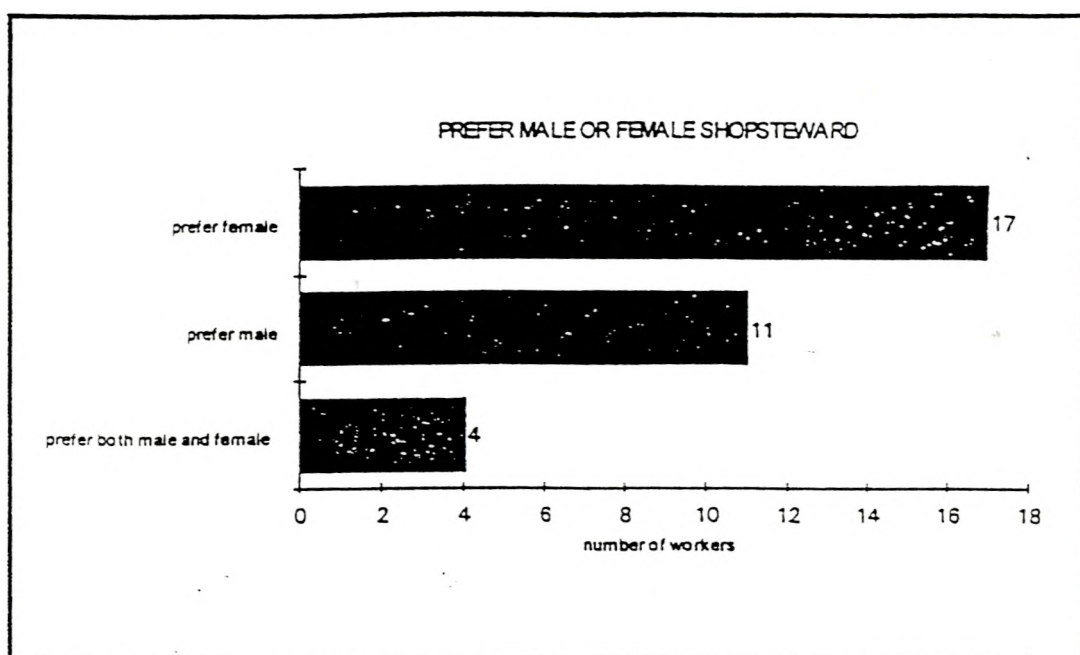
- trying to balance the needs of home life and union life;
- having to choose between a partner and union work;
- educating men about the importance of women's involvement in union work;
- finding themselves in service jobs in the unions;
- not being taken seriously by workers and male comrades;
- sexual harassment by male comrades in the unions;
- finding themselves trapped in lower leadership positions where their work is not acknowledged;
- building up the confidence to be leaders. (Lacom et al, 1992)

other women is more complex. For example one interviewer stated that women do not stand for leadership positions because:

The reason why there are such few women leaders is because a leader is elected by the people. People still have more confidence in men than women. They still think that women are not equal to men for leadership positions.

Chart Eight discloses results from the SACCAWU survey where female workers' indicated their preference for male or female shop-stewards.

CHART EIGHT



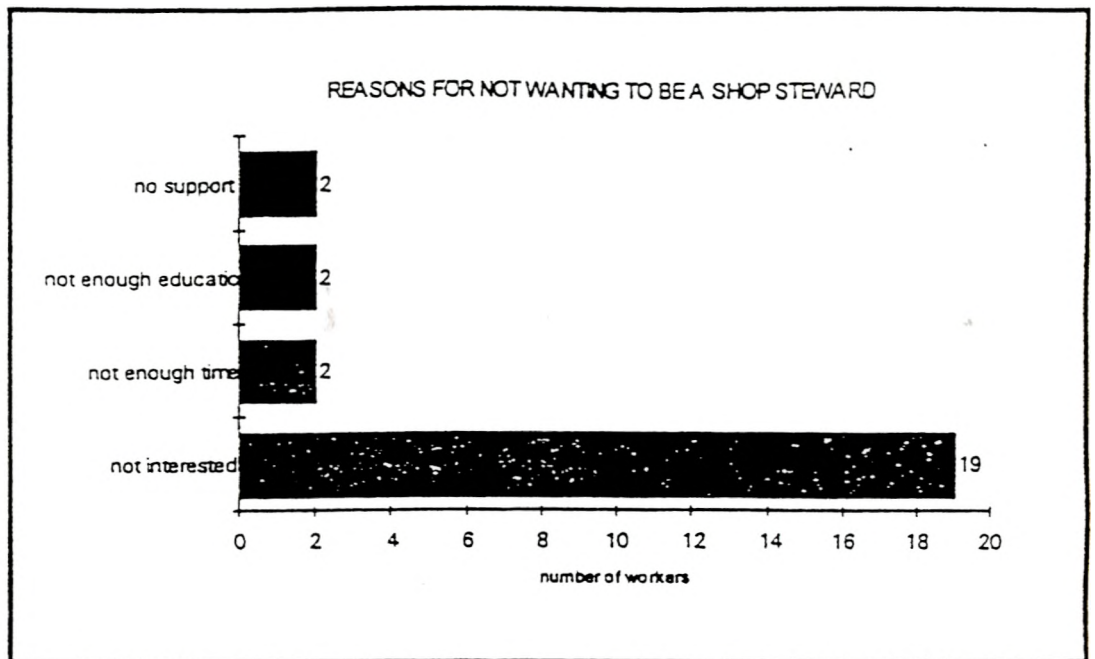
An unexpected result is the stark gender preference indicated by workers as only 4 workers indicated a 'gender neutral' response. The high preference for a male shop-steward is surprising given that both the interviewees and interviewers were female and that only 30% of workers are male. It is also necessary to take into account a 'lie factor' in that workers could have been sensitive to giving a 'politically correct' response in stating their preference for a female shop-steward. This points towards probably a higher than stated preference for a male shop-steward.

On the other hand, the majority preference for a female shop-steward does not explain why there is such a low level of female shop-stewards. In other words, why do workers not vote for female shop-stewards if a majority prefer female shop-stewards to male shop-stewards? This contradiction is reinforced by most women indicating that women are better shop-stewards than men, as reflected in Chart Nine.

Also workers regard the position of shop-steward as important. Literacy counts. You are expected to take notes. You can find that there is a strong woman, but she is not literate. For example there was a strong woman, we elected her, In one shop-steward meeting she said she wants to resign. She said she cannot read, write or speak English. She said she needs an interpreter and it makes her weak in the eyes of management. The nature of education does not necessarily mean formal education. In many cases women's level of formal education is indeed higher than that of men.

Chart Ten indicates the reasons stated by SACCAWU workers for not wanting to be shop-stewards.

CHART TEN



It is revealing that only 2 female workers advanced lack of education as an obstacle to becoming shop-stewards. A possible reason for this low number is that workers interpreted education to mean formal school education, where there is a negligible gap in school education between men and women. It is therefore evident that women have the same abilities in terms of literacy and numeracy as men to fulfill the functions as a shop-steward.

A compelling response is the high number of workers (19) who simply indicated that they were not interested in becoming a shop-steward. Likely explanations for this response are women's lack of interest in union activities and their own lack of confidence that they translate into 'not being interested'. It is therefore necessary to create the conditions in the union that encourage women to stand as shop-stewards.

Conditions under which elections take place

An important area that needs addressing are the conditions under which shop-steward elections take place. Union officials conducting the elections play an important agitational role in advising workers of the characteristics a shop-steward should have. A key consideration should be whether union officials are gender sensitive. If this is the case, s/he should stress the importance of nominating and electing female shop-stewards. As this is not the likely situation, gender-sensitive education should target shop-steward elections specifically. In addition, the employment of female union organisers should be prioritised. This is an area where the federation and affiliates can make an immediate impact.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment has been listed as a hidden problem in COSATU. Yet, no research has been done on the extent of sexual harassment and its impact on women in the federation or the affiliates. Furthermore, harassed workers are reluctant to report cases. COSATU was however central in establishing the Sexual Harassment and Education Project (SHEP). SHEP's work primarily involves providing assistance to harassed workers and holding education programmes.

The SACCAWU and SADTU surveys revealed that only 2% of respondents regarded sexual harassment as an obstacle to being a shop-steward. The low result can be attributed to the limitations of the questionnaire which did not allow for probing. During the interviews sexual harassment was stated as a problem by a union official:

We do not have proof that sexual harassment is a factor. However, existing shop-stewards have had problems with sexual harassment. The problem arises when a female shop-steward goes out with a male organiser or shop-steward and she gets ditched - as normally she is one of many women. This is an abuse of power. So not regarded as sexual harassment but as abuse of power: because of the man's status he gets sexual favours. Women however voluntarily agree to the relationship.

An ex-SACCAWU shop-steward gave a similar interpretation:

Sexual harassment demoralises women from being elected into positions. As a new shop-steward you get elected. As there is a new face (male) officials target women. When the woman get dumped they get demoralised. In that way they get demoralised and we loose good shop-stewards.

Although the impact of sexual harassment is still uncertain, it is clear that it does exist. COSATU has adopted a Code of Conduct and Procedure on Sexual Harassment for internal application. The Code is a sound starting point to create the conditions to make sexual harassment an organisational and not a private issue. It will be necessary to run education programmes on the Code's content to encourage workers to report cases of sexual harassment.

CHART TWELVE

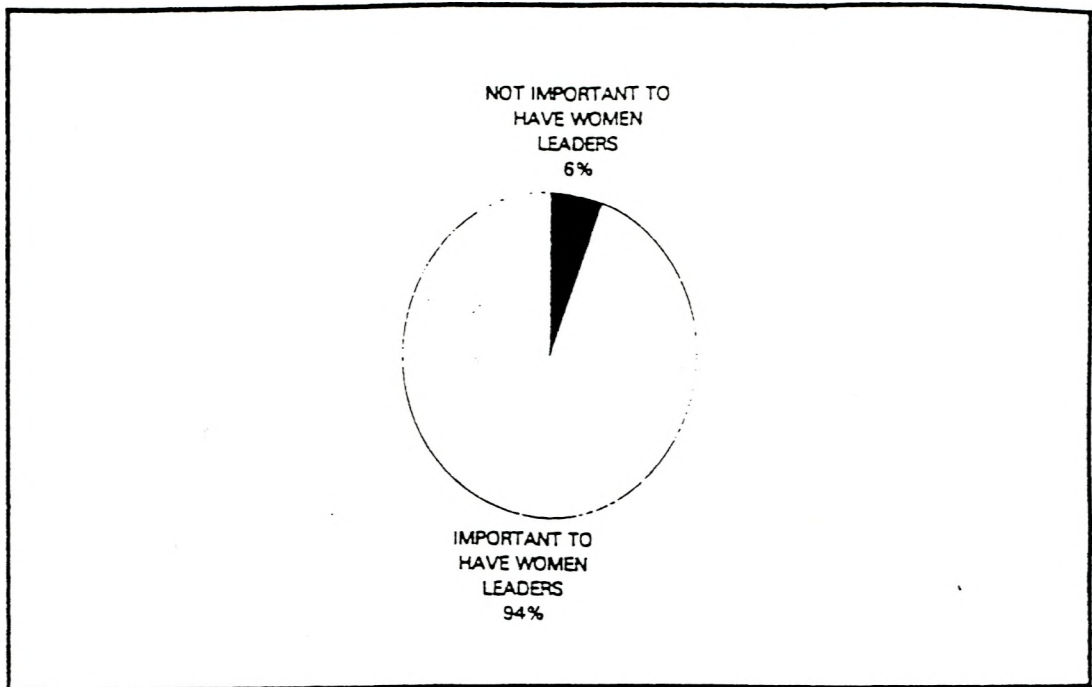


Chart Twelve reinforces the centrality of having women leaders: 94% stated that it is important to have women leaders. The significance workers attach to women leaders is based on the role they see women leaders playing in fighting for their rights as reflected in Chart Thirteen.

CHART THIRTEEN

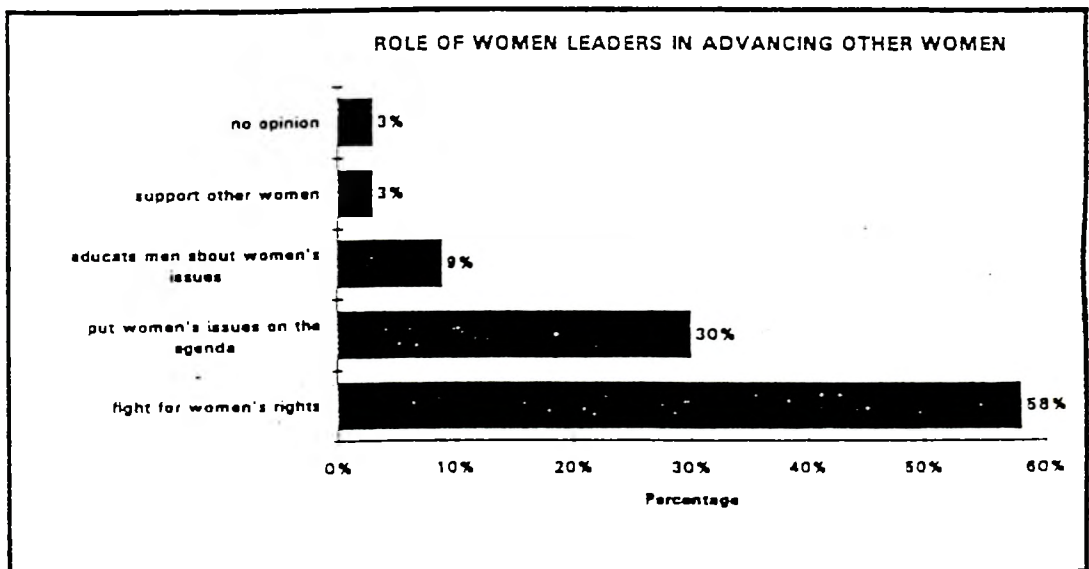


Chart Thirteen discloses that 58% of workers believe women leaders should fight for women's rights while 30% believe women leaders should put women's issues on the union's agenda. This means by far the majority of workers hold the opinion that women leaders should play a special role in advancing the interests of other women.

CHART FOURTEEN

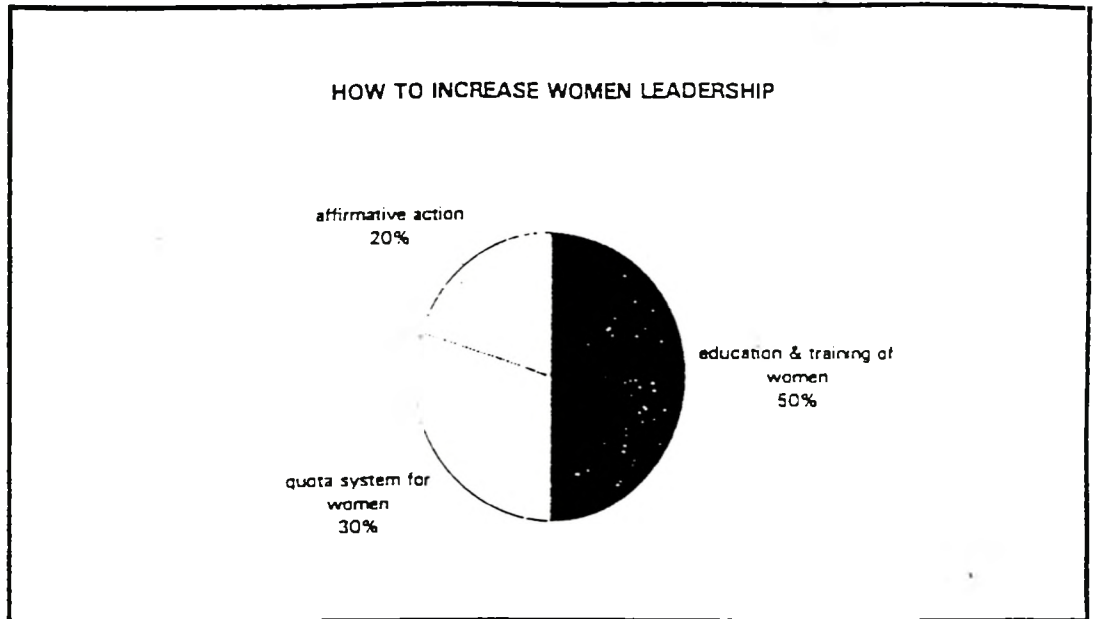


Chart Fourteen reveals 50% of workers surveyed are of the opinion that women leadership can be increased through education and training while 30% support the quota system and the remaining 20% support affirmative action. Women's level of support for the quota system is quite high as it is the most extreme form of affirmative action.

Workers' high degree of support for education and training seems to contradict their low support for education and training as an obstacle to electing women. A possible explanation is that women are not referring to formal education, but to the organisation linking affirmative action to informal education and training. In other words, workers view the different mechanisms as a package that complement one another.

The position is supported by an ex-SACCAWU shop-steward:

I agree with the quota system. Once it is compulsory, the federation will see to it that they are trained. Otherwise nothing binds it. If the quota system is implemented it will bind the federation....Education is important because we want women to have a real say - not just rubber stamps.

It seems in addition to gender-sensitive education and training for women, leadership education and training is required to equip women to lead. Furthermore leadership training will demystify the job of a leader and demonstrate to women that they have the talents and ability to lead.

PART SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS

Part seven outlines the following key recommendations:

- Childcare facilities;
- Quota system;
- Education and training;
- Employment of female union organisers;
- Popularise Sexual Harassment Code of Conduct.

Childcare facilities

COSATU should prioritise the negotiation of childcare facilities at the workplace and at all COSATU meetings to ensure women's full participation. As these recommendations are long-standing COSATU resolutions, the COSATU CEC should play a more active monitoring role and request report backs from affiliates on the state of childcare negotiations.

Quota system

COSATU should consider the implementation of a quota system at federation and affiliate level. The quota system should set certain targets for representation, e.g. 36% representation of women in leadership positions or representation in the federation in proportion to the number of women in an affiliate. Such a quota system should be phased in over a period of time (e.g. three years) to ensure the preparation and availability of women for those positions.

Education and training

Education is necessary to build prospective women leaders' confidence to stand for leadership positions. The nature of education should involve leadership skills and organisational issues. COSATU at federation level should continue with its trend of integrating gender issues into its education programmes. But the approach should be duplicated at affiliate level.

Employment of female union organisers

COSATU should evaluate its employment practices to ensure that more women are employed as organisers and negotiators and not only as administrators. Recruitment and selection practices should prioritise the employment of women. This recommendation is achievable as the unions have discretion in hiring organisers and negotiators, and filling such positions is not subject to the vagaries of elections and women's reluctance to stand as leaders.

Popularise Sexual Harassment Code of Conduct

The Code should be popularised in education programmes so that workers can identify and oppose sexual harassment.

SALHA-22a! COSATU 1996

**COSATU DISCUSSION PAPER
A PROGRAMME FOR THE ALLIANCE**

PREPARED FOR EXCO

22, 23 NOVEMBER 1996

PROCESSED

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This discussion paper arises out of the last Executive discussion on the Alliance, which resolved that the Alliance, and therefore a way forward for the Alliance, is not based on meetings or persons, but on a concrete programme. The meeting resolved that COSATU should develop proposals for what it believes should be an Alliance programme - first for internal discussions and later for broad debate in the Alliance. This should include concrete implementation of RDP objectives, relationship and the role of the Alliance in governance and policy formulation, mass mobilisation and building organisation.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE ALLIANCE

□.1 Without going into a detailed history, it is useful to recap how we came to be in Alliance with the African National Congress and SA Communist Party, and to share a common programme of action.

□.□ Despite not being formally part of the Congress movement at its birth in 1985, COSATU developed a close association with the Congress movement from its inception. Conditions in the country dictated the need to go beyond bread and butter issues to embrace national and class struggle. This perspective was formally endorsed with COSATU's adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1987. Even before 1987 COSATU's outlook was based on the combination of organisational, political and economical issues rooted within the congress movement

□.3 In 1991, after the unbanning of the liberation movement, COSATU's Fourth National Congress resolved that the Federation should join the ANC and SACP in alliance in place of SACTU, thus becoming part of the Tripartite Alliance as we know it today. This was consciously based on the view that COSATU's alliance with the SACP and ANC would be the motive force for national liberation, democratisation and transformation at the political and socio-economic level.

□.4 It has always been understood that the Alliance consists of independent organisations with independent structures for mandating and decision making. These independent organisations agreed nonetheless to co-operate, consult and take joint decisions on collective action for the emancipation of our people.

□.5 We agreed that the Alliance would be based on a programme which would be evaluated and assessed from time to time. Further that it may need to be redefined taking into account the prevailing objective conditions. We agreed to build the ANC and SACP and to encourage workers to join.

□.6 In the pre-election period, the Alliance consulted one another on major issues. A number of summits were held to look at positions on negotiations, mobilisation in support thereof, joint struggle on VAT, and the elections. Finally, we developed the RDP, not only as an election platform, but as a programme designed to achieve the objective of transforming our society to meet the social and economic needs of our people.

3. AFTER THE 1994 ELECTIONS

3.1 Since 1994, there have been very few substantial meetings of the Alliance. Even those that have taken place have been ad hoc, sporadic or crisis meetings. Further, issues agreed at those meetings have largely not been followed through. In early 1995, COSATU raised the need to develop an Alliance economic strategy to achieve RDP goals. A committee to look at these matters comprising of among others comrades Alec, Jay, Gwede and Jeremy was established. They were also supposed to look at the constraints and the debt we inherited, and how they could be overcome. No report was forthcoming.

3.□ The above notwithstanding, the Alliance never sat down to systematically look at the challenges of the transition and formulate a strategy, and what role our various formations should play in that strategy. Nor was this done for people who are in parliament, government, various formations outside of government, and the state sector. No programme was formulated for engagement of the masses. To this date the masses largely remain spectators in

the theatre of the struggle for transformation. During negotiations on the LRA and the Constitution, several Alliance meetings were held. Indeed it was possible to as far as possible speak with one voice on these matters. Even our meeting with employers were bilaterals between us as an Alliance and them. This enabled us to ward off any attack on the alliance. We were also sending one message to our people on this issue.

3.3 Large numbers of COSATU and Alliance activists were deployed in parliament, government, and other structures, including provinces and locally. Yet no assessment was made of the impact of this for organisation, and a systematic approach to re deployment. More comrades have since been re-deployed in the public service, parastatals and the private sector

4. CURRENT SITUATION

This paper will not attempt to engage in a detailed analysis of the current conjuncture or balance of forces. Rather we will focus on the way in which the Alliance and democratic government have related to the processes of political and economic transformation. What follows are broad indicators of some of the main features affecting Alliance functioning at various levels.

Political

4.1 We have a new political situation, with legitimate government and parliament. There is however no programme, or yard stick that is being used to guide and measure success. We have not been able to use organisational and political space to alter the power balance at a socio-economic level. Of course there has been good legislation that emerged from parliament, with COSATU's participation. These include the LRA, health and safety in mines, abortion, schools bill, the constitution etc. There was however no prior strategic planning. There has been no systematic Alliance approach to the development of policy. We largely react to policies as they come out of the Ministries. We have struggled to find agreement on policies in a number of areas: housing, transport, the economy etc. We have depended on what the view of a particular individual in government is, rather than what the position is of the organisation as a whole. In actual fact progressive policies can easily be thwarted by parties to the Alliance as no strategic vision largely shared by all exist.

Socio - economic

4.□ This area has been the most difficult one for the Alliance. As mentioned earlier an Alliance committee formed to deal with priorities, perceived constraints and how they could be resolved, has produced no report as yet. In fact the committee does not exist any longer. There is no single view of how to implement the RDP. Positions emerging from the government on privatisation and the famous GEAR have been presented to the Alliance as a fait accompli. Those who hold a different view have been told in no uncertain terms that the strategy is cast in stone. This was a clear case of policy driven by panic - due to the fall of the Rand and pressure from the amorphous market - to borrow but a phrase from comrade Trevor Manuel. No one except some in government from the ranks of the movement were involved in its formulation, only orthodox economists from the old order, IMF and World Bank. There has been pressure put on the government by both local and international business, and the media, to adopt economic policies in direct contradiction to those they were mandated to implement. The movement seems to be paralysed by the threat of globalisation and the investment strike of business. The defeatist view that the balance of forces are not in our favour and that we therefore have to give in to "the market" appears to have taken hold. This static analysis largely ignores the significance of access to state power, and the potential of organisation, using the new political space, to tilt the balance of forces. The economy in the new South Africa continues to largely represent what it was in 1993, except that there is some growth (jobless) and a few black faces and companies that participate in it. Otherwise it is business as usual.

Organisational

4.3 There is general demobilisation of our people. Most activists are no more sure of what the strategic objectives are. There is very little participation and involvement in decision making. ANC structures have no programme in which their members participate. Many see actions by COSATU, students and SANCO in the same light as those of right-wing elements - counter revolutionary. The Alliance itself has no programme except the oft cited RDP which means many things to different people.

Our structures are either weak or not functioning at various levels. Obviously this differs from area to area. There are locals and regions where regular meetings, for consultations or

action take place from time to time. At Provincial level there is also a reluctance to focus on issues of governance.

5. LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION

Marx: 'we change the world, but not under conditions of our own choosing.'

5.1 This statement is true of our situation

We face a situation in South Africa today where we are attempting to transform our country. Yet we face various constraints, which we did not choose. Neither are they of our own making. They have been thrust upon us by history.

These include:

5.1.1 Firstly, the **legacy of apartheid**: A long catalogue which includes mismanagement of our economy, the debt burden, destruction of our human resources, a deformed public sector, vast unemployment and poverty, concentration of ownership in the hands of the conglomerates, marginalisation of the majority from economic activity, massive income and social inequalities - the list goes on.

5.1.□ Secondly, the **new world situation** into which our democracy has been born.

Politically, this situation has been characterised as a unipolar one (one power bloc) in which there is no serious alternative to the power wielded by the G7 countries, and their international financial and trade institutions. Economically, the process of globalisation has trampled the sovereignty of nation states. Capital has unprecedented mobility, aided by new technology and the new information age. The world economy has been organised into powerful trading blocs. We are told that those who don't play by the rules of the new game, will be forever marginalised and fall by the wayside.

5.□ The above presents a challenge to ourselves. While we inherited enormous problems, the elements are present for us to perform our own 'social miracle' comparable to post-war Europe, the Asian Tigers, and some aspects of the Socialist advances of the □0th century. In comparative historical terms, the problems we face are not overwhelmingly larger than the societies which managed major reconstruction efforts, on a scale even larger than we are attempting. Although conditions are changing, it is a myth to claim, historically, that this epoch is unique, and that no other society has had to face problems on the scale we are confronting, or that they didn't have to fight to push back the barriers of 'the possible'.

5.3 As with all other societies facing reconstruction challenges, the critical factor in our situation will be our ability to mobilise the masses in support of the programme- to unleash huge national energies to achieve what would normally not be possible. In our view the objective basis has been laid, over the past few decades, for this scenario to unfold. Leaving aside for the moment very real problems we have inherited, our rich history of struggle has resulted in one of the most politicised and conscious mass movements, rooted in a strongly organised working class.

5.4 The organisation of the main mass formations under the leadership of the Alliance has catapulted a progressive peoples government into power on the basis of an overwhelming popular mandate, despite the history of apartheid division, and vilification of the liberation movement. The huge majority (6□%) secured by the ANC is a luxury which ruling parties in most democracies are denied.

5.5 The major social forces have subscribed to a programme of transformation, which on paper at least was accepted by all parties and strata as the basis for change, and was the product of extensive discussion and mobilisation. The society has a strong tradition of an active progressive civil society, and the existence of various social institutions to structure their participation. Compared to other developing societies, the industrial base of the country, and the advanced organisation of workers into a progressive trade union movement, gives the progressive forces considerable strategic leverage.

5.6 On top of all this, South Africa has more potential international allies and goodwill than probably any other comparable struggle. It is mechanical to suggest that this has simply evaporated with democracy, and that we are now the same as any other country on the international stage. It is a myth perpetuated by the bourgeoisie and the media that after only a few months into a new democracy, the "honeymoon period" is over. This is aimed at agitation of the masses against the new order as well as driving us into a panic- hoping we will abandon mobilisation of the masses behind reconstruction and development

5.7 All these positive factors outlined above, while concrete and a legacy of our struggle, are at the same time *potentialities, which have to be harnessed to be fully realised.* Failure to do this can result in the squandering of the most important resource of the NDR: the unity, mobilisation, and consciousness of the people is not a given, but is constantly impacted on by changing conditions. The fragmentation and demoralisation we have begun to see should be sending very serious warning signals to the movement as a whole.

5.8 The question therefore arises: Is it possible, given our potential strengths, to achieve fundamental transformation under the constraints inherited from apartheid and imposed by the new world order?

5.9 Two dangers arise in answering this question. The first is falling into the trap of fatalism - passively accepting that these forces ranged against us are too powerful to counter and we must simply accept our fate. The second is that of triumphalism - pretending that our electoral triumph has wiped out these constraints - and that we can impose our agenda of change, without factoring these objective realities into our transformation equation.

The balance of forces

"The main motive forces of the democratic transformation are primarily represented by African workers and the African rural poor. These forces are also represented by black workers in general and the black middle strata. These are the forces which possess the best political and ideological potential to lead and defend the process of transformation... At the same time we must recognise the fact that there is social differentiation these black masses which at times will lead the various strata and classes to express different aspirations and pursue separate objectives. While continuing to strive to represent the black people as a whole, the movement must however ensure that, at all times, and in the first instance, it represents

the interests of the workers, rural masses and the middle strata, those who constitute the majority of the people of this country.” (Strategy and Tactics, ANC Conference December 1994)

5.10 What is the actual situation after more than two years of democratic government?

The power of the apartheid-era ruling class remains largely entrenched in critical areas of society: in the security forces, the media, the bureaucracy, and above all in the commanding heights of the economy. The alternative centre of power in society is our new democratic government, rooted in the Alliance of our leading mass democratic formations: the ANC, COSATU and the SACP. While the leading partner of the Alliance, the ANC, is in *office*, there are real questions, as the cliché goes, as to how far the democratic forces have taken *power*. The same questions have been raised on more than one occasion by both Comrades Thabo and Madiba. The programme of the democratic movement, the RDP, has been systematically undermined by a range of forces. The Government of National Unity, led by the ANC, has been subjected to intense pressures, both from other political parties, as well as other local and international forces, particularly business. This is not to discount the fact that significant advances have been made. Rather that the logic of transformation, as contained in the RDP, has been overpowered by that of the forces attempting to halt transformation.

5.11 When we drew up the RDP, and mobilised for democratic elections, we anticipated in broad terms many of these developments. In a COSATU Discussion Paper adopted by the Executive in early 1994 we stated:

*“There are many contradictions that will face us. The ANC will be subjected to a lot of demands by all sorts of interest groups. Our membership will expect us to ensure a change in the conditions of work and living standards. Employers will expect the ANC to confront us on issues such as productivity, minimum wage, and to accept wage restraint. The ANC as the government of the day will have to concern itself with catering for the needs of society as a whole, including our class enemies...Senior ANC personnel in government will find themselves frustrated, undermined and blocked by the large bureaucracy they will inherit from the apartheid era... (but) There is no iron law which says that the new governing stratum will have to sell out, will have to become bureaucratised and embourgoised. Quite apart from their subjective strengths and weaknesses, the new ANC stratum will face contradictory strategic and class pulls and inclinations. **Which of the different tendencies will emerge as dominant ...will be a function of strategic clarity on our part, struggle and the relative balance of class forces within the broader ANC-led Alliance.**”*

5.1□ So we clearly understood that the democratic project would be contested by various class forces. COSATU must therefore have also believed that the democratic forces had the potential strength to isolate, divide and outmanoeuvre these forces. Otherwise we would not have ploughed huge resources and energies into constructing the RDP, and fighting the elections. Above all we have always believed that our agenda, if properly followed will emerge as the victor with all the forces for social transformation and democracy squarely behind it.

5.13 The ANC has taken the same view: *“Each component of the Alliance has a responsibility to organise and mobilise its social base and any other forces allied to it, for the defence of the democratic revolution, the implementation of the RDP and the mobilisation of the people as a whole for their constructive engagement in the process of the fundamental transformation of the country”*. (Strategy and Tactics, ANC Conference December 1994)

5.14 It is a law of physics that a vector of a given force will propel an object in a particular direction, unless a countervailing force of even greater power is brought to bear on that object from the opposite direction. In our case the power of the masses concentrated in the Alliance is the main countervailing force, to those forces attempting to divert the state off the path of fundamental transformation. Conversely, a failure of the Alliance to act as an effective vehicle to drive transformation will result in the fledgling democracy being a captive of these backward forces. To a certain extent, if we do a ruthless audit of our performance over the last □ years, this is what has already begun to happen.

5.15 Instead of the Alliance being the engine for transformation, policy has in many instances been driven by the old bureaucracy, business advisers, economists from the Reserve Bank, the World Bank etc. We seem to have ditched the researchers and advisers who have served the democratic movement. Further, instead of mass mobilisation being seen as a vital force for driving transformation, we have reduced mass involvement to appeals for payment of rents and services, and/or pleas to understand that we face ‘major constraints’.

5.16 The masses have not disappeared from the political equation. Rather, demobilisation and demoralisation has taken place, particularly of activists and leadership. This has led to an undermining of the discipline and ethic which characterised previous years. With

demoralisation, the individual struggle for self-enrichment has begun to take hold, in the absence of any vision of collective advancement. Equating the National Democratic Revolution, as is beginning to happen, with the creation of a 'patriotic (black) bourgeoisie', is tantamount to robbing the NDR of its transformational character, and going for the caricature of "Uhuru" which our movement has always been so critical of. This does not in anyway deny the need to deracialise the economy. It however means that it must be part of our national and class struggle in which transformation is paramount as opposed to concentrating on the success of a few individuals and then parade them as a success of 'black economic empowerment' while the majority of blacks remain in poverty.

5.17 *"How committed is the corporate community in this country? How committed is it to the rebuilding of South Africa...The South African Foundation gave us their strategy document ... it says absolutely nothing about what business itself commits itself to in order to achieve this 'growth for all.' (Thabo Mbeki- Millennium Magazine, 1996)*

Unlike other countries facing fascism or war, South Africa has never had a 'patriotic bourgeoisie'. Our national struggle has been led by working class and allied forces. The bourgeoisie in our country have always benefited directly from Apartheid and the status quo. Their interest in profits, also in so far as they accrue from the economic power relations inherited from apartheid, has led to a resistance to fundamental national transformation. Talk of a 'patriotic bourgeoisie' is therefore misleading, even if it refers to the class mobility of black individuals. Economic empowerment of the black majority, and the shifting of the focus of economic power, goes way beyond the co-option of individual black entrepreneurs into the structures of economic power (hitherto exclusively occupied by whites).

5.18 The lack of leadership from the democratic movement has begun to lead to disillusionment, de politicisation and alienation from 'politics' amongst ordinary people. The lack of a people-driven transformation, expressed in this phenomenon of demobilisation, in turn undermines the cohesion and power of our organisations, and their ability to intervene decisively in the transformation equation. These are the same people who understood the problems of apartheid and the need to crush it. Yet they seem to have lost an interest in what should replace it. It is time for the movement to problematise the transformation process.

