INDUSTRIAL REL. - WORKERS' ORGANISATION - GENERAL
1993 - 1994 AND
1995
Church faces test

World Alliance of Reformed Churches president Dr Jane Dempsey Douglas is in SA with other alliance executive committee members to see if they should reinstate the Dutch Reformed Church as a member.

Douglas told reporters in Johannesburg yesterday they would determine if the NGK had met readmission conditions set in 1982. A decision will be taken in July.

$100000 surf revamp

NEARLY $100000 is to be spent on a “surf amphitheatre” at Durban’s North Beach, upgrading what has already become a world surfing venue. This year’s Durban 500 in July will be extended to 10 days and will include lifesaving, boogie-boarding and jet-ski events.

Workers bury hatchet

LANGEBERG Foods, the Pool and Allied Workers’ Union (PAWU) and the United Workers’ Union of SA (UWU) have signed a code of conduct aimed at ensuring a climate of tolerance and fair play at Langenberg’s East Rand factory in the future following eight violent deaths in union rivalry.

$420m Post Office deal

LEONARDUS de Wet was appointed chairman of the Witwatersrand Regional Services Council by Transvaal Administrator Dame Hough yesterday.

Labour-intensive projects favoured

THE construction industry has made a strong plea for labour-intensive building as a means to create jobs.

Submissions to the National Economic Forum will be used by the forum’s short-term working group to draw up a consensus document on employment which could form the basis of government policy.

The document is expected to be finalised by the end of April.

The working group may also produce a report on the feasibility of the proposals, which may be used to guide the forum’s work.

Government, labour and business delegations would study the tabled submissions and oral testimony, the forum said yesterday.

Each would draw up a report, which would then be considered by the working group with a view to reaching consensus.

Submissions chosen by the working group included those from the National Committee for Labour-Intensive Construction and consulting engineering firms Soderland & Schutte and B S Bergman & Partners.

The committee said the SA Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors was “completely” in favour of labour-intensive construction projects and would do “everything possible” to ensure their success and viability. The construction method uses as much labour as technically possible, without compromising standards.

The Small Business Development Corporation and the Sunnyvale Group submitted proposals on small business development.

The Sunnyvale Group argued that elements of entrepreneurial and small business development had to be built into programmes such as housing projects.

Other proposals included proposals by AgriLink argued small-scale agricultural development could create jobs at less cost than the cost of job creation in formal industry.

Common themes in submissions were housing projects, electrification, road building and provision of infrastructure in labour-intensive ways.

The Standing Committee on Water Supply and Sanitation noted job creation opportunities in rural and urban areas.

Improvement of rural sanitation could create about 4000 jobs.

On financing, Nedcor/Old Mutual’s Professional Economic Panel suggested the creation of an independent public works trust which received annual state grants.

The trust should absorb public works to co-ordinate job creation activities currently undertaken by institutions such as the IDT, DBSA and the Urban Foundation.
Emergency era 'helped SA unions''

Municipal Reporter

The state of emergency era gave unions a chance to consolidate their power, says Department of Manpower Director-General Mr Joel Fourie.

He told the annual congress of the SA Association of Municipal Employees that, while the 'emergency' years of 1985 to 1990 had their negative side, unions had developed their leadership and consolidated their power.

Summarising a speech the Minister of Manpower, Mr Leon Wessels, would have given at the conference, Mr Fourie said the government did not support unions having a political role, but acknowledged that union strategies developed in response to the demands of society.

He said the role government should play between employer and employee should be debated because, of 13 million economically-active people, fewer than three million belonged to unions.

The government's role was among the issues being debated by the Manpower Commission, Mr Fourie said. Other issues being examined included affirmative action.
Doves of peace coo at Langeberg

LAST week the Langeberg Food Co-op, once the site of violent battles between rival union factions, is now striving for peace after the intervention of mediators, reports FERIAL HAFFAJEE

A LITTLE hope for deeply divided South Africa is being forged at the Langeberg Food Co-operative in Boksburg, near Johannesburg.

Last month, warring workers at the factory signed a pact to end violence and promised to use a peace committee instead of pangas to solve problems.

Workers have lost their lives and many have been injured in two years of political strife between the Inkatha-linked United Workers' Union of South Africa (Uwusa) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions affiliate, the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu), at the factory.

It was the site of the most notorious Uwusa/Cosatu battles on the Reef and while fighting only once strayed on to the factory premises, workers fought just outside the factory and also in surrounding townships.

Things got so dangerous that management at one time considered closing the factory.

Instead, they called for the Local Dispute Resolution Committee (LDRC) — affiliated to the National Peace Accord — which suggested they enrol the help of the Independent Mediation Service of South Africa (Inmass).

Inmass took each worker through a four-hour crash course in tolerance and democracy, and on February 16, a code of conduct was signed at the factory. Each worker has received a copy and pledged to peace. Langeberg workers have committed themselves to a code of conduct.

A huge sign in the yard says: "The code is always visible to the company's 1000 canning, glassing and distribution workers."

"It is going to take a lot of work to make the code more than just a pretty symbol," said Rashaad Guma, a member of the LDRC.

"There is still palpable tension at Langeberg. At the front gate everyone is searched with a metal detector. They may not wear any party political symbols, such as T-shirts in the workplace, or distribute any material of the organisation or trade union they belong to."

A Langeberg management also committed itself to majority unionism in the code and while there must be no compulsion to strike, a clause states: "This shall not be construed as limiting or preventing any trade union, office-bearer, shop steward or worker from lawfully engaging in, or lawfully encouraging others, to engage in industrial action."

Uwusa has, according to sources, a minimal presence at the factory. It does not have shop stewards and Fawu would not at first assume to participating as a representative union.

"If it could hinder the peace process, that organisation must be brought into that process regardless of its constituency," believes a source who helped draw up the code.

Despite the various provisions, the parties realised that disputes could still arise. So the code makes provision for dispute resolution: a permanent peace committee, comprising three management representatives, seven from Fawu and three from Uwusa, is the first option.

Fawu president Chris Dlamini said parties at Langeberg had "been brave enough to discuss ways and means of sorting out problems" while the rest of the country was being devastated by violence.

Amos Magcanya, a shop steward at Langeberg, at first resisted meeting the National Peace Accord. It wasn't working on the ground, he had become a "paper commitment", he thought. Now he will "encourage use of the code and the procedures to minimise friction."

To popularise the code, Langeberg's management will "run follow-up sessions throughout the year", says general manager Garth Ward.

Ward adds that peace negotiations had had the important spin-off of improving labour relations: "Productivity will improve if you improve (workplace) relations," he says.
Unions set to oppose Budget if job problems are ignored

SHARON SOROUR
Labour Reporter

ORGANISED labour is set to oppose the Budget if it does not address demands for the creation of jobs and the upliftment of workers.

Cosatu regional secretary Jonathan Arendse said federation members would hold a “low profile protest” tomorrow, beginning with a meeting in St George’s Cathedral hall and culminating in a march to parliament with its affiliate National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu).

Cosatu members would protest outside the offices of the Receiver of Revenue in Plein Street.

The trade union federation—which has called for a Budget aimed at creating jobs and providing housing and education—met Finance Minister Derek Keys last week to discuss it.

Cosatu also appealed to Mr Keys not to increase the VAT rate or other taxes that would affect the poor and the working class.

The federation welcomed the lifting of VAT from basic foodstuffs last week, but questioned why fish and white bread were not exempted.

Cosatu spokesman Brian Williams said Nactu was not expecting a Budget that would direct itself at “providing a foundation to overcome problems created by apartheid”.

Mr Williams said preliminary reports on the Budget Nactu had received indicated it was “excessively weak” on economic redistribution.

“The central philosophy of the Budget is based on the supply-side economic philosophy of Britain and the United States”, Mr Williams believed the Budget presented little hope for the poor.

“It will burden the poor to a greater extent to provide more money for the government and I do not believe it will bring about any significant changes in unemployment or the conditions of the working classes,” he said.

Nactu would hold a strategy planning conference in Johannesburg later this week.
Union slams attack on white workers

SHARON SOROUR, Labour Reporter

The militant white SA Iron, Steel and Allied Industries Union has condemned the "despicable" attack on white workers in Vanderbijlpark this week, demanding that the leaders and perpetrators "be called to answer".

Union general manager Mr Nic Celliers said the union, which saw the attack as a "premeditated onslaught against the white worker", would hold a mass meeting in Vereeniging on Monday to discuss white workers' safety.

Mr Celliers and AWB leader Mr Eugene Terre'Blanche would address the meeting.

Mr Celliers condemned the cowardly manner in which the attack was executed saying: "It leaves little doubt that the action was politically motivated and a pattern is unfolding, aimed at creating fear and panic among the broader white population.

"Attacks on whites in public places, on their way to work and intended attacks on schoolchildren seem to be related and appear orchestrated."

The union found it strange that the "apostles of human rights" remained silent on these events, "while they often create a furor in the media about petty things such as the admittance of all races at holiday resorts."

Mr Celliers said the attack in Vanderbijlpark was a "blatant violation of one of the basic rights of the worker and the union is apprehensive that more are to follow."
Union numbers reach record levels.

The Federation of Labour, a labor union, reported in June 2022 that union membership increased by 3.2 million people, compared to the previous year. This growth is attributed to the effectiveness of collective bargaining and the ability of unions to negotiate better wages and benefits for their members. As of July 2022, union membership reached 12.8 million people, with 23.4% of the labor force belonging to unions. This is a significant increase from the 21.0 million members reported in 2021. The growth in union membership has been fueled by a rise in both new members joining existing unions and the organizing efforts of new unions. The result is a stronger voice for workers at the bargaining table, leading to better wages and benefits for union members.
New retail trade union faces rival's wrath

A new union called the Catering, Clerical, Commercial and Allied Workers' Union (Cecawusa) has been formed in the retail trade. A pamphlet, the new union said it had tried to fight Saccawu's problems through legitimate channels but had been blocked by union structures. It had been left with no choice but to form a new union which would be controlled by workers and accountable to them. Kgasare said a Supreme Court action to have Saccawu declared insolvent, brought by Tshetsetse and five other dismissed office bearers, had yet to be resolved.
Three trade union offices bombed

KLERKS DORP. — The offices of two trade unions here and one in Harrismith in the northern Free State were bombed early yesterday morning.
Western Transvaal police have offered a R100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the two simultaneous blasts at the offices of the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa in Klerksdorp yesterday.
A police spokesman said a policeman patrolling the area had narrowly escaped injury in the Klerksdorp blasts. The offices of the Klerksdorp Blood Transfusion Service were also damaged.
In Harrismith a NUM office was seriously damaged when the building caught fire after an explosion yesterday morning.
'Protect workers from insolvencies'

Compiled by SHARON SOROUR

CLOTHING industry unions have called for an urgent review of the Insolvency Act in a bid to secure the wages and savings of workers when companies go into liquidation.

The South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactw) is to approach the National Manpower Commission to address the issue and to ask the Congress of South African Trade Unions to launch a campaign in defence of workers' rights.

This follows the provisional liquidation of Highams South Africa in Maitland last year, when 142 staff lost their jobs — and personal savings totalling R49 561.

The workers took part in a factory savings scheme and the money was not held in trust, but in a company bank account.

Frame Textile Corporation and Merchant Trading Finance Ltd held security for claims totalling R13 million, and other creditors were owed in excess of R2 million. Because workers' savings were placed in the bank account of the company, their status was the same as that of any other concurrent creditor.

Frame Group chairman Mr Mervyn King supported the union and later helped secure the return of the workers' money.

But the case had highlighted the vulnerable position of workers and the fact that the law favoured the interests of other, more secure stakeholders at the expense of workers, the union said.

SACTWU has also stepped into a row over election T-shirts which the ANC were to have imported.

The union "convincingly" the ANC to have the T-shirts made locally, thereby supporting South African manufacturers and creating jobs in the embattled industry.

While Cosatu said it "accepted" the ANC's reasons for importing the T-shirts, Sactw, Cosatu's third largest affiliate, insisted the ANC drop the plan.

A PROGRAMME to promote job creation and the socio-economic empowerment of black women, sponsored by Investec Bank, was launched in Cape Town this week.

The programme, co-ordinated by the Take Hands Foundation, aims to provide township women with the means to uplift themselves and play a meaningful economic role in society.

The first project involves training young unemployed black women as paper bag and box makers in the packaging department of local company Alternate Labels and Printing (Pty) Ltd. The company manufactures labels and related products for the clothing and footwear industries. Training will include instruction in conflict resolution, primary health care, literacy, nutrition, personal upliftment, self confidence, budgeting, money management and voter education.

WORKERS at Carlton Paper of South Africa in Epping are on a nationwide strike over wages and working conditions.

About 40 workers were arrested outside the factory this week on a charge of intimidation, but the charges were later dropped and the workers released, according to Paper, Print-

ing, Wood and Allied Workers' Union spokesman Shadid Mahomed.

The company obtained a Supreme Court interdict barring workers from hindering the access to the factory by vehicles.

More than 590 workers are on strike over wages nationwide, including about 150 in Cape Town, amounting to about 40 percent of the workforce at the Epping factory.

Mr Mahomed said non-striking workers were upset at the arrests and were considering joining the strike.

While production had been affected, the demand for products had not been as high as usual and the company was serving its customers "quite easily", factory manager Ben Erasmus said.

Workers are demanding a 12 percent increase on the hourly wage, plus three months paid maternity leave. The company is offering a 5 percent hourly increase and a profit-sharing scheme.

The union has contested the profit-sharing scheme system, saying the company tabled the offer on the day of the conciliation board hearing and could give no details as to how it would work.

DISGRUNTLED employees of the Sached Trust in Cape Town went on a solidarity work stoppage in support of a colleague who claims he is being victimized by the organisation.

The South African Committee for Higher Education workers, members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union, suspended their three-day action this week pending the full-time appointment of Mr Mekhaim of Harvey, who plans to take the matter to the Industrial Court.

Mr Harvey declared a dispute with the organisation, claiming unfair labour practice when his position as half-day administrator in the Educators for Transformation and Development programme was not upgraded.

All half-day administration posts were supposed to have been upgraded to full-time positions. This was in terms of a resolution adopted at a national staff meeting last August, which had been also adopted by the national planning meeting — the highest decision-making body in Saced.

POLICE have detained the leader of Indonesia's largest independent trade union after he called for a one-hour national strike.

Mohitar Pakpahan, chairman of the Indonesian Welfare Labour Union, was detained with two other people in Semarang 400km east of Jakarta while he was visiting union members.

Police declined to comment.

DE BEERS has warned it may leave Ireland, putting more than 600 employees out of work.

Workers at the industrial diamonds division at Shannon voted to reject a planned 10 percent pay cut, having asked for strike action to be sanctioned. De Beers is now threatening to move production elsewhere.

They have been told by management the company is in "serious trouble" — prices for its products have slumped and it is now suffering significant losses from the recession and increased competition.
Union backs ANC

DURBAN — The South African Allied Workers Union will throw its weight behind the ANC in the April election, Saawu general-secretary Mr Sam Kikne said yesterday.
NUM appeal for healers

JOHANNESBURG

The National Union of Mineworkers will negotiate with employers to secure recognition of medical certificates and sick notes issued by traditional healers.

The NUM took this resolution at its eighth national conference in Pretoria on March 4.

The union said it wanted 56 days' sick leave a year for its members and 10 days' paternity leave for its male members.

It would also investigate its own registered charity to help miners and mining communities.

— Sapa.
DP slams printing contract decision

THE Independent Electoral Commission should rethink its decision to award a British company a printing contract for 80 million ballot papers, Western Cape Democratic Party leader Henne Bester said.

Arguing that the local printing industry had the expertise and capacity to do the job, he said the IEC’s decision did not bode well for local industry. "The IEC seems to follow the suit of the African National Congress, which awarded its contract for the production of three million T-shirts to an oriental company."

"Under pressure from other political parties, they were forced to retreat,\" Mr Bester said the R8 million printing contract could give many South Africans jobs and, moreover, could be one of the election's early benefits to the people.\"

"Since the contract will be finalised only on March 5, we call on the IEC to reconsider.\" It is most appropriate that the physical ballots on which South Africans will cast their first democratic vote should be made locally - by local people, from local paper.\"

(Report by C C de Villiers, Harrass Street, Jo-(Revised 1989)
There are estimates that 100,000 workers have been laid off in the South African steel industry in recent months. This is due to a combination of factors, including high costs, low prices, and a decline in demand. The situation has been exacerbated by the ongoing conflict between the government and labor unions, which has led to protests and strikes. Despite efforts to negotiate a resolution, the situation remains tense, and the future of the industry is uncertain.
Sweden to join Union ranks

BRUSSELS - "Sweden clinched a deal yesterday to join the ranks of the European Union, and Finland was expected to follow suit within hours," diplomats said. "Sweden is in. Finland is in there (still negotiating) now.

Exhausted negotiators from four countries haggled through the night seeking terms for their entry next January to the 12-nation European Union. — Sapa-Reuters
Alexander jailed and banished

By Malatsha Tsedu
Political Editor

The Workers’ List Party a newcomer

By Malatsha Tsedu
Political Editor

Socialism is the only viable route

By Malatsha Tsedu
Political Editor

ANC SLIPPED Compromise

brought nationalism to the end of its road.

What the Leaders are saying

The right to work

We stood for the right to a job for every worker including the unemployed. We demand an immediate end to all retrenchments, an end to unemployment and work for all in a living unemployment.

We stand for a massive public works programme of electrification building schools, roads, clinics, parks, halls and sports grounds primarily in townships. This programme must be used to workers must be used.

The unemployed must be drawn in at a living wage. There must be a state run training scheme.

Health, education, housing and social services

We stand for free provision of free and compulsory education for all up to and including high school.

State provision of adequate housing for all, including the provision of free meals, legal, recreational and other community services that will revitalize the highest possible quality of life.

We stand for paid education leave of 30 days, 20 after this by four years per year and longer periods of training to be the norms.

Economy

We believe in working class control over the means of production and distribution.

We believe in a socialized, planned, democratic economy.

We believe in a living wage, a 35-hour week. No jobs for less than an end to retrenchment and a full right to a job.

Land

The land shall be restored in all its forms and ways and work on the land in accordance with acceptable principles of agricultural sciences and democratic control.

The land of absentee landlords and the defence force must be confiscated and used for productive purposes.

Equality

The party will fight against oppression of women. Women should be at home, at the workplace, in the workplace, and on the farm out as farmland to be fought against.

We demand an immediate end to all retrenchments, an end to unemployment and work for all in a living unemployment.

Children’s rights should be entrenched in the constitution. The state must ensure that every child has a nutritious meal a day and be given adequate clothes and care.

Apartheid criminals

No general amnesty and we will bring to trial those who defended the apartheid criminal regime. We must have our own Nuremberg trials in SA.

We also stand for the bringing to book of all those responsible for the rest of this nation.

Foreign debt and IMF Loans

We campaign against the repayment of loans made by the apartheid state from foreign and multinational debt including the IMF, World Bank.

Tralism

We reject these divisions and we are we that can be based on the same principles.

teach. He was director of the Cape Town Centre of the South African Council for Higher Education until 1986.

He was married in 1965 to the late Mrs. Dorothea Mau, a prominent anti-apartheid activist from the Cape Town Women’s Liberation Movement. He was also a member of the Freedom Fighters, a South African liberation movement.

Neville Alexander was a distinguished scholar and a committed anti-apartheid activist. He spent many years in prison for his activism and was later exiled to the United States.

In South Africa, he continued his work as an academic and a writer. He published several books on South African history and politics. He was a close friend of Nelson Mandela and played a key role in the formation of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912.

Alexander was instrumental in disseminating the ANC’s message far and wide through his writings and speeches. He was one of the first to use the term “apartheid” to describe the system of racial segregation and discrimination that was enshrined in South African law.

He was a member of the ANC’s Executive Committee and was involved in the organization’s strategy and tactics during the fight against apartheid. He was also a signatory of the so-called “Freedom Charter,” which outlined the ANC’s vision for a democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Alexander was released from jail in 1974. He was branded for five years but was later allowed
JOHANNESBURG — The Workers' List Party says its programme to renege on South Africa's foreign debt, nationalise big business and bring apartheid criminals to trial will attract millions of votes in the April elections.

The party's list and manifesto were launched here yesterday.

"We do not believe that any of the white or black nationalist parties can solve the crisis of unemployment, homelessness, disease, illiteracy and poverty that afflict the urban and the rural poor," the manifesto says.

The party stands for the right to work entrenched in the constitution, state provision of social services and a socialist democracy, which includes "nationalisation under worker control of the monopoly companies, banks, mines and land without compensation."

It further calls for the trial of those who defended the "apartheid capitalist regime" and the cancellation of foreign debt repayments.

The WLP list includes trade unionists, representatives from the Workers' Organisation for a Socialist Azania and the Independent Socialist Movement, and "grassroots people in grassroots structures."

The party is contesting the election on a national level only — Sapa 171/3/94.
Union calls on workers to vote for the ANC

SHARON SOROUR
Labour Reporter

FEARS of escalating violence in the Western Cape if the National Party wins the regional election have prompted Nactu-aligned trade union leader Brian Williams to call on all workers to support the ANC.

Unlike its counterpart Cosatu, trade union federation Nactu (National Council of Trade Unions) is believed to be sympathectic to the Pan Africanist Congress. The majority of its members belong to the PAC.

Mr Williams, acting regional secretary of Nactu, said the NP's racist campaign and its ability to create tension between coloureds and Africans had prompted his decision.

He said: "I am calling on all workers in the Western Cape to support the ANC because in spite of having strong reservations of the organisation and being critical of its policies, the ANC is in the best position to defeat the NP."

There was a strong possibility the NP would come to power in the Western Cape, which represented "a great danger for the region given the party's oppressive history and the strategy being used to fight the election."

"From a political point of view, if the region goes to the Nats, Nactu might well regard it as not being liberated, and will continue the struggle until it is liberated," said Mr Williams.

Nactu and Cosatu had formulated a joint approach to expose the racist NP campaign and the destructive consequences if the NP gained control of the region.

Mr Williams said: "To win votes the NP have used racism as a key instrument in their campaign and have openly used people classified as coloured to instil fear in people and to distort certain realities, namely that blacks are violent people and through the now-banned racist booklet."

The NP's approach would divide workers, who were fast becoming openly antagonistic towards each other in certain factories in the Western Cape.
Union chiefs back off over call to vote-ANC

SHARON SOROUR
Labour Reporter

TRADE union federation Nactu and some regional affiliates have distanced themselves from a call by the movement's acting regional secretary for workers to vote for the African National Congress to keep the National Party out.

Union leader Brian Williams, of the Nactu affiliate Mewusa (Metal and Electrical Workers Union of SA), in his personal capacity, recently called on all Western Cape workers to unite and support the ANC.

Nactu general secretary Cunningham Ngcukana said they dissociated themselves from Mr Williams' statement "as it runs against the political policy of Nactu on elections".

Mr Ngcukana said Nactu was independent and did not support a particular liberation movement as members belonged to "the broad spectrum of the liberation movement".

Nactu advocated that members voted for parties which had fought against racism and oppression, and had called on its members not to vote for the NP, the Democratic Party, parties which had served apartheid and "emerged from nowhere".

At a heated Press conference yesterday, an unrepentant Mr Williams said he would not apolo-
gise for his position, and he defended his decision saying he had the right to ask anyone to vote for the ANC.

"The Western Cape is different to the other regions because the oppressor party stands a good chance of winning the election, and it is my view that we must support the party able to defeat the NP — if the PAC were the strongest party, I would call for workers to support it."

Peter Roman of the SA Chemical Workers' Union — who is a candidate on the Pan Africanist Congress regional list — said the statement by Mr Williams was "out of line" and not policy.

Other Nactu affiliates which opposed the call by Mr Williams to call for a united ANC vote were the Building, Construction and Allied Workers' Union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union and the Hotel, Liquor, Catering and Commercial Workers' Union, said Mr Roman.

Mr Williams said it was "unfortunate" that Mr Roman and others had called the Press conference "to attack my democratic right as an individual to call on all people in the Western Cape to support the ANC."

"I spoke on behalf of myself, and I did not say that Nactu as a trade union federation supports the ANC or any other party," said Mr Williams.

(News by S Svorou, 132 St George's Mall, Cape Town)
MBOWENI TACKLES HOLIDAY PAY ISSUE

LABOUR Minister Tito Mboweni appealed to employers last night to pay workers for the three additional public holidays called to facilitate the election and the presidential inauguration.

He was referring to the strike by about 20 000 KwaZulu-Natal clothing workers which began last week when workers discovered they had not been paid for the three days.

Appearing on television last night, Mboweni said employers should deal with the issue as a matter of urgency in the interests of national reconciliation and sound labour relations.

Mboweni said he had talked to the newly formed employers' federation Business SA, which had in turn urged its members to treat the holidays as paid days off.

BSA president Dave Bunk appealed last week to members to pay all workers for the three days.

In his interview, Mboweni said other labour issues could be dealt with later, but this would have to be handled immediately to avoid further confrontation between workers and management.

SA Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactwu) members yesterday marched to the Durban Manpower Department offices demanding that these days be treated as paid public holidays. They then attended a rally at Curries Fountain where they were addressed by union officials.

A union spokesman said some work stoppages had also occurred in the Western Cape when clothing workers discovered they too had not been paid for these days off.

Sapa reported Sactwu assistant general secretary Ebrahim Patel addressed the rally and called for President Nelson Mandela and Mboweni to intervene.

He also threatened a product boycott and said that the strike would escalate if employers did not change their stand.

Patel accused management of penalising workers for the election by deciding to deal with the holidays unsympathetically.

A Sactwu spokesman confirmed that Mboweni had been approached on the issue, his first challenge as Minister.

Although the three holidays were not promulgated so as to include factory workers, many employers had decided not to confront workers on the issue and had paid those who had not reported for duty, or paid premium rates to those who had.

The Natal Clothing Manufacturers' Association declined to comment, but was expected to respond to the union's request last night.
White-collar union warms up to Cosatu

ERICA JANKOWITZ

COSATU's attempt to gain a foothold in white-collar unions may get a boost later this year when the SA Society of Bank Officials (Sasbo) is expected to leave the Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsal).

Sasbo assistant general secretary Donald Graham said the decision to affiliate to Cosatu had been taken in principle and it was "now a matter of selling it to the membership." He hoped this would happen before Cosatu's congress in September.

The only obstacle was Cosatu's alliance with the ANC, which was viewed with concern by some Sasbo factions.

Graham said Sasbo had been given carte blanche to organise in the financial sector and would incorporate about 4,000 SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Sacawu) members in the sector.

Sasbo had about 69,000 members and was looking at the possibility of merging with fellow Fedsal affiliate, the Financial Institutions Workers' Union, which has about 20,000 members.

Union analysts said Sasbo was not the only Fedsal affiliate talking to Cosatu, with the SA Broadcasting Staff Association (Sabsa) and the Transnet Salaries' Staff Union (Salsal) exploring the same option.

This could mean the loss of an additional 20,000 Fedsal members, cutting its numbers by almost half, which might precipitate a merger, sources concluded.

Graham said Cosatu would gain financial expertise and membership fees...
Unions bank on new scheme

SHARON SOROUR
Labour Reporter
AUG. 16/94

TRADE unions are beginning to opt for various incentive remuneration schemes usually offered to top executives instead of fixed pay packages for their members.

While most companies’ introducing performance pay schemes still do so only at executive level, there is a huge groundswell towards company-wide schemes, says Mike Honet of FSA-Contact’s remuneration division. Several had already been implemented in large companies.

Mr Honet said unions agreed to performance pay if fair, clearly defined and measurable criteria were negotiated on which to base the determination of salaries.

Support was also growing among unionists and executives for a new concept in the salary field called “banking.”

He added, “Banking is designed to reduce the ‘feast and famine’ uncertainties associated with ordinary profit-sharing schemes where salaries and bonuses rocket in good years and plummet in bad ones.”

Each year the “carry-over” was added to the person’s current earnings, which consisted of a basic salary plus a share of the company’s gains or profits. "A percentage of this total amount is then paid out in the current year while the rest is carried forward," Mr Honet said.

If the following year was a good one, the individual would receive a bumper bonus; if it was not, the salary would remain stable, supported by the carry-over from the previous year.

Mr Honet said “banking” encouraged executives and employees to work strategically to improve the long-term performance of the organisation instead of going after a short-term gain a once-off super bonus.
Unionised Cape workers cash in

SHARON SOROUR
Labour Reporter
WESTERN Cape employers are brac- ing themselves for more job losses this year than any other region — but for the first time in four years, union- ised workers are getting increases on a par with their counterparts in the rest of the country, research has re- vealed.

Results of a survey conducted by industrial relations experts Gavin Brown and Associates estimated that about 80 percent of unionised workers in the Western Cape secured wage in- creases as a result of national bar- gaining arrangements — either through industrial councils or be- tween employers and unions.

Some workers were getting the highest increases nationwide in their sector.

In the food sector, where Cape wage increases traditionally lagged behind other major metropolitan ar- eas by up to two percent, the average increase was 10.1 percent, which was more than the national average of 8.5 percent.

The highest number of wage settle- ments in the general manufacturing sector had been reported by regional employers, where the average negoti- ated increase was 9.8 percent.

"Comparatively few agreements in this sector have been concluded elsewhere in the country," the report said.

Wage negotiations at companies based in the Western Cape experienced the lowest levels of accompanying strike action.

Less than 15 percent of employers reported industrial action during wage talks — compared with the national average of 22 percent.

"A negative feature of Cape-based negotiations is the comparatively large number of employers who report that they expect job losses to continue for the rest of the year.

"Cape employers have the highest expectations of further retrenchments occurring this year, with employers in the textile, clothing and footwear sec- tors indicating that workforce reduc- tions of between two percent and sev- en percent are still possible."

Although the figures were not as high as the previous three years, they were the among the highest in the country, excluding the mining sector.

The report said another unique fea- ture of Western Cape wage negotia- tions was the continuity of union lead- ership.
Lekota talks on workers’ rights

BLOEMFONTEIN — All workers had the right to organise and bring their complaints to the fore in an orderly fashion but the struggle for change should advance and not worsen their lot, Free State premier Mr Patrick Lekota said when he met the Public Service Bargaining Council here.

Mr Lekota said there were labour leaders who insisted on calling provincial and other workers out on strike after provincial ministers had told them workers’ grievances were receiving attention. He said legislative powers to enable the Free State legislature to take action on grievances of workers had not yet been received from central government — Sapa.
Cosatu threat

Workers will exert power

Staff Reporter

Johannesburg — Cosatu yesterday threatened protests on an unprecedented scale should the labour crisis remain unresolved.

Cosatu Watersrand regional secretary Mr Louis Zita warned that employers would no longer be dealing with individual industrial disputes because organised workers planned to "bring their weight to bear on all deadlocks".

His statement followed a march by about 3,000 workers to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and John Vorster Square to publicise demands, including the right to a "living wage" and freedom to strike and protest without police intervention.

Mr Zita said the march was the "first campaign of workers in the new society with the object of putting workers' demands at the top of the new South Africa's agenda".

Cosatu secretary-general Mr Sam Shilowa, addressing the marchers outside the JSE, where a list of demands was presented to representatives of organised business, said the current wave of industrial action was aimed at reinforcing the ANC's hand to bring about change.

Amid loud applause, Mr Shilowa said strikes were about the democratisation of the country's economy.

He rejected accusations that strikes were killing the economy. "Investors must not pretend this is the first time they've heard about unions and strikes," he added.

Mr Shilowa also dismissed employers as "hypocrites", claiming they were hiding behind the Reconstruction and Development Programme. "When workers demand a living wage they (the employers) say this makes it difficult for them to employ other people. "They're blaming us for unemployment. But democracy is good for business."

But Mr Raymond Ackerman, chairman of Pick n Pay, probably the single company worst hit by the current wave of strikes, hit back at the strikers for their "disgusting" behaviour.

New assessment

"We respect the right of workers to withdraw their labour, but not to swear and intimidate customers or to close stores down," he said.

Meanwhile the authoritative Standard Bank Investment Corporation's report says that in spite of a smooth political transition, "developments over the past few months have forced a new assessment."

Analysts also believed that growth projections for 1994 should be watered down.

City Council workers were hard at work on Clifton yesterday, cleaning up bags of oil which were washed from the rocks onto the sand by high seas at the weekend. A helicopter commissioned by the council to move the bags failed to arrive on Friday.

Picture Clive Smith
Union links with international labour threaten SA employers

BRUCE CAMERON
Business Editor

SOUTH African businesses, already taking it on the nose in industrial relations, could find even tougher times ahead as links between local unions and international labour strengthen.

And the problem could be even worse if the local company has a strong foreign holding.

French-controlled construction company Basil Read has already come up against the situation with its current industrial dispute with the Construction and Allied Workers’ Union (Cawu).

According to the latest edition of South African Labour News, the major International Federation of Building and Wood Workers has reacted “swiftly and aggressively to a call for assistance from huge Cawu.

The publication reports “In a strongly worded letter to Basil Read, the IFBWW has condemned the company’s notice of dismissal to more than 200 Cawu members, the lock-out since June 24 over a wage dispute, as well as the use of teargas and police dogs to disperse picketing employees by the South African Police Services.”

The IFBWW told Basil Read that it supported Cawu’s demands and said it would be taking up the issue with parent company Bougues in France.

Deputy editor of the publication Winifred Everett says the move by the French Union could be the thin edge of the wedge.

“The IFBWW is a massive organisation and very powerful in Europe, which will impress the local unions.

“Lock-outs are anathema to international unionism and it is quite possible that they would wish to make this a policy issue and pull out other workers in sympathy.

“Should the matter end up in industrial court one can be certain the IFBWW will see that its huge resources are made available to bring in the biggest labour law guns to present the Cawu case.”
The struggle goes on

Radical socialist activists predict that the ANC before next election will desert the ANCYL party which it worked ceaselessly to kill.

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David Breiter

**The Weekend Argus, September 3/4, 1994**
Unions' challenge to govt

CT 3/10/94

**DURBAN**. Deputy-President F W de Klerk warned at the weekend that while the government was faring well, it faced challenges from the union movement, which had not realised its responsibilities to the nation.

While he said the National Party recognised the right to strike, the wave of demands for salaries beyond inflation — particularly in the motor manufacturing industry — threatened investor confidence.

There was a need for a negotiated economic accord — similar to the constitutional accord reached at Kempton Park — between business, labour and government to underpin labour instability and make South Africa investor-friendly.

"The unions need to become part of the economic solution.

"Addressing the kwaZulu/Natal NP congress at the weekend, he said the ANC owed it to the nation to impress upon unions the need for responsibility to promote economic growth and increase productivity.

"He said it was the ANC's duty, rather than that of the other two parties in the coalition, to do this because the unions were members of the ANC's alliance partner, the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu).

Mr De Klerk said, during recent business trips abroad, it had been impressed on him by businessmen that the NP's continued presence in the government — in which it kept its eye on South Africa's fiscal and monetary policies — was crucial to investor confidence.

Mr de Klerk also said the truth and reconciliation commission should not be allowed to become the instrument of any one party. He pointed out there had been no agreement on the issue at cabinet level.

It was important that the disclosure of facts should be managed confidentially so that retribution was prevented, he added.
Weak labour federations warned

UNAFFILIATED trade unions and the weaker union federations should realise that their future survival depended on joining one of the major union federations as tripartism became more entrenched in SA labour relations, the Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsal) said on Friday.

Reacting to assertions that Fedsal would be subsumed under Cosatu if it was to merge with the largest federation in SA, Fedsal general secretary Dannaher van der Merwe said affiliates were not prepared to lose their identity by following this path.

He said talks between Cosatu, Natu and Fedsal about forming a union confederation were well on track. Fedsal, he added, would table farm proposals by the end of November about how such a confederation would be structured.

Van der Merwe envisaged a confederation within which the individual federations would retain their identity, but with greater co-operation on such issues as training and workplace matters, including legislation and bargaining levels.

He believed the new tripartite forum, formed with the merger of the National Maapower Commission and the National Economic Forum, required greater union unity so labour’s proposals were afforded an appropriate emphasis within the forum.
SA's unions urged to be reasonable

□ Help speed up economic recovery — Dutch PM

VUYO BAVUMA
Political Staff

THE HAGUE — Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok says South African trade unions should formulate reasonable demands to speed up the country's economic recovery.

He urged unions and employers to join in a national effort to facilitate this important recovery.

Speaking to a group of South African journalists yesterday, Mr Kok said it was important for unions to realise it was also their responsibility to adjust to the new political dispensation and to make a well-balanced contribution to the economic growth.

The Netherlands did not want to prescribe to South Africa which model to follow because South Africans should base their own programmes on their "qualities and realities".

So far, the Netherlands was impressed with developments in South Africa and believed the climate was slowly becoming ripe for investment.

Mr Kok pledged to stimulate good economic relations between his country and South Africa.

Presently, the Netherlands government was not only "selling South Africa" to its internal companies but also throughout the European Union. And this task would be easier the more stable South Africa became.

Mr Kok said South Africa was personally important to him though he did not have any "colonial characteristics".

He was moved by the fact that, many thousands of kilometres away, there were people who spoke his language.

Asked whether the Netherlands had any concern about South African Communist Party influence in the government, Mr Kok said he judged South Africa merely on its "track record and general policies".

President Mandela had good key advisors and the support of deputy president F W de Klerk — and that showed South Africa was on the "right track".

The Dutch government realised the two leaders needed support in their programme to provide houses and jobs for millions of people.

Mr Kok said his government was willing to renew its long-standing cultural ties with South Africa that were broken because of apartheid.

"We are grateful apartheid has ended. Now we have to think of joint responsibilities that will lead to prosperity for both countries," the former trade union leader spoke about how to avoid friction in coalition government, which had been a feature of Dutch politics for more than 30 years.

He said the Netherlands government always tried to depoliticise problems and tackled them in a functional and pragmatic way.

"Coalition government is like a marriage — if the wife and husband don't co-operate, they make a mess."

