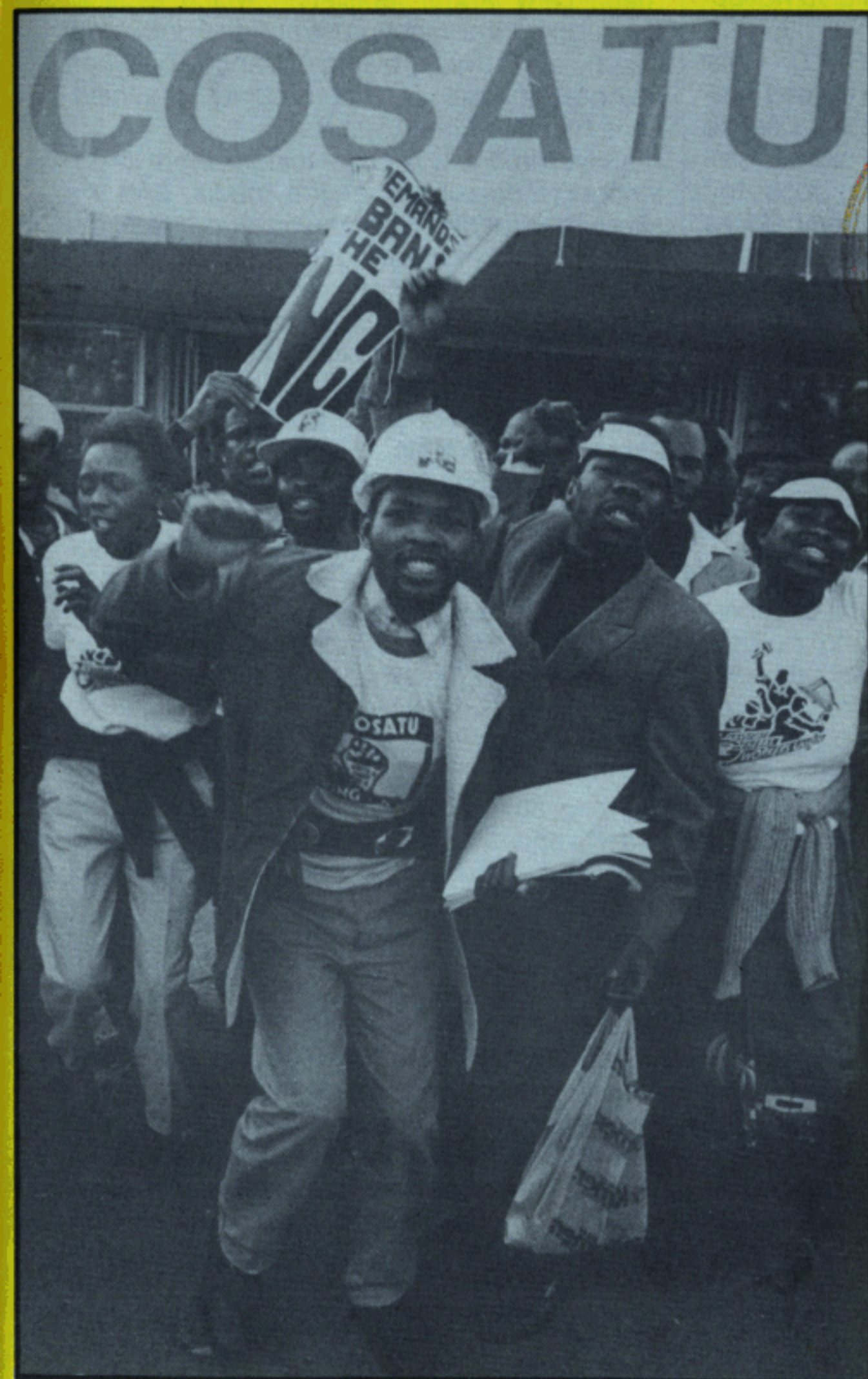


WORK IN PROGRESS

49



WORKERS ON THE MOVE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meeting the
ANC in Dakar

340 000
mineworkers on
strike

Sanctions and
British
Anti-Apartheid

COSATU: the
congress, and
local structures

Mogopa: a
dream smashed

The UDF

EDITORIAL

As a number of articles in this issue of *Work In Progress* indicate, workers are currently demonstrating considerable confidence and discipline. In most sectors of the economy there is a massive strike wave, with a resultant increase in trade union membership.

Disciplined action in the key mining and metal sectors are the most obvious examples of working-class assertiveness at present. But in chemicals, food and the public sector, increased strike activity is also noticeable.

The recent congress of COSATU - the Congress of South African Trade Unions - reflected this mood of confidence. Despite enormous pressures from the state, employers and shadowy right-wing groups, the giant union federation has thus far held its structures together, and achieved considerable success in welding unions together within the major economic sectors.

Organised workers have achieved some surprising successes in the context of an ongoing recession. And whatever its final outcome, the National Union of Mineworkers has displayed greater strength and discipline in the miners strike than even sympathetic commentators expected.

But growing worker confidence is only one side of the picture. The state of emergency has weakened popular and political organisation in a number of areas and sectors. The United Democratic Front is effectively forced to operate underground at present, and some of its strongest affiliates have been severely damaged.

The COSATU congress resolved to strengthen and formalise alliance structures with community organisations that are mass-based, democratic, non-racial and have a proven record of struggle. But as Jay Naidoo, COSATU's secretary general points out

in this issue of *WIP*, disciplined alliances are based on deeply-rooted structures. COSATU understands the difficulty organisations in the community face in developing these structures at present. However, Naidoo notes that 'an urgent responsibility lies with our allies in the community to build sound organisation in the different sectors'.

The state is indicating growing concern about developments within the labour movement. New labour legislation which aims to curb union militancy, use of the industrial court, and the growing alliance between unions, political and community organisations has been threatened.

Government has also telegraphed its intention to curtail further the media, and the alternative media in particular, and attack the way in which opposition organisations finance their activities. Its expropriation of a farm intend for victims of forced removals, and the Magopa people in particular, suggests a government which believes it remains strong enough to control the pace of events in South Africa.

The threatened alterations to the Labour Relations Act, by-passing an appeal court decision regarding the Magopa forced removal, and a number of distressing human rights legal decisions all suggest that the legal space for opposition and organisation may be closing even faster than the state of emergency dictates.

Strength and discipline displayed by trade unions and their memberships, and the growing strike wave, suggest a power and assertiveness on the part of organised workers. But disruption in the development of popular and community structures, and likely government initiatives, indicate that the struggle over the nature of South Africa's future is far from over.

The *Work In Progress* collective condemns the state's refusal to allow Jon Lewis, editor of the *South African Labour Bulletin*, permanent residence in South Africa. Actions like this from a government ruling through force are not surprising. But *WIP* deeply regrets the loss of an editor of one of those publications with which we share a fraternal relationship.

Thanks to Gideon Mendel for Mogopa pictures, and to Afrapix for all other photographs used.

Meeting the ANC in West Africa: From Dakar to Burkina Faso

Most of the IDASA delegates to the meeting in Dakar, capital of Senegal, were Afrikaners and academics. A few were businessmen, politicians, and English-speakers. One was an architect, one an actress and one an artist.

Though one or two were relatively conservative, by and large the group consisted of Afrikaans academics who were not 'New Nats' or recently converted ex-Nats. They were mostly academics at Afrikaans universities who had long been on the left of their universities. Many had suffered slight damage in promotions and status because of their political views.

The group was not made up of 'new independents' associated with ex-National Party members like Dennis Worrall and Wynand Malan. But they benefitted from the independent movement, which included those who had previously been their main detractors. For years, Stellenbosch University academics like Sampie Terreblanche, Julius Jeppe and Willie Esterhuysen remained members of the National Party, gracing the middle pages of the *Sunday Times* with 'verligte nasionalism' and

The Dakar meeting between ANC representatives and a delegation convened by the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa (IDASA) is still making headlines. State President PW Botha has attacked the integrity of IDASA delegates, and indicated that government may withdraw passports to prevent future contact with the ANC. The far right has accused the IDASA group of treason. JOHN MATISONN, a journalist who covered the Dakar meeting, describes the trip, which included visits to Senegal, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

condemning those who were to become Dakarites for not fighting from within the party.

The independent movement made life easier for the sorts of people who went to Dakar. It allowed them to come in from the cold of opposition, entering the mainstream of Afrikaans academics who now oppose PW Botha. Some were in the same think tank with new non-Nats Terreblanche and Jeppe, helping particularly Esther Lategan's independent candidacy in Stellenbosch during the May white election.

The ANC sent their 'A' team to Dakar. It would not have been appropriate to have Oliver Tambo present. The ANC understands diplomacy -

presidents speak to presidents, and Slabbert is not one. The ANC had their working intellectuals present: Thabo Mbeki, Mac Maharaj, Pallo Jordan, Steve Tswete, and an assortment of others including Harold Wolpe (now teaching sociology at Essex university in England), Essop Pahad, and Selwyn Gross, a Catholic monk who admits to not having lost his Cape Town Jewishness...

The Dakar meeting

There was consensus that ANC delegates worked much harder than the IDASA group. At the end of a day they would caucus for two hours while the white delegation drank and swam.

The conference lasted three days. The ANC had the four papers delivered by the white delegation beforehand, so they had been able to prepare replies. The most important of these was the opening paper by Andre du Toit, formerly of Stellenbosch and now at the University of Cape Town. He had previously been exposed to the ANC and its thinking while studying at America's Yale University for a year, and was not new to the subject of ANC policies and programmes.

Du Toit's major point was a simple one: while morally opposed to violence, he accepts our shared historical reality that the ANC's 58 years of peaceful protest changed with the establishment of Umkhonto we Sizwe. This has resulted in 26 years of military activity, which is not likely to stop at present.

He asked the ANC whether it left a space for opponents of apartheid inside South Africa who do not accept the 'armed struggle', or ANC policy.

That set the tone for the three days. Before the ANC answered, there were dozens and dozens of questions from the white delegation. Some questions were really advice to the ANC. Would it not make things easier for everyone if the ANC gave up the communists, the 'armed struggle', nationalisation, and every other instance of rhetoric that offended suburban sensibilities?

When it came, the ANC answer was very positive about all forms of opposition, except those directly antagonistic to ANC activity. But they also suggested to the IDASA group that people should not walk into the anti-apartheid world and tell it how to oppose apartheid.

Yes, said the delegation, the ANC leads. When asked who their leaders are, even non-ANC members are likely to say 'Mandela', or 'Luthuli' or 'Sisulu'. The ANC accepts that it is a major force which is likely to lead one side of the negotiations when they come.

There will be only two sides to the negotiating table. On one side will be the govern-

ment and its various allies. On the opposition side will be the ANC, and non-ANC supporters who have made their contribution to fighting apartheid. And, said the ANC, 'we fully expect to see some of the whites in Dakar on that side'.

The ANC willingly accepts initiatives complementary to what it is fighting for. But it will react to activities aimed against it, or at strategies which it has spent long years developing.

That was the essence of the political discussion.

The nationalisation discussion

Many other issues were raised, but not firmly nailed down. This applied to the economic discussion. The IDASA side's paper was essentially social democratic, emphasising the need to retain capitalism while examining black economic needs. It proposed a solution focused mainly on housing. Those who had lived in township houses for a period (not specified) should be granted freehold title for nothing. This should accompany a crash housing programme which would be good for the economy as well as new householders.

The ANC approach was to say: do not tell us to give up the idea of nationalising the commanding heights of industry. This is in the Freedom Charter and it is our policy. One did get the impression that details for this have not been worked out. However, in considering implementation of this policy, the ANC will see economic growth as a top priority. More clarity than this

was not obtained, but I was left with the impression that nationalisation will remain part of stated policy though its implementation could be delayed, as in the case of Zimbabwe. This, I assumed, would depend on who was in power in the ANC and the circumstances in which transition takes place. The effect of nationalisation on the flight of capital could be a reason to delay it.

Part of my work in Dakar was to associate-produce a film, due to air in the US during December. For this a debate was set up, including Thabo Mbeki, Mac Maharaj, Pallo Jordan, Van Zyl Slabbert, Herman Giliomee and Theuns Eloff. This was an extraordinary discussion. There was real calm on all sides, agreements and disagreements were freely exchanged, ANC members felt free to differ with each other and so did the IDASA people. On some issues individuals from both groups sided together against other individuals from both groups.

Giliomee, an historian, said he agreed that propaganda had to be taken out of the history books, but did not want to see black heroes simply replace white ones. The ANC were instantly clear: there are black villains and white heroes as well... 'like Braam Fischer, and Van Zyl Slabbert, he'll be in the history books'.

In another encounter, one of the Afrikaner historians asked why the ANC did not drop the military strategy and concentrate on the political, just as Afrikaners had done. Pallo Jordan, also an historian,

replied that 'when I listen to you, I despair for our discipline', going on to say that black nationalism could not be compared to Afrikaner nationalism, not least because Afrikaners had the vote.

On to Burkina Faso and Ghana

All those who travelled on from Dakar were moved by the experience of Burkina Faso, known as Upper Volta until 1984, and meaning 'land of the righteous people'. Sixty-seven languages are spoken in Burkina Faso, which is one of the poorest countries in the world. It is 50% desert, and has a history of post-independence corruption and vacillation between civilian, democratic and military rule.

Captain Thomas Sankara renamed the country, sold most of the government's Mercedes Benz motor cars, drives a Renault 5 himself, earns less than his wife, is a good musician, speaks several languages including good English and French, and reads voraciously. According to two Western ambassadors, Sankara has ensured that economic aid gets to the people it is sent for. This is a rare feat.

Under Sankara, corruption

has been largely cleared up. He runs a semi-permanent people's court in a large indoor stadium, which we attended. Here any member of the public can have the microphone to bear witness to corruption of officials. Though it is difficult to learn much about the situation in a few days, even the US state department human rights report indicates that human rights violations in the country are relatively mild. The people's court apparently delivers sentences up to ten years imprisonment, but its main punishment is the ongoing public opprobrium which corruption carries.

This works; if you lose money, a wallet, travellers' cheques or a camera, they find you. One of the IDASA delegation experienced this, and so did a French friend of mine on a previous trip. In both cases, people came to the hotel to search for the owners of the lost articles.

Burkina Faso is not paradise. One remarks on the soldiers with rifles on street corners. But the South Africans were moved at the experience of a poor people fighting with dignity and thought for a stake in the world.

Last stop was Ghana. There are signs of fading from the glory of Nkrumah's heyday. But it was in Accra that the whole experience came together. This was at the airport on arrival, at the first press conference. 'Comrades of the ANC', asked a Ghanaian journalist, 'do you really believe that these whites are sincere?'

There was a general titter. Obviously it was the cleverest question imaginable. The ANC replied without a second's hesitation: 'Yes, we have whites in our army. We believe a person can see injustice and react against it, white or black'.

This was an experience repeated several times in Ghana, unlike Senegal and Burkina Faso which unquestioningly accepted the bona fides of the group. One journalist prefaced his question with, 'I am a Ghanaian, and therefore a revolutionary', and went on to ask about the role of whites.

At this point it looked as if the South Africans from both delegations were on the same side, fielding questions from foreigners who just could not understand what we South Africans could.

Sanctions and the British Anti-Apartheid Movement

The recent Convention for Sanctions convened by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement called for the implementation of sanctions at a local level. Some delegates also argued for closer links between solidarity action and trade unions in the sanctions campaign. WILLIAM COBBETT reports on the convention, and raises some controversial questions about the role of anti-apartheid solidarity organisations.

The British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) held a Convention for Sanctions in London during June. It took place against the background of a deeply depressing general election result, in which the Tories swept back to a third term of power with a slightly reduced majority of some 100 seats. This was a particularly sorely-felt result for the AAM, which had been hoping for a more vigorous approach to sanctions from a Labour government.

Some 500 delegates packed into Westminster Central Hall to hear an address by the president of the movement, Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, as well as keynote speeches by representatives from SWAPO, the ANC and the British Trades Union Congress. From under the large and colourful banners of SWAPO and the ANC, speakers reiterated their demands for British disengagement from South Africa, and the complete international isolation of apartheid.

British support for apartheid

Links between Britain and South Africa involve more than financial investment, and are

significant in cultural and ideological terms. An estimated 800 000 South African residents have the right to British citizenship.

The issue of sanctions, however, concerns itself primarily with British investment and trade with South Africa and Namibia. There are currently about 300 British firms operating in South Africa, with an additional 80 or so in Namibia. Britain accounts for some 40% of total foreign investment in South Africa - more than the combined investment from Pretoria's other two chief allies, the United States and West Germany.

Britain has an estimated total of £6 000-million invested in South Africa. Profits from direct British investment (excluding bank loans) totalled £2 900-million for the years 1975-83.

In 1985, Britain was South Africa's third largest supplier, providing 12% of its imports - mostly machinery, electrical equipment, vehicles and chemicals. While these exports are crucial to the apartheid economy, they represented only 1.3% of total British exports. It is this gap in relative importance that the AAM

seeks to exploit in its arguments for comprehensive and mandatory economic sanctions. The AAM convincingly argues that South Africa needs Britain, but Britain does not need South Africa.

Despite the widening consumer boycott, Britain is still South Africa's biggest customer for fruit and vegetables. Overall, Britain takes nearly a third of South Africa's non-gold exports.

In spite of the UN mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, Britain is still an important source of arms. Two UK companies, Marconi and Plessey, have licences to export their advanced military radar systems to Pretoria, ostensibly for 'civilian' use, while British Leyland landrovers are used by the South African police.

The AAM claims that South Africa's underground naval surveillance and communications centre at Silvermine, near Cape Town, is linked directly to the Admiralty in London, and gives Pretoria and the SADF access to NATO intelligence.

Britain has provided hundreds of thousands of emigrants to South Africa, boosting the numerical strength of the white minority. Most of these emigrants adapt very easily to a life of privilege in South Africa, often quickly forgetting their subordinate British class origins.

South African parastatals and multinationals continue to recruit British skills needed by the apartheid economy, and white immigrants profit from the racial division of labour. In 1984, the year that South Afri-

can troops were occupying the townships, over 9 000 Britons emigrated to South Africa.

In 1985, 724 000 tons of South African coal were imported into Britain - helping the Thatcher government to defeat the miners' strike while deliberately running down the British coal industry. Despite the 1984-85 expiry of the extended government contract to import Namibian uranium, an estimated 4 000 tons were imported in 1986. The Tory government refuses to guarantee that Namibian uranium is not being imported for the military stockpile.

The British Consolidated Gold Fields company holds a 48% stake in the notorious Gold Fields of South Africa. This huge mining company, with its particularly backward employment policies, employs nearly 100 000 people, and produces most of South Africa's contribution of 44% of Consgold's total profits. Other British multinationals are noted for their Victorian employment practices. A good example is BTR, which has the dubious honour of being party to the longest industrial dispute in South African labour history - MAWU's struggle for union recognition at BTR.

All in all, the AAM argues, Britain has done more than any other country to build and sustain the apartheid system in South Africa, and its occupation of Namibia. The AAM points out that the British government has used its veto in the UN Security Council more often on the question of apartheid and colonialism in Southern Africa, than on any other issue.

The call for 'people's sanctions'

Delegates at the London Convention for Sanctions came from some of AAM's 183 local groups that operate throughout Britain, as well as representatives from trade unions, student groupings, local government and community organisations. The stated purpose of the convention was to provide an opportunity for delegates to 'make proposals and suggestions to strengthen and extend the Programme of Action'.

It was not the task of the convention to make policy. Suggestions put forward on the day were to be submitted to a steering committee which would then decide policy. This served to make the day's events rather sterile, as there was little or no debate. Debate was also hampered by the fact that written requests to speak had to be made, and speakers were called at the discretion of the steering committee through the chair. There was little opportunity to challenge policy from the floor, giving an impression of policy being decided in a top-down fashion.