5.19 Obsession with the constraints and problems, however, mustn't become the rationale for our political assessment. 'BALANCE of FORCES' precisely implies that there are two sides to the political equation. Remove the masses, the progressive forces for change, from your calculation, and the power of the reactionary forces becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Just as ignoring the power of the forces of reaction constitutes triumphalism, removing the forces for change from the equation is surrender and defeatism. For those who ignore the role of the masses in change, any serious attempt in the movement to challenge the remaining centres of apartheid power become characterised as 'opportunist', 'adventurist', and ultimately 'counter-revolutionary'. This defeatist approach would never have allowed us to overcome the huge obstacles constructed by the apartheid state, with its international allies.

5.20 Giving in to the blackmail of reactionary forces and the market creates a situation which is even more difficult to control, as we progressively give away our ability to determine the agenda of change. This has been clearly seen on the economic policy front, with exchange controls, monetary policy and so on. Decisive action, even by authoritarian regimes in South East Asia was crucial in disciplining capital in most countries undergoing reconstruction. Ironically, certain sections of capital would over time become more favourably disposed to a democratic state taking decisive transformatory actions, because those actions, in the short to medium term would create conditions for rapid and sustainable growth. In this respect we need to distinguish between finance capital and those elements of the conglomerates wanting to move their money out, and sections of manufacturing and international capital interested in long-term investment. We need to look at how to isolate elements of the latter from the anti-transformation agenda of the former.

How do we characterise this phase of our struggle?

5.21 It is probably true to say that we are faced with a peculiar situation similar to "dual power", where the new democratic government, while fully legitimate, popular, and apparently in full control, neither has its hands decisively on all the tillers of state power- including the security forces, bureaucracy, parastatals, reserve bank, judiciary etc.- nor has it been able to strategically direct the economy of the country. While this is not to suggest the classic scenario of a counter-revolutionary force, directly contesting state power in an open and organised sense, it does convey the extent to which the government has been confined to limited areas of governance. This is exacerbated by the constant attempt in the international

context, to chip away at the sovereignty of government, and the constant onslaught particularly by the financial markets, to pressurise government to adopt the economic policies desired by them. The call for blind adherence to privatisation, reduced budget deficit for its own sake, immediate removal of exchange controls are part of an attempt to weaken and ultimately remove the role of the state in the economy.

5.□□ This sense of 'dual power' is important in characterising the current situation, because it helps to convey the strategic moment in which we find ourselves: the existence of a popular bloc, with its representatives in government, parliament and other institutions, pitted against a minority bloc, attempting to use its access to economic and other power to abort the NDR. Left alone they will do everything to preserve the privileges acquired during years of apartheid. Where they embrace the need for change, they would want it to happen at the pace of the slowest and conservative white elements. The debate is not about whether we are in the phase of completing the struggle for socialism or national democracy. The question is whether, having successfully held democratic elections, we are able to seriously enter into the task of **beginning** to decisively transform our country in a manner which while difficult and challenging, will ensure the success of the NDR.

5.□3 This moment of transition- crudely put, either moving forward to a fundamental transformation, or backwards to the consolidation of minority privilege, albeit with new features- is a **historical moment**. While it is a process, in a dynamic and shifting terrain, it is necessarily a historic moment which can't last indefinitely. Either of the two great forces or blocs outlined above, will seize the initiative to lead and direct society. This poses a challenge to the Alliance, government, members of parliament, and progressive civil society to take our fate into our own hands.

5.□4 This implies two things: firstly, the need for a popular **programme**, which is implementable, broadly supported, and able to achieve the social hegemony required to break this deadlock (or unstable equilibrium) and shift the power balance qualitatively in our favour. Secondly, the **political will**, and organisational ability to drive this programme.

Can we present a hegemonic alternative to lead society?

5.□5 The great Italian revolutionary Gramsci used the concept of 'hegemony' to describe the process whereby a particular class in society successfully puts forward its programme for adoption by society as a whole. This, of course, is the terrain *par excellence* for struggle, and is not the preserve of the popular forces. In fact the experience of advanced capitalism has been one of the ruling class attempting to perfect its hegemony over society. The RDP was an extremely powerful intervention by the democratic forces in our country to assert their hegemony.

5.□6 But, as we have seen in recent months, this terrain is dynamic and ever-shifting. Failure to implement your programme, for whatever reason, and failure to mobilise the people in defense of that programme, can see a powerful hegemonic alternative disintegrate in a relatively short space of time. History is littered with examples of revolutions which have failed on this basis. On the one side, if people own the programme, and appreciate the difficulties being faced, they are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to defend it, as in Cuba. On the other, if people become convinced that the programme is not workable, and are not prepared to accept the implications of fighting counter-revolution, they will abandon it- as we saw in Nicaragua.

5.□7 There is a concerted attempt to impose capital's agenda on society as the only feasible alternative to social and economic transformation. Even amongst those who don't like it, there is the argument that in this era of globalisation, trade blocs, the new information technology, the power of multilateral institutions etc we have to accept the limitations which this international environment imposes on us. After all, who are we, a relatively small power on the world stage, to resist this? A slogan has been coined by a multinational company in South Africa to capture this sense of 'the end of history'. This is the 'TINA' scenario, which stands for "There Is No Alternative"□ (We need to counterpose this with a 'T□EBA ' scenario - **There □as To Be An Alternative□**)

5.□8 In the context of this powerful line, which is constantly churned out by the media, business, and other institutions, it is critical that we as a movement have a rigorous and coherent platform which :

- shows that the prescriptions of capital's agenda are disastrous not only in our country, but have also failed in many other countries ;
- that we **have** an alternative, which is serious, well thought out, and viable in the South African context ;and
- that we won't be blackmailed into abandoning this programme.
- That we are capable of mobilising our people behind political and social transformation as the main actors in the theatre of struggle for social emancipation.

5.□9 There is nothing inherently wrong in the RDP which suggests that it was an inappropriate or unrealistic programme.

Why then is it having such difficulty?

- there has been no clear programme for its comprehensive implementation
- no mass involvement in driving and developing such a programme of implementation
- in the absence of these factors, space has opened up for capital's agenda to seize the initiative

5.30 Even within the democratic movement, there is a tendency to believe, that in current global realities, the RDP programme is not workable, in its current form. Therefore some believe that Gear will be more effective, given the constraints, in reaching the same objectives. It is therefore not a question of reinventing the RDP, but demonstrating that we have a concrete, achievable programme to implement it and a programme to involve the masses in driving this process. This is not something which can be achieved through 'RDP forums' alone, which are marginalised from the centre of decision-making. If the Alliance is to drive this process both democratic government, and progressive civil society must be fully involved.

Re galvanising the MDM

5.31 Concentration on the Alliance to exclusively drive the transformation process would be a serious error. The ANC is heavily taxed by the pressures of governance, and all the

organisational tensions and problems this has thrown up. On the other side COSATU only represents one, albeit critical, mass constituency. COSATU has to concentrate its efforts not only the challenges of the transition but also has to ensure that the shop floor is on board its activities. We have to have enough cadres to deal with micro issues and maintain a vibrant organisation. The SACP is itself grappling with defining its role during this period. It also has to define how those of our organisations that are committed to socialism play their role today rather than tomorrow. A broad front of MDM forces for transformation, transforming our mass organisations into a different type of vehicle than that used to destroy apartheid, is a basic necessity. In this instance the Alliance needs to have a strategic open and frank discussion with SANCO. This should focus on weaknesses and potential strengths; our vision of a civic movement and its role in a democracy, relationship to the ANC and to the government. This may help transform it from an activist based organisation to a truly mass and representative civic movement in which residents regardless of political persuasion play a role.

5.3 □ Continued fragmentation of MDM forces will have a number of serious consequences: apart from weakening the power of the peoples bloc, it will also entrench the frustration and alienation of constituencies which were historically united around the MDM programme. The emergence of petty conflicts, sectarian approaches, as well as a failure to adjust to the new period in which we find ourselves, are all a function of the isolation of a number of these constituencies. Yet governments programmes for transformation in health, land, education, local government, housing and other critical areas will depend critically on the active involvement and mobilisation of these constituencies. The reality is that we have totally failed as an Alliance to consolidate MDM organisations as a meaningful united force in society since the elections. This must be rectified. This doesn't mean the formation of new structures, but the development of an effective programme to bring our organisations on board.

6. TRADE UNIONS AND THE ALLIANCE

"No leader of any moral authority could work with an ally when we were all alone, under extremely difficult conditions, and on the verge of victory, be advised by our former

enemies, that we should dispense with our allies. To try to sell us that idea, means that those who are saying so have no morals. They mean that they can work with an ally for a particular objective and on the eve of obtaining that objective, they take advice from their former enemies. I said that I would never do that... We have won the elections as a result of the sweat and blood of the tripartite alliance. That alliance must go on. But that does not mean that Cosatu and the SACP are subservient to the ANC. No. That's why you have criticised us in the past... We want that, because when we face any issue we want the advice of strong, independent allies who can say to us "Now you are right", and who can say to us, "Now you are wrong." That is why we have been so strong. We've been working with strong, independent organisations that are self- confident, fearless, and who can express their views even when those views clash with ours." (President Mandela, 'Shop Steward' May 1996)

6.1. Some, in the trade union movement, who reject the defeatist approach which argues that we are powerless to deal with the forces of reaction, may write off the entire movement as having abandoned the NDR. They may therefore conclude that the Alliance itself is no longer a viable vehicle for transformation. This would be mistaken at a number of levels:

- by generalising a strand of thought which at this stage only represents one perspective, or elements of a perspective in the movement;
- by abandoning the most powerful vehicle for transformation to other forces in society;
- by abandoning the masses, who remain convinced that the Alliance represents their strongest hope of implementing a programme for fundamental change.
- by suggesting that the trade unions themselves are inherently progressive or socialist, and ignoring the fact that the unions are subject to both progressive and reactionary tendencies.
- Some would even want to de-link the struggle for socialism from that of the liberation of our people and defending and consolidating the current gains.

6.2 At the recent NUMSA Congress the GS Report outlined the two options being proposed for our relationship to the Alliance, and related issues, and posed some pertinent questions:

6.2.1 *"Option 1. the Alliance should be maintained*

6.2.2. *Option 2. the Alliance should be scrapped and a working class party put in its place.*

This (Option 2) was the resolution that we passed at our last Congress but was not passed by COSATU. Our main reason for passing this resolution was our fear that we would become a transmission belt for government.

6.2.3 *Let us detail the questions that we need to ask around these two positions:*

1. The Alliance should be maintained

do we need the Alliance?

what for?

is there a minimum programme we can unite around?

what are the contents of such a programme?

2. the Alliance should be scrapped and a working class party formed

what about existing political parties whose objectives and

ambitions claim to serve the working people?

why don't working people come closer to these political parties, why don't

working people join these political parties?

if Western Cape voters can't vote for a social democratic party like the ANC, what chance is there
of them voting for a working class party?

do we have the resources to build a general working class mass party?

Who are we fighting for and how should we fight?

6.2.4 *Our founding resolutions and aims and objectives talk of fighting for the working class as a whole. Who are we fighting for now? The organised workers or for the working class in general and the non-working poor?*

6.2.5 *Before April 27, 1994, progressive forces were united in fighting racism. We could not go wrong, the wider society could easily associate with our actions...*

6.2.6 *We are living in a liberal democracy. The emphasis is on conciliation, consensus, the "rainbow nation". Are our tools of militant mass action still the right ones or are they antagonising our allies and marginalising us as an elite?*

6.2.7 *Other labour movements faced with a liberal democracy have chosen one of the following:*

social contract/ consensus

creation of labour based political parties

class warfare - permanent opposition.

6.2.8 *What choice should we make? In making this choice we must decide what our*

role is as a trade union. Is it just narrow trade unionism where we fight for wages, conditions of employment, employment security for employed workers or are our responsibilities to the wider working class?

Socialism

6.2.9 As organised workers ... we have always cherished the idea of a socialist society. What do we mean by socialism? What outcome do we want to see? This outcome must be influenced by the objective conditions in this country – it is pointless having a set of objectives that cannot be realised because the economic and political conditions at the time make them impossible to realise.”

6.3 From the aforementioned it is clear that workers are themselves grappling with how to relate to the new changed situation. They would want to engage with the situation in a manner that makes yesterday, today and tomorrow to be relevant. They want to work with the ANC, but are not clear as to what that working relationship should be. How does it relate to their struggles-better conditions of employment, elimination of poverty and unemployment, socialism, etc. The answer lies in a shared vision in which the working class and their formations are all involved. This will allow us to reflect on our own shopfloor struggles, locate them within the broader struggle, and together with the rest of society join hands in defending and consolidating democracy.

6.4 More engagement will need to take place between COSATU and the SACP. For while COSATU has a vision that extends beyond the shopfloor, it needs a revolutionary working class party to spearhead a working class programme. This will help to locate the struggle for socialism in the current struggles.

6.5 In the absence of a shared strategic vision, and joint programme, between the trade union movement and our Alliance partners, COSATU faces the danger of becoming increasingly reactive, and defensive in its approach. As our broad social role becomes increasingly difficult to sustain, we would face the danger of isolation and a retreat into narrow economism. Any attempt to play the role of a “permanent opposition” would also see the

marginalisation of unions and fragmentation of the democratic forces. This starkly poses the need for a new strategy, both for the Alliance and the trade union movement.

7. PROPOSAL FOR AN ALLIANCE PROGRAMME

Need for a new strategy

We said we needed two things: firstly, a popular **programme**, which is implementable, broadly supported, and able to achieve social hegemony. Secondly, the **political will**, and organisational ability to drive this programme.

7.1 Are the existing proposals of the Alliance as contained in the RDP realisable under today's conditions, or were they the pipe-dream of another era, just an election platform? Have conditions fundamentally changed since we drew up the document, which entail the setting up of a 'much less ambitious' programme? For the socialists in the Alliance the RDP was a minimum programme. Can it now become the maximum programme?

7.2 The RDP should remain the programme of the Alliance. What confronts us now is the need for a strategy for its implementation. This strategy needs to be based on the identification of strategic core areas which can lay the basis, particularly in the socio-economic sphere, and in the transformation of state institutions, for a qualitative movement forward for the comprehensive implementation of the programme set out in the RDP. We should seek to reach agreement in the Alliance on concrete measures to take us forward in areas such as social security and the social wage (health, transport, pensions, UIF etc.); job creation (especially public works and investment); intervention in the financial markets; public housing and infrastructure; training; land reform; elements of trade and industrial policy; tax reform; and wage policy (especially reducing the wage gap). Labour has already attempted to do this to some extent in the Social Equity proposals. The government has itself produced GEAR. Are the two reconcilable? If not what is our strategy to achieve a single position? We now need a sharper focus on strategic areas which would both decisively improve peoples quality of life, and leverage significant power for the popular forces, and democratic government, in the economy.

7.3 These core measures would obviously need to be located within a macro-economic framework which is viable and sustainable. Equally, if the existing macro-economic framework is unable to accommodate the most basic elements of the Alliance agenda, it would need to be reworked to bring it in line with the programme adopted by the Alliance. An issue-based approach may appear attractive, but there is no way your socio-economic programmes will be sustainable unless there is an alignment of fiscal and monetary policies with these programmes. Commitment to the extension of a basic welfare net, for example, is sheer rhetoric if your programme of deficit reduction involves a cut-back in existing, limited social security provision. On the other hand, agreement on programmes can't be purely needs driven, but also require a rigorous calculation of how such programmes are to be financed, and the capacity needed to implement them.

Alliance approach to processes of governance.

7.4 As we indicated at the beginning of the paper, there was no strategic planning before or after 1994, as to how the Alliance would deal with the processes of governance. This included how to transform the Departments, parastatals, and the public sector; relationship between policy making proposals in Ministries, and in the Alliance; policy making in Ministries; Parliamentary processes; and engagement with fora and statutory institutions, including Nedlac. Nor has there been a process of ongoing assessment, or mechanisms to deal with the problems which would inevitably be encountered. Alliance structures have only been brought in, if at all, on an ad hoc basis, or for crisis management.

7.5 Logically, the political strategies of the alliance should take responsibility to drive its own programme . This would, amongst others, rest on an implementation strategy identifying key areas inside (and outside) governance which need to be harnessed as a vehicle for the implementation of the programme. The ruling party, as with ruling parties throughout the world, should use its electoral mandate to ensure the implementation of its programme. The locus of decision-making on key political issues has, however, not been in the Alliance structures. Rather, this has tended to take place in individual Ministries, and the Alliance only engages with the product.

7.6 This has led to conflicting perspectives emerging between the democratic forces in the Executive (Cabinet) and the Legislature (Parliament); and in Nedlac and other structures, on what the strategy and content should be on socio-economic issues, including the thorny issue of the role of the state in the economy. In the absence of a coherent approach from the Alliance, other forces have sometimes occupied this space, whether in the form of business advisers in Ministries, conservative economists, or the old bureaucracy. Often they appear to be driving policy by default. At least this appears to be the case to those of us who are outside of government. This leads to the anomalous situation of Ministries feeling that they are being left without direction by the Alliance, saddled with policies which they feel obliged to defend, which are not broadly acceptable within the Alliance, or do not appear to reflect the programme as agreed upon. This is a recipe for ongoing conflict and division.

7.7 The alternative is for the Alliance to reach an Accord or National Agreement on strategic issues, as well as a programme to implement these at different levels of government. This would clearly bind the Alliance forces to actively pursue this agenda in all areas. It would guide for example, COSATU and the Government as to how to approach the various issues in Nedlac, rather than the two parties going there with separate and often competing agendas. It would remove the impression that government is acting as a neutral referee, sitting above the other players in society. Rather, the mass bias of the government, and its commitment to the implementation of a particular programme, would be the lodestar which would clearly reflect the mandate of the majority party. The Alliance would therefore openly mobilise people for the implementation of agreed programmes at the level of Parliament, Nedlac and other areas of governance.

7.8 The structured, collective input of the Alliance would decisively refute the view perpetuated by some right-wing forces that COSATU has now embarked on the role of unofficial opposition. It would also ensure that by going into Nedlac with a 'joint mandate', where possible, a co-operative approach between government and labour was developed, rather than Nedlac being seen as a delaying mechanism, or as an institution which prevents government from governing.

7.9 This ambitious approach involves both collective decision making and collective responsibility. It also requires a high level of ongoing co-ordination, to ensure that the process is managed effectively, given the inevitable differences in nuance and approach which will emerge from time to time. In the Norwegian situation, for example, this is driven by a top-level structure meeting weekly, involving the leadership of the Party and the Trade Unions, as well as the Prime Minister and the relevant Ministers. In our case this may require dynamic contact between the Alliance Secretariat with the Deputy President and the Chief Whip, Alliance NOB's from time to time and the Alliance Executive. This was the approach we took during negotiations on the Constitution. The whole Alliance's presence could be felt even by our enemies.

Re-examining the need for a Reconstruction Accord

7.10 One initial conceptualisation of the RDP in 1993 was that there should be a **Reconstruction Accord** between COSATU and the ANC. The idea was to have a binding agreement or Pact in terms of which broad policy frameworks (such as those contained in the RDP) would be translated into detailed commitments as to how various areas of policy would be implemented. This would require the identification of strategic areas for transformation, methods of financing, legislation required, time frames, and so on. The role of the labour movement in this perspective would be, not to enter into a no-strike, wage restraint mode but:

- to mobilise the working people for a decisive victory of the ANC in elections;
- to mobilise resources political, organisational, financial and otherwise to help drive the process of transformation- in the public service, parastatals, private sector, and communities.

7.11 In the event, this approach of a detailed Reconstruction Pact was not pursued, and the ANC was elected on the broad mandate of the RDP. Comrades, both from COSATU and other formations were deployed into parliament, Ministries, the public sector, and local government, on the basis of a popular, democratically formulated programme, but which taken alone, did not arm them to deal with the situation which was confronting them. Those in parliament, government and outside of these institutions hold different views of what the overall mandate is. There is no agreed to approach to measure success of RDP implementation. Some focus on RDP delivery while others call for a program based on RDP

objectives. If it means so many things to those who drafted it, this has given plenty ammunition to its opponents to redirect it.

7.1 □ A full and frank audit of progress and problems experienced still needs to be undertaken by the Alliance, measured against the targets we set ourselves. But few would seriously claim that, for whatever reasons, we have made anything like the progress we had hoped for. The proposals of the RDP, with certain exceptions, have been implemented in very patchy and confined areas. Limited, but important advances, have been made in areas such as labour legislation, health, education and to a certain extent water provision and land reform. □ However, serious questions have arisen, not only about the level of progress, but also whether the vision contained in the RDP is being followed, in vital areas such as housing, trade and industrial policy, job creation, public sector restructuring, fiscal policy, and others. In some instances, guidelines given by the RDP about how to implement these programmes seem to have been ignored.

7.13 Where we are failing, it is because we are attempting to build on the basis of past, failed policies, or vested interests are blocking real change. In areas such as housing, and fiscal and monetary policy, we are succumbing to the blackmail of the "market". An interesting feature is how the private sector and financial institutions blame the government for the problems in the housing arena despite it being largely private sector driven.

7.14 In some peoples minds, the harsh realities of the current national and international situation, and our apartheid legacy, have relegated the RDP to being a well-meaning document which served its purpose- that is, to provide an elections platform for our country's first democratic elections. But when we drew up the RDP, we were aware of these 'harsh realities', and it was precisely designed to address these. The ANC gets accused by the masses and our opponents of having ditched the RDP. One employer remarked in a COSATU organised conference that the RDP was dead and in the mortuary awaiting burial. Of course this is wishful thinking on his part, but that is a view shared by some within our own ranks.

7.15 The purpose of this assessment is not to point fingers, but rather to reflect on whether the Alliance approach to transformation was a viable one, and if not, what is a way forward to move us beyond this current *impasse* or deadlock.

7.16 It may be necessary to revisit the need for a pact/ accord/agreement between COSATU and the ANC or within the Alliance. While there is a common perception that Accords have to be between, unions, government and business, there is no law which says that Accords have to be negotiated with Capital. Obviously, an Alliance agreement will for its implementation need certain elements to be negotiated with capital (dealt with in the next section), but this is different from deciding that you want the agreement itself to be tripartite in character. Here the approach of the Brenthurst group is instructive. They are not interested in influencing labour, but the government. They have no intention of tabling anything in NEDLAC, but to the government. The time is over for us shying away from being seen to act as one. Even without us doing so pressure has always been mounted on us to separate. Capital will never tire of the old trick of accusing COSATU and the SACP of being the tail that wags the dog.

7.17 An Alliance accord would require agreement as to the priority tasks of government, strategic areas for policy decision, and legislation or other measures needed for implementation. To be viable, this would need to be an integrated package which provided a solid platform to advance towards the comprehensive implementation of the RDP.

7.18 Refusal to consider the option of an Alliance pact (or to put forward a viable alternative) would be short-sighted for a number of reasons:

- Failure by the democratic forces to implement a programme will perpetuate a crisis environment, and a vacuum, which will be filled by business and other reactionary forces. The development of an 'informal Social Accord' between business and government, to 'stabilise' the situation, will be the worst of both worlds for labour and the Alliance.
- In the absence of an Alliance agreement, government will continue to tend to play a 'mediating role' between business and labour.

- If the democratic forces don't set the agenda, but constantly react to proposals and initiatives which we had no part in formulating, it will marginalise us and reduce us to fighting defensive battle on all fronts.
- This scenario would be likely to lead to the gradual disintegration of the Alliance.
- This would lead to increasing demoralisation and demobilisation of our people and their organisations.
- Above all, we will be failing in giving leadership as the Alliance, particularly where hard choices have to be made.

7.19 The notion of an Alliance agreement would attempt to deal with these concerns. If better options are available to achieve the same objective, they should be put on the table.

7.20 We need to clarify how, without an Alliance accord, we would negotiate economic policy in Nedlac. Would we merely table the Social Equity document and demand its implementation, or having received various documents from the Nedlac parties, look at areas of commonality and disagreement in order to negotiate? This approach, safe as it may sound, is the worst of both worlds. We usually go for a lowest common denominator, or fight defensive battles following what may seem to be an understanding between government and Capital. (Government and business often appear to have the same advisor.)

7.21 A national agreement with the ANC on the other hand, presents us with an opportunity to have a joint negotiating position with government when entering into discussions with capital. This could also present an opportunity to the Alliance to bring about a new focus prior to and after the next elections.

7.22 Resistance to "social accords" have been largely based on experiences in other countries and fear of having to agree to no-strike provisions and wage restraint. Would an agreement, which excludes the above be acceptable or not? The alliance leadership have worked together enough to know that we can not achieve anything without us building trust. Put differently we can not hoodwink one another. This would have to be based on mutual trust, transparency and articulation of what our strategic objectives are.

7.23 A Social Accord does not necessarily imply wage restraint or no-strike provisions:

- Wage restraint - an Accord in South Africa would need to reorganise the wage structure and raise the living standards of the majority of workers. It may entail restraints or cuts for the high-paid, including management. Some in the business sector would actually support this approach.
- No-strike provisions and demobilisation - There is no way the trade union movement would suspend its right to strike. Neither would such a call come from the SACP and ANC. There may be a danger of demobilisation, but this depends partly on the type of accord negotiated. It is unavoidable that if you exercise social power in an institutionalised way based on commitment to a particular agreement (which clearly you assess to be in the interest of working people) - this will result in having to exercise certain responsibilities, which implies limits. This is not a negative thing for the labour movement, if it is making major gains. It also opens up space for new forms of mobilisation and organisation. Further it opens up opportunities for COSATU to be actively involved in programmes that leads to improvement of life of our own people.

7.□4 This can be contrasted with the current situation of an increasingly hostile policy environment, growing demobilisation, and the de facto imposition by employers of measures which roll back the gains of organised workers. Where we hold different views as the Alliance, we merely defend turf, but make no decisive movement at all. Proposals are not usually based on a joint approach, but at outmanoeuvring one another or winning a public debate. This is a dangerous and unnecessary game to play.

Elements of an accord

7.□5 The selection of issues to form the basis of a national agreement should not be a wish-list, but a carefully thought out identification of strategic issues which will tilt the balance of economic power in favour of the popular forces, by giving the democratic state, and its supporting institutions, effective leverage over areas of investment, production, and delivery. At the same time, they should raise effective incomes and create basic services, particularly for the poorest 70%. The combination of supply side measures to boost production; the effect of rising demand in the economy, as a result of economic improvements for the majority; and

mechanisms by the state to target investment in job creation, would all be part of a coherent strategy to address the crisis of unemployment, particularly for the youth and rural women. Fiscal and monetary policies would have to be realigned to facilitate this strategy, as would the process of restructuring the public service and parastatals.

7.6 Two types of interventions would form the core areas of an Alliance Agreement.

7.6.1 Firstly, areas which would be driven and organised by the state. These interventions would be targeted towards, providing a social wage across the board, addressing poverty, unleashing economic activity, and attracting unemployment. Proposed areas of focus are:

- **public mass housing and infrastructure;**
- **national health** system;
- **social safety net** (including comprehensive unemployment insurance; old age pensions; etc.);
- **public transport** system;
- **land reform;**
- **public job creation** measures- including public works, procurement, and taxation strategies;
- **public sector restructuring** accord- agreement on the reorganisation of the public service and parastatals, to ensure delivery.
- **public investment strategy**

7.6.2 The second set of interventions would relate to areas which are primarily implemented in the private sector, but require state regulation. Some of the strategic areas which would need to be focused on are:

- **an income/ wage policy.** From government's side, the commitment to increase the **social wage**- and therefore the income of working people as a whole (the publicly provided goods and services which increase the real value of the workers basic wage) is outlined in

the measures described above. The other critical area is a programme to **reduce the apartheid wage gap**. A flattening of the wage and salary structure between the top and the bottom would represent a massive gain for economic redistribution, and reduction of inequality, given the size of the gap we have inherited. It is not true that this can only be achieved at the level of collective bargaining. Deliberate strategies have been successfully embarked on by countries internationally to reduce their gaps (for example, Norway's "solidarity alternative" which provides that the lowest paid, relatively, get the highest increases.) A target could be set for society setting out the ratios at various levels. This could be included in the Employment Equity White Paper and legislation. Government procurement should require the meeting of targets. The existing policy in the public sector of reducing the wage gap should be accelerated, and this same approach should be implemented by government in the parastatals. Reducing the wage gap would be linked to reorganisation of grading and training;

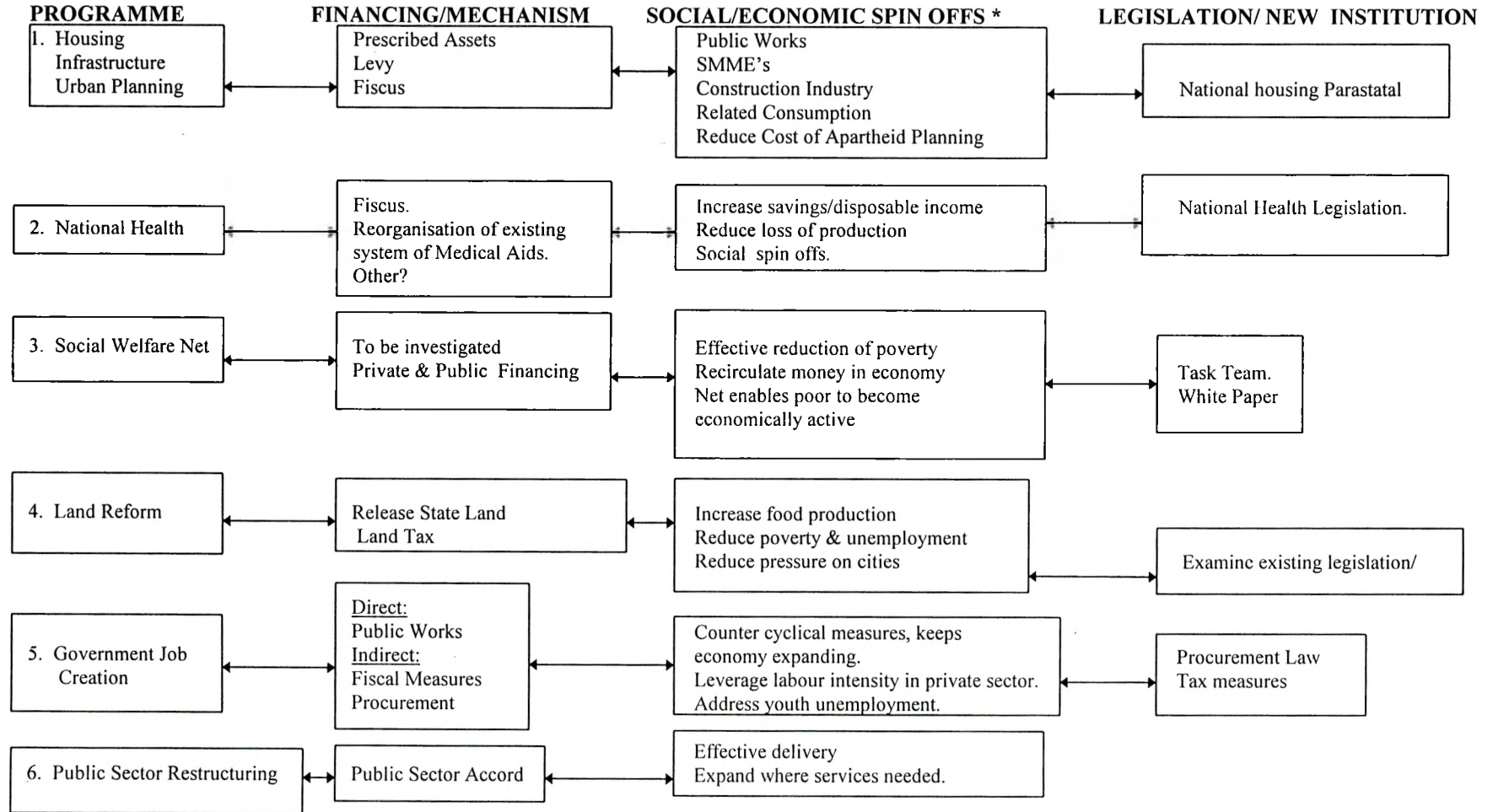
- a **national training** and general R&D drive. Again, targets should be set for this, and the instruments of government used as a lever to ensure transformation. This should be seen as a key element of affirmative action for workers. The national training levy, proposed in 'Social Equity' should be introduced;
- intervention to ensure **productive investment** in the economy. High interest rates and lack of commitment to economic development have resulted in hot, speculative investment. Measures to ensure productive investment should include prescribed assets which provide that a certain proportion of investments have to go into public projects, and the introduction of tax disincentives to penalise speculation (including the tax on dividends -STC- which the Department of Finance wants to scrap). There should be a deliberate policy of lowering interest rates;
- the creation of a **national retirement fund (pension) scheme**. This would be compulsory and ensure portability and worker control. It would be a key strategic lever in the economy.
- **supply side measures** and a **social plan**. Measures to assist the process of restructuring our industries, and to put alternatives in place where industries are downscaling. 'Social Equity' proposals for a Social Plan Act/Fund, and a National Restructuring Fund for new technology and work organisation.

- a **national employment strategy**, which limits retrenchments, and creates incentives for job creation, and disincentives for capital intensity.

7.□7 The attached tables illustrate these two areas of intervention for the Alliance, some of their economic and social linkages, as well as ideas for mechanisms, financing and legislation to take the proposed areas forward. The strategic areas identified are not welfare-driven, but have an economic and developmental logic, to unleash the economic creativity and potential of the majority of people, previously excluded.

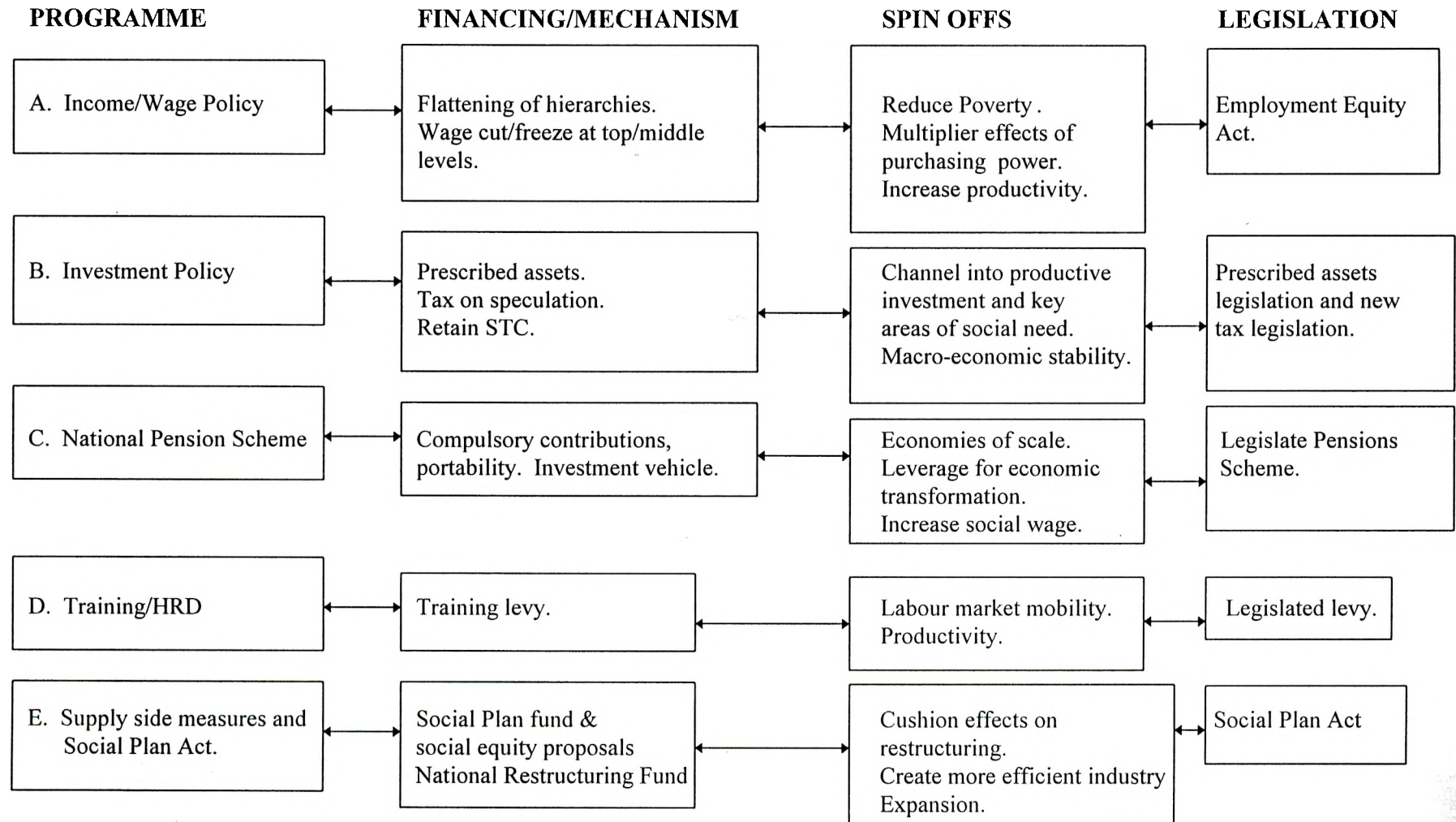
Graphic depiction of proposed Accord

STATE DRIVEN ACTIVITY



(* note - all increase social wage)

STATE REGULATED PRIVATE SECTOR ACTIVITY



7.□8 It is important to note that in all areas, benefits accrue to working people and the poor across the board. Economic benefits are not limited to the employed, in areas such as health, social welfare, housing etc.- which a private sector driven policy would tend to do. Proposals in these areas would clearly debunk the myth that trade unions are only narrowly concerned with the welfare of our own members.