□
Labour warns on consultation

Own Correspondent

The federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsal) has urged the government not to be “afraid to govern”, warning that placing too much emphasis on consultation could be counter-productive.

In a submission to the parliamentary standing committee on the RDP, Fedsal also called on the government to give more detail of how it proposed to achieve the RDP’s goals.

Cosatu, in its submission, urged the government not to stick to a rigidly ideological commitment to fiscal discipline and reduced public spending.

“The RDP involves a massive expansion in welfare and service delivery by government. This may lead to increased public spending and employment in certain areas, while reducing it drastically in others.”

Cosatu called on the government to give a clear commitment to closing the public sector wage gap and replacing it with a sliding-scale formula which would cut “super salaries” while improving low-paid workers’ incomes.

It welcomed the government’s recognition of the need for a progressive labour policy — including an adequate social security safety net, the right to strike and the right to a living wage — but felt human resource development was neglected.

FAMILIAR SIGHT ... Minibus taxis were back in Strand Street yesterday following the shooting of 10 people at the new station deck taxi rank on Saturday morning. Drivers said they were concerned about the safety of their passengers and would not go back to the station deck until Codeta and Cata had “sorted things out”. However, traffic officers moved them back to the station deck yesterday afternoon and placed drums along Strand Street to prevent stopping.

Picture JENNY COOL
Workers' party an idle thought, say unions

The meeting also resolved to support the call by the Comatul-aligned National Metalworkers' Union of South Africa's (Nasua) for the establishment of a new political party.

Comatu's national spokesman Neil Coleman said there was "no official Comatu representation" at Wosa's meeting.

He confirmed Numa had proposed that the recent Comatu National Congress, the establishment of a new worker-based political party, but the resolution was defeated.

"We decided to continue supporting our alliance with the ANC," he said. Wosa, together with other ultra-left organisations, were "trying to use their individual contacts" to put forward their agendas.

"We have just come out of a socialist conference at the weekend to which Wosa was invited. There were no resolutions for the launching of a workers' party.

"It's pie-in-the-sky stuff," Naeto president James Mabaso said. The formation of a workers' party had not been on the agenda at the federation's recent annual congress.

"It has not been discussed within Naeto. We are an independent federation, not aligned to any political party or organisation, and we believe we should maintain that position."
'Police still harass unions?'

JOHANNESBURG

Police harassment continued in labour disputes in spite of the government urging restraint, the Trade Union of South African Authorities (Tusaa) claimed in Pretoria yesterday.

Tusaa general secretary Mr Nkedi Mogale said repeated efforts by the union to discuss the matter with Northern Transvaal Premier Mr Ngoako Ramathlodi had been unsuccessful.

Sapa
About 600 demonstrators march through central Johannesburg yesterday to demand recognition of their union at Spar outlets, and centralised bargaining, the issues which triggered a week-long strike in the PWV region.

Reinstate staff, union demands

KATHRYN STRACHAN

THE SA Commercial and Catering Workers' Union (Saccawu) yesterday called for workers dismissed during the apartheid era to be reinstated now that a new democratic dispensation was in place.

Saccawu assistant general-secretary Herbert Mbizane said many of the cases had gone to court, but had been dismissed.

The union was starting its campaign to redress the ills of the past by supporting 600 workers dismissed from Walter Chaplin. Although the dispute at Walter Chaplin began two years ago, the case was settled only in August. Staff had rejected the company's offer of a R220,000 fund for dismissed workers, and were demanding they be reinstated.

Saccawu also called for working conditions at Spar outlets to be streamlined, and for workers to be allowed to negotiate with the Spar regional committee, rather than with individual outlet managers.

Spar management continued dismissing workers yesterday, bringing the number to 225.

Saccawu said yesterday the 4000 workers it represented at PNB were balloting for a national strike to demand the bank recognise the union.
Wosan Plan on Mass Workers' Party. In the skystuff.
Union urges support in dispute with major transport company

Labour Reporter

THE Turnung Wheel Workers Union has declared a deadlock with national transport company Lehmbecker Transport and called on the support of all workers in the transport sector, irrespective of union affiliation.

The dispute arises out of the national freeway blockades in September and the subsequent dismissal and "victimisation" of certain Lehmbecker drivers.

"The company remains intransigent and reluctant to recognise the union as the collective bargaining unit," the Turnung Wheel union said in a statement.

The union is demanding the unconditional reinstatement of all dismissed workers and that Lehmbecker "respects the principle of freedom of association as a constitutional right of workers".

According to the union the majority of workers at Lehmbecker — in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban — have embarked on a strike.
THE National Union of Metalworkers (Numsa) and Volkswagen SA have reached a multi-faceted, groundbreaking agreement which will change management structures and establish a new relationship between management and worker.

Globally, the agreement aims to develop Volkswagen SA to become a world class performer as looming tariff protection cuts threaten to take a huge bite out of motor manufacturers' market share in the country.

"The agreement is crafted to ensure that the company does succeed in the face of looming international competition," says Judy Parltt, VWSA human resources spokesman.

For Numsa chief negotiator Gavin Hartford the agreement sets a "new benchmark" for the union nationally and he is hopeful other manufacturers may follow suit.

The Iron and Steel Workers' Union is also party to the agreement.

The agreement, concluded after several months of in-plant negotiations, broadly means that both union and management will work jointly to ensure the continued viability and growth of VWSA.

Other key features of the agreement include increased production to 100,000 units per year, employment protection and the promotion of education, training and development of employees.

In a joint statement on Wednesday the parties agreed that there will be no compulsory retrenchments for an 18-month period provided there are no unprocedural actions during this period or that VWSA's market share does not fall below 10 percent.

Furthermore, VWSA has agreed to pump R10 million into basic education in 1995 which will benefit up to 1000 employees, accelerating employees up the industry career path ladder.

Key to the agreement is the flattening of management structures and the piloting of teamwork on new product lines as new forms of work organisations are phased in.

Another priority is the implementation of affirmative action principles which will compel the company to prioritise gender and racial appointments both internally and externally.
Waltons, union reach innovative deal

Labour Reporter

STATIONERY company Waltons and the South African Typographical Union have come to an innovative wage agreement. Waltons, incorporating Parcelforce and Roll-a-Pak, has agreed to a 32 percent wage increase for factory aides and a 25 percent increase for drivers. Minimum monthly wages are now R1,300 for aides and R1,500 for drivers.
Sanlam workers want union rights

NORMAN JOSEPH
Staff Reporter

MORE than 200 angry Sanlam workers in Bellville are demanding recognition of their union by the insurance giant.

The workers, members of the South African Catering and Allied Workers' Union (SACCAWU), marched from the Bellville Civic Centre to Sanlam on Friday and handed a memorandum outlining their grievances to Johan Reyneke, secretary to managing director Desmond Smith.

Union branch chairman Trevor Christians said: "We demand the recognition of Sanlam SACCAWU as a union within Sanlam.

"We want viable remuneration and adjustments to remuneration of disadvantaged workers against whom Sanlam discriminates."

The workers rejected Sanlam's implementation of affirmative action without worker consultation, as well as the company's merit system and demanded collective bargaining.

Sanlam spokesman Nico van Gijzen said, "All I can say is that we will give attention to their memorandum."

Mpetha dies bitter and forgotten

Oscar Mpetha, the 'father of South African trade unionism', died last week. William-Mervin Gumede reports

"FREEDOM in my lifetime — a birthday present anybody could wish for," said Oscar Mpetha at his 85th birthday celebration in August this year.

The fulfillment of his wish was tarnished by his belief that many of his former comrades had abandoned him. 'The 'father of South African trade unionism', once a darling of the Congress Movement, was at one stage denied transport to a rally in Cape Town where Nelson Mandela was to speak. In the words of his grandson, Shadrack Mpetha, "All the comrades we approached said they were too busy to help."

On his death bed last week, Mpetha was a bitter man. He felt the ANC had 'forgotten him'. After his release from prison he was venerated by hundreds of well-wishers, and a school was even named in his honour. "Our phone never stopped ringing — with people from all over the world wanting to salute him," said his daughter, Esther Mpetha.

The local leadership of the ANC, who honoured him in 1992 as honorary president of the Western Cape region, later rarely visited him. Until his last days he savoured Winnie Mandela's surprise appearance at his Gugulethu home at the beginning of this year.

His lifelong struggle for workers' rights started 60 years ago, when he organised his first successful strike. At that time he was working as a deputy foreman of a road gang in Malmesbury. Mpetha became angry when he found out that Italian workers were being paid higher than their African counterparts in the same gang. He immediately organised the workers, a strike was called, and their demand for wage parity was met.

Mpetha decided that the trade union movement was where he belonged, and he joined the African..."
Union confederation proposed by Fedsal

BY HELEN GRANGE
LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of South African Labour Unions (Fedsal) has proposed the establishment of a confederation of trade unions — including the all-white SA Confederation of Labour (Sacol).

Meetings between the union federations, including the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), have been taking place over some time to discuss greater co-operation to increase bargaining power.

Fedsal proposed at the weekend that the confederation could be made up of "the founder members of its own organisation and Cosatu, the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) and Sacol — but that any other national trade union federation agreeing with principles such as a non-party approach could be considered for membership.

According to Fedsal, it has 260,000 members, Nactu 320,000 members, Cosatu 1.3 million members and Sacol 55,000.

Objectives of the proposed confederation included giving trade unions a collective voice regarding all issues affecting labour.

Cosatu spokesman Neil Coleman said Cosatu's founding policy was to promote the formation of a single federation of unions, but foresaw problems if the confederation option was pursued.

This was because there would be continued stakeholdings in the various union federations which were likely to divide rather than unify union members.
Alliance of unions proposed

The Federation of South African Labour Unions at the weekend proposed the establishment of a confederation of trade unions — including the all-white SA Confederation of Labour. (See)

Fedsal said the proposed confederation could be made up of the "founder members" of their own organisation, the National Council of Trade Unions, and Sacol. The federation said, however, that any other national trade union federation agreeing with principles such as a non-party political approach could also be considered for membership.

The federation said the all-white Sacol should be included "for the purpose of reconciling the workforce."

According to Fedsal, it has 280,000 members, Cosatu 1.3 million members, Nactu 326,000 members and Sacol 55,000 members.

Fedsal has always opposed party political involvement and Nactu was increasingly opposing involvement of politicians in trade union activities — Sapo.
New confederation of trade unions mooted

JOHANNESBURG — The Federation of South African Labour Unions (Fedsa) proposed on Saturday the establishment of a confederation of trade unions — including the all-white SA Confederation of Labour.
Fedsa said membership should be open to any national trade union federation agreeing with certain principles, such as a non-party political approach.
The all-white Sacol should be included "for the purpose of reconciling the workforce".
Fedsa says it has 280 000 members, the National Council of Trade Unions 330 000 members, the Congress of SA Trade Unions 1.3 million members and Sacol 85 000 members. — Sapa
NEWS FOCUS

Cosatu pledge to monitor reforms

NEXT year would be a watershed for workers and the SA labour movement, would expect tangible social and economic changes and democratisation of workplaces, Cosatu general secretary Sam Shilowa said yesterday.

Labeling 1995 as the year of reconstruction and development, Shilowa warned government that Cosatu would monitor its progress against the stated aims of the reconstruction and development programme (RDP). The "many enemies" of the programme would have to be conquered as its successful implementation would depend on the participation of everyone in a massive national effort to combat poverty.

Shilowa said government would enjoy the support of people only if democracy demonstrated its ability to change their everyday lives. Crime would be successfully combated only if "the social conditions which breed these evils begin to be successfully tackled".

The RDP would have positive spinoffs in the form of job creation and, especially, the unleashing of the country's true human resource potential. Shilowa emphasised that the RDP envisaged skills development and training with this goal in mind.

Social discrimination and inequalities inherited from the previous order would have to be eradicated. "Cosatu will focus in 1995 on challenging the vestiges of apartheid inequality which are still entrenched at the economic level. This will necessitate a focus on rural development, affirmative action, anti-trust policies, human resource development and democratization of economic decision-making." What was described as tackling "the apartheid wage gap" would become the union movement's top priority. "Our wages and salaries will be negotiated at industrial level, centralised bargaining would be introduced, complemented by joint decision-making at shopfloor level. To ensure workplace forums were not just consultative in nature, employers would need a "radical rethink" on managerial prerogative."

Redrafted labour legislation should provide for centralised bargaining, basic conditions and minimum wages, a maximum 40-hour working week, a full right to strike and picket with protection from dismissal and outlawing the employment of strike breakers, disclosure of information, and compelling employers to negotiate all aspects of retrenchment.

Shilowa said Cosatu would push for the restructuring of labour market institutions such as the wage board, unemployment insurance board and the Industrial Court. The federation was determined to remove the lockout clause from the constitution and would vigorously oppose any attempt to introduce federalism.

Recognising certain organisational weaknesses, Shilowa said Cosatu was determined to open membership to all categories of workers by recruiting white-collar and professional members. Previously disorganised sectors such as agriculture, construction and the public service would also be targeted.

"This back-to-basics" thrust will not involve a retreat from our broader role as a trade union movement. We will continue to strive to advance the interests of working and poor people as a whole, but from a stronger, more mobilised organisational base."

For the public service, Shilowa reiterated Cosatu's aims to introduce a coherent grading and training structure linked to wages, close the wage gap, create a culture of accountability and implement affirmative action.
White workers' vote to move into Numasa fold

WHITE workers at Volkswagen (SA) voted overwhelmingly to join the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) and leave the whites-only SA Iron and Steel and Allied Industrial Workers Union, Ashwin Desai, editor of the latest issue of the SA Labour Bulletin, said.

According to Numsa negotiations co-ordinator G.

von Hartford, this would leave the way clear for the union to open career paths for members beyond the category of technician, which had traditionally been the cap, Desai said.

In the past, jobs were defined in racial terms with white workers automatically joining the ranks of salaried staff and blacks confined to manual labour.

Numsa believes that recruiting all levels of workers will erode this artificial barrier to advancement by blacks beyond artisans.

Desai warned that as many white workers would be affected by this move, and had joined the union to protect their jobs, Numsa would have a tough time defending "the interests of this crust of white privilege" while at the same time ensuring its own members' upward mobility from the ranks.

Numsa's aim was to win a 50% plus one majority membership within the almost 2 000 salaried staff of VW SA and then bargain on their behalf at plant level.

But its ultimate aim was to create a single bargaining forum for salaried and non-salaried staff, explained Desai.

"Burly Afrikaner foremen and superintendents, until yesterday the foot soldiers of the AWB, will now march under the banner of the most militant union in Cosatu."
Prison warders establish new union, Cousa

A NEW prison warders' union, the Correctional Officers' Union of South Africa (Cousa), has been formed after prison warders broke away from Gregory Rockman's Popcru this week.

A Cousa spokesperson said the break "emanates out of frustration and anger with the leadership of Popcru".

The prison warders claimed that the leadership of Popcru has proved itself as incompetent and prejudiced and the leadership of Popcru has dismally failed to serve the interests of prison warders.

The breakaway had been brewing since May under the leadership of Cousa president Enobh Nelum.

One bone of contention was an invitation from the Danish Prison Union this year, by which Popcru members were invited to visit Denmark to study the Danish system. Popcru leaders had undertaken to draw up a draft document on the Danish system.
Militant unions worry the JCCI

BY CHARLOTTE MATHEWS

The overwhelming concern among members of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce & Industry (JCCI) in the manufacturing sector is the growing militancy of trade unions, a telephone survey shows.

In the latest issue of Going Concerns, the JCCI’s newsletter, it says militancy is curbing industrial output, limiting job creation and hindering the implementation of the RDP.

"One respondent reported that an export order worth several million rand, and which would have required 30 extra staff, had been turned down."

"Because of SA’s labour volatility, the buyer had stipulated severe penalty clauses for non-delivery on time, which could have crippled the business."
No trade unions for defence force

Special Correspondent

SOLDIERS in the South African National Defence Force will not be allowed to join trade unions, says deputy Defence Minister Mr Ronnie Kasrila.

Mr Kasrila was addressing a visiting delegation of the French Institute for Advanced Defence Studies.

Mr Kasrila said some of the civilians employed in the SANDF belonged to trade unions and there had recently been strikes in military hospitals.

The deputy minister called for a streamlined process to deal with soldiers' complaints.

He told the delegation that the SANDF had learned from mistakes made in last year's integration process.

Delays in the administration of the process which led to frustration would be avoided by integrating 1,500 former APLA and uMkhonto we Sizwe members every six weeks instead of 10,000 at once, as was the case last year.

He said the extent to which the SANDF would be representative of society would change as more voluntary recruits joined for one year's training. Thereafter they would serve for a month every year for eight years.

Mr Kasrila also told the group that South Africa's arms industry could be increased from 0.3% to 1% of the world arms market. This would boost the almost R1-billion the country earned in foreign exchange from arms sales, as well as the 70,000 jobs presently linked to the industry.

He said a draft defence policy document as well as a conventional arms control policy document were almost completed. The draft defence White Paper would then be submitted to the parliamentary defence committee.
Third union in Parliament

Political Staff

A THIRD trade union has been formed to represent the 700 people working in the Houses of Parliament.

The Parliamentary Staff Association, which has 94 signed-up members, was open to all officials but was more representative of the professional ranks. Its interim chairman, Mr Derek Smith, said...
Racially exclusive unions have six months to reform

UNIONS with racially exclusive clauses in their constitutions would have six months in which to rectify this requirement or face being deregistered in terms of the draft Labour Relations Bill, released for comment last week.

SA Iron, Steel and Allied Workers' Union general secretary Len van Niekerk-Venter said the union was concerned as it had a long tradition of restricting membership to white workers.

He urged the Labour Ministry to follow the example of the government of national unity and allow minority groups to have a say in labour matters. "This is the moral ground on which labour relations should be moulded," he said.

He felt minority groups — including the SA Council of Labour Unions (Sacol), which represented about 100,000 white workers — would be left in the lurch if their rights were not enshrined in legislation.

Van Niekerk-Venter said Sacol and its affiliates had circulated a copy of the draft Bill to all regions and would respond once all members had had their say on the issue.

"Some members wouldn't mind the racial restriction removed, but ultimately it is the majority who will decide."

All-white Mine Workers' Union (MWU) general secretary Peet Ungerer said the MWU would not change its racial exclusivity, but would not be affected by having its registration withdrawn.

The MWU's 76 existing recognition agreements would still stand and membership would continue to grow despite this requirement.

"The MWU's future role is to protect the white worker as the target of discriminating practices and future legislation against unfair discrimination," Ungerer said.

Van Niekerk-Venter expressed his concern about Sacol's possible exclusion from the National Economic, Development and Labour Council at which the Bill would be discussed as there were other problems with the legislation.

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Barred pupils readmitted

MOKUDUZI KA HARVEY

TWO hundred male pupils expelled by the Black Nation school in Orange Farm, were reinstated after the Congress of SA Students demanded their readmission.

They were expelled after school director Mawandile Khumalo ruled they were ill-disciplined. He claimed some pupils carried guns, sold drugs and were guilty of rapes at the school.

"Teachers and pupils felt very intimidated and the school was losing a lot of girls because of fear," he said.

But the pupils argued they had not been informed in advance about plans to convert the institution into an all-girl school and that Khumalo had not refunded their fees. They also felt it was unfair to expel all male students when only a few were guilty.

Khumalo agreed to accommodate the pupils at the school while he built another school for boys. This was expected to be completed in two weeks.

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Pupils taught to run own small businesses

MOKUDUZI KA HARVEY

PUPILS are being taught to make a living even while they are still at school through a business management course devised by a Midrand education centre.

The course, run by the Sagewood Education Centre, has already produced success stories.

A pupil at Richards Bay High School runs a tuck shop and has employed his mother to manage the shop. After paying his mother a net profit is in excess of R1 500 monthly.

Evan King from Empangeni High School set up a chocolate manufacturing venture which has made a R500 profit a month over the past year.

The Sagewood Education Centre has introduced an entrepreneurial course for school children aimed at identifying young entrepreneurs, developing business skills and helping them set up shop.

This idea is the brainchild of Ian Hemberton, of the National Industrial Chamber and Peter Morrisson of the Business Advice Centre.

Entrepreneurship educator Gary Morrison says: "If parents give money to start a business, pupils have to repay their parents with interest."

"Our duty is to teach the children how to draw up a business plan and how to run the business," said Morrison.

The aim is to enable pupils to come up with their own business ideas whether they want to shine shoes, manage a tuck shop or even sell lemonade stand, they will be taught how to do it.

Sagewood director John de Jager said: "Not only is it necessary for pupils to acquire skills for the formal market, but they should be in a position to set up their own businesses."

Introduced three years ago in KwaZulu-Natal, the course will soon be introduced at 25 schools in Pietersburg and at 20 schools in Rustenburg.
Union to aid farm labour

Johannesburg. — The newly launched South African Agricultural, Plantation and Allied Workers' Union (SAAAPU) said yesterday it would campaign for the improvement of basic conditions for farm and rural workers and a minimum wage of R350.

Speaking after a weekend conference attended by 147 delegates here, SAAAPU general-secretary Mr Dickson Mothi said the union, which has about 30,000 members, would also concentrate on educating workers about local government elections.
Union launched Farm Workers' Union to organize and negotiate with the farm owners and provide benefits to the workers.
Agricultural and workers' unions sign labour pact

THE Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) signed an agreement with the Agricultural Workers' Union (AWU) yesterday to co-operate on labour issues.

TAU president Ever Brouwer dismissed but said farmers needed support in a changed labour environment.

The two organisations agreed to provide farmers with legal support in labour disputes and to canvass members for the AWU.

The AWU, with 6,000 members, also runs a 24-hour emergency telephone service to help farmers deal with labour problems.

AWU chairman Werner Weber said the TAU would concentrate on labour policy issues, while the AWU would train workers and provide a female service for farmers.
Union plans to defy govt

A Special Correspondent

THE SA Health and Public Service Workers Union (Sahpswa) unveiled plans yesterday to spread its defiance campaign to the Western Cape. Secretary-general Mr Silas Baloyi said despite government threats to prosecute unionists who take hostages that the union would do so.
New union formed for farm hands

A new farm workers' union hopes to end the exploitation of South African farm labour.

ROGER FRIEDMAN
Weekend Argus Reporter

The newly launched South African Agricultural Plantation and Allied Workers Union's (Saapawu) campaign to increase minimum wages in the sector to R750 a month may seem a moderate goal.

Most other unions have campaigned for minimum wages of between R900 and R1 200 over the past year — public service unions want R1 500 — and are threatening to strike to demand it.

But with some farm labourers earning nothing bar the right to live on the land, and others earning as little as R40 a month, R750 could be an impossible dream.

At Saapawu's launch in Johannesburg, Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom said one in five South Africans lived on white-owned farms — and were paid, on average, less than a third of a minimum wage.

The formation of the union was long overdue, Mr Hanekom said.

Saapawu was established last weekend with an already-paid-up membership of about 30 000.

The majority of the membership belonged to three other Cosatu affiliated unions — the Food and Allied Workers Union, the Paper Printing Wood and Allied Workers Union and the SA Clothing and Textile Workers Union.

Others were members of independent unions including the Karoo Farmworkers Union and the Farm Rural Inhabitants Association based on the East Rand.

According to general-secretary Dickson Motha, a further 10 000 members had signed up but had not paid-up due to stop-order and other problems.

The union's five-person executive committee was selected to represent as many of the country's regions as possible.

Mr Motha said issues the union planned to start addressing immediately were the improvement of labour legislation governing the sector, child labour, migrant labour and "illegal immigrants who are being used at the expense of the local workers".

The initial response from farmers to the formation of the union had not been too positive, he said.

Mr Motha said problems the union would have to overcome included access to isolated farms, farmworkers dependence on their employers for a place to live and the "payment-in-kind" or "dop" system.

Incidentally, the union would not campaign to abolish the dop system, Mr Motha said.

"Members might say they like the system because they are used to it. Some see it as a perk. We are not saying it should be abolished, but it should be formally structured."

On the subject of the new draft Labour Relations Bill, Mr Motha said, on the whole, it was a victory for the workers, but there were a few issues which concerned Saapawu.

Of major concern was the proviso in the draft Bill that workplace forums be established at businesses employing more than 100 workers.

This excluded most farms.

The government was considering legislation to prevent the arbitrary or forcible eviction of farm workers by land owners, Mr Hanekom said earlier this month.
New trade union federation

A NEW trade union federation, the United South African Trade Unions (Usatu), was launched at the weekend, representing about 100 000 workers in a wide spectrum of sectors.

Usatu general secretary Andre Rose said yesterday the union had been formed to "give a home" to the millions of organised workers in unaffiliated unions. Cosatu, Nactu and the Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsal) between them represented only about three million of the about eight million organised workers in SA.

The Public Servants' Association had expressed an interest in joining the federation and a meeting to discuss this issue was scheduled for next week, Rose said.

Usatu was strictly apolitical, unlike the other federations which, despite claims to the contrary, had political roots.

Usatu's origins were in the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, which had failed to service members or gain any seats in the National Economic, Development and Labour Council (Nedlac). The new federation would concentrate on building membership to ensure a future place on Nedlac, Rose said.

Affiliates included the Radio, Television, Electronic and Allied Workers' Union, the African Mine Workers' Union, the Chemical Workers' Union, the Brick and Allied Workers' National Union and the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Association. Usatu had met a Labour Ministry representative and had justified not joining any of the existing federations because of its stand on political affiliation.

Usatu's president is Vuyani Madolo of the African Mine Workers' Union with John Mguthu of the Brick and Allied Workers' National Union and Benjamin Masepula of the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Association as vice-presidents.
Right-wing auto men join Numsa

By RYAN CRESSWELL

FOR years Danie Botha was a top man in the conservative whites-only Yster and Staal union in Uitenhage but he is now an outspoken member of Numsa, the most militant organisation in Cosatu.

Salaried staff at Volkswagen South Africa in Uitenhage became concerned last year after it was announced they would have to undergo assessment tests and started to seriously consider organising a proper bargaining forum.

After a meeting in October, at which both unions were called on to explain their positions, far right Afrikaner auto workers have flocked to join Numsa, according to Mr Botha, a former Yster and Staal executive council member.

"Numsa said their piece at the meeting, but Yster and Staal did not because they would have had to admit that many of the workers present could not join them."

"I stood up and announced I was going to join Numsa. We later put it to the vote and almost everybody at the meeting, about 600 people, decided to back Numsa.

"Some of those who filled in forms after that meeting were staunch rightwingers."

Numsa could not give exact figures of how many Yster and Staal members had joined because race and former union affiliations do not form part of the application form.

A Numsa spokesman said "dozens" had probably joined but an Yster and Staal member claimed only about 20 unions had made the long walk.
Chemcraeft workers allege firm applied ‘selective retrenchment’

Union accuses company boss of racism

By Dan Fuphe

THE Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union has accused the managing director of Chemcraft in Rynfield, near Benoni, of racism and union-bashing.

This follows a failed attempt between the union and company MD Mr Gidroy McAlpine to resolve a row that led to a strike by the company’s workers.

The employees yesterday said they had embarked on the three-week-old strike after what they described as “selective retrenchment” and use of white scabs by management.

Spokesman for the workers, Moses Malapane, said management’s refusal to negotiate for retrenchments started in November last year “in bad faith”.

He said the proposed relocation of some workers by the company to one of its subsidiaries was a ploy by management “to break the morale of members”.

Local CWIU organiser Mr Mabutu Mlangeni confirmed the grievances of the members, claiming that Chemcraft had morally failed to support its decision to lay off the workers, “except to say that the retrenchments are due to financial constraints”.

Talks deadlocked

Mlangeni said talks to resolve the dispute deadlocked even after they were referred to the Industrial Court.

McAlpine, however, refuted all allegations by the workers and the union, saying that his company was not prepared to be dictated to by anyone, especially the CWIU.

McAlpine said extensive consultations had taken place between the company and the union pending the closure of the Supawood and Fibreglass divisions within the group.

He said Chemcraft regretted the closure of the two divisions in November last year.

A woman kisses the hand of Bishop Samuel Ruiz after mass in San Cristobal de las Casas in Mexico’s southern state of Chiapas. The controversial bishop called for peace during his first mass since a riot had in front of the cathedral last week between supporters of the bishop and those who characterise him as rebel sympathiser.

PIC AP
Mandela ‘must defy SA unions’

HARARE — The political price President Nelson Mandela would have to pay for sustained economic recovery was defiance of trade union resistance to market economic reform, Financial Mail editor Nigel Bruce said in Zimbabwe last week.

Addressing the closing session of the Marketing 2000 conference, Bruce warned recovery would not be sustained without private sector foreign investment, but the rate of return on capital was too low and falling, while real wages were above those in Korea. BD27/2/95.

“If experience elsewhere is anything to go by, the political price Mandela will have to pay for sustained economic recovery will be a similar defiance of trade union hegemony that Walesa in Poland and Thatcher in Britain had to face before they were able to make meaningful reforms.”

MICHAEL HARTNACK

In SA, the public sector unions would be equally hostile as public service wages were more than 50% of total government spending, excluding debt servicing.

Bruce’s speech to leading marketing executives on “the economic and political dynamics of change in southern Africa” caused a stir, as he voiced the most outspoken criticism of President Robert Mugabe yet heard at the conference.

Bruce said “those who feel the energy of greater confidence will look ahead and not backwards to the illusory comforts of indigenisation, the imagined protection of isolation and the stifling thinking characteristic of a nationalised media.”

Politicians like Mugabe saw free markets as a threat to their “power of preferment and their privilege of despoliation”.

“His intervention brought the economy of this country these last 15 years to such a pass that he had to call on the IMF, cap in hand, for help.”

Bruce said Mandela also suffered from “the Mugabe contradiction” — paying lip service to market reforms demanded by foreign financial institutions while his supporters raised sentiment against those reforms.

Bruce urged that Mandela be given “time, flattery and example” for his new-found conversion to market economics to “mature into conviction”.

“Mandela is nothing if not mutable. But such obfuscation lacks the conviction to carry populist support away from the disaster of socialist coercion, and towards the conditions in which innovations will spur greater savings, rising investment and greater prosperity.”
Action urged on union threats

SOUTH AFRICAN Health and Public Service Union (SAHPSU) publicity secretary Mr Themba Ncalo should be charged for his kidnap threats on cabinet ministers and white civil servants, the ANC said yesterday.

Mr Ncalo's threats in support of the union's wage demands — made during CCV's Newsline on Sunday — were a criminal offence and a challenge to the government, the ANC's Senator Jackson Mthembu said.

The ANC urged the government to act firmly against any individual or group who intensified ethnic tensions and promoted lawlessness. — Sapa
Union demands defence force recognition

Staff Reporter

THE National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union has embarked on a programme of mass action in support of their demand for recognition in the South African National Defence Force.

Regional chairman Wilfred Alcock said they condemned the refusal by Chief of the Force Georg Meiring to grant recognition to the union.

"This denial is a breach of our rights under the new constitution."
Concern over labour union

RENÉE GRAWITZKY

THE Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedbas) expressed concern over the formation of yet another trade union federation, the United SA Trade Unions (Usatu), which was formed on February 18.

"We see no reasons for the formation of yet another independent grouping... In the trade union movement, numbers are what count, and three independent federations independent of each other cannot expect to have any real negotiating power," Fedbas general secretary Dammhaar van der Merwe said.

He rejected claims by Usatu that Fedbas "had political roots".

Usatu claimed 14 affiliates with close to 100,000 workers had been seen as a breakaway from the Federation of Independent Trade Unions (Fitu) which claimed a membership of more than 200,000.

"We have had no official resignations in recent months and there might be affiliates who have dual affiliation with Fitu and Usatu," Fitu general secretary Martin Deyels said. He said unity talks had been held with a number of independent unions in recent months and Fedbas had not participated despite requests to do so.

Fedbas was open and prepared to conduct "one-on-one" unity talks with Fitu, Van der Merwe said.

Usatu general secretary Andreau Rose, formerly Fitu general secretary, said that approaches had been made to request participation and representation within the National Economic Labour and Development Council (Nedlac) structures, but was advised that it had to increase its level of representivity.
White union opposes blasting changes

THE amendment of one of the few remaining discriminatory regulations in the mining industry has come under fire from the all-white Mineworkers' Union.

The union rejected the lowering of blasting certificate requirements from Std 5 to Std 4.

General secretary Pieter Ungerer said this would lead to an overflow of people in mining positions, a lowering of salaries and an adverse effect on health and safety.

The mining industry welcomed the move but questioned whether the Std 5 qualification was suitable, a Chamber of Mines spokesman said.

Mineral and energy select committee chairman Marcel Golding said the lowering of requirements would enhance productivity and would not affect safety.
Cosatu backing for one industry 'voice' (134)

LABOUR REPORTER

Talks aimed at bringing together the three major union federations in South Africa into a single powerful federation will take place next month, the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), said yesterday after the biannual meeting of its central executive committee.

Officials of Cosatu, the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu), and the Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fed sa), have been asked to draft proposals on trade union unity in which suggestions will be made on removing obstacles impeding the setting up of one union federation.

These proposals, agreed on by officials of the federations, will be put to a joint executive meeting of the three in April.

The meeting, the highest decision-making body in Cosatu after its national congress, set up a task force to finalise investment guidelines for the Cosatu Investment Company in making investments in line with "the broad strategic direction agreed by the federation."

In the interim, the company will not involve itself in any investments.

Study

It agreed to undertake a feasibility study with a view to setting up an administration company to ensure that administration of members' pension and provident funds is handled in a way which enables maximum benefit to them.

Cosatu said it rejected attempts by business to pressurise provinces to enter into agreements on export processing zones, saying these led to the undermining of labour standards.

The federation accepted applications by the SA Agricultural Plantation and Allied Workers Union, SA Society of Bank Officials and the SA Bollermakers Union. The new affiliates now bring Cosatu's membership close to 1.5 million.

The federation's celebrations of Child Care Day on June 1 this year would focus on child care facilities at work, the plight of homeless children and the use of child labour.

It said it would hold an international policy conference from April 21 to 23 to focus on key international issues.
The Johannesburg of a union strongman. Wits, even more so than some of its friends, has become a major source of the accumulation of power and influence in the country. This has led to a situation where the university is seen as a bastion of political power and influence, often siding with the ruling party and government. This has caused a lot of controversy and criticism, with many people calling for the university to be more transparent and accountable.

Wits is an important player in the South African political landscape, with its vast resources and influence allowing it to shape public discourse and policy. However, this has also led to concerns about the university's role in perpetuating inequality and inequality.

This is why it is so important that the university be held to high standards of accountability and transparency. It is critical that the university is seen as an institution that is open to debate and critical thinking, and that its actions are guided by a commitment to the public good. It is only through this kind of openness and transparency that the university can continue to be a font of knowledge and enlightenment, and a true sanctuary for the pursuit of truth and justice.
Nehawu dispute with navy goes on

Labour Reporter

THE National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) has vowed to continue its struggle for recognition by the South African National Defence Forces in spite of the military claiming the union was not complying with prescribed procedures.

Yesterday, SANDF liaison officer John Rolt said the defence force had negotiated with Nehawu in good faith.

Nehawu's intended march on the Simon's Town dockyard next week was "not conducive to the promotion of sound labour relations and good faith bargaining", Colonel Rolt said.

The defence force was impartial in its dealings with employee organisations as long as they acted within the limits of the Labour Relations Act for the Public Service.

Colonel Rolt said Nehawu's Western Cape branch was in contravention of an agreement reached at national level that all negotiations pending recognition should be conducted at national level.

But Nehawu regional chairman Wilfred Alcock accused the military of "making it extremely difficult" to be granted recognition.

An interim agreement brokered with Simon's Town Naval Dockyard had been scrapped "unilaterally" by the navy.

Mr Alcock said the navy had refused to negotiate with the union at Simon's Town in spite of the union having signed up about 600 members.

In any case, it was preferable to negotiate grievances emanating from Simon's Town with the navy in Simon's Town rather than with SANDF headquarters in Pretoria.

Mr Alcock said the planned march to the naval base next Tuesday would proceed.

Nehawu members from various sectors would march with the dockyard workers in solidarity.

"We will continue to expose corruption, nepotism, racism, mismanagement and maladministration in the Public Service at places such as the naval base and Ysterplaat," he said.

Six union members arrested for holding an illegal gathering at the Ysterplaat airbase last November had their cases dismissed this week.
Unions deliberate social development

COPENHAGEN — Trade unions from around the world — under threat of marginalisation through shrinking employment and the emergence of more effective organs of civil society — kicked off their conference on next week’s world summit on social development yesterday.

The conference was organised under the auspices of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Delegates yesterday began formulating their position on the main issues: jobs, equality and justice.

Summit organiser Chilean ambassador Juan Somavia urged governments not to view social security as the sole adjustable variable in structural adjustment policies.

“It is not politically sustainable to balance budgets by unbalancing people’s lives,” he warned.

He said social development had to be given priority and global markets made to act in a balanced manner without adversely affecting less developed countries’ economies.

Somavia said the social summit would be the largest gathering of heads of state and representative organs of civil society. This was evidence of the seriousness with which development problems were viewed.

In tackling unemployment, countries needed to look beyond the number of jobs created to ensure they were of a reasonable quality that would sustain life. Sustainable development which increased the flow of resources and opportunities to weaker sectors was essential, he said.

Social development should control the cruelty of market forces to those who were excluded from markets — including the youth, women and the disabled.

Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrop Rasmussen said labour market flexibility need not affect social security adversely. Countries which had successfully implemented social welfare policies found that one of the best ways to create jobs was to develop skills. Workers had to be assured of an income during training.

Rasmussen attributed some of Denmark’s success to participation by social partners in state functions such as budgeting and assessing the welfare system.

Confederation acting general secretary Bill Jordan called for governments to give equal recognition to economic and social considerations when devising policy. There was a need for a balance between market forces and social justice, he said.

All speakers called for the International Labour Organisation’s role to be extended to monitor the implementation of the organisation’s declaration of rights. The declaration was expected to be finalised during the summit.