Speakers that were called covered a wide range of topics. The dominant theme through the day was the demand for 'people's sanctions'. This tactic of implementing sanctions at a local, activist level, is a response to the intransigence of the British government. It does not rule out continual demands for state-imposed sanctions, and may be a way of forcing the issue to be debated at government level. But 'people's sanctions' implicitly accept that the Tory government is unlikely to implement sanctions against South Africa.

According to one delegate, 'we cannot wait for government action to break the links that make Britain an ally of apartheid South Africa. By our organised and united efforts, in our trade unions, churches, political parties, women's organisations, professional, cultural and sports bodies, through our local authorities, student unions and community associations we can act now to break the links. People's sanctions must develop into an unstoppable groundswell that not only breaks the links at local and regional level, but forces action at government level'.

Numerous examples were given of the increasing success of these local activities - the closing of a Shell garage for an afternoon (Shell having replaced Barclays as the primary international target); the action of Ford workers at the Dagenham plant; and the declaration of an 'apartheid-free zone' in St Paul's, Bristol, where community activists have forced Tesco's supermarket to remove all South African produce from their local branch, and persuaded small local businesses to follow suit.

In September 1985, Transport and General Workers Union members in the Southampton docks, backed by the National Union of Seamen, blocked the shipment of a container carrying goods for the South African war plane industry. The Co-operative Society banned all South African and Namibian produce from their shops from October 1985. A campaign by the AAM's women's committee has helped cut British imports of South African textiles by 50%.

The most famous and striking success was won in Ireland by the Dunnes workers. After a

protracted dispute following their refusal to handle South African produce, they were instrumental in forcing the Irish government to ban all South African fruit and vegetable imports.

Extending the sanctions campaign

The retail industry is an obvious and prime target for local initiatives. The AAM has recently called for a national boycott of Tesco's supermarkets, as they are still carrying South African tinned and fresh pro-

duce. Tesco's is likely to have to make concessions, situated as it is in an intensely competitive market with low profit margins and a high public profile.

There were criticisms, however, of the dominance of action in the retail industry. A speaker from Lambeth Trades Council called for a greater emphasis on worker sanctions, with particular attention paid to strategic groups such as the dockers. The speaker was also critical of the perceived lack of action by the TUC, a theme

picked up by other speakers who challenged it to back its public statements with concrete action.

One speaker called for support of the City of London group, despite the fact that it is in dispute with the national AAM. The City group has organised a non-stop (literally) picket of the South African embassy in Trafalgar Square since 19 April 1986, and has vowed to stay there until Nelson Mandela is released.

On 6 May, protestors threw red paint over the doors of the embassy, in protest against the whites-only election. Police have now used the notorious new Public Order Act to prohibit demonstrations outside the embassy, forcing the picket to a less-visible spot. City group has responded with mass rallies, claiming that 'the pavement is ours'.

One of the four new black MPs, Paul Boateng, has already made an appearance on the picket. The Black Communities Working Party has called on the MPs to join the campaign, and especially to become a voice for sanctions inside the House of Commons. But that parliamentary task is a daunting one. It is necessary to persuade at least 50 Tory backbenchers to vote against the government on the sanctions issue.

Trade union initiatives

A number of speakers called for the AAM to undertake more work within the trade union movement. A National Union of Railwaymen speaker told of the contact their union had with the SA Railway and Harbour Workers Union during the recent SATS strike, as part of their 'Rail against Apartheid' campaign.



The speaker called for the building of organisation through struggle, giving confidence to workers to take direct action over the issue of apartheid. Unions were called upon to make links with their sister unions inside South Africa. This, the speaker said, should be carried out 'under the guidance of SACTU'.

A number of speakers called upon the unions to take their lead from unions within the country. An executive member from the National Association of Local Government Officers put this clearly: 'It is their struggle, they must tell us what to do - that is their right'. A representative from the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers said that 'unions in South Africa have as much to teach us as we have to teach them'.

According to a speaker from the National Union of Mineworkers' national executive, importing coal from South Africa was no better than importing coal from Nazi Germany: 'that coal is covered with black miners blood'. Saluting the South African NUM, the speaker called for an intensification of the campaign, saying that 'we can bring down this atrocious regime'.

The British Communist Party speaker noted how little discussion there had been on South Africa in the recent British elections, and warned the audience 'not to underestimate the ability of the Thatcher government to distort and manipulate positions when the going gets tough in South Africa'.

The academic and cultural boycotts

The call to strengthen the academic and cultural boycotts was of particular interest. On

the academic boycott, the AAM stated that 'action is needed to stop the trickle of South Africans who come to the UK on sabbaticals, and those Britons who go to South Africa'.

In the field of culture, the AAM stated, 'some promoters and theatres are lending themselves to the regime's efforts to break out of its increasing isolation by staging productions imported from South Africa. Whilst some of these have an ostensible anti-apartheid packaging, they are not usually intended primarily to project and further the struggle against apartheid - rather do they more typically trade on that struggle to satisfy commercial and career aspirations'.

The reference to sabbaticals in the academic boycott, and 'ostensible anti-apartheid packaging' in the cultural boycott, is a clear reference to controversies that have arisen in England over the past year. The issue of Paul Simon's Graceland album was much debated, as was the AAM's picketing of the production of Athol Fugard's play, *Mr Bizer's Sunbird*.

The call for the strengthening of the boycotts has been met with surprise in some quarters, coming so soon after a speech by Oliver Tambo which indicated a significant shift in the ANC's position. Commenting on the fact that the boycott campaigns were initiated in the late 1950s, Tambo suggested that it was necessary to take into account changes that have taken place over time. In particular, he argued, a definable alternative democratic culture giving expression to a people in struggle had emerged in South Africa.

These organisations and

their alternative structures had to be dealt with as the genuine representatives of the masses. Not only should they not be boycotted, they should be supported, encouraged and treated as the democratic counterparts of similar institutions and organisations internationally. This meant that the ANC, the broad democratic movement in its various formulations within South Africa, and the international solidarity movement needed to act together.

In this context, it was not surprising when a number of speakers from the floor called for clarification on the academic and cultural boycotts. In particular, a representative from the Cambridge University's AA stated that 'we do support a boycott against privileged academics working in an environment outside the liberation movement'. She went on to state that 'the argument that the academic boycott silences those academics working in the liberation movement in South Africa is used against us (by those) wishing to justify ignoring the academic boycott altogether'.

The implicit selectivity of action made apparent by Tambo has already been understood and acted upon by elements within the AAM. For example, a cinemagraphic union has banned all film and video production in South except for news and current affairs.

The AAM and struggle in South Africa

From this limited reporting on the convention, one can draw some conclusions which may serve as the basis for further discussion. What follows is offered in a positive and fraternal

spirit, in the process of clarifying and strengthening the struggle against apartheid.

A number of issues over the way the AAM relates to the South African struggle are linked and mutually reinforcing. What was quite striking as one listened to the speeches, motions and limited debate, was the paucity of discussion over what was happening inside the country. While that is partly explained by the fact that delegates were discussing British action, it seemed to be happening in a vacuum, divorced from the main struggle within South Africa.

Listening to some of the speeches, one could have been forgiven for thinking that the real battle lines against apartheid have been drawn in Camden or Lambeth or, indeed, on the forecourt of the local Shell garage. This position at times borders on the paternalistic and the patronising, and it was with great relief that one heard some speakers tell the audience to take their lead from events within South Africa.

The explanation for this attitude lies in an over-optimistic reading of the potential consequences of sanctions. For many, sanctions and the armed struggle alone are a state-toppling combination. This reduces organisations and struggles inside the country to passive observer status, waiting for liberation to be delivered.

This attitude is best displayed by a large drawing which dominated the AAM handout. With Botha and AWB perched at the top of a cracking apartheid monolith, the people of South Africa are represented by black faces peering hopefully out of jails. The final telling blow to apartheid is portrayed as the wedge

of people's sanctions splitting the apartheid edifice. The few blacks outside the jails are bearing arms under the banners of the ANC and SWAPO.

One should not read too much into a poster, but it does graphically depict the position of many AAM activists. This conception of the struggle in South Africa - and the relationship of external solidarity groups to that struggle - needs to be challenged. This criticism in no way detracts from the commendable solidarity efforts of thousands of AAM activists throughout the country, and the enormous amount of time and energy put into the cause.

The way in which the liberation movement is portrayed exclusively as the ANC and SACTU, in an exiled position of leadership, and the UDF and COSATU internally, is equally worrying. There is no doubt about the strength of support either for the ANC or a Charterist position. But it is inexcusable for other democratic forces battling against apartheid to be excluded. At no stage, for example, did the National Forum get a mention. It was not even afforded the privilege of being attacked, which would at least offer it recognition! It was equally remarkable to hear SACTU being constantly referred to, whereas the newly-formed National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), which claims 300 000 signed-up members, was ignored.

As support organisations, solidarity movements derive their legitimacy from other organisations. They cannot become autonomous bodies deciding strategy and tactics independently. This raises particular issues in regard to the AAM.

If the AAM is a solidarity movement for all South Africans fighting apartheid, then that support must be carried out in a completely non-partisan manner, offering concrete help to all strands of progressive organisations within the country. The AAM appears to be particularly weak on this point at the moment.

If the AAM is a support organisation for the ANC and SACTU only, this presents no problem whatsoever, providing it is stated clearly and unambiguously. People would then be able to relate to such an organisation knowing its position, which would still remain a subordinate one.

It does not weaken the AAM to suggest that it must have a subordinate status to the liberation movement. This subordination does not imply irrelevance. On the contrary, it is the surest way to guarantee that the AAM is operating in the most beneficial manner to the struggle at large. This implies, however, that positions in conflict with the liberation movement - such as the undifferentiated strengthening of the academic and cultural boycotts - must be reappraised.

Strengthening links between the AAM in Britain, and organisations on the ground in South Africa, is important. By way of example, a close and continual dialogue with COSATU and NACTU would allow for the most informed strategy to be followed in implementing people's sanctions in Britain. This would maximise impact and increase links between progressive forces in Britain and the real struggle in South Africa.

COSATU: towards disciplined alliances

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) recently held its second national conference. YUNUS CARRIM reports.

The second congress of COSATU, the country's largest and most powerful trade union federation, took place at Wits University from 15 to 18 July. The congress was attended by 1 438 delegates representing 712 231 workers.

'That it took place at all is remarkable', said COSATU general secretary, Jay Naidoo. 'We are in the midst of a state of emergency. COSATU has suffered a severe onslaught from the state, employers and shadowy right-wing elements. Scores of our members have been detained. Our offices throughout the country, including our headquarters, have been bombed. Our daily administration has been severely disrupted. Yet the congress took place without a hitch. It was a major feat of organisation'.

'What is particularly significant', he added, 'was that the congress participants were major industrial unions: we are nearly complete with the process of creating one union per industry through mergers among the 33 affiliates we had at our December 1985 launch. COSATU is now going to be much more democratic, efficient and effective'.

Unions represented at the congress were: National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) (261 901); National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) (130 796); Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) (65 278); Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa

(CCAWUSA) (56 000); South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union (SARHWU) (34 411); National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) (30 538); Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) (29 859); Construction and Allied Workers Union (CAWU) (26 291); (PWAU) Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union (23 310); Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) (18 281); municipal sector unions (16 967); South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU) (9 402); and the National Education and Health Workers Union (NEHAWU) (9 197).

Unions had one delegate for every 500 members. Twenty observers were allowed from the National Unemployed Workers Co-ordinating Committee and nine from POTWA (Post Office and Telecommunication Workers Association).

SARHWU and TGWU will form one union in the transport sector, and mergers in the municipal and paper sectors are to take place soon. Problems relating to the merger in the commercial and catering sector have been referred to a special CCAWUSA congress. A COSATU mediating committee will assist in this process.

The unions which have merged still have a long way to go to consolidate their structures. 'We recognise that there are problems', said Naidoo. 'But it is better that these are within one union than between

several in one sector. And one should not make too much of the problems. NUMSA has only recently merged - yet this has not prevented workers from very different union backgrounds uniting in their commitment to strike action. In the short space of 19 months we have reduced 33 affiliates to 12 industrial sectors. Look around the world today. Union unity is notoriously difficult to achieve. COSATU has surely done well'.

The major significance of the congress is that it provided greater clarity on COSATU's political direction and set the basis for alliances with organisations beyond the shop floor. Policies taken on sanctions, disinvestment and international relations are also particularly important.

The Freedom Charter: a guiding document

COSATU adopted the Freedom Charter as 'a guiding document which reflects the views and aspirations of the majority of the oppressed and exploited in our struggle against national oppression and economic exploitation'. COSATU sees these struggles as 'complementary to each other and part of an uninterrupted struggle for total liberation'.

COSATU believes the charter 'encompasses the minimum demands of the democratic majority which lays the basis for the building of a non-exploitative society'. The federation committed itself to de-

veloping a 'coherent working-class understanding of the demands of the Freedom Charter' and encouraging 'the fullest discussion on socialism and democracy within our structures and amongst all progressive and democratic forces'.

COSATU noted that 'workers in our country are not only striving for better conditions in the mines, factories, shops and farms but also for a democratic socialist society controlled by the working class'.

'It is in the context of our commitment to a non-exploitative, worker-controlled society that we have adopted the Freedom Charter', explained Jay Naidoo. 'The Freedom Charter is a weapon to emphasise the leading role of the working class in the liberation struggle'.

COSATU unions are going to integrate the charter's demands into daily struggles on the shop floor and beyond. 'We will make the charter a living, dynamic document of the working class', said Naidoo.

Debate at congress was not so much about whether to adopt the Freedom Charter as what meaning should be given to its adoption. There seemed to be four broad approaches. The first was for purely formal adoption of the charter. In this view, realisation of the charter's demands is a prior, separate stage from the creation of a socialist society, which is not on the agenda at the moment.

The second and third approaches saw the adoption of the charter as part of a commitment to uninterrupted struggle for socialism. The approaches differ over how adequate the charter is for creating a socialist society, and the appropriate response to this.

The fourth position opposed

adopting the Freedom Charter - or the charter or manifesto of any political organisation - as it would be divisive within COSATU. This group also argued that there had not been wide enough discussions among COSATU's rank-and-file about adopting the charter.

But the main debate was between the second and third positions, spearheaded by the NUM and NUMSA delegations. Although not spelt out clearly, the differences underlying all approaches, and especially the second and third, involved: how to retain unions' organisational independence in alliances with organisations in the community; where a programme of action fits into a strategy for socialism; what the role of trade unions and the organised industrial working class is in the wider political struggle; the content of a socialist society; and how explicit organisations can be about their commitment to socialism, given conditions of repression in South Africa.

In a not altogether clear message the South African Congress of Trade Unions startled most congress delegates by saying that while they should discuss socialism, they should not 'elevate it to a policy'. Some delegates did pursue a rather crude version of this argument.

'In a federation as large as ours', explained Naidoo, 'there will obviously be different views. And so it should be. Any democratic organisation will welcome that. And within the constraints of time and the organisational pressures of such a large congress, we did air our differences. People feel very strongly about some of the issues and debate was emotional at times. But that is perfectly

understandable. The important thing is that in the end there was widespread agreement on the adoption of the Freedom Charter. And it is not as if all discussion on political policy has now ended. We will continue to debate some of these issues and develop our political policy to suit the particular conditions of the time'.

Naidoo stressed that the congress reflected what is going on in the wider society. 'Daily, workers have to relate with organisations committed to, and struggles revolving around, the demands of the Freedom Charter. It is worker participation in these struggles and those on the shop floor that have put the charter on COSATU's agenda. Many demands in the charter have been raised in COSATU resolutions adopted before the congress. In a sense, adopting the charter is simply formalising what is happening on the ground anyway. But through our political policy we aim to give these struggles direction and provide them with stronger working-class content'.

Naidoo stressed the federation's political policy was the outcome of a long process of discussion. He cited important 'landmarks' as being the COSATU executive's discussion paper; the 1986 MAWU resolution calling for discussion on socialism; the 1987 COSATU executive message; the adoption of the Freedom Charter by congresses of NUM, NUMSA, FAWU, CCAWUSA and NEHAWU; and discussions on the charter and political policy by NUTW and CWIU.

The question of a workers charter, about which there was much speculation before the congress, did not surface as an overt issue in the debates. Nai-

doo said there was some support within COSATU for a workers charter, but that its implications were unclear: 'If, however, most of our members wanted a trade union or workers charter, we will have to consider it. It will no doubt be complementary to the Freedom Charter - a sectoral charter amplifying the demands relating specifically to organised workers. It will be rooted in the experience of workers and in a sense feed into the Freedom Charter. Other sectors such as education and health are developing their own charters'.

In some ways a programme is emerging gradually from resolutions COSATU has adopted since its launch. But a more coherent concerted programme of action is needed - one which will also bring together unions and community organisations.

Creating structured relationships

The congress resolved that while COSATU would not affiliate to any political organisation at this stage, it would establish 'disciplined alliances' with community organisations which are mass based, democratic and non-racial, have a proven record of struggle, and principles and policies compatible with COSATU. COSATU intends to develop permanent structures at local, regional and national levels with these organisations.

In practice this is likely to involve a more structured relationship between COSATU and UDF organisations, which predominate in the community. It is likely to be a strategic alliance based on clearly set out terms, rather than their present ad-hoc

issue-oriented tactical alliance.

COSATU is calling for a united front alliance of strong, national, non-racial organisations in the different sectors - workers, youth, students, women, civics, and the unemployed. The rural sector is also likely to be considered in due course.

The UDF favours such an alliance, according to acting publicity secretary Murphy Morobe, who addressed COSATU congress: 'For the UDF and the whole democratic movement to adequately contend with the demands of the popular advance against racism and exploitation, the concept of the united front must represent a new and highly dynamic approach to our understanding of the tasks facing the mass democratic movement'.

Morobe said the UDF

would 'work towards a more structured relationship with the trade union movement'. Peter Mokaba, president of the South African Youth Congress, also called for a structured relationship between COSATU and UDF in his address to congress.

By 'disciplined alliances', COSATU means 'alliances based on structures, and on the respect of organisations involved in the alliances for each other's organisational independence', said Jay Naidoo. 'At one level it is an alliance not of free-floating individuals, but of mandated representatives of organisations accountable to their constituencies through regular report-back meetings. It is an alliance based on the most thoroughgoing democratic practice. This is how we, as a federation of



COSATU President Elijah Barayi addresses delegates to the second congress of the giant federation

trade unions, operate'.

But a disciplined and effective alliance must be based on deeply-rooted structures in the different sectors. UDF organisations have been severely disrupted by the state of emergency. Organisation is uneven across different sectors and regions. And these organisations' structure and dynamics are somewhat different to those of the unions.

But in recent months the UDF has begun to consolidate and develop its organisation and adjust more creatively to conditions of the emergency. Some of the re-orientation of organisation has been to facilitate a united front of sectors and provide for a more structured relationship with the unions.

It is clear to COSATU that there will be difficulties in creating disciplined alliances. Said Naidoo: 'Of course, we have already created significantly strong national industrial unions. An urgent responsibility lies with our allies in the community to build sound organisation in the different sectors. But we understand the difficulties, and are definitely prepared to play our role in achieving strong organisation in the community. We also expect that where we are weak, our allies in the community will assist us to build strong organisation'.

The united front alliance would then strengthen organisation in all sectors in such a way that the working class would play an effective and leading role in the wider political struggle.

'The united front alliance is based on agreement on the leading role of the working class in the struggle for liberation', said Naidoo. Morobe

also stated that the UDF would like to see working-class leadership of the wider democratic movement: not purely trade union leadership but essentially political leadership.

Ways of linking unions and community

The form of structural links between COSATU and community organisations have still to be worked out. There are several possibilities. Community organisations could participate in shop stewards councils. Or organised workers could participate in the structures of community organisations. Or a separate joint structure could be created. More than one of these options could be pursued.