7.□9 The platform outlined above doesn't claim to represent any consensus as to what the elements of a national agreement should be. It may be that there are key elements missing, or that it is felt that some of the issues raised are not priorities, or that the list needs to be tighter. What it does do is to convey the vision of an integrated platform of issues which could provide the basis for such an agreement.

Alliance conception of the economic role of the state

7.30 Without examining the subject in detail, it is important to note that there are a range of views within the Alliance on the economic role which the state can or should play. Part of the Alliance discussion would need to be, not so much a theoretical debate, but our strategic conception of the role the state should play in implementing the Alliance platform. It is clear that the RDP envisaged extensive state intervention in a variety of areas, and a leading role for the state in others. No convincing argument has been forwarded as to why this need has changed.

7.31 If anything events since 1994 clearly indicate that where we rely on market-driven programmes, there are disastrous results. We need to look no further than the examples of housing, and the private sector's record in job creation, where even by their own admission we are producing jobless (in fact job-loss) growth despite a positive economic growth. In fact most companies have reported higher profits than ever before. The question is as to whether such profit go to investment or to lining pockets of CEO's.

7.3□ Some are beginning to believe the myth that real growth and development will primarily come about through the role of private capital. Others exaggerate the power of capital to hold the democratic state hostage, and underrate the economic power of both the state, organised workers and the broad mass of our people. The failure to actively direct and harness this latter power will leave the country's economy hostage to the whims of the private sector. It is also a mistake to treat capital as a homogenous bloc, and not to recognise that there are areas where different groupings of capital have significantly different interests. For instance some international companies, more than local business, may be in favour of investing in people and implementation of genuine affirmative action since they have seen the spin-offs in their own countries. Furthermore some would know the advantages of negotiating with a strong union while local business are looking for a Singapore type union. Another group of business would realise the importance of joint decision making on the shop floor and the link to improved productivity.

7.33 The Alliance needs to audit areas where the state has significant economic muscle, and ways in which this can be harnessed for reconstruction. Further, creative ways need to be found to harness both the potential economic muscle of the trade union movement, as well as the development of new economic levers by the democratic state. Investment companies linked to trade unions should be encouraged to invest in the productive sector of the economy rather than join the ranks of speculators in the JSE. We should team up with international unions who also have massive capital in the form of pension funds.

7.34 A brief survey of the institutions under the control, or potential control of the state and trade unions, reveals that it is not an exaggeration to say that the democratic state and its allies potentially have hundreds of billions of rand directly or indirectly under their control, to lever transformation in the economy.

This includes:

- The national fiscus (budget), through which the state spends billions of rand annually. Significant portions of this can be harnessed for RDP objectives through the use of procurement policies at national, provincial and local levels, which provide that companies winning government tenders have to meet certain criteria;
- Existing parastatals, which control huge assets and budgets, in strategic areas of the economy such as telecommunications, energy and transport;
- Potential new parastatals, such as housing, which would give government leverage over areas of the construction industry, pricing of building materials etc.
- Government intervention in the financial sector, which includes the proposal to set up Post Office Banks, which would service people throughout the country, and provide low interest loans and other services on terms more favourable than the commercial sector;
- Public control of the pension and provident funds, which are worth close on R500 billion, through the Public Investment Commission for public service pensions, and the setting up of a National Pension Fund, which would amalgamate all existing private sector funds. This would allow workers to direct investment of their capital, including through the use of prescribed assets;
- The setting up of a Reconstruction Bond for those who want to invest in public reconstruction projects;
- The harnessing of institutions such as the IDC, DBSA and others to channel investment in job-creating industry, and development projects;
- Transforming the Reserve Bank, to ensure that its monetary policies assist, rather than frustrate expansionary and developmental economic policies;
- Leverage of the investment potential of the trade unions.

8. ALLIANCE ACCORD & NEGOTIATIONS WITH CAPITAL

"Transformation is not possible in a developing country like South Africa - not with our history, our incompetent civil service and inexperienced politicians. One should question whether transformation is necessary at all..." (Leading businessman, Millennium magazine, 1996)

8.1 No proposal is being made for COSATU to enter a comprehensive accord with capital, through Nedlac or any other forum.

8.□ Rather, specific agreements would be entered into with other stakeholders, including capital, on certain areas, for example training. Alliance partners would go into such negotiations within the comprehensive framework set out by the Alliance Agreement.

8.3 This would not be confined to Nedlac, but would include other multipartite forums, such as the NTB, and industry forums.

8.4 In our proposal for an Alliance Agreement outlined earlier, we identified two broad categories of interventions which would constitute such a programme - 'state driven activity' and 'state regulated private sector activity.' For the latter proposals, most but not all would require agreements to be reached in Nedlac and other forums.

8.5 We should have no illusion that implementation of the Alliance Agreement will be easily accepted by business. It would represent the most serious concrete challenge by the democratic forces to the relations of economic power in the country.

8.6 The sort of question we can expect to be asked is "What's in it for us? What do you bring to the party?" The answer to this is that it is an opportunity for business to make reparations for the devastation they have created in this country over the apartheid years; to create social stability; to allow people to benefit from economic participation; and to

themselves ultimately share in the huge economic expansion which they have been too short-sighted to invest in.

8.7 We will not fall into the trap of the quid pro quo ('this for that') line, which suggests that workers have to sacrifice in order to get what is rightfully theirs. It is ludicrous to suggest for example that workers earning below the poverty line should accept a wage freeze, in order to benefit from basic social security and health care.

8.8 Having said this, there is nothing wrong with negotiating a national productivity agreement, as proposed in 'Social Equity', which links productivity improvements to not only wages, but job creation and investment. This will make it clear that the trade union movement is in favour of proposals which will lead to an expansion in the economy, as long as it is directly linked to an improvement in workers lives.

8.9 So the commitments the trade union movement make, would be a commitment to transformation and economic development, not a quid pro quo for business. We are committed to raising the levels of productivity in the economy. But we are also committed to closing the wage gap, training, ensuring investment in job creation, stabilising the price of basic commodities etc. These things are linked, and we have to accept that the responsibility for driving the process lies with the Alliance. Business is too short-sighted to even do what is ultimately in its own interests.

9. DEVELOPMENT OF COSATU'S ABILITY TO ENGAGE EFFECTIVELY

9.1 *"The changing situation demands of us to redefine our role. New methods of dealing with problems, demands and expectations will have to be found. While workers in the past may have joined us because of our links with the Congress movement, in the future they will join us primarily because they expect us to safeguard their interest..."*

It will be a sad day for trade unionism if COSATU was to become a sweetheart federation. Our members will do to us what we have done with the old TUCSA unions." - (1994 Exco paper)

9.□ The proposals in this paper no matter how good they are, will have no impact unless we seriously focus our organisation on achieving the objectives we have set out. It is useless lamenting about our lack of capacity, when we don't effectively utilise the capacity we already have. We need to harness the structures, experience and expertise we have in our ranks. We are not tapping into the wealth of experience, which the collective worker leadership has accumulated over the last two decades. We need to 're-gear' the organisation for the challenges that are facing us.

9.3 A refocussing of the organisation will assist us in identifying genuine capacity constraints which we are facing, and measures to deal with these. Once we are clear as to what we want as an organisation, we then need to ensure that the necessary research and technical capacity is developed or tapped on.

9.4 The structures of the Federation need to take political responsibility for developing coherent policy options. Good technical research, which we need, as well as scenario planning, must be guided by the policy framework we are setting for ourselves. The organisation as a whole must take responsibility for going beyond the generality of Congress resolutions, to develop substantial policy proposals which can be placed on the table for the Alliance to debate.

9.5 *"The lack of involvement by the rank and file in policy formulation can not go on forever. In the late eighties almost all our shop stewards felt confident enough to explain our policies, campaigns and strategies. We were able within days to mobilise our members around a number of campaigns. This tradition is fast dying." - (1994 Exco Paper)*

The involvement of our membership is critical in two respects:

- Firstly in informing the policies and ensuring that there is understanding of the issues which will become highly contested in society at large.
- Secondly, to ensure that we lead the process of mobilising society in support of the Alliance's programme for transformation.

9.6 Movement for Reconstruction: Congress and various affiliates have made creative proposals ranging from the setting up work brigades to the setting up of a civil society RDP fund, and the donation of working time to the RDP. There needs to be a national campaign by the Alliance to mobilise people around these and other proposals.

9.7 In all reports to the various COSATU and affiliate structures, we have always maintained that existence of a strong organisation is key. We however tend to base such strength on the basis of attendance at meetings and marches or stayaways. While these are important indicators, we should not undermine the strong shopfloor organisation that we have as affiliates. This is precisely so because while workers may be absent from COSATU activities, they are available for affiliate activities since they relate closely to their day to day needs as workers. The challenge facing us is how to link these activities to the macro issues politically and economically. What we require is a capacity for affiliates to reach their members and to put aside time for discussions of COSATU linked activities.

9.8 The challenge for us is to find creative organisational approaches to mobilise our structures around campaigns for transformation, rather than limiting ourselves to reactive oppositional activity. This needs to involve not only the alliance and the MDM, but even the government in for example national literacy, health and housing campaigns, in which communities are mobilised into brigades on a national scale. Action will activate our structures, rather than debate about why they are dying.

10. WAY FORWARD

10.1 This paper has attempted to outline the need for a new strategy for COSATU and the Alliance in taking forward the process of transforming our country.

10.□ We have proposed, as the core of this strategy, that the Alliance enter into a National Agreement on a programme to implement the RDP in strategic areas with

specifics on legislation, mechanisms, financing and time frames. Secondly that this Agreement be combined with a programme of national mass mobilisation for transformation. Thirdly that the broad MDM forces need to be involved in the development and implementation of the programme. Finally that the ANC, as majority party, needs to align all processes of governance towards achievement of this programme.

10.3 We propose that we do not attempt, as COSATU or the Alliance to enter into a comprehensive national agreement with business. Rather, we would negotiate within the Alliance framework, on specific issues needing tripartite agreement, both in Nedlac and other forums.

10.4 There is probably a limited window of opportunity allowing such an agreement to be negotiated. There is the real danger that the current economic policy direction, and the resultant alienation of the Alliance's constituency, will become so entrenched, as to make the negotiation of such an Agreement impossible.

10.5 We therefore need to agree on a number of core issues:

- Whether the broad approach contained in the proposal is acceptable. If so, how to take it forward in Alliance structures;
- Further identification, removal or refinement of the strategic issues contained in our proposal for an Alliance Accord, bearing in mind the need to avoid a wish-list;
- Mechanisms to develop joint Alliance policy proposals on areas identified for the Alliance Agreement. The Alliance must own the process;
- Proposals for a programme for mass mobilisation for transformation, and involvement of allies in the MDM;
- Proposals for transformation of Alliance structures to enable the Alliance to effectively drive such a programme;
- Measures which need to be taken in COSATU to ensure our effective participation; and

- An approach to governance, given that a number of policy areas have been finalised or are far advanced. Further that only some of these proposals take us forward in terms of implementing the goals of the RDP. There would need to be an agreement in the Alliance as to how to adjust these, where necessary.

Ends/

1. Accountability & Participation

1.1. We need to strengthen COSATU's role in NEDLAC through greater accountability of NEDLAC representatives, regular report backs to workers and a programme of mass action to back up working class demands.

1.2 We need to develop strategies for engaging our allies and the broader working class in the process of transforming our country. We need to use the Alliance political centre to co-ordinate our strategies.

1.3 We need to bring NEDLAC and its processes closer to the people by developing a mechanism to involve our members in the process of policy formulation.

1.4 Our constitutional structures need to constantly evaluate our strategies and ensure our effective participation in NEDLAC.

2. Capacity Building

2.1 COSATU's human resource development should be extended to worker leadership so as to give effect to the *principle of worker control and participation*.

2.2 To achieve the above we will use the capacity building fund in NEDLAC to empower our people.

2.3 Documents and agreements must be written in accessible language.

2.4 We need to translate the *Social Equity and Job Creation* document into a dynamic programme of action and a tool for transformation.

Source: CWIU, COSATU Living Wage Conference, 1996

TRADE UNION
CENTRE

PROCESSED

**COSATU DISCUSSION PAPER
A DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR THE
ALLIANCE**

PRESENTED TO THE EXCO

22 NOVEMBER 1996

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This discussion paper arises out of the last Central Executive Committee discussion on the Alliance, which resolved that the Alliance, and therefore a way forward for the Alliance, is not based on meetings or persons, but on a concrete programme. The meeting resolved that COSATU should develop proposals for what it believes should be an Alliance programme - first for internal discussions and later for broad debate in the Alliance. This should include concrete proposals for the implementation of RDP objectives, Labour Social Equity document relationship and the role of the Alliance in governance and policy formulation, mass mobilisation and building organisation.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE ALLIANCE

- 2.1 Without going into a detailed history, it is useful to recap how we came to be in Alliance with the African National Congress and SA Communist Party, and to share a common programme of action.
- 2.2 Despite not being formally part of the Congress movement at its birth in 1985, COSATU developed a close association with the Congress movement from its inception. Conditions in the country dictated the need to go beyond bread and butter issues to embrace national and class struggle. This perspective was formally endorsed with COSATU's adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1987. Even before 1987 COSATU's outlook was based on the combination of organisational, political and economic perspectives rooted within the congress movement. At the 1987 Congress, the Resolution on Alliances agreed on criteria for COSATU to build its alliance. This implied working with organisations with a track record of struggle, mass based, and whose principles were not in conflict with those of COSATU.
- 2.3 COSATU's Fourth National Congress in 1991 resolved, after the unbanning of the liberation movement, that the Federation should join the ANC and SACP in alliance in place of SACTU, thus becoming part of the

Tripartite Alliance as we know it today. This was consciously based on the view that COSATU's alliance with the SACP and ANC would be the motive force for national liberation, democratisation and transformation at the political and socio-economic level.

- 2.4 It has always been understood that the Alliance consists of independent organisations with independent structures for mandating and decision making. These independent organisations agreed nonetheless to co-operate, consult and take joint decisions on collective action for the emancipation of our people. COSATU further outlined that the Alliance would need to work on the basis of proper mandate and consensus
- 2.5 We agreed that the Alliance would be based on a programme which would be evaluated and assessed from time to time. Further that it may need to be redefined taking into account the prevailing objective conditions. We agreed to build the ANC and SACP and to encourage workers to join.
- 2.6 In the pre-election period, the Alliance parties consulted one another on major issues. A number of summits were held to look at positions on negotiations, mobilisation in support thereof, joint struggle on VAT, and the elections. Finally, we developed the RDP, not only as an election platform, but as a programme designed to achieve the objective of transforming our society to meet the social and economic needs of our people.

3. AFTER THE 1994 ELECTIONS

- 3.1 Since 1994, there have been very few substantial meetings of the Alliance. Even those that have taken place have been ad hoc, sporadic or crisis meetings. Further, issues agreed at those meetings have largely not been followed through. In early 1995, COSATU raised the need to develop an Alliance economic strategy to achieve RDP goals. A committee to look at these matters was established. It was also supposed to look at the

constraints and the debt we inherited, and how they could be overcome. To date no report has been forthcoming.

- 3.2 The above attempts notwithstanding, the Alliance never sat down to systematically look at the challenges of the transition and formulate a strategy, and what role our various formations should play in that strategy. Nor was this done for people who are in parliament, government, various formations outside of government, and the state sector. No programme was formulated for engagement of the masses. To this date the masses largely remain spectators in the theatre of the struggle for transformation. A notable exception was during negotiations on the LRA and the Constitution, when, several Alliance meetings were held. Indeed it was possible to as far as possible to speak with one voice on these matters. Even our meeting with employers on the Constitution were bilaterals between us as an Alliance and them. This enabled us to ward off any attack on the alliance. We were also sending one message to our people on this issue.

- 3.3 Large numbers of COSATU and Alliance activists have been deployed in parliament, government, and other structures, including provinces and locally. Yet no assessment was made of the impact of this for organisation, and a systematic approach to redeployment. More comrades have since been re-deployed in the public service, parastatals and the private sector.

4. CURRENT SITUATION

This paper will not attempt to engage in a detailed analysis of the current conjuncture or balance of forces. Rather we will focus on the way in which the Alliance and democratic government have related to the processes of political and economic transformation. What follows are broad indicators of some of the main features affecting Alliance functioning at various levels.

Political

4.1 We have a new political situation, with legitimate government and parliament. There is however no clear programme, or yard stick that is being used to guide and measure success.

We have not been able to use organisational and political space to constantly alter the power balance at a socio-economic level. Of course there has been good legislation that emerged from parliament, with COSATU's participation. These include the LRA, health and safety in mines, abortion, schools bill, the constitution etc. There was however no prior strategic planning. There has been no systematic Alliance approach to the development of policy. We largely react to policies as they come out of the Ministries. We have struggled to find agreement on policies in a number of areas: housing, transport, the economy etc. We have depended on the view of particular individuals in government, rather than largely the position of the organisation as a whole. In actual fact progressive policies can easily be thwarted by any of the parties to the Alliance as no strategic vision largely shared by all exists.

Socio - economic

4.2 This area has been the most difficult one for the Alliance. As mentioned earlier an Alliance committee formed to deal with priorities, perceived constraints and how they could be resolved, has produced no report to date. In fact the committee does not exist any longer. There is no single view of how to implement the RDP. Positions emerging from the government on privatisation and the famous GEAR have been presented to the Alliance as a fait accompli. Those who hold a different view have been told in no uncertain terms that the strategy is cast in stone. Whatever the difficulties, this surely leads to unnecessary tensions and differences which gets easily exploited by our detractors. This was a clear case of policy driven by panic - due to the fall of the Rand and pressure from the amorphous market - to borrow but a phrase from comrade Trevor Manuel. No one from the ranks of the movement, except some in government,

order, IMF and World Bank . There has been pressure put on the government by both local and international business, and the media, to adopt economic policies in direct contradiction to those they were mandated to implement . The movement seems to be paralysed by the threat of globalisation and the investment strike of business. The defeatist view that the balance of forces are not in our favour and that we therefore have to give in to "the market" appears to have taken hold. This static analysis largely ignores the significance of access to state power, and the potential of organisation, using the new political space, to tilt the balance of forces. The economy in the new South Africa continues to largely represent what it was in 1993, except that there is some growth (jobless) and a few black faces and companies that participate in it. Otherwise it is business as usual. One prominent businessman have recently indicated this disappointment at how capital which was prepared to work with the democratic government for fear of tougher policies such as nationalisation and anti-trust law is now putting pressure on the government to adopt thatcherite positions.

Organisational

- 4.3 There is general demobilisation of our people. Most activists are no more sure of what the strategic objectives are. There is very little participation and involvement in decision and policy making. ANC structures have no visible mass mobilisation programme in which their members participate. Many see actions by COSATU, students and SANCO in the same light as those of right-wing elements - 'counter revolutionary'. The Alliance itself has no programme except the often cited RDP which means many things to different people.

Our structures are either weak or not functioning at various levels. Obviously this differs from area to area. There are locals and regions where regular meetings, for consultations or action take place from time to time. At Provincial level there is also a reluctance to focus on issues of governance, unless structures are in a crisis.

5. LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION

Marx: 'we change the world, but not under conditions of our own choosing.'

5.1 This statement is true of our situation.

We face a situation in South Africa today where we are attempting to transform our country. Yet we face various constraints, which we did not choose. Neither are they of our own making. They have been thrust upon us by history.

These include:

5.1.1 Firstly, the **legacy of apartheid**: A long catalogue which includes mismanagement of our economy, the debt burden, destruction of our human resources, a deformed public sector, vast unemployment and poverty, concentration of ownership in the hands of the conglomerates, marginalisation of the majority from economic activity, massive income and social inequalities - the list goes on.

5.1.2 Secondly, the **new world situation** into which our democracy has been born. Politically, this situation has been characterised as a unipolar one (one power bloc) in which there is no serious alternative to the power wielded by the G7 countries, and their international financial and trade institutions. Economically, the process of globalisation has trampled the sovereignty of nation states. Capital has unprecedented mobility, aided by new technology and the new information age. The world economy has been organised into powerful trading blocs. We are told that those who don't play by the rules of the new game, will be forever marginalised and fall by the wayside.

5.2 The above presents a challenge to ourselves. While we inherited enormous problems, the elements are present for us to perform our own 'social miracle' comparable to post-war Europe, the Asian Tigers, and

some aspects of the Socialist advances of the 20th century. In comparative historical terms, the problems we face are not overwhelmingly larger than those faced by societies which managed major reconstruction efforts, on a scale even larger than we are attempting. Although conditions are changing, it is a myth to claim, historically, that this epoch is unique, and that no other society has had to face problems on the scale we are confronting, or that they didn't have to fight to push back the barriers of 'the possible'.

- 5.3 As with all other societies facing reconstruction challenges, the critical factor in our situation will be our ability to mobilise the masses in support of the programme- to unleash huge national energies to achieve what would normally not be possible. In our view the objective basis has been laid, over the past few decades, for this scenario to unfold. Leaving aside for the moment very real problems we have inherited, our rich history of struggle has resulted in one of the most politicised and conscious mass movements, rooted in a strongly organised working class.
- 5.4 The organisation of the main mass formations under the leadership of the Alliance has catapulted a progressive peoples government into power on the basis of an overwhelming popular mandate, despite the history of apartheid division, and vilification of the liberation movement. The huge majority (62%) secured by the ANC is a luxury which ruling parties in most democracies are denied. This was repeated during the local government elections.
- 5.5 The major social forces have subscribed to a programme of transformation, which on paper at least was accepted by all parties and strata as the basis for change, and was the product of extensive discussion and mobilisation. Our society has a strong tradition of an active progressive civil society, and the existence of various social institutions to structure their participation. Compared to other developing societies, the industrial base of the country, and the advanced organisation of workers into a progressive trade union movement, gives the progressive forces considerable strategic leverage.

- 5.6 Above all of this, South Africa has more potential international allies and goodwill than probably any other comparable struggle. It is mechanical to suggest that this has simply evaporated with democracy, and that we are now the same as any other country on the international stage. It is a myth perpetuated by the bourgeoisie and the media that after only a few months into a new democracy, the "honeymoon period" is over.
- 5.7 All these positive factors outlined above, while concrete and a legacy of our struggle, are at the same time *potentialities, which have to be harnessed to be fully realised*. Failure to do this can result in the squandering of the most important resource of the NDR. The unity, mobilisation, and consciousness of the people is not a given, but is constantly impacted on by changing conditions. The fragmentation and demoralisation we have begun to see should be sending very serious warning signals to the movement as a whole. We are convinced as COSATU that it is possible for the democratic movement to reverse these trends.
- 5.8 The question therefore arises: Is it possible, given our potential strengths, to achieve fundamental transformation under the constraints inherited from apartheid and imposed by the new world order?
- 5.9 Two dangers arise in answering this question. The first is falling into the trap of fatalism - passively accepting that these forces ranged against us are too powerful to counter and we must simply accept our fate. The second is that of triumphalism - pretending that our electoral triumph has wiped out these constraints - and that we can impose our agenda of change, without factoring these objective realities into our transformation equation.

The balance of forces

"The main motive forces of the democratic transformation are primarily represented by African workers and the African rural poor. These forces are also represented by black workers in general"

and the black middle strata. These are the forces which possess the best political and ideological potential to lead and defend the process of transformation... At the same time we must recognise the fact that there is social differentiation (of) these black masses which at times will lead the various strata and classes to express different aspirations and pursue separate objectives. While continuing to strive to represent the black people as a whole, the movement must however ensure that, at all times, and in the first instance, it represents the interests of the workers, rural masses and the middle strata, those who constitute the majority of the people of this country." (Strategy and Tactics, ANC Conference December 1994)

- 5.10 What is the actual situation after more than two years of democratic government?

The power of the apartheid-era ruling class remains largely entrenched in critical areas of society: in the security forces, the media, the bureaucracy, and above all in the commanding heights of the economy. The accepted centre of power in society is our new democratic government, rooted in the Alliance of our leading mass democratic formations: the ANC, COSATU and the SACP. While the leading partner of the Alliance, the ANC, is in *office*, there are real questions, as the cliché goes, as to how far the democratic forces have taken *power*. The same questions have been raised on more than one occasion by both Comrades Thabo and Madiba. The programme of the democratic movement, the RDP, has been systematically undermined by a range of forces. The Government of National Unity, led by the ANC, has been subjected to intense pressures, both from other political parties, as well as local and international forces, particularly business. This is not to discount the fact that significant advances have been made. Rather that the logic of transformation, as contained in the RDP, has been overpowered by that of the forces attempting to halt transformation.

- 5.11 When we drew up the RDP, and mobilised for democratic elections, we anticipated in broad terms many of these developments. In a COSATU Discussion Paper adopted by the Executive in early 1994 we stated:

"There are many contradictions that will face us. The ANC will be subjected to a lot of demands by all sorts of interest groups. Our membership will expect us to ensure a change in the conditions of work and living standards. Employers will expect the ANC to confront us on issues such as productivity, minimum wage, and to accept wage restraint. The ANC as the government of the day will have to concern itself with catering for the needs of society as a whole, including our class enemies...Senior ANC personnel in government will find themselves frustrated, undermined and blocked by the large bureaucracy they will inherit from the apartheid era... (but) There is no iron law which says that the new governing stratum will have to sell out, will have to become bureaucratized and embourgeoised. Quite apart from their subjective strengths and weaknesses, the new ANC stratum will face contradictory strategic and class pulls and inclinations. Which of the different tendencies will emerge as dominant ...will be a function of strategic clarity on our part, struggle and the relative balance of class forces within the broader ANC-led Alliance." (Towards developing a long term strategy for COSATU, discussion paper April 1994.)

- 5.12 So we clearly understood that the democratic project would be contested by various class forces. COSATU must therefore have also believed that the democratic forces had the potential strength to isolate, divide and outmanoeuvre these forces. Otherwise we would not have ploughed huge resources and energies into constructing the RDP, and fighting the elections. Above all we have always believed that our agenda, if properly followed will emerge as the victor with all the forces for social transformation and democracy squarely behind it.
- 5.13 The ANC has taken the same view: *"Each component of the Alliance has a responsibility to organise and mobilise its social base and any other forces allied to it, for the defense of the democratic revolution, the implementation of the RDP and the mobilisation of the people as a whole for their constructive engagement in the process of the fundamental transformation of the country". (Strategy and Tactics, ANC Conference December 1994)*
- 5.14 It is a law of physics that a vector of a given force will propel an object in a particular direction, unless a countervailing force of even greater power is brought to bear on that object from the opposite direction. This is a useful analogy to illustrate the South African situation: the power of the

masses concentrated in the Alliance is the main driving force, to counter those forces attempting to divert the state off the path of fundamental transformation. A failure of the Alliance to act as an effective vehicle to drive transformation will result in the fledgling democracy being a captive of these backward forces. To a certain extent, if we do a ruthless audit of our performance over the last two years, this has already begun to happen.

- 5.15 Instead of the Alliance being the engine for transformation, policy has in many instances been driven by the old bureaucracy, business advisers, economists from the Reserve Bank, the World Bank etc. We seem to have ditched the researchers and advisers who have served the democratic movement. Further, instead of mass mobilisation being seen as a vital force for driving transformation, we have reduced mass involvement to appeals for payment of rents and services, and/or pleas to understand that we face 'major constraints'.
- 5.16 The masses have not disappeared from the political equation. Rather, demobilisation and demoralisation has taken place, particularly of activists and leadership. This has led to an undermining of the discipline and ethic which characterised previous years. With demoralisation, the individual struggle for self-enrichment has begun to take hold, in the absence of any vision of collective advancement. Equating the National Democratic Revolution, as is beginning to happen, in some quarters, with the creation of a 'patriotic (black) bourgeoisie', is tantamount to robbing the NDR of its transformational character, and going for the caricature of "Uhuru" which our movement has always been so critical of. This does not in anyway deny the need to deracialise the economy. It however means that it must be part of our national and class struggle in which transformation is paramount as opposed to concentrating on the success of a few individuals and then parade them as a success of 'black economic empowerment' while the majority of blacks remain in poverty.
- 5.17 *"How committed is the corporate community in this country? How committed is it to the rebuilding of South Africa...The South African Foundation gave us their strategy document ... it says absolutely nothing about what business itself commits itself to in order to achieve this 'growth for all.'" (Thabo Mbeki- Millennium Magazine, 1996)*

Unlike other countries facing fascism or war, South Africa has never had a 'patriotic bourgeoisie'. Our national struggle has been led by working class and allied forces. The bourgeoisie in our country have always benefited directly from Apartheid and the status quo. Their interest in profits, also in so far as they accrue from the economic power relations inherited from apartheid, has led to a resistance to fundamental national transformation. Talk of an existing 'patriotic bourgeoisie' is therefore misleading, even if it refers to the class mobility of black individuals. Economic empowerment of the black majority, and the shifting of the focus of economic power, goes way beyond the co-option of individual black entrepreneurs into the structures of economic power (hitherto exclusively occupied by whites).

- 5.18 The lack of leadership from the democratic movement has begun to lead to disillusionment, depoliticisation and alienation from 'politics' amongst ordinary people. The lack of a people-driven transformation, expressed in this phenomenon of demobilisation, in turn undermines the cohesion and power of our organisations, and their ability to intervene decisively in the transformation equation. These are the same people who understood the problems of apartheid and the need to crush it. Yet they seem to have lost an interest in what should replace it. It is time for the movement to problematise the transformation process, and to mobilise our forces behind the new challenges.
- 5.19 Obsession with the perceived constraints and problems, however, mustn't become the rationale for our political assessment. 'BALANCE of FORCES' precisely implies that there are two sides to the political equation. Remove the masses, the progressive forces for change, from your calculation, and the power of the reactionary forces becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Just as ignoring the power of the forces of reaction constitutes triumphalism, removing the forces for change from the equation is surrender and defeatism. For those who ignore the role of the masses in change, any serious attempt in the movement to challenge the remaining centres of apartheid power become characterised as 'opportunist', 'adventurist', and ultimately 'counter-revolutionary'. This

defeatist approach would never have allowed us to overcome the huge obstacles constructed by the apartheid state, with its international allies.

- 5.20 Giving in to the blackmail of reactionary forces and the market creates a situation which is even more difficult to control, as we progressively give away our ability to determine the agenda of change. This has been clearly seen on the economic policy front, with exchange controls, monetary policy and so on. Decisive action, even by authoritarian regimes in South East Asia was crucial in disciplining capital in most countries undergoing reconstruction. Ironically, certain sections of capital would over time become more favourably disposed to a democratic state taking decisive transformatory actions, because those actions, in the short to medium term would create conditions for rapid and sustainable growth. In this respect we need to distinguish between finance capital and those elements of the conglomerates wanting to move their money out, and sections of manufacturing and international capital interested in long-term investment. We need to look at how to isolate elements of the latter from the anti-transformation agenda of the former.

How do we characterise this phase of our struggle?

- 5.21 It is probably true to say that we are faced with a peculiar situation similar to "dual power", where the new democratic government, while fully legitimate, popular, and apparently in full control, neither has its hands decisively on all the tillers of state power- including the security forces, bureaucracy, parastatals, reserve bank, judiciary etc.- nor has it been able to strategically direct the economy of the country based on our own agenda. While this is not to suggest the classic scenario of a counter-revolutionary force, directly contesting state power in an open and organised sense, it does convey the extent to which the government seem to have been confined to limited areas of governance. This is exacerbated by the constant attempt in the international context, to chip away at the sovereignty of government, and the constant onslaught particularly by the financial markets, to pressurise government to adopt the economic policies desired by them. The call for blind adherence to privatisation, reduced budget deficit for its own sake, immediate removal of exchange controls

are part of an attempt to weaken and ultimately remove the role of the state in the economy.

- 5.22 This sense of 'dual power' is important in characterising the current situation, because it helps to convey the strategic moment in which we find ourselves: the existence of a popular bloc, with its representatives in government, parliament and other institutions, pitted against a minority bloc, attempting to use its access to economic and other power to abort the NDR. Left alone they will do everything to preserve the privileges acquired during years of apartheid. Where they embrace the need for change, they would want it to happen at the slowest pace possible and to accommodate the conservative white elements. The debate is not about whether we are in the phase of completing the struggle for socialism or national democracy. The question is whether, having successfully held democratic elections, we are able to seriously enter into the task of **beginning** to decisively transform our country in a manner which while difficult and challenging, will ensure the success of the NDR.
- 5.23 This moment of transition- crudely put, either moving forward to a fundamental transformation, or backwards to the consolidation of minority privilege, albeit with new features- is a **historical moment**. While it is a process, in a dynamic and shifting terrain, it is necessarily a historic moment which can't last indefinitely. Either of the two forces or blocs outlined above, will seize the initiative to lead and direct society. This poses a challenge to the Alliance, government, members of parliament, and progressive civil society to take our fate into our own hands.
- 5.24 This implies two things: firstly, the need for a popular **programme**, which is implementable, broadly supported, and able to achieve the social hegemony required to break this deadlock (or unstable equilibrium) and continuously shift the power balance qualitatively in our favour. Secondly, the **political will**, and organisational ability to drive this programme.

Can we present a hegemonic alternative to lead society?