Trade union delegates will present a position paper at the summit.

During deliberations, issues such as attaining full employment, the need for a global commitment to social security and the future of trade unions in a global economy will be discussed by more than 200 delegates.

SA is represented by Metal, Electrical and Allied Workers’ Union of SA general secretary Tommy Oliphant Cosatu is not affiliated to the confederation.

See Page 14
Union 'struggle' continues

DEMOCRACY in SA did not mean the union's focus on reconstruction implied resistance and struggle were things of the past, Cosatu president John Gumomo said.

Speaking at the conference of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Bonn, Germany yesterday, Gumomo said Cosatu had always advanced a vision of strategic unionism "where our struggles have gone beyond the immediate defence of workers' rights".

As such, the federation would remain actively involved in the struggle for social justice. "Working people and the poor look to Cosatu to advance their interests, and not only narrowly pursue the concerns of our members."
SIMON'S TOWN

Navy 'must recognise dock union'

FEROZA MILLER
Staff Reporter

MORE than 200 dockyard workers marched through the streets of Simon's Town this week to demand that the South African National Defence Force recognise the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu).

The march was the culmination of Nehawu's week-long programme of mass action.

The programme included workplace demonstrations, meetings during work hours, work stoppages, inter-departmental marches during work hours and the placard demonstration at the naval base.

Speakers included members of parliament, the ANC, SACP, Cosatu and Cosas.

Nehawu regional chairman Wilfred Alcock said union officials would continue to address members on navy premises on a daily basis and any attempts by the navy to use the Military Police instead of applying sound labour relations would be met with mass resistance, he said.

Minister of Defence Joe Modise was urged to 'grant his staff their rights as outlined by law'.

A memorandum to the minister said 'The naval base at Simon's Town unilaterally suspended the interim agreement between the naval base and our union. The grievances of our members remain unresolved which could lead to serious industrial action'.
Labour unions plan front for hotel industry

BY JUSTICE MALALA
LABOUR REPORTER

Unions representing workers in the southern African hotel industry are attempting to form a united front for dealing with the management of four hotel groups operating in the region.

Strategy

South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union spokesman Sithembele Tshwete said yesterday worker representatives from the four major hotel groups in the region would be attending a conference in Johannesburg this month to "develop a uniform strategy to deal with the companies".

The hotel groups are Sun International, Southern Sun, Protea Hotels and the Karos Hotel group.

"We have found that there are many discrepancies in the way that these groups deal with workers in the different countries and, as much as possible, want to get a uniform approach," said Tshwete.

He said employment policies of some of the groups in some countries in the region were "appealing", adding that they hired and fired in a manner that was not in line with international labour practices.

The meeting, which will be the first in the region, would devise strategies to form a forum to bargain with the four groups on various issues, which may include salaries and wages.

Tshwete said representatives from the hotel groups' management would be invited to the conference for certain sessions and to address delegates.

Addressed

The three-day conference, to be held from March 20 at the Edjah Barayi Centre in Yeoville, will be addressed by Congress of South African Trade Unions international desk head Bongumal Silingo.

Tshwete said delegates from Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Malawi and Namibia will attend.
Unions prepare '95 demands

COSATU's three largest af-
filates will formulate poli-
cy and wage demands for
1995 during the next week.

The National Union of
Mineworkers (NUM) cen-
tral committee meets to-
day and tomorrow to fin-
lise wage demands and
future policy.

The union's general sec-
retary Kgalema Motlanthe
said the "status of mem-
bers in organisations had
changed. They are now be-
ing faced with new rights
and obligations. The chal-
lenge lies in taking respons-
ibility for their actions".

The union leadership had
to ensure that understand-
ing filtered down to its
entire membership.

Items on the agenda
would include: the donation
of earnings from selected
public holidays to the RDP
fund; public holidays and
Sunday work; use of con-
tract workers; the abolition
of the closed-shop, and re-
placement with a multi-
union closed shop.

Meanwhile wage de-
mands for the clothing, tex-
tile and leather industry
will be formulated by the
SA Clothing and Textile
Workers' Union (SACTWU)
at its collective bargain-
ning conference this weekend.

The union stated this de-
velopment resulted after the
parties committed them-
selves to "collective bar-
gaining structures on a sec-
torial basis". This council is
the first of nine in the tex-
tiles industry.

The National Union of
Metalworkers of SA's
(Numsa) collective bar-
gaining conference will be
held next week after the re-
gion had formulated their
demands at congresses.

Numsa general secre-
tary Enoch Godongwana
said this year's negotiations
were taking place under a
new political dispensation
"which provided enormous
opportunities for us, but
also constraints." One of the union's main
priorities would be the for-
mulation of a wage policy
to look at wage differen-
tials, sustainable wage
levels, and the balance be-
tween low wages and job
creation. He added that dis-
cussions around produc-
tivity would have to take into
account the wage gap and
differentials.
Govt clamps fetters on prisoners' union

CAPE TOWN — Government has barred the SA Prisoners' Organisation for Human Rights (Sapohr) from operating in prisons.

The order was issued yesterday by Correctional Services Minister Sipho Manela on the instruction of President Nelson Mandela. Manela said he had been instructed "to restrict with immediate effect, all ... Sapohr activities at prisons which could promote unlawful activities or ... lead to loss of lives and damage".

Sapohr leader Golden Miles Bhudu had told government to set up an amnesty resolution committee before April 10 with a view to determining the release of common law prisoners, or prisoners countrywide who would start mass action, Manela said. Such demands had in the past led to riots, deaths and extensive damage.

Government would "not allow itself to be held to ransom by threats of violence. It was Mandela's prerogative to decide when and how he would grant special remission of sentences. Government, following recommendations by the Kriegler commission, probe of unrest in prisons and a study by the national advisory council on correctional services, had decided "not to accede to the request for the establishment of an amnesty resolution committee".

Sapohr, which had been given the opportunity to motivate its proposals to both bodies, had been informed of the restrictions placed on it.

A senior Correctional Services Department source said: "The organisation has been all but banned. If it wanted access to any prisoner it would have to apply to the commissioner of prisons."
NUM calls on ANC to nationalise SA's mines

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — More than 500 delegates representing the 320 000-strong National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) have called for nationalisation of mines which "continue to violate human and worker rights".

Their nationalisation call, though qualified, presents a challenge to the African National Congress and the new government, both of which have formally abandoned their support for nationalisation.

The NUM is the largest component of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), which shares power with the ANC in the government of national unity.

ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa is a former NUM leader, and the reconstruction and development head, Jay Naidoo, is a former Cosatu secretary-general.

They are now faced with the choice of supporting the ANC's decision — taken at its annual congress in Bloemfontein last year — to renounce nationalisation and to embrace privatisation, or supporting the huge NUM membership.

An NUM central committee meeting earlier in Pretoria called for a basic minimum wage of R1 200 for surface workers and R1 325 for underground workers.
Labour must look after itself, says union chief

GOVERNMENT would not necessarily satisfy the interest of labour as it had to "look after the interests of the broader society", National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) general secretary Enoch Godongwana warned at the union's two-day national bargaining conference in Johannesburg yesterday.

A number of external factors had to be taken into account in the preparation of wage demands for 1996 as they "impacted on what Numsa does", he said.

Although changes had occurred in the political arena, the lives of workers on the shopfloor had not changed and they still faced racist managers, undemocratic structures and pay systems.

When workers did go on strike, business and the government lobbied and used the unemployed to sway public opinion that "our demand for high wages limits their potential access to job opportunities".

In the past, workers could strike without considering public opinion. However, the auto strike had shown how public opinion was used to the detriment of the union, he said.

Economic issues such as productivity had to be dealt with in an innovative manner and could not be ignored any longer. The labour movement could not be "locked in the past".

He said that addressing the issue of productivity also affected the levels of bargaining.

While the union was committed to centralised bargaining, in practice two-tier bargaining existed.

The union's challenge was to develop strategies to ensure that centralised bargaining was protected.

The central challenge of the conference, besides finalising recommendations on a list of demands, was to address three core demands — education and training, strategies to close the wage gap and levels of bargaining and productivity.

The recommendations made at the conference would be referred to the central executive committee, which would meet at the weekend to finalise demands for 1996, he said.
Registration Requested

THE Turning Wheel Workers' Union applied for registration in February to operate in the goods transportation and storage industry in SA.

The Transport and General Workers' Union said yesterday it was disturbed that an organisation that had been around for such a short time claimed to have national representivity.
PRETORIA: A "bloody war" could erupt today between members of the South African Health and Public Service Workers' Union and those of the rival National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union. Shapswu said last night.

General secretary Mr. Silas Baloyi said Nehawu members had earlier "physically removed" three white and three black Shapswu members from Garankuwa Hospital near Pretoria - Sapa
LEADING ARTICLES

UNIONS UNDER THE ANC

Fond hopes and hard choices

Can the alliance survive the drive for greater productivity?

Cosatu and the ANC may well be fraternal allies. But, as the government of the day, the ANC has far wider concerns — prudent economic management, growth and social development — than the black trade union movement, which remains relatively privileged in spite of Cosatu’s claim that its 1.3m members “in practice provide a social security net for millions of unemployed.”

A prime example of the ANC government’s more fundamental task is its decision to scrap the financial rand. This is set to drive home hard truths on the labour front. From now on, industry will be more vulnerable to the rapid and brutal discipline of international markets. Gone are the barriers to soften poor productivity, uncompetitive wage costs and volatile unions.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Cosatu general secretary, Numsa’s Enoch Godongwana, decnes the single currency move as another example of “IMF-style, neo-liberal deregulation,” which he maintains is not appropriate to SA conditions.

But among SA’s problematic labour market legacies is a wage-price spiral identified by the World Bank (and others) as our conflict-ridden industrial relations. As the bank observes, SA’s burgeoning black labour movement was at the vanguard of the struggle against apartheid and responsible for the number of man days lost to strikes ranging from 227 000 in 1981 to 914 000 in 1988 (with a blip of almost 6m the previous year as a result of the workers’ strike) and 3.9m last year. Without better industrial relations and there was reason to hope that political transformation would reduce the intensity of that conflict — the bank points out that an employment-oriented industrial strategy is certain to be a nonstarter.

It estimates that increased union activity raised African real wages in the formal sector by about 15% above what they would have been from 1979 to 1990. “The evidence is clear that higher wages have led to lower demand for labour” (though by how much is disputed). It further estimates that, in the absence of the 15% union-induced increase, formal African employment would have been 200 000–400 000 above the present level of about 5m. Such constraints on the labour market clearly one hand, and promoting social democracy on the other through tripartism, worker co-determination and the right to strike — as has draft new labour Bill does Yet few would expect the ANC to suddenly ditch its union ally of struggle days by adopting a Thatcherite approach.

As Mboweni explains: “We have come out of a political struggle in which we struggled for specific things — social justice, democratisation of the workplace, broader democracy in society. But,” he says in the latest SA Labour Bulletin, “we have also struggled against the sort of institutional arrangements which made it difficult for workers or employers to interact more productively. The world tends to see globalisation in terms of sizing down, reducing workplace democratisation, increasing disallowing unions and so on.

“We need to liberate productivity from that kind of perspective,” says the Minister. “The success of the SA experiment depends on how determined business and labour are to move along a new path.”

This calls for a “different kind of productivity” and entails moving “more towards workplace forums where issues of organisation, new technologies and restructuring are discussed so that workers feel they are part of decision-making. “So, yes, there’s a sense in which we’ll be moving against the current of declining union power internationally,” he says.

Though the draft labour Bill increases union bargaining power, which some employers, might be expected to resist, Mboweni is confident of getting it into law with its fundamental proposals intact (Leaders February 10). He bases this view on discussions with some key business and union leaders and other parties in the Government of National Unity. He has not had comment on the Bill from the ANC and SAP, implying that they accept it as “part of the overall programme of social transformation”.

But the extent to which Cosatu shares this view is open to ques-
tion. As the remarks of its president, John Gomola, made clear at the launch of the National Economic Development & Labour Council (Nedlac), the unions are not entirely comfortable with the direction in which the ANC government is steering labour relations (Current Affairs February 24).

Mboweni and government set great store by Nedlac as a forum for reaching consensual solutions on industrial policy and the labour Bill. But he prefers not to be drawn on whether government will actually impose obligations like co-determination where these are resisted by employers. Instead, he hopes for “less muscle and more will and management of the process.”

The imposition of worker control of industry (similar to the British Labour Party’s notorious “Clause Four,” which its leader Tony Blair has been intent on scrapping) is not ANC policy, however sympathetic the ANC may be to unions still captive to socialist ideas.

For instance, the issue of centralised bargaining so dear to Cosatu seems to have been budged in the Bill. Mboweni is “not convinced” that centralised bargaining is appropriate for SA. He favours “bargaining at all levels.” It is interesting that the Bill, which has been criticised for being too prescriptive, does not impose the duty to bargain, as the old Act did. Bargaining, he says, must come “as a result of the exercise of power by the parties.” This is effectively the position now, except that the new law seems intended to give more leeway to enable smaller enterprises to bypass union clutches.

Mboweni and the government’s fundamental concern is economic growth and development and their chosen path to achieve this is by forging a “social partnership” among business, labour and government. Warning recently of his intention to crack down on dissentists and anarchists in Cosatu and other ANC-linked organisations, President Nelson Mandela said “SA demands practical action to ensure economic growth. We have to speak with one voice. We have to endorse the need for workers and unions to be partners with government in building this country.”

Mboweni reiterates this goal “I think it will take us time to develop a really serious concept of social partnership. Nedlac plays a role. If government, business and labour can put their stamp of democratisation on society, we would be successful.”

It’s a big “if.” Recent research (Voices of a New Democracy) published by the Centre for Policy Studies finds that ordinary union members are deeply suspicious of the idea of tripartism and don’t want their leaders associating too closely with “the enemy.” While the study’s results generally show that warnings of a coming consolidation in SA are based on flimsy evidence, says consultant Andrew Levy, “they do suggest that the workplace may be one area in which the attitudes which could prompt conflict are very much alive. Union leadership may face a uphill battle to convince significant sections of the membership that the strategy which Nedlac represents is worth supporting.”

“Continuing the rhetoric of the past might convince members that leaders are not ‘selling out’ but may also reinforce the attitudes which ensure continued enthusiasm for adversarial approaches.”

The mood of the unions, according to Cosatu spokesman Neil Coleman, is “very focused and serious, so the idea that we’re on the defensive is a misreading.” This focus is on the new labour Bill, Nedlac negotiations, wage bargaining and “getting back to the shop floor” by directly involving the membership in wage talks. Greater worker involvement in driving the negotiations may mean tougher bargaining for employers in the short term, he concedes, but the thrust is “back to basics.”

Nor is Cosatu pessimistic when it talks of fundamental change in the economy. Last year’s Numsa strike, which Coleman says was less about the 10%-10.5% wage rise, could be seen as a prelude to battle over questions such as industrial reorganisation, wage grading and human resource development — issues over which the National Union of Mineworkers almost went on strike last year.

“Capital and labour will either reach an accord or we are heading for a period of confrontation. If there is no framework in which workers can see their concerns, such as narrowing the wage gap, being addressed, there will be confrontation.”

Though Nedlac provides a national framework for discussing things like tariff reductions, Cosatu wants more detail at industry and plant level. “We see those three tiers as inseparable parts of an integrated package.”

Can we expect the level of strikes to rise? “That completely depends on how these issues are addressed,” says Coleman, adding that it’s “a fallacy to think that we sit and plan strikes.”

Cosatu’s “preparedness to have a three-year plan also shows that workers and unions are not simply expecting immediate gratification in percentage wage increases but want to ensure that those below the poverty line get more, there’s a skill development programme and so on. It needs to be intelligently approached by employers, unions will do the same.”

Conflict is inherent in industrial relations, says Coleman, referring to the draft labour Bill, which Cosatu views as an attempt to create a framework for constructively managing that conflict. However, “we don’t find the framework strong enough, especially on industry bargaining.”

The balancing act being attempted by Mboweni’s new labour dispensation is predicated on a belief (or hope) that capital and labour can forge a new industrial relations culture in which both pull together for the greater glory of the GDP. This may, like SA’s “miraculous” democracy election, be possible (in the sense that anything is possible) and if the ANC pulls it off, SA will have chalked up another rare settlement.

Unfortunately, experience elsewhere suggests this is unlikely and deregulating labour relations to make a flexible labour market is a sure way to achieve growth and anything approaching full employment.
‘Poorly managed unions will suffer in new system’

ESAN IN DE KOCK
Education Reporter

BADLY managed unions may be at a disadvantage under the proposed system of workplace forums aimed at joint problem-solving and decision-making, says Labour Minister Tito Mboweni.

But he said well-organised trade unions would find the forums working to their advantage with a resulting smaller workload.

Speaking at the first of a series of graduation ceremonies at the University of the Western Cape last night, Mr Mboweni said the proposed forums — contained in the draft labour bill currently under discussion — were set to bring democracy and transformation to the workplace.

The South African reality was one of a managerial system where workers simply had to implement what management had decided.

This, said Mr Mboweni, was cause for much conflict.

Joint problem-solving and decision-making was the only way to transform the situation and bring about democracy and transformation in the workplace.

He criticised "prophets of doom" who feared this kind of proposal was too radical for South African society and could work only in a mature democracy.

Unions had nothing to fear and they would not be marginalised by the workplace forums, Mr Mboweni said.

Industrial councils had a high failure rate in trying to resolve disputes, whereas independent mediation services boasted a 70 percent success rate, and his department recommended a statutory but independent commission to resolve disputes.

Mr Mboweni told graduates and their families that all South Africans had to avoid claiming they had superior solutions to problems.

No-one in South Africa had yet lived under a democracy.
Trade union unity

(a real prospect)

RENEE GRAVITZKY

TEN years after its launch, Cosatu membership rose to a record high and for the first time the prospect of trade union unity appeared to be a real one, Cosatu's Neil Coleman said yesterday.

Cosatu's central executive committee accepted at the weekend the applications for affiliation from the newly formed SA Agricultural Plantation and Allied Workers' Union, SA Boilermakers' Union and SA Society of Bank Officials (Sasbo).

These unions would contribute an extra 12,000 members to the federation, bringing its membership well above 4.4-million.

Coleman said the federation had received approaches from another 10 unions, mainly in the public sector.

The SA Boilermakers' Union was an affiliate of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions while Sasbo was an affiliate of the Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsal).

A formulated position was agreed to on the draft negotiating document of the Labour Relations Act to be negotiated within the labour chamber of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), Coleman said.

Cosatu would refer its position on the Act to both Nactu and Fedsal so as to "as far as possible present a consensus labour position" within Nedlac.
TWO groups of South African public service trade union representatives will go on a study tour of Sweden as guests of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida).

The first group, of 21 people, leaves today.

This was announced yesterday by Public Service and Administration Minister Zola Skweyiya.

The visits were funded by Sida "as a contribution to the normalisation of labour relations and the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness in the public service."

Accompanying the first group will be special ministerial labour adviser John Ernstzen and negotiating team member, Themba Sangon.

They will meet the Swedish minister of labour and visit the Swedish Association of Health Officers (SSHAF), the tax and inland revenue department, trade unions for the civil service, the Association for Salaried Employees within the Civil Service Labour Court and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Sace).

The object of the visits was to enhance good labour relations and the empowerment of unions and staff associations with the necessary skills for collective bargaining, the minister said in a statement.

The second group would leave some time in June — Sapa.
Union says no talking now until its demand is met

THE Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) resolved yesterday to suspend all plant- and company-level wage negotiations until employers agreed to demands for centralised bargaining.

The 45 000-member union took this decision at its three-day national bargaining conference which ended at the weekend.

The union said employers in the petroleum, consumer goods, glass, heavy chemicals and rubber sectors faced co-ordinated mass action culminating in a national strike if they failed to agree to centralised bargaining.

The union decided also to press for a 20% across the board increase and a R1 600 minimum wage.

Union wage policy would also encompass equal pay for work of equal value, career paths for all, training, recognition of prior learning, fair promotional systems, removal of all wage discrimination, a single grading system, the narrowing of wage gaps, a 10% differential between grades, the reduction of the number of grades, and full disclosure of information and worker participation in decision-making.

CWIU president Abraham Agulhas said the union had come to "stop employers taking decisions on their own over investment, restructuring, training and new technology".

Cosatu president John Gomomo urged workers to discuss the draft Labour Bill and said although the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) was of Cosatu's own making, it was not a "holy cow".

Cosatu would continue to assess its participation in Nedlac and "would pull out" if it did not remain accountable to membership, result in redistribution of wealth, increase worker power and deepen democracy, he said.

Labour Minister Tito Mboweni faced a barrage of questions on dealing with the duty to bargain and workplace forums.
Members must fight NP - Nehawu

Labour Reporter

GIANT public sector union Nehawu has called on its members to "fight" the National Party and the Western Cape Provincial Administration to ensure a meaningful affirmative action programme is instituted in this province's public service.

The union is concerned that "the same old NP operatives" are implementing affirmative action in the region—without taking working class interests into account.

"If workers do not take control of this process our aims and objectives will never be met," Nehawu said at its regional congress last weekend.

Nehawu believed "the NP will substitute affirmative action with window-dressing," it emerged.

The union further believed the NP was implementing its own agenda aimed at protecting the "old bureaucrats and attacking workers." (124)

The union resolved "Nehawu should rally all its members to fight the NP and the Provincial Administration of the Western Cape." (APL 2/14/95)
Union will work for ‘complete victory’ for all

Aim: closer ties with SACP, civics

ROGER FRIEDMAN
Labour Reporter

THE National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (Western Cape) has resolved to strengthen its ties with the SA Communist Party (SACP) and SA National Civics Organisation (Sanco) to “ensure a complete victory for the democratic forces” in the 1999 general elections.

This was one of the resolutions taken by the Nehawu regional congress at the weekend — which will form the Western Cape’s position at the national congress later this month.

Noting that last year’s election did not bring about the ultimate victory”, and the “need to ensure a complete victory for the democratic forces”, Nehawu resolved to play an active role in strengthening the ANC, Cosatu/SACP alliance in the lead-up to 1999’s poll.

There was a need to ensure that bread and butter issues of the working class were taken up at community level.

To this end, Nehawu resolved to give the SACP a platform at all union meetings — especially at workplace and branch level, to encourage members to participate in civic structures and to embark on joint campaigns with Sanco.

Sanco is not officially part of the alliance, but is perceived to be closely tied to it — ideologically and through its membership base.

Other resolutions adopted at the Western Cape congress included:

- Fighting for a legislated minimum wage in the public service of R1 500 a month within a year.
- That all working parents have access to “adequate” child-care facilities, at work and at union meetings.
- Deploying the union’s most active members at different institutions to maximise their effectiveness.
- Providing training to shop stewards, whose terms of office should be extended from one year to three years.
- Campaigning for legislated literacy programmes at workplace and community level.
- To fight for the disbandment of public service bargaining chambers at provincial level and for the formation of public sector forums at national and provincial level.
THE CAPE

Women's issues hold the floor

Labour Reporter

WOMEN enjoyed much of the limelight at the South African Municipal Workers' Union's fourth national congress held at Tongaat in KwaZulu-Natal.

The congress at the weekend debated at length steps to empower women in the union and in the broader, societal, context.

Among the resolutions agreed to were the establishment of special training courses for women shop stewards, that the union should fight for a balance in the number of men and women in municipal employment, and that the union should develop clear policies on sexual harassment.

Recognising the critical importance of local government as "a focal point of delivery of basic goods and services", Samwu resolved to urgently embark on a voter registration campaign.

It was agreed that the union would attempt to take steps to ensure that all municipal workers were released from normal duties on April 18 and April 26 to assist in registering people for the election.

The congress stated strongly that local government was "not a servant" of provincial government — and pushed for the establishment at national cabinet level of a Ministry of Local Government.

On the implementation of the RDP, Samwu noted the fact that local government was best positioned to deliver basic services effectively.

"Samwu would therefore strive to play a leading role in RDP structures."

It was also resolved that a new grading system be introduced, one that promoted career paths for municipal workers and rewarded higher skills with appropriate wages.

"Production systems should be reorganised and jobs redesigned to provide more rewarding employment. Adult basic education must also be placed on the agenda of the government, employers and the union," secretary Roger Ronnie said.

Petrus Mashisho was re-elected as president of the union for the fourth consecutive term. Sandile Mqaza was returned for a second term as vice-president along with treasurer Joseph Mpharing. Jimmy Mohajane was elected as assistant secretary.
Correspondent Reports

THIRTEEN talks as strikes threaten
court unions in crucial wage

NEW PAY PROPOSALS FOR 1.2 MILLION PUBLIC SERVANTS

JOHANNESBURG: A government task team begins talks
Unions insist on more

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

ALTHOUGH trade unions in the metal industry have rejected the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa’s opening offer of a 7.5 percent wage increase, they were yesterday positive of securing a better offer as negotiations progress.

The 13 unions in the industry are demanding a wage package that includes increases ranging from 13 to 33 percent, a minimum wage rate increase and the revision of the job grading and training system.

Seifsa, however, wants no increase on the current minimum wage rate “to stimulate further employment opportunities”, and also wants non-wage issues to be discussed separately.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa rejected the employers’ offer, saying it was not interested in separating the wage issue from the rest of the demands.

Metal and Electrical Workers Union of SA general secretary Tommy Oliphant said although this year’s Seifsa offer was better than last year’s, the unions and employers were still far apart. Oliphant said the unions also wanted the current 13 job grades to be reduced to five to close the wage gap between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.
Unions ponder new global role

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Solidarity to be sought with foreign unions

COSATU would attempt to establish solidarity with labour movements in southern Africa and other developing countries to prevent unfair competition and ensure SA's competitiveness by increasing wages in these countries, general secretary Sam Shilowa said at the weekend.

At Cosatu's three-day International Policy Conference, Shilowa said the formulation of an international policy which protected workers in heightening unemployment and strengthening South-South links was crucial to ensure SA was not faced with further unemployment. "In this way, we will avoid being caught in the bosses' competition war."

Mather said that the thinking behind a social clause stemmed from the view that goods and services should not be bought from countries where workers were not free to form trade unions or to bargain collectively.

Many unions in industrialised countries supported the concept while southern countries saw 'social clauses as a disguised protectionism by northern workers against southern goods and services', Mather said.

Shilowa said the federation should actively participate in this debate as "our Asian and African colleagues regard the social clause as a Trojan Horse for protectionism", whereas "our understanding is that the social clause is about promotion of basic human and trade union rights and basic tenets of democracy."

Shilowa called for democracy of the country's foreign policy where all parties "helped develop the policy."

Cosatu calls for controls in use of migrant labour

COSATU President John Gonome has accused employers in the mining industry of trying to destroy the NUM by promoting ethnicity and conflict between local and migrant workers.

At Cosatu's three-day international policy conference at the weekend, he said "irresponsible forces inside the country have been trying to whip up emotions around the issue of labour migration... The demon of xenophobia has been used worldwide to divide workers, to exploit migrants and undermine trade union unity."

However, the conference decided to call for a quota on the number of foreign workers in SA.

Cosatu's Neil Coleman said the inflow of migrants and refugees had to be regulated and controlled. "One does not want to say that no foreigners should take certain jobs, but we need a degree of planning and stability."

Gonome called for a meeting of Southern African states to develop a programme to allow for integrated economic development and the raising of living standards of all and to discuss migration.

The federation noted that certain employers exploited illegal migrant workers by paying sub-minimum wages which "undermines gains made by organised labour."

Other resolutions adopted included calls to scrap the Apartheid Act and commence a process of negotiation and developing the skills of migrant workers. Fair and proper control of migrant workers into host countries should be achieved.
Union seeks transformed workplace

TRANSFORMING the workplace and giving effect to the reconstruction and development programme through efficient services were key issues under discussion at National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) fourth national congress, its general secretary said yesterday.

Nehawu general secretary Neal Thobejane said the formation of one public sector union, opposition to all forms of privatisation, the formation of a position on the public service negotiations, redrafting of the Public Service Act in accordance with the proposed Labour Relations Act, campaigning for a social wage policy and international solidarity were other issues under consideration.

A year after the election, the approximately 130,000-strong union was well placed to review its position and how it would relate to the new situation and the Minister for Public Service and Administration.

Public Service Ministry adviser John Erentsisi said the rationalisation of the sector would have only a limited effect on Nehawu's membership. He said rationalisation would be taken to its final conclusion only with the union's involvement.

Thobejane, in his secretary report, said: "Clearly to date there has been a lack of political will on the side of the ANC to even implement the strategies developed together prior to elections. "Trade unions need to become more aggressive in asserting the values of political and economic principles that should be coming through in the RDP." Weaknesses in union structures were highlighted, with the union continuing to experience problems in servicing members in various regions, with structures in some regions collapsing as a result.
Numsa kicks off wage talks

RENEE GRAWITZKY

WAGE negotiations covering 25,600 motor assembly workers started this week with the National Union of Metalworkers of SA's core demands homing in on implementation of education and training, a long-term wage policy and wage model and productivity issues.

The first plenary session of the National Bargaining Forum took place this week. Two task groups, established to investigate a wage model and education and training programmes, reported back to constituencies.

Industry sources said the two task groups contributed to more focused and less conflictual negotiations.

Numsa also motivated its other demands relating to worker rights, job security and employer contributions to the reconstruction and development programme.

On the employer side key issues were industrial peace and stability, longer term agreements, the decentralisation of issues relating to plant flexibility and productivity and competitiveness.
Cosatu not set for breakaway

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions was not prepared to break away from the ANC-SACP alliance but the time for that had not yet arrived, the federation's national president, Mr. John Gomomo, said in Durban this week. He said the federation was "not married" to the alliance and would break away from it if that would advance the unity of the workers.

Gomomo, who was in the city to mobilise workers for the local government elections and report on the proposed Labour Relations Act, said Cosatu was committed to achieving unity with the National Council of Trade Unions and the Federation of South African Labour. Talks between these federations started last year and the ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance had been identified as one of problems in this process.

"If we had a choice between the alliance and the unity of the workers, we would choose unity. The alliance should not stand in the way of unity," he said. He said the federation's secretary-general, Mr. Siphiwe Mngqeni, were even prepared to resign their posts if the workers felt they were hindering the process. But he felt there was still a need for the alliance because the strategic objective for which it was established had not been fully realised. "We are now at the transition and we have not put into power the Government that we want," Gomomo said.

Mandela and President Nelson Mandela are expected to address workers at a Workers Day celebration rally at King Zwelithini Stadium in Umlazi on Monday. The celebration will have a festive mood this year and internationally acclaimed musician Mbuyazi Ngema and other musicians will entertain the crowd.

Sr. Charles Nqakula will address a rally at Sundown Stadium near Mandeville. — Sowetan Correspondent
THE end of protest politics was the chief reason for the small turn-out of about 1,000 at yesterday's May Day rally on the Grand Parade, according to SA Communist Party members.

Mr Phillip Dexter, an SAPC member and ANC MP, said yesterday it was harder to get people to come to rallies now that the era of protest politics had ended.

Mr Jeremy Cronin, assistant general-secretary of the SAPC, said party structures countrywide had been depleted of their leaders after the general election, when many of them took up new jobs.

Contradiction

He said yesterday's turn-out was not significantly smaller than that last Thursday, when Deputy President F W de Klerk spoke at a rally on the Parade to mark the first anniversary of the first democratic election.

A member of the International Socialist Movement, who asked not to be named, said workers also noted "a contradiction" when they saw that people like Mr Dexter, who fought in the National Health and Allied Workers' Union for a R1 300 minimum wage, was now a partner in a government that was offering Nehawu workers R1 076 a month.

Speakers at the rally attacked the privatisation of parastatal corporations.

Mr Zwelinzima Vavi, assistant general-secretary of Cosatu, called for the "full nationalisation of Telkom, the Post Office, the SABC, Eskom, Iscor and all the industries that are key to the delivery of the RDP."

He said the World Economic Forum had been vastly over-optimistic when it had invited a leading trade unionist, Mr John Gomomo, to address a meeting of theirs in Kempton Park on "the inevitability of privatisation in South Africa."

2/5/95

Mr Cronin said the SAPC was not inflexible, and it was not opposed to the sale to individuals of some of the vast landholdings of the SADF, for example, or even "the privatisation of apartheid white elephants like Mosselgas, if someone wants to buy it."

"But selling off the parastatals to pay off government debt was like selling the roof of one's house when the sun is shining so as to pay off the bond more quickly."

We need the state corporations to meet the social needs of our people. That is the efficiency we want, not the efficiency of making private profits, and of retrenching people.

Scabs

He congratulated the ANC for the "quite progressive" Labour Relations Act it had produced, especially since it guaranteed the right to strike.

On the other hand, it allowed management to hire scab labour. In his view, employing scabs during a strike should be outlawed.

"But workplace forums should not be used to undermine shop-steward structures, he said.

"NEW JOBS HAVE DEPLETED SAPC LEADERSHIP"
Ramaphosa calls on ‘Oppenheimer’s, Ruperts’

JOHANNESBURG: The business community was not yet seen to be committed to the country’s development, but would only secure its interests if this changed, ANC secretary-general and Constitutional Assembly chairman Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said yesterday.

He told a Congress of South African Trade Unions’ Workers’ Day rally at the Rand Stadium here: “The Oppenheimer’s, the Ruperts must get the message clear. Their interests can only be secured if they have a clear commitment to the future of this country.”

They should help create jobs and stop billions of rands leaving the country to create jobs for people elsewhere, Mr Ramaphosa said. A strong economy was needed to underpin democracy in SA.

The business community needed to become part of the Masakhane (build together) campaign, he said, referring to a government initiative for public involvement in its Reconstruction and Development Programme.

Mr Ramaphosa appealed to managers to show good faith in this year’s pay negotiations and avoid strikes. It was time to rid the workplace of racial discrimination and bad working conditions.

About 500 people arrived for the rally and huddled on one side of the almost empty stadium.

Mr Ramaphosa said: “This stadium is supposed to be full with workers coming to celebrate May Day. Our unions have become weak.”

Gauteng Premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale urged workers to take part in the constitution-writing process and the local elections in November, otherwise last year’s election victory would be “hollow”.

Strike

Mr Sexwale said: “You elected a government and then strike at it. You want to protect this government so you can use it as your tool.”

Ester, Cosatu treasurer Mr Ronald Mofokeng pledged support to public servants whose pay talks with the state are deadlocked recently, especially teachers who want an 18% pay rise — Sapa
International union workshop kicks off

A four-week workshop to build leadership and organizational and educational skills among women trade unionists from the agricultural and forestry sectors in six African countries began in Johannesburg at the weekend.

The workshop was part of a long-term project initiated in 1986 with assistance from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers.

More than 1,500 women have been trained through the project since 1986.

The 43 delegates at the workshop represent unions from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa.

Many of the unions in these countries did not until recently allow women to hold formal union positions.

Workers' Union of Ghana's women's co-ordinator Adwoa Saayi said mobilization of workers in the agricultural sector could be undermined by a number of unions operating in the same sector.

Dickson Motho, general secretary of the newly formed SA Plantation and Agricultural Workers' Union, said he hoped to learn from other African countries how they achieved unity among agricultural workers.

Beth Goodson of the ILO said solidarity among unions was necessary.

The course involves a study of rural workers' organizations, ILO standards for rural workers, collective bargaining, industrial relations, environment, pesticides, and occupational health and safety.
Rampboss wants another compaigonal after Rally's poor turnout
Business not committed to development, says Ramaphosa

Sexwale slams poor May Day turnout

BY MICHAEL SPARKS and SAPA

The late start and poor attendance at yesterday's May Day rally at the Rand Stadium in Johannesburg was criticised by Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale who said the stadium should have been filled.

Fewer than 1,000 people attended the rally.

Sexwale told the crowd it was their responsibility to make representation if they wanted changes to the new constitution.

"You have a representative in the Constitutional Assembly. He will hear you, he is one of you," Sexwale said, referring to Constitutional Assembly chairman Cyril Ramaphosa who was also on the podium.

CROWD at rally urged by Gauteng premier to take responsibility for shaping the new constitution

In his speech, Ramaphosa said business had not yet committed itself to the country's development. "The Oppenheims, the Rupert family must get their message clear. Their interests can only be secured if they have a clear commitment to the future of this country. This year, the business community must commit itself to really developing this country," he said.

He also called on business to help create jobs in SA, rather than allowing money to leave the country to create jobs for people elsewhere.

Congress of South African Trade Unions national treasurer Ronald Medokeng explained the poor attendance before the meeting by saying it was the first year that workers were required to organise their own transport, while in the past, Cosatu had paid for buses.

In a statement, Cosatu general secretary Sam Shilowa criticised business for paying lip service to change. It was not prepared to create sustainable jobs, he said.

"We also call on the Government not to diverge from the approach of closing the apartheid wage gap. Low-paid workers must be given the highest increases. Highly paid bureaucrats should have their salaries frozen or cut," Shilowa said.

Shilowa accused the International Monetary Fund of "undermining the sovereignty of South Africa by attempting to impose policies which directly contradict the RDP." "They are giving us advice, which we haven't asked for, to embark on wholesale privatisation, drop all tariff barriers, adopt a wage freeze and cut back social spending."

At a rally in Cape Town, SA Communist Party general secretary Jeremy Cronin said unions were bracing themselves for a battle to prevent the privatisation of parastatals, since there was no chance that free-market forces would provide electricity to rural areas...
NATIONAL office bearers of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union (Nehawu) would be empowered to take whatever action was necessary to push government to meet its wage demands within the central bargaining chamber, Nehawu president Vusi Nhlapo said yesterday.

Nhlapo said after Nehawu’s fourth and last national congress, that it had resolved to look at strike action to achieve its demands of R1 000 as a minimum wage phased in over three years, starting with a R1 200 minimum wage this year. Public sector negotiations continue on May 8.

The congress had focused on the union’s recommitment to socialism, the restructuring of the public sector, the democratisation of the workplace, the dissolution of the union and the formation of one public sector union, human resource development including education and training, and service delivery in the public sector.