To some extent local conditions will influence the form these links take. But a strong current of thinking within COSATU is to confine shop stewards councils to workers and opt for a separate permanent structure to bring together unions and community organisations. The argument is that shop stewards councils have important trade union functions and are vital for the creation of worker unity and the consolidation of trade union power at local level. They are an important basis on which workers can play the leading role in the wider political struggle.

Morobe pointed out that shop stewards councils should not focus only on shop-floor issues. On the other hand they should not become 'pure political organs' as they had important union functions. He was concerned that some people sought to promote shop stewards councils as alternative township political structures to those of the UDF.

Morobe called for the creation of 'political centres' at every level to 'become the heart and engine of the united front of organisations'. Exactly what these 'political centres' will be and how they would function has still to be clarified.

Permanent structures linking COSATU and community organisations at regional and national levels will also have to be worked out. And how different organisations will be represented has still to be decided. But given the difficulties community organisations face, COSATU is unlikely to insist on paid-up membership as a basis.

This strategic alliance is likely to bring COSATU and UDF closer. But according to Naidoo, it does not preclude COSATU from tactical alliances over specific issues with organisations like the Azanian Peoples Organisation, New Unity Movement, National Forum, and so on.

'The level at which organisations will be drawn into a campaign will depend on its scope and the extent to which the groups meet our criteria of a progressive community organisation. In general, a campaign's form and content will be decided by organisations in the strategic alliance. If other organisations want to come in on a particular issue - for example, the campaign for the reinstatement of the fired Clover workers - they would be welcome to do so. Local conditions will determine this'.

The precise form of structural links between COSATU and community organisations is likely to emerge from further discussions and, importantly, joint campaigns.

Campaigns to consolidate the alliance

COSATU resolutions set the basis for various campaigns. Some will largely serve to consolidate and strengthen COSATU structures. Others can more usefully be taken up with community organisations, and so serve to build disciplined alliances. Further campaigns will emerge from concerted co-operation between unions and community organisations.

A key COSATU campaign at present is the Living Wage Campaign. It focuses mainly on

sations in a major national campaign with concrete demands, contributing to building the united front alliance. Because the campaign focuses on basic material needs and the failures of the economy, it can also raise fundamental questions about the need to restructure the economy.

State action has weakened the campaign, reducing national co-ordination. But with successful mergers consolidating workers into one union per industry, COSATU unions will have more energy and better structures to focus on the cam-

the unemployed are being used as scabs and vigilantes. Joint union-community organisation could play a vital role in preventing this.

COSATU has committed itself to providing 'material assistance in a systematic manner' to the National Unemployed Workers Co-ordinating Committee to form a COSATU-affiliated unemployed workers' union. All shop stewards councils are being called upon to help organise the unemployed. Organised groups will be given observer status with full speaking rights in all



1 438 delegates representing 712 231 workers from 12 industrial sectors attended the COSATU congress

shop-floor demands, but also addresses wider needs and is meant to draw in community organisations. The campaign could also attract unions outside COSATU which are likely to open to mergers with COSATU affiliates in time to come.

The economic recession has affected a wide cross-section of the community. So the campaign has the potential to unite unions and community organi-

paign. COSATU is also to consider a set of 'national demands' which might give the campaign greater coherence. And certainly community organisations might be more prepared to participate if they are part of the strategic alliance with COSATU.

Closely linked to the Living Wage Campaign is the campaign to organise the unemployed. Organised workers have expressed concern that

COSATU structures.

COSATU also intends to commission detailed research into unemployment and co-operatives. And the federation resolved to campaign for a 40-hour week and a ban on overtime pay so that extra jobs can be created. COSATU has called for a social security system and a state-initiated programme of public works.

All organisations face highly repressive conditions at pres-

ent, and COSATU passed a lengthy resolution on repression. It warned the government against any 'further repressive labour legislation' and employers against tacitly supporting the onslaught on COSATU.

COSATU resolved to back its demand for the release of detainees with 'appropriate action' and to 'campaign rigorously' for its democratic right to organise. It also called for the consolidation of 'worker defence' against vigilante attacks. The congress decided to 'actively support the campaign' for the reprieve of 32 people sentenced to death for politically-linked offences, and called on the government to recognise captured guerillas as prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention. Some of these demands will obviously be difficult to concretise into campaigns, but a realistic joint campaign against repression is likely.

Other possible areas of co-operation between unions and community organisations are the education struggle and the rent boycotts. COSATU noted that the economic climate and the community council system has led to a 'legitimate call for a rent boycott'. It warned employers against submitting to government pressure to deduct rents from wages of those taking part in the rent boycott.

The federation also opposed the regional services councils and the national statutory council, favouring instead a 'democratic system of local government as part of a people's democratic system of government to provide for the needs of all'.

Finally, COSATU resolved to support fully the organisation of domestic workers and

their campaign for legal recognition under the Labour Relations Act. Minimum conditions for domestic workers were set out: R200 per month minimum wage; a 40-hour week; R2,50 per hour overtime pay; annual, sick and maternity leave; decent accommodation; Unemployment Insurance Fund benefits; and pensions.

Sanctions and disinvestment

COSATU's policies on sanctions and disinvestment are of major significance, particularly as it is an organisation of workers operating in conditions of severe recession. Organised workers had not given direction to the sanctions and disinvestment campaigns, and the congress aimed to correct this. COSATU's main concern is to ensure that the state and employers, not workers, suffer most from sanctions and disinvestment.

Selective sanctions as applied presently are not effective against the state and employers, but could have serious negative consequences for workers, including increased unemployment. Current disinvestment is, COSATU noted, 'nothing more than corporate camouflage which often allows these (disinvesting) companies to increase their support for the South African regime'.

COSATU called for 'comprehensive and mandatory', rather than selective sanctions. However, the resolution pinpointed certain areas which would be detrimental to state and employers without negative consequences for workers necessarily: stopping loans to the state, employers and bantustan administrations; diplomatic isolation; an end to overseas travel and emigration;

withdrawal of South African Airways landing and airspace rights; ending South African capital investment abroad; an arms embargo; and an end to overseas recruitment of skilled workers.

While supporting disinvestment, COSATU is concerned to 'ensure that the social wealth of South Africa remains the property of the people of South Africa for the benefit of all'. It demands that disinvesting companies negotiate the terms of their withdrawal with COSATU affiliates. 'We expect companies to give us timely notice of their withdrawal. Any pull-out behind the backs of workers is completely unacceptable to us', said COSATU information officer, Frank Meintjies.

COSATU has not set out specific pre-conditions for disinvesting companies. But some were suggested during the debate at the congress: giving workers at least 12 months notice of withdrawal; unions to be informed of the nature of the disinvestment; that new owners maintain union recognition agreements; worker benefits should not be prejudiced and unions to have control of pension funds; workers to receive one month's pay for every year of service; that the disinvesting company guarantee workers five years employment.

It seems COSATU did not take policy on pre-conditions because disinvestment affects workers differently and they have differing capacities to wage struggles around these demands. The congress did not oppose pre-conditions, but felt that to spell them out would be somewhat premature. The campaign had to develop sufficient momentum within COSATU as a whole.

'Our affiliates will negotiate the specific terms of withdrawal on the basis of the specific conditions they face and the strength of organised workers on the shop floor', said vice-president Chris Dlamini. But setting out general pre-conditions is likely to arise in future debates on disinvestment.

COSATU has not yet decided policy on workers buying shares in, or serving on boards of directors of, disinvesting companies. 'Workers definitely want greater control over industry as well as their whole lives', said Naidoo. 'But companies are offering various kinds of worker participation without any control. It would seem to be contradictory and unacceptable for workers to serve on boards of directors while apartheid persists'.

Meintjies suggested that individual workers buying shares would go against the collective ethos that union organisation had created on the shop floor. It could also create divisions between workers. 'But if the shares are being offered to unions, this has to be properly discussed within COSATU', said Naidoo. In any event, COSATU has committed itself to extensively discussing the political implications of the sanctions and disinvestment policies.

South African companies are increasingly offering shares to workers. In his 1987 chairman's statement, Anglo

American's Gavin Relly said the stake held in the country through growing home-ownership should be matched by workers holding a direct stake in the companies which employ them. He said this was consistent with the world trend away from the extremes of 'centralist socialism' and 'rigorous capitalism' to 'something in between, founded not on ideology but on pragmatism'. It is likely that sooner or later COSATU will have to decide policy on workers holding shares in companies.

COSATU committed itself to 'the principle of international working-class solidarity action as the most powerful form of solidarity action with

dor, Phillipines, Angola and Mozambique, and resolved to forge closer links with worker organisations in these countries. 'Our struggle against apartheid and exploitation is also a struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism', the resolution stated. COSATU will also consider the congress recommendation to affiliate to the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity.

COSATU resolved to offer concrete support to organised workers in Namibia. A Mineworkers Union of Namibia representative was a guest speaker at the congress and a delegation of Namibian trade unionists attended as observers. COSATU's international policy represents a significant shift in stress from building ties with trade unions in the developed world to those in the developing world.

COSATU's organisational tasks

Despite employer unease and government warnings of action against unions which 'engaged in politics', COSATU intensified its commitment to playing a leading role in the wider political struggle. But some of the resolutions are bold and sweeping - and will ultimately have a more symbolic than practical meaning.

COSATU's political assertiveness must be understood against the background of intensified conflict both on the shop floor and in the community. Because COSATU has remained relatively intact organisationally when compared to community organisations disrupted by the



SADWU members perform at COSATU culture day

our struggle for national liberation'.

The federation also noted the militant anti-imperialist struggles waged by the working class in the developing world, especially Nicaragua, El Salva-

emergency, it has been pushed to the forefront of the political struggle.

A sense of the pressure on COSATU is suggested in the words of SAYCO's Mokaba: 'The whole nation is looking today at this congress to see emerging out of it the most formidable working-class weapon, the most formidable people's formation, wielding with more vigour than before the hammer of the united workers marching under the red banner of the future as part and parcel of the black, green and gold of the whole people - like the South African Youth Congress and the whole of the democratic movement'.

The extent to which COSATU will effectively fulfil its wider political role is crucially dependent on how it attends to the hard organisational tasks it faces. Mergers must be consolidated. Local and regional structures of the federation have to be more firmly entrenched. National structures must become more cohesive and efficient.

Democratic practice within COSATU will have to be deepened. No doubt the constitutional amendments made at the congress - which include an expanded national executive committee of two persons per affiliate and the tightening of regional structures - will help towards this.

Organising the unemployed will demand a lot of energy. And there are vast numbers of unorganised workers, particularly in the public, domestic and rural sectors. FAWU, for example, now has four full-time organisers for farm workers - but progress is slow. And COSATU has not been able to intervene effectively in worker struggles in the bantustans.

A substantial number of workers are organised in unions outside COSATU, the most significant being in the black-consciousness oriented National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU). The prospect of unity between the two federations seems very slim.

COSATU is keen on unity based on principles of non-racialism, worker control, one union per industry, representation based on paid-up membership, and national co-operation between affiliates. In a fraternal message to the COSATU congress, NACTU called for worker unity on the basis of: anti-racism; anti-sexism; anti-imperialism; anti-capitalism; worker control; black working-class leadership; non-affiliation to political organisations; financial accountability to the unions; and independent action of unions within the federation.

But the underlying differences between the federations are those of political perspective; historical development; conception of the structure and function of a union federation; the practice of democracy; international ties; and personalities. However, there are large numbers of other organised workers, especially from the disbanded Trade Union Council of South Africa, which COSATU has to address.

Another area of concern for COSATU is the position of women workers. The inaugural congress resolved to elect a standing sub-committee to undertake an intensive education programme. This has still not been done. The secretariat report suggested that unions set up women's committees and the federation establish regional committees before a na-

tional structure is established. COSATU's education department has been asked to implement the resolution from the inaugural congress.

The congress also resolved to hold an education conference every two years and to restructure the education department. Local, regional and national education programmes have the vital task of creating greater unity and cohesion within COSATU. They will have to provide workers with the support to play a leading role in wider political struggle.

An important task for COSATU is to make its political policy more concrete. At present, policy is somewhat general and could give rise to different interpretations. Naidoo acknowledged this, saying that 'although we have come a long way, we have to create greater unity within COSATU. We have set ourselves major tasks. Our success in achieving these will depend on how united we are'.

He said some of the traditional divisions between 'workerists' and 'populists' had disappeared. 'COSATU's political direction is being determined through workers struggles and not abstract theoretical conceptions like workerism and populism'. COSATU tries to avoid the excesses of both.

The second national COSATU congress seems to be a major step in that direction. Its significance may well be that it has decisively shifted the theoretical terrain away from the debate between 'workerists' and 'populists' to debates within the wider liberation movement on strategies for change, and the pace and depth of that change.



Mogopa residents listen to the government announcement about the expropriation of Holgat farm

The Mogopa people: another dream smashed

In July 1987, government expropriated the farm Holgat, bought by a church trust to resettle communities left landless because of forced removals. **GEORGINA JAFFEE** records how the expectations of the Mogopa people to live and farm on their own land were dashed by this state action. They are now determined to re-occupy their original land, which they had legal title to before an apartheid-inspired forced removal.

‘People do not want a confrontation but the position which the government has left us in forces us to take this action’, said a spokesman for the Mo-

gopa people shortly after the government expropriated the Western Transvaal farm of Holgat.

In 1984, the government moved the Mogopa people at gun-point from their ancestral land near Ventersdorp. Holgat was intended as an alternative settlement after they had exhausted all legal means to regain their original farms.

After the expropriation of Holgat, announced on 7 July, the people of Mogopa believe they have no alternative but to defy the government and return to their land.

Many in the community have developed a Messianic conviction that they have been appointed by god to reclaim the land of their birth. ‘We would rather die than live without our land. If we do not succeed in this task it will be the

end of our livelihood and the government’s responsibility’.

A department of development aid official has responded by saying that ‘if the Mogopa people go back to their farms they are exposing themselves to prosecution’.

The forced removal of 1984

Government intended to resettle all the Mogopa people in Pachsdraai, near Zeerust. At 3 am on the morning of 14 February 1984, police arrived at Mogopa announcing that they were there to remove the community to Pachsdraai.

Police first approached the houses of community leaders, handcuffed them and put them into police vans. Then they started on the rest of the community. They entered houses by force, and people were

pushed into awaiting trucks and buses. Parents were separated from their children in the chaos. Those who refused to move were beaten with batons. Many of their belongings were broken and families with cattle were forced to abandon them or sell them at low prices.

As early as 1982, the Mogopa people heard rumours that government intended to remove them because the area they farmed was a 'black spot'. This is freehold land acquired before the 1913 Land Act, lying outside areas designated for the settlement of African people.

The land consisted of two farms amounting to 10 000 hectares, and was bought by the Mogopa people in 1911. Many in the tribe had been share-croppers on Orange Free State farms at the time, and longed for land of their own. The tribe sold its cattle to pay for the two farms, which were farmed productively for the next 70 years.

Mr Lebethe, whose father was one of the original settlers in Mogopa, recalls this earlier period. 'We worked hard and built up a rich community, with schools and churches. We had a lot of cattle and planted every year. Sometimes we had 6 000 bags of mielies to sell to the co-op in Ventersdorp'.

In 1983, officials from the department of co-operation and development secretly negotiated resettlement with a deposed Mogopa chief, Jacob More. With offers of compensation, More and a few families moved to Pachsdraai. In June of that year bulldozers smashed schools and churches at Mogopa. This was done to 'encourage' the rest of the community to leave Mogopa. But the majority of the com-

munity remained.

In December, Mogopa villagers decided to rebuild the schools and fix the roads. They did not expect to be forcibly removed within two months.

After the brutal removal, the Mogopa people refused to stay in Pachsdraai. Government had placed Jacob More in charge of the allocation of land and given him total administrative power. But the majority of the Mogopa people had deposed him in 1981 for corruption. They detested More as he had worked closely with government officials to assist in the 1984 removal.

Within a month of the removal, they fled to the Bophuthatswanan village of Bethanie, near Brits.

Life in Bethanie

Bethanie is the home of the Magopa people's paramount chief, James Lerothodi Mamogale. Since the removal, they have been living in shacks in three separate areas of Bethanie. They have no livestock and the ground is too dry to cultivate. The entire community has been impoverished. Few have found employment and they have not received unemployment insurance or pension pay-outs. In one area, Barsheba, people have to walk 4 km for access to dirty water from a river bed.

Rosina Pooe is one of the Magopa refugees living in Bethanie. She sat outside her tin shack on a tin drum. A few chickens grovelled in the dust near her. 'We are desperate. Few of us have work and we are hungry. We only eat cabbage cooked with sugar and water and our children are sick'. She receives a few rand each week from her sister who earns R15 a week clearing

stones off mielie fields close by.

All Mogopa refugees in Bethanie want to risk returning to Mogopa. They feel they have nothing to lose.

Despite their circumstances, the 230 Mogopa families in Bethanie have maintained a strong sense of community. They are united and determined to return to Mogopa. Organised into various committees even though they are not able to hold meetings in Bethanie, they manage to hold their organisations together.

Last year a youth group was formed. Many of the young people are active in maintaining the solidarity and spirit of the settlement. Years of injustice and victimisation by the state have created a strong, resistant and militant community.

The Holgat project: a dream smashed

When the Mogopa people won a legal appeal against their removal in 1985, they expected to return home. But government had expropriated their land and warned that they would be guilty of trespass if they re-occupied the land. The authorities did offer them another piece of land, but attached unacceptable conditions to the offer. The first was that they would be incorporated into Bophuthatswana, the second that they would not have security of tenure, merely being tenants on the land.

Mogopa families were introduced to the Holgat project when negotiations with government finally broke down after a meeting with the department of development aid in December 1986. The department refused to reconsider the conditions laid out for the occupation of the alternative land.

The Mogopa people began preparing to return to their original land. But resource and support groups they were in contact with dissuaded them from this, fearing it would lead to a bloody confrontation with the authorities and loss of life.

It was then that the Holgat farm was presented as a possible alternative. At first the Mogopa people were reluctant to accept Holgat because of their determination to re-occupy their original land. But slowly they began to see that Holgat could provide a new home where they could again farm productively and live with dignity.

Holgat, near Coligny in the Western Transvaal, was bought from the Hermansberg

munities comprising 360 families, and a group of 21 Holgat farmworker families who resided on the farm, had already planned how they were going to run the farm when government announced the expropriation.

While making these plans, a strong bond and friendship developed among the three communities because of their common histories. They are committed to sticking together and finding another solution to their landlessness.

Plans to farm Holgat

During the planning stage there was great enthusiasm from all three groups about the Holgat project. The soil is good and they were to inherit farm

flowers and beans as soon as they were settled. Dairy, poultry and vegetable projects were planned to complement the farming activities.

At planning workshops, all three groups had discussed how to live and work together. They had already agreed that people would live together in one village. They would settle in 'kgoros' (clans) and cultivate land collectively. Each kgoro would be made up of people from each of the communities, and would elect a representative onto the farm committee. Income from the farm was to be divided equally with some of the surplus saved for re-investment.

There was great concern to share skills, unite the com-



Mogopa women: 'We will go on struggling for land for a future for our children and our grandchildren'

Mission by the Botshabelo Trust, which raised the necessary capital from international church organisations. It was to provide a permanent home for both the Mogopa and the Machavie people. The Machavie were removed from their ancestral lands in 1971 and have been living in desperate conditions at Rooigrond, near Mafikeng, for the past 16 years.

These two Tswana com-

equipment and 300 cows. The farm was intended to be productive enough to support all the families living on it. But it was acknowledged that some income would have to be earned elsewhere. Many of the Mogopa people have been weekly or monthly migrants for years, and intended to continue in their employment.

Plans were afoot to begin planting dryland maize, sun-

munities and work the land efficiently. Organisations like the Environmental and Development Agency (EDA) and the Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC) assisted in planning the settlement.