- 5.25 The great Italian revolutionary Gramsci used the concept of 'hegemony' to describe the process whereby a particular class in society successfully puts forward its programme for adoption by society as a whole. This, of course, is the terrain *par excellence* for struggle, and is not the preserve of the popular forces. In fact the experience of advanced capitalism has been one of the ruling class attempting to perfect its hegemony over society. The RDP was an extremely powerful intervention by the democratic forces in our country to assert their hegemony.
- 5.26 But, as we have seen in recent months, this terrain is dynamic and ever-shifting. Failure to implement your programme, for whatever reason, and failure to mobilise the people in defense of that programme, can see a powerful hegemonic alternative disintegrate in a relatively short space of time. History is littered with examples of revolutions which have failed on this basis. On the one side, if people own the programme, and appreciate the difficulties being faced, they are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to defend it, as in Cuba. On the other, if people become convinced that the programme is not workable, and are not prepared to accept the implications of fighting counter-revolution, they will abandon it- as we saw in Nicaragua.
- 5.27 There is a concerted attempt to impose capital's agenda on society as the only feasible alternative to social and economic transformation. Even amongst those who don't like it, there is the argument that in this era of globalisation, trade blocs, the new information technology, the power of multilateral institutions etc we have to accept the limitations which this international environment imposes on us. After all, who are we, a relatively small power on the world stage, to resist this? A slogan has been coined by a multinational company in South Africa to capture this sense of 'the end of history'. This is the 'TINA' scenario, which stands for "There Is No Alternative"! (We need to counterpose this with a 'THEBA' scenario - There Has To Be An Alternative!)

- 5.28 In the context of this powerful line, which is constantly churned out by the media, business, and other institutions, it is critical that we as a movement have a rigorous and coherent platform which :
- shows that the prescriptions of capital's agenda are disastrous not only in our country, but have also failed in many other countries ;
 - that we have an alternative, which is serious, well thought out, and viable in the South African context ;
 - that we won't be blackmailed into abandoning this programme;
 - and
 - That we are capable of mobilising our people behind political and social transformation as the main actors in the theatre of struggle for social emancipation.
- 5.29 There is nothing inherently wrong in the RDP which suggests that it was an inappropriate or unrealistic programme.

Why then is it having such difficulty?

- there has been no clear programme for its comprehensive implementation by the broad democratic movement
 - no mass involvement in driving and developing such a programme of implementation.
 - in the absence of these factors, space has opened up for capital's agenda to seize the initiative
- 5.30 Even within the democratic movement, there is a tendency to believe, that in current global realities, the RDP programme is not workable, in its current form. Therefore some believe that Gear will be more effective, given the constraints, in reaching the same objectives. It is therefore not a question of reinventing the RDP, but demonstrating that we have a concrete, achievable programme to implement it and a programme to involve the masses in driving this process. This is not something which can be achieved through 'RDP forums' alone, which are marginalised from the centre of decision-making. If the Alliance is to drive this process both democratic government, and progressive civil society must be fully involved.

Re galvanising the MDM

- 5.31 Concentration on the Alliance to exclusively drive the transformation process would be a serious error. The ANC is heavily taxed by the pressures of governance, and all the organisational tensions and problems this has thrown up. On the other side COSATU only represents one, albeit critical and important, mass constituency. COSATU has to concentrate its efforts not only on the challenges of the transition but also has to ensure that the shop floor is on board its activities. We have to have enough cadres to deal with micro issues and maintain a vibrant organisation. The SACP is itself grappling with defining its role during this period. It also has to define how those of our organisations that are committed to socialism play their role today rather than tomorrow. A broad front of MDM forces for transformation, transforming our mass organisations into a different type of vehicle than that used to destroy apartheid, is a basic necessity.
- 5.32 The Alliance needs to have a strategic open and frank discussion with SANCO. This should focus on weaknesses and potential strengths; our vision of a civic movement and its role in a democracy, relationship to the ANC and to the government. This may help transform it from an activist based organisation to a truly mass and representative civic movement in which residents regardless of political persuasion play a role. The reality is that SANCO and the ANC both appeal to the same constituencies on the ground. This often leads to conflicts which we can not afford. The other area tackled is whether or not SANCO should be in the Alliance or one of the organs of civil society that we relate to.
- 5.33 Continued fragmentation of MDM forces will have a number of serious consequences: apart from weakening the power of the peoples bloc, it will also entrench the frustration and alienation of constituencies which were historically united around the MDM programme. The emergence of petty conflicts, sectarian approaches, as well as a failure to adjust to the new period in which we find ourselves, are all a function of the isolation of a number of these constituencies. Yet governments programmes for transformation in health, land, education, local government, housing and

other critical areas will depend critically on the active involvement and mobilisation of these constituencies. The reality is that we have totally failed as an Alliance to consolidate MDM organisations as a meaningful united force in society since the elections. This must be rectified. This doesn't mean the formation of new structures, but the development of an effective programme to bring these organisations on board.

- 5.34 MDM forces need to help direct popular mobilisation which seem to be taking place without our leadership. There have been instances of popular participation, progressive and not so progressive, which have taken place without organisational direction. Examples of these are the land and housing movements, anti-crime activities, ranging from community policing forums to vigilante activity, and isolated pockets of community street committees, attempting to address the real problems confronting residents.

6. TRADE UNIONS AND THE ALLIANCE

"No leader of any moral authority could work with an ally when we were all alone, under extremely difficult conditions, and on the verge of victory, be advised by our former enemies, that we should dispense with our allies. To try to sell us that idea, means that those who are saying so have no morals. They mean that they can work with an ally for a particular objective and on the eve of obtaining that objective, they take advice from their former enemies. I said that I would never do that... We have won the elections as a result of the sweat and blood of the tripartite alliance. That alliance must go on. But that does not mean that Cosatu and the SACP are subservient to the ANC. No. That's why you have criticised us in the past... We want that, because when we face any issue we want the advice of strong, independent allies who can say to us "Now you are right", and who can say to us, "Now you are wrong." That is why we have been so strong. We've been working with strong, independent organisations that are self- confident, fearless, and who can express their views even when those views clash with ours." (President Mandela, 'Shop Steward' May 1996)

- 6.1 Some, in the trade union movement, who reject the defeatist approach which argues that we are powerless to deal with the forces of reaction, may write off the entire movement as having abandoned the NDR. They

may therefore conclude that the Alliance itself is no longer a viable vehicle for transformation. This would be mistaken at a number of levels:

- by generalising a strand of thought which at this stage may only represents one perspective, or elements of a perspective in the movement;
- by abandoning the most powerful vehicle for transformation to other forces in society;
- by abandoning the masses, who remain convinced that the Alliance represents their strongest hope of implementing a programme for fundamental change.
- by suggesting that the trade unions themselves are inherently progressive or socialist, and ignoring the fact that the unions are subject to both progressive and reactionary tendencies.
- Some would even want to de-link the struggle for socialism from that of the liberation of our people and defending and consolidating the current gains.

6.2 At the recent NUMSA Congress the GS Report outlined the two options being proposed for our relationship to the Alliance, and related issues, and posed some pertinent questions:

6.2.1 *"Option 1. the Alliance should be maintained*

6.2.2. *Option 2. the Alliance should be scrapped and a working class party put in its place.*

This (Option 2) was the resolution that we passed at our last Congress but was not passed by COSATU. Our main reason for passing this resolution was our fear that we would become a transmission belt for government.

6.2.3 *Let us detail the questions that we need to ask around these two positions:*

1. The Alliance should be maintained

do we need the Alliance?

what for?

is there a minimum programme we can unite around?

what are the contents of such a programme?

2. the Alliance should be scrapped and a working class party formed

what about existing political parties whose objectives and ambitions claim to serve the working people?

why don't working people come closer to these political parties, why don't working people join these political parties?

if Western Cape voters can't vote for a social democratic party like the ANC, what chance is there of them voting for a working class party?

do we have the resources to build a general working class mass party?

Who are we fighting for and how should we fight?

- 6.2.4 *Our founding resolutions and aims and objectives talk of fighting for the working class as a whole. Who are we fighting for now? The organised workers or for the working class in general and the non-working poor?*
- 6.2.5 *Before April 27, 1994, progressive forces were united in fighting racism. We could not go wrong, the wider society could easily associate with our actions...*
- 6.2.6 *We are living in a liberal democracy. The emphasis is on conciliation, consensus, the "rainbow nation". Are our tools of militant mass action still the right ones or are they antagonising our allies and marginalising us as an elite?*
- 6.2.7 *Other labour movements faced with a liberal democracy have chosen one of the following:*
social contract/ consensus
creation of labour based political parties
class warfare - permanent opposition.
- 6.2.8 *What choice should we make? In making this choice we must decide what our role is as a trade union. Is it just narrow trade unionism where we fight for wages, conditions of employment, employment security for employed workers*

Socialism

6.2.9 *As organised workers ... we have always cherished the idea of a socialist society. What do we mean by socialism? What outcome do we want to see? This outcome must be influenced by the objective conditions in this country – it is pointless having a set of objectives that cannot be realised because the economic and political conditions at the time make them impossible to realise."*

- 6.3 From the aforementioned it is clear that workers are themselves grappling with how to relate to the new changed situation. They would want to engage with the situation in a manner that makes yesterday, today and tomorrow to be relevant. They want to work with the ANC, but are not clear as to what that working relationship should be. How does it relate to their struggles-better conditions of employment, elimination of poverty and unemployment, socialism, etc. The answer lies in a shared vision in which the working class and their formations are all involved. This will allow us to reflect on our own shopfloor struggles, locate them within the broader struggle, and together with the rest of society join hands in defending and consolidating democracy. This means being realistic, willing to engage, work with the ANC without losing our commitment to a socialist future.
- 6.4 More engagement will need to take place between COSATU and the SACP. For while COSATU has a vision that extends beyond the shopfloor, it needs a revolutionary working class party to spearhead a working class programme. This will help to locate the struggle for socialism in the current struggles. The SACP need to explicitly outline how it sees the relationship between our commitment to the success of the NOB within a socialist vision.
- 6.5 In the absence of a shared strategic vision, and joint programme, between the trade union movement and our Alliance partners, COSATU faces the danger of becoming increasingly reactive, and defensive in its approach. As our broad social role becomes increasingly difficult to sustain, we

would face the danger of isolation and a retreat into narrow economism. Any attempt to play the role of a "permanent opposition" would also see the marginalisation of unions and fragmentation of the democratic forces. This starkly poses the need for a new strategy, both for the Alliance and the trade union movement.

7. PROPOSAL FOR AN ALLIANCE PROGRAMME

Need for a new strategy

We said we needed two things: firstly, a popular programme, which is implementable, broadly supported, and able to achieve social hegemony. Secondly, the political will, and organisational ability to drive this programme.

7.1 Are the existing proposals of the Alliance as contained in the RDP realisable under today's conditions, or were they the pipe-dream of another era, just an election platform?

Have conditions fundamentally changed since we drew up the document, which entail the setting up of a 'much less ambitious' programme? For the socialists in the Alliance the RDP was seen as a minimum programme. Has it now become the maximum programme?

7.2 The RDP should remain the programme of the Alliance. What confronts us now is the need for a strategy for its implementation. This strategy needs to be based on the identification of strategic core areas which can lay the basis, particularly in the socio-economic sphere, and in the transformation of state institutions, for a qualitative movement forward for the comprehensive implementation of the programme set out in the RDP. We should seek to reach agreement in the Alliance on concrete measures to take us forward in areas such as social security and the social wage (Health, transport, pensions, UIF etc.); job creation (especially public works and investment); intervention in the financial markets; public housing and infrastructure; training; land reform; elements of trade and industrial policy; tax reform; and wage policy (especially reducing the wage gap). Labour has already attempted to do this to some extent in the

Social Equity proposals. The government has itself produced GEAR. Are the two reconcilable? If not what is our strategy to achieve a single position? We now need a sharper focus on strategic areas which would both decisively improve peoples quality of life, and leverage significant power for the popular forces, and democratic government, in the economy.

- 7.3 These core measures would obviously need to be located within a macro-economic framework which is viable and sustainable. Equally, if the existing macro-economic framework is unable to accommodate the most basic elements of the Alliance agenda, it would need to be reworked to bring it in line with the programme adopted by the Alliance. An issue-based approach may appear attractive, but there is no way that a socio-economic programmes will be sustainable unless there is an alignment of fiscal and monetary policies with these programmes. Commitment to the extension of a basic welfare net, for example, is sheer rhetoric if a programme of deficit management involves a cut-back in existing, limited social security provision. On the other hand, agreement on programmes can't be purely needs driven, but also require a rigorous calculation of how such programmes are to be financed, and the capacity needed to implement them. Above all, it requires the backing of the broad liberation movement for success.

Alliance approach to processes of governance.

- 7.4 As we indicated at the beginning of the paper, there was little strategic planning before or after 1994, as to how the Alliance would deal with the processes of governance. This included how to transform the Departments, parastatals, and the public sector; relationship between policy making proposals in Ministries, and in the Alliance; policy making in Ministries; Parliamentary processes; and engagement with fora and statutory institutions, including Nedlac. Nor has there been a process of ongoing assessment, or mechanisms to deal with the problems which would inevitably be encountered. Alliance structures have only been brought in, if at all, on an ad hoc basis, or for crisis management.

- 7.5 Logically, the political structures of the Alliance should take responsibility to drive its own programme . This would, amongst others, rest on an implementation strategy identifying key areas inside (and outside) governance which need to be harnessed as a vehicle for the implementation of the programme. The ruling party, as with ruling parties throughout the world, should use its electoral mandate to ensure the implementation of its programme. The locus of decision-making on key political issues has, however, not been in the Alliance structures. Rather, this has tended to take place in individual Ministries, and the Alliance only engages with the product.
- 7.6 This has led to conflicting perspectives emerging between the democratic forces in the Executive (Cabinet) and the Legislature (Parliament); and in Nedlac and other structures , on what the strategy and content should be on socio-economic issues, including the thorny issue of the role of the state in the economy. In the absence of a coherent approach from the Alliance, other forces have sometimes occupied this space, whether in the form of business advisers in Ministries, conservative economists, or the old bureaucracy. Often they appear to be driving policy by default. At least this appears to be the case to those of us who are outside of government. This leads to the anomalous situation of Ministries feeling that they are being left without direction by the Alliance, saddled with policies which they feel obliged to defend, which are not broadly acceptable within the Alliance, or do not appear to reflect the programme as agreed upon. This is a recipe for ongoing conflict and division.
- 7.7 The alternative is for the Alliance to reach an Accord or National Agreement on strategic issues, as well as a programme to implement these at different levels of government. This would clearly bind the Alliance forces to actively pursue this agenda in all areas. It would guide for example, COSATU and the Government as to how to approach the various issues in Nedlac, rather than the two parties going there with separate and often competing agendas. It would remove the impression that government is acting as a neutral referee, sitting above the other players in society. Rather, the mass bias of the government, and its commitment to the implementation of a particular programme, would be the lodestar

which would clearly reflect the mandate of the majority party. The Alliance would therefore openly mobilise people for the implementation and defence of agreed programmes at the level of Parliament, Nedlac and other areas of governance.

- 7.8 The structured, collective input of the Alliance would decisively refute the view perpetuated by some right-wing forces that COSATU has now embarked on the role of unofficial opposition. It would also ensure that by going into Nedlac with a 'joint mandate', where possible, a co-operative approach between government and labour was developed, rather than Nedlac being seen as a delaying mechanism, or as an institution which prevents government from governing.
- 7.9 This ambitious approach involves both collective decision making and collective responsibility. It also requires a high level of ongoing co-ordination, to ensure that the process is managed effectively, given the inevitable differences in nuance and approach which will emerge from time to time. In the Norwegian situation, for example, this is driven by a top-level structure meeting weekly, involving the leadership of the Party and the Trade Unions, as well as the Prime Minister and the relevant Ministers. In our case this may require dynamic contact between the Alliance Secretariat with the Deputy President and the Chief Whip, Alliance NOB's from time to time and the Alliance Executive. This was the approach we took during negotiations on the Constitution. The whole Alliance's presence could be felt even by our enemies.

Re-examining the need for a Reconstruction Accord

- 7.10 One initial conceptualisation of the RDP was that there should be a **Reconstruction Accord** between COSATU and the ANC. The idea was to have a binding agreement or Pact in terms of which broad policy frameworks (such as those contained in the RDP) would be translated into detailed commitments as to how various areas of policy would be implemented. This would require the identification of strategic areas for transformation, methods of financing, legislation required, time frames,

and so on. The role of the labour movement in this perspective would be, not to enter into a no-strike, wage restraint mode but:

- to mobilise the working people for a decisive victory of the ANC in elections;
- to mobilise resources political, organisational, financial and otherwise to help drive the process of transformation- in the public service, parastatals, private sector, and communities.

7.11 In the event, this approach of a detailed Reconstruction Pact was not pursued, and the ANC was elected on the broad mandate of the RDP. Comrades, both from COSATU and other formations were deployed into parliament, Ministries, the public sector, and local government, on the basis of a popular, democratically formulated programme, but which taken alone, did not arm them to deal with the situation which was confronting them. Those in parliament, government and outside of these institutions hold different views of what the overall mandate is. There is no agreed to approach to measure success of RDP implementation. Some focus on RDP delivery while others call for a program based on RDP objectives. If it means so many things to those who drafted it, this has given plenty ammunition to it's opponents to redirect it.

7.12 A full and frank audit of progress and problems experienced still needs to be undertaken by the Alliance, measured against the targets we set ourselves. But few would seriously claim that, for whatever reasons, we have made anything like the progress we had hoped for. The proposals of the RDP, with certain exceptions, have been implemented in very patchy and confined areas. Limited, but important advances, have been made in areas such as labour legislation, health, education and to a certain extent water provision and land reform. However, serious questions have arisen, not only about the level of progress, but also whether the vision contained in the RDP is being followed, in vital areas such as housing, trade and industrial policy, job creation, public sector restructuring, fiscal policy, and others. In some instances, guidelines given by the RDP about how to implement these programmes seem to have been ignored.

- 7.13 Where we are failing, it is because we are attempting to build on the basis of past, failed policies, or vested interests are blocking real change. In areas such as housing, transport, and fiscal and monetary policy, we are succumbing to the blackmail of the "market". An interesting feature is how the private sector and financial institutions blame the government for the problems in the housing arena despite it being largely private sector driven.
- 7.14 In some peoples minds, the harsh realities of the current national and international situation, and our apartheid legacy, have relegated the RDP to being a well-meaning document which served its purpose- that is, to provide an elections platform for our country's first democratic elections. But when we drew up the RDP, we were aware of these 'harsh realities', and it was precisely designed to address these. The ANC gets accused by the masses and our opponents of having ditched the RDP. One employer remarked in a COSATU organised conference that the RDP was dead and in the mortuary awaiting burial. Of course this is wishful thinking on his part, but that is a view shared by some within our own ranks.
- 7.15 The purpose of this assessment is not to point fingers, but rather to reflect on whether the Alliance approach to transformation was a viable one, and if not, what is a way forward to move us beyond this current *impasse* or deadlock.
- 7.16 It may be necessary to revisit the need for a pact/ accord/agreement between COSATU and the ANC or within the Alliance. While there is a common perception that Accords have to be between, unions, government and business, there is no law which says that Accords have to be negotiated with Capital. Obviously, an Alliance agreement will for its implementation need certain elements to be negotiated with capital (dealt with in the next section), but this is different from deciding that you want the agreement itself to be tripartite in character. Here the approach of the Brenthurst group is instructive. They are not interested in influencing labour, but the government. They have no intention of tabling anything in NEDLAC, but to the government. The time is over for us shying away from being seen to act as one. Even without us doing so pressure has

always been mounted on us to separate. Capital will never tire of the old trick of accusing COSATU and the SACP of being the tail that wags the dog even though they know that this is not the case.

- 7.17 An Alliance accord would require agreement as to the priority tasks of social transformation, government, strategic areas for policy decision, and legislation or other measures needed for implementation. To be viable, this would need to be an integrated package which provided a solid platform to advance towards the comprehensive implementation of the RDP.
- 7.18 Refusal to consider the option of an Alliance pact (or to put forward a viable alternative) would be short-sighted for a number of reasons:
- Failure by the democratic forces to implement a programme will perpetuate a crisis environment, and a vacuum, which will be filled by business and other reactionary forces. The development of an 'informal Social Accord' between business and government, to 'stabilise' the situation, will be the worst of both worlds for labour and the Alliance.
 - In the absence of an Alliance agreement, government will continue to tend to play a 'mediating role' between business and labour.
 - If the democratic forces don't set the agenda, but constantly react to proposals and initiatives which we had no part in formulating, it will marginalise us and reduce us to fighting defensive battle on all fronts.
 - This scenario would be likely to lead to the gradual disintegration of the Alliance.
 - This would lead to increasing demoralisation and demobilisation of our people and their organisations.
 - Above all, we will be failing in giving leadership as the Alliance, particularly where hard choices have to be made.
- 7.19 The notion of an Alliance agreement would attempt to deal with these concerns. If better options are available to achieve the same objective, they should be put on the table.

- 7.20 We need to clarify how, without an Alliance accord, we would negotiate economic policy in Nedlac. Would we merely table the Social Equity document and demand its implementation, or having received various documents from the Nedlac parties, look at areas of commonality and disagreement in order to negotiate? This approach, safe as it may sound, is the worst of both worlds. We usually go for a lowest common denominator, or fight defensive battles following what may seem to be an understanding between government and Capital. (Government and business often appear to have the same advisors.)
- 7.21 A national agreement with the ANC on the other hand, presents us with an opportunity to have a joint negotiating position with government when entering into discussions with capital. This could also present an opportunity to the Alliance to bring about a new focus prior to and after the next elections.
- 7.22 Resistance to "social accords" have been largely based on experiences in other countries and fear of having to agree to no-strike provisions and wage restraint. Would an agreement, which excludes the above be acceptable or not? The alliance leadership have worked together enough to know that we can not achieve anything without us building trust. Put differently we can not hoodwink one another. This would have to be based on mutual trust, transparency and articulation of what our strategic objectives are. The masses will also need to be brought on board.
- 7.23 A Social Accord does not necessarily imply wage restraint or no-strike provisions:
- Wage restraint - an Accord in South Africa would need to reorganise the wage structure and raise the living standards of the majority of workers. It may entail restraints or cuts for the high-paid, including management. Some in the business sector would actually support this approach.

- No-strike provisions and demobilisation - There is no way the trade union movement would suspend its right to strike. Neither would such a call come from the SACP and ANC. There may be a danger of demobilisation, but this depends partly on the type of accord negotiated. It is unavoidable that if you exercise social power in an institutionalised way based on commitment to a particular agreement (which clearly you assess to be in the interest of working people) - this will result in having to exercise certain responsibilities, which implies limits. This is not a negative thing for the labour movement, if it is making major gains. It also opens up space for new forms of mobilisation and organisation. Further it opens up opportunities for COSATU to be actively involved in programmes that leads to improvement of life of our own people.

7.24 This can be contrasted with the current situation of an increasingly hostile policy environment, growing demobilisation, and the de facto imposition by employers of measures which roll back the gains of organised workers. Where we hold different views as the Alliance, we merely defend turf, but make no decisive movement at all. Proposals are not usually based on a joint approach, but at outmanoeuvring one another or winning a public debate. This is a dangerous and unnecessary game to play.

Elements of an accord

7.25 The selection of issues to form the basis of any national agreement should not be a wish-list, but a carefully thought out identification of strategic issues which will tilt the balance of economic power in favour of the popular forces, by giving the democratic state, and its supporting institutions, effective leverage over areas of investment, production, and delivery. At the same time, they should raise effective incomes and create basic services, particularly for the poorest 70%. The combination of supply side measures to boost production; the effect of rising demand in the economy, as a result of economic improvements for the majority; and mechanisms by the state to target investment in job creation, would all be part of a coherent strategy to address the crisis of unemployment, particularly for the youth and rural women. Fiscal and monetary policies

would have to be realigned to facilitate this strategy, as would the process of restructuring the public service and parastatals.

7.26 **Two types of interventions would form the core areas of an Alliance Agreement.**

7.26.1 Firstly, areas which would be driven and organised by the state. These interventions would be targeted towards, providing a social wage across the board, addressing poverty, unleashing economic activity, and attacking unemployment. Proposed areas of focus are:

- public mass housing and infrastructure;
- national health system;
- social safety net (including comprehensive unemployment insurance; old age pensions; etc.);
- public transport system;
- land reform;
- public job creation measures- including public works, procurement, and taxation strategies;
- public sector restructuring accord- agreement on the reorganisation of the public service and parastatals, to ensure delivery.
- public investment strategy

7.26.2 The second set of interventions would relate to areas which are primarily implemented in the private sector, but require state regulation. Some of the strategic areas which would need to be focused on are:

- an income/ wage policy. From government's side, the commitment to increase the social wage- and therefore the income of working people as a whole (the publicly provided goods and services which increase the real value of the workers basic wage) is outlined in the measures described above. The other critical area is a programme to

reduce the apartheid wage gap. A flattening of the wage and salary structure between the top and the bottom would represent a massive gain for economic redistribution, and reduction of inequality, given the size of the gap we have inherited. It is not true that this can only be achieved at the level of collective bargaining. Deliberate strategies have been successfully embarked on by countries internationally to reduce their gaps (for example, Norway's "solidarity alternative" which provides that the lowest paid, relatively, get the highest increases.) A target could be set for society setting out the ratios at various levels. This could be included in the Employment Equity White Paper and legislation. Government procurement should require the meeting of targets. The existing policy in the public sector of reducing the wage gap should be accelerated, and this same approach should be implemented by government in the parastatals. Reducing the wage gap would be linked to reorganisation of grading and training;

- a **national training** and general HRD drive. Again, targets should be set for this, and the instruments of government used as a lever to ensure transformation. This should be seen as a key element of affirmative action for workers. The national training levy, proposed in 'Social Equity' should be introduced;
- intervention to ensure **productive investment** in the economy. High interest rates and lack of commitment to economic development have resulted in hot, speculative investment. Measures to ensure productive investment should include prescribed assets which provide that a certain proportion of investments have to go into public projects, and the introduction of tax disincentives to penalise speculation (including the tax on dividends -STC- which the Department of Finance wants to scrap). There should be a deliberate policy of lowering interest rates;
- the creation of a **national retirement fund (pension) scheme**. This would be compulsory and ensure portability



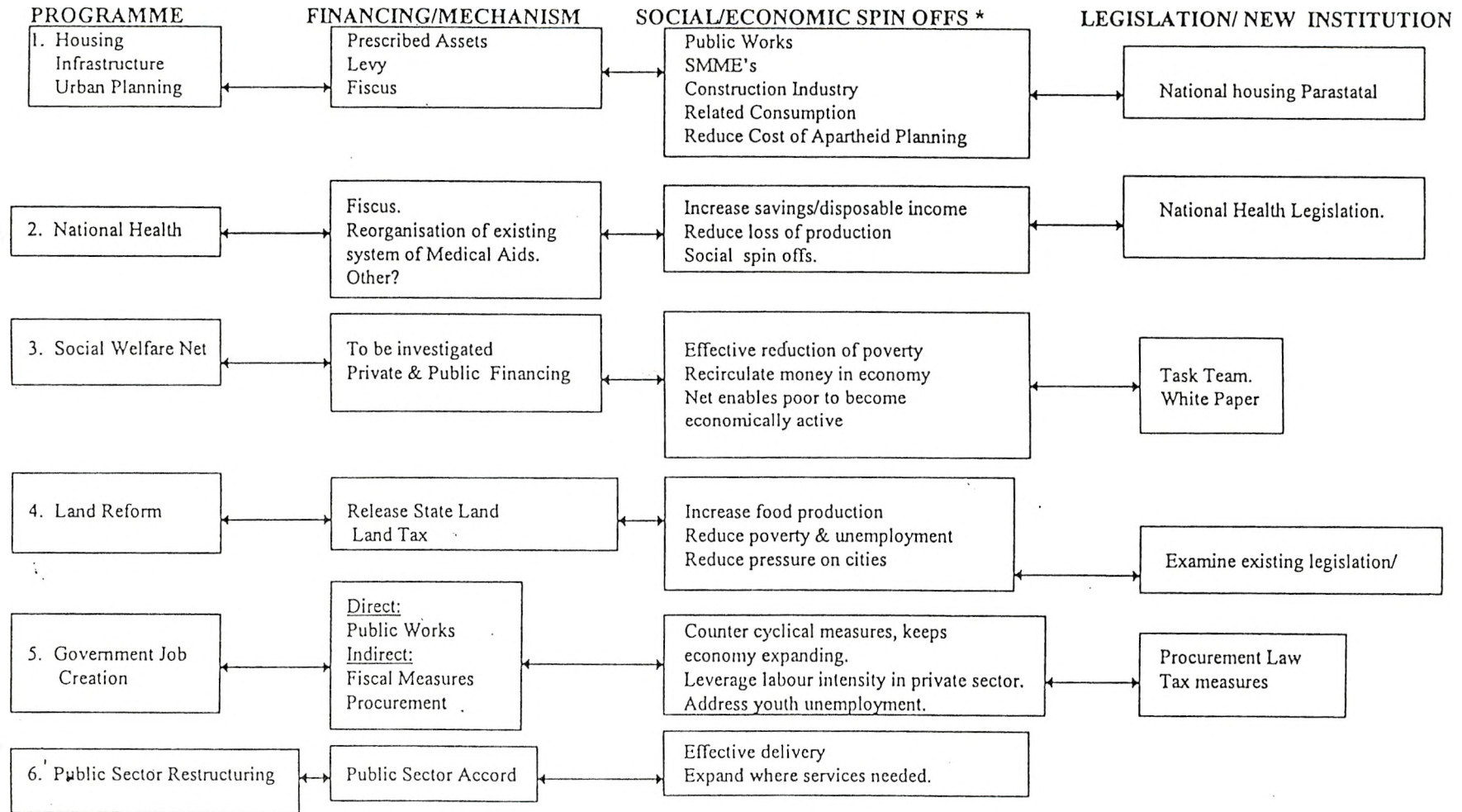
and worker control. It would be a key strategic lever in the economy.

- **supply side measures** and a **social plan**. Measures to assist the process of restructuring our industries, and to put alternatives in place where industries are downscaling. 'Social Equity' proposals for a Social Plan Act/Fund, and a National Restructuring Fund for new technology and work organisation. This must also relate to communities where these sectors or industries are found.
- a **national employment strategy**, which limits retrenchments, and creates incentives for job creation, and disincentives for capital intensity.

7.27 The attached tables illustrate most of these areas of intervention for the Alliance, some of their economic and social linkages, as well as ideas for mechanisms, financing and legislation to take the proposed areas forward. The strategic areas identified are not welfare-driven, but have an economic and developmental logic, to unleash the economic creativity and potential of the majority of people, previously excluded.

Graphic depiction of proposed Accord

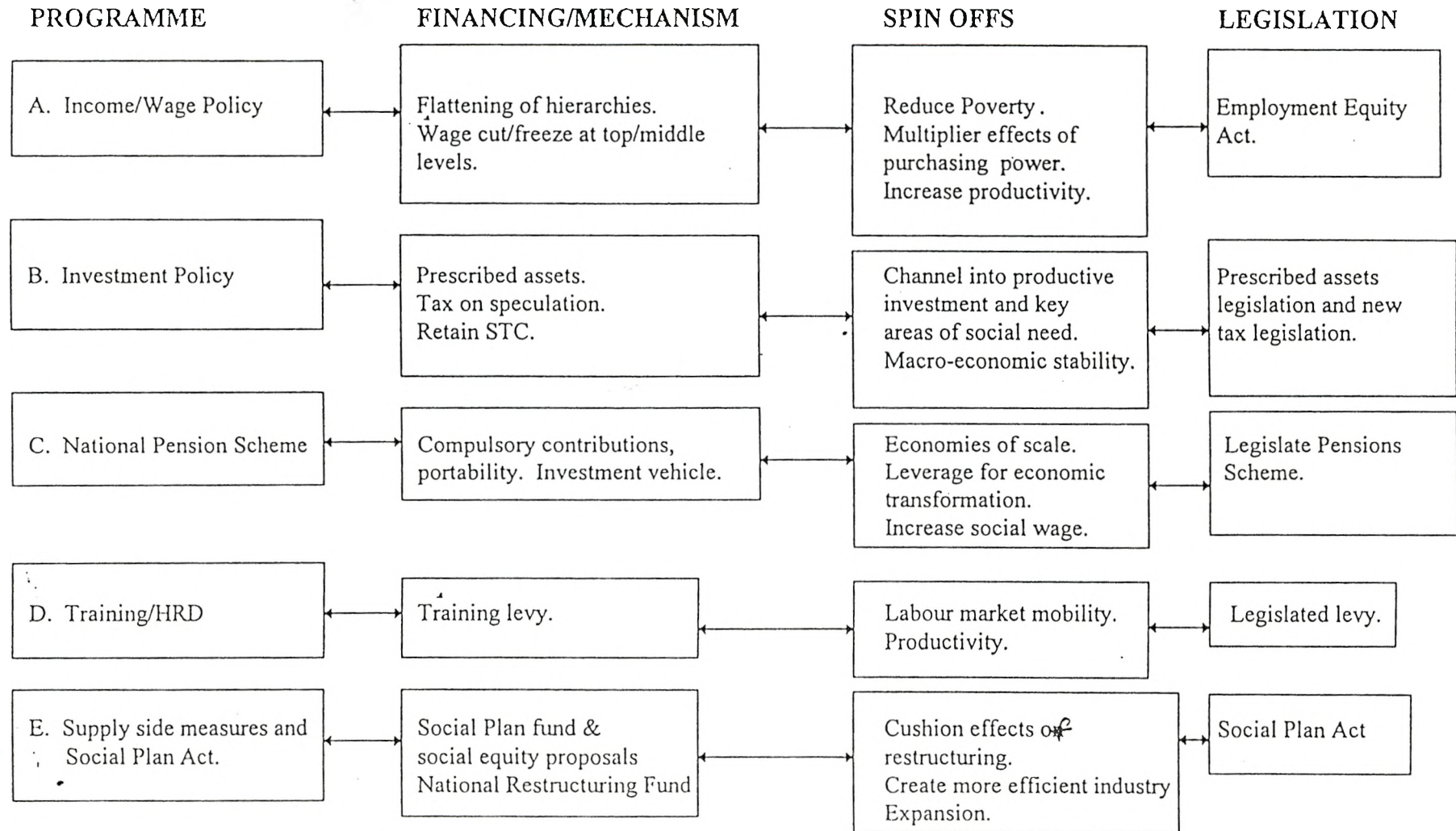
STATE DRIVEN ACTIVITY



(* note - all increase social wage)

113.

STATE REGULATED PRIVATE SECTOR ACTIVITY



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- 7.28 It is important to note that in all areas, benefits accrue to working people and the poor across the board. Economic benefits are not limited to the employed, in areas such as health, social welfare, housing etc.- which a private sector driven policy would tend to do. Proposals in these areas would clearly debunk the myth that trade unions are only narrowly concerned with the welfare of their own members.
- 7.29 The platform outlined above doesn't claim to represent any consensus as to what the elements of a national agreement should be. It may be that there are key elements missing, or that it is felt that some of the issues raised are not priorities, or that the list needs to be tighter. What it does do is to convey the vision of an integrated platform of issues which could provide the basis for such an agreement.