Delegates resolved to resist any bid to “cut down jobs at functional level through so-called public service downsizing” and any improvements in conditions of employment which perpetuated disparities.

The merger with the SA Municipal Workers’ Union and Post and Telecommunications Workers’ Association scheduled for August would result in the formation of the largest public sector union and would become Cosatu’s second largest affiliate after the NUM.

Nehawu general secretary Neal Thebejane said that until then, the union would focus on building and strengthening its structures and worker capacity.

He said the union’s organisational problems should be seen in the context of its rapid growth from 120 000 in 1992.

Thebejane acknowledged the union’s focus had been mainly on the public sector to the detriment of private sector health care facilities. This would be addressed with the employment of an organiser to focus on the private sector.

The union had initiated research into health care delivery in the private sector.

Saps reports Nehawu’s Cape Town secretary Themba Nkon said workers at Parliament would protest at the National Assembly building today over pay demands.

This was the first step in a programme of action to highlight management “intransigency” in resolving pay disparities and low wages in Parliament.

Dispute

Pretoria — The Public Servants’ Association has declared a dispute with the SA Police Service, saying it excluded some civilian employees from a once-off payment of R350.

The association accused the SAPS of “unilateral decisions” on the use of R350 “rolled over” from the previous financial year.

It said this amount was set aside to meet the demands of SAPS employees who did not receive the R250 which was meant for all shift workers.

The association said police commissioner George Fiva mutually agreed that a committee of SAPS management and all employee organisations concerned would determine how the R350 should be used.

However, police management “unilaterally decided” to pay R250 to all uniformed personnel, not working shifts. The PSA demanded that 18 000 civilian non-shift workers also be paid R350. — Saps.
Nedlac gets down to business

BY THEO LESHLO

The National Economic, Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) had established an essential infrastructure and would begin discussing priorities today, the body's executive director, Jayendra Naidoo, said at a media briefing yesterday.

More than half the staff quota had been filled with members drawn from the trade unions, the business community and the government.

Naidoo said various constituencies would make their first formal presentations on the draft Labour Relations Bill at today's meeting of the Nedlac development chamber.

He said the struggle between the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (Nafcoc) and Business SA over the 18 seats on the body which were reserved for business, had not affected progress on the council.

Bobby Godsell, BSA's vice-president, agreed, saying that progress had been made at numerous meetings held between Nafcoc and BSA to resolve their differences.

The 18 seats were to be shared among BSA's 18 affiliated business bodies. However, Nafcoc demanded nine seats as it was the largest body representing black business and should be treated as an equal.
Mboweni doesn't pay, say workers

ABOUR Minister Tito Mboweni is struggling to find workers for his department. The problem, he says, is that he pays too little.

The former trade union leader made this candid admission at an impromptu speech at Rhodes University this week.

"I am struggling to get black workers to work at the department because they say we do not pay," he told about 100 mainly black students at a Workers' Day meeting organised by the Student Representative Council.

Mboweni appeared unannounced at the meeting after delivering a speech at a rally in Port Elizabeth. South African Communist Party leader and senator Thokozile Mntso was billed as the main speaker.

Students cheered, sang, ululated, shouted ANC slogans and danced when Mboweni entered the Rhodes General Lecture Theatre.

He told them that May 1 was a "significant international day which should be commemorated by all workers."

He said the day had emerged as a result of intense worker struggles and was recognised as early as 1886.

He then criticised black people who employed other black people to be their domestic servants for paying "unreasonable salaries" and then justified the low pay on grounds that "this is my aunt."

He said this kind of unfair labour practice was an abuse of social justice. A new labour relations bill was in the making and this would protect the rights of domestic workers, farm workers, and public sector workers.

Mntso hit out at what she termed "new-born" trade unions unions which were emerging only now when apartheid had ended and labour repression had eased.

She warned workers against abusing the strike weapon. "Enda"
Volkswagen acts against union

Renee Grawitzky

VOLKSWAGEN has derecognised the SA Iron, Steel and Allied Workers' Union (Veter en Staal) on the basis that it has refused to open up its membership to all races. It would now grant full bargaining rights only to the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa), the majority union.

Volkswagen's Human Resource Director Brian Smith said: "The decision was taken in the light of the principle — recognised by the Industrial Court — that a union is entitled to recognition only if it signs up a majority of employees in a particular bargaining unit."

Iron and Steel represented 11% of hourly paid workers against Numsa's 94%, he said. "Racially based organisations have no place in the new SA, where nation-building is a priority."

As a consequence of this, a number of members of SA Iron and Steel have resigned and joined Numsa. More recently, Numsa appointed two ex-SA Iron and Steel shop stewards as full-time Numsa shop stewards at Volkswagen.

Edwin Ncunde, chairman of Numsa's shop stewards' council at Volkswagen said this occurred after the company decided to derecognise the union on the basis that it would recognise only nonracial and majority unions in the plant.

He said Numsa had made it clear to Iron and Steel members that they would be accepted into the union "for the sake of unity as well as to strengthen our position."

Numsa has claimed that Iron and Steel has close to 500 members at Volkswagen.

Iron and Steel general secretary Len van Niekerk-Venter said the company had alleged that an agreement had been reached with its full-time shop stewards on the question of minority/majority union status.

The union had no knowledge of this and no mandate had been given to the shop stewards to agree to any such development in terms of which the union was derecognised, he said.

Van Niekerk-Venter has requested the company to produce such a document.

He claimed Volkswagen had "manipulated the shop stewards in order to recognise only Numsa."
Workers Survey Investigates Role of Unions

NEWS FOCUS

RENEE GRAVATTY

Workers Survey Investigates Role of Unions

Worker's rights have evolved over time, with the role of organized labor playing a significant part in the protection of these rights. Unions have historically been instrumental in advocating for better working conditions, higher wages, and protecting workers' rights. This survey aims to explore the current role of unions and their impact on the modern workplace.

Survey Results

The survey indicates that a majority of workers feel that unions are still necessary for protecting their rights and interests. However, some challenges and limitations have been identified, such as the decrease in union membership and the impact of globalization on the traditional labor movement. The survey also highlights the importance of worker involvement in decision-making processes and the need for more inclusive workplace practices.

Conclusion

While the role of unions has evolved, their contribution to the protection of workers' rights and interests remains significant. The findings from this survey emphasize the need for continued dialogue and collaboration between unions and employers to ensure a fair and just workplace for all workers.

References:

Organisers are arrested at demo

SEVEN South African Health and Public Service Workers Union members were arrested yesterday for organising an illegal demonstration in central Pretoria, police spokesman Captain Dave Harrington said.

The SAHPSWU leaders, including publicity secretary Mr Tshiliba Ntalo, refused to heed requests by the police to end a protest by about 200 union members at Transvaal House, where civil service pay talks were being held.

Illegal demonstration

Harrington said the seven had been charged with holding an illegal demonstration before being released on their own recognisances.

He said SAHPSWU protesters earlier in the day gathered in the same street where a rival union, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), had permission to stage a legal march.

"SAHPSWU did not have permission for its protest. Had we allowed the union to continue its protest in Van der Walt Street there would have been a clash between the two groups," Harrington claimed.

Thousands of Nehawu members took part in yesterday morning's march to pressure the Public Service Commission to accede to the union's minimum wage demands.

Fruitless negotiations

Nehawu organiser Mr Ze bullpen Dladlu said the march was called after 10 months of fruitless negotiations.

A memorandum detailing Nehawu's demands on minimum wages, a single public sector union, and restructuring of state institutions, was handed to the commission.

A reply was expected by the end of June, failing which Nehawu would consider further action, including strikes, Dladlu said.

Nehawu is demanding a minimum wage of R1 200 for members — mostly general hospital assistants, clerks and radiographers — earning less than R60 000 a year.

It aims to obtain for those workers a minimum salary of R1 500 by 1997. The government has offered a minimum wage of R1 075. — Sapa
Union puts on pressure

and hospitals targeted after talks fail.

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union yesterday began lunch-time demonstrations at Lifecare’s 37 hospitals and clinics in protest against unilateral restructuring by the company.

Nehawu general secretary Mr Neal Tobejane said the union was also opposed to Lifecare Group’s decision to suspend negotiations at the beginning of the year.

Business strategy

Tobejane said the reasons put forward by Lifecare for suspending the negotiations was that their business strategy had changed and clinics and special healthcare services had been separated.

Tobejane said since Lifecare came into existence 41 years ago, no apparent effort had been made by management to improve conditions of service for black employees.

The decision to embark on lunchtime demonstrations was taken on Thursday last week to force the company to resume negotiations and finalise all outstanding issues.

Tobejane said management’s decision to suspend negotiations meant the transfer of workers’ provident funds would not be possible this year, salary increases and parity between white and black workers would also not be achieved.

Negotiations

Lifecare spokesman Ms Helen Dugan, however, said management had not suspended negotiations, adding that a number of meetings were held with the union in January.

Dugan said further meetings were scheduled but did not take place because of illegal industrial action by Nehawu in the Eastern Cape in February.

She said the restructuring process did not threaten the security of employees, nor did it materially disadvantage them.

Existing divisions

Dugan said the process was based on a sound business strategy and was merely a streamlining of the existing divisions of the company to enable it to address the Government's new health-care policy.
Integration of troops ‘working well’

BY WILLEM STEENKAMP

THE Western Cape integration of former non-statutory forces into the SANDF was proceeding smoothly, instructors and trainees alike said this week.

During a press visit to the Touws River training area, Brigadier Dan Lamprecht, officer commanding Western Province Command, said he was “quite proud” to say the training had “worked well” within his command area.

The evaluation of 427 former MK cadres’ basic training phase at 9 SA Infantry Battalion bore this out, showing average scores of between 72.5% and 94.8% for map reading, musketry, fieldcraft, buddy aid, fitness and shooting.

The soldiers described their training as being “of a high standard” and “enjoyable”, and said there had been a shift in attitude among the former enemies.

SINGALONG: Led by Lance-Corporal Lucky Mathothe, former MK cadres in training at the SANDF grounds at Touws River break into song after weapons training.

Sanco in clash

JOHANNESBURG: Nine civic leaders were injured when factions of the South African National Civic Organisation clashed at a squatter camp in Krugersdorp, police said yesterday.

Police spokesman Lt-Col Henriette Besterveld said the fighting on Sunday pitted the new leadership at Lusaka section of the Swaneville squatter camp against members of the “old civic group”.

Unions to merge

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) is to launch one public sector union in August.

This is according to a joint statement issued yesterday by Cosatu’s Western Cape region, the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu), the SA Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu), the Post and Telecommunications Workers Association (potwa), and the SA Municipal Workers Union (Samwu). Merger committees have been established.

SAPA
Rally, march will herald giant new union

COSATU's bid to unite all public sector unions under one banner will be signalled today by a proposed rally on the Grand Parade and a march to the provincial buildings in Wale Street.

In the Western Cape the initiative would also mark COSATU's intentions to have public service decision-making powers removed from the National Party-controlled provincial government.

Unions expected to take part in today's action include the National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), the Postal and Telecommunications Workers' Association (Potaw), the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu), and the South African Democratic Teachers' Association (Satatu).

Nehawu, Potaw and Samwu have already agreed to the formation of the new union, while Satatu will decide its future at its annual congress in July.

Spokesman for Nehawu said yesterday the present unions would automatically fall away to make way for the new one.

The unions hailed today's action as "the first public display of unity of public sector workers in this province".

Together the four unions represent the interests of 350 000 workers across the nation.

The new union, provisionally called the Public Sector Union, will be born a national launch congress to be held in Gauteng from August 9 to 13.

Merger committees have been established nationally and provincially in preparation for the merger.

"We aim to send a clear message to management of municipalities, provincial administrations, universities, private hospitals, Telkom, the Post Office and the Education Department that workers have united around the battle-cry of: An injury to one is an injury to all," the unions said in a joint statement yesterday.

(Today) will be the start of our campaign for the transformation of the public sector from one of apartheid bureaucracy to an instrument that serves all the people of our country.

They gave their joint support for Nehawu's demand that Provincial Public Service Bargaining Chambers be scrapped forthwith "as there is nothing to bargain for at provincial level: salaries and conditions of employment can only be negotiated at national level."

The unions called on their membership to use mass action "to ensure that all workplaces are democratised," and demanded that Western Cape Premier Herman Kriel step the "unilateral restructuring currently taking place" within the province's public service.

If Mr Kriel continued restructuring, he would leave the unions with no option but to "throw them into disarray."
There seems little doubt that a Cosatu-aligned consortium is the leading contender in the bid for Anglo's controlling stake in Johnnic.

The Cosatu unions involved include NUM (National Union of Mineworkers), Sacwru (Commercial and Catering Workers' Union), FAWU (Food and Allied Workers' Union) and CWU (Chemical Workers' Union). Officials at NUMsa (National Union of Metalworkers) are still undecided.

The union grouping seems to have the lead over other contenders in that, more than most, they can bring credibility and cash to the deal.

The unions can justifiably claim to represent millions of black people, and given their practice of accountability and democracy, there is little risk of charges of enrichment of a few individuals rather than empowerment of the masses.

Aggressive

On the financial side, the unions' ability to direct hundreds of millions of rand of provident fund money to the deal means there is less emphasis on complex financial engineering to gear up a minimal initial investment.

But within the union movement there has not been whole-hearted acceptance of a more aggressive approach to the business of capital ownership.

The offer of a variety of business opportunities is making life complex for trade union officials. For the union movement, life through much of the 1980s involved a relatively uncomplicated commitment to building up a political power base and filling a political vacuum for black South Africans.

With that power base largely established by the late 1980s, and with increased control demanded by unions in the trusteeship of their provident funds being realised, a financial dimension was added to the political power.

The gradual move from company-based provident funds to union-organised funds and eventually the creation of the Sactu investment company has made the financial dimension of the union movement more complex.

Opportunity

Ebrahim Patel is advising Sactu's investment company on national funds and traditional investment strategies. Patel's approach has been to not only direct financial resources to the black community but also to develop a financial dimension to the union movement.

More recently, the drive towards black empowerment has led to the creation of a new category of union funds. These funds are designed to benefit the black community and to develop financial resources for the black community.

The union movement has also been involved in the establishment of financial institutions such as the Sactu investment company. This company is responsible for managing the financial resources of the union movement and has been involved in the development of financial strategies to benefit the black community.

Two Camps

Trade union officials appear to have split into two camps on the issue of business involvement. The one camp could be described as "purist" and has a fairly high level of apprehension about business and the role of capital.

The other camp comprises the "entrepreneurs" who believe the new South Africa offers a lot of opportunity for trade unions to take some of the profit that their members generate and use them to build up the resources of the union.

The purists argue that trade unions should concentrate on providing the needs of their members rather than diverting their energy to financial deals.

In addition, they charge that involvement in financial schemes will inevitably lead to a conflict between earning profit and members' interests. Irrespective of this, there is concern that profit will be used to build up the power base of individual officials rather than the resources and services of a union. And there is the danger that the cost of the pension or provident fund service to members is increased as the institution pays out to "union brokers" as well as its own middle men.

Another national co-ordinator explained that the willingness to trade and be available to advise was the biggest influence in his union's decision. The role of pension fund trustee is relatively new and frequently surrounding format is still evolving. In the past, advice has been sought on corporate bonds and exchange for unions. For trade union officials to pick up a "corporate" approach to business in the financial sector is new for them, and they are still learning the ropes.
Membership of unions takes 14.5% dive

Adrian Hadland

CAPE TOWN — Membership of registered trade unions had plummeted 14.5% to 2.47-million between October 1993 and October 1994, the National Manpower Commission’s last annual report said.

The commission, which has been replaced by the National Economic Development and Labour Council, said the decline was partly attributable to SA’s unfavourable economic conditions at the time, together with the concomitant effect of large-scale retrenchments.

A marginal decrease in union membership of 0.5% had been experienced in 1992.

Since 1979, however, rapid and consistent membership growth was achieved at an average annual rate of 8.5% — largely due to SA’s political situation and denial of workers’ political expression, as well as the realisation of benefits offered by organised labour.

Strike activities had also risen sharply in the past 15 years, reaching a peak of 5.8-million lost man-days in 1987.

In the year to October 1994, 2.1-million days had been lost in 804 strikes, excluding industrial action in the public sector.

Wage hikes remained the primary trigger of industrial action, discrimination and racism had emerged as “new strike triggers” last year.

The number of industrial councils had dropped from 102 in 1979 to 86 last year.

Between 1979 and 1993 only 161 new job opportunities had been created in non-agricultural sectors. The government and services sector showed the largest increases (more than 370 000) while the financial and insurance sector showed the biggest annual percentage rise of 3.5%.

Non-agricultural, formal sector employment declined steadily from 1990 to end-1993.

Sapa reports the backlog of cases before the Industrial Court had increased to a record 3 085 in October 1994. Its workload had increased from four cases in 1979, when it was established, to 8 400 last year.
Bill Jordan

Fighting for workers' rights a risky business
Brussels — South Africa has emerged as one of the few countries where trade union rights are improving, in a report by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, based in Brussels.

The report covers 98 countries and also praises Chile and Haiti. However, it condemns assassinations of trade unionists in 17 countries, with over 300 killed in Algeria and 178 in Colombia.

The report says “a more optimistic note” was struck in South Africa last year, with the elections and the admission of South Africa into the International Labour Organisation. It adds “A tripartite committee was created to draft a new labour code.”

“The committee’s preliminary report was welcomed by the unions, who are participating in the reconstruction programme.”

Nevertheless, the report notes there are still restrictions on the right of public sector workers to strike.

It complains that workers can be dismissed for striking, but welcomes court rulings “that striking employees cannot be fired if the strike is a valid part of the collective bargaining process.”

“The court has ordered the reinstatement of workers when it considered that the firings constituted an unfair labour practice.”

The report notes the Basic Conditions of Employment Act came into effect on January 1 last year giving certain basic rights to domestic workers. “However, they still remain unprotected by the Labour Relations Act and are not allowed to join unions, to bargain collectively or to strike.”

The report also notes the Agricultural Labour Act came into force in January last year extending some trade union rights to farmworkers. However, it says that last year there were strikes in the mining sector “related to racist practices by mine management.”
Unions hold indaba

FIVE major public sector unions and the Congress of SA Trade Unions began a three-day conference today to discuss the formation of a single public sector union within the federation.

According to sources within the five groupings, the new union will be formed in August this year.

The conference is hosted by the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union and the SA Municipal Workers' Union. The Post and Telecommunications Workers Union, the South African Democratic Teachers Union and the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union are also represented.

According to Nehawu, the conference will seek to identify areas of common ground on key issues facing the public sector.
Working women face worse discrimination

Renee Grawitzky

The increasing participation of women in the economy and the labour market has inadvertently resulted in an increase in discrimination and inequality, says the International Labour Organisation.

The June edition of the organisation’s flagship report, World of Work, said “The feminisation of employment has not been synonymous with improvement in the quality of employment.” Women workers continued to be discriminated against in areas such as pay, with women receiving 70% of the pay of men in the industrialised world.

Jobs dominated by women had traditionally been characterised by low status and remuneration.

Despite growing inequality in the workplace, however, there was an increased awareness by some governments of the need for gender equality. A growing number were adopting wage equity and affirmative action measures to accelerate women’s entry into leadership and managerial positions, the report said.

The organisation said most women workers worldwide continued to be concentrated in clerical, services, sales and middle-level professional occupations.

In SA, the status of women at work does not appear to be a matter of concern to most employers if one analyses employment practices. For example, the main thrust of affirmative action as interpreted by companies has been on racial lines, and disregards gender. This is not in accordance with the reconstruction and development programme, which specifies that affirmative action should apply to both blacks and women.

A map survey of a number of women in middle to senior management positions in a cross section of organisations revealed that some experienced overt discrimination such as inequality in wages while others experienced a more subtle and intangible form of discrimination. This could take the form of being constantly reminded of women’s other roles - as mothers and homemakers, as opposed to career women.

Some women perceived that women’s opinions were not given the same credence as men in the same or similar positions and men from middle-management level and below found it more difficult accepting women’s views.

One woman said “Women bring it upon themselves to certain respects. They have this constant fear of having to prove themselves and they try and overcompensate for being women.”

Others said that management was quite happy to let women remain in more junior positions even though they were performing more senior functions. Where confronted, management either said women were not ready, even though they had performed the tasks for extended periods or were being kept happy as they were affirmative action placements.

Comments by all the women interviewed indicated that they felt the “old boys’ club” was alive and well.

Fawu considers creating umbrella industry forum

Renee Grawitzky

The Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu) is contemplating establishing a national industry forum in the food sector with other forums failing under the main body.

The national forum would consider broader issues such as education, training and industrial restructuring with the aim of becoming competitive worldwide. The sectoral forums would negotiate wages and conditions of employment.

Fawu’s Valerie Flanagan said the forums would cover sectors such as sugar, dairy, fishing and baking.

She said initially the union would pursue its objectives in these sectors where it was strongest and able to achieve its goals.

Flanagan said initial discussions had taken place between the union and the Chamber of Baking which represented baking employers.

The union wanted to establish an industrial council in the baking sector, but “was trying to achieve this with the full understanding and support of both employers and workers.”

She said the forum would be prepared to discuss the formation of a sector forum.

Alberts said, however, that “we are concerned about the wisdom of such a move at this stage in the development of the industry where we are trying to preserve jobs and keep some marginal bakeries viable.”

He said the industry was dominated by a few companies with approximately 3000 small independent bakeries who would have to be accommodated.

Alberts said even within the “big six”, “some groups bargain at company level, others at regional level and some are totally decentralised”.

Western Cape leads boom in tourism

Theo Rawana

SA’s tourism industry is well on its way to recovery, figures released by the Central Reservations Bureau show.

The number of foreign tourists in April was more than double the figure for the same month last year’s 62 689.

The most popular province was the Western Cape, which attracted 35% of the visitors. The total number of bed nights sold to foreign tourists in April was 265 652, 117% higher than the figure for April 1994.

Asian tourists accounted for the greatest increase in market share according to comparative data from Statistics South Africa.

The study, conducted by Steinberger Reservation Service, reported that family accommodation accounted for an average of 5% of business volume, and was as high as 12.5% at hotels in the US.

The group has two hotels in SA the Carlton Court and the Malamala
UNION MEMBERSHIP

Levelling off

In rich countries, the Economist recently observed, trade union membership and influence are declining, particularly among young people, and in poor ones, they remain weak and often repressed. "Driven by technological progress and economic liberalisation, global capitalism is changing fundamentally, and in ways that are apparently munical to organised labour."

Union membership in Australia, Britain, Japan, the US and France has fallen in the last 20 years, is unchanged in Germany but has risen in Sweden, Italy and Canada.

In SA, according to the Department of Labour's latest figures (October 1994), almost 2.47m workers belonged to registered trade unions — a 14.5% decline from the previous year's 2.89m. This is partly due to saturation in growth potential of new unions since 1980 and partly to the decrease in job opportunities during the recession.

Unregistered unions had a membership of almost 510 000 (1993: 528 000), giving a total membership of 2.98m — about 25.7% of the total economically active population.

Bucking the international trend, the department expects union membership will, in the long term, "still show a moderate growth in the now relatively unorganised sectors, such as central government and agriculture." While that could be the case, the advent of a popular ANC government may, ironically, cap future union growth.

Over 30 unions applied for registration last year, of which five were registered, together with 12 who applied in 1993 and four in 1992, bringing the total to 213 unions. The registration of nine unions was cancelled, either because they had ceased to function owing to lack of interest by members, or due to mergers with other unions — a development which has tended to boost the biggest labour federation, Cosatu, whose membership last year was 1.32m.

Cosatu's membership stayed at around 1,21m in the previous two years, having grown from 712 231 in 1987 and 924 499 in 1988. Having lost 50 000 members in the wake of the 1987 mine strike, the NUM has clawed back its position as Cosatu's largest affiliate, growing from 212 000 members in 1988 to 310 596 last year.

Cosatu has been beefed up by new entrants from the public service, affiliation of the SA Society of Bank Officials, the SA Bottlemakers' Union and the Agricultural, Plantation & Allied Workers' Union.

Meanwhile, intense bonkerad negotiations between labour, business and government continued this week in the hope of meeting Minister Tito Mboweni's July 17 deadline for sufficient consensus on the Labour Bill. Reports of the three working groups set up last week to expedite agreement on outstanding issues were due to be presented by the principals' committee as the FM went to press.

The principals — Mboweni, Bobby Godsell from business and Sam Shilowa from labour — have independently been looking into the questions of centralised bargaining and replacement labour. Fresh proposals from all three parties on certain issues were expected to be tabled this week.
Mass meeting
for unions
STAV 28 19 95
BY JUSTICE NIALALA
LABOUR REPORTER

Representatives of more than 1,0-million mine, quarry and energy sector unions in the southern African region will meet in Johannesburg this weekend to increase regional co-operation and strengthen strategies to fight worker exploitation.

Delegates from nine countries will attend.

The Southern Africa Miners' Federation conference will focus on labour troubles in Swaziland, the establishment of export-processing zones and closer economic cooperation between workers and the participating governments.
Unions launch new bloc

By Joe Mdhlela

A BLACK-LED trade union confederation is to be launched this weekend.

The launch, to attract at least 16 trade unions, including the South African Health and Public Service Workers Union, will be held at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on Saturday.

Other unions expected to be represented at the launch include the Azanian Workers Union, the Black Mining Workers Union, Education, Hospital and Church Workers Union, Meta and Engineering General Workers Union and the National Association of Civil Service Workers Organisation.

The Confederation, to be known as the South African Independent Trade Unions Confederation, is expected to embrace a number of independent trade unions in the North West.

The Confederation is expected to attract a paid-up membership of at least 120 000 at its launch, spokesman for the Confederation Mr Themba Ncalo said. Deputy president of Azapo Mr Pandelani Nefolovhodwe will deliver the keynote address.
Unions to march in Pretoria

PRETORIA: Trade union members will march on the Union Buildings here tomorrow to launch the SA Independent Trade Union Confederation, co-ordinator Mr Thembu Ncalo said yesterday.
Trade unions in new alliance

PRETORIA: About 500 workers marched on the Union Buildings here at the weekend to launch the South African Independent Trade Unions Confederation. The confederation, which comprises 14 trade unions, claims a membership of 230,000.
Unions unite for power

(39) January 7

ABOUT 500 workers marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria on Saturday to launch the South African Independent Trade Unions Confederation (Saituco).

The confederation, which comprises 14 independent trade unions, including the National Civil Service Union, the South African National Workers' Union and the Azanian National Workers' Union, claims a membership of 250,000.

Saituco acting general secretary Mr Thembeka Ncalo said member union leaders should bury their differences and start "leading workers out of Egypt and take them to the land of milk and honey, where they will enjoy the fruits of their labour."

He added Saituco would not join hands with employers who were exploiting workers "on a daily basis."

"We will fight tirelessly for the attainment of the nationalisation of all companies which are obsessed with profit making while disregarding the suffering of millions who are retrenched daily," Ncalo said.

Saituco is also demanding a living wage of R1,500 a month as well as a 40-hour working week and safe working places — Sapo
Role players down tools
for 'work issues' summit

Theo Rawns

LABOUR role players including unions, politicians and consultants will meet at next month's World of Work summit, which is designed to be an update on all the labour and industrial relations and human resource issues which have emerged since last year's elections.

Conference organiser Glenda Cohen says the conference will benefit a wide range of players in the SA labour arena, including company MDs, industrial relations and human resources managers, directors, consultants, affirmative action managers and union representatives.

Government representatives, lawyers, non-governmental organisations, employer organisation representatives, academics and all managers with an interest in the "world of work" stand to gain, says Cohen.

Labour Minister Tito Mboweni will open the three-day summit on September 6, while Nedlac executive director Jayendra Naidoo will address the theme, "Towards a strategic agenda for Nedlac".

Duncan Innes, manager and publisher of The Innes Labour Brief, will analyse the changing roles of alliances, with focus on politics and labour, Cosatu and the ANC alliance, trade union alliances and the expected new roles of business and unions.

Andrew Levy and Associates senior partner Andrew Levy will speak on "Industrial relations: the past and the future", focusing on the Nic Wiseman era, and the situations before and after the first national election and before and after the new Labour Relations Act.

Other speakers will include Independent Mediation Services of SA (Inmesa) vice-chairman Felicity Steadman, who will address "Resolution of new-age conflicts", examining whether the traditional adversarial approach to dispute resolution is appropriate for the resolution of structural, relationship and "new age" disputes. The talk will also focus on resolving centralised bargaining and on worker participation.
Council staff plan next step

SHOP stewards representing 14,000 municipal workers in the Western Cape were due to meet at the South African Municipal Workers' Union regional office in Athlone last night to decide whether to resume their strike as mediation had failed. CT 16/8/95

Sanmex regional secretary Mr Stanley Ysaka said shop stewards would present mandates from their structures at the meeting.

He expected the meeting would arrive at a "programme of action" — Municipal Reporter

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White collar union planned

JOHANNESBURG: The Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsa) has decided to create a union for management, specialist and administrative employees in the private sector.

General secretary Mr. Dannauser van der Merwe said the federation hoped the union would attract thousands of members.
ANC-Cosatu alliance will adapt

Is the alliance between Cosatu and the ANC about to end?

Many commentators have spent the past six months predicting this. Sometimes sharp disagreements between government and labour during the recent negotiations on labour relations legislation seemed to re-inforce predictions of a split.

But to the participants, the negotiations were an important process in redefining relationships — and identifying weaknesses.

Sam Shikowa, the general secretary of Cosatu, said that it was an "eye opener" for Cosatu and the ANC.

"It demanded co-operation and independence. We had to face the question, to what extent do we rely solely on the ANC minister? To what extent does the ANC accept everything labour demands?" The alliance emerged intact despite strains.

Cosatu adopted its own position and showed a willingness to fight for them. Cosatu's influence in the ANC depended on its strength outside the alliance.

In this sense Cosatu's mass action was less a signal that the alliance was over, than that Cosatu was asserting its position within the alliance.

There was an increase in alliance activity as the deadlock deepened and the unions mobilised for mass action, and as conflict between labour and government sharpened.

ANC figures, including President Nelson Mandela, addressed thousands of demonstrating workers Cosatu caucused with ANC MPs.

High-level alliance meetings were held where the legislation and the overall political situation were discussed. In these meetings, for example, the ANC made it clear that the protection of strikers would not be extended to a ban on scabs.

These discussions contributed to overcoming tensions and moving towards a settlement.

Cosatu's mass action was an assertion of its position in the alliance.

It would be inaccurate to say the labour movement had to fight for its demands against the opposition of government. The original draft bill was labour-friendly. The government proposals which broke the deadlock accommodated a number of labour demands.

But there was concern in many union and ANC circles that the alliance was not functioning as an active strategic centre. Tensions during the negotiations were a sign of this weakness.

Enoch Godongwana, the general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), argued that the process revealed two things: the nature of an alliance was that, while there was agreement on fundamentals, there were disagreements on certain issues and secondly, that there was an absence of strategic and policy co-ordination in the alliance.

Tito Mboweni, the minister of labour, concurred: "The alliance has a programme — the RDP. But now that we have settled on an agreement, the alliance needs to manage the political process."

The alliance between Cosatu and the ANC may face two further challenges.

First, there is the question of broader labour unity. The other two big federations in South Africa, the National Council of Trade Unions of state assets" and reducing tariff barriers, were more complex than labour legislation.

Many pundits believed a parting of ways was inevitable because a rational ANC must adopt free-market policies and clash with Cosatu's "anti-market" stance.

This argument denies an alternative possibility: that the ANC government adopts a more actively developmental, interventionist and social democratic approach.

After all, the idea of the RDP and much of its content, came from Cosatu. The result is likely to be an enduring partnership with labour, rather than a parting of ways.

□ The writer is consulting editor at SA Labour Bulletin
Workers sue Numsa for R1m

Port Elizabeth – Former Ford Motor Company workers in Port Elizabeth have issued summonses totalling more than R1 million against the trade union Numsa in the first civil claim against a Cosatu affiliate. The first case will be heard on Monday when an ex-Ford worker from Port Elizabeth will take the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) to court. Mr Solomon Mamooge will claim under-payment of a retrenchment package negotiated when Ford disinvested from South Africa 10 years ago. Numsa’s legal spokesman Sunil Narun could not be reached for comment. Own Correspondent.
ROBERT TALON

in some countries endangered species
Trade unions an

1
Protection for all employees

IN ADDITION to making it an inalienable right for workers to strike and, for the first time, entitling domestic workers to join trade unions, drafters of the Labour Relations Bill have taken pains to ensure that it is written in simple language.

In terms of present legislation, workers do not have the right to strike and even when strikes are legal those who choose to strike do not have any protection from dismissal.

The proposed Bill presents a simple method of procedure for a "protected strike".

"All that is required is that the dispute be referred for conciliation. In the event that the dispute remains unresolved the trade union is entitled to engage in a protected strike after notice to the employer.

"The employer may likewise institute a protected lock-out," the Labour Ministry explains in the draft Bill.

Ballotting will no longer be a legal requirement for a protected strike.

"In the past, strikes were often interpreted for technical irregularities concerning ballots. This prevented the proper conclusion of collective bargaining processes and constituted an unwarranted interference in the resolution of disputes," the ministry points out.

Now the new Bill protects workers from discipline by trade unions if they refuse to take part in strikes.

What is still not clear is the position of those workers who choose not to be members of a trade union. In terms of the Bill's provisions on closed shops the Constitutional Court may have to decide whether the right not to become a member of a trade union is invalid in terms of the Constitution.

Reportedly for political reasons, there are four different laws governing labour relations and, even then, employees in certain sectors have no legal protection.

Those mainly affected are domestic workers, university teaching staff and parliamentary employees.

This situation left in its wake laws that were complex and inconsistent and resulted in the duplication of resources.

The new Bill means the death of the existing Labour Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations Act, the Education Labour Relations Act and Chapter I of the Agricultural Labour Act.

The Bill covers all employees and employers in all sectors, other than members of the South African National Defence Force and its intelligence services.

Members of the South African Police Services will be protected by the Bill, but will not have the right to strike.

Professor Halton Cheadle, the Labour Ministry's special advisor, quipped at a briefing this week: "The cops are in but the soldiers and the spies are out!"

By the legislation:

The Bill encourages the right of workers to be involved in decision-making in the workplace. It introduces "workplace forums" which will serve as mechanisms for worker participation and representation at the workplace.

"Workplace forums are designed to facilitate a shift at the workplace from adversarial collective bargaining to joint problem-solving and participation on certain matters," the ministry says.

"Workplace forums expand worker representation beyond the limits of collective bargaining by providing workers with an institutionalised voice in mana-

But do you have a right to stay out of a union?

IT'S ALL but official — and it's supposed to be easy to understand. While workers will have the right to strike, there are elements of the controversial Labour Relations Bill that could be challenged in the Constitutional Court.

Political correspondent, RAFIG ROHAN, reports.

TITO MBOWENI... His drafters of the Labour Relations Bill have taken pains to ensure that it is written in simple language.

While the Bill promotes the principle of collective bargaining, it also equips unions with organisational rights by fully protecting the right to strike.

Organisational rights are:

■ The right of employers' premises for union-related purposes,
■ The right to stop-order facilities,
■ The right to elect trade union representatives,
■ The right to time off for union activities, and
■ The right to information for collective bargaining purposes.

Industrial councils will cease to exist and will be reborn as bargaining councils. The name change is necessary because the new Bill applies not only to the industrial and private sector but to all sectors of the economy.

The Labour Ministry saw as one of its priorities the need to use simple language in the writing of the Bill.

General decision-making. By creating a structure for ongoing dialogue between management and workers, statutory recognition is given to the realisation that unless workers and managers work together more effectively they will fail to improve productivity and living standards.

As with Industrial Councils, these courts will cease to exist and be replaced by Labour Courts. These will function within the Department of Justice and enjoy the same status as a division of the Supreme Court.

"The Goliath will have exclusive jurisdiction over labour matters under the Bill," the Labour Ministry points out.
Farmers may protest

Wyndham Hartley

THE controversial extension of the nomination period for the local government elections in the Free State could face a court challenge from organised agriculture in the province.

Free State Agricultural Union president Piet Gous said yesterday that opinions had been obtained and they were in the process of making a decision.

The new wrangle between organised agriculture and the ANC follows the sitting of Parliament last week when the union’s proposals for increased representation for farmers and other key payers in local government structures were rejected by the constitutional affairs committee.

A decision on the boycott of the elections by agriculture would be discussed at this week’s agriculture union conference in Vanderbijlpark.

Local government elections task group national co-ordinator Vic Milne said that the provinces had the power in terms of local government legislation to extend deadlines.

IFP’s trade unions form new alliance

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — IFP-supporting trade unions have decided to unify themselves into a confederation in a bid to strengthen their influence and secure representation in Nedian.

Two existing federations, the United Independent Trade Union of Southern Africa and the United Independent and Economic Trade Union of SA, would form part of the new body.

United Independent Trade Union of Southern Africa general secretary Mthetho Gumede said five independent unions — including the National Police Service Union (which draws its membership mainly from the KwaZulu Police), the United Security Workers’ Union and the United Farm Workers’ Union of SA — would also be part of the new confederation.

Representatives of a sixth union, the Natal Teachers’ Union, had agreed in principle to throw their weight behind the initiative, but wanted to consult further with constituents.

The unions met in Wankiepruit on the south coast for a two-day weekend workshop where agreement was reached on the need for such a confederation.

Gumede said the unions were denied representation in Nedian. It was hoped their combined strength would open the way for them to participate in the body.

The confederation would strive for a membership of at least 500,000.

IFP labour portfolio committee chairmanVelaphi Ndlovu, who chaired the workshop, said the new grouping would bring together unions committed to free market principles, and those that were “federal-thinking”.

The IFP would not interfere in the confederation and would leave it to operate independently.

Gumede said the fate of the United Workers’ Union of SA, which was “close to collapse”, had taught the unions a confederation would not survive if dictated to by politicians.