Government responses

When under threat of removal, the Mogopa people unsuccessfully applied to the Transvaal supreme court for an order re-

straining the government from evicting them. At the time of their forced removal, they were petitioning the appeal court for leave to appeal against the Transvaal court's decision.

In September 1985, the appeal was won. But because government had already expropriated their land, the Mogopa people could only re-occupy it under threat of arrest and prosecution for trespass.

According to Gerrit Viljoen, minister of education and development, the expropriation of Holgat took place because:

- * the government wants to extend the Bethal Mission School, currently on the farm, into an agricultural college;
- * Holgat was not planned for black settlement;
- * negotiations are still in progress around an alternative piece of land for the Mogopa people.

But Holgat is not on the section of the farm where the Bethal Mission is situated, and the farm had been for sale for several years. The project was not in breach of any law and

was taking advantage of government's recent 'reforms' which are meant to relieve black spots. Section 5 of the Black Administration Act, which kept blacks out of white farming areas, was repealed in May 1986.

According to the Mogopa people, the negotiations over alternative land had ended because government attached conditions to proposed land.

It is more likely that the expropriation was due to government fears about the protests of white farmers in the area, who support the Conservative Party.

At the time of the expropriation, rushed through with indecent haste by government, a deed of sale for Holgat had already been signed and R2,8-million transferred to the sellers.

A resolution taken by the three groups after the expropriation stated that 'we believe that the government's reason for expropriating the farm was to defeat our plans for the future. However we will go on

struggling for land for a future for our children and our grandchildren'.

The expropriation of the farm exposes government's 'reform' policy for what it is. While modifying or repealing some apartheid laws, it uses apparently colour-blind laws like the Expropriation Act to achieve the same apartheid goals.

In the light of their appeal court success, the Mogopa people feel that re-occupation of their land is not an act of civil disobedience but a legal right to reclaim the land of their forefathers.

The crisis of landlessness and poverty in rural areas has been growing for years. The Holgat farm could have been an experiment which may have provided a model for agricultural development. But as the attorney representing the Mogopa people put it, 'there is no human rights case on which I have been compelled to reflect with such despair'.

TRANSFORMATION

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Locals Link Unions

The South African working class stands battle-scarred but unbowed. Despite enormous difficulties created by the state offensive and right-wing attacks against the unions, and a distinct hardening of capital's attitude to unions, progressive trade unions continue the struggle for economic and political liberty.

A crucial aspect of the union movement's resilience is its firm democratic mass base and reliance on workers control, initiative and power. This is especially so for COSATU, the most powerful non-racial federation of unions with 713 000 paid-up members.

An index of COSATU's growing muscle and consolidation into a tight federation is the extent to which it has been able to weld links across its affiliated unions, and extend links to community organisations at regional and local level.

By the second COSATU national congress, 31 locals had been formed country-wide. At that congress, COSATU resolved that it 'must develop permanent structures at local, regional and national levels with other sectors of the democratic movement which will strengthen our relationships and interaction with these organisations and promote the leading role of the working class in a united front alliance'.

Locals are set to play a decisive role in future political and labour struggles. *Work In Progress* interviewed officials of the Springs local on the workings, activities and vision of this East Rand structure.

Could you give a brief background to the Springs shop steward local?

In 1981, we had a strike at Telephone Manufacturers of South Africa (TEMSA), which resulted in mass dismissals of the striking workers. Individual unions were weak and we had to link up, as workers, to help those at TEMSA. During the strike, scabbing had to be eliminated. So we began to organise the unemployed in the community.

Then in 1984, unions were drawn into the crisis in education. Workers, as parents, were involved and we came together to see how we could alleviate the problems in the community. Therefore, even before COSATU, locals had been

formed. In Springs we had an active shop stewards council where we could address problems in our community and in the factory.

How does the Springs local function?

All shop stewards from COSATU-organised factories must attend local meetings every week. We have 35 factories represented at the local. We do not want only one or two shop stewards present from a factory. All must try to attend so that we can build up leadership skills. Some shop stewards may give their own views so we insist on maximum representation from each factory.

The Springs local covers the industrial areas of New Era

and Nuffield, but we also have workers from Tsakane and Du-duza attending.

How do locals relate to the factory-floor membership of unions?

Unions themselves have ongoing activities in the factories. These are reported to the locals especially when there are problems with management. The locals discuss ways of helping fellow workers. Shop stewards report back to their members. Normally the minutes of the local are read out to the members. Reports on the success of solidarity actions, such as the one-hour stoppage demanding the release of MAWU general secretary Moses Mayekiso, are given. Members on the factory floor are aware of the importance of the locals and ensure their shop stewards attend COSATU local meetings.

What is the overall role of the COSATU locals?

An important role of the local is to ensure and monitor the carrying out of COSATU's national policies, resolutions and campaigns. In addition it has to address itself to the problems in the area of operation, by linking up with mass-based community structures; building up area and street committees and organising the unemployed. It has to be the employed who will organise the unemployed.

Different unions have different methods, but in Springs we have, from an earlier period, come together and do not worry about different union labels.

What role has the local played in the national COSATU campaigns like the Living Wage and the Hands Off COSATU campaigns?

We support the principle of

a living wage campaign, but each union has a different strategy. If workers at a factory have problems with management, then we support those workers and put pressure on management. The living wage campaign is being supported, but because of different union strategies, we cannot come up with one concise demand as a local, for example to say that this is the amount of money we all want as a minimum.

As far as the Hands Off COSATU campaign is concerned, we as the local monitor if management does something about the harassment of unions. On the right to hold meetings, management must be told that if we do not have meetings, there will be problems. When shop stewards were detained, we asked the Springs Chamber of Commerce to make representations to have them released.

If there is no concisely stated amount which is to be a national living wage, what other demands could unify all the workers?

We would like to push the issue of the 40-hour week as a key demand. Management does not want to look at this issue and the demand for no tax deductions. We are urging all affiliates to put pressure on management to accept the 40-hour week. Even before the COSATU living wage campaign we had a project in Springs to ban all overtime. Certain factories such as Kellogg's, Jabula Foods and Acoustics Fibreglass Insulation (AFI) do not have overtime.

What has been done to defend COSATU from further harassment and disruption besides pressurising management and the Federated Chamber of Commerce?

The trade unions are legal organisations and where our freedom of association has been prevented, we have defied. Defiance is taking place. There was a time when the whole shop stewards council was surrounded by the army, but we did not stop having meetings. The locals have not discussed defensive methods as such. The best basis of defence is to build and consolidate factory strength and the mass-based structures. Then defence comes on its own.

During the period of the first state of emergency we had to have local meetings during working hours and inside the factory. We preferred meeting in the afternoons as repression was worst in the evening.

When COSATU House was bombed, the workers wanted to take action. But it became obvious that the state and the bosses were together. So at the time we felt we had to adopt a low profile.

What about the Inkatha-linked United Workers Union of SA (UWUSA) and right-wing violence?

We had serious violence related to UWUSA trying to come into Jabula Foods. There were deaths. At Boart Hard Metals UWUSA also tried, but we no longer have problems. Management in some factories welcomed UWUSA. We did have a meeting in the local Federated Chamber of Commerce and put our position on UWUSA clearly.

Locals have been seen as a means of extending the organisation, skills and industrial power of the working class into the communities. What is your relationship with the community structures?

As we stated, in 1984 the locals were part and parcel of the

delegations and committees that tried to resolve the education crisis. More recently students have appealed to the local on the problem of registration at schools.

There is also the need for us to focus on housing and the local wants to come up with recommendations on housing and have meetings with the relevant authorities. But we must obtain a mandate.

Since the East Rand Peoples Organisation (ERAPO) was crushed, we are still trying to build a civic structure. The only organisations we see coming up are the KwaThema Students Congress (KWASCO) and the KwaThema Youth Congress (KWAYCO), and we do have a relationship with them.

As unions, we have to delimit our activities, but we cannot ignore community structures. We will strengthen these structures without taking their autonomy away from them.

How strong is the link with the youth in particular?

Because of our co-ordination with the youth, we had a hundred percent stayaway on 5 and 6 May. It was also the quietest stayaway yet. The youth have been showing a commitment to consulting with the workers in the interest of the community.

What is the local's relationship with workers in unions outside COSATU?

Workers have common problems. Ideological differences should not hinder us from common struggles. The doors of COSATU have always been open to all workers. When a factory organised by the Council of Trade Unions (CUSA) in Brakpan had a problem, we did not see the label but the problem, and gave help. A CUSA

factory even attended our local meetings and we were happy.

Any unity must be built at root level. Workers do not have an ideological problem. The problem is that we are being exploited. If you look at Springs, most of the factories are COSATU-organised. Perhaps in areas where the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) is strong, COSATU locals should discuss common problems with NACTU workers.

The industrial area committees are a way of bringing in unorganised factories. Management always tries to use the conditions of the unorganised workers as an excuse for not giving organised workers their rights. Industrial area committees can ensure easy dissemination of information and sharing of problems. We are definitely looking at forming industrial area committees. We have to start the industrial area committee with the organised workers and then invite other factories. Already we will need two industrial area committees - one for New Era and one for Nuffield.

At present locals have no clear constitutional status in COSATU's structure. Do you feel this should change?

We would like to see the COSATU locals have more constitutional status. At present we have speaking but not voting rights in the Witwatersrand COSATU region. At the moment, the locals do a job broadly monitoring the implementation of national policy locally. COSATU locals should have more push. The problem is that the local has affiliates which also have their decisions and recommendations.

The local has a good rela-

tionship with the youth, but are the locals open to them?

Yes, we have the student congress and the Kwathema Youth Congress in the local. Youth have their own area of operation, and their representation at the COSATU local must be controlled. So we limit it to two persons for each of the youth bodies. They have no voting rights but can speak in meetings. They have to disseminate our resolutions to their constituencies. We only have limited youth representation because we cannot have the whole student organisation, otherwise we will not be discussing the problems of the workers. Student representatives at the local must speak for all students. We do not want every high school to come in dribs and drabs with individual problems. They must come in a collective manner. We encouraged Tsakane, Duduza and KwaThema youth to unite.

What would the attitude be to AZAPO youth coming to the local?

It is very important to see that the local does not delimit itself according to ideology. But in order to form disciplined alliances, the organisations must be mass-based and democratic. I do not mean that AZAPO or the UDF are unacceptable. We will encourage KWASCO and Azanian Youth Unity to become one force to alleviate common problems. We are striving for unity in principle, not as a tactic to win over members.

Could you comment on the extent to which political issues such as the Freedom Charter are discussed within the locals?

Before the recent COSATU

congress in July, individual unions took positions.

Affiliates discuss political issues within their unions and through their structures. Now that the Freedom Charter has been accepted, it is very important to discuss it properly; so the local will address the issue when we look at the resolutions of the congress as a whole.

How do you cope with resources and meeting venues?

We meet in a church hall in KwaThema. Typing of agendas and minutes are drawn from the affiliate's resources. We also plan to have local education seminars and then we will need money. At present we also subscribe to and distribute progressive magazines.

What is your vision of the role of the local as a force for fundamental change?

The locals can play a role as a unifying factor and as part of decision-making machinery in a democratic future and in democratic struggles. Gone are the days when we were shop stewards only in the factory. We must also be leaders in the broader society. We see locals as an important force but at the same time we must build particular kinds of structures in the community. The working class has to be a leading force, but the youth and unemployed are part of the working class. A leading role must be played in the democratic mass-based organisations.

Because of historical events, this leadership role is being played by workers. It is not, however, proper for a worker to serve himself only as a worker, but also as a member of the community.

The United Democratic Front and township revolt

Despite ongoing state repression, the United Democratic Front continues to unite a large section of opposition forces in South Africa. MARK SWILLING looks at the composition of UDF leadership, its ideology and campaigns, and argues that the front has shifted from initially reactive politics to the attempted establishment of organs of 'people's power' in black communities.

Recent years have witnessed mass opposition to apartheid. Fighting in the townships, labour unrest, classroom revolts, rent strikes, consumer boycotts, worker stayaways and guerilla warfare have become familiar features of South Africa's political landscape since 1976. But with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983, radical opposition assumed a more organised form.

Resistance became increasingly effective because of the UDF's capacity to provide a national political and ideological centre. However, the township revolt was not caused by strategies formulated and implemented by UDF national leadership. With the exception of key national campaigns (eg the black local authorities election boycotts of 1983-84 and the anti-tricameral parliament campaigns), the driving force of resistance came from below, as communities responded to their terrible living conditions.

As these local struggles spread, the UDF played an important role in putting forward common national demands for the dismantling of apartheid.

Black communities were drawn into a national movement which believes the transfer of political power to repre-

sentatives of the majority is a precondition for the realisation of basic economic demands. These include decent shelter, cheap transport, proper health care, adequate education, the right to occupy land and the right to a living wage.

The UDF is formed

In January 1983 Allan Boesak, speaking at the conference of the Anti-South African Indian Council campaign, called for the formation of a front to oppose the government's tricameral constitutional proposals.

This call was later expanded to include opposition to new influx control laws and local government structures for Africans, based on the 'Koornhof Bills'. The Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 was particularly isolated for attack: it provided for the establishment of autonomous municipal institutions in the African townships.

The UDF was launched as a national body at a meeting in Cape Town on 20 August 1983. About 600 organisations eventually affiliated. They included trade unions, youth organisations, student

movements, women's groups, religious groups, civic associations, political parties and a range of support and professional organisations.

The UDF was conceived of as a front, a federation to which different groups could affiliate and a body which could link different social interests with common short-term objectives.

Since early 1984, literally hundreds of community organisations allied to the UDF have sprung up around the country. And although the major trade union federations have not formally affiliated, they have developed strong working relationships with the UDF over the years.

Ad hoc and constituency-based committees were established to handle specific campaigns or represent particular groups with special grievances.

By early 1984 the UDF's affiliates were classified as follows:

	TvI	Natal	W Cape	E Cape	OFS
Student	12	8	23	3	1
Youth	16	15	271*	13	1
Unions	8	5	2	3	0
Women	8	3	20	2	0
Civic	30	28	27	2	0
Religious	11	4	4	2	0
Political	9	11	9	4	0
Other	16	7	4	4	0

* 235 of these youth organisations were affiliates of Inter-Church Youth.

Well-known ad hoc organisations included the consumer boycott committees and burial committees. Examples of groups represented by constituency committees included squatters, communities threatened with forced removals, commuters opposed to their transport conditions, hostel dwellers, traders, detainees, unemployed groups, professionals and the various crisis committees.

The complex patchwork of local community organisations which became the organisational foundation of the UDF developed out of local urban struggles that took place before and after the formation of the front. At first these struggles involved minor conflicts between communities and local authorities over issues such as transport, housing, rent and service charges. But the authorities' coercive responses and refusal to make concessions transformed the local urban struggles into campaigns with a national political focus.

This transformation was not the simple outcome of local 'reformist' organisations affiliating to the front's national class-based programme.

Rather, these struggles contained an increasingly powerful national challenge to the state's racial and class character which the front expressed instead of directly instigating.

Working-class or petty-bourgeois leaders?

The mixed social and class composition of UDF leadership belies attempts to explain its ideological position in simplistic class categories. Some have claimed the UDF has a 'petty-bourgeois leadership'. This implies the UDF is domi-

nated by people of petty-bourgeois class origin and so cannot be expected to adopt a proletarian ideology. It is questionable whether ideological affiliation is reducible to class origins, but even so, this argument misrepresents the class origins of UDF leadership.

Although the UDF is a multi-class front, a high proportion of its leadership comes from poor working-class origins. The current Eastern Cape regional executive is a good example.

Its president, Edgar Ngoyi, is a building painter by profession. After being politically active in the ANC in the 1950s he was sentenced to 17 years on Robben Island. Vice-president Henry Fazzie was a full-time trade unionist in the 1940s and 1950s. In the early 1960s he was sentenced to 20 years on the Island. Stone Sizani, publicity secretary, is a skilled worker in a chemical factory and previously worked as an organiser for the African Food and Canning Workers Union. Michael Dube, recording secretary, is a factory worker at Nova Board.

Only Derek Swartz, general secretary, and the late Matthew Goniwe, regional organiser, were not workers. Swartz is a teacher and Goniwe was a headmaster in Cradock.

The Western Cape regional executive has a slightly different profile. The president, who used to be a petrol pump attendant, was imprisoned for his political activities and after his release has remained unemployed. The vice-president started his adult life as a mine worker in the Transvaal. He then worked in Cape Town as a migrant labourer and became an organiser for the South African Congress of Trade

Unions during the 1950s. He was later imprisoned and has been unemployed since his release. The second vice-president was a clothing worker but is now unemployed because of police harassment.

The remaining nine members of the executive are teachers, lecturers and students - four of whom have working-class origins, the rest coming from middle-class backgrounds.

Using a sample of 62 UDF leaders from six regional executives, 33 are currently in economic positions that can be defined as working class, while the rest are teachers/lecturers (16), doctors/nurses/social workers (4), lawyers (5), priests (2), technicians (2) and students (2). Significantly, there is not one businessperson in this sample. This profile reflects a working-class and intellectual/professional leadership.

A complex ideology

Ideologically, the UDF is equally complex. The major affiliates subscribe to the national democratic programme of the Freedom Charter. This involves dismantling white minority rule and establishing a non-racial unitary democratic state based on the rule of law, constitutional equality, freedom of association and other democratic liberties.

The charter proposes dismantling the white capitalist power-structures through a combination of nationalisation, land redistribution and social welfare. The UDF insists the Freedom Charter is anti-capitalist: if implemented it will dislodge the basic foundations of *South African* capitalism. But this, they acknowledge, does not make it a socialist programme. Presenting the

Freedom Charter as anti-capitalist reflects the UDF's concern to represent the front's ideology in a way that mirrors its multi-class character.

UDF publications and speakers maintain that the extent to which the South African revolution achieves a socialist order largely depends on the working class establishing its hegemony within the front, gearing the struggle towards socialist goals.

Some UDF leaders - particularly those close to the trade union movement - openly describe the anti-apartheid struggle in terms of a class struggle.

Socialists in the UDF have emphasised the links between oppression in the communities and exploitation in production. Speaking at the 1987 National Union of Mineworkers congress, UDF acting publicity secretary Murphy Morobe argued that 'we know how it is for people to go to work in the morning and find their shack demolished when they come back home. To such people it is completely artificial to build a Chinese wall between trade unions and community organisations... Therefore who would deny the patently symbiotic relationship between the rent boycott and struggle for high wages?'

The rhetoric of religious leaders in the UDF is more conservative. They refer to divinely ordained human rights and liberal conceptions of individual liberty.

However, for socialists within the UDF, this marriage of proletarian and liberal/religious political ideologies reflects the reality of racial oppression and class exploitation which have made it necessary for all oppressed classes to unite against the common

enemy of white rule.

Organisation and development of structures

The UDF's organisational power is reducible to the capacities of its affiliates. But its regional and national structures have a political and ideological influence on political relations in local communities and on national and international perceptions of South Africa.

The UDF is a front, not a centrally co-ordinated political party. This makes it impossible to explain the wide range of mass protests since 1983 by initiatives originating from within the front. Nevertheless, it is possible to periodise the general orientation of the UDF and its affiliates into four phases.

Phase one: reactive politics

The first phase of UDF activities began when it was formed to organise nationwide opposition to the new constitution and 'Koornhof Bills'. The idea behind this campaign was to use the inadequacy of these forms of political representation to demand substantive political rights. The subsequent successful boycotts of the tricameral parliament and black local authority elections dealt a severe blow to the state's reformist initiatives.

The success of the boycott tactic established the UDF as a viable extra-parliamentary alternative. The UDF slogan expressing this objective was 'Apartheid Divides, UDF Unites', indicating that the front was responding to state initiatives on a terrain determined by the state. So its politics can be described as reactive.