Alliance conception of the economic role of the state

- 7.30 Without examining the subject in detail, it is important to note that there are a range of views within the Alliance on the economic role which the state can or should play. Part of the Alliance discussion would need to be, not so much a theoretical debate, but our strategic conception of the role the state should play in implementing the Alliance platform. It is clear that the RDP envisaged extensive state intervention in a variety of areas, and a leading role for the state in others. No convincing argument has been forwarded as to why this need has changed.
- 7.31 If anything events since 1994 clearly indicate that where we rely on market-driven programmes, there are disastrous results. We need to look no further than the examples of housing, and the private sector's record in job creation, where even by their own admission we are producing jobless (in fact job-loss) growth despite a positive economic growth. In fact most companies have reported higher profits than ever before. The question is as to whether such profit go to investment or to lining pockets of CEO's.
- 7.32 Some are beginning to believe the myth that real growth and development will primarily come about through the role of private capital. Others exaggerate the power of capital to hold the democratic state hostage, and

underrate the economic power of both the state, organised workers and the broad mass of our people. The failure to actively direct and harness this latter power will leave the country's economy hostage to the whims of the private sector. It is also a mistake to treat capital as a homogenous bloc, and not to recognise that there are areas where different groupings of capital have significantly different interests. For instance some international companies, more than local business, may be in favour of investing in people and implementation of genuine affirmative action since they have seen the spin-offs in their own countries. Furthermore some would know the advantages of negotiating with a strong union while local business are looking for a Singapore type union. Another group of business would realise the importance of joint decision making on the shop floor and the link to improved productivity.

- 7.33 The Alliance needs to audit areas where the state has significant economic muscle, and ways in which this can be harnessed for reconstruction. Further, creative ways need to be found to harness both the potential economic muscle of the trade union movement, as well as the development of new economic levers by the democratic state. Investment companies linked to trade unions should be encouraged to invest in the productive sector of the economy rather than join the ranks of speculators in the JSE. We should team up with international unions who also have massive capital in the form of pension funds.
- 7.34 A brief survey of the institutions under the control, or potential control of the state and trade unions, reveals that it is not an exaggeration to say that the democratic state and its allies potentially have hundreds of billions of rand directly or indirectly under their control, to lever transformation in the economy.

This includes:

- The national fiscus (budget), through which the state spends billions of rand annually. Significant portions of this can be harnessed for RDP objectives through the use of procurement policies at national, provincial and local levels, which provide that

companies winning government tenders have to meet certain criteria;

- Existing parastatals, which control huge assets and budgets, in strategic areas of the economy such as telecommunications, energy and transport;
- Potential new parastatals, such as housing, which would give government leverage over areas of the construction industry, pricing of building materials etc.
- Government intervention in the financial sector, which includes the proposal to set up Post Office Banks, which would service people throughout the country, and provide low interest loans and other services on terms more favourable than the commercial sector;
- Public control of the pension and provident funds, which are worth close on R500 billion, through the Public Investment Commission for public service pensions, and the setting up of a National Pension Fund, which would amalgamate all existing private sector funds. This would allow workers to direct investment of their capital, including through the use of prescribed assets;
- The setting up of a Reconstruction Bond for those who want to invest in public reconstruction projects;
- The harnessing of institutions such as the IDC, DBSA and others to channel investment in job-creating industry, and development projects;
- Transforming the Reserve Bank, to ensure that its monetary policies assist, rather than frustrate expansionary and developmental economic policies;
- Leverage of the investment potential of the trade unions.

8. ALLIANCE ACCORD & NEGOTIATIONS WITH CAPITAL

"Transformation is not possible in a developing country like South Africa - not with our history, our incompetent civil service and inexperienced politicians. One should question whether transformation is necessary at all..." (Leading businessman, Millennium magazine, 1996)

- 8.1 No proposal is being made for COSATU to enter a comprehensive accord with capital, through Nedlac or any other forum.
- 8.2 Rather, specific agreements would be entered into with other stakeholders, including capital, on specific areas, for example training. Alliance partners would go into such negotiations within the comprehensive framework set out by the Alliance Agreement.
- 8.3 This would not be confined to Nedlac, but would include other multipartite forums, such as the NTB, and industry forums.
- 8.4 In our proposal for an Alliance Agreement outlined above, we identified two broad categories of interventions which would constitute such a programme - 'state driven activity' and 'state regulated private sector activity.' For the latter proposals, most but not all would require agreements to be reached in Nedlac and other forums.
- 8.5 We should have no illusion that implementation of the Alliance Agreement will be easily accepted by business. It would represent the most serious concrete challenge by the democratic forces to the relations of economic power in the country.
- 8.6 The sort of question we can expect to be asked is "What's in it for us? What do you bring to the party?" The answer to this is that it is an opportunity for business to make reparations for the devastation they have created in this country over the apartheid years; to create social stability; to allow people to benefit from economic participation; and to themselves ultimately share in the huge economic expansion which they have been too short-sighted to invest in.
- 8.7 We should not fall into the trap of the quid pro quo ('this for that') line, which suggests that workers have to sacrifice in order to get what is rightfully theirs. It is ludicrous to suggest for example that workers earning below the poverty line should accept a wage freeze, in order to benefit from basic social security and health care.

- 8.8 Having said this, there is nothing wrong with negotiating a national productivity agreement, as proposed in 'Social Equity', which links productivity improvements to not only wages, but job creation and investment. This will make it clear that the trade union movement is in favour of proposals which will lead to an expansion in the economy, as long as it is directly linked to an improvement in workers lives.
- 8.9 So the commitments the trade union movement make, would be a commitment to transformation mobilisation and economic development, not a quid pro quo for business. We are committed to raising the levels of productivity in the economy. But we are also committed to closing the wage gap, training, ensuring investment in job creation, stabilising the price of basic commodities etc. These things are linked, and we have to accept that the responsibility for driving the process lies with the Alliance. Business is too short-sighted to even do what is ultimately in its own interests.
- 8.10 COSATU sees no contradiction in the development of an Alliance Accord, with the process of tripartite negotiations in Nedlac and other fora. Any interpretation to the contrary, would be to misunderstand the purpose of these fora, as they were historically conceived- as fora for transformation. An Accord within the alliance would be a fundamental means of ensuring that our participation in tripartite structures is not reduced to meaningless form, but is indeed driven by content. In other words, it would provide a critical mass of constituencies who back a clear programme of transformation.
- 8.11 It would give a new focus to all the efforts of the alliance – for the ANC, it would guide the majority party in government, for the unions, it would give a focus to the annual collective bargaining rounds with the business sector, and for government, organised labour and the community in Nedlac, it would be the programme which would be championed and which would be the framework for national agreements. Such a grouping of transformative forces would be able to win widespread public support, and be the basis to win over sections of business, instead of us constantly

acceding to the demands of those who want the government to abandon its election mandate.

9. DEVELOPMENT OF COSATU'S ABILITY TO ENGAGE EFFECTIVELY

- 9.1 *"The changing situation demands of us to redefine our role. New methods of dealing with problems, demands and expectations will have to be found. While workers in the past may have joined us because of our links with the Congress movement, in the future they will join us primarily because they expect us to safeguard their interest..."*
It will be a sad day for trade unionism if COSATU was to become a sweetheart federation. Our members will do to us what we have done with the old TUCSA unions."
- (1994 Exco paper)
- 9.2 The proposals in this paper no matter how good they are, will have no impact unless we seriously focus our organisation on achieving the objectives we have set out. It is useless lamenting about our lack of capacity, when we don't effectively utilise the capacity we already have. We need to harness the structures, experience and expertise we have in our ranks. We are not tapping into the wealth of experience, which the collective worker leadership has accumulated over the last two decades. We need to 're-gear' the organisation for the challenges that are facing us.
- 9.3 A refocussing of the organisation will assist us in identifying genuine capacity constraints which we are facing, and measures to deal with these. Once we are clear as to what we want as an organisation, we then need to ensure that the necessary research and technical capacity is developed or tapped on.
- 9.4 The structures of the Federation need to take political responsibility for developing coherent policy options. Good technical research, which we need, as well as scenario planning, must be guided by the policy framework we are setting for ourselves. The organisation as a whole must take responsibility for going beyond the generality of Congress resolutions, to develop substantial policy proposals which can be placed on the table for the Alliance to debate.

9.5 *"The lack of involvement by the rank and file in policy formulation can not go on forever. In the late eighties almost all our shop stewards felt confident enough to explain our policies, campaigns and strategies. We were able within days to mobilise our members around a number of campaigns. This tradition is fast dying." - (1994 Exco Paper)*

The involvement of our membership is critical in two respects:

- Firstly in informing the policies and ensuring that there is understanding of the issues which will become highly contested in society at large.
- Secondly, to ensure that we lead the process of mobilising society in support of the Alliance's programme for transformation.

9.6 The involvement of our membership is vital if the programme we develop is to have long term legitimacy. In this sense, we have to learn from the international experience. In recent years, an ambitious programme between the governing party and the main trade union federation was the basis of Australian politics for more than a decade. There was one serious weakness in that accord process – it was, and certainly was seen, as an accord of leaders. This had a negative effect in two ways. First, when the accord process dealt with difficult policy choices, it was seen to be the choices of the leaders. There was very little defence of it on the shopfloor when such policies were attacked. Second, sections of the union members were critical of the union federations closeness to government, and it was cited as one reason for the decline in trade union activity and membership.

9.7 We should root the alliance accord in an active membership process, which not only contributes to its original content, but importantly, becomes the basis for a continual defence of the programme. Within Cosatu, we should activate the very successful workers forums which we used during the 1994 election campaign. Our education programmes would need to address the content, and implementation mechanisms of the programme.

- 9.8 Beyond the shopfloor, we should make resources available to have on-going forums in the community, embracing our shop stewards and membership, but also members from civics the ANC and SACP, and other community based organisations. The community structures have faced many problems and challenges in recent years. A people driven programme offers an important means of revitalising community structures. In recent times, the relationship with the student and youth movements, has not been as close as it should . In part, the lack of a national programme has meant that isolated, defensive struggles have replaced a formative strategy for transformation. If we make the process one where all parts of the democratic movement can contribute, a national focus will be brought to the work of all the sections of the community.
- 9.9 Movement for Reconstruction: Congress and various affiliates have made creative proposals ranging from the setting up work brigades to the setting up of a civil society RDP fund, and the donation of working time to the RDP. There needs to be a national campaign by the Alliance to mobilise people around these and other proposals.
- 9.10 In all reports to the various COSATU and affiliate structures, we have always maintained that existence of a strong organisation is key. We however tend to base such strength on the basis of attendance at meetings and marches or stayaways. While these are important indicators, we should not undermine the strong shopfloor organisation that we have as affiliates. This is precisely so because while workers may be absent from COSATU activities, they are available for affiliate activities since they relate closely to their day to day needs as workers. The challenge facing us is how to link these activities to the macro issues politically and economically. What we require is a capacity for affiliates to reach their members and to put aside time for discussions of COSATU linked activities.
- 9.11 The challenge for us is to find creative organisational approaches to mobilise our structures around campaigns for transformation, rather than limiting ourselves to reactive oppositional activity. This needs to involve not only the alliance and the MDM, but even the government in for

example national literacy, health and housing campaigns, in which communities are mobilised into brigades on a national scale. Action will activate our structures, rather than debate about why they are dying.

- 9.12 Once the Alliance has agreed to a joint programme, we therefore need to avoid a situation where the Alliance Accord becomes the beginning and end of the programme. We need to ensure that our programme is concretised in campaigns relating to issues such as health, crime, housing etc., as a way of involving our members in policy formulation, implementation and struggle. For our part, we intend to use the proposals in this document as a basis for mass mobilisation of our members. We also need to use this to rekindle worker participation in the ANC, SACP and civics.

10. WAY FORWARD

- 10.1 This paper has attempted to outline the need for a new programme and strategy for COSATU and the Alliance in taking forward the process of transforming our country.
- 10.2 We have proposed, as the core of this strategy, that the Alliance enter into a National Agreement on a programme to implement the RDP in strategic areas with specifics on legislation, mass involvement, mechanisms, financing and time frames. Secondly that this Agreement be combined with a programme of national mass mobilisation for transformation. Thirdly that the broad MDM forces need to be involved in the development and implementation of the programme. Finally that the ANC, as majority party, needs to align all processes of governance towards achievement of this programme. The same should apply to other Alliance partners. We need to realign our programmes to this new approach if we are to succeed in the democratisation and transformation processes.
- 10.3 We propose that we do not attempt, as COSATU or the Alliance to enter into a comprehensive national agreement with business. Rather, we would

negotiate within the Alliance framework, on specific issues needing tripartite agreement, both in Nedlac and other forums.

- 10.4 There is probably a limited window of opportunity allowing such an agreement to be negotiated. There is the real danger that the current economic policy direction, and the resultant alienation of the Alliance's constituency, will become so entrenched, as to make the negotiation of such an Agreement impossible.
- 10.5 We therefore need to agree on a number of core issues:
- Whether the broad approach contained in the proposal is acceptable. If so, how to take it forward in Alliance structures;
 - Further identification, removal or refinement of the strategic issues contained in our proposal for an Alliance Accord, bearing in mind the need to avoid a wish-list;
 - Mechanisms to develop joint Alliance policy proposals on areas identified for the Alliance Agreement. The Alliance must own the process;
 - Proposals for a programme for mass mobilisation for transformation, and involvement of allies in the MDM;
 - Proposals for transformation of Alliance structures to enable the Alliance to effectively drive such a programme;
 - Measures which need to be taken in COSATU to ensure our effective participation;
 - Utilising resources available to the democratic movement to assist in: development and defence of our macro-economic policies; development of policy options on implementation mechanisms; and monitoring of the implementation of agreed policies by the state; and
 - An approach to governance, given that a number of policy areas have been finalised or are far advanced. Further that only some of these proposals take us forward in terms of implementing the goals of the RDP. There would need to be an agreement in the Alliance as to how to adjust these, where necessary.

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11. CONCLUSION

This paper is going to be presented to all the COSATU structures. Our structures are expected to engage in discussion with a view to arriving at a broad agreement in the EXCO in February next year. Those issues which are not resolved will be debated either in the April CEC, or the 6th National Congress, depending on some issues.

At the same time, the paper will be made available the ANC and SACP to help them gain sight of the issues we are debating and to factor them into their own internal discussion, whereafter an Alliance process can be set in place.

Ends/

Joint Shop Steward Council

Education Focus on The September Commission Report

Cosatu - ref programme :

*All programmes will be hosted at Community
House, Salt River Road, Salt River*

⇒ JULY : Tuesday 29, at 6pm
Topic : Democracy and alliances:
A political programme for transformation

⇒ AUGUST: Tuesday 5, at 6pm
Topic : Building women leadership

⇒ AUGUST: Tuesday 12, at 6pm
Topic : Reclaiming redistribution: *An
economic programme for
transformation*

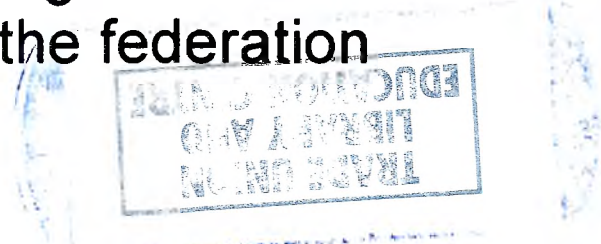


⇒ **AUGUST:** Tuesday 19, at 6pm
Topic : Democracy for delivery :
Transforming the public service

⇒ **AUGUST:** Tuesday 26, at 6pm
Topic : What kind of Trade union
movement do we want

Topic : Democracy in the Workplace

Topic : Building the engine of Cosatu:
restructuring the federation



Forward to participatory and democratic debate!

PROCESSED

The September scenarios

Cosatu's September Commission outlines three possible future scenarios to provoke discussion within the federation about the future of the labour movement

The trade union movement faces complex and difficult new challenges. We were born in the struggle against apartheid, as a component in the broad national liberation movement. Our struggles culminated, in April 1994, in the first democratic elections in the history of our country. We are now living and working and negotiating in a democracy, and our alliance partner is the democratically elected government.

We face difficult economic challenges. On the one hand, our goal is to provide for the basic needs of the people. On the other, we have to respond to the competitive pressures of the global economy.

The political and economic terrain has changed fundamentally. What will our country look like in the year 2005? The future is filled with uncertainties. These uncertainties will shape and limit the strategic options available to Cosatu. If we want to develop powerful and effective policies and strategies, we need to analyse the key uncertainties which will affect us. We have identified the following as the key uncertainties facing Cosatu:

- the extent and nature of economic development;

- the nature of the labour market, in other words, what kind of workplaces and jobs will we be organising in 2005? How many workers will be unemployed?

- the vision and programme of the ANC;
- the nature and strategies of the capitalist class;
- the degree of coherence or fragmentation of social values in South Africa (whether people share the same basic values and attitudes to justice, fairness, the state, etc);
- the prospects for socialism.

It is impossible to predict the future. The September Commission has drawn up three scenarios to explore these uncertainties and provoke discussion within the federation about the future of labour. The three scenarios are called *The Desert and the Promised Land*, *Skorokoro* and *Pap, Vleis and Gravy*.

The scenarios are stories about the future. The scenarios are not stories about the strategies of Cosatu. They are stories about the forces and factors outside Cosatu, beyond Cosatu's control. Each story is designed to highlight critical challenges we may face in the future, and to provoke debate about the strategic responses which Cosatu could choose. There are other stories that could be told about the future, but we believe these highlight the most important issues for Cosatu.



The Desert and the Promised Land

In this scenario, there is no economic development, no RDP delivery, and a high level of class conflict. South Africa finds itself in the desert instead of the promised land of the RDP. Could socialism provide the way out of the desert and towards the promised land?

In 1996, the ANC government announces its new macro-economic policy. In the few years that follow, the economy stagnates. There is very little RDP delivery as the government focuses on reducing state expenditure. There are retrenchments across the economy. Only the informal sector seems to be growing.

There is growing conflict between employers and unions in collective bargaining and at Nedlac. In 1998, the employers table a demand that labour agree to wage restraint and industrial peace. Labour rejects this. Employers stage a walkout. Government closes Nedlac down.

Centralised bargaining collapses as employers pull out of bargaining councils. Although workers are militant, unions tend to lose strikes because of the poor economic situation.

The ANC moves further to the right and signs an austerity package with the IMF. There are massive demonstrations against the worsening conditions of the masses. Placards are seen asking, "Where is the RDP? Where is the promised land?" and, "We the masses are in the desert – where is our Moses?"

Powerful organisations of the unemployed, the youth and the communities emerge. The government detains a number of leaders. Government leaders promise to look into the people's legitimate grievances, but warn against

false prophets who mislead the people. The SACP splits, with half its leadership remaining in the ANC, and the others joining an alliance of Left organisations to build a workers' party.

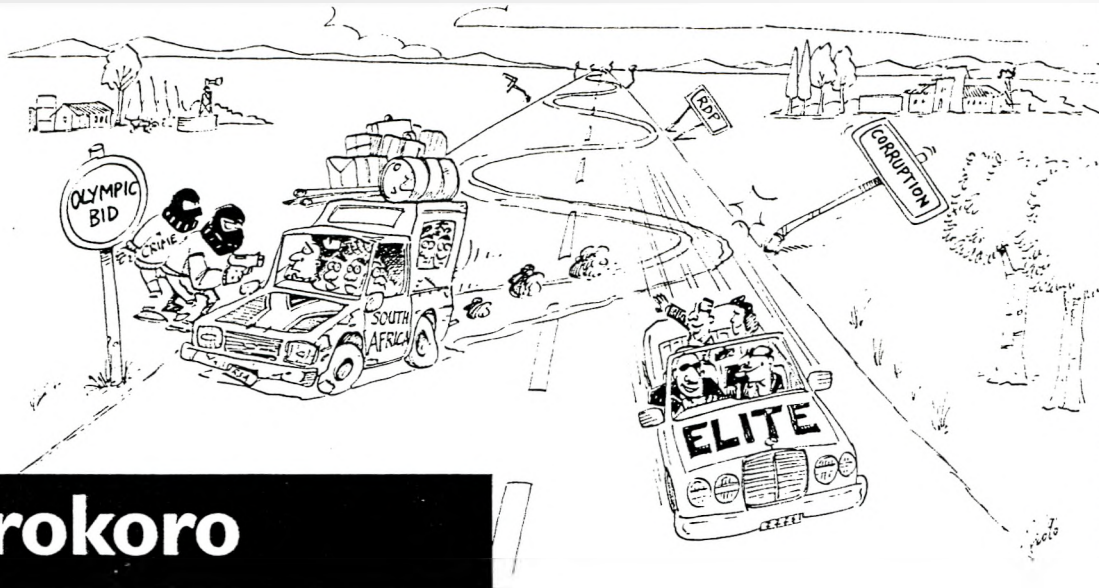
Should Cosatu remain in alliance with the ANC and campaign for it in the 2004 elections, or should it ally itself with the new workers' party and the growing popular alliance against ANC government policies? This is the major question being debated in the federation as it prepares for its congress in September 2003.

Threats to Cosatu

- Cosatu could lose the gains it made in the years before and after 1990.
- Cosatu could become weaker as it becomes more difficult to win strikes and improve wages and conditions because of the deteriorating economy.
- Cosatu could become narrowly focused on militant wage bargaining and lose sight of broader working class issues.

Opportunities for Cosatu

- Cosatu could become stronger by drawing on its militant tradition to organise the resistance of workers.
- Cosatu could broaden its perspective to take up living conditions and political issues as well as wages.
- Cosatu could play a central role in forging a new popular alliance, and in building a new socialist movement in opposition to government.



Skorokoro

In this scenario there is some economic growth and modest delivery. The main features are, on the one hand, increasing social fragmentation and conflict, and on the other hand, the rapid self-empowerment of black business and the black middle class. South Africa is a skorokoro zigzagging from problem to problem.

By 1999 the growth in GDP has been 4% per year, 300 000 houses have been built and 400 000 new jobs have been created. However, unemployment is still at 30%. Despite these problems, there has been a rapid emergence of black business and the expansion of a black middle class. Newspapers are filled with reports of new millionaires, new corporate deals and high salaries of government officials and consultants.

Ethnicity, racism, provincialism and regionalism become very powerful as a result of lack of delivery and conflict over resources. This makes it even more difficult to deliver. Patronage and corruption become the order of the day in government and in civil society.

Trade unions face ongoing problems like the "five madoda" at Rustenburg Platinum, like the Turning Wheel, like violence on the mines. There is increasing competition between affiliates for members. Union activists continue seeking greener pastures elsewhere. Provincial governments in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape establish EPZs to attract foreign investment. The government stops extending bargaining council agreements to non-parties.

Organisations have clear racial identities – the NP is coloured and white, the ANC and Cosatu are African. The NP organises "responsible" coloured unions in the Western Cape and undermines Sactwu and Samwu.

On the ground, there is a lack of co-operation and violent conflict in communities and on the shopfloor. The rainbow nation does not exist. In 1998 it is announced that Cape Town has failed in its bid to host the Olympic Games.

The ANC zigzags from policy to policy. It announces privatisation, but backs down when workers take mass action. It announces a crackdown on corruption and crime, but takes no firm steps. It proposes a new tax on the wealthy,

but changes its mind when they protest that this will discourage foreign investors. It regularly announces new measures to transform the public service, but keeps changing its policies under pressure from various constituencies.

There are repeated calls by business, other political parties and the press for the tripartite alliance to end. While many leaders in the ANC think this would be a good idea, the dominant view is that breaking the alliance would undermine support for the ANC and worsen the divisions in society.

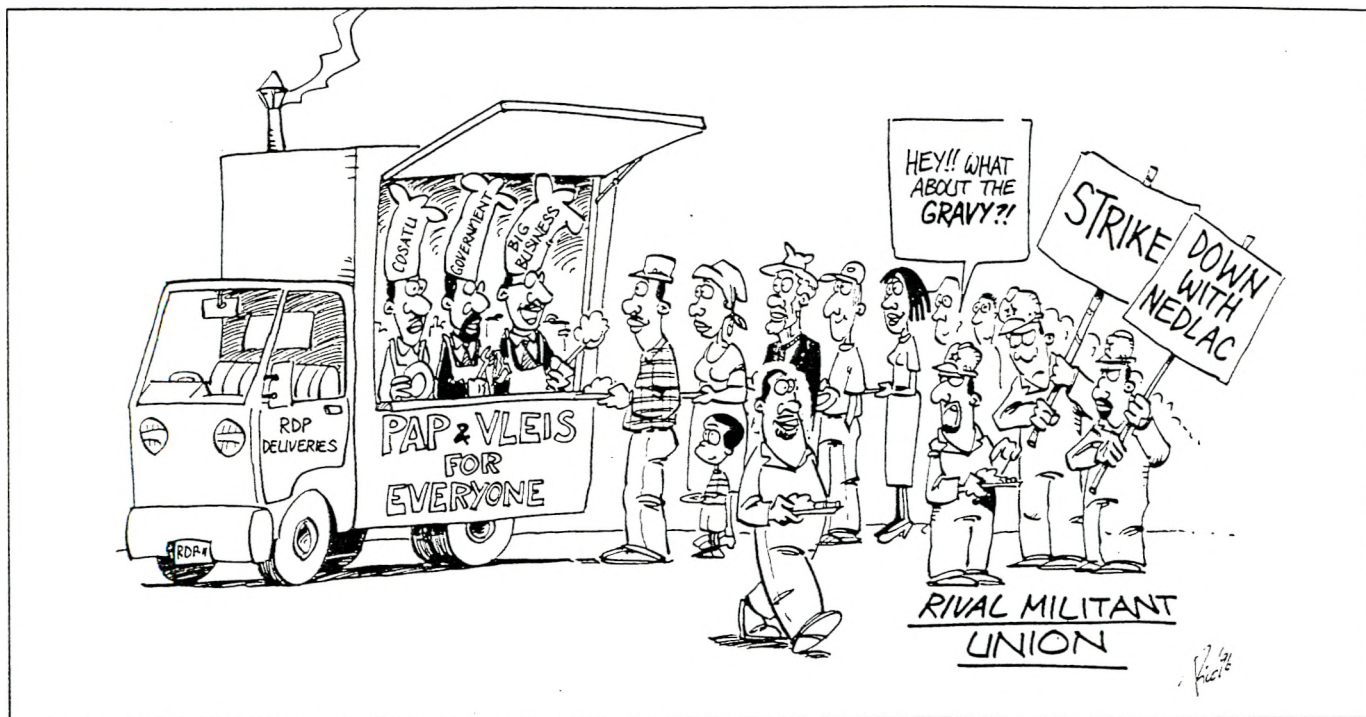
In their secretariat report to the Cosatu congress at the end of 2003, the federation's leadership states that there is a social crisis in South Africa: "The government lacks a vision of where we are going. There is no leadership in civil society. We are rapidly becoming a skorokoro society, and we face the danger of becoming a skorokoro union movement as well."

Threats to Cosatu

- Cosatu could be weakened by the many divisions and conflicts in society.
- The culture of self-enrichment and the growth of a black middle class could undermine the unions' culture of solidarity.
- Cosatu could become a reactive trade union movement, responding to initiatives of others but unable to take initiatives of its own.
- The ANC could move further to the right.

Opportunities for Cosatu

- Cosatu could develop strategies for unifying workers and overcoming divisions in the workplace.
- Cosatu could win wide public support by developing policies for more effective delivery by the public service, and for exposing mismanagement and corruption.
- Cosatu could provide leadership to society and the ANC by putting forward a vision based on clear economic and social policies.



Pap, Vleis and Gravy

In this scenario there is massive economic growth and development. Jobs are created and the RDP delivers. There is pap en vleis for most people. The unions are involved in deal-making, joint decision-making and co-determination at all levels of society. But are they getting caught in the gravy?

From 1996 onwards, productivity agreements are signed in many sectors. In 1998, after 18 months of negotiation, a breakthrough social accord is negotiated at Nedlac.

Over the next six years, there is tremendous growth in all sectors. All kinds of small and medium companies flourish. There is an increase in sub-contracting, part-time and temporary work.

This means that there is a wide range of new jobs and new workers: part-time, casual, seasonal and sub-contracted workers; hotel and restaurant workers; clerical, service and financial workers; public sector workers; skilled workers, scientists and technicians; and people working in music, film and advertising studios. There are big differences in wages and conditions of all these different workers. Many women are employed in low-paid and vulnerable sectors, for example, seasonal workers in the tourist industry. Millions of people are still unemployed and many work in the informal sector.

Companies are under tremendous competitive pressures. Managers put pressure on workers and their unions to assist in improving productivity and quality, and to work

harder, faster and smarter. There is also continual pressure for wage moderation in the private and the public sectors.

After 2002 there seems to be some decline in investment and growth figures, and government calls for new negotiation around wage moderation, flexibility and industrial peace. After lengthy meetings of the tripartite alliance behind closed doors, and further tough negotiations at Nedlac, labour agrees on wage moderation in exchange for greater investment by business and government in training. The following week, the minister of finance and the president of Cosatu are prominent in the grandstands, cheering the amaboko-boko to victory against the All Blacks.

At the same time, a new militant federation emerges. Although it is still small, it attacks the national agreement struck at Nedlac as a sellout. Unions should fight for higher wages for their members, not get involved in solving management's problems, it argues. This federation also argues against unions getting involved in politics or political alliances.

Informal sector organisations such as the Hawkers and Vendors Organisation, apply to affiliate to Cosatu. New unions and professional associations appear among the more skilled and professional workers. They do not affiliate to Cosatu, saying that it does not offer them anything.

Over the years, RDP delivery increases. Millions of houses are built, but there are still huge shack settlements.

Despite tremendous progress, the successes of the

Readers should ask themselves how should Cosatu respond if we find ourselves in THE DESERT AND THE PROMISED LANDS; in SKOROKORO; or in PAP, VLEIS AND GRAVY? Readers are invited to write letters to give your views. These will be sent to the September Commission and some will be published in The Shopsteward.

new South Africa seem shaky. There are questions over the political direction of the ANC government, and over the prospects for continued economic growth. Will there still be pap en vleis for most people? Who will get the gravy? What about those who have not yet benefited from growth or the RDP?

"We need to encourage open debate about our role and future direction. There is no sign of such debate in our structures or among our members," says the general secretary of Cosatu in his address to the federation's congress in 2003.

Threats to Cosatu

- Cosatu may be unable to develop the strategies for organising the many new kinds of workers and workplaces created by economic growth, and so lose out to other unions.
- Involvement in so many forums of joint decision-making could co-opt and weaken Cosatu, making it dependent on

the state.

- Cosatu may lack the expertise, information and capacity to enter into such complex negotiations and participation.
- Agreements on productivity and wage moderation may alienate the members from the leadership, making Cosatu vulnerable to competition from more militant unions.
- Cosatu may become a Tucsa of the 1990s – complacent, with no clear strategies, and with no vision of socialism.

Opportunities for Cosatu

- Cosatu could increase its membership both in traditional sectors and in new sectors, and build big strong organisation.
- Cosatu could make use of its access to tripartite institutions and state resources to build its organisational capacity.
- Cosatu could democratise the workplace, extend worker participation in economic decision-making, and influence society at all levels.
- Cosatu could make significant advances, over the medium term, for workers in terms of job opportunities, wages, working conditions, training and careers, the improvement of the social wage, etc.
- Cosatu could develop a programme of achieving socialism through reforms which democratise institutions and extend social regulation of the economy.

SUMMARY OF THE SEPTEMBER SCENARIOS

UNCERTAINTY	THE DESERT AND THE PROMISED LANDS	SKOROKORO	PAP, VLEIS AND GRAVY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	stagnant	slow growth	rapid growth
VISION OF ANC	conservative	moderate	radical
LABOUR MARKET	job loss / unemployment	stable	job creation
SOCIAL VALUES	class struggle	middle class	bourgeois
EMPLOYERS	strong	moderate	weak
WORKERS	weak	moderate	strong
SOCIALISM	strong	moderate	weak

Here we give a summary of what workers and union officials said at Cosatu regional Workers' Forums organised by the September Commission



Contributing to the future of the unions: participants have their say at Workers Forums in George (above), and in Cosatu's Mpumalanga (above right) and Wits regions (right)

Workers have a say

Workers and union officials throughout the country have been making their voices heard at Workers Forums organised by Cosatu's September Commission.

Regional Workers Forums kicked off at the end of September in Mpumalanga and Cape Town and then moved on to other Cosatu regions. Other forums were held in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, George and Durban.

The forums were called to give workers an opportunity to raise their concerns about the way Cosatu is working and to give their views on where trade unions should be going as the 21st century approaches.

Workers, office bearers and officials arrived at the various forums with a mixture of mandated positions from their unions and individual submissions.

While the forums have helped ensure that the voices of ordinary workers are heard in the commission's deliberations, attendance was less than expected, averaging about 150 people in each region.

Workers raised a host of issues which stimulated debate among those present. Some raised hard-hitting criticisms of their fellow union members and the leadership of the federation and its affiliates. But this is exactly what the commissioners wanted. This will help the federation take stock of itself and initiate a process of consolidation and development which will take the union movement into the next century.

Submissions at the forums, both written and verbal, raised a wide range of issues, including: the state of the Cosatu locals, the way the federation operates, the relationship between affiliates and the federation, the tripartite alliance, the relationship between Cosatu and the government and the need for a plan to achieve socialism.

The need for a vision

A key problem raised in different regions was that the trade union movement lacked a vision.

"Members are confused and there is a lack of direction in the workers' struggle. The demise of apartheid has left a lot of the membership feeling lost. They don't know who to fight against. Shopstewards and other members

need to be educated as to who their real enemy is," said one unionist. The struggle had lost its direction, and this had resulted in a lack of interest on the part of members.

Submissions also questioned what they saw as Cosatu's failure to provide a broad political vision for its membership and the lack of a clear strategy towards the attainment of a socialist state. Submissions from almost all the worker forums called on Cosatu to provide a socialist vision for its membership. Alongside this, a programme of action had to be developed.

Organisation

A lack of organisational discipline was also raised as a problem. A number of participants lamented the demise of the mass mobilisation of the 80s. This was evident in the lack of attendance at meetings of the various structures, especially at a local level. Some workers also ignored calls for action around campaigns. Campaigns had to be strengthened. Cosatu should play a leading role in coordinating and implementing campaign strategies. This should be guided by the federation's congress resolutions.



Communication

The lack of communication, both within the federation and between affiliates was identified as a major problem area. In Johannesburg, some unions complained that even the notification for the Workers Forum had been inadequate and it was reported that the notices had been received just a few days before the event. "It is possible that many workers are unaware that the September Commission was sitting today for submissions," said one worker. More effective methods of communication were essential. This would also help improve attendance at meetings, including the weekly local meetings.

There is also a gap in the flow of information between affiliates and Cosatu. Shopstewards are more in touch with the decisions of the affiliates but they do not receive enough information about the deci-

sions of the federation. Instead of getting first-hand information from the federation's structures, shopstewards often have to glean information from the media.

Structures

Cosatu structures are not functioning properly, particularly at a local level. At national level, however, there is a working relationship between the affiliates and the federation.

"Cosatu needs to embark on a consolidation process. And this needs to be undertaken from the base up," said one participant. The gap between the leadership and the membership is widening and has a negative ripple effect throughout the federation's structures.

The lack of communication between the national leadership and the membership leads to a lack of interest among the membership. And this has fed into the lack of attendance of meetings. "Even those comrades who do attend meetings and participate in structures are now becoming demoralised," said one submission.

Some comrades submitted that proper administration is needed at the local level to improve the situation. Their were strong views, particularly in areas outside the major cities, that Cosatu should put more resources into building its locals.

"Cosatu should seriously consider employing local organisers, as local office bearers who ought to take responsibility for the locals are

at work for most of the day.

"Those staff that are employed should be paid the market rate in an attempt to retain them. If employed, the Cosatu local organisers functions should be to build the locals and to embark on a recruitment drive. They should be directly accountable to the local office bearers and to the regional secretary for the problems and failings of the locals."