The leaders of the United Workers’ Union of SA had been invited to the workshop, but had failed to pitch up.

Ndlovu said the IFP was in the process of drafting a labour position paper. Academics Hugh Higbi and Themba Sono, from Cape Town and Wits Universities respectively, were assisting in this regard. It was hoped that the paper would be ready by end-November for submission to the IFP national council for approval.

He said the workshop had also decided that illegal foreign workers should be arrested, prosecuted and deported.

The number of foreign skilled workers should be reduced at a rate of 25% per annum. Trauma should be granted to SA job seekers.

Ndlovu said the labour position paper would spell out in detail the IFP’s position on such matters.
Nurses union upset by Sana

NURSES in the new Cosatu-initiated Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (Denosa) are upset that a 75% majority vote to dissolve the old SA Nursing Association has not been attained.

They have asked Sana to dissolve itself anyway in the interests of forming a single organisation.

"The failure of Sana to persuade its member branches to complete the process in line with (Denosa) objectives is simply retrogressive," Denosa said — Staff Reporter
World focus at Cosatu congress

JOHANNESBURG: Trade unions needed to pull together internationally and Commonwealth countries like Nigeria should respect trade union and human rights. Cosatu General Secretary Mr Sam Shilowa said on Saturday.

He was addressing more than 1,600 delegates at Cosatu's regional congress here.

International solidarity was one of Cosatu's challenges and priorities and would be addressed at an international trade union summit in Egypt next year.

He also said the human rights record of Commonwealth countries like Nigeria would need to be scrutinised at the Commonwealth conference next month.

There was also a need for worldwide support for a social contract clause in trade agreements.

"There must not only be free trade but there must also be fair trade," said Mr Shilowa.

This means countries dealing with must respect freedom of association, collective bargaining and a ban on child labour.

Cosatu would continue to work with the ANC and the government, he said. — Sapa

● See Page 19
Cosatu to focus on shop floor

Renee Gravitzky

COSATU would increase its emphasis on issues directly affecting workers on the shop floor, for instance health and safety, and would call not only for the disbanding of the National Occupational Safety Association but for government to stop funding it.

Speaking at the close of Cosatu's three-day health, safety and environment conference in Johannesburg yesterday, general secretary Sam Shilowa said Cosatu would vigorously campaign on health and safety demands.

He said affiliates should table the demands as formulated at the conference as part of the broader living wage and collective bargaining struggle.

Cosatu called on the leadership of affiliates to ensure there was effective co-ordination of the health, safety and environment policies of the federation.

At the start of the conference, Cosatu president John Gumede questioned the commitment of the leadership of affiliates to issues concerning health and safety.

He said the absence of a number of affiliates' general secretaries from the conference raised the question of who, at the senior level of affiliates, would co-ordinate strategies in line with decisions adopted at the conference.

The conference called for the restructuring and improvement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act.

In terms of the safety committees established under OHSA, the conference resolved to build the capacity of worker representatives in these committees through training and would call on government and business to provide funding to build this capacity.

Other demands related to the automatic prosecution and heavier penalties for negligence imposed on employers; the training and employment of more inspectors, job security, retraining and redeployment of permanently disabled workers, paid time off for AIDS education, and that employers cover medical costs and support families of workers who are HIV positive.
Non-Sadtu unions in W Cape take first step to set up new body

STAFF REPORTER

THE five Western Cape Teacher Unions not affiliated to the South African Democratic Teachers' Union would begin working towards unification in the next six months, the new chairman of the Western Cape Council of Teacher Organisations, Mr Chris Jaftha, said last night.

Mr Jaftha, principal of Portavue Primary School in Athlone, was elected chairman at the council's inaugural meeting.

The council is to comprise the Cape African Teachers' Union, the Cape Teachers Professional Association, South African Association of Vocational and Specialised Education, Sud Afrikaanse Onderwyisers Unie and South African Teachers' Association (Sata).

"This is a temporary structure until we form one body. By June the first unifications will have begun to take place," Mr Jaftha said.

The new body will not take the place of the Cape Council of Teacher Organisations, which is to continue as an umbrella for the Northern, Western and Eastern Cape Teacher Councils.

Mr Sam Pienaar, head of Excelsior Primary School, was elected council vice-chairman and Sata director Mr Mike Reeler, secretary...
Popcru furore over 'lost' cash

By CHIARA CARTER

The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) wants police to charge its former president and its recently fired financial administrator in connection with hundreds of thousands of rand that are unaccounted for.

Lefaro Matutoane, the union's assistant general secretary, said a complaint would be made to police about Norman Lepere, the former financial administrator, and Enoch Nelani, the union's former president.

Neither Mr Lepere nor Mr Nelani could be contacted for comment.

The move follows the discovery by auditors of alleged financial irregularities. The auditors said credit cards belonging to the union had been used by Mr Nelani to buy clothing worth more than R10 000. More than R6 000 had been paid for hotel accommodation, flights and meals.

They also said a new bakkie was bought in the union's name but was not reflected in the financial statements.

Mr Matutoane alleged the vehicle was in Mr Lepere's possession and legal action was being taken.

The auditors said the union's salary records were "virtually non-existent" and there were unexplained salary fluctuations from month to month.

They added that deposits made by the union were unidentified, there was no fixed-asset register and donated assets had not been accounted for in the financial statements.

Mr Matutoane said that R23 000 was unaccounted for in the financial records of the union's funeral scheme.

He denied the Gauteng and Mpumalanga delegations had walked out of a union executive council meeting called to discuss the irregularities.
INDUSTRIAL REL.- WORKERS ORG. - GENERAL
(134)

1996 - 1997
KwaZulu-Natal unions divided

Renee Grawitzky

TRADE unionism in KwaZulu-Natal would turn into a lame office with a culture of empowerment and incompetence without proper direction, vision, politics and decisiveness, commentator Ard Sitas said in the latest edition of the SA Labour Bulletin which focuses on KwaZulu-Natal.

Sitasa said that on the one hand unions were operating in a vulnerable and declining regional economy which was hostile to unions and on the other hand internal trade union problems were leading to division between leadership and the rank-and-file.

He said "it seems that no matter what arrangements are made at national and regional leadership level, the culture of expectation and direct action remains."

Sitasa said "there is a mood spreading through black communities that swift, radical action, whatever the consequences, not only demonstrates grievances but also achieves results."

Sitasa said was demonstrated last year by the new strike wave where workers termed and acted without and despite their unions in a culture that could only be described as "ad hoc democracy."

Sitasa said unions were under tremendous pressure as they were being regarded by membership as distant, ineffective, unorganised, untrustworthy and in "cahoots with management."

These views were reinforced in part during interviews with Numsa shop stewards in which they indicated that the aims and objectives of the union movement were no longer clear.

Sitasa said trade unions were facing serious organisational problems which were further exacerbated by the decline of the shop steward loca1.

The weakening of the trade union movement in KwaZulu-Natal would constitute a serious challenge to the labour movement as a whole, Sitasa argued.

Other contributors to the bulletin argued that despite regular "self-criticism by union leadership and shop stewards little had been done to alleviate the region's problems."

They argued that the "violence and the widening gap between leaders and rank-and-file has left workers exposed to the ravages of exploitation."

They cautioned that this did not mean that workers would accept a "silent partnership in an industrial system many feel they had little part in shaping."

Rather, they argued that future struggles would be shaped in the continuous process of rebuilding the unions and "leading them in new innovative directions."

However, if leadership failed in this workers "have shown that they are not afraid to challenge bureaucracies, authorities, capital and the state both in KwaZulu-Natal and nationally."


Unions to start mobilising across national frontiers

ROBERT TAYLOR

A0 17/192 (134)

"THINK global, act local", once the slogan of corporations and environmentalists, is fast becoming a rallying cry of international labour. In the past, trade unions found it hard to work in unity across national boundaries. Now they have started to mobilise in campaigns applying pressure on some of the world's large companies.

There is a growing number of examples of trade unions taking the offensive. Last week the Geneva-based International Federation of Commercial, Technical and Clerical Employees launched a campaign to unionise employees at US-based retailer Toys 'R Us in 20 countries.

The Teamsters, the US's largest trade union, has taken its protest against what it sees as an unfair distribution policy by Ahold, the supermarket multinational, to the company's home country of the Netherlands, placing advertisements in local newspapers which claim it is hurting the "poor and elderly" in the US by building hypermarkets outside inner cities.

The Postal, Telegraph and Tele- phone International, which represents unions in the sector around the world, is involved in international action against the US company Sprint after it dismissed Hispanic workers trying to organise a union at its La Conexan Familiar subsidiary in San Francisco.

Deutsche Postgewerkschaft, the German telecommunications union, has indirectly pressured Sprint to negotiate with its fired US workers by demanding that Deutsche Telecom introduces a code of basic labour standards as part of its deal to launch a £2.7bn joint venture with Sprint.

French telecom workers are holding a similar deal between France Telecom and Sprint, while STRM, Mexico's telecoms company, has drawn up charges against the US company which it alleges is in breach of the labour agreements of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement.

There is also widespread trade union mobilisation through the International Metalworkers' Federation against the anti-union behaviour of Japanese tyre manufacturer Bridgestone at its US Firestone subsidiary, where striking employees were replaced.

Officials from the same union visited the UK recently to lobby against British Steel's decision to close its ununited operations in Cleveland and open non-union steel-making facilities in Alabama.

Solidarity action is not just being organised by established union organisations. In the current unofficial strike at Merseyside in the UK, dockers are in direct contact with the Longshoreman's union on the US west coast. Support is also coming from union activists in Austria, Israel and Spain.

On 17/192 all international union action confrontation. Last year French companies Accor, the world's largest hotel chain, and food group Danone signed agreements with IUF, an international hotel and catering union, to uphold basic labour rights for their employees.

Such diversity of union activity suggests a belated awareness of the effect the new global economy is having on international labour and thus looks set to grow this year.

A June congress in Brussels by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions will adopt a strategy to challenge the power of transnational companies, especially around the Pacific rim.

The organisation, claiming to represent 127-million workers in 190 trade union centres around the world, plans an integrated information network in alliance with the 15 trade secretariats that cover unions in different industrial sectors.

"We are building a practical partnership in response to globalisation," says confederation general secretary Bill Jordan.

Such labour assertiveness against global corporations must not be exaggerated, but it appears to reflect a new subculture.

Says UK Labour MP for Rotherham Dennis MacShane: "In the past international labour was about meetings of top union leaders exchanging platitudes. "Now it involves shop stewards and union officials in a practical way as a normal, not an exceptional, part of their work."

He believes unions have taken "18 years to catch up with the globalisation of capitalism."

However, with the spread of the Internet and use of information technology, workers and unions are forging strategies that go beyond resolutions.

The new mood has been helped by the recent change of leadership at the head of the AFL-CIO union federation. Under its new president, John Sweeney, the US labour movement looks set to take the offensive against what it sees as the excesses of corporate America in the global economy.

Despite this, international labour still lacks the clout consumer pressure groups can wield against corporate power, much as that used by Greenpeace last year against Shell's threat to dump its Brent Spar oil platform in the north Atlantic. — Financial Times
Unknown union group demands to see Mandela

Labour Reporter

A NEW and unknown federation of trade unions, claiming it represents about 300 000 workers, has threatened action if it is not granted a meeting with President Mandela over the Labour Relations Act.

The Act was extensively debated in the National Economic and Development Council (Nedlac) by organised labour and business. But the Congress of Independent Worker Organisations (CIWO) claims it has never been consulted and that trade unions in CIWO are not represented in Nedlac.

CIWO said many aspects of the Act were unacceptable to it.

These included issues of freedom of association and recognition of minority trade unions.

Louis Roux, a spokesperson for the organisation, said it consisted of 18 minority trade unions ranging "from the far left to the far right".

Two of the trade union groups affiliated to CIWO are the United South African Trade Unions — a federation comprising 16 trade unions, and the South African Iron, Steel and Allied Industries Union, an affiliate of the white South African Confederation of Labour.
Colleagues opposed to new shift system behind job queue killings, say workers

By NEWTON KANHEMA

Workers at the NF Die Casting factory in Alrod, Alberton, where eight job-seekers were shot dead and 21 injured this week, suspect that the massacre was committed by workers who were opposed to the introduction of a different shift system.

The workers, who declined to be named, said there had been opposition to the new three-shift system by the Inkatha-aligned United Workers’ Union of South Africa (Uwusa), but the stronger National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa (Numsa) agreed with the three-shift system, which meant the creation of 200 new jobs. The three-shift system effectively translates to fewer hours per shift and results in less remuneration for current workers who collect good money from overtime work.

“If the new system is introduced, we will be working 40 hours per week instead of the 53 hours we are working now. Of those 53 hours, nine are overtime. We are paid an average of R580 per week and if we work 40 hours per week without any overtime, our salaries will go down by R130 per week,” said one worker.

Asked whether there was a perception that either a political party or a union was involved in Monday morning’s killings, all the workers present shook their heads.

One said: “Although Uwusa was opposed to the three-shift system, we don’t believe they planned this killing. The victims were a mixture of people.”

“I think this is work of disipemeng (criminals) who might be working here but are opposed to the three-shift system. I don’t think Uwusa was involved,” said another.

The managing director of the company, Barry Hallett, is still puzzled by the brutal attack.

“I wish we could get to the bottom of this. It is very difficult to come up with a substantial motive for this killing. I don’t think this is related to the shift systems. The workers would work fewer hours and get more or less the same. We have been talking about this for three years. The only motive we are left with is that of criminality.”

Hallett said Numsa had 50% support at the firm, while Uwusa had 17%. The relationship between the two unions was “much the same as anywhere else”. The recruitment of the 200 workers would go ahead “probably in two weeks’ time”. Consultation with the unions and the police had to be done before a “safe” venue for the exercise could be decided.
Metro union deal sealed

THE Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) yesterday signed an agreement with municipal trade unions to recognise the rights of union shop stewards.

The agreement was signed by the CMC, South African Association of Municipal Employees, South African Municipal Workers' Union and the South African Local Authorities and Allied Workers' Union.

The CMC said in a statement that the agreement "should enhance improved relationships between the CMC and its employees and result in minimising industrial conflict on the shop floor."

The agreement says the unions will try to settle disputes arising from the agreement by conciliatory methods in future. — Staff Writer
Tireless campaigner for workers' rights

ESTELLE RANDALL
Labour Reporter

JOSEPH Benjamin's wiry frame is well known in the Grabouw area. A worker at Applethwaite Farm, he is also a vice-president of the South African Agricultural, Plantation and Allied Workers' Union (Saapawu), launched by Cosatu last year.

All his members have just been dismissed after a work stoppage but he is calm — a calm that has been nurtured through five years of work at the farm.

Mr Benjamin has himself been dismissed and reinstated before.

"I was dismissed last year for 'inciting' employees to go on an illegal work stoppage," he recalled. He was reinstated in July 1995 after being suspended for two months. But he had been involved in his union's activities at Applethwaite — and elsewhere in Grabouw.

The union has a presence at 12 farms in the area and he claims credit for bringing them into the fold.

He arrived at Applethwaite five years ago as a labourer, attracted by the secure housing — which he may now lose if the dismissals go ahead.

"In 1993 when the Agricultural Labour Relations Act was introduced I got so excited," he said. "That was when I started to organise."

This organising happened secretly at first and he made few inroads in winning workers' confidence.

"People were scared. They feared that I would have a lot to say to them but would be silent in front of management. Once before someone who worked here had tried to organise and he was dismissed. So when I spoke to them to talk about the union, people didn't want to be associated with me."

☐ Union ponders dismissals

His big break came after someone reported his activities. The management instructed him to address a meeting of workers in the farm hall.

This was the chance he had been wanting for.

"All the workers were there," he said. "They listened to me for an hour and at the end got to their feet and cheered. That same night they all came to sign up with the union."

Nine months later farm management and Saapawu signed a recognition agreement.

Now there are seven elected shop stewards and channels to negotiate. And there is much with which workers are unhappy. In particular, they want what they term racial discrimination in their working conditions to end.

Mr Benjamin gave the example of the wages which he earned as a supervisor and the wages of colleague and fellow-shop steward Bozeman Cwana, also a supervisor.

"I am earning R225 a week," Mr Benjamin said, "while Bozeman is earning R147 a week. This is less than the R150 a week which some coloured labourers are earning."

He pointed also to the different housing allocated to African and coloured workers.

While permanent coloured workers on the farm live in family accommodation, Africans have to live as migrants. And there is the case of an alleged assault on the union's Western Cape vice-chairman, Mannie Daman, by a manager. Mr Daman has laid a charge and the matter is under investigation.

These are some of the catalysts behind the stoppage on Tuesday. Now there are the dismissals which, if they succeed, will undo all Mr Benjamin's work.
No way we'll merge with Sapu - region

By DAN RADINKU

THE GAUTENG regional office of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) is heading for a confrontation with its parent body during the forthcoming national executive council meeting, scheduled for February 22-25 in Johannesburg.

The hostility is likely to come from the unilateral decision taken by the national body to negotiate a possible merger with the predominantly white South African Police Union (Sapu).

Popcru's Gauteng regional secretary Lando Samu was this week reported to have confirmed the merger negotiations.

"The idea of a merger with Sapu is good because it will be in line with the policy of the country which encourages one industry, one union," he was reported to have said.

But Popcru's Gauteng Regional said the secret negotiations were not in line with the union's policy.

"We are absolutely not in for a merger," argued temporary Gauteng secretary Jacob Tsunane.

National assistance secretary Linenso Matutana said Popcru did not need a mandate to negotiate informally with Sapu. He added that it did not believe the two unions could be merged.
Unionists open Cape office to be near MPs

BY JUSTICE MALALA

South Africa’s second biggest trade union federation, the Federation of SA Labour Unions, has followed in the footsteps of the Congress of SA Trade Unions by opening an office in Cape Town.

The 212,000-member federation said it regarded interaction with Parliament, communicating its views to all stakeholders and developing co-operation in the labour field as vital to the business-labour-government relationship.

Fedlal’s former assistant general secretary, James Abrahams, will head the new office.

Fedlal said the office would make submissions on the upcoming Basic Conditions of Employment Act and issues such as occupational health and safety, environmental legislation and employment equity.
New force in public sector

PRETORIA: A federation of public sector groups claiming a combined membership of more than 250,000 was founded here on Tuesday. The Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees (Force) said in a statement it would promote an equitable labour relations dispensation for its members.

22/1/95
Nehawu digs in heels over staff cuts, pay

Labour Reporter

THE National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union (Nehawu) has vowed to dig its heels in over possible wage restraint and staff cuts in the public service.

This announcement has come on the eve of national public sector negotiations. Last year, strikes in the public sector accounted for 71 percent of “man” days lost in South Africa.

On Monday, government and public sector unions will meet in Cape Town to negotiate wages and working conditions for public sector employees in health, state administration and correctional (prison) services.

At issue will be finalisation and implementation of the grading system, agreed to in principle by trade unions in October 1995, and wage levels which should be attached to these.

Nehawu assistant general secretary Fikile Majola said the cost of implementing the new grading system had been estimated at about R5.1 billion for the 1996/1997 financial year. Yet, government had this year indicated only R5.5 billion was available.

“We do not accept that government can put to us a proposal costing R5.1 billion, only to tell us later that only R5.5 billion is available. This is viewed as extremely insensitive and irresponsible,” Mr Majola said.

There are about 1.2 million public sector employees, including all tiers of government, parastatals and public sector corporations, such as Telkom and Transnet.

Of these 1.2 million workers, about 500 000 are from the former homelands and self-governing territories.

In March 1995, the average salary in the public sector had risen from R3 271 to R3 467 but there was still a wage gap between white and black salaries. There were also differences in the average salaries between different sectors of the public service.

Exco to split in two to speed restructuring

Municipal Reporter

THE Cape Town City Council has voted to radically reorganise its committee system in the run-up to the May 29 election because councillors have failed to devote their full attention to the restructuring process.

The council has effectively decided to split its executive committee into two because it has been falling behind in local government restructuring.

One half of the executive committee will deal with the day-to-day running of business, while the other will focus solely on restructuring, which involves attending meetings with representatives of other councils.

A memorandum stated the council’s participation was “not what it should be and urgent steps are not taken to rectify this. The transition process will fall further and further behind the targets needed for a successful transformation.”

Among the problems which have been cited are the absence of joint executive council (JEC) delegates from plenary or working group meetings, leading sometimes to no quorum being present.

New challenge to Cosatu unions

Labour Reporter

ABOUT 250 000 public sector employees have joined forces in a new federation which could pose a threat to public sector unions in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

The Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees (Force), which was launched this week in Pretoria, comprises 50 percent of employees who are represented in the central chamber of the Public Service Bargaining Council, Force says.

Force said it aimed to secure a “non-partisan, secure and career-orientated employment environment.”

The first test of Force’s mettle will be in the national public sector negotiations which began in Cape Town on Monday.
Affiliation of unions formed for 250 000 public servants

By Normaie Chandler

 Pretoria Bureau

A new organisation representing more than 250 000 civil servants has been established by four major public service employee organisations.

Known as the Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees (FORCE), it intends to bring pressure to bear on the Government on all aspects of employment in the public service.

Groups represented are the Public and Allied Workers’ Union of South Africa, the Public Servants’ Association, the United National Public Servants’ Association and the South African Nursing Association.

Malcolm Domango, who was elected chairman, said yesterday that the objective was "the need to unite independent employee organisations in order to enhance the position of employees in collective bargaining."

FORCE would also be associated with collective bargaining negotiations in the private sector.

Negotiation power would be demonstrated and applied in forthcoming negotiations scheduled to start next week – with the Government in regard to salaries, the grading system, pensions and future retrenchment packages, Domango added.

FORCE represents more than half of the employees represented by employee organisations in the central chamber of the Public Service Bargaining Council.
Municipal union

A municipal employees' union is to be established next week and organisers claim it will have 80,000 members and 300 branches countrywide.

The Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union will be an amalgamation of five unions which have been operating under the banner of the Federation of Municipal Trade Unions since 1986.

Briefly, Sowetan Reporter, and.
Sowetan 29/2/76
Unions ‘can shape future’

Renee Grawitzky

The union movement’s ability to resolve its capacity crisis would be crucial in determining the future shape of industrial relations in SA, the National Labour and Economic Development Institute’s Jeremy Baskin says in the latest edition of the Labour Bulletin.

In an article titled “Unions at the crossroads — Can they make the transition?”, Baskin said the labour movement now had an “institutional role in policy-making and was recognized as social partners by the democratic movement”. But they were not making the most of these dramatic gains.

Baskin said “with Nedlac (the National Economic, Development and Labour Council) and the workplace forums envisaged by the new Labour Relations Act, SA has one of the most institutionalised forms of corporatism in the world. Ironically, this has emerged without any explicit union commitment to co-determination, income accords and the social democratic-type politics which normally accompany such developments.

For example, debate within the union movement on workplace forums had revealed little enthusiasm for these institutions, with many unionists still fearful the forums would undermine shopfloor organisation. Some unions had resolved not to initiate forums, fearing these would “diminish class conflict and encourage worker-management co-operation”.

Baskin said co-determination required sophisticated negotiations between the parties and he questioned whether the union movement had the capacity. He outlined three dimensions to the problem of capacity.

The first, he said, related to the high levels of staff turnover in recent years which were far more complex than just experienced unionists moving to take up government positions. On the shopfloor, he said, “particularly as racial barriers decrease and pressure to implement affirmative action increases, many talented shop stewards have been promot-ed to supervisory and management positions”.

The second area related to what Baskin called the “challenge of influence”. The establishment of various institutions at national and sectoral level had granted unions an opportunity to be involved in policy decisions. However, “the union movement is battling to make effective use of the space it has won.”

The third challenge, he said, was more ideologically based. Although unions had been “pragmatic negotiators”, their vision of transformation “frequently remains rooted in outdated paradigms.”

Baskin said it was not clear whether unions were able to “engage with the implications of new trends, including changing political and economic circumstances.”

As a result of this, he said, “one sees oscillations between dogmatic and pragmatic perspectives and a focus on criticising state initiatives rather than presenting alternatives.” Labour’s challenge was to “use its power in a new context.”

Lack of interest compels land rights claims delay

Louise Cook

The commission on the restoration of land rights has again had to postpone the deadline for claims to property in District Six following a poor response to the restitution process.

People forcibly moved from the area in the 1960s under Group Areas legislation now have until April 30 to put in claims. When the second deadline expired at the end of last month, only 700 people had come forward.

Regional commissioner’s office spokesman Elizabeth Davidson blamed the response on a lack of information about the restitution process.

Regional commissioner Wallace Mogoj said processing of claims would not start until at least 2000 people had responded because “it is the only way to use the resources of the commission and the land claims court effectively”.

A source said the regional commissioner’s office held meetings regularly with various communities to promote awareness of the restitution process. People could either claim their original property back, apply for financial compensation or apply for alternative land.

City Council sources said last month that District Six had been targeted for subeconomic housing, and those forced to move away would get first option to return.
New trade union founded

BLOEMFONTEIN. — A municipal employees' trade union, which claims to have 80,000 members in 300 branches across the country, has been established here.

The Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union is the result of the amalgamation of five existing unions: the Durban Municipal Employees' Society, the Johannesburg Municipal Employees' Association, the National Union of Employees of Local Authorities, the SA Association of Municipal Employees and the SA Local Authorities and Allied Workers' Union.

SAPA, 9/3/96
Unions compete as memberships expand

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

THE race for union membership on the labour front is on and South Africa's major federations are rushing to win over the unaffiliated trade unions.

The first to make progress was the Federation of South African Labour Unions (FedSAL), which increased its membership by 15,000 last week when two of its affiliates merged with three other independent trade unions in Bloemfontein.

The merger of two of FedSAL's affiliates, the Johannesburg Municipal Employees Association, the SA Municipal Employees Association and three other independent unions increased the federation's membership by 220,000.

FedSAL is currently the third largest federation, with the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) second with 327,000 members and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) leading the pack with a membership of 1.6 million.

All three federations are involved in strong recruitment drives and their target is the unaffiliated unions.

Nactu general secretary Mr Cunningham Ngcukana said the federation was expecting an increase of 10,000 members before June from their strong recruitment drive in the farming and textile sectors.

Cosatu spokeswoman Ms Nowethu Mnisi said they were also expecting a big boost with the recent increased membership in the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

FedSAL general secretary Danehauser van der Merwe said the federation lost 80,000 members when one of their affiliates, the South African Bankers Association, joined Cosatu last year.

Nactu and Cosatu's strengths are in their political affiliation while FedSAL claims to be apolitical.
Labour aims at 'balance' in plan to achieve growth

Renee Grawitzky

LABOUR will seek a balance between promoting social equity and job creation as opposed to big business's "systematic attack on organised workers" to pursue growth.

This emerges in what could be a draft labour response to the SA Foundation document, "Growth for all". It will pursue job creation through intensification of public works programmes, job sharing, labour-intensive projects, training, reviewing trade liberalisation policies, increased productivity and upgrading of technology.

Attainment of social equity through job creation is part of measures under consideration by labour and is outlined in the document. The final document is expected to be released this week.

Debate between labour and business on prerequisites for economic growth and job creation could cause major confrontation which could be intensified when negotiations start on the green paper on minimum employment standards in the National Economic, Development and Labour Council on April 11. The trade-off between worker rights and economic imperatives could become crucial, especially in view of the foundation document which proposes a dual-labour market and other mechanisms to achieve labour market flexibility.

Labour's document was drafted as a result of input at last week's Nedlac negotiating school between Cosatu, the National Council of Trade Unions and the Federation of SA Labour.

Other measures being considered by labour include improving incomes and the quality of workers' lives, redirecting spending towards social services and shifting the tax burden from the poor.

Foundation head Neil van Heerden said yesterday its document was in response to President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's call to the private sector to join the national debate on growth.
INSIDE LABOUR

Union’s banker sounds a Keynesian chord

TERRY BELL

When Sam Shulova, the general secretary of Cosatu, last week warmly referred to Vella Pillay, the economist and banker, as “the only banker within the South African trade union movement”, he gave the clearest hint so far of the alternative economic strategy the trade unions would promote. For Pillay, the economic adviser to the Bank of China, is a man with clear ideas about the way forward for the South African economy.

Then this week Pallo Jordan, the communications minister, requested the National Institute of Economic Policy, of which Pillay is the director, to draft a response to the South Africa Foundation’s Growth for All economic strategy document.

This was the document that brought Pillay back from the margins of economic debate to the centre.

But he has for some time been increasingly listened to in a trade union movement determined to influence economic policy to encourage “growth with social justice”. Once openly tipped — in the euphoric days after the release from prison of President Nelson Mandela — as the first ANC governor of the Reserve Bank, London-based Pillay is a bitter opponent of the conventional monetarist orientation of Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals.

He and Johannesburg-based collaborator and financial consultant Charles Millward have lobbied and written for nearly two years about the “magused” policies of the Reserve Bank and the government.

But they appeared to make little headway. Their decidedly heterogeneous audience in the ANC and trade unions tended to react to agendas being set by business and the Reserve Bank.

The shortcomings of this reactive posture were shown up clearly with the recent release of the foundation’s document and the government’s national economic growth strategy. The government’s document was long on targets and extremely short on detail.

In contrast, the foundation spelled out policies, which, in the present jargon, were neo-liberal, promoting rapid privatization, free trade and an unfettered labour market.

Even when he castigated the foundation document as “an affront to democracy”, Tito Mboweni, the labour minister, could only promise that the government would respond to the proposals “at a later date”. Jordan — to the broad approval of most of the trade union leadership — has pushed that ball squarely into the court of Pillay.

This is likely to raise a number of hackles because Cosatu unions are officially still committed to “socialism” and given Pillay’s links with the unions and China, accusations of “creeping socialism” will probably be made. This would be a mistake. The course Pillay has promoted owes nothing to the idea of Karl Marx but a considerable debt to those of John Maynard Keynes, the father of the modern interventionist capitalist model.

This is why it will find support among sections of the business community and fierce resistance among elements in the trade unions. What Pillay proposes is a heavily interventionist package in which the state plays a major role in creating the conditions — and dictating the direction — of economic growth. Public spending lies at its core, as does a policy of a managed exchange rate with a devalued rand and lower interest rates.

His argument is that South Africa cannot open up to a fiercely competitive world without first addressing the disadvantages the country faces.

The national currency, he and Millward have maintained, should be prized at a level which would make local manufactures competitive and generate substantial foreign exchange reserves.

Last week, Pillay told several leading trade unionists that this approach would reflect that of many of the Asian tigers, including Japan.

Exchange rates were deliberately underestimated by these countries to generate sufficient hard currency to finance current account deficits without having to resort to borrowing.

He said it appeared nonsensical that while South Africa “digs some $20 billion of minerals from the ground annually” it had only $3 billion in reserves.

The arguments struck an extremely responsive chord.

They are likely to continue to do so within an administration becoming desperately concerned at rising rates of unemployment. A future corporatist state — its dynamic capitalist, but co-managed by the state, business and labour — now seems a distinct possibility.
### Wage settlements 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Sector</th>
<th>1995 Expected Percentage Increase</th>
<th>1996 Expected Percentage Increase</th>
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<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; Consumer</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemical &amp; Allied</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timber, Paper, Packaging</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motor and Allied</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction &amp; Allied</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Manufacturing</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverages</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other/Leather/Tobacco</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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**Range of expected percentage increases within sector (wages only)**

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<th></th>
<th>5%</th>
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<th>9%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>5%</td>
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**Summary of data as of GB - Feb/March 1996**

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### Are the unions deadbeat?

**CT**(BR) 29/3/96 (134)

**JAMES LAMONT**

There was a time when South Africa’s trade unions were the foot soldiers of the liberation movement and the ANC. Their successful mobilization of the masses in social protest at home made the Umkhonto we Sizwe guerilla campaign look like a sideshow to the demonstrations on the streets at home.

But now that the ANC and a considerable number of union leaders sit in government, that long-sustained power is slipping.

Where the unions were once able to raise popular protest against apartheid, they appear unable to stir the same emotions on the macroeconomic issues of privatization and tax policy. Nowadays, it is the IFP that marches. And the issue: the right to bear traditional weapons, not to have a job.

The unions are increasingly discredit-ed, through a private sector campaign for a deregulated labour market, for protecting a labour elite against the hordes of unemployed and ensuring that South Africa remains in a cycle of economic growth that is not matched by job creation.

Prominent sources within the labour movement bemoan an inglorious track record over the last 15 months. The government has derailed the unions of its top and capable leadership. They have been left to flounder in defeat in the automotive industry and fail to come up with campaigns to thwart wholesale restructuring of the public sector, and the lowering of tariffs in the clothing and textile sector. The sources also criticize the unions for being sucked into debates that are not strictly pertinent to the needs of their members.

So have the unions become diffuse and ineffective? Or does an upsurge in strike action in the first quarter of this year testify to a militant core that can still call workers out and keep them there for weeks, rather than days?

A central bargaining survey, released last week, argued that the power of the unions was being eroded, in part by firm-handed government diplomacy.

The survey, compiled by Gavin Brown & Associates, an industrial relations company, said that an expected showdown between the government and the unions had not taken place because of union impotence to pressurise the government to change its policies.

The survey observed that labour campaigens against the new Labour Relations Act, privatization, tax policy, public sector wage policy and other policies, have failed to influence the fundamental policies pursued by the government.

It speculated that public shows of co-operation between labour and the government, such as the last-minute collusion between Fedisa, Cosatu and Nactu and Alec Erwin, the deputy finance minister, amounted to nothing more than lip service to former political allies. The charade, it said, did not "disguise the steady erosion taking place in the political influence of the labour movement."

"At best, the influence of labour appears to be confined to a slowing down of state initiatives," it stated.

Labour's lack of clout is in part the result of calculated manoeuvring by the government, based on judgments of the labour movement by many of its former leaders — many of whom reside on the "fiscal right of the ANC", the survey surmised. This has led to the government approaching union demands with a tactful but "inflexible" resistance.

The old union leadership has become its successors' own worst enemy.

The government's attitude might harden further should any substantial labour unrest arise in the public sector. The government is an employer itself, and might find reason — in the interests of slimming its own wage bill — to run in the uncooperative labour relations proposal by Tito Mboweni, the labour minister.

The survey identifies "shallow leadership" as the labour movement's biggest challenge. This has been reflected not only in unimpressive lobbying of the government over broad economic issues, but also in the inability of unions to marshal their own members. The survey maintains that union membership has fallen since the democratic elections in 1994 and that some unions are now deeply divided.

"More and more, union officials elevated to leadership roles by vacuums at the top are finding it difficult to influence or discipline membership," it said.

Still, some are better than others. According to the survey, the National Union of Muneworkers and the SA Clothing and Textile Workers Union have adapted to the new political environment and developed practical responses to the difficulties that their sectors are facing. On the other hand, it castigates the Chemical Workers Industrial Union for its insistence on a central bargaining system that has led to a costly stalemate with employers in a profitable sector.

The chemical union has begun an extensive programme of industrial action, but the battle may already be lost.
Mary Malte: First
trade unionist
and foremost a
fighter for women and the plight of women to have real voz position
The new president of the 220,000 strong Federation of Australian
Women's
Unions
(1974)
INSIDE LABOUR

Mao and union freestyle

(134) CT (JL) 19/4/96

Terry Bell

A
djusting to the changed
circumstances wrought by
the government of national
unity has caused considerable
strains within the trade union
movement

A multitude of political strands,
trends and tendencies, once bound
by the ideological cement of opposi-
tion to apartheid, have been free of
this compelling unity for two years.

One early result of the change
was the drafting of leading trade
unionists into the parliamentary
political arena. Many of these came
from the loose but extremely promi-
nent formation of syndicalists, politi-
cally non-aligned radical trade
unionists, who often dominated the
early unions. They were simply
absorbed into mainstream parlia-
mmentary politics.

Among those individuals is Alec
Erwin, now a cabinet minister,
Moses Mayekiso, a former member
of parliament and now a company
chairman, and Bernie Fanafori,
the director-general of the recently
dissolved office of the reconstruc-
tion and development programme.

But their move to the main-
stream accurately reflected the sen-
timent among the overwhelming
bulk of the rank and file. For all the

cries of “forward to socialism” and
expressed desires for union inde-
pendence, most union members—
as election results and other indica-
tions of support for the ANC have
shown—fell in behind the banner
of parliamentary reform and sup-
port for the tripartite alliance.

Most of the revolutionary politi-
cal tendencies, ranging from
Trotskyites and Maoists to radical
black nationalists, were left strand-
ed as isolated outposts in a sea of
reformist sentiment. For those indi-
viduals and tendencies in the major
unions, this merely meant adapting
to minority positions.

But in many of the smaller inde-
pendent unions where articulate
and highly organised radical group-
ings often held dominant positions,
matters were not so clear cut.

Frequently represented in only
one or two provinces, these smaller
unions—referred to disdainfully
within the Cosatu leadership as
“mushrooms” — opposed any
alliance with the government.

But they have become increas-
ingly marginalised. This has led to
two tendencies in the struggle to
survive: seek alliances or attempt to
hold the line against change.

Holding the line has resulted in
a number of minor explosions, the
latest of which has struck the
National Council of Food and Agri-
culture Workers.

This is the only union with a
dominant influence exerted by the
secretive South African Communist
Party. After a bruising conference
in East London late last month,
which was boycotted by the major-
ty of Eastern Cape branches, it now
faces legal actions brought by rebel
members.

The Port Elizabeth, Aliwal
North, Grahamstown and Queens-
town branches stayed away. They
maintained that the conference was
being manipulated and was unconsti-
tutional. A court hearing is sched-
uled for next month.

Many among the rebels are
talking of reporing the Cosatu-
affiliated Food and Allied Worker’s
Union, despite their opposition to
Cosatu’s alliance with the ANC.

“We must be part of a bigger
unity and make the arguments
about independence inside,” said
one of the rebel organisers, who
wished to remain anonymous.

The Eastern Cape was also the
scene of unity talks last week
between smaller unions organising
in the hotel, catering and restaurant
sectors.