At this stage, the UDF's ob-

jective was not to pose alternatives to apartheid or establish organisational structures designed to sustain a long-term struggle. Rather, the front aimed to counter the divisive tactics of state reforms by calling for the maximum unity of the oppressed, urging them to reject apartheid by refusing to vote.

The concern to build this consensus was reflected in the UDF's decision not to adopt the Freedom Charter as a formal statement of principles. It still wanted to draw in non-charterist groups like black consciousness and major trade union organisations.

The reactive phase of UDF politics ended with the Million Signature Campaign involving a petition against apartheid. The campaign objective was to challenge the apartheid state's legitimacy at an ideological level.

The campaign also provided township activists with a vehicle for solid door-to-door organising for the first time. In a number of Eastern Cape towns, the organisational infrastructure for strong grassroots community organisations was laid during this period. But in some Transvaal areas activists refused to collect signatures. They believed the campaign was a futile form of protest politics. In the event, the campaign failed to get a million signatures.

Phase two: community struggle

The second phase of UDF politics began after the tricameral elections of August 1984. Then struggles initiated by local community organisations began to centre around more basic issues of township life. Transport and rent boycotts,

squatter revolts, housing movements, labour strikes, school protests and township stayaways followed. The depth and geographic extent of these actions resulted in an urban uprising which culminated in the declaration of a state of emergency in July 1985.

This shift from national anti-constitutional campaigns to local community struggles was not due to changes in national UDF policy. The shift was the product of local community organisations and activists mobilising around daily urban issues. Some of these organisations had been active since 1979 while others were

illegitimacy of black local government.

These local organisations rode a wave of anger and protest that transformed political relations in the communities. The change was so fast that UDF local, regional and national leaders could not build organisational structures to keep pace with the levels of mobilisation and politicisation.

The deepening recession and illegitimacy of state reforms were the underlying causes of this urban uprising. The recession - which began in early 1982 - undermined real wage levels. It also limited the state's capacity to subsidise

black local authorities' failure to attract support from the African communities, meant economic grievances were quickly politicised. The resulting struggles included both economic and political demands.

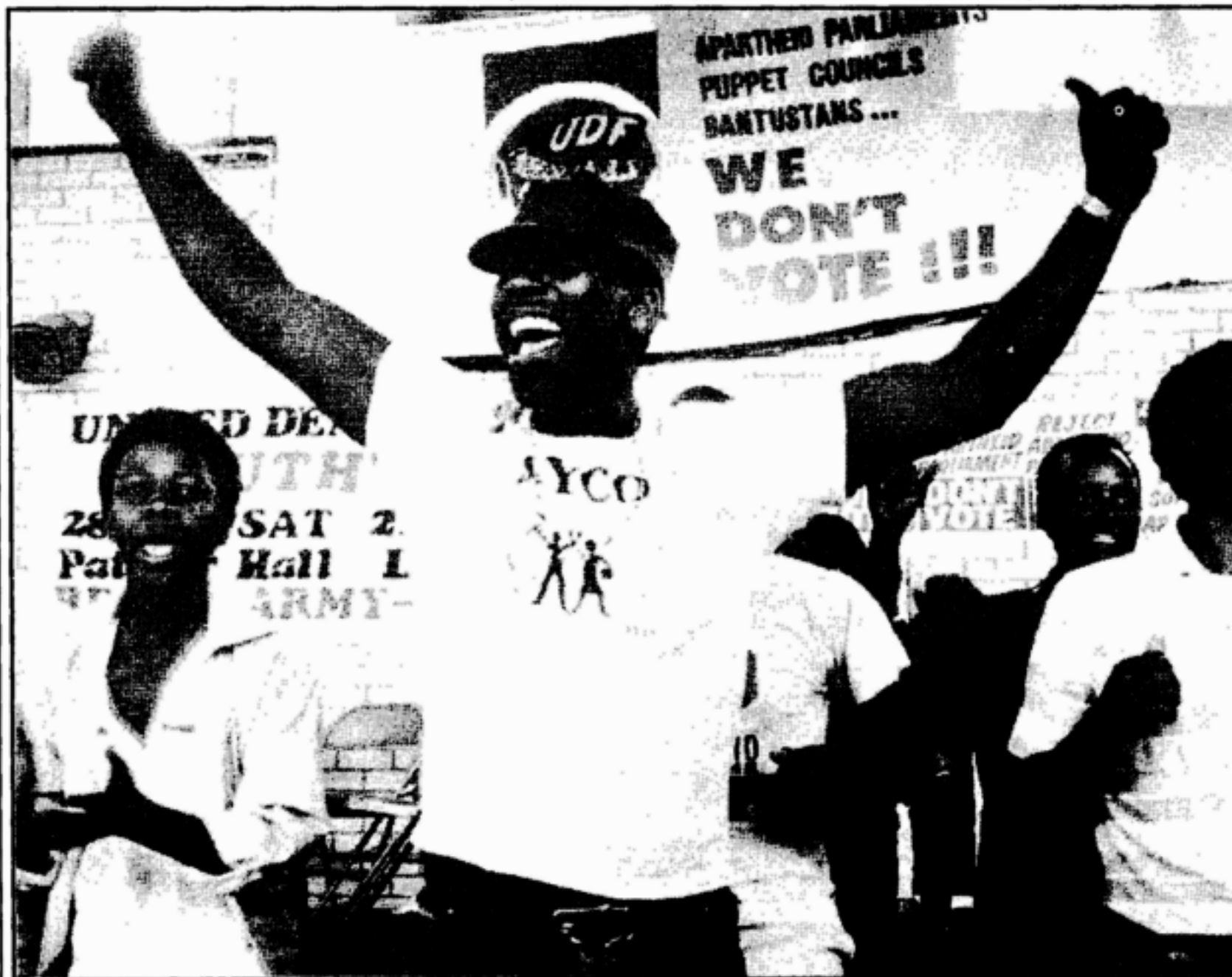
There were four decisive moments during this period. Firstly, the Vaal uprising, which began in September 1984. It was sparked by a rent increase announced by the Lekoa Town Council. The uprising led to at least 31 deaths and the beginning of a rent boycott in the region which continues into 1987.

Secondly, the nation-wide schools boycott.

This began in Cradock in late 1983 when students protested against the dismissal of Matthew Goniwe, a local headmaster and UDF leader subsequently assassinated in 1985. The boycott spread to Pretoria in early 1984 and to the rest of the country by the end of the year. Student demands included recognition of elected student representative councils, an end to sexual harassment of female students and corporal punishment, release of detained students,

and upgrading of educational facilities.

Thirdly, the mass November 1984 worker stayaway in the Transvaal marked the beginning of strong working rela-



UDF stage one: reactive politics against the new parliament and other government institutions of apartheid

only formed during 1984 and 1985. They were able to exploit the contradiction between state attempts to improve urban living conditions and the fiscal bankruptcy and political

transport and bread prices, finance housing construction, urban services and educational and health facility upgrading.

The illegitimacy of state reforms and in particular new

tionships between community organisations, student movements and trade unions. The stayaway, supported by 800 000 workers and 400 000 students, was called to protest against army occupation of the townships and to support students' educational demands.

This was followed by the equally successful but organisationally more complex stayaways in Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage during March 1985. These were called in support of the demand for a reduction in the petrol price and in protest against security force action.

These mass actions mobilised unprecedented numbers of people, and displayed new features which signalled a turning point in the recent history of black protest. They mobilised all sectors of the township population including youth and older residents; they involved co-ordinated action between trade unions and political organisations; they were called in support of demands that challenged the coercive, urban and educational policies of the apartheid state; and they gave rise to ungovernable areas as state authority collapsed in many townships in the wake of the resignation of black local authority councillors.

An internal discussion document circulated by the UDF's Transvaal education forum in May 1985, recognised that 'we have been unable to respond effectively to the spontaneous waves of militancy around the country'. The UDF's 1985 theme, 'From Protest to Challenge. Mobilisation to Organisation', was part of leadership's attempt to find ways to transform mass mobilisation into coherent mass organisation.

UDF documents and speakers began emphasising the

need to create strong organisational structures at local, regional and national levels, built on more traditional party-type lines. Accountability, direct representation, ideological cohesion, national rather than localised campaigns, and disciplined legal rather than illegal forms of struggle were all stressed.

The state's coercive response to rising levels of mobilisation during the last few months of 1984 and early 1985 prevented UDF leadership from consolidating the front's structures. After the army occupied townships in late 1984, community struggles became increasingly militarist. Groups of youths engaged the security forces in running street battles and hundreds of lives were lost. The militant voluntarism of the youth eclipsed the organisational concerns of grassroots activists, making it even more difficult to establish long-term structures.

Phase three: ungovernability

The first few months of 1985 amounted to urban civil warfare. The state was forced to admit it had lost control of many townships and declared a state of emergency in July 1985. This marked the beginning of the third phase of UDF politics.

In many areas organs of civil government had collapsed or been rendered inoperable by mass and/or violent opposition. The responsibility for re-establishing civil government in the townships fell largely on the shoulders of over-extended police and relatively inexperienced military personnel. In the end, the state of emergency failed to restore civil government. The permanent presence

of security forces in the townships fuelled rather than quelled resistance and some areas became effectively un-governable.

Militant youth, organised into quasi-military action squads by elements outside UDF affiliates, were able to use crude guerilla tactics to harass the security forces. But clearly, in the light of the later 1986-87 emergency, the state had not yet committed itself to a complete assault against opposition groups.

Activists were caught between the youth's militarism and security force terror tactics. Whereas youths were criticising UDF activists for being too moderate in refusing to abandon non-violence, security forces were hunting them down and detaining them.

Phase four: organs of people's power

This unenviable position forced grassroots activists to set up new durable decentralised organisational structures. These had to be strong enough to withstand the effects of repression while also bringing the youth under control. The result was the establishment of what many activists refer to as 'alternative organs of people's power'.

The process of creating these structures began in earnest towards the end of 1985, marking the beginning of the fourth - and probably most important - phase of UDF politics. Structures of 'people's power' involve sophisticated forms of organisation based on street and area committees. Each street elects a street committee, which in turn elects representatives to an area committee.

These structures have de-

veloped most effectively in the Eastern Cape and parts of the Transvaal. But they have also spread to some small Western Cape and Natal townships.

Street and area committees helped activists bring militant youth under control by dividing youth squads into smaller more disciplined units attached to a street or area committee.

Tight local-level organisation lessened the damaging effect which detention, disappearance or death of leaders might otherwise have had. Obviously they are not invulnerable. There is evidence that many Eastern Cape street committees collapsed towards the end of 1986 as security forces began detaining their entire memberships.

Consumer boycotts

One dimension of the attempt to establish organs of 'people's power' was the Eastern Cape's consumer boycott movement. Consumer boycotts began as early as March 1985 and proved most successful when called in support of local community grievances. Demands included rent reductions, improved housing, instalment of proper services, desegregation of trading facilities, withdrawal of troops and the establishment of non-racial municipalities.

At one time 15 Eastern Cape towns were affected by boycotts. High levels of unity and solidarity over long periods (in some cases six months) helped consolidate and strengthen community organi-

sations.

The success of the Eastern Cape boycotts helped spread the tactic to other regions. But

tives as the unification of all sectors of the community around a common set of short and long-term demands; and the need to put sufficient pressure on white middle-class shopkeepers to support these demands and in so doing detach their support from the white state.

Accordingly, local chambers of commerce, reflecting the anxiety of near-bankrupt retailers, were the first to capitulate. In some cases they actually negotiated the withdrawal of troops from townships and undertook to desegregate central business district facilities.

Consumer boycotts worked best where organisation was most developed. In small towns like Port Alfred and Cradock a remarkable community consensus existed, with virtually total participation, few reports of intimidation, and a united leadership exercising a high degree of control and discipline. In Cradock, for example, youthful activists refrained from trying to kill discredited community councillors at the request of leadership. In Port Elizabeth, boycott organisers managed to ensure township businesspeople did not raise their prices during the boycotts.

Regional differences in the boycotts reflected the varying quality of UDF organisation and influence during 1985. It was relatively weak in Natal. The often bloody antipathy between the UDF and Inkatha seriously weakened UDF organisation in African townships. But where trade unions



The campaign to challenge apartheid's legitimacy

initiatives in other regions came from UDF regional leaders who tried to call consumer boycotts without the necessary organisational infrastructure. They also posed general political rather than specific local demands. Additional problems included profiteering by township businessmen and the difficulties involved in organising the huge Natal and Transvaal townships.

Local activists organised the most successful consumer boycotts around basic community grievances. But the regional and national UDF leadership tended to present the objec-

initiated consumer boycotts in Natal, the campaigns were relatively successful.

In the Transvaal, Pretoria and the East Rand were better organised than Soweto. But the UDF seemed most entrenched through its various affiliates in the Eastern Cape communities. The consumer boycotts were sustained where street and area committees developed most strongly.

The roots of the movement for national liberation which the UDF represents went too deep in certain communities to be eradicated by force. And with this entrenchment in many working-class communities, the UDF is likely to generate an increasingly radical conception of a liberated society.

The concept of 'people's power', for example, is more than a mobilising slogan. The new forms of organisation developed during the township revolt are rudimentary organs of self-government. The collapse of state authority and the legitimacy of the UDF-affiliated community groups enabled these organisations to take responsibility for administering a number of township services. They have also on occasion negotiated with state representatives, demanding and winning improvements in the terms and conditions of township living.

The rent boycotts

Evidence that political consciousness in the townships had become increasingly combative emerged during 1986 when the rent boycott spread to 54 townships countrywide. This involved about 300 000 households and cost the state at least R40-million per month.

The rent boycotts were a re-

sponse to both economic and political grievances. Economic grievances involved the level and quality of urban subsistence: declining real wages as inflation increased the costs of basic foodstuffs and transport by 20%; overcrowding with a national average of 12 people per household; massive housing shortages (conservative estimates detail a shortage of 600 000 housing units excluding the 'independent' bantustans); rising rent and service charges (sometimes by 100%); and a growing number of unemployed people as the unemployment rate moves beyond the 40% mark.

Political grievances were linked to state failure to give blacks substantive political rights in general, and the persistent inadequacy and illegitimacy of the black local authorities in particular.

An August 1986 UDF information pamphlet pointed out that rent was not being paid because 'people are simply unable to afford it'. It also linked the boycott to political demands: 'The (rent) boycott is...part of an attempt to make all the structures of apartheid unworkable. The black local authorities are structures designed to make apartheid work - to make people participate in their own domination by a white minority government. The rent boycott weakens these structures and demonstrates to the government that there can be no taxation without representation and that the people will accept nothing less than majority rule'.

In most cases a rent boycott began in response to a sudden change in the relationship between the communities and the state: the shooting of 30 people in Mamelodi; the declaration

of the 1986 state of emergency in Port Elizabeth; forced removal of people in Uitenhage; and a local official's failure to keep his promise to meet the community in Parys.

Most importantly, rent boycotts have united largely working-class communities around a strategy with the potential to sustain itself for a considerable length of time.

Unlike consumer boycotts, which aimed at pressurising the state via middle-class white commercial interests, rent boycotts challenge the state directly. They undermine the fiscal foundations of township administration and have received the full support of both trade union and community organisations. A result of this unity was that trade unions prevented employers from accepting a state security council recommendation that rents be deducted from pay packets through stop orders.

The current state of emergency is unlikely to 'normalise' local government and 'restore law and order' in the townships as long as the rent boycott persists. Nor is it likely the rent boycott will end before the state of emergency has been lifted.

Community struggle and national liberation

As conflict between oppressed communities and the state escalates outside the workplace, local UDF affiliates have become progressively more entrenched in poor working-class communities. During 1986 this led to a radicalisation of its ideology and democratisation of its structures as working-class elements asserted their right to control their organisations both in and outside the workplaces.

This is why the state, after the 1986 emergency was declared in June, decided to launch a full frontal assault to head-off this radicalising movement.

Two organisational forms

ture. The front-type structure has proved workable in most authoritarian societies. But two outstanding features of South Africa's democratic movement are the strength of the trade unions and the resilience of

this problem. Communities - and particularly the youth - moved too quickly to take on the full might of the state without the protection, despite the street committee system, of strong national organisation.



While the UDF may not have officially adopted the Freedom Charter yet, it remains a guiding document

have come to complement one another within the broad parameters of the UDF. Firstly, there are processes associated with developing local community organisations. Secondly, these local community movements are part of a national liberation movement with an objective of dismantling the present white minority regime.

Just as the formation of COSATU can be seen as the fusion of political and collective bargaining unionism, so the UDF can be understood in terms of the distinct but complementary functions of local community and national liberation movements.

But when legal space to organise is regained, the UDF will have to evaluate its struc-

local-level community organisations. A structure founded more directly on the democratic structures of community and workplace organisations may become appropriate in the future.

There will also be the question of developing an organisational infrastructure able to cope with the rapid radicalisation and politicisation of the masses that inevitably occurs during periods of rebellion.

A critical problem faced by political activists since the uprising began in 1984 was how to hold back political mobilisation while organisations were built to guide and direct the oppositional movements. Repression and inadequate organisational resources prevented them from resolving

Inspiring future generations

The UDF has been shaped by pressures and processes largely beyond its control as the dynamics of black resistance have shifted from reactive politics to the establishment of organs of democracy in communities, schools and factories.

Despite its severely weakened national organisational structures due to successive repressive assaults, UDF affiliates and leaders remain crucial representatives of South Africa's black majority.

The UDF is not a pressure group, nor a political party. It is essentially what its architects always intended it to be: a front representing a broad spectrum of oppressed class interests. Beneath this formal level of public appearances is a complex network of local organisations. Their campaigns and struggles have generated an increasingly radical conception of the road that should be followed to achieve a liberated society.

No matter how far South Africa's rulers go to crush the UDF and its affiliates, the ideas, aspirations and struggles which have made it what it is will continue to inspire present and future generations to struggle for political and economic justice.

This is a shortened and edited version of a chapter due to appear in *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, edited by William Cobbett and Robin Cohen, published in London by James Currey in asso-

Disciplined mine strike a test of strength

The National Union of Mineworkers' strike reflects the growing strength and discipline of organised workers. However the strike ends, it will have an important effect on working-class organisation in South Africa. INGRID OBERY, SHAREEN SINGH and DAVID NIDDRIE report.

As *Work In Progress* went to press, the situation on South Africa's strike-bound mines and within the entire labour movement was changing dramatically by the day.

By 20 August, a national strike had begun in the milling industry; what appeared to be an increasing likelihood of agreement between NUM and Anglo American on a programme to minimise mounting violence during the strike by 340 000 black miners was apparently shattered when police shot 15 strikers near the President Steyn mine. Only hours later the talks appeared to be on again.

What is clear is that whatever the outcome of the miners' strike, NUM will enter 1988 wage negotiations far stronger than it entered those of 1987. Ironically, it is the strike itself, which NUM did not want, that has added substantially to the union's strength.

NUM's dispute with the Chamber of Mines began at a time of unprecedented worker militancy which has left no major sector untouched. Importantly, it follows successful worker action in two public sectors (railways and the post office) previously known for their harsh reactions to worker organisation and demands.

South African workers are presently angrily politicised, and more organised than ever

before. Industrial action has increased dramatically, despite approximately 40% unemployment and a deepening recession.

A strike-ridden economy

A number of factors can explain this. With the formation of COSATU, two trends in South African trade unionism merged: overtly political trade unionism, and worker organisation strongly based on the shop floor. The new federation took a more aggressive and vocal political stance than its largest predecessor, the Federation of South African Trade Unions. Symbols and positions previously identified with organisations of the popular movement entered the unions.