It was also said that meetings of locals are becoming very administrative, without any exciting content about the larger issues like debates around the implementation of campaign strategies and the macro-economic policy. "Local meetings tend to be very boring which is a reason for the lack of interest by the shopstewards, and therefore we get low attendance figures."

The low attendance figures also means that regional structures do not quorate and cannot take binding decisions.

Campaigns

Workers were of the opinion that Cosatu does not seem to be embarking on any new campaigns. Campaign structures are not working and those campaigns which were embarked on seem to have been forgotten. "By Cosatu not embarking on strong and meaningful campaigns, it is committing organisational suicide. If there are no campaigns, the structures of the organisation begins to die, and if there are no structures, there is no organisation." Campaigns are the building blocks of the organisation, as they give content to structural meetings, and make the meetings more interesting.

Cosatu needs to play a more central role and take more responsibility in the campaign to achieve centralised bargaining for all its affiliates. Along with this, Cosatu needs to set targets for the growth of the federation and to embark on a con-



September Commission head Connie September speaking at the Wits regional Workers Forum along with regional office bearers and other commissioners

certed recruitment drive. The campaigns that Cosatu is taking up are failing to unite the workforce, and the conflict between the affiliates are not being managed by the federation. Cosatu also needs to look back and reintroduce the living wage campaign and the campaign for a 40-hour week. These campaigns seemed to have helped in bringing workers together.

Education

Comrades felt there is a lack of understanding of shopstewards' role in the affiliates and the federation. Education structures in the affiliates and in the federation are weak. Education is needed around workplace issues as well as on broad macro issues. Proper education programmes need to be developed by the federation. In its education programmes, Cosatu needs to revisit the basics of organisational development in order to ensure that a solid foundation is built.

The workplace

There is a perception that affirmative action is weakening the organisation through the promotion of capable and trained shopstewards into managerial positions. "The employer promotes stewards because

they see the shopsteward as being powerful and competent, and having the trust of the workers." In the old days, when stewards were promoted to the managerial level, they were seen as "impimpis". But, today, one participant said, "It must be agreed that the person is still a worker and should be used in the interest of workers." On the other hand, in some cases workers still see affirmative action promotions of shopstewards by management as an attempt at weakening the union.

Workers also pointed to the need for an informed strategy which will work towards the democratisation of the workplaces without compromising the independence of workers and their organisations. Education around the new Labour Relations Act (LRA) is urgent, especially if workers are going to participate in workplace forums.

The tripartite alliance

Many workers said the tripartite alliance was formed because Cosatu believed the ANC was the only organisation which would carry forward workers' interests. But some said Cosatu was failing in its goal of promoting working class interests. What had happened to Cosatu's vision of socialism, they asked. Cosatu ought to be independent, whether

within the alliance or outside the alliance. Cosatu had failed to initiate or shape alliance meetings, some comrades felt. There was a mix bag of opinion on whether the alliance should continue. There was criticism of the way it had functioned. But the dominant view was that it should continue and be strengthened, with radical alterations to the way it operated.

"The alliance needs to be strengthened in an attempt to ensure an ANC win in the next general elections in 1999," said one union activist. In some regions, there was wholesale dissent over the continuation of the alliance, and participants called for it to be ended immediately.

Socio-economic policy

There were strong views on the need for Cosatu to intervene strategically in the political, social and economic issues of the day. The RDP was a Cosatu brainchild, and strong intervention is needed by Cosatu if the RDP is to be properly implemented. Cosatu needs to steer its membership towards a worker-friendly economy, and this can only be done through the strengthening of tripartite structures. Cosatu needs a plan on the implementation of the RDP, which must incorpo-

rate proper report back meetings, and the attainment of proper mandates.

There needs to be more education around the state's macro-economic policy, and it was said that workers are questioning the "non-negotiability" of the document. Nedlac also came under the spotlight with workers concerned that decisions are taken at the national level, with no reporting to the grassroots structures. Submissions called for a review of the RDP, given that it was being watered down by the alliance and that its implementation was not in line with what Cosatu had expected. Calls were made for Cosatu to revisit the RDP and review the popular mandate in the interest of accountability.

Socialism

Comrades said that workers in South Africa are highly politicised and socialism is very important for them. A vehicle to achieve socialism needs to be found. "Maybe it could be centralised bargaining," ventured one. The reality of socialism seems to be lost, the vision needs to be rekindled. Socialism should not be a dream, but should be linked to the concrete reality and the lives of the workers. Submissions called on Cosatu to take the lead and bring together all bona fide socialist organisations to determine a vision as to how socialism could be attained.

Another submission in the Western Cape said Cosatu and workers in general must assert their independence, the alliance should be broken and the struggle for socialism ought to be intensified. "Everybody" it says, "talks about socialism, but no-one calls for the dictatorship of the proletariat." The federation should encourage a revival of the discussions and debates on socialism and should generate discussion documents on socialism. ☛

Do you know who your health and safety representatives are?

In the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act), 85 of 1993, we find out who our health and safety representatives are...

Who appoints health and safety reps?

Health and safety representatives are elected by the workers at a time and place agreed upon with the employer.

How many health and safety reps per workplace?

In shops and offices, there must be one representative elected for every 100 employees. For all other workplaces, there must be one representative elected for every 50 employees.

Can we elect more health and safety reps?

More health and safety reps can be elected if decided upon by an inspector. The inspector will direct the employer to increase the number of health and safety reps if it is felt that the industry needs more representatives to meet the needs of a healthy and safe work environment.

Can any employee become a health and safety rep?

No, the elected health and safety rep must be familiar with the work, they must be literate and they must be a full-time worker.

What are the duties and responsibilities of the rep?

- Evaluate the effectiveness of health and safety measures
- Identify potential health and safety hazards
- Investigate accidents at workplace
- Review complaints made by other employees
- Report employee complaints at health and safety committees
- Conduct regular inspections at the workplace

- Accompany any inspector on a workplace inspection
- Attend health and safety committees

Will reps be held responsible if they do not fulfill these duties?

No, while the position of a rep is to act on behalf of the employees and take action on health and safety matters, it is not the ultimate responsibility of the rep. The end responsibility for health and safety still lies with the employer.

How will the health and safety reps know what is dangerous?

The OHS Act says the employer must provide training for reps during working hours. The training must be of sufficient quantity and quality to equip the reps with knowledge to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. The type and amount of training will be decided upon at the health and safety meeting.

What is the duty to inform?

The OHS Act gives the rep the right to be informed of all health and safety matters in the workplace. For example, the rep must be informed about:

- any inspections, investigations or enquiries conducted by an inspector;
- any accident or incident at the workplace.

Do reps have equal representation on the health and safety committee?

Yes, health and safety committees consist of health and safety representatives and representatives of the employer. The number of people nominated by the employer to serve on a committee may not exceed the number of health and safety reps on the committee. ☛
— Heather Burton, Industrial Health Unit, Durban.

- Find out about compensation for workplace injuries in the next in our series on health and safety.

The role of the working class in consolidating and deepening the national democratic revolution

A summary of an address at Numsa's congress by **BLADE NZIMANDE**, SACP deputy chairperson and chairperson of the parliamentary standing committee on education

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“...the proletariat alone is capable of carrying the democratic revolution to the end ... that the main task of the proletariat at the current historical moment is to carry the democratic revolution ... forward to the end ... that any minimisation of this task inevitably results in the working class being transformed from the leader of the people's revolution carrying with it the mass of the democratic peasantry, into a passive participant in the revolution tailing behind the liberal bourgeoisie.” (Lenin, 1907)

Whilst Lenin was reflecting on the tasks of the Russian proletariat in 1907, the above quotation captures very starkly, albeit under different conditions, the main tasks of our working class in this phase of the national democratic revolution (NDR) in South Africa.

The recent struggles over the direction of the RDP, property and lock-out clauses in the new constitution, and the government's macro-economic strategy, all point to the need for a politically conscious and politically organised working class to assert its imprint over the outcome of these struggles. At the heart of these struggles is fundamentally the question of the capacity of our people to stick to and defend the path of the national democratic revolution in the light of a very serious all-round offensive by South Africa's capitalist class to shape post-apartheid society.

COSATU Submission on Social Welfare White Paper

4 November 1996

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Introduction

This submission comments mainly on those aspects of the Social Welfare White Paper ("the White Paper") outlining government policy on the provision of social security, particularly as far as it concerns government's commitment to the extension of a basic social security net for South Africa's people. The submission also calls on government to deepen its commitment to improving the co-ordination of the social security system in order to provide people, those who are working as well as those who are unemployed, with the knowledge that government is committed to putting into place a system which will ensure that no South Africans should live in poverty.

This commitment must be seen against the background of South Africa's history of inequality and the fact that, until today, South Africa remains one of the world's most unequal societies, with great wealth existing side by side with extreme levels of poverty. The poorest 40 percent of households earn less than 6 percent of total income, while the richest 10 percent earn more than 50 percent of total income¹. The poorest sections of the population also have severely limited access to housing, electricity, piped water, modern sanitation, health care and education².

These inequalities are not accidental. They are the natural outcome of low wage policies, followed by the private sector, and the deliberate policies of the old government to under-spend on social services for black people. These inequalities can now only be overcome through government programmes to boost economic activity, redistribute wealth and extend social security. The White Paper's commitment to this latter programme, of social security extension, forms the central focus of this submission.

We do not focus on the other major aspect of the White Paper which outlines government policy on the provision of welfare services, such as, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and family counselling. While we do recognise welfare services as a critical area of social concern, we feel that there are a number of organisations who have far more expertise in this field than ourselves, who have addressed these areas in the White Paper.

Vision of state's role in providing social security

Despite COSATU's support for much of the policy contained in the White Paper, the document contains some areas of serious weaknesses where policy is indecisive and lacks a clear vision of the role of government in the provision of social security. In general, the White Paper does set out the correct objectives for the provision of social security, but it does not map out a clear strategy through which these objective are to be achieved.

Constitutional responsibility

The Constitution provides a good starting point to understanding what is required of government in the provision of social security. The proposed Constitution of South Africa, which is currently awaiting certification by the Constitutional Court, guarantees that: "Everyone has the right to have access to - social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance."² The state is obliged to "take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation" of this right⁴.

These Constitutional provisions place a positive obligation on government to put systems in place to ensure that every South African has access to social security. In certain circumstances where people are unable to support themselves, this duty goes even further as government will be duty bound to take steps to assist people who are unable to support themselves.

The White Paper must be read in this context. In particular, it is submitted that there may be constitutional limitations on government welfare policy relying exclusively, for the provision of social security, on privately funded social insurance schemes (such as provident funds and the UIF, which require contributions from beneficiaries) as a substitute for publicly funded social assistance schemes (such as state pensions, which are not dependent on a prior contribution from beneficiaries).

This constitutional limitation would flow from the fact that an over-reliance on social insurance would lead to a situation where citizens' rights to social security are made to be dependent on them having had adequate employment or, more generally, having had sufficient opportunity to make their own contributions to social insurance schemes. A social security system premised on such requirements, could be in breach of the constitution's guarantee of equality of treatment for all citizens.

COSATU strongly believes that the provision of social security is the responsibility of the state. While contributory social insurance is possible for those who can contribute, the state must ensure that the basic needs of all are met.

Provision for a social wage and a security net

The White Paper states that it attempts to promote strategies which "in the longer term... will lead to a lessening of dependence on state social assistance programmes and an increased self-reliance on the part of the poor and the vulnerable"⁵. While lessening dependence and increasing self-reliance are clearly desirable long term goals, government policy makers should not over-look the immediate priority to equalise, extend and improve the provision of social security, particularly social assistance, to historically marginalised sections of our population.

We also need to recognise the reality that even with the removal of racial disparities from existing social assistance programmes, millions of people living in poverty will have no direct access to any

form of state assistance.

To promote the sustainability of the social security system, the White Paper puts forward the following guiding principle: "The social security system will be restructured to achieve structural efficiency between public and private (work related) benefits."⁶ The fact that the White Paper does not develop this point any further is a serious weakness, as such a critical aspect of social security policy should be more thoroughly elaborated upon.

Talk of 'structural efficiency' between the public and private sectors in the provision of social security raises number of questions which are not adequately dealt with in the White Paper:

1. To what extent should government rely on employers and employees to contribute towards the costs of social security provision, how should such contributions be structured and to what extent should responsibility for these contributions be taken over by the state in order to bring down non-wage costs?
2. To what extent should government take direct responsibility for the provision of social security to people who are not employed and generally fall outside of the social insurance safety-net?

(1) Restructuring Social Insurance

While it may reduce pressure on the fiscus if employers and employees are required to bear some additional costs of social security through increased social insurance payments, it will lead to an increase in the non-wage costs of employment. This may act as a disincentive to increased job creation and result in the adoption of more capital intensive methods of production. It may also create an incentive for employers to seek to reduce their work-force through out-sourcing. Most importantly, coverage rates are low, for example, only 5 to 10 percent of unemployed are covered through the UIF.

Other negative effects of providing social security benefits through the employment relationship could result in some severe distortions or market failures. For example, fast rising medical costs - fuelled by the fact that it is an employment related benefit - has the effect of pricing health care out of the reach of the poor.

In COSATU's view, the transfer of a number of the non-wage costs of employment (such as health care costs) to public mechanisms (like a national health scheme) would amount to the introduction of a social wage - where the state sets up institutions which provide social security, thereby effectively subsidising part of the costs of the labour force. This could assist both as a launching-pad in the creation of an effective social security net and in reducing non-wage labour costs.

Government policy should also play a role in restructuring those elements of social insurance which continue to be funded through the contributions of employers and employees, like the pension and provident schemes. Instead of having over 16,000 retirement funds - many of which were started as tax avoidance schemes - government should embark on a programme to re-regulate these various schemes and move towards a consolidated national fund. The White Paper goes some way to achieving this through advocating that "all people in formal employment belong to a compulsory retirement scheme"⁷ and through backing the transferability or portability of retirement contributions⁸.

This focus will facilitate the implementation of the RDP's commitment to introduce "social insurance which includes compulsory private contributory pension schemes and provident funds for all workers, and state social pensions"⁹.

* U.I.F.

Lastly, social insurance schemes usually only provide temporary assistance and work best where they are underpinned by social assistance. By filling the often large gaps in social insurance, social assistance ensures that the most vulnerable are catered for.

(2) Extending the social security net

Re-regulation and consolidation of social insurance can not be seen as a substitute for an extension of the social security net. Government policy should be clearer on the need to extend the social security net beyond those who are in a position to benefit from employment-linked social insurance schemes.

At points the White Paper seems to suggest that the burden for social assistance could be taken from the state through an increase in private social insurance levels¹⁰. This line of argument should be rejected on the basis that social insurance is not capable of extending to the same people that benefit from social assistance. This is true for a number of reasons, including the fact that:

- only recently unemployed people are temporarily covered under the UIF (a form of social insurance), thereby excluding millions of unemployed, particularly the youth as first time job seekers,
- most of the 3 million people who are recipients of social assistance - typically pensioners, people with disabilities and children who require maintenance - are not covered by any form of social insurance, and
- work-related disabilities and illnesses are a distinct phenomenon from disabilities which are not linked to the workplace.

To compare social insurance and social assistance is to compare apples with oranges. To imply that an increase in one could justify a decrease in the other is bad policy. COSATU's view is that it is unavoidable for expenditure on social assistance to be increased¹¹ if poverty is to be alleviated. This will entail extending social assistance to deserving areas which have not been covered before and increasing levels of payment to compensate for the rising cost of living.

A commitment to extend social assistance would entail both (1) the extension of existing forms of social assistance and (2) the introduction of new forms of assistance, particularly income support for the unemployed.

Extension: The existing state old aged pension scheme is recognised as the most effective form of distribution of resources into poor households. To reduce the amount of the transfers or to limit their extent would have devastating effects. There is room for improvement in the reach of the pension scheme, though, as it is estimated that only 60 percent of those that should be assisted by the scheme are actually gaining such assistance¹². In COSATU's view, government's explicit aim should be to achieve universal provision of state pension benefits to all eligible households. In order to extend government's administrative reach, consideration should be given to the use of post offices and post office banks as pension pay out points.

The short-fall in coverage has led to the situation in some provinces where drives to educate people about the pension benefits which should be available to them are being tempered by the knowledge that the universal provision of such benefits are not catered for in the current budget.

New Forms of assistance: The White Paper has also failed to give consideration to the possibility of setting up new forms of social assistance to address the millions of people who are destitute and unemployed. For example, consideration could be given to the establishment of a general social

assistance scheme which could provide modest benefits to all households who can prove that they live off less than a certain monthly income¹³.

The introduction of a well designed anti-poverty mechanism, such as a general social assistance scheme to complement the state pensions, might well be the most urgently needed element of social protection reform in South Africa¹⁴, but the White Paper gives no consideration to such a scheme. Such an assistance scheme may take pressure off some other welfare programmes, improve the living conditions of the poor and many other socio-economic spin-offs.

(3) Recommendation

As the White Paper is weak with regard to mapping out a vision for the extension of the social security net, COSATU calls on government to open discussions and launch an investigation into how social insurance and the provision of social assistance can best be integrated to achieve the most effective - and widest possible - social security net which in the White Paper's terms is characterised by "structural efficiency between public and private benefits".

Such a recommendation would be in line with the RDP's aim of establishing "a national co-ordinating body with representation of workers, community members, the social welfare sector, government and other appropriate organisations to... monitor the implementation of a transformed social security system"¹⁵.

This process should aim at drafting a White Paper focused particularly on the provision of social security. In addition to mapping out a vision for the full realisation of people's rights to social security and poverty alleviation, the White Paper would have to deal with the question of the funding of the extension of the social security net and would have to be aligned with the process of restructuring the pension and provident funds and social insurance. The White Paper should be based on acceptance that there is a complementarity between privately-funded social insurance and publicly-funded social assistance. In order to achieve universal coverage, the key is to find the proper mix between these two forms of social security provision.

Increased co-ordination of government policy

The White Paper accurately describes present social welfare and social security institutions as characterised by "duplication and fragmentation"¹⁶. This echoes the view expressed in the ILO's recent report on restructuring labour market policy that "the system of state transfers is fragmented, inefficient and inadequate"¹⁷.

There clearly is a lack of co-ordination. The Department of Social Welfare has not made joint policy (or implement jointly) with other Departments. Despite the central nature of social plans in macro-economic and industrial strategy, social security issues have been given little priority.

It is of critical importance that the Department of Welfare interface with other Government Departments in the development and implementation of social welfare policy should give recognition to the strong linkages that exist between social welfare and other programmes of government.

For example, in addition to the co-ordination with the Department of Public Works on employment creation, there should be co-ordination with the Department of Labour regarding the restructuring of the UIF and with the Department of Trade and Industry on the development of social plans to

assist workers in declining industries.

Recommendation:

It is not good enough that the White Paper merely identifies the need to co-ordinate activities with other government departments, without considering the difficulties which are to be anticipated if such an approach is to be followed and mapping-out ways in which these difficulties are to be overcome.

COSATU calls for the development of a coherent strategy to improve co-ordination. In order to achieve this, consideration should be given to the establishment of an inter-ministerial task team, under the co-ordination of the Deputy President's Office, and the formalisation of linkages with civil society through Nedlac's Development Chamber, which comprises representatives of labour, business, government, and community organisations.

Fiscal constraints

Despite the call for fiscal cut backs, the reality is that poor South Africans cannot afford a real budget cut in social welfare expenditure. In fact, if the social security system is to be made more equitable, more resources are going to be needed in social welfare provision.

For example, the state pension scheme provides about 1,7 million pensioners with a regular income amounting to approximately R8 billion annually. Even though the amount involved is very low - R430 per household which is less than half the poverty line (R970 monthly income) - it is critical as for many destitute households it is the only thing which stands between them and starvation. For the poorest 20 percent of African households, "the average increase in per capita income because of the pensions [is] more than double (206 percent) the per capita income without the pension income"¹⁸. As not all people eligible for old aged pensioners are receiving them, it is likely that government should anticipate an increase in expenditure on pensions.

Despite the centrality of pensions, and other welfare transfers, to raising the incomes of many poor South Africans, some alarm bells have already been sounded:

- the Lund Committee Report on Child and Family Support stated that "government is committed to reducing the fiscal deficit and promoting economic growth, it has signalled the social sectors such as health, education and welfare should not anticipate significant budgetary increases in the short term"¹⁹.
- the Smith Committee Report on Pensions recommended that "all parties in government negotiate an agreement on a maximum percentage of GDP that will be allocated to old age assistance, say, for example, the current 2%"²⁰.

These pressures to reduce social welfare expenditure obviously flow from governments commitment to cut the budget deficit to 4 percent of GDP in the 1996/7 fiscal year, and even further in subsequent years. These budgetary targets are spelt-out in government's macroeconomic framework - Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). Some of the implications of these targets have been presented in report by the Finance and Fiscal Commission (FFC). The report predicts dramatic reductions in the allocations to the provinces for social pensions²¹.

Interestingly, it appears that GEAR's budgetary targets may clash with its own understanding that welfare spending "which assist more than 3 million elderly or disabled person or needy children... play a vital role in poverty alleviation, especially in rural areas"²².

Recommendation:

It is clear to COSATU that cuts to welfare to pay off South Africa's debt would hurt the poorest and benefit the wealthy. COSATU believes that in order to prevent social security and welfare priorities from being hamstrung by rigid budget deficit reduction targets, the White Paper should be amended to include quantified commitments or targets (in the same way as targets have been set for the reduction of the budget deficit) to outline clearly the vision for the extension of the social security net to all South Africans.

Secondly, as the social security and welfare services components of the welfare budget are used to fund quite distinct types of government activity - money transfers in the former case and services in the latter - consideration should be given to separating these aspects of the budget. This would have both the benefit of (1) assisting in the quantification of targets and (2) in ending the practice where shortfalls in either component of the budget are solved through transfers from the other component.

Conclusion

COSATU supports many aspects of the White Paper, including: the objective of promoting active labour market policies, its commitment to a war on poverty, its commitment to equity, the proposed establishment of a social welfare ombud and the emphasis on the protection of children from being employed prematurely as child labour.

A general critique though is that many important areas of concern are identified, but very few are properly fleshed out and given clear policy direction. Such a vision is very important, particularly in an international environment in which many developed countries are dismantling and trimming back their welfare systems. **The US recently passed a Bill ending the government's commitment to provide aid to poor Americans.**

Given these international trends, it is likely that there will be increasing pressure on South Africa to reduce the scope of our welfare system. It is important that, without condoning the rolling-back of the welfare systems in many countries, we clearly distinguish South Africa's experience of institutionalised inequality and skewed distribution of wealth and incomes as the basis for our country's need to develop its own appropriate and effective welfare and social security system.

Summary of recommendations

(1) Further Development of government policy on social security

As the White Paper is weak with regard to mapping out a vision for the extension of the social security net, COSATU calls on government to open discussions and launch an investigation into how social insurance and the provision of social assistance can best be integrated to achieve the most effective - and widest possible - social security net.

This process should aim at drafting a White Paper focused particularly on the provision of social security. In addition to mapping out a vision for the full realisation of people's rights to social security and poverty alleviation, **the White Paper would have to deal with the question of the funding of the extension of the social security net and would have to be aligned with the process of restructuring the pension and provident funds and social insurance.**

(2) Government Co-ordination

COSATU calls for the development of a coherent strategy to improve co-ordination. In order to achieve this, consideration should be given to the establishment of an inter-ministerial task team, under the co-ordination of the Deputy President's Office, and the formalisation of linkages with civil society through Nedlac's Development Chamber, which comprises representatives of labour, business, government, and community organisations.

(3) Fiscal re-prioritisation

It is clear to COSATU that cuts to welfare to pay off South Africa's debt would hurt the poorest and benefit the wealthy. COSATU believes that in order to prevent social security and welfare priorities from being hamstrung by rigid budget deficit reduction targets, the White Paper should be amended to include quantified commitments or targets (in the same way as target have been set for the reduction of the deficit) to outline clearly the vision for the extension of social security to all deserving South Africans.

Secondly, as the social security and welfare services components of the welfare budget are used to fund quite distinct types of government activity - money transfers in the former case and services in the latter - consideration should be given to separating these aspects of the budget. This would have both the benefit of (1) assisting in the quantification of targets and (2) in ending the practice where shortfalls in either component of the budget are solved through transfers from the other component.

Footnotes:

1. HSRC Study: A Profile of Poverty, Inequality and Human Development in South Africa, 1995, also quoted in the White Paper, p1 (at 1).
2. Source "Study on Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa, Saldru/World Bank 1996" which shows that of the poorest 53 percent of the population, about 80 percent have no access to electricity, about 70 percent have no access to piped water to their premises, and more than 80 percent no access to modern sanitation
3. s27(1) of the proposed Constitution
4. s27(2) of the proposed Constitution
5. White Paper, p52 (at 22)
6. White Paper, p52 (at 22(a))
7. White Paper, p67 (at 56)
8. White Paper, p68 (at 57)
9. RDP, p55 (at 2.13.10)
10. Implicit in the White Paper is the argument that extensive resources are allocated to social assistance (from state coffers) and more resources are required for social insurance (generally made up through contributions from employers and employees. The White Paper, draws a comparison between the amount paid nationally in 1990 for work-related disability and illness (R200m) and the amount paid in Gauteng in 1995 for disability grants (R223m) and suggests that this can be used as an indicator "of the extent to which government is bearing the responsibility for social assistance [and that a] greater investment in social insurance is needed [White Paper, p60 (at 17)]. It is difficult to understand why the White Paper relies upon this comparison as a basis for indicating the extent of government expenditure on social assistance as the Gauteng disability grant amounts to less than 2 percent of the national social security budget. It is not a useful indicator of the extent of government sponsored social assistance.
11. Particularly with regard to state pensions, transfers should at least be maintained at present levels in real terms. COSATU rejects the call by the SA Foundation in their document 'Growth for All' that government should "limit rises in pension payments to below the inflation rate, perhaps keeping them at their current nominal levels for three to five years".
12. The White Paper's reference (p60, at 15) to state pension coverage rates of 96 percent in the 1960's declining to 67 percent in the 1990, rising to 80 percent currently reflects the share that state pensions provide as compared to total retirement coverage. It is not the extent to which state pension provision has been able to reach old people who should, in terms of the means test, receive pensions

13. If an amount of R200 per month were to be given to all South African households living off less than R410 per month (estimated to include about 2,5 million households) the cost would be about 1,1 percent of GDP (which is three times the present expenditure on UIF). CSS figures indicate that this would apply to 36 percent of African households, 20 percent of coloured households, 17 percent of Asian households and 10 percent of white households. (CSS: Planning growth and development in South Africa: Selected Indicators on employment, human development, infrastructure and poverty. Pretoria, February 1996)
 14. Such an argument is made in a recent ILO technical note assessing the UIF.
 15. RDP, p55 (at 2.13.12)
 16. White Paper, p22 (at 1)
 17. ILO Report Restructuring South African Labour Market, p407
 18. ILO Report, p408
 19. Lund Committee Report, p2 (Executive Summary)
 20. Smith Committee Report, annexure 4, p36
 21. The FFC Report: "The Recommendation of the Budget Council, Implications for the Provision of Public Services during the 1997/8 Financial Year", predicts a reduction of over 20 percent in the top-slice allocation to Provinces for social pensions (in real terms) (p11).
 22. GEAR, p14-15
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I Social assistance:

	Who is eligible?	What does the benefit provided look like?	
		Amount	Duration
a) Old age pension	Female person over the age of 59 / male person over the age of 64 whose income is less than R1250 (individual) or R2500 (combined); a sliding scale means-test is applied	Up to R470 per month <i>R520.00</i>	For the rest of the life, unless the income situation changes. (long-term)
b) Disability grant	Disabled person (with a medical certificate that the disability will continue for longer than six month) earning less than R1250 (individual) or R2500 (combined), a sliding scale means-test is applied	Up to R470 per month	Until the income or medical situation improves. (long-term)
c) Child support grant (replaces the SMG)	Children from 0-7 years living in a household which has an income of less than R833 per month ² (the programme aims to reach 3 million in the year 2003)	R100 per month	Up to the seventh birthday of the child or until the income situation changes. (medium-term)
d) Foster care grant	Parent/s who take a child (0-18) which was placed in their custody	R350 per month	Until the child turns 18 or the child is no longer in custody. (long-term)
e) Care-dependency grant	Parent/s of a child who needs care (medical report needed)	R 470 per month	Until the child is 18 or not longer in custody of the parents. (long-term)
f) Social relief	Persons in need of temporary material assistance	Up to R470 per month	Not longer than three exceeding month (in exceptional cases another three month). (short-term)

² This means-test has not yet been finalised, the information is taken from recent press statements of the Department of Welfare

Presentation to Joint Standing Committee on Finance

The Smith Committee Report 20th May 1996.



by Irene Charnley, on behalf of COSATU

INTRODUCTION

I would like to thank the Joint Standing Committee of Finance for inviting COSATU to present views on the way forward on the Smith Report.

A submission has already been made dealing with a variety of issues. My aim today is to supplement our previous submission and emphasizes two of the issues that may not have been dealt with adequately as well as to propose a process of taking the report forward. Submissions by Naledi on behalf of COSATU to the JSCOF on 16th May 1996 is fully supported.

TAXATION

The recent recommendations by the Katz Commission resulted in the introduction of a 17% tax on the gross interest and rental income earned by the retirement industry in both public and private sector retirement funds. One of the aims the implementation of this recommendation is to raise additional funds for the fiscus to address the developmental projects envisaged for the RDP. What seems to have been overlooked is that a large percentage of public sector funds are invested in fixed income securities while not more than 20% the private sector funds are invested in such securities. This tax will therefore affect public sector funds more because these are predominantly defined benefit funds with the government and its agencies liable for the balance of cost. Any shortfall resulting from this tax will increase their liability if under the fully funded system. This will result in an increase in the deficit.

The private sector can minimize the effect of this tax by restructuring their assets switching from investment in property bonds and cash to a maximum level investment in equities. This can be achieved with pressure by the retirement fund industry to allow 100% equity funds. The industry, despite their professed concern for the poor, is more concerned with possible reduction in the flow of savings to the industry that will result from the leveling of the playing fields in the financial service industry as far as taxation is concerned.

The retirement fund industry advocates treating pension and provident funds equally in as far tax concessions are concerned. This they argue should be achieved by giving provident funds the same tax deductibility on contributions as pension funds. The experience of the labour movement is that our membership who are mostly members of provident funds do not save in retirement vehicles for tax purposes. While they will benefit from any tax deductibility of contributions this will not influence their decision to save. The benefit to the government resulting from the current recommended leveling of the tax deductibility to that enjoyed by pension funds will be negligible. The benefit of removing the current tax deductibility enjoyed by pension funds must be looked at because it has the potential of greater benefit from taxation for the fiscus than the former without adversely affecting the saving tendencies of the poor. Tax incentives should rather be at the stage of receiving the benefit while contributions are taxed now to fund needed current development.

INVESTMENT POLICIES

It is clear from the Smith Commission that the retirement fund industry is a major player in the economy in terms of the amount of funds that it has at its disposal. However, there are no clear recommendation on how these funds can be utilized to foster economic growth. We have already



made recommendations that through a code of investment which encourages productive rather than speculative investment should form part of the Prudential Investment Guidelines (PIG's).

If our aim as a country is to continue on growth patterns of 2%, then little needs to be done. To achieve the 6 - 8%, as forecasted by economic fundamentalist, growth rates that are necessary to address the high levels of unemployment in the country we need investment in development and create jobs. Without development which would focus on infrastructure such as the provision of water, housing, transport systems, roads, ports, etc., which will improve the conditions for the poor, enhance our export capability, assist in the expansion our domestic market and the creation of jobs, the required growth levels of 6 to 8% will be very difficult to achieve.

The government has a great responsibility to ensure that development takes place. However, government cannot do it alone. It needs assistance from all the major players in the economy like the financial institutions and the institutional investors (retirement funds). Expecting them to voluntarily invest directly in developmental projects through significant cash injections is wishful thinking. A few will do while the majority will find ways to avoid such investment for competitive reason at the expense of those who voluntarily invest in desirable projects. It is imperative that uniform measure be applied to all institutions.

It is recommended that some form of a reconstruction bond be launched and all institutions be required to invest at least 10% of the assets under their management in this bond. This would be done by restructuring the PIG's requirements. This would apply to both private and public sector funds. Unlike what happened in the past, these changes must go hand in hand with a clear efficient delivery program by the government for which they will be held accountable.

PROCESS

We need to stress once again that the Smith Committee has not made enough effort to involve labour in the process of drafting their report. The process that will have to follow the Committee report is very important. It requires that for balance not be in favour of Industry representatives and groups supporting the status quo. The recent Pension Funds Amendment Bill recognizes two major stakeholders in the retirement fund industry; employers and members of retirement funds (and or their representative unions) who have to be equally represented in the boards of management of retirement funds (trustees). It follows therefore that any committee set up to deal with retirement fund issues should reflect this representation. We recommend that a committee of 12 representatives which will use the Mouton and Smith Commissions' reports as a basis to come up with clear recommendations on the way forward for how the Retirement Industry , both private and public sector should be restructured. The Proposed Committee should consist of the following representatives:

- six from Labour [Four COSATU, one FEDSAL, one NACTU]
- two from Employer Bodies
- one from the Institute of Retirement Funds [IRF]
- one from the LOA
- one from the Actuarial Society of South Africa
- one from academia well versed with retirement fund issues
- one from the government and
- one from Community Organisations

This committee could be related to the processes at NEDLAC. The committee should be given four months to complete their investigation so that they can have a draft document for discussion during the end of the second half of 1996. This would allow the committee's recommendations to be dealt with in the next budget. We believe, as already presented to this committee, that the following issues still need to be addressed in more detail by the new Committee:

- How best to fund the civil service pension scheme, whether it should be a fully funded system or a pay as you go system. It would appear that the latter system should urgently be investigated because of its profound effect it could have on the government deficit.
- Investment policies for both the private and public sector funds, as discussed earlier in this submission.
- Taxation of Pension Fund contributions versus the taxability of Provident Funds.
- An integrated Pensions Policy, integrating occupational benefits and those provided for by Retirement funds into one scheme.
- A National Fund with due regard to the agricultural sector and domestic workers , Industry Funds as envisaged with the new LRA, possibly amalgamation of small funds into Industry Funds.
- Tax incentives at the time of Retiring versus income now for development and growth.
- The State Old Age Pension as the most redistributive instrument available to the government at the moment, is extremely important to many of the poorest households in South Africa. The value of this pension should not loose value and should seriously be addressed.
- Amendments or the scrapping of the means test to allow poor households more income support.
- Trustee training, compulsory for Funds.
- Information Disclosure
- Monitoring of the Industry, a relook at the FSB.

These are only part of a long list of issues to be addressed and finalised by the new Committee.



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4. THE CONGRESS PROCEEDINGS

The Congress oscillated between extreme rhetoric and militancy on the one hand and more strategic interventions on policy issues on the other. On the question of ANC's economic agenda - GEAR, there was an almost pathological rejection of it which set the tone of the conference from start to finish. On the question of globalism, debate was fierce between an antiquated approach which rejected it entirely and those which proffered a more pragmatic view that it was a fait accompli and that Cosatu had to influence global trends to suit its own national and regional objectives. Another major focus of Congress proceedings was strengthening Cosatu structures, especially with the view of centralising decision-making into the hands of federation's leadership - a debate which sharply divided affiliates over the weakening of individual union autonomy.

