

At its May 23 meeting in Cape Town the Black Sash national executive adopted the following resolution:

COSATU LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

The Black Sash supports the Cosatu Living Wage Campaign, and the right of Cosatu to promote such a campaign. We do so for these reasons:

1. In all civilised countries worker organisations have the moral and constitutional right to seek improved wages and employment conditions for their members.
2. In South Africa the historic gap between white incomes and black is indisputably and unacceptably wide, despite recent improvements in certain black job categories.
3. All our advice offices have in the past 18 months felt and recorded with distress the impact of a rising tide of black impoverishment and sheer struggle for survival. Some aspects of this are contained in Appendix A.

We call on our own members, who generally belong to the materially more favoured white sector, to relate actively to Cosatu in -

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- A. self education and assessment of the campaign demands;
- B. making known to fellow whites the realities of black economic needs and demands;
- C. putting whatever legitimate pressure they can on those in influence, whether in the public or private sector, in support of the Living Wage Campaign.

We pledge ourselves at national level to pursue the same programme and do our best to ensure that Black Sash members in employer roles, personally and organisationally, will apply the same standards of economic justice as we are commending to others.

APPENDIX A BLACK POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Black poverty has deepened in the past 18 months. It has been aggravated by a range of factors and influence including -

- ~~xxxxxx~~ increasing unemployment and heavier dependency burdens, due to lack of job creation to meet the needs of 300 000 new workseekers per annum and to retrenchments as companies go into liquidation or "rationalise" in order to improve profits. Both factors predate the October 1986 imposition of economic sanctions.
- inflation, particularly in respect of food prices and transport costs which constitute so large a part of the budget of low income families.

- wage increases that do not keep pace with inflation.
- forced removals and wholesale destruction of dwellings and possessions e.g. at Crossroads and KTC in the Cape.
- loss of earnings due to unrest conditions and to ill-health and injury sustained in those conditions.
- delays and inefficiencies in payments of UIF and other benefits.
- payment only in homelands of UIF and other benefits earned by workers in 'white' South Africa.
- overnight closure of firms, leaving workers without legally due compensation.
- worker ignorance of rights and benefits, due to lack of information from employers and state authorities.
- lack of education and skill training.
- lack of access to skilled job categories e.g. on the mines.
- debilitating effects of migrant and commuter labour systems.

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In 1985 half the households in South Africa i.e. excluding the impoverished TVBC homelands, received less than R400 per month. and ... % received less than R150 per month.

Meantime investors are laughing all the way to the bank as companies report record profits and the market value of shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange rise from around R136 billion at the end of 1985 to just under R270 billion at the end of March 1987, a "handsome profit of R132 billion" (Argus, 11.4.1987).

APPENDIX B COSATU "LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN" DEMANDS

(page 22, UPFRONT April 1987)

(See also back pages of Cosatu News March 1987)