Several are breakaways from the
Cosatu-affiliated catering union
Saccawu and one is dominated by
the Azanian People’s Organisation.

A driving force behind the talks
was the newly renamed Hotel
Allied and Restaurant Workers’
Union based in the Western Cape.

The general secretary of this union
is Bela Lucas, a well-known mem-
ber of the Workers Organisation for
Socialist Action.

“We need to come together on a
federal or unitary basis to have a
national presence,” said Lucas.

“And political affiliations should
not matter. We are trade unionists
and our members belong to all ran-
ners of political groups.”

The object is not survival. At ear-
ier talks, all the unions agreed the
object was to establish a national,
politically unaffiliated trade union.

It would organise in the hospitality
industry at a time the larger unions
were spreading their coverage. It
should make for a handy niche—but
it will still be on the margins.

The specialists from the
National Institute for Economic
Planning involved in Cosatu’s alter-
native economic strategy document
referred to in this column on April 4
only handled “some mathematical
exercises” for the report. Respon-
sibility for authorship rests with
Cosatu and, specifically, Ebrahim
Patel of the textile workers’ Union
Sactwu.
Unions face crucial questions over bid

Renee Grawitzky

WITH the NUM, other Cosatu affiliates, Nactu and various union-owned investment companies vying for a significant role in the forthcoming bid for Anglo American’s 48% stake in Johnstic, organised labour faces crucial questions over how to walk the tightrope of conflicting roles of owner and worker representative.

Unions in other countries have followed this route with varying degrees of success and failure. What, then, is SA labour’s motivation and objective?

In its recently published economic policy document, labour calls for the attainment of social equity and a reduction in inequalities which would entail, among other things, the redistribution of wealth, the eradication of poverty, worker empowerment and eliminating “economic concentration in the hands of a few”.

NUM general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe says the liberation movement brought together wide-ranging groups including an aspirant black entrepreneurial class which took up the fight against apartheid because it effectively excluded its members from participating in the economy. With the removal of apartheid “we are now moving into a new phase”.

“Black business, he argues, is seeking co-operation from labour and the broader black population to support it in its initiative to enter the mainstream economy. Labour will use this period not only to ensure the generation of massive “economic surpluses” to fund job creation and social benefit improvements but also to ensure equitable distribution.

This, he says, is borne out by Nal chairman Nhato Motlana’s recent comment that labour could not have a social contract with white business but could achieve it with black business. Labour believes this phase will be brief. Once black business matures, it will have less regard for questions of social equity. But, argues Motlanthe, if labour now adopts an anti-black business stance it would ensure the retention of the status quo.

He says apartheid created a distinction between white and black business. Black people have not experienced the phenomenon of black business exploiting workers, so there is faith black capital will “do things differently”. It is necessary for black people to see their own kind running corporations. It will be an inspiration for black people to be seen to succeed in business. Also, it will dispel illusions that exploitation is a whites-only phenomenon.

On potential conflicts and contradictions in labour becoming a major shareholder in a company, Motlanthe says unions’ investment companies are separate entities from unions. They operated like any other business.

Motlanthe agrees with comments made by Ashgar Adelazadeh of the National Institute for Economic Policy that a change in ownership of shareholding does not imply a change in the nature of production which is dominated by market forces or a change in relationships on the shop floor between labour and capital.

However, Motlanthe says, if workers want to control the means of production they have to own it.

Union leadership is quick to say it will not lose sight of the fact that it is a trade union movement. This, however, is a core concern of those within labour who have resisted such moves. The sceptics fear this form of black empowerment will empower and enrich only a few business men and union leaders.

Elements in the participation movement and in the SAPC question whether these moves may harm the strategic interests of labour, exacerbating the “bureaucratisation” of union organisation.

Questions are raised over the degree of consultation, or lack thereof, with rank-and-file membership on these moves. Numsa general secretary Enoch Godongwana, a leading sceptic on the establishment of union investment companies, notes unions have traditionally relied on membership fees, which ensured accountability.

If unions become independent of such income, could this not lead to increased non-accountability, he asks.

SACP leader Jeremy Cronin says there are many ways to increase the “socialisation” of the economy. One could be through the mobilisation of pension funds. However, as with the experience of nationalisation, there were no guarantees this route would not lead to union-appointed bureaucrats becoming indistinguishable from past owners.

On a practical level, where labour is seen to be a part owner in a company, conflicts could divide union leadership and membership to the detriment of the movement. Cronin says such conflict could be compounded if workers were to go on strike in a partially labour-owned company.

Those supporting such initiatives believe through ownership it can influence company direction. Say Nactu general secretary Cunningham Ngcukana: “We can intervene decisively and change the culture of the corporate world and the economic direction.” Against, however, argues there is a limit to how labour-friendly any business can be.
Cosatu seeks the revival of weak union structures

Renee Grawitzky

Cosatu emerged from its three-day living wage conference with a range of campaigns which the federation hopes will revive weak local union structures.

Cosatu general secretary Sam Shulowa said at the close of the conference at the weekend that failure to implement resolutions adopted would not be with the Cosatu secretariat but with those at the conference.

Shulowa said the conference had emerged with a number of resolutions and campaigns around which workers could be mobilised. The challenge was whether “we can implement these resolutions”.

Cosatu reaffirmed its commitment to campaign for a 40-hour week, an overtime ban, the elimination of scab labour, opposition to lockouts and one month’s severance pay.

These demands would be taken up in negotiations on the green paper on employment standards.

Shulowa acknowledged that in some sectors, where workers were not organised, it could be extremely difficult to implement a total overtime ban.

On the implementation of the new Labour Relations Act, delegates resolved that the Act as a whole should not be implemented later than July 1 and called for a minimum of 20 days’ paid leave for the training of shop stewards on the legislation.

In view of recent action by NUM members at Eskom on restructuring, an emergency resolution was adopted on the restructuring of the electricity industry. Cosatu would lobby government against “giving away the distribution industry to the employer bodies, with distant involvement of central government”.

Other resolutions adopted on the green paper on employment standards related to parental rights, child labour and compassionate leave.

In addition to six months’ paid maternity leave, Cosatu would demand five days’ paternity leave and up to 20 days’ paid child care leave and creche facilities.

Intense debate took place on the restructuring of state assets and public sector transformation, with Shulowa calling for a clear document on state asset restructuring.

Delegates agreed that “where there is evidence that any parastatal management is undermining National Framework Agreement provisions, the appropriate minister should use his or her powers to remove these managers”.

In view of recent attempts by the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) secretariat to initiate debate around building consensus and a social partnership, a number of resolutions were adopted on Cosatu’s Nedlac role.

Shulowa said “we are not being dragged into Nedlac” as it was a product of “our own struggles”. He said the social equity document had to guide Cosatu in discussions and negotiations within Nedlac.

Delegates resolved that Cosatu would not put all its hopes in Nedlac, but needed to use Nedlac to “challenge and change the power relations in favour of the working class”.
INSIDE LABOUR

Return to sender

Terry Bell

A large unified public service union—that has been the expressed aim of the three major public service unions in the country for several years—is also the aim of Cosatu.

That aim, however, was clearly illustrated recently when Philip Dexter, the former general secretary of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), addressed a Nehawu sector meeting at the University of the Western Cape.

Dexter, a leading member of the South African Communist Party and an ANC member of the national assembly, stressed the importance of the proposed merger of the unions. He said the merger should still be the goal. He blamed a lack of drive as well as "various other factors which we are well aware of" for having delayed the process.

"Everybody wants to be general secretary," muttered an audience member in response.

Accusations of personal empire building have long been part of the debate surrounding the merger proposal and are often given as the main reason that unity has proved elusive, although Nehawu and the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) are still officially talking.

However, the Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association (Pothwa) pulled out of the process last year and has shown no inclination to return.

The reason should become glaringly obvious in the middle of next month. It is then tentatively on May 18—that Pothwa should cease to exist as a public service union. It plans to transform itself into a general union covering all communications workers in the public and private sectors.

Accusations of empire building, underhandedness and worse are likely to proliferate. What Pothwa intends doing is contrary to Cosatu's merger policy, because it means cutting heavily into areas in which other Cosatu unions operate. But there is a logic to the move. Telnets is a target for at least limited privatization and the telecommunications industry — the province of Pothwa — now includes various private sector operators.

Problems are likely to arise with Pothwa's expressed intention of widening the definition of its present scope to include all communications aspects. "We have members of the South African Union of Journeymen (SAUJ) who are not happy with their situation and who will be joining us," said Ramateu Monyokolo, the president of Pothwa.

An even happier poaching ground for what is likely to be called the Communication Workers' Union of South Africa (Cwusa) is the Media Workers' Association of South Africa (Mwasa).

"Affiliated to the smaller, mutually black-consciousness-oriented National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu), many branches of Mwasa are now virtually moribund while among the active sectors there is a widespread feeling that the union needs to be larger to have the necessary clout."

The fact that Cwusa will bring members of the unaffiliated SAUJ and the Nactu-aligned Mwasa into the Cosatu orbit may lessen the anger and anguish within Cosatu.

But if, as seems likely, Cwusa widens its net still further to include truck drivers, technicians and engineers, there will have to be some hard talking within the labour movement.

"We know nothing about this officially," said Roger Roos, the general secretary of Samwu. "It was never brought to the Cosatu executive. And it is against Cosatu policy."

Yet it does seem that a large, potentially fast-growing union in a vital sector will be able to ignore the letter of Cosatu's law and Cwusa should become a force in the future..."
Research may put unions in new light

PRELIMINARY findings from a survey conducted among Gauteng companies has raised serious questions about certain assumptions and popular perceptions regarding a decline in union membership, weak union capacity and "shallow" leadership.

Research has revealed that contrary to these perceptions, union membership and capacity at plant level was growing with a relatively large number of trained shop stewards meeting regularly within shop steward committees.

This emerged during a Sociology of Work Unit breakfast seminar conducted by Ian Macun and Tanya Rosenthal on the results of a survey on worker representation conducted among 96 companies in Gauteng.

The survey formed part of a broader national survey titled The SA Labour Flexibility Survey conducted in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation. The purpose of the survey is to inform the labour market commission.

Macun said in view of certain assumptions adopted by certain media on the state of unions, it was crucial to assess on a more scientific basis the real state of unions at plant level as this could affect the governance of the labour market.

The survey was an attempt to get an idea of union strength, and to ascertain whether claims of the state of the unions was mirrored at plant level.

Macun said where a labour movement was changing rapidly the key issue was not so much the role of national leadership but the type of leadership and structures present at plant level.

In view of economic restructuring, it was more important to have capacity at plant level to participate and contribute to the restructuring debate as "restructuring really takes place at plant level".

Recent reports made assumptions of a decline in union membership had increased and membership loss, where it occurred, was attributed to dissatisfaction, pressure from management and promotion out of the bargaining unit.

Contrary to popular belief, multi-unionism was not entrenched in SA, with the majority of companies surveyed having one union operating on site. Where multi-unionism existed, limited co-operation was reported.

An analysis of union capacity at plant level revealed that the vast majority of companies had shop stewards with between three to four years of experience, and a large number were receiving training.

Research also revealed that the shop stewards consulted union officials often and on a variety of issues.

Research revealed that shop stewards received limited information from management, while management believed it was giving sufficient information.

It became evident that either management was not providing information or was providing it in a form that shop stewards did not understand, or the information was irrelevant.

Shop stewards identified discrimination and segregation as some of the main problems in the workplace besides working conditions, trade union capacity and activity, lack of benefits and lack of communication with management. Management identified productivity, wage and non-wage issues and lack of skilled workers.
Cracks in the Alliance

South Africa, under pressure from a falling currency that added R1 billion to its external debt in three months, is beginning to feel the cracks in the alliance between the ruling African National Congress, South African Communist Party and Congress of South African Trade Unions.

For more than two years, the alliance has been united by the abolition of apartheid, the sanctity of workers’ rights and an ideological thrust.

Differences are now emerging between the labour movement and the Government on key policy issues such as privatisation, rating interest rates and relations with the powerful business community.

Cosatu is essentially fighting for survival as the Government moves in to restructure a bloated parastatal sector, retrench thousands of workers and cut waste in the public sector.

The move is supported by big business, which argues for a leaner, but efficient, public service. Commerce and industry also want a piece of the parastatal pie.

The SAPC subscribes to socialism as its guiding ideology. Issues like the current monetary policy, privatisation of state assets and market economies contradict that ideology.

To complicate matters, there does not seem to be any chance of the country implementing any widespread socialist policy in future.

Radical shift

The party made a radical shift in its policy and embraced capitalism because, what senior officials describe as a major compromise based on the historical reality in South Africa.

"Somewhere, the two systems met," says Jabu Moleketi, the SAPC Gauteng secretary.

Soon after the 1994 elections, President Nelson Mandela cautioned Cosatu against the dangers of making "selfish" demands for higher wages in a country with a huge army of jobless people. He said the union federation should accept low salaries to enable industry to employ more people.

This suggestion has been taken up by the South African Foundation, a lobbying group for industry that is part of Business South Africa and has sturdy international links – which suggests lowering minimum wages to create jobs in the free market.

Cosatu general secretary Sam Shilowa, on the other hand, is famous about Mandela’s proposal, especially after the foundation’s endorsement.

"Business wants to weaken us. They lobby Mandela directly instead of using established channels," he says.

In the past two years, the Government has moved to lower import tariffs to open up the economy. This move is unpopular in the union movement because it threatens jobs in uncompetitive industries.

The Government is arguing for a wholesale privatisation programme to raise billions of rand needed to finance the transition, fulfill election promises and extend its services to underprivileged urban townships and poor rural communities.

Up for sale are South African Airways, Telkom and arms manufacturer Denel. Escom has also been earmarked for major restructuring.

The SAPC says South Africa needs a mass economic transformation to satisfy workers while, at the same time, dealing with industrial growth and business interests.

"Social justice should be part of business growth and profit making. There ought to be coherence on choices regarding social equity and attracting foreign investments," says Moleketi.

The SAPC and unions, representing largely urban workers, are against some of the Government strategies, thus breaking the Government’s efforts to allay the fears of commerce and industry.

They say that while they do not support wholesale privatisation, they are prepared to make concessions and allow the state to sell some organisations.

The rift came to a head when banks raised interest rates after the 20 percent fall of the rand.

Cosatu, the SAPC and the South African National Civic Organisation strongly criticised banks and threatened to demonstrate against them. Cosatu even laid a criminal charge with the police, saying banks had colluded to punish workers.

Potential investors and local industrialists are pressing the ANC to keep its alliance partners in check and boost business confidence in a country that desperately needs external support.

"Investors chase profits – the colour of flags and names of parties seem to be very secondary," argues Jeremy Cronin, the SAPC Deputy general secretary.

Cosatu believes there is a broader plot to neutralise unions after they succeeded in getting significant safeguards for workers’ rights in the Constitution.

Rising tensions

"We cannot enter into negotiations with business when they call for unions to be smashed," said Zwelinzima Vavi, Cosatu’s deputy general secretary.

The tension between labour and business sabotaged the Government’s campaigns for investment. Mandela stepped in and tried to get the two sides to agree. When that failed, he declared that the ANC was going ahead with its plans to privatise state companies.

The SAPC and Cosatu, while publicly pledging their allegiance to the alliance, called a meeting that week with the ANC to discuss this proposal.

"Vultures are hovering prematurely over what they believe is the carcass of the tripartite alliance. We have differences but they do not amount to cracks," says Cyril Ramaphosa, the outgoing ANC general secretary.

"We are concerned that business and labour are shooting arrows at each other. I’ve never seen a family that is unanimous on everything. The management of conflict is what matters," he said.

Cronin says South Africa should not be held to ransom by investors. "Over the past decade, foreign investors have been tripping over themselves to get into the People’s Republic of China — and that is ruled by the Communist Party."

Africa Information Africa.
Unions to take a R65m stake in Motolink group

Edward West

THE investment arms of the National Union of Mineworkers and the SA Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union are to take a stake of about R65m in Motolink.

The transport company, which has merged with Super Group in a R284m deal, said yesterday the new group and its black empowerment partners would be positioned to benefit from privatisation and parastatal outsourcing of their transport functions.

Motolink, which had applied to the JSE to transfer its listing from the industrial to the motor sector, planned a R45m rights issue to fund further expansion. It also cautioned shareholders that negotiations for further acquisitions were in progress.

In terms of the deal the Mineworkers Investment Company (Minc) and Sactwuf Investment Group will take an 11% stake in the new group. Minc spokesman Kuben Pillay said it had used a down payment and debt to fund the purchase.

The deal represents the latest in a string for the two investment companies. They hold a stake in Pepsi bottler and marketer New Age Beverages, a stake in listed retail group Mathomo, are represented in the National Empowerment Consortium’s bid for Johnnie Walker and recently emerged as Primedia’s partners in bidding for radio stations.

Motolink will issue 89-million new shares at R3 each to the vendors of Super Group to fund the merger, nearly doubling its share capital to 154-million shares. Motolink traded at R3.45 yesterday.

Motolink CEO Larry Lipschutz said that the aim of the deal was not to have a black shareholder, but to provide opportunities for joint ventures and small business creation through mechanisms such as repair shops and owner-driver schemes.

Since listing in October 1994 Motolink has bought established motor dealerships, an auto-electrical wholesaler and a short-term insurance company.

The Super Group, with about 2600 commercial vehicles, was established in the truck rental, full maintenance leasing and third party distribution markets.

The merged group would have a turnover of about R950m and an asset base of R400m. Motolink forecast earnings a share of at least 33.5c for the year to March next year, 57% up on the 21.4c a share for the nine-month period to March this year.

Super Group’s controlling shareholders had undertaken that the company would make a pre-tax profit of at least R15.3m for the year to June 1996, excluding income derived from a R66m recapitalisation of Super Group.

The purchase price would be reduced by R13 for every R1 by which the warrant profit was less than R15.3m. The merger could be rescinded by either party if the purchase price fell below R236m.

Lipschutz said the trend for companies to outsource transport requirements and focus on core businesses was gaining ground in SA, as companies began to be globally competitive.
Union bosses face workers' expectations

Renee Grawitzky

UNION officials could face trying times this year when attempting to persuade their members to accept that lower nominal increases granted this year compared to last year nevertheless represented a real wage increase.

Labour sources have indicated that workers have expectations of wage increases equal to or higher than increases granted last year. Their hopes could be dashed due to the level of inflation.

Employers, they indicate, are proposing wage offers of between 7.5% and 8.5% to current levels of inflation ranging between 5% and 6%. Unions argue, however, that inflation by year-end will be closer to 8% and are seeking increases above 10% to ensure the preservation of buying power.

Government's macroeconomic strategy predicts an inflation rate of 8% by the end of the year and states that average real wage growth in the private sector could decline by 0.5% and thereafter increase by 1% per annum to 2000.

National Union of Mineworkers' official Martin Naidoo said yesterday: "People are not convinced that wage increases being offered are reasonable in the context of the need to see economic changes. No one anticipates that inflation will continue dropping in view of increases to the petrol price and other developments."

Durban-based industrial relations consultant Pat Stone said that settlement levels last year were 1% to 2% higher than was anticipated and averaged between 10% and 12% with an inflation rate of 9%.

Employers had signalled their preparedness to pay over and above the inflation rate, partly on expectations of business taking off.

In a changing environment this year where employers were talking of inflation of between 5% and 6%, union officials were having to explain the implications of this to their membership, Stone said.

This change would be played out against a backdrop of increasing competition between unions to gain ground.

He said a growing number of non-recognised unions were offering "better deals" as opposed to Cosatu-aligned unions which they claimed were being regulated by an ANC government demanding wage restraint.

Stone said union officials now faced the very hard task of really fighting for workers' hearts and minds, at a time they had to report back unpalatable messages.

He warned that if settlements were more than 1% to 1.5% less than last year, industrial action would accelerate.
Here is a strange and dangerous conventional wisdom: Sam Shilowa is a bully, the unions are too powerful and the ANC-Cosatu alliance is a threat to the long-term survival of the South African economy.

There is just a faint possibility that behind the gruff exterior and the flash of temper Sam is in fact a pushover. He wears snazzy suits, tailored loafers, a funny hat and a gold watch that dangles foppishly on his left wrist. He enjoys large Cuban cigars, fine cars, and he loves his mother and supports a large extended family. Sam has also recently helped engineer a cut in interest rates and for the moment may be a real popular hero.

But try to imagine being Sam. He lives on the edge. He is effective only as long as he has the ear of the government and the unions in his federation. The student threats and tub thumping are the way he keeps the workers in thrall.

In the smoke-filled rooms of power, he is, inscrutable, accommodating and conciliatory. He will rage against privatization while union pension funds and union-owned investment companies pick up large pieces of the business action. By the time it is all done, he will have figured out how to explain that the selling-off of state assets has been about worker empowerment all along.

Sam does not control the government. Rather, as the government shows every sign of adopting economic and labour-market policies that directly challenge the unions, he is at its mercy. The ANC put him in place at Cosatu and he must constantly try to squeeze his desire to stay on side with the ANC into acceptable rhetoric for the workforce.

Thus, a sitting duck like the commercial banks' rate rises was manna from heaven. Having a go at the banks was almost unfair, like clubbing seals, but it keeps Sam alive.

The balancing act is very delicate. Shilowa is not a radical — he will not appreciate this being written — and business could indeed talk to him. If he is defeated or if the media put him into any situation in which he is perceived to have been defeated, say on privatization, he may well fall. We could then all be losers. We know sweet nothing about who would replace him.

The ANC "influences" Cosatu, and not the other way around. Their alliance is not a bad thing for the country. It would be ludicrous not to have expected a close alliance between a black government and the trade unions. But it would be wrong to assume the tail wags the dog when all that is occurring is that the two so often think alike.

A large body of unionised, disciplined workers is a thousand times better than an angry rabble. Just look at the fiascos over at Amplats's Rustenburg mines for an insight into what life might be like without trade unions and trade union leaders.

Earlier this year the Amplats management negotiated a series of pay demands brought to it by a non-unionised group of workers. They wanted their provident fund payments repaid. The management gave them the money — against union advice — and created a monster in the process.

Within months, the same group was back, wanting their PAYE payments repaid.

About 25,000 rumour have lost their jobs because of the inevitable collapse of the talks.

Sam Shilowa probably wakes up each morning with his knees trembling in worry. Given his stature, he always has to have a position on everything.

To anyone who still thinks this country should be going about its business as normal, what he says will always be terrifying. But Cosatu's stances since the general elections have been broadly tame and controlled. They have been announced well in advance and they have never lasted long. We have been lucky so far.
Labour needs ‘broader social base’

Renee Grawitzky

LABOUR’s future depends on it becoming part of a broad-based social movement which exerts political and shopfloor pressure to improve and spread the benefits gained by members to the broader working class.

This is the view argued by National Union of Mineworkers Carletonville regional co-ordinator Frans Baleni in the latest edition of the SA Labour Bulletin.

Baleni said conditions for broader communities could be improved via equitable distribution within the economy, with clear government intervention to ensure economic growth. This had to be achieved through the extension of public ownership.

Labour had to ensure, through exercising political pressure, that government was involved in every stage of the restructuring process.

He pointed out that unions were not political parties and to exercise political pressure, they would have to “ally themselves with a political party.”

Baleni said the current alliance with the ANC and SAPC should continue, but warned that in the long run it could change.

“Unions must be aligned in one form or another to whichever emerges as the primary political representative of the working class.”

However, this did not imply unions that should not jealously guard their independence. “There are times when it will be necessary to oppose government — the struggle over privatisation is a case in point.”

Labour, to move towards becoming a social movement, had to develop and adopt strategies to address broader societal problems that had emerged as a result of apartheid, rather than pursuing narrow sectional interests.

This view was based on the belief that if unionists pursued narrow sectoral interests only, this could lead to the alienation of other deprived groups in society, “not organised and who do not have the collective strength of workers.”

Such an approach should, he said, be pursued by labour in order to prevent a split between urban and rural communities, where rural communities became alienated from their urban counterparts.

They might then “ally themselves with anti-trade union elements” — as had occurred in Tanzania during the 1960s.
Brave mushrooms

When a union such as the NUM is put in a position where it appears to side with management, that adds fuel to the segments of the disquiet. In recent years such dissent has led to the formation of a number of small, often regionally based unions. Few have thrived and some, such as the Turning Wheel transport union, have trundled briefly onto the scene only to implode within months. Groups of disaffected members mainly from Cosatu unions have also moved, usually on the basis of principled independence, into a few of the established non-aligned unions, giving them a new lease of life. Because the numbers involved have been small, there has been a tendency within the Cosatu leadership to dismiss these developments out of hand:

"They called us mushrooms, just growing overnight and disappearing," said former Turning Wheel shop steward John van Wyk.

But a number of the breakaway unions have not disappeared, although some appear still to be in the throes of further fragmentation. There now seems to be a growing movement of what could be called principled mushrooms. Two of the latest are the Public Service Workers Union (PSWU) in King William's Town and an apparently burgeoning group of independent regional unions that plan to merge next month as the Hotel Allied and Restaurant Workers Union of South Africa (Harwusa). The Western Cape-based Hotel, Bar and Catering Trades Employees Association has already transformed itself into Harwusa and independents in the Eastern Cape, Durban and Pretoria should follow suit next month. An Harwusa office was opened in Durban this week. Combined membership after the merger will be little more than 6,000.

Like most other independents, Harwusa rejects political affiliation for the union. "That does not mean we will not take political positions," said general secretary Ben Lucas, who is well-known as a member of the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (Wosa) and is, therefore, also a member of the Workers Left Party. "Most of our members are probably members of the ANC, but we have agreed not to be politically affiliated." Trade unions, said Lucas, should act as "non-partisan organisations".

This view is shared by the newly formed PSWU, which is not yet registered and has little more than 700 members, most of whom had belonged to the Cosatu-affiliated public service union, Nehawu. Started in King William's Town earlier this year by former Nehawu regional organiser Hemming Dalh, the core membership comprises workers who went on strike against former Ciskei homeland leader Bongodwe Oupa Gopzo — and were sacked. "We expected when the ANC came into office all the workers would be reinstated," Dalh said this week. Instead, after a sit-in demonstration in the government offices in Bulho in 1994, they were re-employed. This meant loss of seniority and placed them at the head of reintegration lists on a last in, first out basis.

"It was not an easy step to take to form a new union," Dalh said. "We know that unity is the most powerful weapon for workers. But sometimes it is inevitable that we have to start again."
Trade unions need solidarity – ICFTU

By Joe Mdlilela
Political Reporter

Trade unions have to be in solidarity with one another and courageously fight human and union rights violations, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions spokesman Mr. Kelly Zidana said. Zidana was speaking at the end of a two-week seminar on rights violations at Lilongwe in Malawi at the weekend. He said those who violated trade union and human rights, including captains of industry and governments, should be exposed to the glare of international bodies such as the International Labour Organisation, United Nations and European Union.

ICFTU-Africa was determined to root out any violations that impinged on human rights, among developing countries. "The ICFTU will not stop blowing the whistle simply because those who violate trade union and other rights happen to be drawn from industrialised countries."
Labour faces unity challenge

Renee Grawitzky

The formation of one trade union federation in the country which united all working people was one of the labour movements major challenges in the future, National Union of Mineworkers general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe said last night.

Addressing a SA Communist Party meeting commemorating the party's 75th anniversary, Motlanthe said the labour movement did not just consist of Cosatu but of all working people in the country. A key challenge was to find a common platform with those unions in privileged positions and to unite to form one trade union federation.

The building of sufficient capacity within the labour movement and the deepening of class consciousness of workers were other key challenges of the labour movement, he said.

At present the labour movement could not begin to influence processes because it did not have the capacity to do so, Motlanthe said. It was crucial that labour added value to the alliance and also be able to ensure that as a key component it could think independently when all the parties came together to discuss issues.

SACP national deputy chairman Blade Nzimande said there was a concerted campaign to demonise organised labour as representing an elite. The party had to criticise such campaigns and protect labour.

Nzimande said the SACP had to dispel any beliefs that it should break with the ANC and for SACP members to leave the ANC. He reiterated that the SACP had not abandoned the path to socialism. The ultimate goal of the SACP was to ensure the reconstruction of a national democratic state and the fight around the property and lock-out clause in the constitution was to ensure that the state did not only protect the narrow interests of certain people but the broader interests of the nation.
Sometimes trendy classics?

What are you wearing at the moment?
Two unions in merger

By Abdul Milazi
Labour Reporter

THE Broadcast, Electronic Media and Allied Workers Union and the Media Workers Association yesterday formed a broadcasting federation in a historic marriage of convenience.

General secretary of the new Broadcast Workers Federation of Africa (BWFA) Mr Sthembile Khala said the merger of the two arch rivals was necessitated by the need to build the capacity of workers in Africa to be on par with the rest of the international industry.

The new federation aims to take control of broadcasting, and determine the content and destiny of the industry.

"We want broadcasting to be controlled by workers instead of academics as it is at present," Khala said.

The two unions collectively command 90 percent of the workforce at the SABC.
Union membership up, work disruptions down

BARRY STREEK
POLITICAL WRITER

MEMBERSHIP of trade unions in South Africa rose by 8.9% last year to 2 690 727, but the estimated 1.6 million work-days lost through strikes was the lowest since 1988, the Department of Labour reported yesterday.

The increase of 220 246 union members last year came after a steady decline in membership in 1993 and 1994.

Last year registered and unregistered unions together had a membership of 2.95 million — 20.4%, or just over one in five, of the working population.

The department said in its 1995 report, tabled in Parliament yesterday, that workdays lost through strikes had declined

"Industrial action during 1995 defied all predictions of a surge in strikes under the new government, and instead showed a significant decline over previous years.

"A further observation is that 'political' strikes were largely absent during 1995.

"For the year ending 31 December 1995 an estimated 1.6 million man-days were lost through strikes — the lowest since 1988. This must be compared with the 3.9 million man-days lost during 1994."

The overwhelming majority of strikes that occurred during 1995 took place in the public sector and parastatals, accounting for 71% of the man-days lost.

The 10 556 industrial accidents was the highest number ever, and the number of people killed in industrial accidents was 942 — 492 in the transport industry."
R4-m training project for worker leaders

New labour institute

ESTELLE RANDALL
Labour Reporter

For the first time, taxpayers’ money will be spent on strengthening the labour movement when the government spends an estimated R4 million on training worker leaders.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsal) and the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) have applied to the Department of Labour for about R4 million to set up the Development Institute of Training, Support and Education for Labour (Ditsela — also a Sotho word meaning “pathways”).

The money is part of an estimated R6 million which the Department of Labour has set aside for capacity building in labour organisations.

The money is not a charitable offering, said director-general Sipho Pityane. “Part of our effectiveness in enforcing the new labour laws rests in enhancing labour’s capacity for understanding these.”

This view is shared by labour.

“We’re hoping Ditsela will enable workers and full-time labour leadership to play a greater role in workplace restructuring and economic development,” said Andre Kriel, Ditsela board member and SA Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (Sactwu) national education officer.

In anticipation of the grant, the Ditsela management board met to finalise the institute’s October start-up date and appointment of its director.

“Initially Ditsela will be based in Johannesburg but it will work closely with regional organisations already delivering worker education. Over time, we would like these regional organisations to co-ordinate their work through Ditsela,” said Mr Kriel.

“It’s not in labour’s interests to have hundreds of worker education institutions all over the place when our key interests are the same. But this is the first time there is a serious attempt to co-ordinate worker education nationally, so it could take time.”

Cosatu, Nactu and Fedsal already jointly run worker colleges in Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth which offer short courses on bargaining, organisation and labour law and policy.

In the Western Cape, about 4,000 shop stewards and more than half of the province’s union organisers have been through the workers’ college since 1991. These include Cosatu’s regional secretary Elias Mabows and five of Sactwu’s 15 organisers.

Ditsela plans to put about 1,000 worker leaders through leadership and economic debate courses from October to December this year.

“We also want to get accreditation for our courses, in terms of the National Qualifications Framework,” said Mr Kriel.

While Cosatu, Nactu and Fedsal all agree on the need for Ditsela, Nactu wants all the federations, regardless of size, to have the same representation on the new institute’s management board. This goes against the grain of the proportional representation which exists in equivalent structures of the regional workers’ colleges and in other forums where labour is represented.

Nactu said it had 480,000 members and Fedsal claims 230,000. Combined, the Nactu and Fedsal membership is about 40 percent of Cosatu’s 1.8 million members.

Both Fedsal and Cosatu were confident that the difference with Nactu over representation would not stand in the way of the launch of Ditsela in October.
The white-collar federation is determined to make its mark in the post-apartheid era

Transformed Fedsal sets sights on centre stage

By Thabo Lesulu

The Federation of South African Labour Unions (Fedsal), the independent trade union federation, is gearing itself to play a more high-profile role in the labour and economic arena.

Fedsal, which was founded in 1961 as the white-only Federation of Salaried Staff Associations of South Africa, was dormant until the early 1980s. It became active again in the mid-1980s with the rise of interest in trade unions among white-collar workers because of the negative effects of commercialisation, downsizing and unbundling on labour Fedsal now has a sizeable black constituency and is ready to meet the challenges of the 1990s.

The 230,000-strong union federation is the third largest after Cosatu with its 1.6 million members and Nactu, with about 250 000 members. It concluded a workshop in Johannesburg on Friday to plan its future in the post-apartheid South Africa.

André Venter, the vice-president of Fedsal, says the federation is transforming itself into a formidable force in the labour movement and wants to be more representative of the people of South Africa.

It is so determined in its pursuit of this goal that it already has a black woman, Mary Malele, a hospital matron, as its president.

Venter regards the persistent reference to the federation as "predominantly white" as unfair. "What about Cosatu? Why is it not called predominantly black?" he asks.

Venter argues that Fedsal did not become white by choice in the past and had simply been a victim of apartheid, which denied blacks trade union rights. "We want to be judged by the signals we send out and the role we play in the economy today," says Venter.

Thus view is echoed by Louis Brockett, the deputy general secretary of the South African Footplate Staff Association (Safsasa), an affiliate of Fedsal Brockett says Fedsal cannot be blamed for the fact that there was job reservation for whites in the past.

Brockett proudly says that Safsasa was the first black Transnet trade union to turn multiracial after the National Party regime had accepted the recommendations of the Wishahn commission to end job reservation and allow desegregated unions in 1979.

Safsasa claims that about 10 percent of its 8 000 members are black.

Already, there are signs of a new-found militancy among some of the middle-of-the-road federation's 17 affiliates. Recently, three such affiliates at Transnet the Technical Workers' Union, the South African Footplate Staff Association and the Employees' Union of South Africa brought the transport employees to the verge of a crippling strike after rejecting the company's wage offer.

Venter says Fedsal intends playing a more constructive role in the economy. For now, the federation has its sights firmly set on making its influence felt on the restructuring of state assets and affirmative action.

Because Fedsal does not have the numbers that Cosatu has, it will concentrate on making a qualitative contribution to shaping economic policies.

"Instead of being involved in ideological rhetoric, we want to play a leadership role and go into the processes with the government, test the information and develop alternatives with all stakeholders instead of standing outside and throwing stones," says Venter on the emotive privatisation debate.

The federation recently submitted its views on affirmative action to the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) in response to the government's proposed policy on promoting employment equity.

Hearing Venter explain Fedsal's views on affirmative action, one can be excused for wondering whether it is not the Black Management Forum itself, the affirmative action lobby group, speaking.

"Affirmative action must be done. But it must be competency-based and be in line with the national economic plan of the government, with growth and global competitiveness in mind. It should not be superficial and (about) putting people in positions, setting them up for failure."

For growth and sustainability, the training and development of people must be fast-tracked to address imbalances of the past. But the development of people already in the system must continue. We prefer a holistic approach," says Venter.

Fedsal's recommendations to Nedlac on the government's proposed policy on employment equity include a call for home-grown solutions to the challenges of global competition, adherence to the new constitution and insistence that the proposed law be in line with the goals of the restructuring and development programme.

Fedsal is also involved in the National Framework Agreement discussions on the restructuring of state assets with the government, alongside Cosatu and Nactu.

Well aware of its not-so-impressive record of militancy as a mainly white-collar, conservative federation, compared with Cosatu and Nactu, who proved their mettle during the anti-apartheid struggle, Fedsal intends maintaining its cordial relations with its two larger rivals to advance the interests of its members.

However, it plans to remain independent to continue to represent the interests of its constituencies, which has widely different political persuasions than the ANC-aligned Cosatu and Nactu, with its black consciousness and African traditions.

Fedsal believes in a free market economy with a minimal government role.

"Fedsal serves all workers in South Africa, irrespective of colour, creed, political beliefs, race because all workers' experiences are the same," says Venter.

Not all trade unions from the apartheid era share Fedsal's enthusiasm about the new South Africa. Some, like the right-wing Mine-workers' Union (MWU), are determined to stay exclusively white.

But Ferdi Hartzenberg, the communications, training and development officer of MWU, denies that the union is racist. "We are not segregated and standing for the benefit of the white worker. There is no other institution or government standing for the right of white worker," he said.
Union membership ‘20% of workers’

Reenée Grawitzky

ONE-fifth (20.4%) of the total economically active population of around 14.3 million people were members of registered and unregistered trade unions, according to the labour department’s annual report.

The report, distributed last week, estimated that by the end of last year trade union membership totalled 2.95 million. This figure excluded trade union members in the former TBVC states.

Of the total membership, only 823,823 workers were covered by industrial council wage agreements, while more than 1 million workers fell under the jurisdiction of industrial councils.

The report said a continuing trend during negotiations last year was that lower percentage wage increases were the order of the day, while agreement was reached in various industries and trades on ensuring greater job security and improved packages in cases of staff reductions.

Besides those workers covered by industrial council wage agreements, an additional 100,112 workers were covered by six wage orders.
Numsa congress 'a guide for labour'

Renee Grawitzky

RESOLUTIONS adopted at Numsa's first congress since the 1994 election would be crucial in determining labour's future direction and could influence debate at the Cosatu congress next year, leading participants said yesterday.