4.1 THE ATTACK ON GEAR

Cosatu's President and SACP Central Committee member, John Gomomo set the tone of the conference in his opening address when, in the presence of President Nelson Mandela, he called GEAR a "monster" whose strategy and philosophy needed to be rejected by the union movement. Attacking GEAR for being full of rhetoric about employment creation and economic growth, Gomomo ventured that "it remains an empty shell which will not deliver any benefit to the working class particularly the unemployed and the rural poor". "Left unchallenged", Gomomo warned, "it can only mean more poverty and the increase of the gap between the rich and the poor". GEAR was simply a replication of the global phenomenon called "neo-liberalism", supported by big business and international capital.

Gomomo's attack on GEAR was supported by ANC MP and SACP Acting Chairman, Blade Nzimande, who, providing the SACP view, reminded delegates that at the Party's last Central Committee meeting, the SACP had come out in opposition to GEAR. "The Central Committee made the point that this kind of macro-economic framework is not conducive to the implementation of the RDP".

GEAR was also criticised in the General Secretary's secretariat's political report. "At one point we had entertained the thought that, instead of confronting GEAR head-on, we would attempt to propose progressive policies in key areas of social and economic development, such as housing, and in that way hope to shift the parameters of GEAR. The limitations of this approach, however, have become clear." The report went on to outline specific areas which GEAR had impacted negatively upon. These included:

- Its intrusion into a wide range of social policy and legislation;
- GEAR's intermediate objectives of fiscal discipline which have replaced the social and developmental aspects of the RDP;
- The "religious" commitment to GEAR by the Ministries of Finance and Trade and Industry, which led to both privately and publicly questioning the "financial implications" of the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill; and
- Cutting back the public sector.

As far as the report was concerned, progressive or socialist elements of GEAR were never part of GEAR's conceptualisation "but added as a sop to make it seem in line with the RDP!"

Cosatu's hardline position was cemented when a couple of unions which had previously called for a more open approach to GEAR, suddenly switched sides. On the second day, the South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union (Sarhwu) withdrew a proposal calling for engagement with the government on GEAR because it could not be rejected as a whole. Its proposal had noted that while there were areas of disagreement with the strategy, "we need to take cognisance of the fact that the climate for foreign investment must be conducive". Sarhwu's resolution pleaded for Cosatu to rather isolate problematic elements of GEAR.

Both Cosatu and the SACP, however, were defensive over allegations that the labour movement's criticism of government economic policy and the use of mass action and strikes, was somehow "unpatriotic" and "counter revolutionary". Gomomo was at pains to stress that Cosatu's actions were not aimed at government but at business, even though the logic of this delineation was flawed given the structured interlock between business and government in the economy, and the fact that GEAR was initiated in ANC rather than business circles. Mass mobilisation and mass action by Cosatu, according to Gomomo, had to be seen in the context of ongoing "struggles to ensure success in rebuilding our country based on the needs of the majority". He went on to assert: "We reject with contempt any assertion to equate all forms of mass mobilisation and protests with those of counter revolutionary elements who want the failure of an ANC government".

Blade Nzimande was equally as defensive: "To argue that a general strike against capital is a strike against the democratic government is a deliberate distortion in order to continue to subject employed workers to conditions to which they have been subjected under apartheid colonialism and its capitalist system". These defensive and contorted arguments were aimed not just at opposition parties and the business community in general, but also towards

a growing antipathy emerging within the ANC and black business towards their socialist compatriots in the labour movement.

4.2 ENTER THE ANC

President Mandela was the only senior ANC leader to address the Congress. Given the mood of the delegates, he was the most credible leader for the ANC to wheel in to face their ambivalent Alliance partner. Thabo Mbeki, the architect of GEAR, was nowhere to be seen, and the Minister of Labour, Tito Mboweni, who had angered Cosatu delegates the day before the Congress started by suggesting that sufficient consensus had been reached on the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill to be sent to parliament for ratification into legislation, did not venture anywhere near the podium.

Despite his immeasurable charm reflected in the standing ovation he received on the way to the podium to make his address, the President had been somewhat taken aback at Gomomo's unyielding attack on ANC economic policy and it seemed was badly briefed on critical issues. Throughout his speech Mandela walked a tightrope between the need for the ANC to assert its leadership on certain issues and a willingness to compromise with its Alliance partners on others.

President Mandela made the point that it was not in the character of the Tripartite Alliance for its partners to declare non-negotiable positions to each other. At the Alliance Summit held three weeks earlier, the ANC had compromised on its previously non-negotiable position on GEAR to state that "it was not cast in stone". He expected Cosatu to show similar flexibility over its hardline anti-GEAR stance and give the policy a chance. Ultimately, however, Mandela indicated that despite the need for greater consultation, there would be occasions when compromise was not possible and then the ANC's position would prevail. "There will be situations where we agree from the start. Then there are situations where our conflicting views can be resolved by compromise. But, there are situations where no agreement is possible. Here, the ANC's view will hold sway", he told disenchanted delegates.

On a reconciliatory note, Mandela conceded that he had serious reservations about GEAR but that it was a good strategy "to drag our economy out of the mess that apartheid left us". He also conceded that there had not been sufficient consultation within the Alliance over GEAR, exclaiming somewhat absurdly that even the ANC only learnt of GEAR when it was almost complete.

Nevertheless, these two points reflected a discernible distancing of the President, for whatever tactical reason, from GEAR's chief architect - Deputy

President, Thabo Mbeki. The latter point about GEAR taking the ANC "by surprise" is not plausible given that GEAR was discussed by the ANC leadership both within its own leadership structures and the cabinet before becoming official ANC government policy. Mandela later went on to contradict himself when he told delegates that GEAR was actually the collective effort of the entire cabinet. Mandela's contradictory approach continued when he criticised GEAR's approach to servicing the national debt, saying that government could not spend so much on debt as it defeated the purpose of transformation; and then praising his Minister of Finance as "one of the most brilliant young men this country has produced".

Mandela then caused a furore when he congratulated Cosatu General Secretary, Sam Shilowa, and Minister Tito Mboweni for reaching a consensus on the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill. Delegates were momentarily stunned as Shilowa had been given no mandate to compromise over the bill. Tito Mboweni who was present when Mandela made the statement remained silent over the issue.

When Mandela vacated the podium, delegates remained unmoved at the President's defence of government economic policy and chanted "Asiyifuni i GEAR" (we reject GEAR). Later a resolution rejecting GEAR was passed, calling it "an unsuitable macro-economic strategy for South Africa's socio-economic transformation" and calling on Cosatu and like-minded institutions to "publicise and resist the Gear elements of subsidy cuts, privatisation, labour market flexibility, etc". [See selected appendices.] A proposal put forward by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and backed by the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) that the ANC abandon GEAR with immediate effect, was unsuccessful.

After Mandela's speech, Shilowa indulged in rapid damage control to assure delegates that in fact no compromise had been reached. Yet the controversy rankled in the minds of delegates that Shilowa may have done some behind the scene deal with the government on the bill. Cosatu President Gomomo reacted strongly to Mandela's position stating that there was no consensus on the bill. "I do not know who informs the President, it is certainly not us."

The following day Mandela sent a message to the Congress apologising for his comments around the bill, blaming not Mboweni but "inaccurate" press reports. Yet Mboweni had clearly stated just before the Congress started that in his mind sufficient consensus around the bill had been reached. To cover the President, the minister in a dissembling manner, later clarified his earlier position to say that "not everybody else's" sufficient consensus had been reached. There are indications, however, that some sort of deal may have been struck behind the scenes at the time with Cosatu's leadership, that it would allow the bill to go to Parliament in its current form but on condition that certain amendments would have to be made within certain time frames.

4.3 THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALISATION

Considerable time was spent debating the issue of globalisation. Several powerful unions including the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu), wanted the congress to adopt a resolution opposing the concept of globalisation in its entirety. This impractical viewpoint was rejected by other unions which argued on a more practical level that globalisation was a fait accompli. Consideration had to be given to the fact that globalisation was crushing any thought of socialism and that global investments were being shifted to those countries where few union rights were enjoyed. Instead, it was felt that unions should rather work towards protecting workers rights in the global market.

The acceptance of globalisation as a fait accompli was a pragmatic shift on previous positions which had seen globalisation as the stalking horse of "neo-liberalism" and capitalism which had to be opposed at all costs. Shilowa quipped: "I have never understood Cosatu to say we oppose globalisation, period". This elicited a response from some delegates saying that this was not Cosatu policy. Shilowa replied that he was opposed to the "capitalist logic" of globalism but not opposed to the coordination of productive forces on a global level operating within the parameters of socialist modes of production and distribution.

In the end, a motion was adopted that workers be mobilised internationally against the "neo-liberal" trends of globalisation. Cosatu's response to the "neo-liberal strategy", outlined in its resolution on the issue, included the following:

- Initiate international campaigns amongst unions and "progressive forces" to target countries such as Nigeria and Swaziland that have a poor labour track record;
- Counter the free market system and "deepen the crisis of imperialism" by developing an alternative "humanistic project" consistent with a socialist perspective;
- Promote trade union unity in all countries;
- Develop an international platform of progressive forces, to advance proposals for an alternative economic order; and
- Campaign for coordinated international actions every year by unions to draw attention to the negative consequences of globalisation.

On this last point Cosatu has mapped out an ambitious strategy to develop an international programme of action. During the first half of 1998, an

international week focusing on globalisation and ending with May Day celebrations will be considered. Then sometime during the second half of 1998, Cosatu has called for "an international day of action" on a normal working day to consist of "demonstrations, pickets, stoppages, and a global strike by workers". Global trade federations such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and regional federations such as the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (Oatuu) and the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordinating Council (Satucc) would be called upon to mobilise support.

The resolution on globalisation also called for a decision to be taken at Cosatu's next Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting to consider mechanisms for setting aside a certain percentage of the federation's affiliation income to establish a solidarity fund to be used to build trade unionism in Southern Africa and other parts of the developing world.

4.4 THE STATUS OF THE TRI-PARTITE ALLIANCE

A central issue for the Congress was re-examining Cosatu's relationship with the ANC within the context of the Tri-partite Alliance. Again the debate was guided by the already released September Commission report which made it clear that while there were certainly problems with the Alliance, it still remained the most effective locus of power to drive and influence the political and economic transformational process in the country.

The Commission conceded that the Alliance represented a complex relationship between the ANC, SACP and Cosatu - a relationship made more difficult and fraught with tension given the ANC's role in government which had exacerbated natural class tensions and contradictions between all three partners. Quite clearly, according to the Commission, the Alliance was not working for a number of reasons:

- In most cases Alliance structures do not meet, and when they do meet it is formalistic in nature. There is little or no joint formulation of policy or strategy;
- Alliance partners are not operating as partners: they do not, in general, confront common problems together and work out joint solutions. This is the case at national level (cabinet, the executive), at sectoral level (ministries) and provincial and local levels; and
- The gradual erosion of the RDP and the sudden adoption of GEAR as a "non-negotiable" economic framework had seriously undermined the Alliance.

The solution to this according to the Commission was not to quit the Alliance but to build the ANC with a working-class bias. From this perspective Cosatu has adopted the SACP position to reassert the socialist programme within the ANC.

There was also debate at the Congress around an ANC offer made at its Lekgotla conference in January 1997 to set aside a certain number of seats on its constitutional structures for Cosatu members. Although the September Commission accepted the ANC's proposal, mounting opposition to this view came from Numsa. ANC Chairman, Jacob Zuma tried to sell the benefits deploying Cosatu leaders into ANC structures, by stating that the ANC would not have been "progressive" as it is today had it not been for the involvement of Cosatu leaders - "nor can we shape policies of a political organisation with people who do not have the workers' interests at heart". But Numsa's general secretary, Mbuyi Ngwenda, a senior SACP member with workerist tendencies, feared cooption and a dilution of the independence of the labour movement. Instead, he called on Cosatu to re-examine its ties with the ruling Tri-partite Alliance, saying that the ANC had abandoned its leftist roots. Shilowa had also voiced a certain cynicism as to how much "value for money" the federation was getting from the people it had sent to parliament in the past.

The Congress finally resolved that the federation retain its policy of releasing its leaders to stand for elections to leadership positions in the ANC. It also resolved to support the ANC in the 1999 general elections. A proposal by the Paper, Pulp, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPWAWU) that any pact with the ANC for the 1999 elections should be conditional on the ANC's acceptance of Cosatu's demands, was rejected.

Other aspects of the Alliance which Cosatu resolved to work on included:

- Restructuring the Tri-partite Alliance in such a manner that the ANC in government is subject to the political control of the ANC party structures and is guided by the policies of the Alliance. [This is a controversial point which has its genesis in a document written back in 1993 by SACP Central Committee member Raymond Suttner in which was raised the issue of accountability of ANC members once in government to its party structures and grassroots support base. Socialists in the Alliance have become concerned at how decisions are being increasingly made at the executive arm of government (cabinet and the Deputy President's office) at the expense of the ANC's National Executive Committee and its Alliance partners];
- That the Alliance remains the only vehicle capable of bringing about fundamental transformation for the country;

- Holding regular summits to co-ordinate and guide the activities of the Alliance;
- Establishing an Alliance political centre to be coordinated by an Alliance leadership;
- That the common programme of the Alliance must be based and built on the RDP; and
- Ensuring that while committed to the Alliance, there will be commitment to vigorously defending the federation's political independence.

According to some Cosatu sources, the noticeable decline in anti-Alliance sentiments among Cosatu's more radical affiliates stemmed less from a surrender to ANC dominance than from an apparently concerted effort by the SACP in reasserting its influence within key Cosatu unions, as well as taking up more radical positions against key ANC policy formulations such as GEAR.

Spearheading this initiative have been SACP Central Committee member and former NUMSA general secretary, Enoch Godongwana, Langa Zita (a former Cosatu organiser in the Wits region and now the SACP's National Organiser and Mbuyi Ngwenda (a former chairman of the SACP's Eastern Cape region and Numsa's new General Secretary). Their view has been to turn the SACP into a true party of the working class led by workers rather than an intellectual cabal with non-working class roots.

4.5 THE GENDER DEBACLE: QUOTA VS MERIT DEBATE

The most embarrassing moment at the Congress came when delegates rejected a key policy position of the September Commission and endorsed by the federation's secretariat, that Cosatu adopt a gender quota to boost women representation at all levels of Cosatu's structures. The recommendation by the Commission was that "Cosatu and affiliates should adopt a quota system for electing (women) representatives and office bearers. The target should be 50 percent representation in all Cosatu and affiliate structures by the year 2 000, starting at this year's Cosatu Congress with the election of at least three women office-bearers".

According to the newly elected First Vice President, Connie September, the only woman on Cosatu's executive committee, a quota was necessary as "other avenues have failed". What was thought would be a mere a formality of acceptance of women quotas by the attending delegates, turned out to be one of the most contentious issues which impinged on other similarly critical areas such as affirmative action.

6. A SUMMARY OF COSATU WEAKNESSES

Looking at the Congress as a whole, the following weaknesses were identified by delegates, who, in informal discussions, gave a more forthright perspective on some of the problems and challenges Cosatu faces. These points included the following:

- The federations's structures are considered to over-elaborate and complex;
- Cosatu does not have a coherent macro-economic critique of GEAR. Its attack on GEAR is ideologically driven rather than based on well-researched assumptions;
- Its poor ability to utilise union representatives in parliament;
- The debate between deregulation, privatisation and nationalisation has not been resolved;
- A fear among some senior labour officials that after Sasbo joining Cosatu, the federation may have reached a ceiling for further union membership growth;
- Ideologically within Cosatu there are "distorted" perspectives on socialism ranging from ultra-leftism to a pragmatic embrace of market forces;
- A continued loss of quality union leaders to both the public and private sectors. The new generation of emergent union leaders are considered political lightweights compared to their contemporaries from yesteryear;
- The existence of an incipient racism directed at non-black run union investment vehicles;
- The ongoing divide between workerist and populist thinking;
- The low development standards of shop stewards;
- Complaints by shop stewards that their concerns do not filter through to union leadership;
- Complaints by some affiliates that while they are subsidising Cosatu's head-office, they are not taken sufficiently serious until their is a cash crisis;

- That Cosatu's leaders rather than affiliate union leaders are generating all the media attention;
- On a political level, criticism levelled at government ministries in not coordinating media releases with Cosatu before their public release on labour related issues. The fracas around "sufficient consensus" on the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill was a case in point;
- Management has become more adept in persuading union members to see their point of view. This has been assisted by joint ventures with black economic empowerment enterprises which sometimes include union investment vehicles;
- Debates are never resolved. Simplistic formulations are often complicated by ideological wrangling by individual leaders who believe they have the sole monopoly on the correctness of socialist thinking. Formulated ideas which lead to recommended mechanisms for implementation, are either not implementable or achieve little on implementation. Unions have great difficulty in adopting formal resolutions; and
- Finally, Cosatu's leaders are seemingly attempting to achieve contradictory objectives:
 - Implementing a quota for black women in Cosatu's structures;
 - Attempting to attract white workers;
 - Using the race card against whites to mobilise black workers;
 - Trying to achieve a non-racial class consciousness;
 - Demanding affirmative action programmes for black workers.

7. THE ROLE OF THE SACP

Any assessment of the Congress cannot be complete without an appreciation of the role which the SACP played in shaping some of its outcomes and future course. Prior to the Congress, the SACP had reviewed its standing in the Tri-partite Alliance and had decided that to leave the political arrangement it has enjoyed with the ANC since the early 1950s would leave it politically isolated from mainstream politics.

Since 1994, the SACP until recently, has had difficulty in trying to shape a strategic agenda relevant to the rapidly changing local and international environment. The formulation of GEAR by the ANC leadership was a direct attack on socialism and the working class aspirations of labour. The last line of defence remained the shopfloor and the labour movement, which has seen the SACP work closely with Cosatu in recent months in forging a unified response to GEAR and a purposeful unity within the Tri-partite Alliance to re-augment and reinforce the ANC's bias towards the working class. The formulation of proposals which emanated from the September Commission was one such manifestation of this renewed determination, as was the defeat of workerist notions at Cosatu's Congress calling for the formation of an independent worker-led socialist formation to the left of the ANC.

The September Commission was heavily influenced by SACP thinking with at least six of its nine commissioners also being members of the SACP. They included Sam Shilowa (SACP Central Committee member), Herbert Mkhize (Saccawu General Secretary), Philip Dexter (ANC MP and former Nehawu General Secretary), Susan Shabangu (Deputy Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs and a former senior TGWU official), John Gomomo (SACP Central Committee member) and Ronald Mofokeng. The SACP perspective was clearly evident on issues such as GEAR, globalisation, strengthening the decision-making powers of Cosatu's central structures, the Tri-partite Alliance and Cosatu's political programme.

On the question of GEAR, the SACP had already set the tone for Cosatu's views when prior to its Congress, the Party's Central Committee had undergone a strategic rethink on GEAR, calling for "a thorough-going review of macro-economic policy". As opposed to seeing GEAR as "a framework for the RDP", as it had done just after GEAR was released in June 1996, the new position stated unequivocally that "the very centrality of growth to GEAR calls the overall policy assumptions into question...it (GEAR) is not working and will not work". Instead, the SACP called for a progressive and "coherent industrial policy" to which any macro-economic framework is "subservient" in addition to "halting the unmandated drift into privatisation".

The defeat of workerist notions at the Cosatu's Congress was also steered by

SACP delegates, including Jeremy Cronin (Deputy General Secretary) and Philip Dexter. In the past it was usually the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and the South African Commercial and Catering Allied Union (Saccawu), which would put forward workerist notions at previous congresses, that would briefly cause some consternation in the Alliance.

Another problem for the SACP in recent years, was having to cope with a tendency which had developed within Party district branches, especially those in Gauteng, Western Cape, Port Elizabeth and in mining areas in the North West province, that the SACP would do better to pursue party agendas on its own. The belief was that communists could contest local and national government elections, confident that as much as 28 percent of the Alliance electoral block would support the Party. The sentiment behind this view stemmed from grassroots shopstewards and SACP district organisers

For a while last year, the SACP leadership was reluctant to condemn this autonomous view in the spirit of democratic debate. However, the SACP's leading theoreticians, namely Cronin and Blade Nzimande took the view that a split was a dangerous development. Advocates of the split were advancing their criticisms within the Party at the same time "ultra leftists" were demanding that an "authentic left" had to leave the ANC that was properly the home of African nationalists diligently trying to advance capitalism. Labelled as a "workerist tendency" and "neo-Trotskyite" the isolationist faction in the SACP quickly became muted but continued to work towards the goal of an SACP separated, but not divorced from the ANC, through the unions with a largely populist sentiment based in Cosatu.

In order to head off the workerist challenge over the past few years, the SACP leadership co-opted key leaders of the "workerist" oriented unions onto its own Central Committee. These individuals included Alec Erwin, Moses Mayekiso and the former Numsa General Secretary, Enoch Godongwana. Consequently the criticism of the alternative vision died away. The Sixth Cosatu Congress remained, nonetheless, a possible venue for a resurrected separation debate and possibly by workerist delegates. None of these concerns materialised on the day and the SACP felt it had achieved the defeat of both workerism and separatism, for the time being, although both strands of thinking are still rooted in both the Party and certain union sectors.

To consolidate these gains the Party has adopted a more assertive and unapologetic stance towards its function within the ANC. Its present view is that it commands a considerable skills base within the ANC that is indispensable and which has placed communists in unassailable positions throughout ANC structures. Examples of this include at least 80 ANC MPs, 5 cabinet ministers and 3 deputy ministers. The ANC National Conference in December might therefore witness hard critiques of black nationalism cloaked

in capitalist explanations than would have been contemplated in previous years. Peter Mokaba and Winnie Mandela are especially likely to bear the brunt of such criticism because populists are the least likely to follow the Party line.

In a resolution on Political Strategy and Vision, Cosatu pledged the provision of "resources" to strengthen the SACP and "transform it into a formidable force capable of meeting the challenges and leading the struggle for socialism". Cosatu also resolved to establish SACP units in the workplace and strengthen SACP branches where they are weak and build new ones where none exist. With the SACP facing serious financial constraints, Cosatu will provide both the financial and organisational resources to build the Party into a truly representative workers party.

ID 14244 Cosatu Box

8. THE ANC VIEW

Cosatu's views on the Alliance are unlikely to find favour with the ANC's current leadership elite. The stated determination of the federation to shift the balance of power in favour of the working class component of the Tripartite Alliance is set to clash with an emergent Africanist perspective, spearheaded by Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, which is seeking to broaden the main motive forces behind a redefined National Democratic Revolution (NDR) to include the emergent black entrepreneurial and middle class sectors of South African society. Such a fundamental shift in the changing character of the ANC's NDR raises fundamental questions around the relevance of Cosatu's renewed enthusiasm to sustain a moribund ideology which in real terms is representative of only a minority segment of the ANC's support base.

Shortly after Cosatu's congress, two ANC discussion documents quickly surfaced in the public domain which articulated a very different vision of where the ANC should be headed as that being touted by Cosatu. Authored by the Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Peter Mokaba, both discussed the once sacrosanct topic of the ANC/SACP alliance.

In one document entitled *The National Question*, Mokaba at a stroke demolishes the continued relevance, indeed desirability of the ANC/SACP alliance given the differing end objectives held by both parties. Central to Mokaba's view is that the SACP's ultimate objective is to establish socialism in South Africa while the ANC's programme sets out to establish "the most democratic capitalist society in which all, including the Communist Party, will enjoy free political activity to operate freely... It simply does not share the goal or the aspiration of establishing socialism in South Africa or anywhere else". Mokaba eschews a clear parting of ways with supporters of socialism when he states that unlike the SACP: "The ANC's economic policy has never been one that envisages socialism or the abolition of classes". Instead, the task of the ANC is to "de-racialise these classes as part of the deracialisation of the economy". [See selected appendices.]

While Mokaba is not pushing a laissez-faire economic model, he talks firmly of a mixed economy with the public and private sector working side by side. It is a vision of a mixed economy which has as its core objective the economic empowerment of blacks, especially Africans, in the country. This is not to be achieved via nationalising the means of production but via empowering blacks to compete with their established white counterparts in the private sector.

Referring to Cosatu, Mokaba makes the point that socialism is not the natural objective of trade unionism but rather the upliftment of the working conditions

of black workers to reap the fruits of a market driven capitalist democracy. On this issue the ANC supports worker upliftment as part of Cosatu's *raison de'tre*.

Black economic empowerment has become the central plank of Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance initiative and runs counter to the socialist agenda which emanated from Cosatu's Congress. The Mokaba documents are believed to not just be the work of the author but of several other senior ANC leaders, including Thabo Mbeki and Joel Netshitenzhe, released to offset any socialist assault on ANC thinking at its upcoming December National Congress.

Looking beyond South Africa's borders, Cosatu's aggressive stand on regional and international issues are already running counter to ANC's foreign policy and economic interests. On the Nigerian question, there is a rapid parting of ways between the ANC and Cosatu's interests in the matter, given the certain relationship which existed between the ANC's exiled leadership and the current Nigerian military government prior to 1994. Notwithstanding the undemocratic nature of the Swaziland government, a perception is emerging that Cosatu represents an adjunct of ANC foreign policy indulging in the economic destabilisation of South Africa's neighbours.

Moving abroad, Cosatu in another resolution condemned the human rights violations inflicted "against unions and the freedom loving people in Indonesia". Cosatu has also called for "mass activities" during the visit of the Indonesian dictator, Suharto, to South Africa in 1998. Indonesia has been one of the ANC's largest donors of funds.

19 April 1998

Attendance

All present. New cde Van welcomed to group.

Outstanding work

Governing Bodies: Jan has not completed briefing document. The existing documents are to be circulated. Jan to draft 2 page plan.

Workers' World: Is to be established on full-time basis which Jan will set up. A funding proposal has been drafted with funding from Nov. The labour movement and radio stations are to be involved. 2-3 staff members will be employed. Good signs of co-operation from COSATU PS and CDC.

CWIT/Us: Van to establish whether work's old computers have programme in order to print.

W/place restructuring: Dan to circulate documents. TULEC pack to be copied and distributed by Jan.

Amin: Dan to provide docs.

Theses: For's made available. Dan to provide relevant extracts of his.

1999 elections: Jan to provide articles on how British Trots approached their elections. Jac to collect docs from CWC.

CWIU: Jac to provide chronology of struggle in CT branch to Jan. A final document is to be prepared for 17/5 meeting.

IWC: Paper to be available early May.

Ed. Crisis: Jaw to distribute original M&G article.

VP: Work to commence once COSATU paper has been concluded.

Draft COSATU paper

Two unresolved issues arose in the discussion which should be taken up at a later date:

- The fundamental underlying cause of the capitalist crisis
- Trade union independence from political parties.

Cdes are to give thought to how paper is to be published. Possible options are to publish by prominent cde, in a left journal under a pseudonym or by clandestine distribution to selected s/s or activists.

Final drafts should be distributed prior to following meeting. An editorial committee is to merge the final version.

- containment were insufficient then significant change became possible. Here Miliband's conception of the Left's role entered, for it was the Left's task to keep alive and promote ideas about the nature and direction of such change – towards socialism – so that they would be available at precisely such moments. For a more general survey of this perspective, see Ralph Miliband, *Divided Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
25. Here Miliband's great colleague and rival, Nicos Poulantzas, was for once more acute in his analysis than Miliband himself. Poulantzas was convinced of the growing political importance and complex identities of what he labelled the 'new petite bourgeoisie.' To Poulantzas, the 'desubordination' of these groups visible in the 1960s and 1970s was of a very different type from that of workers, and in many cases contradictory to it. See Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1975).
 26. Many ex-revolutionaries then connected with the 'new social movements' while others became apostate Left intellectuals, making new, media-sponsored careers denouncing their earlier selves, along with 'master narratives' and various other mortal dangers stemming from the hubris of the Enlightenment. The French 'new philosophers' were the most outrageous practitioners of such apostasy, but they were far from alone.
 27. In the eyes of Touraine and his followers the movements of which social democracy and the Left were components were attached to the earlier social forms of industrial society and destined to decline. See Alain Touraine et al. *The Workers' Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991).
 28. Habermasian celebrators of NSMs proudly announced that the movements had transcended earlier fixations on capitalism, the market and the 'material' more generally. Claus Offe had the rare perspicacity, however, to note that the positioning of NSMs between Left and Right was problematic, depending a great deal on how both poles reacted to new sources of protest. See Claus Offe in *Social Research*, Summer, 1985.
 29. The most valiant effort to avoid the excommunicative reductionism of Tourainians and Habermasians and the relativism of post-modernists while connecting 'old' with 'new' forms of protest, that of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985) attacked the Left for its attachment to metanarrative while reinventing its own vague metanarrative about the forward progress of democracy.
 30. *Socialism for a Sceptical Age* p. 57.
 31. The major exception was the Comintern where, in fact, national Communist parties were subordinated to the objectives of the Soviet Union.
 32. There are very good empirical illustrations of this. Labour's inability to generate more effective transnational cooperation within the European Community/Union after 1985 undoubtedly helped make the consequences of the '1992' programme and its sequels even more neo-liberal than they might have been.
 33. *Socialism for a Sceptical Age* p. 70.

ONCE MORE MOVING ON: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND THE FUTURE OF THE RADICAL LEFT*

Hilary Wainwright

Introduction

A paradox highlights the problem facing the radical left in Britain to-day. Historically the British working class movement has been one of Europe's strongest: the earliest, the most densely organised, one of the most militant and associated throughout its history with a rich variety of wider democratic movements and co-operative experiments. Yet the British state has remained one of the most undemocratic in Europe, retaining close protective bonds with the financial heart of British capitalism. It is as if some resilient, invisible membrane has separated the labour and other democratic social movements from unsettling the real centres of economic power in Britain. No doubt the membrane has many constituents but one is certainly the highly mediated, indirect way in which extra-parliamentary radicalism is represented – but in effect diffused – by the Labour Party. The membrane is held in place by the majoritarian, first-past-the-post electoral system which makes it very difficult for minorities on the left, reflecting radical social forces, to thrive and gain a voice of their own.

The problem of how to create such a voice; how, in other words, to establish a socialist organisation in Britain 'able to attract a substantial measure of support and hold out genuine promise of further growth',¹ was one of Ralph Miliband's theoretical and practical preoccupations. It was one I shared with him. The idea was not and is not some grandiose fantasy of replacing the Labour Party. The aim is rather to create an independent, insubordinate challenge and spur to the left of Labour.

In 'Moving On' in *Socialist Register* 1976 Ralph looks back over the period since 1956. He concludes that in the intervening twenty years the radical left in Britain made no progress towards establishing such 'an effective political formation'. 'A lot has happened in the Labour movement in these years, and much of this has been positive.' 'But,' he insists: 'in

*I want to thank Leo Panitch and Aleks Sierz for their very helpful comments and suggestions in editing this essay.

RECEIVED

SUBMISSIONS TO THE SEPTEMBER COMMISSION

POLITICS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

A better life for all?

Defining the nature of political developments in South Africa and a political role, if any, for COSATU in the current epoch will, in the first instance, require some consideration of conditions nationally and internationally.

The April 1994 election victory of the ANC, with the support of amongst others the SACP and COSATU, was a watershed in the political struggles of the oppressed masses in the country. However, the slogan of "A better life for all" has not yet been transformed into a reality for the thousands who went to the polls for the first time.

COSATU has on more than one occasion re-affirmed itself to the realisation of a socialist order in South Africa. Our approach to the future political role of the Federation should be guided by this objective. The last three years however has seen a very clear rightward shift in the thinking and actions of the Federation. This shift, clearly influenced by the ongoing capitalist crisis, is premised on the joint management of the crisis by capital, labour and the state. In analysing this shift and in attempting to plot a way forward which will reflect our socialist orientation, we need to take note of the prevailing international and national situation.

The new world order

The neo-liberal globalisation of the capitalist economy has brought nothing but pain and suffering to the masses of this world. Declining standards in old industrialised countries and the ongoing pillage and rape of third world countries are a common feature of this new world order.

South Africa has not been left untouched. The living and working conditions of the black majority have progressively worsened. Greater numbers of white workers in previously protected sectors like the state and mining industries find their living standards and even their job security under serious threat. The standard of living of the average South African has fallen 13,5% since 1989. We are constantly confronted by an ever escalating crime rate. Social diseases, drug-abuse etc. are increasing.

In a nutshell the international scene can be described as follows:

- An increase in unemployment, homelessness and poverty in advanced capitalist countries.
- An impoverished third world, increasingly drawn under the control of multi- and transnationals with the aid of the IMF and World Bank
- Increasing cultural and ethnic fragmentation

- Ex-socialist countries experiencing an alarming increase in ethnic conflicts and crime
- A developing ecological crisis.

In addition to the above, an ongoing assault against the union movement continues to gain momentum. This offensive takes various forms. Tactics range through new industrial relations and management techniques to the use of brute force.

Although linked to a sympathetic government, which professes support for the development of a strong labour movement, workers in South Africa continue to come under attack by management. Ongoing attempts to drive down real wage increases, attempts at co-option, collapsing of industrial councils and opposition to centralised bargaining continue to be the order of the day. This has been aided in South Africa by the co-determinist position adopted by COSATU. It is very necessary that this is reviewed and quickly at that.

Generally speaking, unions are in a weak position internationally. Membership figures continue to decline and unions now only represent a small number of the worlds working people. We fear COSATU is heading in this direction.

The ANC has become a neo-liberal party

The recent adoption by the NEC of the ANC of the Government's Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic strategy is the clearest indication, to date, of the rightward shift by the ANC. This strategy has as its key elements:

- reduction in government consumption
- private and public sector wage restraint
- financial deregulation
- accelerated tariff reform
- fiscal discipline
- reducing the role of the state through privatisation.

It will mean nothing more than increased levels of poverty and unemployment and will merely succeed in redistributing income from the poor to the already wealthy.

Co-determination and the Social Contract

One of the most discouraging and potentially demoralising features within COSATU has been the rapid acceptance of co-determinist unionism. This shift of COSATU has been hailed by many as the surest sign of "maturity" within the Federation and a necessary step if COSATU is to remain relevant in this period of neo-liberal dominance. We disagree most strongly with this position. Until fairly recently, COSATU and, indeed, the whole liberation movement struggled on the basis that apartheid and capitalism were two faces of the same coin. Now that apartheid is officially dead it is considered impolite to remind ourselves that capitalism is still all too alive. Instead we are asked to accept that the class struggle no longer exists.

People who a short while ago were loud in demonstrating the class struggle as an unavoidable feature of capitalism, now happily sing a different song. Without acknowledging the change, let alone explaining how today's capitalism is supposedly different from the one they attacked so incisively, the new social democrats expect us to give joyous voice to their new song about capital and labour struggling together for the benefit of everyone. In its place we are consistently told that the surest guarantee of democracy and the "better life for all" is the building of something called independent civil society. But more about civil society a bit later.

COSATU committed itself to the path of social contracts and co-determination when it became a signatory to the establishment of NEDLAC. The authors of NEDLAC are very clear about where it is going. A recent discussion document had the following to say,

"there is **no other alternative** (emphasis in the original) open to South Africa except to seek a meaningful social partnership. To undo the legacy of apartheid, and to cope with global economic developments, it is vital to both the self-interest of each constituency, as well as the interest of society as a whole, that the major social forces in society co-operate with each other."

This shift has already been echoed by a few COSATU affiliates. SACTWU has the following to say:

"Through our struggles we can create a system of co-determination, where capital or government is unable to act in a unilateral manner. Through co-determination we can have a joint say over economic policy at national, sectoral and company level. Decisions on macro-economic policy would need to be resolved through tri-partite institutions."

A study of social contracts in other parts of the world (Australia, Britain, Canada etc.) reveal that they led to attacks on the living standards of workers. Workers were made to work harder, wage restraints were implemented and in many cases many workers lost their jobs. Is this what we want for workers in South Africa?