Even before COSATU's formation, and certainly since then, workers started expressing their demands in far more political terms. Rocketing inflation added to worker militancy; but organised workers have been as badly affected by the visible and violent state repression of the past two years as popular political organisations. This has tended to draw these groups together, and encouraged the dialogue between unions and sectors like youth, women, and community organisations already beginning before COSATU's formation in 1985. Debates on the nature of post-apartheid society reflected a realisation that such a

society was achievable. They also nudged unions and political organisations slightly closer towards realising the possibilities and concrete realities of societies based on non-capitalist alternatives.

A prime example of this complex development is COSATU's living wage campaign. It was intended as a nationally-based organisational tool for unions and their memberships to consolidate on the shop floor and unite around a single central issue.

In his report to the second national congress, COSATU General Secretary Jay Naidoo criticised COSATU and its affiliates for failing to co-ordinate and organise the campaign actively. But as he went on to say: 'The campaign has the potential to capture the imagination of millions of workers both within and outside of our ranks'. The idea behind the campaign, and the issue of what a living wage involves, have recently surfaced in recent strikes and disputes over wages and working conditions.

Workers see others winning wage gains despite the recession, and recognise that it is possible to do the same. Both unorganised workers - MEDUNSA cleaners have demanded a R375 minimum, R159 up from their present minimum of R216 - and those organised in independent unions in some sectors have expressly demanded a living wage. POTWA, for example has demanded R550-R600 a month for unskilled workers.

The Pick 'n Pay sit-in last year, and the OK, SATS and post office strikes this year were all very public affairs,

largely thanks to state media. Ironically the current mine strike has been less prominent in the SABC's news. The SATS strike particularly raised awareness of what can be achieved, with workers striking directly at the state. The intense counter-attack through the SABC made it evident that the blow was felt. Ironically, although workers were killed, called 'communists' and 'terrorists' and suffered an incredibly harsh press, they won a significant victory and their jobs back. It was an object lesson, widely distributed - courtesy of the state media - of the potential strength of workers united in a trade union.

The recent aborted strike in the metal industry over national wage negotiations demonstrated the power of workers in that sector. Although the minister intervened at the last moment, making the strike illegal, the action gained increasing worker support for

NUMSA. At ISCOR alone the union gained 1 000 new members in the day before the strike ballot.

In the food industry, 15 000 Food and Allied Workers Union members are on strike in the milling sector. And in the chemical industry, between 12 000 and 15 000 workers are involved in disputes. The Chemical Workers Industrial Union recently won significant wage increases in multinationals like Shell and Mobil, where minimum monthly wages rose to between R700 and R800. In the present SASOL dispute, management increased the minimum from R475 to R575, but workers, unconvinced by management's fast-footed arithmetic, have set their sights on a real living wage.

These disputes, particularly the larger ones, graphically demonstrate the benefits of union membership to workers. The economic power workers can wield in large numbers

under disciplined trade union organisation is presently being spelt out.

Mine workers on strike

In the mine strike, NUM has demonstrated its ability to bring almost half of all black mine workers out, and keep them there. At the start, General Secretary Cyril Ramaphosa called for workers to be disciplined and dignified, and unity around this was evident. Despite growing allegations of violence, the first week of the strike was remarkably free of confrontations. The first allegations of violence occurred only after management called in police and mine security. By the second week over 250 miners had been injured.

The Chamber of Mines has stressed that not more than 50% of mines are out. But it is more significant to talk about the number of workers out, interrupted production and the



Miners attend a strike meeting.

By the tenth day the cost of the strike overtook the full annual cost of granting the 30% wage increase.

rate at which profit levels have declined. By the tenth day, the financial cost of the strike to the chamber overtook the full annual cost of granting the 30% wage increase demanded by NUM. By Saturday 15 August, one week into the strike, the Labour Monitoring Group estimated that Anglo American had lost 100% of weekly profits at affected mines, Gencor 79%, and JCI 100%. All the big mines are out, and the strike rolls on to smaller plants all the time. NUM and the chamber stand at two ends of the carpet. The question is whether the chamber can roll it up faster than NUM rolls it out. Increasingly it seems the chamber cannot.

In choosing to demand a 30% wage increase, NUM prevented an early split in the chamber, as happened in 1985. This also allowed stronger organised mines to strike legally, backing up action by workers on less consolidated mines such as those owned by Gold Fields.

Anglo and Gencor workers solidly supported the strike call, and this probably prevents Anglo from following last year's route of an independent offer, since this would not break the strike.

Another alternative for management would be to call for state help and bring in police or army to break the strike. But if management follows this course, they face incredible short-term losses (estimates range from R15-million to R30-million per day in the industry). And in the long term they would be faced by a militant, angry workforce without representation. They would have no means of dealing with wildcat strikes, no means of dealing with workers, and no

structure to use in the attempt to control workers.

Tactics and counter-tactics

Bringing out large numbers of strikers has affected production severely, and kept the gold price steady around the R467 mark, despite the the depressing effect on the gold price by lowered tensions in the Gulf war.

The chamber has threatened to close down marginal mines and shafts which produce lower-grade ore. The issue is a complex one. But crudely, this will cut into long-term mining economic viability. These mines cannot operate economically without the existence of other high-grade ore mines. But if only the high-grade ore mines produce, the life of the industry is shortened. And it would be unprofitable to re-open the marginal mines at that late stage.

Mine management has been looking at advanced mining technology and mechanisation techniques for some years. The extent to which a strike of these proportions will push them further along this road is unclear. But miners do face the prospect of some mines closing, even temporarily, and this probably means a significant number of lost jobs.

NUM showed it could keep workers out beyond three days. The chamber probably thought this was the limit, and management's so-far limited counter-attack using mine security forces started on the fourth day of the strike.

NUM's threat to send striking workers home was a new tactic. It appears the union has used this tactic strategically, particularly on mines which have experienced extensive vi-

olence like Lorraine. By the 17 August between 15 000 and 20 000 workers from a few mines had gone home, raising the possibility of mass dismissals. But this is not easy for chamber, since most migrants have some level of skill, and even those without 'official' skills are generally migrants who have returned time and time again to the same jobs. Hiring inexperienced workers must result in significant production losses over a fairly extended period.

This was shown in 1985, when 14 000 Vaal Reefs miners were fired. The mine was unable to fill the jobs and forced to take most workers back.

There must be a significant level of organisation and discipline within the union to have managed a longer strike, and significantly little 'factional' or 'ethnic' fighting. Yet workers are faced with aggressive security forces, and the combination of this and their frustration could result in escalating violence the longer the strike continues. Allegations have already been made that management at Saaiplaats, Bracken and Leslie mines actively promoted ethnic division and fighting. Anglo American's attempts to draw up a code of conduct regarding violence during the strike came rather late, after numerous injuries and deaths. The union had its code of conduct circulated to workers in its pamphlet on strike rules, ensuring that 'restraint and discipline governed the strike action'.

Union gains

In the second week of the strike, the chamber indicated willingness to re-open talks, but only on conditions of em-

ployment. In this NUM had demonstrated that it could force management to the table through worker power. However, NUM refused to consider talks unless wages were on the agenda. Nothing less would satisfy rank and file. A song doing the rounds warns union leadership that workers will not return to work unless substantial gains are won.

The strike is now over who breaks first. In the 1946 mine strike management was able to force workers back underground at gunpoint. This is not as easily done now, for it would immediately be an unfair labour practice.

But management was not short of new tactics. For the first time in the industry, mine managements opted for the tactic of lock-out in an attempt to break the strike. By 19 August workers at four plants - one colliery, two gold mines and Nufcor - had been locked out. NUM viewed this tactic as no more than 'mass dismissal of strikers for participation in a legal strike...or a cheap form of retrenchment to avoid negotiating the need to retrench, the replacement of redundant miners at other mines and to avoid the costs of skills training programmes and severance pay'.

In the light of wage gains in other sectors, it is significant that NUM is just beginning its fight for a living wage. The minimum monthly wage on gold mines is R238; for colliery workers it is R225. The average black miner earns R427 a month. A further grievance must be wages of white miners: those manning additional stations during the strike will net an average of R1 600 more a month in overtime. This is three times an average

worker's monthly wage.

The Labour Research Service in Cape Town claims gold mines can afford a 55% increase and still remain profitable. The gold mines recorded their highest profits in history during 1986. Between 1975 and 1986 gold mining profits rose by 44%. Coal mines have also recorded profits. The LRS also reports that in the same period gold miners have not had a 'proper' increase in real terms.

Implications of the strike

NUM leaders did not want a strike this year, although many in the labour movement believe a massive confrontation was inevitable by 1990 at latest. At its present rate of growth NUM may, by then, have close to total membership on all South African mines. However, conditions and rank-and-file anger prevailed and the union was forced to deal with a strike situation.

Even if management plays its most obvious card, using the combined muscle of private security and state to break the strike, the union, officials believe, will win a post-strike industrial court unfair labour practice ruling, and be back on the mines more strongly than before. NUM may have been forced into a confrontation at a time of the chamber's choosing, but it has demonstrated that it went in far stronger organisationally than even sympathetic observers realised. And it has used that strength to substantially expand its support base during the strike. This is despite the chamber's barring of national leadership from access to the mines. The union's ability to do this says much of the depth of organisational strength, down to shaft level, of a highly centralised union; and

the massive mobilising impact of generalised worker sentiments articulated through COSATU's living wage campaign.

The chamber may have decided to take a hard line in the hope that the resulting confrontation will undermine some of NUM's growing influence, rather than wait for the union to define when and how the clash takes place. But in terms of the 30% demand the chamber may have already delayed too long.

NUM has been able to inject both dynamism and discipline into strike organisation, despite its size. The union has also displayed an ability to adjust tactics when conditions and management strategies have changed. 'We are seeing the results of five painstaking years of organisation in South Africa's most oppressed and exploited community', says assistant general secretary Marcel Golding. In the chamber NUM faces one of the most experienced and hard-hitting management negotiating bodies, with a century of experience in oppressing and exploiting its workforce. But this year NUM has retained much of the initiative, which will not be lost on management and must have implications for future wage bargaining.

One union's demonstrated ability to bring out large numbers of workers and keep them there in a disciplined and organised manner again puts the issue of cross-sector worker solidarity on the agenda. Not that generalised strike action is a real possibility in the immediate future. But mass action by the entire organised working class has, with the NUM strike and the upsurge in general worker militancy, come one step closer.

Working-class leadership and the liberation struggle

Working-class leadership is essential for the success of the liberation struggle, according to trade unionist MONDE MFEKA. Together with unity between oppressed classes it lessens possibilities for government co-option of elements in the black community.

Black resentment against apartheid laws has increased over the last few years, causing a spiral of resistance developing from the Soweto uprising in 1976 to the unrest of 1984 and 1985.

Resistance against apartheid has not only been directed against the state but against agents of the system within the black community as well. One objective of resisting communities has been to fight co-option by the state.

After the 1976 revolt, the apartheid regime passed the Community Councils Act of 1977. These councils replaced the unpopular Urban Bantu Councils and Advisory Boards, and were given limited municipal powers such as allocation of housing and control of local law enforcement. But the councils failed to win support in the communities they were supposed to represent.

Community councillors, who came from within the black community, were primarily controlled by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development. In the minds of the township dwell-

ers, councillors were there to administer the repressive laws of the system. So councillors became a focal point for resistance. A result of this was that community organisations were set up as alternatives to community councils.

Community councillors were well paid and most came from the ranks of the black middle class. In this way, the government managed to co-opt some black people.

But increasing popular resistance made it clear that community councils were a failure. So the government introduced the Black Local Authorities Act in 1982. Under this act black local authorities could apply for greater powers than the councils had been allowed. For example, they could determine rent and levies.

Black local authorities, which had little support, did not change conditions in the townships at all. Township dwellers still demanded the right to have control over their everyday lives, and recognition of their democratically-elected and accountable representatives.

Formation of the UDF

In 1983 community organisations, together with a number of other student, women's

and other political bodies, successfully formed the United Democratic Front, which aimed to fight co-option into the new tricameral parliament.

Despite massive popular rejection of the new parliament, the government went ahead and introduced it. That action, coupled with its unyielding response to community demands, led to uprisings in various townships, particularly in the Transvaal, during 1984.

The army virtually took control of some townships. More than 7 000 troops invaded Vaal Triangle townships in 'Operation Palmiet'.

Community organisations in these areas were to some extent weakened by state action. Thousands of people were detained and hundreds killed in the conflicts which followed.

But the militant expression of anger, frustration and resentment, coupled with the aggressive state response, brought different sectors of society more deeply into the anti-apartheid struggle. Christian, community, student and women's organisations all strengthened their anti-apartheid stance.

The most important of these were the student organisations: the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), and the Azanian Students Organisation

Monde Mfeka is Durban branch secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union. The views expressed in this article are his own, and do not necessarily reflect the union's position.

(AZASO), both formed in 1979. COSAS was banned in 1985 following its active role in the uprisings of 1984 and early 1985.

The National Union of South African Students, based on largely white English-speaking university campuses, called for a united anti-apartheid resistance campaign and rejected the tricameral parliament in a petition signed by 14 000 of its members.

Student organisations, best represented by COSAS and AZASO, which has since changed its name to the South African National Students Congress, and community organisations, best represented by UDF and the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO), have taken the initiative in responding to the government's attempts to divide the black community. These organisations have been in the forefront of our struggle. They have a clear record of resistance to state co-optation and understand the role the working class must play in the struggle for liberation.

Working-class leadership is essential

The UDF and affiliates like the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), the new youth organisation, have called for working-class leadership of the liberation struggle. These organisations do not represent any single class interest but

members of the working class form part of their membership. In essence, their strategy is to unite all the oppressed masses and isolate the apartheid regime.

The apartheid regime will try to exploit class divisions in our society in a further attempt to escalate 'black-on-black violence', thus delaying the struggle. Both the state and big capital have said: 'There is a necessity to build a stable black middle class'.

In this context, the building of working-class leadership is an essential but complicated task. Working-class leadership is essential because the majority of the oppressed masses are workers and our struggle is not only against oppression but against exploitation as well. Industrial workers, by virtue of being employed, have a power they can use to unite others and advance our struggle.

If the working class is defined broadly, and includes the unemployed, then the leadership role will be played by organised workers.

Organised workers can play this leadership role in two possible circumstances. Firstly, where they enter the popular movement and take commanding positions. They are able to do this because of their experience in their day-to-day democratic practices within trade unions. Secondly, a leadership role can be exercised where organised workers, through their

organisations, forge an alliance with the national democratic movement and take the initiative in political action.

Building working-class leadership is complicated because the present economic system has divided us into classes with different interests, and it is only through unity of all oppressed classes that we can win our struggle.

One reason why some in the black middle class have been co-opted and others have remained passive in our liberation struggle, is because they do not understand the relationship between apartheid and capitalism. Those who do not understand this have no understanding of an alternative to capitalism.

Directly exploited by capitalists, organised workers in progressive trade unions have explored the alternatives to capitalism. But workers need a forum to pass on these ideas about alternatives to other classes.

In addition, one of the tasks for working-class leadership is to convince people not to support imperialist-backed organisations in the liberation struggle. This can be done by creating structures where the proper understanding of our ultimate goals can be discussed. And this can only be possible if organised workers are hegemonic in the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

No national strike but metal union grows

NUMSA does not view its abruptly terminated national strike as a failure. Rather, argues the union, the strike ballot and subsequent events strengthened structures and worker discipline. SHAREEN SINGH reports.

When negotiations between the National Union of Metalworkers of SA and employers deadlocked in the industrial council, the union organised a national strike ballot. Of the over 50 000 workers who voted in the 6 July ballot, 94,8% supported strike action.

But the strike was aborted when the minister of manpower renewed last year's industrial council agreement. This made the NUMSA strike illegal. Although the ballot and proposed strike did not meet any worker demands, NUMSA claims they did consolidate the organisation and structures of the new union. For strike action is not only about economic gains, but can also advance worker unity, organisation and discipline.

NUMSA demanded an across-the-board increase of R1 per hour, bringing the minimum rate to R4; improved conditions of employment; and maternity benefits and job security. Fifteen other unions in the industrial council accepted the final wage offer of SEIFSA, the employers' federation in the industry. This involved increases of between 39c per hour at the lowest rates and 72c per hour for artisans. NUMSA claimed these were below the increase in cost of living, and refused to sign the industry's wage agreement for the fourth year.

Once the proposed strike became illegal, the union tacti-

cally retreated. Had it continued, the state might have used its repressive weapons to attack worker organisation and power. Whether NUMSA could have sustained the strike in the light of severe repression can only be assessed in relation to the strength of COSATU as a whole and the current spate of strikes and stoppages.

Towards a living wage

The living wage campaign has precipitated an upsurge of industrial action on all fronts. The threat of simultaneous strike action loomed in the metal and mine sectors and raised expectations and confidence of workers. However, the majority of workers in NUMSA abided by the discipline of the union and returned to work when the strike was declared illegal. Those who continued striking were dismissed.

The living wage campaign had been discussed at local, regional and national levels within NUMSA, and committees elected to organise and co-ordinate campaigns. Through these structures the union succeeded in rapidly mobilising more than 50 000 workers nationally to participate in the ballot.

When the Metal and Allied Workers Union, now part of NUMSA, conducted its first national living wage campaign in 1985, it boosted union membership in 1986 from 37 000 to

60 000. This year hundreds of non-members voted in the strike ballot, making NUMSA optimistic about rapid growth in its membership. According to NUMSA there has already been an increase in membership since the strike ballot. Two locals have reported 40 new factories joining as a direct result of the campaign. Hundreds of workers from those unions which accepted SEIFSA's wage offer have subsequently left their unions and joined NUMSA.

The strike was the first major campaign of the newly-formed NUMSA, and created solidarity among workers in the new union. Some ex-NAAWU factories in Johannesburg and ex-MACWUSA factories in the Eastern Cape which fall under SEIFSA also participated in the strike. This may not necessarily have been the case if NAAWU and MACWUSA were not now part of NUMSA. In this way the strike helped to consolidate NUMSA's structures.

Negotiations at plant and company level

The 15 unions in the industrial council that accepted SEIFSA's wage offer and signed the agreement weakened NUMSA's position. As long as this division exists among workers in the industry, employers will benefit. This experience will intensify NUMSA's struggle for one

union for workers in the metal industry. Workers in NUMSA believe that until this goal is achieved it will be possible for SEIFSA to hide behind other unions in the industrial council.