Union general secretary Enoch Godongwana and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said the congress was taking place at a crucial time. Resolutions tabled by the regions indicated that debates would centre on future economic policy, strategies to address the effect of tariff reductions, and the future of the alliance with the ANC.

Godongwana said the union had lost membership through retirements because of downsizing and tariff reductions, which cost jobs at companies such as critical of the loss of experienced national officials to local and national government and the private and parastatal sectors. He said many shopstewards were frustrated at the lack of a career inside the union and had not stood for re-election. This had resulted in difficulties on the shop floor as new shopstewards grappled with the complexities of their union tasks.

Godongwana said workplace violence was prevalent on the East Rand and in the Northwest where hostels were common and workers divided along ethnic lines. Efforts were continuing to overcome ethnic divisions, but these were deep-rooted and might prove much more difficult to quell than political division.

Numsa secretory-general Enoch Godongwana at the union's congress yesterday.

Phillips and Tedex.

At the conference, the Western Cape region called for engagement with government on bread macroeconomic issues. The region argued that this should be used in working towards a broad working class programme which would ensure the upliftment of the poor and of the working class.

The adoption of such a resolution would be crucial in determining whether engagement between labour and government on the framework continued, a union source said.

Other resolutions tabled at the congress explored positions on building the organisation, privatisation, violence, tariffs and organising strategies.

Godongwana was
Unions moderate wage demands

A new realism? Wage growth steadies

Some of the elements of the macroeconomic plan, stating that they fly in the face of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, it has committed itself to engaging actively the government and its alliance partners to find alternatives," Levy said.

The consultancy also found South Africans enjoying a shorter work week as more companies complied with the recommendations in the new Employment Standards Act (ESA) for a 40-hour week.

The delay in the implementation of the new Labour Relations Act (LRA), expected on August 1, confused the labour market because the labour movement was geared up to enjoy more rights under it. The Act comes into force on November 1. The ESA will rewrite the Wage Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, which is expected to go before parliament shortly.

Levy said the implications of the ESA were immense for employment practice and the economy. "The new proposed (BSA) is possibly more important than the new LRA in that it reflects a totally new approach to employment standards, significantly empowers unions and makes participation a key issue."
Nactu toasts 10 years of fighting for unity

By Abdul Milazi

"WE have to be the masters of our own destiny and work for change." These words by National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) president James Mdlalose laid the foundation for one of South Africa's most powerful labour federations.

On Saturday Nactu celebrates 10 years of fighting for the liberation of black workers and unity within the labour movement.

With about 329 000 members, Nactu was born out of a merger between the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) and the Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (Azatu).

Although the organisation declared itself nonracial, CUSA strongly objected to white leadership and fell out of favour with other unity unions within the federation. Most Nactu leaders subscribed to the black consciousness and Pan-Africanist ideologies, which led to whites labelling the federation as either aligned to the Azanian People's Organisation or the Pan African Congress.

From its inception, Nactu fought tirelessly for worker unity and for black exclusivity but remained politically non-aligned.

Author and industrial relations lecturer at the University of Cape Town Sonja Bendix says it is believed that the federation's refusal to align itself with any of the major political organisations is partly responsible for the fact that Nactu and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) have not yet taken definite steps towards unity.

In 1988 Nactu approached Cosatu to begin talks toward a possible merger to form one umbrella federation for South Africa but this failed because of ideological differences.

The attempt came shortly after a meeting in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, between a Nactu delegation led by Mdlalose and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) under the leadership of its chairman, now Azapo president, Motsibudi Mangena.

The meeting was to find ways of uniting all black workers in South Africa to achieve a democratic society based on the leadership of the African working class.

But Nactu remained poles apart from Cosatu as the latter continued to uphold the ANC's Freedom Charter.

Political documents

"Nactu remains independent of political positions although it acknowledges the existence of political documents such as the Freedom Charter, Azanian Manifesto and Pan Africanist Manifesto," Mdlalose has argued.

Nactu freed its leadership and members to belong to any political organisation or school of thought but maintained that it would not promote any ideology.

Although many black people who subscribed to the black consciousness and Africanist ideologies found a home in Nactu, the federation continued to fight for non-racialism and even stopped using the term black, substituting it with African.

Nactu leadership argued that the term black had racial connotations while African did not mean Africanist.

This was the same idea propagated by the PAC where whites could not qualify as Africans as long as they owed allegiance to the continent.

This led to divisions between the black consciousness and Africanist sectors of the federation.

The divisions manifested themselves in the workplace as different Nactu affiliates still operate in the same sectors despite resolutions of "one industry one union."

In October 1990 Nactu ordered all of its 23 affiliates to merge within six months to form 14 industrial unions but that did not happen, although two years later some unions under the organisation's banner merged, reducing the number of affiliates to 18.
Unions take first steps down merger trail

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL

Johannesburg — Unions are taking the first steps down a merger trail, with the most prominent tie-up likely to be the emergence of a large new union of up to 150,000 workers from the paper, chemical, wood and media sectors.

The Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers’ Union (Ppawu) and the Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) are expected to merge before the end of next year, Bengeza Mthombeni, Ppawu’s general secretary, said on Friday.

“Talks are beginning to bear fruit and we hope that both the unions' congresses next year will pass resolutions giving a time frame for the merger,” Mthombeni said.

He said the two unions organised in similar sectors, with dissolving-pulp workers organised under the 54,000-member Ppawu, whereas in most other countries they were organised into unions covering the chemical sector.

The 46,000-strong CWIU passed a resolution at its 1998 congress calling for a merger, as did Ppawu at its congress last year.

Mthombeni said the process had been delayed on both sides and that both general secretaries’ offices had been identified as behind the delay.

Ppawu’s previous merger talks with the Media Workers’ Association of South Africa (Mwasa), an affiliate of the National Council of Trade Unions, with about 46,000 members, had fallen through. He said both unions were co-operating on the formulation of a centralised bargaining structure. “Because we are talking around other things we may want to revive those talks,” he said.

Also involved in the talks about centralised bargaining was the South African Typographical Union (SATU) with about 34,000 members.

Mthombeni said the three unions (Ppawu, Mwasa, SATU) had met last month to formulate a common position on centralised bargaining to be presented to employers later this year. The unions wanted to have a centralised bargaining council in place next year.

Ppawu also planned to enter into talks with the South African Union of Journalists. Journalists passed a resolution in their last congress, calling for merger with other unions, Mthombeni said.
Union investments under fire from Labour Bulletin

Reneé Grawitzky

TRADE union investment companies — surrounded by confusion and secrecy — would force unions to decide whether they were in the business of business or of trade unionism, an article published in the latest SA Labour Bulletin suggests.

The article, "union investment — new opportunities, new threats", written by an unnamed Labour Bulletin special correspondent, questions whether labour's foray into the companies was an appropriate way for unions to invest their money.

The article said there was a difference between unions making a portfolio investment and going into business by forming partnerships with particular management groups.

This was based on the view that union investment companies were obtaining some "special opportunities" from big business.

Such opportunities were not given away for nothing.

The article said not only had there been inadequate discussion within labour as to trade-offs but questioned whether unions were selling their credibility or "conferring legitimacy on the corporations".

Unions, through their investment companies, were becoming intimately tied up with management and companies, the article argued. Such developments would force unions to question whether they were in fact in business or in trade unionism.

Although unions took comfort in separating the union from its investment arm, in practice, the argument made, this was not happening. This then raised the question of why it was necessary to separate the two structures. "Perhaps that is also a good reason for not having an investment company," the author said.

Calls had been made for investment companies to adopt a code of conduct and to bar union officials from being employed by investment companies.

The article said investment companies were using some "alarming" tactics — often in direct conflict with Cosatu policy — with the result that unions were "tarred with the same brush as union investment companies (as they) plunge into one questionable transaction after another".

The approach by investment companies that "this is business" could inflict lasting damage on the union movement as it introduced commercial values into a social movement, the author argued.

He said "unionism is not about making money", but about social issues with no commercial rationale. Involvement in union investment companies "inserts" commercial values which tended to "squeeze out" unions' values.

The author questioned how unions were able to operate efficiently and effectively and still have excess funds. The article also proposed a number of alternative ways of investing union's excess funds, which ranged from funds being invested and managed by asset managers to establishing a reserve fund.
IMF ‘must recognise SA trade unions’

By Abdul Milazi

The relationship between the South African Government and the International Monetary Fund will spell doom for the country if organised labour is not involved in all discussions between the two parties.

This warning was sounded by assistant general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, Zwelusana Vavi, yesterday.

Cosatu and the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco) rejected two invitations to meet IMF managing director Michael Camdessus when he visited the country last Thursday.

Opposed to IMF

"While we are opposed to the IMF and their policies, we would want to be consulted on any planned relationship between the Government and IMF, so as to avoid falling into the same trap as other countries which are run by the Fund," said Vavi.

Vavi said the IMF was not a workers’ friend because it sided with the former apartheid government in the 1980s against the liberation forces.

"They gave the regime one of the biggest deficit loans (R4 billion) as a bribe," Vavi said.

It is common knowledge that the IMF has been widely critised for pressuring countries to adopt structural adjustment programmes regardless of relevance of such programmes to those countries," Vavi argued.

Vavi said "There has been a recent agreement that the IMF will provide additional resources to finance loan recovery through the offering of greater concessions like lower interest rates than the market rate."

Rendered bankrupt

The problem with the scheme, he said, was that after three years of concession, countries found themselves unable to continue servicing their debt.

Vavi charged that the IMF has rendered many African countries bankrupt through its "policy prescriptions":

"We don’t have to look further than our neighbour, Zimbabwe, to see the problems that can be caused by the tight fiscal policies.

"The IMF’s new Enhanced Structural Adjustment Programme aims at reducing Zimbabwe’s budget deficit of 13 percent to six percent within the next three years."

Vavi said the programme led to increased unemployment and high health and education costs.

"We agree with the approach of the international trade union movement that stakeholders should not be excluded from meaningful engagement with this leading institution," adds Vavi.

He said they rejected the invitations to meet Camdessus due to short notice.
No more ‘sweetheart’ unions

Chief Registrar has been with department for 34 years, but welcomes change

BY GOSIA NDULUVU

When the new Labour Relations Act (LRA) ushered in changes that will advance workers’ interests on November 1, one key figure who will ensure its success is a man who has been with the Department of Labour for 34 years. He is Henrie Slabbert, who has been appointed Chief Registrar of Labour Relations by Labour Minister Tito Mboweni. Mboweni has described him as “a great resource of energy and expertise”.

Slabbert, who will get into action within the next 14 days, does not see himself either as a “relic of the past” or a “mixture of the new and old”. He sees his appointment as a new challenge in his long career and foresees no problems in applying the new LRA after so many years operating under the 1956 Labour Act.

For the greater part of his long service, Slabbert registered both workers’ and employers’ organisations, gave notice of their intended registration so that whoever objected against such registration could lodge his complaint with the department, and kept a list of all these organisations, their office bearers, total membership and financial statements.

“We are moving into exciting times with the pending changes in labour. Everyone must accept the changes, although there will be hiccups along the way. We must have the will and drive to see us through the coming challenges,” said Slabbert.

He says he relies on two people who have been with him over the years. They are his assistant, Deon Coen, and Ru Hunter, who looks after the department’s finances.

New laws ... Hennie Slabbert welcomes challenges

Slabbert says South Africa has 389 registered trade unions – “but this figure may fall to 358 because 30 of them belonged to the defunct TBVC states and were affiliated to their South African counterparts.”

Other important changes Slabbert pointed out related to the current industrial councils. These councils settled disputes between employees and employers. They were divided according to the nature of the industry such as metal, or food industrial councils.

But the councils failed to resolve disputes on account of the old apartheid system which heavily favoured whites. These will be replaced by statutory councils which will be linked directly to the department.

While they will do what the industrial councils did, they will have more authority through the registrar rather than appointees of various industries.

Slabbert said the days of the “sweetheart” unions are over because no trade union will be allowed to rely on employers for its formation and administration.
Labour’s new kids on the block

Despite the loss of many familiar faces in the labour movement, unions deny a lack of leadership, write Jacqui Goldberg-Duffy and Anthony Kunda.

The players:

Zwelinkzima Vavi, assistant general secretary of Cosatu, was apparently born in 1962, or so he says. But he has never explained where he came from. He is an "unfortunate family who lived on a farm and was uneducated, break them out."

Vavi’s involvement in the trade union movement began at a young age when he was called to the bar by the Congress of South African Students (Cosas) in 1984.

Vavi’s stance in the Cosas slogan was not about Solidarity, but that it was the duty of Cosas cadres to build organisations.

Very young, he started a union in a textile company in Durban, where he worked. He left Cosas in 1992, and joined the NUM.

Gwede Mantashe, a NUM official, was born in 1959. He left the NUM in 1994, and joined the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1997.

Kollema Mlotshwa, who joined as an education officer in June 1987, after 10 years in the NUM, was also a trade unionist.

Mlotshwa is currently the head of the Cosatu’s national congress.

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Unions told to keep autonomy
Union involvement in commercial enterprises ‘is in workers’ interest’

Patrick Wadula

NATIONAL Council of Trade Unions Investment Holdings co-ordinator Mjum Maivha has defended union involvement in commercial enterprises, saying this type of investment is in the workers’ interest.

Speaking at a conference in Johannesburg on white and black joint ventures, Maivha said that the unions were accused of undermining their mandate by forging links with big business and not being transparent enough in their investments.

Maivha said the acusers had no interest in black economic empowerment. “We believe that the workers’ sweat and blood contributed to what this country and its economy is right now,” he said.

Workers had done their bit to build the economy and could not be accused of destabilising the economy whenever a strike occurred, he said.

Employees were, he said, underpaid due to companies using what was owed to them to expand their businesses.

“It is these funds, contributed by millions of our people, that have helped to develop the country.”

“It is correct for unions to begin helping in the control and direction of the funds for investment opportunities, so that their members benefit.”

Maivha said the unions’ political struggle might have ended, but the economic struggle would be taken into the boardrooms of companies if necessary.

“We are not going to apologise for engaging in investment opportunities for our workers, for in the long run they and their communities will benefit.”
Lack of female representation in SA trade unions causes concern

BY ROSELINE NYHAN

Women make up an increasing proportion of the South African labour force. This is due to the growth in the traditionally female-dominated service sector and a corresponding decline in the male-dominated manufacturing sector. Thus has resulted in an increase in the number of women joining trade unions. One would also expect to find more women in leadership positions.

But this is not the case. Women come up against a glass ceiling which prevents them from rising to positions of power in the trade unions.

While there are no up-to-date figures on the number of shop stewards in Cosatu unions, a survey conducted in 1991 estimated the figure at 25,000. Of these, only 14% (3,500) were women.

At the same time, total female membership of Cosatu affiliates was estimated at 36%.

If the number of women shop stewards were to be proportional to female membership, there should be 9,000 women shop stewards. This would be an increase of 250% on the current figures.

Being elected as a shop steward is the entry point to other leadership positions in the union. But given that there are so few women shop stewards, the likelihood of them occupying these positions is slim.

The Central Executive Committee (CEC) of Cosatu is the highest decision-making body in the federation after the congress. It is made up of 80 delegates from 19 affiliates and Cosatu regions. It also includes the six Cosatu national office bearers (NOBs).

Lack of female representation in Cosatu structures starts right at the top. Of the six NOB positions, all but one (the first vice-president) are held by men.

Further down the line, the situation is very much the same. While attendance at the CEC varies from one meeting to the next, there is only a sprinkling of women at each gathering.

The CEC of March 1995 was attended by 56 men and 56 women. In September, three women and 34 men attended.

In March 1996 there were 46 men and four women. In addition, all eight Cosatu regions have male regional secretaries.

Their attendance at the CEC tips the scales even further in favour of male representation.

All in all, women constitute an estimated 9% (six people) of the CEC, while men make up the other 91% (76 people).

While it is not surprising that the majority of office-bearers at union and federation level are male (since they are elected from a mostly male shop steward base), it is perplexing that there should be so few women shop stewards. After all, they are elected by a significantly female workforce.

Interviews conducted with 51 female members of the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers’ Union (SACCAWU), which has an overwhelmingly female membership, indicate that women workers do not elect shop stewards mainly because women are not available for election.

Interviews with women workers reveal that they do not have time. They say they do not have time. One worker said, “I have to look after my children. My husband will not look after the children during the week. He says he sacrifices enough on Saturdays and Sundays.”

Other reasons for women’s reluctance to stand for election include:

- The increase in the number of families headed by women. A recent report (World Bank/Sak Steam, 1994) found that 26% of South African households are headed by single women (this includes unmarried, divorced and separated women).
- Lack of childcare facilities. The same survey revealed that only 6% of African children are in childcare.
- The figure for all South African children is correspondingly low, at 9%.
- That women are not being taken seriously by male members and leaders.
- Sexual harassment.
- Women feel a lack of confidence.
- Inadequate education and training.

Women’s participation has been on Cosatu’s agenda since its 1985 inaugural congress. Nonetheless, two years later at the 1994 congress, delegates noted their concern that “Cosatu’s long-standing resolutions around gender inequality issues have not been implemented effectively.”

The recommendations which follow would go some way towards redressing the problems which prevent women from being elected.

- Cosatu should prioritise the negotiation of childcare facilities in the workplace.
- It should consider the implementation of a quota system at federation and affiliate level.
- It should set certain targets for representation, for example 36% representation of women in leadership positions, or representation at federation level in proportion to the number of women members in each affiliate.

Such a system could be phased in over a period of time (say, three years) to ensure that women are available and equipped to take up positions.

Cosatu should evaluate its employment practices to ensure that more women are employed as organisers and negotiators, and not only as administrators.

This article first appeared in the October edition of Labour Bulletin.
Tensions that come from bedding down with the bosses
Johannesburg — Tito Mboweni, the labour minister, relocated discriminatory trade union and employer bodies to the annals of history yesterday, and warned that bodies which maintained discrimination in their constitutions would not be registered under the new Labour Relations Act (LRA).

Speaking at a rally at the Library Gardens in the Johannesburg city centre to celebrate the launch of the act, Mboweni said the legislation provided a "wake-up call" for racially based trade unions and employer bodies, which now belonged to the past.

The 350 000-strong National Union of Mineworkers became the first organisation to receive its certificate of registration yesterday.

However, Hennie Slabbert, the registrar for labour relations in the labour department, said all bodies would have until April 1 next year to rewrite their constitutions to conform with the act and South Africa's post-apartheid constitution.

The registrar said the initial three-month deadline from the implementation of the act had been extended because of the Christmas holiday season.

There are 226 registered trade unions and 196 employer organisations in South Africa. They will all automatically be re-registered. The window period until April 1 will allow time for all the constitutions to be rewritten to conform with the act.

Slabbert said he expected the number of trade unions to drop because some were the counterparts of South African unions in the former homelands. He said that if a union or employer body failed to comply with the terms of registration, its registration would be cancelled.

"If anyone is denied membership on the grounds of race, gender or religion they can take that union to the Constitutional Court," he said.

He said the traditionally white Mine Workers' Union had started to change its membership scope.

AC van Wyk, the deputy general secretary of the Mine Workers' Union, said that as far as he knew the union did not stipulate in its 1975 constitution that members should be white, but it was "a de facto white trade union... We look after a minority group interest. We are quite proud of the fact that we represent white minority action."
Small unions urged to join big guns or face bleak future

By Goba Nkholu

Smaller trade unions, operating without the muscle of larger organisations, could face a bleak future unless they link up with the big guns.

Malcolm Domingo, chairman of the Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees, warned that smaller organisations could not survive without the likes of the Congress of South African Trade Unions or the Federation of South African Labour Unions (Fedral)

Addressing delegates at the opening of a two-day Fedral congress in Pretoria yesterday, he said the new Labour Relations Act promoted the interests of trade unions that had greater support among workers.

Domingo added that workers would soon realise they would benefit greatly by joining unions already affiliated to bigger federations.

In his annual report Fedral secretary-general Dunjahauser van der Merve called for more co-operation between the major unions, such as Cosatu.

He said the “good work” started by the National Economic Development and Labour Council should continue.
Fedsal's swelling membership poses threat to Cosatu

Reënel Grawitzky

COSATU could face increasing competition if the Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedsal) succeeds in its attempt to boost its membership to more than half a million by merging with unaffiliated unions or federations. This emerged at the start of Fedsal's conference in Pretoria yesterday when it was announced that the federation would merge with the Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees (Force), which has an estimated membership of 300,000.

Fedsal general secretary Dammhauser van der Merwe said yesterday that membership had increased to 255,000 with predictions that it could increase to 500,000, if discussions with a range of unaffiliated unions panned out.

Fedsal, Cosatu and Nactu had held talks on the issue of unity, he said. However, recently it had become clear that a formal joint federation encompassing Fedsal, Cosatu and Nactu was "not high on the agenda of any of the three."
Union boss described as prophet of doom

BY GORA NDLOVU

Chairman of the Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees (Forces) Malcolm Domungo was described on Monday as a prophet of doom for claiming smaller unions faced a bleak future if they did not join the bigger federations.

General secretary of the 28 000-strong Trade Union of South African Authorities (Tusa) Naketi Mogale made the accusation in response to a speech delivered by Domungo at a Federation of South African Labour Unions (Fedsa) meeting in Pretoria at the weekend.

Mogale said Domungo’s statements were “mischievous” and challenged him to name the small unions he referred to so that workers could decide.

Domungo had apparently said that according to the new Labour Relations Act, “hundreds” of smaller unions were doomed if they did not join the major federations.

He also reportedly said the smaller unions were responsible for many wildcat strikes, which threatened investment in South Africa – a statement he has denied.

“What I said (at the meeting) was smaller unions had to strengthen their bases by recruiting more members because in terms of the new Act the bigger ones will monopolise the workplace. They will have a greater say because they have greater numbers. In fact, it’s all going to boil down to a game of numbers,” said Domungo from his Cape Town office on Monday.

“I also said that by increasing their numbers, the smaller unions would strengthen their bases at the bargaining forum,” he added.

However, Mogale dismissed Domungo’s claims of having the well-being of smaller unions at heart. He said Domungo was on a recruitment drive and most Fedsa members discouraged the existence of independent unions because they wanted them as affiliates.

“I am afraid Domungo is misinterpreting the new LRA. The new Act says nothing about big unions swallowing up smaller ones. Instead, it speaks of freedom of association, where workers can join a union of their choice, big or small.”

Star 20/11/96
Unions hail WTO meeting as victory for local labour

John Dludlu

SA LABOUR unions which accompanied Pretoria's delegation to last week's meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) have hailed the outcome of the first ministerial meeting as a victory — albeit a modest one — for the labour movement.

International labour federations, including SA unions which took part in the pre-WTO labour conference organised by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, had wanted labour standards to be put on to the WTO's rules-based trading system to facilitate enforcement.

In terms of complex conclusions at the Singapore meeting, the linking of core labour standards — such as a ban on child labour and discrimination — to trade was at least not "thrown out of the WTO agenda", sources said.

Labour federation Cosatu's secretary-general, Sam Shilowa, said yesterday "the conclusion was not great for labour but at least it does not kill the issue" of labour standards.

Labour, backed by the US administration and certain European governments, had feared that virulent opposition from the developing nations, led by India and Malaysia, would see labour standards sent back to the less effective International Labour Organisation (ILO) to die.

Shilowa, who was part of Trade Minister Alec Erwin's delegation, also commended Erwin's performance at the meeting, saying the minister had given labour a "free hand" to canvass countries to follow SA's approach.

In terms of SA's approach, cobbled at the National Economic Development and Labour Council, Pretoria would encourage its trading partners to sign "side letters" committing themselves to upholding labour standards.

Erwin had also made Pretoria's position clear, although SA had to align itself with a significantly toned-down statement from the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The SADC wanted the issue of labour standards banished to the ILO.

Erwin had urged governments not to duck the issue of labour standards which had dominated their talks.
Socialism 'sidelined by blue collar bosses'

Reneé Grawitzky

SA’s labour movement is raising a few eyebrows with its swift move away from its adherence to socialism by spending almost as much time buying into business as it is trying to curb it, says IR Data, published by Andrew Levy & Associates.

The implied contradiction between labour’s move into the investment arena and its support for socialist principles was explored in the December edition which said that relatively little had been said about union investment companies. The author lamented bygone years “when unionists purists worried that the bosses would buy off the workers”. He said they now worried that workers might buy out the bosses.

This, he argued, could lead one to believe that “we have become used to the reality that socialist rhetoric was not to be taken seriously as “all” but a small minority of socialists were as happy to participate in the capitalist system as they were to denounce it.

The article referred to a prominent ANC left-winger who divided his “time between extolling Marxism and running a flourishing leisure property business”, and the “Cape Town Trotskyite who used to offer his cutting Marxist analyses from his CEO’s desk at a travel agency”.

Union investment in profit-making companies, it said, was not an “outlandish idea”, with many parallels in other societies. Of critical importance for labour was whether such initiatives enhanced union and worker influence over the economy and decisions taken within business. It was possible, but not inevitable, that union leaders would be able to exert some influence over company decisions. “Since union owners are invariably not the majority shareholders, they will be a minority on boards and there will be no obligation on board members to listen.”

The author pointed out that in contrast to their German and Scandinavian counterparts, union board members would take their seats not only as worker representatives, but as investor representatives with their eye firstly on their investment and with secondary concerns about union goals.

If unions were seeking a real say in the economy, the employee stock ownership plan was possibly a better route to follow, despite being branded as a union-bashing device, he argued.
Saccawu rejects offer of Sanlam’s services

They have to put their house in order,” he said.

Sanlam’s inability to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with Saccawu stemmed from the fact that about 7 percent of the insurer’s 7 000 clerical workers were union members, said Gerrie Botha, an industrial relations consultant to Sanlam.

“Sanlam is a national company and we do not wish to engage in collective bargaining with a minority union. We have said to them that we can look at other areas of co-operation but they want full bargaining.”

Bones Zulu, the general secretary of Saccawu, said in a letter to one of Sanlam’s few black fund managers that the membership figures should be seen in the context of employment patterns in the finance sector, which were still skewed in favour of whites “who were never disadvantaged nor interested in unions.”

He said Sanlam refused to adapt to change and seemed “hellbent on union bashing.”

Zulu wrote that there was no evident change in Sanlam’s hierarchy. His letter continued: “You may be one of the handful to represent some dark skin in that hierarchy of predominantly pale skins.”
Leaders suspended as friction plagues union

Renee Cawitzky (134) 21/2/97

THREE Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) national office bearers have been suspended for their unauthorised suspension of the general secretary following the release of a report on Fawu's investment activities.

First vice-president Ernest Theron, second vice-president Papki Moeng and national treasurer Richard Mungosej all suspended two weeks ago, intend applying for a High Court interdict "tomorrow against the action of the national executive committee (NEC).

Union sources said the office bearers, without consulting the NEC, suspended general secretary Mandla Granyana after receiving a report which investigated certain investment transactions by Granyana on behalf of the union in 1994 and 1995.

The NEC reversed the decision and suspended the three.

Prior to this assistant general secretary Ernest Buthelezi was suspended.

Continued on Page 2

Union (134)

Continued from Page 1 21/2/97

ed for allegedly contravening the union's employment policy

Union officials said the problems were a result of tensions between two factions, one led by Granyana and the other by Buthelezi. A lack of transparency, accountability and proper guidelines for negotiations with investment partners had fuelled divisions.

The union's national congress in 1995 agreed that an investigation should be conducted into the purchase of Krugerrands worth R256 200 and the manner in which the union sold its share allocation in Oceana Fishing to Real Africa Holdings.

The investigation found an individual (not in the union) had been paid more than R22 000 commission for the purchase of the Krugerrands. This amount was found to be "highly irregular" and excessive. Normal transaction fees charged by institutions were about R600 to R1 350.

The probe found that Granyana had not received union authorisation for paying the commission and the union had been defrauded.

The union was also given an option to buy a stake in Oceana Fishing. It did not take it up and Granyana agreed to allow Real Africa to take up its share option. In return, the union was given R2m which it had to reinvest in Real Africa Investments shares. Elements in the union believed funding could have been found and that in the long term the union lost out on the deal.

Although the investigation did not find any irregularities in the Oceana deal, it found that the final deal was not properly authorised by the union."
Federations merge to form union giant

Reneé Grawitzky
25/02/93

The Federation of SA Labour Unions (Fedusa) merged with the Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees (Force) yesterday to form SA's second largest trade union federation after the Congress of SA Trade Unions (CosaTu).

The new body — Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) — will have 25 affiliates with a membership in excess of 515 000. Talks had been underway for some time between the two federations, with the first indications of a merger in the offing coming when a representative of Force addressed Fedusa's national congress last year.

Force includes affiliates such as the Public Service Association which has a strong presence in the public sector. Fedusa will include affiliates in the private and public sector and covering all the main sectors. The new organisation said its formation was very "closely related to the fact that a growing number of employees from all walks of life felt the need for a much stronger, party political independent, non-racial and stable trade union federation with unionists who can advance the interests of employees".

The federation stressed that it represented members from all different political parties and from different groups and occupations. Fedusa would be represented in the National Economic Development and Labour Council by taking up the seats allocated to Fedusa. The president of the federation would be Mary Malete and the vice-presidents are Malcolm Domingo, André Venter and Martin Deyzel.
New labour force wins support

Madeleine Wackernagel

The formation of the second-largest trade union federation this week drew a unanimously positive response, even from its bigger rival, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

The Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa), created through the merger of the Federation of South African Labour Unions (Fedsal) and the Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees, will represent 25 employee groups with a total membership of 515,000.

"The move is significant," says one analyst, "and more of a change than we realise. The new organisation is far more representative in terms of race and skills across the board, which augurs well for the future of the labour movement."

Says another: "Fedsal played a remarkable role in the consensus-building process at Nedlac [National Economic Development and Labour Council]; it is vital that Fedusa continues that tradition."

Certainly general secretary Dannhauser van der Merwe does not expect any major changes: "The principles upon which Fedusa is established are no different to those of Fedsal - political independence; equal opportunities and non-discrimination; disciplined action; professionalism and support for balanced economic policies."

Nor did he foresee any difficulties with Cosatu. "They have been expecting this move for some time; talks have been ongoing. They may not have expected it to happen this quickly but I don’t see it creating any problems. We will continue to take a non-political stance, which may put us at odds with Cosatu’s more militant line — for instance, their call for a national strike last year, which we didn’t agree with, and their more recent action over Swaziland — but that shouldn’t create ructions in the labour movement as a whole."

"Cosatu cannot, however, speak for ‘organised labour’ alone — there are now three major federations operating in South Africa. Many workers are not political and just want to get on with their lives, in a fair and productive working environment. They should be allowed to do so."

The move "would have no impact on Cosatu", said a Cosatu representative. "It is one of Cosatu’s founding principles to represent the whole of South Africa’s labour force. One day, even if it takes 10 years, we hope to achieve that, but in the meantime, we are working towards common goals in terms of Nedlac and will continue to strive for a co-operative environment."

Van der Merwe, who is leaving in a few months to set up his own business, is seen in the industry as having been pivotal in keeping the disparate membership of Fedsal together. Hence, concern has been raised about his departure, which he was quick to allay.

“I gave notice some time ago and am staying on to oversee this period of transition but I have no doubt that the movement will go from strength to strength. We have some very experienced people in charge, including the new president, Mary Malelo, who was vice-president of Fedsal for more than a year.”
ILO censures 20 countries for persecuting unions

Geneva – The International Labour Organisation has censured 20 countries, including South Korea, where it urged the government to release detained workers and recognise unions with a right to bargain collectively.

In a report, the United Nations agency's freedom of association committee denounced violence against trade unionists – including murder, disappearances, and intimidation – in Colombia, Nigeria and Sudan.

The committee urged Brazil to cancel fines imposed on workers for taking part in a 1995 strike at Petrobas oil company and to drop fines in the case of legitimate strike action, while it reprimanded Pakistan for beating up and detaining unionists.

The 226-page report by the committee, which held closed-door meetings earlier this month, was adopted unanimously by the ILO. – Reuters
Unionists still under pressure — ILO

TRADE unionists worldwide continue to face harassment, arrest, detention and death by torture, claims a report released by the International Labour Organization’s (ILO’s) freedom of association committee.

The ILO’s governing body last week endorsed the report, which identified serious abuses of trade union rights in Colombia, Nigeria, Sudan, Swaziland, Korea and 15 other countries and called for the revision of their labour law and practices.

The committee considered 73 cases of infringement of trade union rights in 22 nations, and appealed to Korea and Swaziland to expedite further revision of their labour legislation.

The ILO urged Swaziland’s government to take the necessary steps to amend industrial relations legislation to ensure it was compatible with the principles of freedom of association.

A report compiled by an ILO mission, sent to Swaziland last October, highlighted the “considerable distrust between the Swazi government and its private sector social partners.

It described the political climate as “intolerant of any trade union activity that is not directly related to workers’ shop floor and labour relations needs.”
New union federation with 515,000 members launched
Moderate union federation formed

By Own Correspondent

The country's second-biggest labour federation, which could transform the face of South African labour relations, was officially launched on Tuesday.

Second in size only to the ANC-aligned giant Cosatu federation, the 515 000-strong Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa) has 25 affiliates and looks set to expand, possibly even overtaking Cosatu in its membership drive.

Along with working agreements and new members, which could include the South African Police Union and the National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa, Fedusa aims to reach the 700 000 mark by the end of the year.

Leadership of the new organisation also hinted this week at the possibility of a merger with the National Council of Trade Unions, a move that would make its power base larger than that of Cosatu.

The central binding force of Nactu and Fedusa is their strong emphasis on independence from political parties.

While Nactu is traditionally more Africanist in its alignment, it has increasingly moved to welcome affiliates of all political persuasions.

Increase its power

Fedusa is a merger of the Federation of South African Labour Unions (Fedsl) and the Federation of Organisations Representing Civil Employees. Its members will include technicians, administrative employees, pilots, nurses, doctors and other skilled and semi-skilled employees from the public and private sectors.

Fedusa vice president Malcolm Domingo says the size of the new federation will increase its power in the workplace and in the bargaining chambers of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac).

Fedusa will take up the seats of Fedsl on this council, which is made up of representatives from Government, labour, business and community organisations, and seeks to negotiate new policy directions.

"We are not trying to compete with Cosatu but we want to find a way of binding as many organisations as possible to inject renewed energy into the labour movement," Domingo says.

He says it is important that smaller unions either join one of the federations or merge with bigger unions if they are to survive in the future.

"Numbers count these days and the bigger you are the more say you have."

Talks between the two federations began last June and were concluded with the signing of an agreement last week because, Domingo says, there is a growing demand from employees for a "stronger, politically independent, non-racial and stable trade union federation."
Bargaining congress for Numsa today

By Abdul Milazi

THE National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) will hold a national bargaining conference in Johannesburg today to prepare for annual wage negotiations in May.

Labour Minister Mr Tito Mboweni is expected to address the conference on the Government’s Human Resources Development Green Paper.

Numsa general secretary Mr Enoch Godongwana told a Press briefing in Johannesburg yesterday that the conference’s discussions would be on key issues affecting workers in the auto, engineering and motor industries.

The main focus would be on creating better access to training for workers. “Training is of vital importance in the transformation process for economic and equity reasons.”

Godongwana said black workers had been deprived of education and training at the workplace. They had been subjected to inferior education and sometimes had no access to education at all.

“Most of our people cannot read and write and yet bosses are not prepared to train them. Their argument is that they can teach workers how to operate machines provided they can read and write, but how workers learn to do that is their own problem,” said Godongwana.

He said employers were indirectly saying they were not prepared to train workers. “If they cannot facilitate adult basic education, they are denying workers access to the technical training they claim they are prepared to carry out. If these workers are not able to read and write, they cannot learn to operate those machines.”

“The narrow training we see now in the sector is the result of apartheid. It is only technical and does not focus on developing the whole individual. Traditional artisan training has all along been biased in favour of whites who could read and write.”

“IT is now time to train our workforce to improve productivity and get a social wage at the same time. Access to education and training has two-pronged implications, economic and equity.”
Recommendation to set up fund to develop trade unions in southern African

BY ADAM COOK

The Congress of South African Trade Unions is to call on the Government to set up a fund to develop trade unions in the entire southern African region, the federation said yesterday.

Cosatu's highest decision-making body, its central executive committee (CEC), recommended that the fund be set up after a meeting last week. The issue is to be discussed at an upcoming meeting with President Nelson Mandela and Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo.

Cosatu general secretary Sam Shilowa said yesterday it was important to show increasing solidarity with unions worldwide.

"Rather than assist in the day-to-day running of other organisations, we could help with capacity-building and skills development," he said.

In line with this move, the CEC meeting announced its intention to affiliate with the International Confederation of Trade Unions.

Illegal immigrants also came under the spotlight when the CEC called for changes to the present legislation. This is part of a drive by the federation to decriminalise immigrants, and the CEC has called for the establishment of a register of all "illegal foreigners".

The CEC went so far as to suggest a temporary permit for the thousands of foreigners selling goods who cross SA's borders and stay for short periods.
Trade union investment strategies face scrutiny.

For a union to be truly effective and responsible, the investment of its members' and supporters' assets must be scrutinised in the same way that individual investors watch the market. The trade union movement is at a crossroads. The question is whether to continue with investments that are viewed as too risky, potentially ending up with a situation where valuable assets are lost or where members and their families are left holding the bag. The unions have a responsibility to their members to ensure that their investments are sound and that they are not subject to unnecessary risk. A union that invests in high-risk ventures runs the risk of losing its members' hard-earned money, which can have serious consequences for its members and the wider community.
Naledi outlines plan to achieve harmony

Investments contradict union aims

MPHO MANTJU

Johannesburg — Union investment companies may be following strategies in conflict with the aims of the unions themselves, according to the findings of a report released yesterday by Naledi, a policy research unit.

Naledi presented its report to Cosatu last week, outlining ways to bring investment strategies in harmony with the broader social aims of trade unions.