The Federation has become more and more enmeshed in the politics of co-determination on the premise that economic growth, via international competitiveness, will somehow start addressing the social needs of the masses. This stance of COSATU has obviously been influenced by the positions adopted by the ANC/SACP on the political and economic route for South Africa. Despite its long tradition of militant shopfloor, democratic and anti-capitalist struggles, COSATU leadership now seeks to secure a formal agreement between government, labour and capital on economic policy which would ensure economic growth and prosperity for all South Africans, especially those who have been deprived of basic necessities and prejudiced against by the historical legacy of apartheid.

Intellectuals located within or linked to the labour movement refer constantly to the need for and the growing "maturity" of the unions as they move away from their

traditional adversarial role to seeking an accommodation with capital. Terms and phrases like "growth path", "social accord", "macro-economics", "restructuring" and "competitiveness" have become catchwords of many a COSATU document and conference, unlike the period of its history preceding 1990, which was saturated with left-wing rhetoric inspired by a more socialist, insurrectionary perspective of radically transforming capitalism after the masses had seized control of economic and political power. How quickly COSATU has forgotten the resolutions it took at the 1992 Economic Policy Conference!

And, in all of this, the bosses in South Africa have continued to enrich themselves at the expense of the workers. Notwithstanding the general "agreement" between the state, capital and labour that the South African economy should be restructured to become internationally competitive as part and parcel of the re-integration of South Africa into the global economy, capital in this country continues to be characterised by massive conglomerates making minimal or no productive investment in South Africa. In addition, the governments "non-negotiable" position on the framework of the GEAR strategy is surely the clearest indication that they (the government and business) are not serious about tri-partism. Why then this undying belief by the leadership of COSATU?

Reformist Politics

As we have already mentioned, the rationale for this changed thinking within the leadership is based upon the factors determining the present historical conjuncture internationally and in South Africa, as well as the dominance of reformist politics within the tri-partite alliance. The changed thinking is therefore not so much due to the clever thinking of advanced visionaries as COSATU leadership would like to believe, but mainly their defeatist response to changed circumstances. They have been overwhelmed by the political ascendancy of imperialism after the collapse of the Eastern European states allowing negotiated settlements of traditional areas of conflict to be promoted such as Central America, the Middle East, South East Asia and Southern Africa - Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and more recently in South Africa. Secondly, the general retreat of the working class from unprecedented heights of militancy for "peoples power" in the mid-1980s to the defeats of the labour movement and strong repression in various forms from 1987 onwards, leading to lower confidence and weakened organisations. Thirdly, the right wing political trajectory of the dominant political force of the oppressed people of South Africa, the ANC/SACP, which has permeated all significant mass-based formations of the working class, including COSATU, in the most profound way. For COSATU leadership it is these factors which have given them the confidence to view the tri-partite social contract as the necessary way forward and not the brilliance of foresight of "new realism".

But the underlying assumptions of social contracts - that through joint efforts most of the harsh realities of capitalism can be curbed to the mutual benefit of all classes - does not fully understand or appreciate the actual political economy of capitalism generally and what is possible during the present phase of monopoly-capitalism and its refracted variant in South Africa.

Capitalism's universal law is the maximisation of profit, based primarily upon the exploitation of labour for commodity production and its ability to secure profitable returns through an uncontrolled market of consumers. In this process, production is socialised but the whole surplus (profits) accrued thereof is not, and instead is wholly owned and controlled by individual capitalists to the extent that labour is able to wrest part of this. The apparent success of capitalism, its so-called economic growth, is not simply the extent to which the productive capacity or benefits to the majority of people are increased, but moreover its rate of profitable return on investment. For this reason countries like Brazil, South Korea and even South Africa in the 1960s were and are considered "economic miracles" by all and sundry today despite their miserable track records of heavy political repression and wide scale poverty.

The growth of bureaucracy

The move towards co-determination by COSATU has been characterised by a consistent bureaucratisation of the Federation. This cancer is threatening to destroy all healthy traditions and attributes of the trade union movement. One of the most significant features is the dominance by 'experts/officials/professionals' over the life of the organisation in order to promote their own and/or group interests.

Already the following features have emerged:

- An erosion of the kind of shop floor democracy on which the union movement was built. This has led to little or no discussion, on very critical issues, amongst workers prior to constitutional meetings. Workers are now surprised by announcements made in the media by their union and federation leaders.
- A decline of shop floor militancy and indeed a lack of servicing of workers..
- A change in basic union attire (struggle t-shirts) amongst officials and what can only be called a labour elite (senior leadership) to a more corporate image. This while the interests of the poor and most disadvantaged in our society are ignored.
- A pre-occupation with "policy development" which often involves the use of academics in a way which is totally disempowering. How often is it not heard that certain things are too technical for workers to understand ? The all-powerful COSATU CEC would generally rubber stamp the recommendations without democratic discussion amongst rank-and-file
- The growing tendency these days to refer almost every labour dispute with the bosses to lawyers, mediators or arbitrators. The CCMA provisions in the new LRA will only serve to promote and consolidate this tendency
- The ever growing pre-occupation with investments and in fact the establishment of investment Companies by a few unions and even by COSATU
- A disregard for alternative, more radical views within the Federation. This includes the whole debate on the future of the Tri-partite Alliance

These examples in themselves do not constitute 'bureaucracy', but indicate a developed tendency within the labour movement which has largely resulted from international and national ideological shifts and political practices - from heightening class conflict and struggle to class collaboration and co-determination.

The bureaucratisation of workers' organisations is therefore not inevitable and for as long as the needs of COSATU members remain inadequately addressed, the bureaucracy will be unstable and pressured to take up the fight for rank-and-file aspirations in a democratic South Africa. It has already happened that on a few occasions, workers have marched on their own union or COSATU's offices, publicly demonstrating their grievances.

All these great challenges now confront the labour movement at its weakest hours. A spontaneous process of addressing them will be hopelessly inadequate. A political solution is required. This raises the issue of the mass workers party. It is, however, our view that based on the crisis of leadership for the working class in South Africa, confined not only to the inadequacies of the ANC/SACP but more importantly, throughout the modern history of liberation struggle, no viable alternative socialist tradition has emerged within or outside of those parties. The primary need therefore is to build an independent working class political movement. Given the general state of organisation of other working class formations (youth, unemployed, students, etc.) it will have to rely on the trade union movement as its organisational launching pad. Herein lies the greatest challenge to COSATU. The industrial working class has always been accepted as the vanguard of the struggle for transformation. It is our submission that COSATU should not be thrown off balance by these attacks nor should it start having second thoughts as to its historical tasks .

The above is not the route currently travelled by COSATU and other labour formations. The notion that the "bosses interests" are the "national interests" needs to be fought against and defeated. It has been shown over and over again that the interests of the working class are diametrically opposed to that of the ruling class. As workers become more resistant to talks of belt-tightening and the need to be grateful that they are at least employed, so union leaders will be called upon to restrain the self-activity of rank-and-file members. The new Labour Relations Act which prohibits strikes in respect of dismissals and retrenchments is a further setback. This has very serious implications for the labour movement. We propose that COSATU initiates critical discussions, involving rank-and-file members, on the implications for COSATU and the broader working class of remaining in the Alliance and possible alternatives.

SOME ECONOMIC POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

COSATU's Economic Policy Proposals

Various questions need to be answered regarding COSATU's most recent attempt to influence the economic future of South Africa.

Firstly, why was it necessary to draft a new document when others had preceded it, like the Economic Policy Conference resolutions of 1992 and the RDP? Secondly, what was the process leading up to the latest document, "Social Equity and Job Creation"? To what extent were rank-and-file members and union structures involved in contributing and the final adoption of the document?

It is obvious to many a critical observer that the RDP has been forcibly shelved and abandoned by the government and COSATU is not prepared to challenge this. The new document of COSATU reflects a major rightward shift in COSATU's position on macro-economic issues, attempting to creatively achieve progressive reforms within the neo-liberal framework of government and capital. COSATU has self-evidently abandoned its socialist positions without **full democratic discussion amongst rank-and-file members.**

The latest document fails to sufficiently emphasise the politics of the economic order, that presently the owners of most of the wealth, i.e. monopoly capital, is accumulating excessive wealth through continued exploitation, oppression and consequent misery of the working class. In order for this huge wealth disparity and poverty to be eradicated a workers' state has to be instituted. The working class, through its own socialist programme and collective organisation should run all major facets of society in its own interests and that of the people.

Due to these fundamental weaknesses, labour's document is deficient in several respects as it does not set out clearly what needs to be done politically and organisationally in order to achieve its limited socio-economic goals. It also lacks a concrete plan of mobilisation to fight those who are likely to stand in the way of its objectives.

More specifically, the document:

- Merely restates the RDP aim of building 300 000 houses annually. Yet it has not analysed the existing failure of non-delivery of housing despite the few billion rands which government has allocated to it. It fails to confront the fact that the new government has placed the building of houses into the hands of **private capital**. It is maximisation of profit by the likes of Stocks and Stocks which prevents a million houses from being built by 1999. The major features of housing provision - land availability and building materials are not addressed. Due to its adaptation to the neo-liberal capitalist reality, no proposals are put forward which will challenge the developers' stranglehold on land and the monopolies like Portlands Cement and Corobrik's control on the prices of their cement and bricks. Why not push for nationalising them?
- Confusingly the document promotes skills training for the purposes of productivity and job creation. Increases in productivity are almost always accompanied by job losses at home or competing companies abroad. Simultaneously, it promotes the false belief that the job losses as a result of GATT can be overcome by "re-training". Not only does COSATU accept and promote job losses by tacitly accepting the neo-liberal reality of GATT, but it falsely offers its own illusory solutions of training to overcome increased unemployment. **Is this training for jobs that do not exist?**
- Fails to make radical proposals for fundamentally challenging wealth concentration in South Africa. "Negotiating new anti-trust policy" is weak and vague. Why are we not promoting and fighting for nationalising the commanding heights of the economy? No wonder the Oppenheims, the Ruperts and Dalings are so pleased with the new South Africa. An economic policy which does not

challenge their control of the wealth only serves their interests and conversely perpetuates the continual impoverishment of the working class.

COSATU, the ANC, the GEAR and NEDLAC

The ANC led government's economic policy "Growth, employment and redistribution" (GEAR) is probably the most clear demonstration of whose interests it is representing, i.e. big business and their emerging black partners. It has no pretensions of its World Bank/IMF-inspired neo-liberal intentions and a radical departure from the RDP on utilising redistribution for economic growth. It is intent on reducing the budget deficit by cutting heavily in social spending and public sector employment. This has already affected people extensively in the provision of health services (babies have died as a direct result of cut-backs) and education.

The government's policy relies heavily on private capitalists, who benefit from the misery of the working class, for solving our socio-economic problems. Consequently, the government wants to intervene less and less in the economy in order to promote the "free-market". Simultaneously it favours capitalists by pushing for "labour flexibility", nothing more than a euphemism for higher levels of exploitation of labour and its further subjugation to the woes of capital. Privatisation is also seen as a solution to the country's economic crisis. The consequences are to lessen the economic clout of government, job losses and increased costs of services for ordinary people. COSATU's position on the National Framework Agreement - creating a forum to negotiate the implementation of privatisation as opposed to developing a fighting campaign has clearly placed workers on the slippery slope to greater suffering and exploitation.

The government's position heavily contradicts the stated aims of labour's policy proposals. It has even refused to negotiate around its position. Yet the COSATU CEC of 12/13 September 1996 tacitly accepted GEAR as the economic framework to work within. This is now meant to be "engaged" and not opposed as this is likely to weaken the ANC in government. What is the basis of this loyalty to the ANC? Either we fully agree with the GEAR and the consequences to the working class or we don't. If we don't, which COSATU has clearly illustrated throughout its history and even its latest economic policy proposals, then the GEAR must be fought tooth and nail. COSATU has not even opposed the government's undemocratic unilateral implementation of the GEAR, undermining NEDLAC. As mentioned earlier, clearly the politics of COSATU and its alliance with the ANC must be placed under thorough and honest scrutiny, particularly by rank-and-file members.

We call for the mounting of a campaign aimed at smashing the GEAR. Such a campaign should draw in other working class formations, e.g. youth, unemployed, women, etc.

COSATU and financial investments

A number of unions have formed investment companies. Often capital comes from surpluses on members' subscriptions. In the light of the numerous complaints of lack of service, we wonder how unions manage to generate these surpluses. Huge

investments have been made in companies employing union members. Union officials and former officials in parliament are part of the boards of companies (most probably reaping huge personal benefits). The unionists have become capitalists themselves. These developments deeply attack the traditional radical politics of COSATU. COSATU itself has formed an investment company and is seeking to purchase a controlling stake in an assurance company.

Where will COSATU stand when NUMSA members of Toyota wish to go on a protracted strike in support of wage demands, when many COSATU unions have a share in Johnnic? Will COSATU still encourage stayaways or general strikes in campaigns?

It seems that capitalist investments, workers' exploitation and workers' traditional strike weapons are irreconcilable. Will Sam Shilowa soon be advocating higher productivity and downsizing in order for COSATU companies to remain competitive?

We strongly recommend that COSATU should re-affirm its support for the positions which emerged at the 1992 Economic Policy Conference. These included :

- To promote the working class as the dominant political and economic power.
- To continue striving for a democratic, socialist society as the means to truly meeting the aspirations of the people.
- The state must ensure that basic services are retained in public hands and any such services that have been privatised should be re-nationalised.
- That COSATU remains committed to social ownership which will include the nationalisation of the leading heights of the economy. This is seen as an instrument for the achievement of full socialism.
- Build a society based on production for need rather than profits.

BARGAINING ISSUES

Collective Bargaining and Solidarity

The lack of enthusiasm shown by workers to celebrate COSATU's 10th anniversary was not without reason. It reflects the state of COSATU and its relatively low public profile and prestige compared to the previous 10 years.

In addition to the political problems raised in this contribution, COSATU's lack of initiative in co-ordinating wage struggles and campaigning around issues which directly impact on workers living and working conditions has also led to this drop in the Federation's prestige. More importantly, COSATU's failure, coupled with the narrow chauvinistic perspective of its affiliates leadership, has resulted in workers' struggles being uncoordinated despite being affected by common problems:- low wage increases, retrenchments, new management techniques, GATT, privatisation, housing, etc.

Historically, COSATU has always been weak in its ability to organise solidarity for groups of workers who battle with their employers or police. To date no assessment

or analysis has been done regarding this major weakness. We could reliably argue that one of the key weaknesses which caused the defeat of the 1987 NUM strike was the absence of solidarity by other unions and workers. This is despite the fact that the NUM strike took place not long after COSATU's second National Congress. Yet, no discussion of COSATU's biggest affiliates strike took place at the Congress.

The new South Africa has not meant much for workers and the broader working class in terms of "a better life for all". In fact, it is likely that their living standards have steadily declined. As mentioned above, with the neo-liberal orientation of the government and capital, it is self evident that the economic growth which they (government and capital) wish to achieve will be on the basis of further impoverishment of the working class. They are unwilling to negotiate, let alone reconsider their positions. It is also noticeable that the labour movement's leadership has beaten a steady retreat, gradually accommodating these neo-liberal perspectives. A prime and recent example has been the way in which COSATU has approached privatisation. Another, as mentioned above, is the rather pragmatic position COSATU has adopted on GEAR.

Organised collective struggle - The only way forward!

COSATU needs to re-assert its central role in defending and advancing the interests of the working class. The truth is that if COSATU does not, there are no other organisations which still have the political perspective, will and stature to fulfil this historic role.

Revive the Living - Wage Campaign

COSATU desperately needs to hit the campaign trail again in order to address the aforementioned problems, as well as revive its organisation and to stop the drift of its major unions into corporatism.

The organisation, must also avoid the style which characterised the most recent campaign efforts around the LRA and privatisation which were completely leadership determined and disrespectful towards workers views and their democratic participation. The role of the leadership must be to direct and give leadership but it must do so on a democratic basis and struggle to win broadest possible acceptance of its direction. Structured mandating and reporting-back through COSATU regional / local structures should be the means to facilitate this process.

Broad guidelines for the Living Wage Campaign

Central to any campaign are the issues which affect people and the demands which arise there from. We put forward that the demands set out below should form the basis of the Living Wage Campaign. These demands should be canvassed amongst the members of all unions and mandated for adoption at a Living Wage Conference.

The demands should focus on:

- Job Security and Job Creation
 - A moratorium on all retrenchments in the private and public sectors.
 - A ban on overtime work. This is to be linked to the realisation of the living wage - there would be no need for overtime work if we earned decent wages
 - A programme of public works as originally envisaged in the RDP (Section 2.3. pp. 18/19) linking reconstruction and development, for the purposes of job-creation (housing, hospitals and schools).
 - Provision of unemployment benefits to workers for as long as they are out of work, including school-leavers. The rates set for the benefit should be set at the average union wage in manufacturing and closely tied to the envisaged living-wage figure.
- A forty hour week
- Social security for all:
 - Living retirement benefits
 - Free medical assistance and benefits to all who cannot afford it. Private hospitals must be compelled to treat quotas of people either on an area basis or referred to by state clinics.
- A living wage of at least R2 000

A note on the Living Wage figure

Various COSATU conferences and meetings have debated the need for setting a figure for the living-wage. Debate has also centred around how this should be determined. The dominant position within the federation has been not to set any figure with arguments supporting this position claiming that:

- it will raise unrealistic expectations of workers
- it will not accommodate the higher paid workers, and for this reasons it will be divisive.

On the first argument:- Whose reality is this based on? The employers profits or the livelihood of workers and their families? What would be the basis of lowering the figure? - lowering the living standards of the working class? (noting that many unemployed and students are dependant on the wages of workers) or lowering the profits of employers which are not being re-invested productively anyway?

The second argument regarding the higher paid workers has some validity but is often used as a red herring by narrow trade unionists. The living wage figure could be used as a minimum benchmark figure on the one hand, coupled with a percentage increase figure which at the very least compensates them (the higher paid workers) for the effects of inflation.

The positive effects of having specific demands such as a living wage figure outweigh the potential negative ones. The demands concretely provide a basis for breaking down union parochialism and

unifying workers across unions and federations, as well as drawing other sections of the working class to join hands with organised workers, the unemployed, students, youth, etc.

The Living Wage Campaign itself

Any campaign must be centrally co-ordinated. Campaigns, like their military origins, have to be centrally driven and of necessity include propaganda and agitation (calls for action). COSATU's experience in campaigning is extensive. However, due to its federalist structure, the regions of COSATU which are the ideal campaign structures, are not given sufficient clout and powers for this task.

The regions should be given more powers of decision-making over the direction and implementation of the campaign. COSATU regional structures are closer to "the ground" than the CEC or EXCO which consist of National Office Bearers who are removed from their rank-and-file members and, in any event, meet too infrequently to make quick, democratic decisions for campaign purposes. (More about COSATU structures further on).

The role of Individual Company negotiations

Whilst supportive of centralised bargaining, we do accept that there are many instances where negotiations still take place at plant level. These should continue with an attempt being made to:-

- Include the COSATU demands as CORE DEMANDS
- Ensure that these company negotiations take place at more or less the same time and co-ordinated at COSATU regions and locals - and nationally by the campaigns committee in the case of large national companies.

The role of NEDLAC

As mentioned earlier, the emergence of NEDLAC signalled the formal entry of COSATU into the politics of co-determination. NEDLAC's legitimacy and stature as a tripartite co-determinist structure has however already been undermined by the governments reluctance to negotiate the fundamentals of its economic policy. As suggested earlier, it is unlikely to ever be fully co-determinist and South African conditions simply render this pseudo-social-democratic phenomenon a pipe-dream.

The last COSATU Living Wage Conference held in March 1996 (and significantly attended by only a small number of CEC delegates), did attempt to refocus COSATU. In re-affirming COSATU's commitment to socialism, the Conference agreed that:

- We must use NEDLAC as a terrain of sharpening class contradictions.
- We must use NEDLAC to challenge and change the power relations in favour of the working class.

- Agreements at NEDLAC should advance and not dilute our struggles.
- We need to develop strategies for engaging our allies and the broader working class in the process of transforming our country.

In fact the resolution ended with the following - "COSATU reaffirms its commitment to a vision of socialism - we must keep the red flag flying high!". Nothing has, however, come of this resolution.

We strongly support the above resolution and recommend that NEDLAC be treated as a national negotiations forum on the basis of a revised political understanding of the role of labour being there to represent its members and the broader working class, not the "national interest" which is inevitably the interests of the capitalists. COSATU will on this basis approach NEDLAC to place its demands to "the other side" within the context of a campaign for demands against the capitalists and the government which has demonstrated a capitalist bias.

Engagement by COSATU should be informed by, amongst other things, the following:

- A vision of socialism and by implication the fact that we are involved in a class war and that we need to develop alliances with other working class formations in advancing the demands of the broader working class.
- That social contracts and other forms of co-determination are not in the short or long term interests of the working class.
- That we should seek to win over other sections of the organised working class (NACTU, FEDSAL) not on the basis that is currently the case, viz. that we bend over backwards in the name of labour unity - but rather on the basis of the class nature of our struggle.
- That the key reason for engagement is not towards co-responsibility for managing capitalism but rather towards defending and struggling for improved wages and other conditions of employment as part of our struggle for socialism.
- Engagement in institutions like NEDLAC must be aimed at getting the ANC-led government to implement programmes which immediately start addressing the needs of workers.

Workplace Forums

This feature of the new LRA has as its main aim, to draw workers into the government's neo-liberal agenda:- to promote international competitiveness, productivity, etc. There are more specific problems related to the basis and manner in which these imposed organs are meant to operate upon.

Fundamentally these relate to:

- The deliberate separation between production issues and distribution matters (wages, investments)
- The opening up of the forums to all workers, potentially weakening unions organisationally and diluting radical perspectives traditionally held by workers organised within COSATU.

We therefore propose that COSATU develops an approach to Workplace Forums through extensive and full participatory discussions towards a common policy for all COSATU affiliates. There are enormous dangers for workers if COSATU retains an unsystematic approach to this issue.

Tackling the TNCs and globalisation

It is well known internationally that the world economy has become "globalised" and integrated. This has been facilitated by technological developments in communications and transport. The transnational companies have spearheaded these developments and are its chief beneficiaries. In the process of this form of economic development, the national state's power and function as a regulator and agent of redistribution of wealth - through ownership, taxation and employment - has declined.

Transnational corporations, especially in the context of a recessionary wave of deep economic crisis internationally, are not subject to any serious constraints which hinder their operations. National governments which still seek to protect the interests and concerns of the people they govern against the exploitative aims of the TNCs are coerced by international institutions like the IMF and World Bank and the threat of disinvestment or non-investment by the TNCs. Part of the modern economic globalisation trend is restructuring of production and introducing new management techniques which exploit labour more and destroy jobs permanently. TNCs have also tended to re-locate production to centres where labour costs are lower and governments more repressive towards labour. TNCs must be challenged!

COSATU's International Department needs to be more pro-active, leading the working class of Southern Africa to defend itself from the neo-liberal onslaught. One way of challenging the TNCs is to establish international collective bargaining at a number of levels.

- Substantive "wage" negotiations between International Trade Secretariats mandated by its affiliated unions and the big TNCs in the motor, petroleum, food and pharmaceutical sectors.
- Every four (4) years the ICFTU could host an international bargaining conference which agrees/adopts core demands and resolutions around substantive issues - hours of work, wages, working conditions, etc. together with a PROGRAMME OF ACTION co-ordinated by the ICFTU in conjunction with the respective ITSs.

- Labour with governments of the world or a particular region. This could take the form of the ICFTU and the UNO/G7 or SATUCC/OATUU with governments of Southern Africa or the OAU - around issues of concern, e.g. European Union Social Charter, repressive governments, labour standards, SATTUC's Social Charter, etc.

Similar to any normal campaign, organised labour and their working class allies must be mobilised in support of their demands, **INTERNATIONALLY**. Here the Internet/E-Mail facility could operate in labour's favour.

COSATU could encourage and/or facilitate the acquiring of the facility for its affiliates at the most localised levels. Similarly, it could spearhead this for unions in Southern Africa. DITSELA and NGOs which service the labour movement could be commissioned to do the necessary training to enable unionists to ride the information highway. The facilities of capitalist globalisation could in this way be used to create active forums of solidarity which reach out to the factory floor and general workforce.

COSATU Structures

COSATU should overhaul and revise its structures and constitution in order to develop a unitary structure which is more in keeping with modern economic developments. Capitalists no longer confine their economic activity to a single enterprise or industry. In South Africa, the Anglo American Corporation epitomises this phenomenon of monopoly-capitalism. Industry-based unions are no longer adequate to counter the strength of monopoly capitalists.

The primary aim of a unitary structure will be to ensure unity in action around annual wage bargaining, retrenchments, struggles around health, safety and environmental issues, etc. It will also counter act the perennial problem of unions disregarding COSATU decisions due to their autonomy and independence as affiliates of COSATU as a federation.

Democratic decision making and participation of workers is undermined twofold by the present COSATU structure:

1. In order for a group of workers within a union's region to promote its position broadly it has to win its position within their union first. Despite their position potentially finding favour with thousands of workers outside of their union, their views could effectively be suppressed by a conservative or even reactionary majority. Affiliates members are not homogeneous and greater cross interaction between workers of different unions can only lead to a flourishing democratic culture within COSATU along with broader unity.
2. COSATU regions need to be given full constitutional status. They are closer to the ground and are able to channel the democratic voice of workers more effectively.

We propose that all constitutional structures of COSATU of regions (from locals) to the EXCO, CEC and Congress have at least half the delegates representing COSATU and the rest elected by affiliates.

Locals

It is self-evident that COSATU and its affiliates have become more and more bureaucratized, with decision making on most issues being confined to the top structures - the National Office Bearers or the General Secretary. Locals need to be rebuilt, resourced and given constitutional status in order to revive and preserve the democratic life-blood of COSATU.

COSATU unions have a rich history of contesting political ideas and campaigning to improve the lot of the working class. If locals and regions are given real power and more resources, they are likely to be taken more seriously by unions. Together with consistent campaigning on issues.

RELATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The Civil Society Debate

Debates within the Federation on the future relationship to civil society would have to include discussions on all or some of the following:

- What constitutes civil society ?
- The relationship between civil society and the state.
- The nature and role of the state in bringing about, entrenching and sustaining democracy.

It is also necessary to note that the whole debate on civil society only really took hold in the progressive movement in the early 1990s. What is of concern is the rather uncritical way in which the concept of "independent civil society" is held up as the ultimate requirement in building democracy within the country. COSATU, as part of this civil society, would therefore have to play a part in the so-called watchdog role of this civil society.

Civil society has generally been defined as that part of society which is not part of any organs of the state. It has been used by the ruling class to draw a distinction between matters political and economic in a way which attempts to eliminate (or reduce to the barest minimum) the role of the state in economic affairs. Further, as already mentioned earlier, democracy can only be achieved through the pressures exerted by "independent civil society". This position has been widely accepted by almost the full spectrum of political opinion.

It is our view that it is an incorrect position and that COSATU should seriously review its position in this regard. Particularly if COSATU is serious about its position

on socialism. Our main reasons for saying that it is incorrect to draw a distinction between civil society and the state, are the following:

- It implies that the state has no role to play in the process of democratisation. That the seizure of state power becomes irrelevant and that all that is required are "pressure groups" from outside to keep the state in check.
- As mentioned above, it seeks to create a distinction between the state and civil society and totally ignores that the state is the institutional, political expression of the relations in society.
- The arguments are silent on the role of political parties and organisations in the process of building democracy.
- It completely downplays the class character of our society in that oppressive and capitalist institutions are also "independent organs of civil society".

People's Power

It is quite significant that prior to the unbanning of the ANC, a very close relationship existed, within the democratic movement, between civic and political matters. This focus has shifted significantly since then to one which seeks to create a very clear separation between matters civic and political.

Our history is rich with courageous examples of the work done by our civics, trade unions, student organisations, etc. in bringing about a change in government. In other words a direct political role for so-called organs of civil society. This process was supported by the establishment of street and block committees during an insurrectionary struggle phase of the mid-1980s. Our actions were governed by a desire to not only bring about the downfall of the apartheid regime but to lay the basis for the transition to socialism. The slogan was very clear - "Forward to people's power!".

Since 1994 however, the focus has shifted away from organs of people's power to the creation of independent organs of civil society. The pre-occupation with building large social movements around certain issues, for example, the bank rates campaign and failing to build on this in the interest of the working class has been a very real weakness. This we believe has been fuelled by our desire to afford the ANC an opportunity to govern, despite it leading to vicious economic attacks against the working class, no different to Thatcher's measures during the early 1980s.

COSATU - Part of independent civil society or an organ of people's power?

Recent events within COSATU seem to illustrate that COSATU has abdicated the task it set itself of struggling towards a socialist South Africa. As a forerunner in the struggle against apartheid and with a stated objective of socialism, COSATU was a classic example of what could be termed working class civil society. The question that then must be asked is - Does COSATU then proceed to play the role of mere

watchdog and a pressure group in favour of working class interests or does it play a much more overtly political role in the ongoing struggle for socialism?

We would suggest that it is necessary to build strong working class organisations. Youth, students, unemployed, women etc. should be organised in such a way that the working class is able to advance its agenda during this period. This does however raise the question of a political party directly representing the interests of the working class. This we have dealt with in another section of our submission. The relationship of COSATU to other organs of working class society should then be on the basis of a clearly articulated set of progressive demands such as:

- A living wage for all.
- Job security and job creation.
- Decent education and healthcare for all.
- Decent and affordable housing.
- Food for all.

In advancing the above against those which stand in the way of achieving this "better life for all" (state and capitalist class), COSATU would then be eliminating the false separation of civic from political matters.

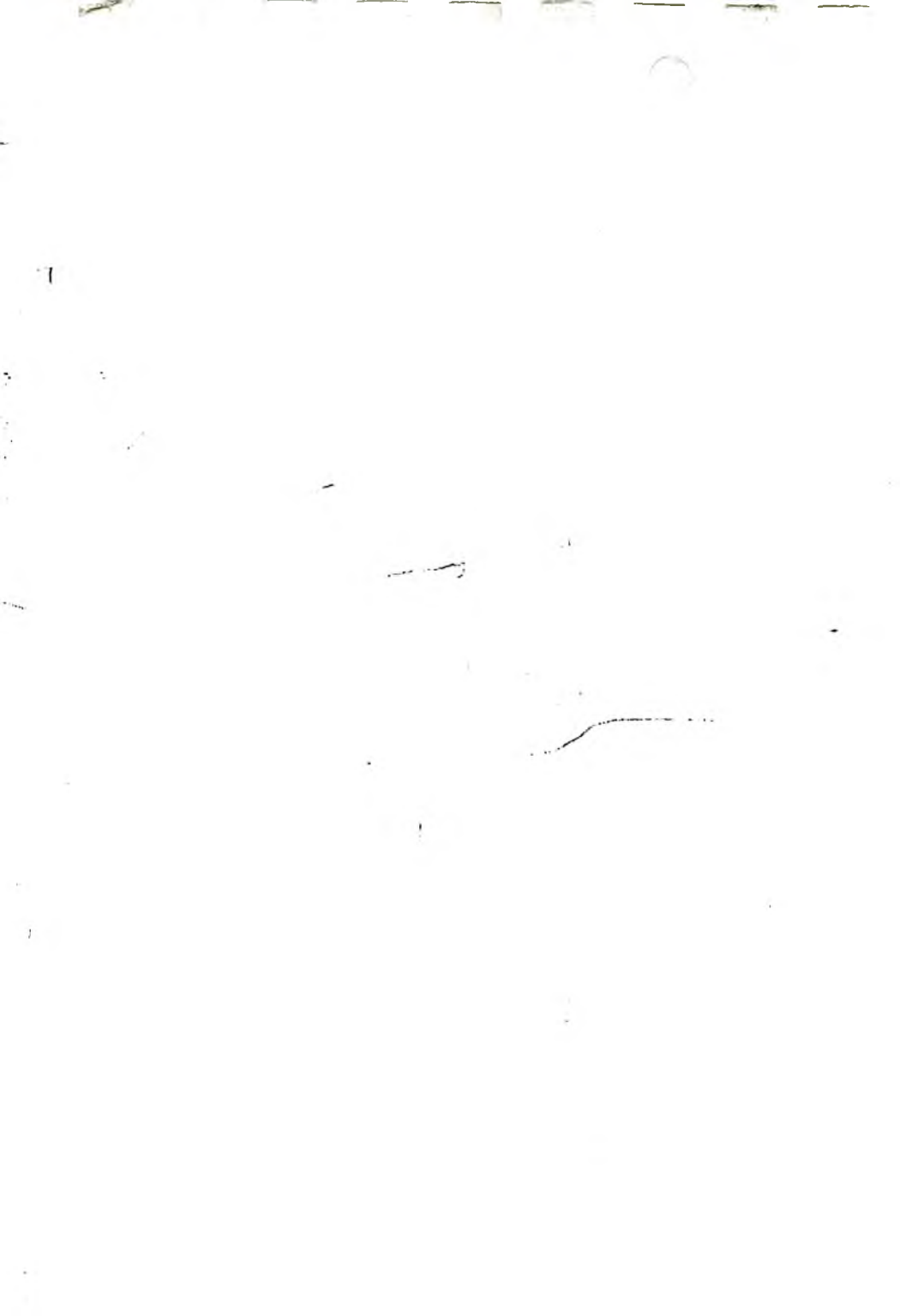
Working class allies within "civil society"

COSATU should avoid the pitfalls of European "syndicalist" unionism of confining organisation and mobilisation to industrial workers only. Organisationally, COSATU's track record has been poor in its attempts to organise other sectors - farmworkers, domestic workers and the unemployed. These groups of workers are usually the most difficult to organise, with the former two characterised by physical constraints - atomised employment separated by huge distances, as well as labouring under the yoke of harshly oppressive conditions.

With the advent of industrial restructuring since the 1970s, capital's creativity in exploiting the working class through sub-contracting, home-based work, temporary employment, etc. has not been matched by the trade unions organisationally. Worse still, trade unions, as an organisational home and vital social current, has declined internationally. This has been especially marked amongst young workers and new employment groups.

Already due to political and economic developments discussed previously, together with the labour movements tardiness, there is a visible decline in COSATU's political stature and a dramatic slow-down in real numerical growth. The lack of progressive organisation amongst significant sections of the working class, ultimately weakens and undermines industrial, unionised workers economically and politically in a variety of ways:

- lowering wage levels.
- competition for jobs and resources causing open violent conflict.
- scabbing



- susceptibility to being won over by reactionary groups hostile to the working class
- the unemployed drawn to criminal activity, causing further social and moral decay.

COSATU therefore needs to :

- ⇒ Re-visit the tasks of organising the unemployed.
- ⇒ Play a more central role in organising farmworkers.
- ⇒ Allocate more attention and resources to its plans for domestic workers.
- ⇒ Develop a strategy for organising non-industrial workers who are supposedly outside of the formal economy (home-based, contract, casual and temporary workers)

Vital strategic decisions need to be made about allocating resources to these organisational and political tasks. Affiliates need to play a **direct role** in implementing these tasks by availing their resources - offices, organisers, experienced leadership, etc. as well as increasing their financial contribution to the Federation. This will only do on the basis of affiliates being politically committed to the necessity and feasibility of the tasks.

We trust that these submissions will contribute to the work of the Commission.

Submission by Dale Forbes and Mario Jacobs