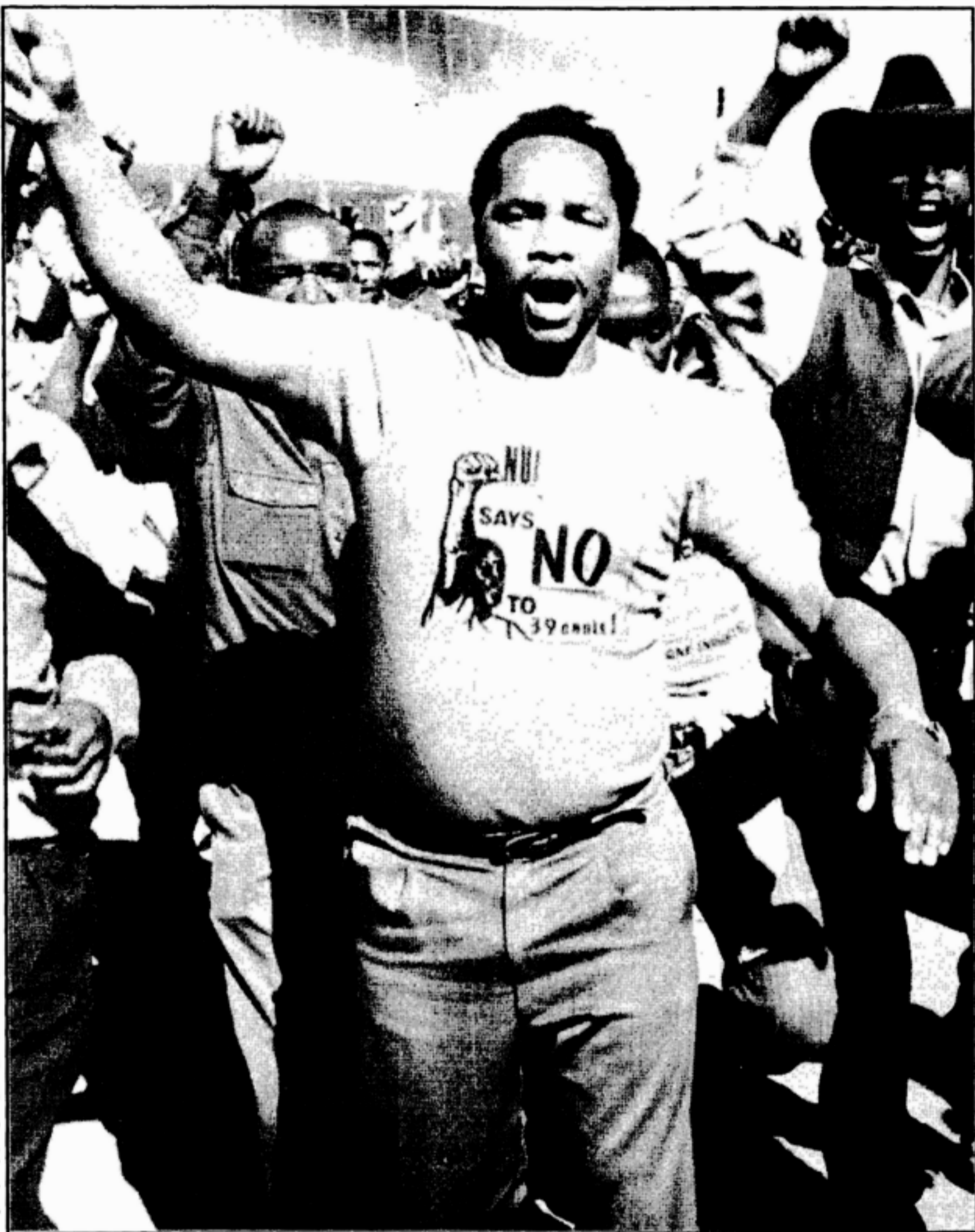
NUMSA members have carried the struggle for a living wage to company and plant level. Where

NUMSA has recognition agreements, workers will negotiate increases and working conditions over and above those of the main industrial council agreement.

At factories where the union is not recognised, workers can negotiate on the wage curve and demands not covered by the main agreement. Workers at these companies have started planning so that negotiations at all plants and companies under SEIFSA will start at about the same

time. NUMSA members at companies that have in-house agreements have already posed a challenge, as in the case of ISCOR where 7 000 workers went on strike. NUMSA did not win worker demands at ISCOR, but gained 1 000 new members a day before the strike ballot.

NUMSA is to challenge the minister of manpower on the



ISCOR workers on strike in August

legality of the strike. The outcome of this case will to a large extent determine the nature of next year's negotiations. But the formation of NUMSA, with its membership of more than 130 000, has altered the balance of forces in the industry; while this year NUMSA did not use its full might, next year might prove different, especially if the union has the op-

portunity to consolidate its forces.

NUMSA does not view the strike as a defeat for workers. The union sees the action in terms of long-term organisational gains. The 'yes' strike vote by 94,8% of balloted membership has shown SEIFSA the union's potential strength.

Strike statistics and trends

Mid-June to mid-August 1987

According to a strikes and disputes monitor maintained by the Southern African Research Service, close to 500 000 workers were involved in strikes, sit-ins and work stoppages during the period mid-June to mid-August 1987. This figure is, however, a conservative one. SARS monitoring is based largely on published sources of information. Systematic monitoring of trade union and management records would no doubt reveal a far greater number of strikes and disputes. In addition, work stoppages by non-unionised workers are rarely recorded, especially where these are in small towns, rural areas and farms.

According to SARS records, the number of workers involved in strikes, sit-ins and stoppages during the period under review can be broken down as follows:

Public sector	26 848
Food	31 534
Mining	352 700
Construction	1 500
Textile	1 000
Chemical	1 835
Metal and motor	63 244
Farm workers	2 100
Total	480 761

Since the conclusion of the SATS railway workers strike there has been an upsurge in industrial action involving an estimated 500 000 workers. This number excludes disputes and pending actions. This sudden spate of strikes can be at-

tributed to a combination of factors: the 20% inflation rate, COSATU's living wage campaign, the success of strikes in the post office and railways, and the merging of trade unions in most sectors.

The success of the striking railway and postal workers in sectors not covered by the Labour Relations Act encouraged other workers in similar sectors to challenge employers. Council workers in Cape Town, East London, Durban and Vereeniging have been involved in industrial action. Education workers at the University of Cape Town, MEDUNSA, Wits Technikon and Stellenbosch University have all clashed with employers, as have hospital, transport and farm workers. Particularly interesting is the fact that many of these workers are not unionised and are expressly demanding a living wage. This is shown in the case of the MEDUNSA workers.

Rolling strikes among public sector workers were noticeable: municipal workers in Cape Town started striking and this soon spread to municipal workers in other regions. The strategy of work-to-rule which began in Cape Town with city council employees belonging to the CTMWA spread to council employees in Durban. Similarly the strike by Wits

Technikon workers was followed by industrial action at UCT and Stellenbosch workers. Most strikes were over wages, but a large percentage were also over unfair dismissals and union recognition.

A common trend during this period involved solidarity strikes, for example in the SA Breweries strike; Associated Glass; Samancor and postal workers organised into POTWA. Threats of demonstrations proved effective in pressurising managements, as in the proposed protest march by cane cutters at Tongaat Milling, the proposed demonstration by CWIU members at Shell and BP, and placard demonstrations by workers at UCT and Shifa Hospital.

Workers at many companies faced detention and harassment by police. At Sapekoe Tea Factory in Natal, farm workers were assaulted and forcefully removed from the company's hostel; 400 workers were arrested at Vaal Transport Company; and police used teargas and batons to disperse striking workers at Spekenham meat factory in Cape Town.

Many strikes seem of longer duration than before, and the climate of heightened militancy and demonstrations of strength may well lead to a rapid increase in trade union membership.

Brief reports on a number of strikes monitored appear in the strikes and disputes table below.

Strikes and disputes: Transvaal

Albany Bakery Germiston	FAWU		August	Albany Bakery obtained a temporary interdict preventing FAWU and ten of its shop stewards from encouraging, organising or participating in a strike or overtime ban by employees at the bakery's premises. FAWU and the shop stewards had until 25 August to reply to the order.
Alberton Town Council	SAAWU	700	02.07	Seven hundred workers employed by the Alberton Town Council went on strike. They demanded a R400 monthly minimum wage and an end to discriminatory practices at the plant. The council agreed on talks with SAAWU.
TW Beckett Isando	FAWU	284	29.07	Workers at TW Beckett tea and coffee manufacturers downed tools after a deadlock in wage negotiations. They demanded an increase of between R26 and R28 a week. Management has offered less than R20 a week. The company obtained an interim order restraining strikers from intimidating scabs. The workers were to appear in court on 18 August to reply to the order.
Bekkersdal Town Council	AMAWU		August	Council employees on strike over the government's 12,5% salary increase returned to work after reaching agreement with management. Workers initially demanded an 80% increase but brought it down to 40%. Management agreed this was negotiable. The union and management arranged to meet on 18 August to negotiate the increase and other worker demands.
Boart Hard Metal Springs	NUMSA	650	17.06-	More than 650 NUMSA members at Boart Hard Metal went on a legal strike over service and merit increases. Boart refused to negotiate increases with the union in terms of an agreement signed earlier this year. NUMSA had struggled for recognition at the plant for more than three years. Eventually the company signed a shop stewards recognition agreement providing for negotiations on financial issues. During the dispute Boart withdrew this agreement, claiming NUMSA refused to negotiate a full procedural agreement. But management has set preconditions which are unacceptable to the union. NUMSA intends appealing to the International Metal Federation (IMF) for support as Boart has extensive holdings overseas. White workers at the plant gave strikers moral support because of their own dissatisfaction with management's plan to deny merit and service increments to long-service workers.
BMW (National)	NUMSA		01.07	BMW South Africa and the union formerly called NAAWU (now part of NUMSA) have entered into a two-year wage agreement. Increases amount to 14,6% for the period up to July 1988 and a further 15% from July 1988 to the end of June 1989. The minimum wage for the next 12 months will be R3,72 an hour.
Clover NCD	FAWU		June	Clover's application for an interdict to stop FAWU from calling on its members at Clover plants to observe 16 June failed. The industrial court ruled that workers taking part in stayaways are not acting illegally as long as they do not make political or industrial demands.
Diepmeadow Town Council		2 000	04-06.08	About 2 000 Diepmeadow Town Council employees stopped work, protesting the transfer of 12 meter readers to a private company. The council agreed to reinstate the 12 meter readers, but workers refused to return to work until the town clerk, a Mr Gaum, was suspended. The council had temporarily suspended Gaum pending talks with the workers.
Entokozweni Day Care Centre Soweto	GAWU	29	07.07	GAWU members at the centre staged a work stoppage demanding increased wages and better working conditions. The workers demanded a R200 a month across-the-board increase, job security, an end to alleged favouritism and access to facilities such as vehicles and telephones. The workers said the lowest paid employee, who had been at the centre for 10 years, earned R180/month. The director of Entokozweni said the centre was a welfare organisation and depended entirely on an overseas donor for funds. The centre has asked for further funds and was awaiting a reply.
Farm Fare (National)	FAWU	1 000		Farm Fare, a subsidiary of the Premier Group, has agreed to sign an agreement with farm labourers represented by FAWU. This is the first time a major company has recognised a farmworkers trade union.
Fidelity Guards Johannesburg	TGWU/ GAWU	350	15-17.07	More than 350 Fidelity Guards employees went on strike in protest against the R20/month increase announced by the government wage board. They returned to work after management agreed to make representations to the government to improve the increase.
ISCOR	NUMSA	7 000	20.07- 11.08	About 7 000 NUMSA members at ISCOR downed tools after a deadlock in wage negotiations. The workers rejected management's hourly increase of 33c and demanded 75c/hour. ISCOR does not fall under SEIFSA and was thus not involved in NUMSA's proposed national strike. After being on strike for 22 days, workers suspended the strike and re-

				turned to work while negotiations continued.
Josiah Park Robertsham	NUMSA	150	August	More than 150 workers at a key manufacturing company were dismissed over a two week period after a work stoppage concerning time regulations. Management said workers violated company regulations by refusing to sign time sheets. According to NUMSA the contract regarding time sheets expired in terms of the agreement with the company.
Karl Schmidt Alrode	NUMSA	279	22.06-	At least 279 workers dismissed by Karl Schmidt management for staying away from work during the 6 May elections are still battling to get their jobs back. The union said the company refused to go to arbitration over the dismissals. The workers saw the dismissals as unfair and vowed to fight until they are reinstated.
Kyalami Ranch Hotel	HARWU	135	29.05-	The industrial council has ordered the hotel to reinstate 135 workers dismissed on 1 June this year. The workers stopped work in protest against the R135/month deduction from their wages for board and lodging. This is R55 more than the R80 legal limit set by the council. It ruled that the dismissals were unfair and that the amount deducted was illegal. According to HARWU, Kyalami Ranch twice before violated the industrial council's ruling over the illegal deductions. Workers at the hotel also earned R235/month, which was below the council's R270/month minimum.
Lebowa Transport Company Seshego	TAWU	600	25.06-17.07	The entire black workforce at the Seshego depot downed tools, protesting the dismissal of nine colleagues who did not report for duty on 16 June. Most workers at the depot filled in leave forms for 16 June but management had told the nine this was not necessary. The workers demanded the unconditional reinstatement of the dismissed workers, the company's written commitment to negotiate an overall recognition agreement with TAWU, an undertaking not to victimise workers involved in the strike and the immediate release of six union leaders detained during the strike. The strike, which affected more than 25 000 commuters, ended after 22 days. Management agreed to reinstate the dismissed workers, to approach the ministers of police and justice to have all detained workers released, and to start negotiations on a comprehensive agreement with TAWU to cover all Lebowa Transport depots. Management also undertook not to victimise workers.
Matthey Rustenburg Refiners Wadeville	CWIU		18.06	Management and CWIU deadlocked at the conciliation board in the dispute over the relocation of the Wadeville platinum refinery to Bophuthatswana. CWIU said several hundred workers were likely to lose their jobs and insisted that the new refinery be built in South Africa, as close to the present site as possible. CWIU also said workers object to the bantustan system and the way in which employers use it to increase their profits.
MEDUNSA		500	20.07-	About 500 workers at the Medical University of SA (MEDUNSA) went on strike over wages when the workers committee received circulars announcing management's proposed increases, which were lower than promised. Workers demanded a minimum monthly wage of R375. Management offered R333. MEDUNSA offered to renew its proposal and management and the workers committee began negotiations.
Metro Cash & Carry	CCAWU-SA			Metro and CCAWUSA reached agreement on wages, leave and housing subsidies. Workers will get a R100 increase and an hour off on 21 March to attend Sharpeville Day commemoration services. Housing subsidies will be paid at a fixed rate.
Mutual and Federal	LAWUSA	106	01.07	LAWUSA members at this insurance company went on strike when management set conditions which excluded certain workers from a recognition agreement to be signed by the company and the union. The union demanded that bargaining should be determined by job description and not job category. The workers said they would not return to work until the dispute was resolved.
Premier Group and Sasco	FAWU	25 000	July/ August	The staple food industry faced the threat of a national strike by more than 25 000 workers in the milling and baking sectors after wage talks deadlocked. On 19 August workers began national action. The dispute involved the Premier Group and Sasco, which monopolise the milling and baking sectors. FAWU's demand for an R80 increase, raising the minimum to R200 a week, was turned down. Employers asked workers to revise their demands before they could revise their own offer. Workers dropped their demand by R18, but management only offered R4 more. Talks deadlocked when workers refused to make further concessions and management withdrew its additional R4 offer, bringing the minimum down to R138. FAWU said the companies could comfortably meet worker demands. Sasco's profits increased to over R31-million last year and Premier's to R152-million this year.
Premier Milling Newtown	FBWU	900		Management and the FBWU reached a wage agreement giving workers an average 19% increase. Wages of senior employees increased from R122,50 to R148,60/week. Junior employee wages increased from R117,50 to R141/week.

Preston Anderson	EAWU	65	02.08	Workers at an electrical repair company were dismissed after going on strike. They stopped work after management went against certain conditions agreed upon over retrenchments, and were dismissed when they ignored management's return-to-work ultimatum. Management was prepared to meet with the union.
Pritchard Security Services Johannesburg	TGWU	800	10-11.08	About 800 security guards staged a one-day work stoppage, demanding reinstatement of five dismissed workers. A TGWU spokesperson said three of the five workers were fired for promoting the union, which is not recognised by the company. The workers returned to work while discussions between the company and the union continued.
PUTCO Edenvale	TAWU		17.07	TAWU signed a recognition agreement with PUTCO at Edenvale. Eight of the company's 14 divisions now have union representation. TAWU also negotiated a pay increase of 16% for cashiers and ticket sellers and an across-the-board 15,83% increase for drivers. PUTCO agreed to improve bonuses and sick leave. The principle of no-work, no-pay will apply to 16 June and May Day.
Randfontein Town Council	SABMA-WU		12.06	SABMAWU and Randfontein Town Council reached a wage agreement to come into effect from 1 July. The agreement is on condition that no further increases or annual notches be granted to any council employee during the period 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1988.
Royal Beech-Nut Isando	FAWU	600	01.07	According to FAWU about 600 of their members were locked out of the factory after a wage dispute. Management disputed these claims. Workers downed tools when a union organiser was refused permission to attend wage talks. They returned to work two days later when the official was allowed to attend but stopped work again after three workers were allegedly suspended over the stoppage. On pay day some workers found they had received increases equal to the company's final offer during current wage negotiations. When they got to work the next day they found the factory locked.
Samancor Meyerton	NUMSA	1 100	21.07-	More than 1 100 NUMSA members at Samancor's Metalloys plant in Meyerton were dismissed after a strike. The dispute was caused after management instituted disciplinary action against some workers for taking part in NUMSA's national strike. About 3 000 workers at Anglo American's Highveld Steel downed tools in solidarity. Samancor obtained a supreme court order evicting workers from their hostels.
Sasol	CWIU	14 000	July	More than 14 000 CWIU members at Sasol were preparing to go on a legal strike over wage demands. CWIU rejected Sasol's offer of a 16,5% increase as this would leave workers with a minimum wage far below many of the smaller chemical plants. Workers also demanded May Day and 16 June as paid holidays. Sasol has taken a hard line on political demands in the past. In 1984 it dismissed 6 500 workers at the Secunda plant following a work stayaway. Application for a conciliation board was made to the minister of manpower in an attempt to break the deadlock.
South African Breweries Rosslyn	FAWU	3 200	19.06-01.07	The dispute ended when SAB submitted to some of the workers demands. It began when SAB implemented shifts for a 24 hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week continuous operation at the Rosslyn plant. SAB dismissed 343 workers who refused to do weekend work and work shifts, as it would affect their family lives. SAB plants in the Witwatersrand and Cape Town came out in support of the dismissed workers. The dispute led to a beer shortage as some SAB plants were not operative. Settlement was reached when SAB agreed to reinstate the 343 and all other workers striking in solidarity. SAB also agreed that only one out of four production lines would operate on continuous shift and this line would be staffed by workers employed two months ago, specifically for a continuous shift. The FBWU suspended negotiations with SAB in sympathy with the striking FAWU members. On 30 June, 300 FBWU members at SAB's Chamdor plant stopped work in support of FAWU strikers at Rosslyn.
South African Pharmaceutical Development Corp	SACWU	400	09.06-	The strike by about 400 SACWU members at SAPDC entered its sixth week with no signs of resolution. The dispute began when workers rejected management's wage increase of R100/month across-the-board and demanded an increase of R80/week. The company gave workers until 17 July to accept their offer and return to work. Workers stood by their demand and did not return. Negotiations between SACWU and management continued.
Tembisa Hospital		600	16.07	About 400 student nurses went on strike in protest against poor food and discrimination at the hospital. The nurses claimed harassment and intimidation from hospital security and racist practices by hospital administration. Meanwhile 600 nurses and student nurses at the hospital had gone on a food boycott after the superintendent rejected an invitation to inspect the dining hall.
Transvaal Mattress Company	PWAWU/NUMSA	1 000	23-24.07	More than 1 000 furniture manufacturing workers downed tools. They were protesting the dismissal of 400 workers at Transvaal Mattress Company. The 400, all members of PWAWU and NUMSA, were dismissed after staging a one-hour

				stoppage over the dismissal of two workers including a PWAU shop steward. Workers resumed work after management undertook to reinstate their 400 colleagues.
United Tobacco Company - Industria	FAWU	550	17-18.06	Workers returned to work after a one-day stoppage over the company's refusal to recognise FAWU. The issue was being negotiated.
Vaal Transport Corporation Vereeniging	TAWU	400	09.07	Four hundred workers were arrested for trespassing after refusing to leave the premises during a work stoppage. The workers downed tools because they were made to pay fares on the corporation's buses to work. It was alleged that some workers were injured during the arrests. They appeared in the Vereeniging Regional Court and fined R20 or 40 days imprisonment for trespass.
Vereeniging Town Council	OVGWU	800	13-16.07	More than 800 council workers went on strike demanding a minimum wage of R500/month and union recognition. They rejected management's offer of a 16% increase, but returned to work after management agreed to negotiate with the union.
Wits Technikon	TGWU	350	16-20.07	Workers went on strike in protest over the dismissal of a fellow worker. They also demanded a minimum salary of R600. The lowest paid worker at the Technikon earns R250 and the highest paid - with more than 15 years experience - R400/month. They returned to work after management met worker representatives to discuss grievances. The dismissed worker was not reinstated but the union was to apply for a conciliation board hearing to deal with the dismissal.

Strikes and disputes: Natal

BTR Dunlop Ladysmith	NUMSA	500	June	About 500 workers went on strike over wages. The dispute arose from lengthy negotiations for a new wage agreement for the period December 1986 to December 1987. NUMSA said workers were concerned about the levels of poverty and starvation among workers in general, and particularly in Ladysmith. Management insisted any new agreement concluded on wages and conditions of service should run for a minimum period of 12 months. NUMSA refused to sign an agreement concluded in 1986 between the union and management and demanded that the agreement should expire in 1987. Workers remained on strike and the company hired white scab labour to replace them.
BTR Sarmcol Howick	NUMSA	950	30.04.85-	South Africa's longest and most bitter labour dispute reached its tenth month in the industrial court. Over two years ago, on 30 April 1985, MAWU members at BTR Sarmcol went on strike over union recognition. The union started organising at Sarmcol in 1974 and had battled for union recognition since then. MAWU pointed out that the union's arrival at Sarmcol coincided with a major mechanisation drive which by 1983 had reduced the workforce from 4 500 to just over 1 000. Shortly after the strike Sarmcol dismissed almost its entire workforce of 950 workers. The industrial court hearing revealed close co-operation between the police and management in a union-busting exercise. Evidence also disclosed that Sarmcol dismissed the workers with the intention of trying to smash the union. The mass dismissal resulted in widespread unemployment, starvation and social upheaval in Natal's Mpophomeni township, where most of the strikers live. With limited industrial employment in the area, Sarmcol was Mpophomeni's main source of income. Over the past two years the incidence of malnutrition and the death rate of children has increased. However, a strong solidarity among Mpophomeni residents has emerged from the Sarmcol struggle. The Sarmcol workers co-operative and workers play have helped workers continue the battle against Sarmcol. The irony of the Sarmcol case is that MAWU battled to gain recognition for over ten years and 950 workers lost their jobs as a result, but the same company has now signed a recognition agreement with the Inkatha-backed UWUSA. Inkatha is allegedly responsible for the killing of a Sarmcol shop steward and three other Mpophomeni residents.
Chipman Durban	BAWU	11	22.06	Police arrested 11 striking workers outside the factory gates. The workers had gone on strike in protest against the dismissal of a colleague who was fired after questioning management about a pay deduction. The union said workers were locked out of the factory and management called in the police when workers started singing.
Deter Security Durban	Vukani Guards	199	1.06-	About 199 workers at Deter Security in Durban stopped work following a dispute with the company on the question of payment of 'free' periods. Workers alleged they were asked by management to take off certain days in the month for which they were not paid. The company obtained a supreme court interim order restraining the union and the striking workers from entering company premises and from intimidating other employees. The company also dismissed the 199 workers. The union intends applying to the industrial court for the interim reinstatement of the dismissed workers.

Durban Electricity Department		150	29.06-	About half of Durban's 300 municipal electricians began a 'work to rule' following the city council's refusal to grant them a 20% increase backdated to June. The workers were not happy with the council's offer of 11,5% increase effective from 1 October. Artisans said working to rule - carrying out one's job strictly in terms of the contract and doing no more - will reduce work output by half. They refused to work overtime or for bonus incentives and will only use council vehicles if they were in perfect running order. Talks with worker representatives and management took place. In another incident at the department, non-graded staff members at two depots downed tools in protest at an amendment to pension fund benefits. Talks between management and workers began.
Indian Ocean Fertilizers Richards Bay	CWIU		July	CWIU declared a dispute with the company which recently bought the liquidated Triomf Fertilizer at Richards Bay. CWIU demanded that Indian Ocean Fertilizers abandon racism, desegregate its facilities and introduce equal opportunity employment, as promised when the company took over four months ago. The union claimed the company had separate canteens for white and black workers. It also reached agreement covering public holidays with the white union Yster en Staal before meeting CWIU about their demand for 16 June and May Day as paid holidays. The company reserved supervisory posts for whites only. The dispute also involved company refusal to raise its 13,75% wage increase, which leaves wages lower than the rest of the industry. CWIU has demanded the identities of the real owners as some workers suspect the company of being a front for state interests. The union has applied for a conciliation board.
Sapekoe Tea Estate Richmond	FAWU	900	18.06-	Workers went on strike over management's refusal to meet the union. Workers demanded union recognition, reduced working hours (8am to 5pm including tea breaks which were not allowed in the present 7am to 6pm shift), the minimum monthly wage to be increased from R55 to R250 and meals to be upgraded and given twice a day. Local management at Richmond refused to talk to the union and referred them to their head office in Tzancan. The head office also refused to meet with the union but they met with the liaison committee. Workers felt their grievances were not addressed and went on strike. Management dismissed the workers and called in the police to evict workers from their hostels. After being warned by FAWU's lawyers management re-employed workers selectively. Shop stewards and activists were dismissed. The company has refused to meet with the union, which is consulting with lawyers on the matter.
SAPREF	CWIU	700	February-July	CWIU declared a dispute with SAPREF over the company's refusal to negotiate on the union's bargaining unit. The union demanded to negotiate for workers in all grades and SAPREF was willing to negotiate only on certain grades. After pressure from the union SAPREF eventually gave in and offered an increase of R84 for all workers. CWIU rejected the offer and demanded an across-the-board increase of R200 a month. Negotiations deadlocked and workers balloted to go on strike. The union had planned a protest march to get Shell and BP subsidiaries of SAPREF involved in the negotiations. The dispute was referred to mediation and settlement was reached shortly before CWIU's planned action. Workers won an across-the-board increase of R140 a month; reduction of working hours from 45 to 43 without loss of pay; May Day and 16 June as paid holidays, and improved conditions of employment.
Shifa Hospital Durban	NEHAWU		June	Nurses and cleaning staff at the privately-run Shifa hospital staged a wave of protests against the dismissal of 35 hospital workers. According to some nurses hospital authorities failed to follow prescribed retrenchment procedure. The nurses demanded adequate compensation by way of severance pay and long-service benefits. Negotiations were being held with the medical superintendent.
SA Stevedores Durban	TGWU	200	June	About 200 TGWU members were retrenched. TGWU views this as part of a campaign to smash progressive trade unions and entrench the Inkatha-backed UWUSA as workers fall victim to selective retrenchments. Workers who are allegedly UWUSA members were not retrenched. The company claimed it applied the LIFO principle when retrenching and did not necessarily select TGWU members. Workers rejected this claim, saying the bosses list of names for retrenchments had serious discrepancies with the LIFO principle. Coinciding with this, a TGWU shop steward was killed after repeated threats that he leave the union or risk being killed. UWUSA has been recruiting members from the ranks of scabs at factories where COSATU workers have been dismissed. The TGWU said it was determined to take action to resolve the issue.
Tongaath-Hulett's	SAAWU	1 200	25.06-01.07	About 1 200 workers, mainly cane cutters at the Tongaath-Hulett's group, returned to work after a week long strike. The workers downed tools in support of their demand for higher wages and improved working conditions. Workers ended the strike after accepting management's latest offer for wages and work conditions.

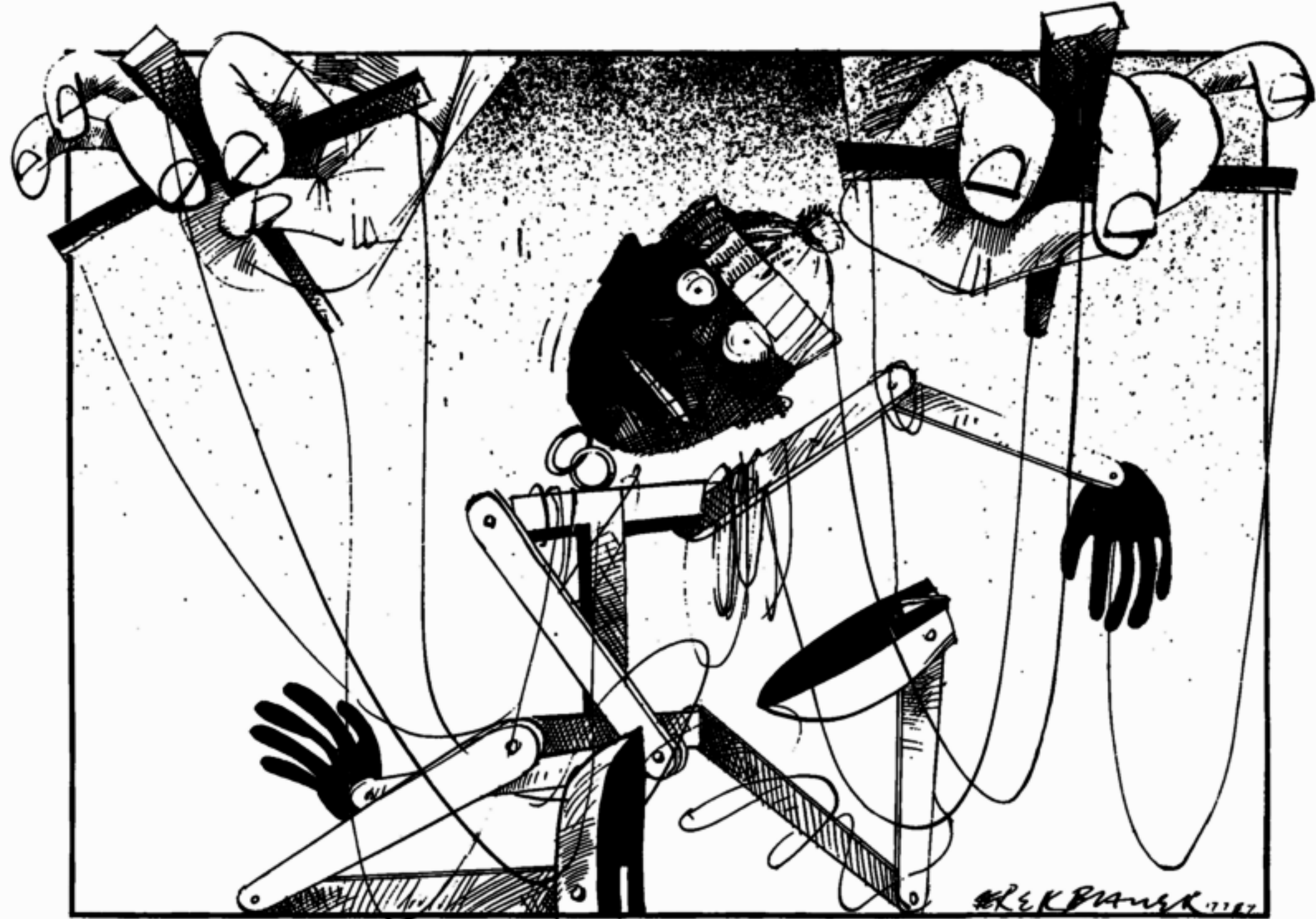
Strikes and disputes: Cape

Associated Glass Works Port Elizabeth	CWIU	95	10-28.07	Workers at Associated Glass Works, a Phillips subsidiary, staged a sit-in, in protest against the temporary retrenchment of seven workers. Workers were locked out of the factory and subsequently dismissed. On 23 July CWIU members at eight factories in the Eastern Cape downed tools in solidarity with workers at Associated Glass. They returned to work after management agreed to reinstate the seven dismissed workers as well as workers dismissed during the strike.
Cape Town City Council	CTMWA	1 200	July	Cape Town's refuse removal workers started a work-to-rule in support of their demand for a R50/week across-the-board increase. Council workers at Sea Point and Cape Town's CBD joined the cleaning staff work-to-rule, which disrupted refuse removals in some suburbs and large areas in the city centre. The workers rejected the 10% increase the council offered. They also rejected the council's proposal that wage increases be tied to evaluation of their jobs. The CTMWA has pushed for a R50/week across-the-board increase for all its 11 500 members. Negotiations between the council and the union continued.
Coates Brothers Cape Town	CWIU	40	June	About 40 workers at a printing ink manufacturing company stopped work after being told by management they would have to work the two hours lost when the factory closed early on 16 June.
Consol Glass Bellville	MWASA	300	15-16.07	About 75% of the total workforce at the factory went on strike after negotiations between MWASA and management faltered. The workers rejected management's offer of a 40c/hour increase and demanded a R2/hour increase. Workers returned to work and negotiations continued.
Dept of Posts and Telecommunications	POTWA	17 000	24.06-	The strike started in East London with about 400 workers over the dismissal of three co-workers in January. The strike spread to other areas in the Eastern Cape and workers tabled other demands: an end to racism at the post offices and the re-employment of 68 colleagues dismissed between January 1985 and this year, and a living wage of R550 to R600 a month for unskilled workers. About 160 workers in the Eastern Cape had been dismissed. The post office offered to re-employ unconditionally one of the three workers dismissed in January. But workers did not return as their other demands were not met. The strike then spread to other regions and by mid-August POTWA claimed more than 17 000 workers were involved.
East London Municipality		200	14-18.05	Two hundred refuse workers who were dismissed have been reinstated. The workers were dismissed after a breakdown in negotiations over the transfer of a supervisor. The municipality's director said a proper investigation would be made into workers' grievances.
Mercedes Benz East London	NUMSA	3 000	03.08-	About 3 000 workers at Mercedes Benz in East London went on strike demanding a wage increase of R5/hour and a reduction of the working week to 43 hours without loss of pay. Talks between management and NUMSA deadlocked and the matter was referred to the industrial council.
Plessey SA Cape Town	EAWU		16.07	EAWU made remarkable strides in its wage negotiations with Plessey. The company offered to place R30 000 in an emergency relief fund to help workers who experience hardship. The company also offered, in principle, to pay salaries of detainees and recognised 16 June as a paid holiday. The union negotiated a minimum rate of R3,25/hour for the lowest graded workers and it further negotiated a minimum monthly salary of R732 for workers in the purchasing, reception, and material and production control departments.
Electrical Contractors Association Western Cape	EAWU		July	Workers have threatened industrial action in the electrical contracting industry over a wage dispute. The union refused to sign the proposed industrial council agreement and demanded an increase for labourers and grade 11 workers to R2,86/hour. The union agreed to drop the dispute if employers gave a firm commitment to improve labourers wages.
Nettex Bellville	NUTW		May	The first agreement in the textile industry to recognise 16 June as a paid holiday was concluded between Nettex and NUTW. The agreement swaps Republic Day for 16 June. The company also recognised May Day as a paid holiday.
Sea Harvest Saldanha	FAWU	1 000	July	It is alleged that about 1 000 workers at Sea Harvest stopped work in protest against pamphlets distributed by management discrediting FAWU and about having to work short time in winter when the factory should be at its busiest.
Spekenham Cape Town	FAWU	600	05.08	About 600 workers at Spekenham meat factory were dismissed after going on strike over wages. FAWU said workers were upset with management's view that wage negotiations could not take place with union officials, but only with a worker committee. Police used teargas and batons to disperse workers from company premises.

University of Cape Town	UAWU		14.07	A group of workers at UCT staged a placard demonstration against low wages and discrimination at the university. UAWU, which represents most of the lower-paid staff, said its members are discriminated against in conditions of service. General staff get 22 days leave a year but gardeners, cleaners and labourers get 10 days for their first 10 years of service, 16 days for up to 20 years of service and 22 days thereafter. Some workers work 46 hours a week while others work between 46 and 35 hours. These are some of the issues UAWU has tabled for this year's wage negotiations.
University of Stellenbosch	UAWU	1 000	May	Workers at the university have expressed dissatisfaction with wages and working conditions. They have abandoned the liaison committee and joined UAWU. Workers claim they are subject to starvation wages, racism, assaults by bosses and dismissals without notice. Some kitchen workers earn less than R150/month and work 12 hours a day. One worker claims he has worked for the university for 16 years and earns only R363/month after deductions, the same as workers who have been in a similar position for four years. UAWU and university management are in the process of negotiating union recognition.
Wellington Industries	TWIU	1 000	21.07	The total workforce at Wellington Industries stopped work demanding the reinstatement of a dismissed shop steward. Workers felt the dismissal was unfair and went on strike after discussions with management failed to resolve the issue. Management and the union held talks about re-employment.

Strikes and disputes: Mines

Amcoal Witbank	NUM	5 000	26.06-01.08	More than 5 000 workers downed tools at five Amcoal collieries in protest against the dismissal of 27 colleagues at the New Largo Colliery. The strike started at New Largo and spread to Bank Colliery, Goedehoop, SA Coal Estates and the central workshop. Workers returned to work when management agreed to give the dismissed workers a fair hearing and to accommodate the workers on company premises during the hearing.
De Beers Consolidated Mines	NUM	7 700	July	NUM declared a wage dispute with De Beers Consolidated Mines after wage talks failed. The company offered increases of 15%, 13% and 12,5% for three categories of mineworkers respectively. This was in response to union demands for a 30% across-the-board increase. NUM applied for a conciliation board on behalf of its members at De Beers Namaqualand, Kimberley, Finsch, Geology and Premier.
Duvha Opencast Colliery (Rand Mines)	NUM		12.06	NUM reached a wage agreement with Rand Mines Duvha Opencast Colliery for a 15% wage increase for its members. The package included Duvha's housing scheme - workers can buy Duvha-owned houses or buy or build other homes.
Consolidated Murchinson (JCI)	NUM	2 000	July	NUM declared a dispute after wage negotiations deadlocked. The union rejected a 20% wage increase and maintained its demand for a 55% across-the-board increase, improved conditions of employment and benefits and May Day and 16 June as paid holidays. Both parties agreed to a conciliation board to try and resolve the dispute.
President Steyn Welkom	NUM	1 500	17.07	NUM and President Steyn mine management settled a dispute over the dismissal of 1 500 workers in February this year. The workers were dismissed for failing to report for duty following incidents of faction fighting at the mine. Management had agreed to re-employ the workers at the same rate of pay prior to their dismissal.
Samancor	BAMCWU	1 200	July	BAMCWU declared disputes at Samancor's Montrose and Grassvalley chrome mines in the Northern Transvaal following a deadlock in annual wage negotiations. The union rejected management's final offer of increases between 17% and 19% and maintained its demand for increases of between 35% and 36%. The dispute at Montrose was referred to mediation and the union was to decide on what course to follow after discussion with its members at Grassvalley.
Western Deep Levels	NUM	37	25.06	Nine miners were killed and 28 injured in a massive rockburst at Anglo's Western Deep Levels gold mine. This brought to over 15 the number of mineworkers killed in rockbursts this year.
Tsumeb Corporation	MUN	4 000	27.07	More than 4 000 striking miners, members of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, at three Tsumeb Corporation copper mines were dismissed by management when they refused to return to work. The workers went on strike demanding a 120% wage increase, the reduction of a 48 hour working week and permission for workers to live with their families. The workers refused to accept the dismissal which was announced by Gold Fields South Africa, the major shareholder in Tsumeb Corporation. The workers continued striking and refused to accept wages offered by the company in termination of their employment. They were still occupying mine hostels. The company was expected to apply for a court order to validate its claims that the workers had been legally dismissed.



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COSATU congress: page 11



British Anti-Apartheid: page 6



Strike on the mines: page 34

Contents

Editorial	2
Meeting the ANC in West Africa: From Dakar to Burkina Faso	3
Sanctions and the British Anti-Apartheid Movement	6
COSATU: towards disciplined alliances	11
The Mogopa people: another dream smashed	19
Locals link unions	23
The United Democratic Front and township revolt	26
Disciplined mine strike a test of strength	34
Working-class leadership and the liberation struggle	38
No national strike but metal union grows	40
Strike trends	42
Strikes and disputes	43

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Work In Progress, a publication of the Southern African Research Service, is published by an editorial collective, 37 Jorrisen Street, Braamfontein. PO Box 32716 Braamfontein 2017. Tel: (011) 403-1912/1586