Ravi Naidoo, Naledi's acting director, said the parties recognised on a broader level that the problems could be corrected. But he said the relationship between the unions and the investment companies was "like one big family, which was bound to be problematic."

Naidoo said a structure would be set up to facilitate accountability and introduce proper guidelines for union investment companies. It was intended that a mechanism would be established that would require companies to abide by the unions' regulations.

Naidoo also said there was a lack of proper communication channels within unions, which might exacerbate the problems.

Nowethu Mpati, Cosatu's spokesman, said Cosatu's aim was to find a coherent approach to investment. She said this was part of a process of placing unions in a favourable position in the economic future of the country. She said there was a need to change some of the rules, set up 10 years ago when Cosatu was formed.

Mpati said the final report was expected to be handed in by September. She said the organisation expected submissions from members and non-members in the meantime.

Naidoo said the doors were open for interested parties to debate the procedures to be followed. He said there should be a separation of functions between the unions and the investment companies.

The success of the partnership between the two could be achieved if the investment companies' principles were consistent with those of unions. Naidoo said the scenario was "very much each union doing its own thing" at the moment — and often differently.
R8-m trust for education heralds new era for unions

JOHANNESBURG - Trade unionism entered a new era yesterday with the launching of an R8-million education trust for the children of workers.

The trust, founded by the South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactwu), is regarded as the first real sign that organised labour is changing from an agent of revolution to a vehicle for the transformation of workers' lives.

"We are trying to make sure that you (the children of workers) are better off than your parents," said Sactwu president Amon Nthul. An investment arm, Sactwu Investments, used R2-million collected from members and produced huge returns to be able to fund the education trust.

A surprise guest was Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, son of a textile worker, who recounted his own failure to obtain a bursary.

About R5-million will pay half the fees of 631 university students this year and assist 3 000 technikon and college students. The rest will buy school equipment.
Union starts R8-m trust to teach children of workers

By Adam Cooke

Trade unionism has entered a new era with the launch of an R8-million education trust for the children of workers belonging to the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Saactwu).

The union’s education trust, launched on Monday at the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg, is the first real sign that organised labour is changing from its historical role as an agent of revolution to a vehicle for the transformation of workers’ lives.

"We are trying to make sure that you (the children of workers) are better than us; that you are better than your parents," said Saactwu president Amon Nual.

This latest move is the result of a controversial decision taken by the union three years ago to establish an investment arm.

The investment arm, known as Saactwu Investments, used R2-million collected from members and produced massive returns to be able to fund the education trust.

About R5-million of trust money will pay half the fees for 631 university students this year and contribute to 2,000 technician and college students.

The remaining R3-million is to be used to buy equipment for schools.
After much delay, the CWU show is back on the road

In June last year, amid considerable fanfare, the Communication Workers Union (CWU) was launched in Johannesburg. It brought together the major post office and Telkom unions, Potwa and Peasa, and the largely KwaZulu Natal-based Saptex. At 47,000 strong it was not one of the larger unions, but it organised in a critical area — information technology.

The coming together of these three unions was also heavy with the symbolism of the new South Africa. Potwa was a largely black union, Peasa organised mainly coloured workers, while Saptex had the image of an Indian organisation. Before the inaugural conference, talks had also been held with the Media Workers Association from South Africa (Mwasa) and the South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ). The organisation trumpeted the prospect of a union of all workers in the communications field.

The message hit home in a timely but significant way: several Mwasa members resigned and joined the CWU as word spread that the two were to merge. No merger took place and the interest the CWU expressed in wider recruitment seemed to evaporate.

"We had talks with the CWU and they sent us their draft constitution for us to comment on," said Motsumi Mokhutse, the general secretary of the 5000-strong SAUJ. The SAUJ made their comments and returned the draft. "Since then we have heard nothing. But we are still open to discussions."

Other industries also heard little or nothing from what had promised to be a major initiative within the labour movement. The reason was kept closely under wraps, but it was simple: the CWU was not interested. The union had ploughed ahead with its amalgamation plans without noticing that a small group of members of the former telecommunications and post office unions in Port Shepstone had registered themselves as the CWU.

This technical problem meant that the CWU did not have the legal rights of unions in the workplace. This could have had major repercussions had it been known. "So we had to take it easy. Mark time, while we sorted the matter out," said Mbuyi Panyani, the national co-ordinator for allied industries.

Talks with the Port Shepstone CWU petered out. "The union there just folded and disappeared," said Panyani. The major CWU was finally registered in March. "Now we have started to do what we originally intended."

This will mean opening talks again with unions like the SAUJ and Mwasa, which has always argued for a single media union. Since last year, the SAUJ has been committed to either a single union or closer co-operation with "other, fraternal organisations." The main reservation it had in its submission on the CWU constitution was that it did not allow for organisational representation of journalists.

But the CWU allied industries' net has been cast much wider than the print and television media, where Mwasa and the SAUJ have most of their members. The union has made inroads into the paging, cellular network and data transfer sectors and most of the staff at the state-run Independent Broadcasting Authority are members.

 Allegations of "poaching" from trade unions affiliated to Cosatu are unlikely since most of these sectors have had little or no union organisation. Where there are unions they are either unaffiliated or affiliated with the National Council of Trade Unions.

"We hope to continue talks with other unions where they exist," said Panyani. "In the meantime, we are launching a big recruiting drive." However diplomatically this is handled, it is likely to cause some ripples as the CWU targets everyone from television technicians to actors and musicians.

As Panyani said, after a long delay, the CWU show is finally on the road.
Unions mushroom under new law

Reneé Gravitzky

ONE hundred new minority unions have registered under the Labour Relations Act, which was designed to promote the formation of majority unions.

Labour consultants and analysts have warned that many of these have been established, by labour lawyers and consultants for commercial gain.

A labour consultant said the act had inadvertently created a “mini-industry in labour relations litigation” and could have exacerbated opportunistic behaviour by those wishing to gain access to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The act did not allow for legal representation at the commission, so those excluded were forming unions and employer associations to represent individuals or companies.

Academics, labour consultants and analysts said it would be a mistake to believe all new unions were bad news as some did represent genuine worker interests—on-special interest groups.

However, a large number were fly-by-night unions formed by opportunistic labour consultants and lawyers, or discredited former unionists wishing to “make a quick buck.”

Durban-based labour consultant Pat Stone said new unions were marketing themselves as not being “in bed with government” and promising to get something more than establishment unions for members.

This trend was also typical of a move towards centralised bargaining. Fragmentation took place, especially where there was a suspicion that the partnership between labour and government “smacked of restraint and a move away from shop floor militancy.”

Ian Macun, deputy director of the Sociology for Work Unit at Wits University, said this trend could be a recipe for violence, divisiveness and complicated collective bargaining if competing power bases were developing which did not have significant or sustainable organisations. This was not in the interests of the company or workers.

Continued on Page 2

Unions (134)

The majority of organised workers

A labour consultant said the new unions caused “major disruption to employers to demonstrate their power base to employees and then they collect money and disappear.”

An industry source said this type of scenario was unfolding at Anglo American Platinum Mines, where a worker grouping which led a violent and unsuccessful strike last year had formed a new union—the Mouthpiece Workers’ Union—on the back of the strike and could sow divisions among workers pursuing unachievable demands.

Labour relations registrar Henne Slabbert said the number of registered trade unions had risen from 282 in October to 381, with 68 applications still being processed. About 65 newly registered unions had operated in the former homelands or the public service.

Slabbert said the new act enabled organisations with a membership of 10 to apply for registration. Established unions were no longer able to oppose the application of new unions.
Fawu in internal battle over ‘purge’

Reneé Grawitzky

THE Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu) — one of SA’s largest trade unions — is embroiled in a major internal battle with 11 national, regional and branch officials having either been suspended or removed from office in the past two months.

Factions within the union regard the moves as a purge.

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration has been asked by some of the union officials concerned to intervene and consolidate the disputes into one, as they all relate to similar issues.

Fawu general secretary Mandla Gxanyana yesterday acknowledged the existence of the individual disputes. He claimed they arose out of misappropriation of funds, misuse of accommodation allowances and violation of union codes of conduct.

Union sources claim the affected officials, suspended for months without an inquiry, were concerned that their cases would not be heard before the union’s congress this month. There was an attempt to purge Fawu of its leadership opposed to corruption ahead of the congress to prejudice their chances of ousting the general secretary in the election, they said.

Other officials were being targeted while members in the Western Cape had stopped paying subscription fees. The union said membership subscriptions were stable.

A labour consultant said such disputes could weaken the union and undermine its financial strength.

Union sources said the problems were a result of tensions between two factions, one led by Gxanyana and the other by former assistant general secretary Ernest Buthelezi.

The Buthelezi faction, they said, was attempting to fight corruption which went beyond union investments to administration of funds and the failure to implement a coherent programme of action.

In February three senior national office bearers were removed from office and subsequently reinstated by the High Court. They were removed after they suspended Gxanyana on receipt of a report which investigated investment transactions relating to the purchase of Krugerrands and the sale of the union’s share in Oceana Fishing to Real Africa Holdings. They were again removed a week after their reinstatement and now await a Labour Court decision next week.

Buthelezi was dismissed for allegedly abusing the union’s accommodation policy. This was despite a recommendation by an independent investigation that it was a minor offence and if he was charged other office bearers should also be. Since his dismissal, seven office bearers and employees have been suspended or resigned.

664/6/97
Sactwu provides R8-m in student bursaries

BUSINESS REPORTER

The South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union's (Sactwu) investment company has set aside R8 million to fund 350 tertiary institution students whose parents belong to the union.

Sactwu spokesman Andre Kriel said the bursary, which was launched in the city last night, would pay between 50% and 100% of the recipient student's fees.

"The only criteria that the union has imposed for us to continue sponsoring students is that they must pass every year."

He said the R8 million was derived from profits Sactwu's investment company had made in its various ventures. These include a stake in Vodacom and the soon-to-be launched Cape Talk radio station.

Mr Kriel also said the union was considering funding primary and secondary schools which in neighbourhoods were its members lived.
The Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) has called on its members to use the mechanisms provided in the union's constitution to address grievances rather than seek redress through legal action.

The call by Fawu follows an internal battle between two groups over alleged corruption. The dispute has led to the suspension of 11 national, regional and branch officials over the past two months. Some of the dismissed officials are said to have instituted legal proceedings to be remitted.

"Following the route indicated by our constitution would have been far more effective and expedient," Fawu said.

"Grievances that have arisen previously within the union have been successfully mediated to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

"Actions of all Fawu staff, office-bearers and members are regulated by an agreed code of conduct and are subject to democratic and transparent decision-making," said the statement.

The union added in the statement that it stood by its actions, which it believed were fair and just.

"It is not and never has been the policy of the union to purge people," said the statement.
Dilemma over land of milk and honey

Jabulani Sikhakhane

The trade union movement's foray into the world of investment, in many ways, is beginning to resemble Christianity, a faith emphasising the virtues of sacrificing this world's pleasures for a life, after death, of eternal happiness. By so doing, Christianity almost ignores that there is also life before death.

Trade unions and their investment companies could soon face the same moral dilemma in recent years, trade unions, led by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactw), have set up investment companies as vehicles for creating wealth which they would then distribute to members as social benefits.

As Tito Mbweni, the labour minister, said recently at the celebration of the takeover of Johnnic by the National Empowerment Consortium, benefits such as housing assistance and scholarships for members would become some of the reasons for joining trade unions.

Recent events suggest that for such benefits to materialise, today's trade union members may have to take pain in order for their children and tomorrow's workers to reach the promised land of milk and honey.

Last week, the NUM responded angrily to the news that Randfontein, the troubled gold mining company controlled by JCI, would retrench 4 100 miners in a bid to improve the mine's financial performance. A further 3 000 workers at Western Areas, another gold mine in the JCI stable, are said to be facing similar fate.

The NUM's Randfontein branch directed its anger at Mzi Khumalo, who recently led the consortium of black investors, including the investment companies created for the benefit of mineworkers and their families, that bought control of JCI for R2.5 billion from Anglo American and De Beers.

Thambo Mngomezulu, a spokesman for the NUM at the Randfontein mine, reportedly told Reuters: "Capital does not know the colour of the skin. Mzi Khumalo has to do what he has to do but the workers have lost faith in him."

But the NUM's senior officials shed away from any direct attacks on Khumalo, preferring to direct their criticism at the mining industry as a whole.

"We'll leave our options open, and if the industry as a whole does not begin to look at other solutions and simply relies on retrenchment, we have to mobilise for a general strike over this issue to save jobs," said Kgalema Motlanthe, the NUM's secretary-general.

Motlanthe, who went to the extent of describing Khumalo as an "old comrade from Robben Island", told Reuters that JCI management had hoped to use Khumalo's appointment to mute the NUM's response to the job cuts.

"They were relying on the fact that in the euphoria of that sort of change they could get away with the job cuts. In this present climate of heavy unemployment, they were pushing their luck too far," he reportedly said.

What the NUM members at Randfontein may not know is that through their membership of the union, they are indirectly interested in the improved profitability of Randfontein.

Through Hosken Consolidated Investment and Wits Nigel, NUM members are indirect investors in JCI, which owns a 30 percent stake in Randfontein. JCI also renders management and other consultancy services to the mine.

Hosken — a company controlled by the Mineworkers Investment Company (MIC), the Mineworkers Social and Benefit Investment Company (MSBIC) and the Sactw Investment Company — owns 13.5 percent of Safhie, which in turn owns 30 percent of JCI.

Randfontein management has argued that the retrenchments are necessary to improve "profit margins and efficiencies." If that were to be achieved, the market value of Randfontein would rise and so would that of JCI, which would also receive a stream of dividend income from Randfontein. So, a more profitable Randfontein would mean more wealth for the MIC and MSBIC. That, in turn, would mean the promised social benefits for the mineworkers and their families would materialise sooner rather than later.

Also, given the fact that Khumalo's consortiu paid R54.60 a share for the JCI stake and the price is now hovering below R40, any effort to narrow that gap should be welcome.

Take another case of the 8 000 workers at Premier Foods, a subsidiary of the Premier Group, who last Thursday went on a nationwide strike after the company allegedly snubbed attempts by the Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAwu) to negotiate the fate of 2 000 workers facing retrenchment. What the FAWu members may not have known is that their union was one of the 15 trade unions and their investment companies that have acquired an effective 17.5 percent stake in Johnnic, an industrial holdings group which, among its investments, counts a joint controlling stake in the Premier Group.

There is also the fact that the National Empowerment Consortium's funding of the Johnnic takeover was structured so that if the Johnnic share price did not perform over a certain period of time, its ownership would revert to the financial institutions that provided the funding.

Furthermore, the Premier Foods Provident Fund was one of the institutions that provided funding for the Johnnic deal. That being the case, FAWu members would have every interest in the financial wellbeing of Premier Foods.

The Randfontein and Premier Foods events point to potential conflict of interest between trade unions' traditional role as guardians of workers' interests and their investment activities.

But trade union officials are quick to point to a Chinese wall between their investment activities and their traditional role. For instance, the MIC is an independent entity owned by the Mineworkers Investment Trust. The NUM derives no financial benefit from the trust nor from the MIC, and to survive the union will remain dependent on members' dues.

Nevertheless, trade union investment companies will either have to stay clear of those sectors in which its beneficiaries are employed or the workers on the shopfloor will soon have to learn that to go to heaven, one has to die first. Amen.
Boer labour union established

Pretoria – A "Boere" labour union has been established in Randburg to withstand "the destructive effects of affirmative action", the Boerevolk Werkersune (BWU) said in a statement.

The union said members would be served by 150 officials countrywide. The union would train its members in armed self-defence in a bid to combat hijackings. A clinic providing members with a 24-hour legal advice service has also been established.

The BWU want recognition of traditional Afrikaner holidays as paid holidays.

Boerestaat Party leader Robert van Tonder has been elected BWU president – Supa
Unions mark time in changing world

Mtoto Nyati

IN SA today, labour union leadership seems to be the only group which has not changed with the times. The union leaders seem to think they have “diplomatic immunity” from change.

Despite the apparent changes in society, the union leadership is practising strategies of the past. We are subjected to the same rhetoric, the same slogan, the same mantra, the ridiculous wage demands and the same wishy-washy socialist dreams.

When will Cosatu secretary-general Sam Shilowa wake up to the reality that SA has changed? When will the leadership start exposing its members to the realities of global competition?

Shilowa is blaming the government for concentrating resources on promoting competitiveness. Can the secretary-general propose an alternative strategy that would minimise and/or reduce job losses?

Zwelinzima Vavi, assistant secretary-general of Cosatu, said that Central Statistical Service reports indicated that instead of job creation there were massive job losses in SA. It would be masochistic, naive and irresponsible to suggest that retrenchments will decrease in SA in the near future. As we become globally competitive, more and more workers will join the ranks of the unemployed — that is a fact. The labour union leadership should define their new role starting from that premise.

Democratic Party leader Tony Leon said Cosatu was a powerful organisation which could have a disruptive and destructive influence on SA’s future. He believes Cosatu overestimates union power and influence.

As thousands of people get retrenched despite their membership of unions, workers are going to start asking themselves questions. For example, does being a member of a union “give one job security”?

The answer obviously is a big “no”. So what is the value of continued membership of the union? I am sure the union leadership would be able to answer that. But would the answer be satisfactory to the representatives of the masses?

Labour unions should recognise their changing role and seek strategies that allow them to contribute positively to the new world order. Relevance of labour unions in the future depends on what the union leadership chooses to do today. It could be toy-tying as usual, resulting in the demise of labour unions as we know them, or cooperating with management in ensuring the long-term survival of their companies.

Co-operation could be centred on productivity, capital expenditure, social responsibility, multiskilling and environmental issues.

Either the unions become extinct or carve themselves a future in the modern competitive environment.

Mtoto Nyati is a manufacturing consultant.
Ejected Fawu officials fail to win posts back

Renee Grawitzky

THE Labour Court last week did not order the reinstatement of three Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) national office bearers who claimed they had been unconstitutionally removed from office by the union's national executive committee.

Union treasurer Ernest Theron and vice-presidents Papki Moeng and Richard Mpumgase, who were removed from office at the beginning of February by the committee, said the judgment had serious implications for the labour movement and a number of other organisations.

They said this would encourage the continuation of "conspratorial activities within the organisation".

Their removal came at a time when seven other officials and employees had been removed or dismissed from the union.

The three were removed from office after they suspended union general secretary Mandla Gxanyana.

He was suspended after an independent report found that he had violated union procedures in relation to the sale of Occana shares offered to Fawu and the unauthorised purchase of Krugerrands.

They applied for an urgent interdict which was not heard as the parties reached an agreement in terms of which the three were reinstated.

A week later, they applied for another interdict after again being removed from office by the committee.

Their removal was challenged on the basis that the committee had acted unconstitutionally and had failed to apply the principles of natural justice.

They argued that in terms of the new Labour Relations Act, a union's constitution had to provide for and establish the circumstances and manner in which office bearers may be removed from office. Thus, they argued, had not happened.

The court did not hold that they had been unfairly removed from office but took the view that a simple majority vote could remove office bearers.

The committee was empowered to arrive at a decision by an agreed democratic process, the court held.

It could not "find any basis which would give a court power to interfere with a decision of a trade union whereby it removes or elects office bearers in a way in which the members of such union have agreed."

The court said it equally did not think that it was open to the courts to look at why a particular official was removed or elected as this was beyond the court's powers of interference.

Rules

The court agreed that where a tribunal was sitting as a disciplinary forum and performing disciplinary functions it was implicit that the rules of natural justice were applied.

The court said "mere noncompliance with the rules of a voluntary association (or trade union) was ordinarily not sufficient justification for a court to intervene in the proceedings of such an association."

The judgment suggested that the union's upcoming national congress was the appropriate forum where the three should present their case as it was the supreme governing body of the union and had the power to ratify all committee decisions.

Meanwhile, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration has agreed to hold a joint conciliation meeting for seven employees and office bearers who have recently been removed from office or dismissed.
Union elects its first woman deputy

New president of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, Willie Matheja, is the first vice-president. Joyce Mapfumo, right, is assistant secretary.

She is regarded as a controversial figure, according to the union's national executive committee. Joyce Mapfumo has been a member of the union for 15 years and has been involved in various campaigns and protests. She was elected as the first woman president of the union.

The Chemical Workers' Union has a membership of over 20,000 workers across the country. The union is known for its activism and has been involved in several industrial disputes and strikes. Joyce Mapfumo's election is seen as a significant development in the union's history.
Setback for proposed union merger

Moves to set up a united trade union in the clothing, textile and leather industries suffered a setback yesterday when the National Union of Leather Workers (NULW) said its independence would be undermined if it merged with another union.

The NULW's Cape Town branch co-ordinator, Ashraf Ryklief, told Business Argus that the South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union's (Sactwu) open relationship with the African National Congress (ANC) would not appeal to his union's membership.

"We are an independent union and we represent a broad spectrum of people who have very different views on many political issues," Mr Ryklief said.

Sactwu is affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions, which has an alliance with the ANC.

Sactwu's secretary general, Jabu Ngoboe, said the union had requested a meeting with the NULW for sometime in July to discuss the possibility of the two merging.
CWIU rejects ‘neo-liberal agenda’

The Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) has rejected union investment and the restructuring of state assets as solutions to the country’s economic problems, Siphiwe Mgcina, the union’s spokesman, said yesterday. Mgcina said these positions were adopted at CWIU’s recent congress. “The congress resolved to reject the setting-up of union investment companies and called for continued state ownership of strategic state assets such as Eskom, Telkom, water and health. We reject globalisation as a neo-liberal agenda which causes unemployment.”

He said the union had also decided to merge with the Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers’ Union. The possibility of a merger with the South African Chemical Workers’ Union was discussed, as the “political stumbling blocks of the past no longer exist”. The CWIU supported Cosatu’s demands on the draft Basic Conditions of Employment Bill, he said. — Frank Nxumalo, Johannesburg
Fawu bars expelled leader from presenting case

Despite allegations of undemocratic practice relating to the suspension and removal of three national office-bearers and other officials, Gxanyana and the majority of the current office bearers were re-elected yesterday.

The Transvaal region tried to contest Gxanyana’s re-election by nominating the region’s regional secretary, Steve Moselio. Buthelezi was dismissed earlier this year for allegedly abusing the union’s accommodation policy. An arbitrator ruled he had the right to state his case verbally or in writing to the conference before it decided whether to endorse the national executive committee’s decision to dismiss him.

Buthelezi is understood to have been told by the union yesterday he was not allowed to present his case verbally or otherwise, as Fawu intended challenging the arbitrator’s order in the Labour Court.

At the time of Buthelezi’s dismissal, the union’s three national office bearers, including Theron, had been removed from office after they had unconstitutionally suspended Gxanyana.

Gxanyana said the issue of who was to be the union’s general secretary had been decided by the union’s structure. In terms of Fawu’s constitution, disciplinary procedures were kept separate from the union’s structure.

On this basis, Buthelezi had not been allowed to address the conference. Gxanyana also said the union rejected the white paper on marine fisheries policy as it did not address aspirations.

AIDS cure controversy researchers repriamed

Kathryn Strachan

THE two University of Pretoria researchers who claimed they had discovered that the drug Virodene could be a cure for AIDS were yesterday found guilty of misconduct by a university disciplinary committee.

The researchers, cardiothoracic surgery department head Prof Dirk du Plessis and clinical assistant Dr Callie Landaau, were found guilty on the grounds that they proceeded with research on Virodene without the permission of the university’s ethics committee. After giving its verdict, the disciplinary committee sternly repriamed Du Plessis and Landaau.

They would both retain their positions at the university, said committee spokesman Mike Smuts.

The researchers had submitted further work into Virodene to the Medicines Control Council, council spokesman Prof Peter Folb said yesterday. The council was not able to give a preliminary finding.

Offer to Cobbett defended

Linda Ensor

CAPE TOWN — The R400 000 a year salary package offered to former housing director-general Billy Cobbett to head up the Cape Town municipality’s housing department was well in line with the salaries paid to municipal officials in similar positions, city manager Andrew Boraine said yesterday.

He noted that Cobbett had been employed on contract for five years, and that employees on contract normally earned less than those permanently employed.

Telkom

Continued from Page 1

The tax bill was almost three times higher at R1.17bn, from R421m previously. Hashim said managing the tax bill would be a priority.

Lower debt levels of R7.2bn (1996: R8.7bn) and the management of financing charges saw group financing charges decline to R1.3bn.

The debt-equity ratio was reduced to 0.5 from 1.4, and Hashim said one of the biggest challenges would be to keep debt at an acceptable level in the face of the huge lines delivery programme.

Share earnings jumped to 60c from 31c, and it was agreed with government at the time of the 30% equity stake sale that R400m in dividends would be retained by Telkom for the rollout programme.

Telkom was still plagued by copper theft and network fraud which, once lost of income was taken into account, swallowed R776m.

Mosekene said that new radio-based technologies were increasingly being deployed in the delivery of new lines to obviate copper theft, and in terms of the SBC/Telkom Malaysia bid documents more than 50% of new connections would be via radio-based technologies.
Union rocked by power struggle

Outcry at Pawusa

BOBBY JORDAN

A BITTER power struggle within the leadership of the Public and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (Pawusa) has caused an outcry among members, who picketed outside the union’s offices in Cape Town this week.

"Legal proceedings were initiated amidst allegations of bribery, corruption and personal vendettas.

At the centre of the row is controversial president Malcolm Domingo, who has been accused of enriching himself at the union’s expense, acquiring a R250 000 BMW and running up a large cellphone account.

Domingo retired from the public service in Cape Town in May, accepting a large early retirement package after 16 years at the helm of Pawusa, formerly the Public Servants League.

He is also vice-president of the 5,400-member Federation of Unions of South Africa.

At a stormy Pawusa meeting in Bellville this week, Domingo refused to stand down as president despite allegations by union officials that he was no longer eligible for leadership by virtue of his retirement.

Domingo fought a lengthy court battle over his leadership in 1987 after he was suspended by the national committee of the Public Servants League. Domingo was then accused of running his union like a “dictator.”

Although his suspension was subsequently set aside, Domingo now faces a fresh challenge from factions within his union who believe he is trying to cling on to power.

Concern has been raised over his new BMW 528, registered in the name of an insurance broker linked to the union, according to legal papers in the possession of Cape Metro.

MTel records show his company cellphone account amounted to R944 from April 26 to May 26.

A handful of Pawusa members picketed outside the union offices in Cape Town this week demanding Domingo’s resignation.

On Thursday, lawyers acting on behalf of the Pawusa Mitchell’s Plain district confirmed they had initiated legal proceedings against Domingo.

Reacting to the latest allegations, Domingo this week lashed out at “a small faction within the union” that appeared to have a personal vendetta against him.

“We’re talking about 30 people as opposed to 40 000 members,” Domingo said.

He described allegations about his BMW as “absolute nonsense.”

“I’ve been in the public service for 40 years and I’ve always said that when I retire I want to buy myself a retirement toy. I simply purchased it through a friend who gets a discount,” he said.

He said a recent amendment to the Pawusa constitution allowed him to continue as president despite his retirement.

“If I take early retirement I must still pay full membership fees until I’m 65. As such I have the same rights as anybody else.

“It’s a matter of going to court. The organisation is quite prepared to face it,” Domingo said, adding that his stance enjoyed the support of the Pawusa national executive committee.

However, deputy president Benedict Molokwena said Domingo had clearly breached regulations and should stand down, adding that recent actions could amount to “bribery and corruption.”

“That new car of his was bought in May when he was still part of the public service. It’s strange that he didn’t tell the union that he was buying it via a broker who was doing business with us. It was his fiduciary duty to notify us,” Molokwena said.

Molokwena said there appeared to be a powerful cartel within the Pawusa leadership that was protecting Domingo.

“It seems there’s a feeling that if he goes down, they all go down. As deputy president of Pawusa I feel this whole thing is dragging our name through the mud and could be used by rival organisations to recruit disillusioned members,” Molokwena said.

“They should be held accountable.”
Surge in union membership

Growth in numbers likely to lead to more union activity and militancy on a wide range of social and economic issues

While the influence and membership of trade unions in Europe and most other developed countries is in decline, SA unions are bucking world trends. Union federations in SA have grown steadily in the past 10 years through structural mergers and union recruitment.

The Department of Labour says about 2.69m workers belong to 248 registered unions, with 248 registered unions reporting a further 260 000 members. This means 20.4% of the economically active population is unionised — considerable growth from the 750 000 members when black unions were granted legal recognition in 1979.

The fact that SA unions are concerned with more than shopfloor issues — agitating on broader social concerns such as tax policy, township infrastructural development and broader employment problems — is a primary reason for their growth, says Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) assistant general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi.

Labour analysts Andrew Levy and Pat Stone as well as SA Chamber of Business labour director Gerne Bezuidenhout agree that the new union-friendly labour legislation will probably add to the unions' growth.

Levy says the larger memberships and spheres of influence of unions and their federations means they will become more active and militant in fighting socio-economic battles.

"The unions may become more militant because of their increased muscle," says Bezuidenhout. "This may not be against business only but against government's economic policy."

The shedding of jobs in sectors such as mining and manufacturing does not appear to have knocked the unions' growth.

The National Union of Mineworkers is an outstanding example. With 261 000 members at the height of major retrenchments following the bruising three-week strike in 1987, its membership stayed fairly constant until 1994, when it shot up to 311 000. Last year, it reached 357 000 — despite the mines having sloughed off about 100 000 jobs in the past six years.

But the most graphic example is the renewed growth of the ANC-aligned Cosatu. Membership leapt from under 1.21m in 1991 to nearly 1.89m last year.

Andrew Levy and Associates says that though unions' growth dipped slightly after 1993, the pattern "is expected to change." 

"The new Labour Relations Act will en..."
Trade Union Membership

Trade union membership has fallen from 8 million in 1950 to 16 on 1970. This fall has been most pronounced in the construction and transport sectors, where membership has dropped from 1.2 million in 1950 to 150,000 in 1970. The fall has been less pronounced in the health and education sectors, where membership has fallen from 1.5 million in 1950 to 1.2 million in 1970. The fall has been less pronounced in the manufacturing and production sectors, where membership has fallen from 1.7 million in 1950 to 1.4 million in 1970. The fall has been less pronounced in the agriculture sector, where membership has fallen from 1.3 million in 1950 to 1.1 million in 1970. The fall has been less pronounced in the service sector, where membership has fallen from 1.5 million in 1950 to 1.3 million in 1970.

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Unionists fight it out in Transkei power struggle

Members told: join us or die

BRONWEN ROBERTS

East London - Who were the three unionists who rode with cocked pistols to a funeral in Coffee Bay last weekend?

On the way back at Maquandul on Monday, their car was raided with bullets. Two of the men were killed and a third was injured.

In a bizarre twist, Transkei police said the men might have been members of the Mouthpiece Workers' Union posing as supporters of their rivals, the National Mineworkers' Union.

The names of the victims have not been released.

The impoverished region is taut with tension as the deadly power struggle between rival unions spills over from the rich north.

There are fears that the fight, which rages more than 100km north at Rustenburg Platinum Mines, will add to the violence which is already scorching areas of Transkei.

This week's random outrage in Transkei saw four children and two women slaughtered when gunmen opened fire on a birthday party in a hut near Qumbu on Wednesday.

It was another tragedy in an area where more than 400 people have died violent deaths in the last three years.

A human rights report last week blamed faction fighting within the ANC for Transkei killings.

The union-linked death toll in rural Transkei so far:

- Two children and a mineworker killed in the idyllic Coffee Bay coastal area last week - they were preparing for the funeral of a colleague killed in Rustenburg.
- Two mineworkers killed outside Mqandul on this week and.
- One mineworker shot dead in Tabankulu in June.

Talk filtering down from the mines this week was that the Mouthpiece Union had told NUM members to join their union by July 20 or die.

Police in the Eastern Cape said they feared more people would die in coming days.

In an attempt to staunch the flow, Umthalazane and Robbery Unit Captains Khaya Gwasi led eight officers back along the killing trail to mines in the Northern Province and North West Province.

He said it appeared that NUM-linked men were responsible for the attack on the three unionists in the early hours of Monday morning.

Their car, bearing North Western Province number plates, was hit by gunfire near Mqandul on the road between Coffee Bay and Umtata.

Captain Gwasi suggested the killing was a first sign that NUM members were retaliating against Mouthpiece unionists in the Eastern Cape.

He said the three men were returning from the funeral in Coffee Bay of a shaft shop steward Eric Rixi. Mr Rixi died in the Rustenberg mine war in June.

Captain Gwasi said some Mouthpiece Workers Union members from Rustenburg had come down to the Coffee Bay funeral posing as "NUM members".

He believed these men, amongst them Mr Rixi's brother, had planned to cause havoc.

"They went under the banner of accompanying the mourners. But we suspect they had a more serious reason."

He said the men had been armed with pistols. "We don't know if these were for fighting or for protecting."

But the funeral had been heavily guarded by police and the men had not been given their chance.

The organiser of Mr Rixi's funeral, Mtzenzi Gebedu, 36, was himself shot dead last week by killers who also murdered his year-old daughter and eight-year-old niece in their beds.

Mr Gebedu's wife managed to escape the attack.

Although Captain Gwasi said he was determined to stop the conflict in Rustenburg mines spreading to the Eastern Cape, his task was made more difficult because many senior NUM and MWU members were migrant workers from the province.

He said it was also difficult tracking down the leaders of MWU, which was still an informal "mob."

Rustenburg NUM regional co-ordinator Mahlakeng Mahlakeng dismissed the MWU as another fly-by-night union making false promises to workers. He said MWU was telling workers, even NUM members, to join MWU by July 20 or die.

"They obviously want members quickly, so they can be recognised (as a real union)."

Mr Mahlakeng said NUM had contacted police about the threats and "it remains to be seen if they will be carried out."

He didn't feel the new union was in any way a danger to NUM's status, even though it claimed to have the backing of Bantu Holomisa's National Consultative Forum.

He said Mr Holomisa had publicly condemned supporting the MWU but "he has been seen at a number of meetings with these guys."

Neither the MWU or Mr Holomisa could be contacted for comment yesterday.

But regional co-ordinator of the Umthalazane Mineworkers' Development Agency, Soweto Mzeli, said the Mouthpiece Workers Union was claiming to have Mr Holomisa's support so they could "capitalize" on his following.

He said miners were tense and confused about the killings.

While this saga unfolds, there are fears that it could develop into the attack and revenge-attack pattern of death that has torn apart Tsolo and Qumbu.

And that is something weary Transkei authorities want to do anything to avoid.
WHO WERE the three unionists who rode with cocked pistols to a funeral in Coffee Bay this weekend?

The man's car, bearing North West Province number plates, was hit by gunfire near Mqandulu on the Coffee Bay/Umtata road last Monday. Two of them died and a third was injured. The names of the victims have not been released.

Transkei police added a bizarre slant to the mystery this week — they claimed those attacked might have been members of the MWU — posing as NUM supporters.

There is fear in the region that the fight raging over 1,000km to the north at Rustplaat will add to the violence scorching parts of the former-Transkei.

There was a further round of outrage on Wednesday. Four children and two women were slaughtered when four gunmen opened fire on a birthday party near Qumbu. This horrific incident is just one more grim statistic in a regional tally of 400 deaths over the last three years.

Last week a human rights report blamed the ongoing killings on faction fighting within the ANC.

Other union-linked deaths in the rural areas of the former-Transkei comprise:

- Two children and a mineworker who were killed in the adibile Coffee Bay coastal area last week — they were preparing for the funeral of a colleague killed in Rustenburg.
- Two mineworkers who were killed outside Mqandulu this week and...
- One mineworker who was shot dead in Tabankulu this June.

Talk filtering down from the mines this week was that the MWU had told NUM members to join their union by July 20 — or they would be killed.

Police in the Eastern Cape fear more people will die in the coming days.

In an attempt to staunch the carnage, Capt. Khuya Gwanyi of the Umtata Murder and Robbery Unit, this week led eight officers along the killing trail to mines in the Northern Province and North Western Province.

In a telephone interview, he told EWN it appeared that NUM-linked men were responsible for the attack on the three unions in the early hours of Monday morning.

Gwanyi suggested the attack was the first sign that NUM members were retaliating against MWU unionists in the Eastern Cape.

He said the three men were returning from the funeral of a fellow miner, Eric Reta, who died in the Rustenburg mine this June.

He said some MWU members from Rustenburg, among them Reta's brother, had come down to the Coffee Bay funeral posing as "NUM members".

Gwanyi suspects the armed men planned to wreak havoc and their attempt to attack mourners was only thwarted because the funeral was heavily guarded by police.

The organiser of Reta's funeral, Mziwam Gobedu, 36, was himself shot dead last week by killers who also murdered his one-year-old daughter and eight-year-old niece in their beds.

Although Gwanyi is determined to stop mine conflict from spreading to the Eastern Cape, he says his task is made difficult because many former NUM and MWU members are migrant workers and were thus difficult to trace.

He said it was also difficult to track down the leaders of the MWU, which was still an informal "mob".

The Rustenburg NUM regional co-ordinator, Mahlakeng Mahlakeng, wants to dismiss the MWU as another fly-by-night union making false promises to workers. He alleges, for instance, that the MWU promises to help them cash in their unemployment insurance fund benefits, death benefits and PAYE.

He also claims the MWU is telling workers, even NUM members, to join the MWU by July 20, or the...
Wiehahn's crucible of change

Man behind historic commission of 20 years ago looks back with pride on his part in bringing democracy to the shopfloor

Opportunity to help those deprived of so much

Of so much for so long by laws and policies that once were either totally ignored or blindly followed

Weihahn contends that it is widely recognised that today's industrial democracy has its roots in that meeting 50 years ago, which he says was the forerunner to the present political democracy.

"Democracy could not have had its roots in any other sphere than labour because ever since World War II, the workplace has been the main crucible for sound labour relations in this country. The workforce, the people of all race groups, had to stand up and fight for their rights as a result of the creation of the labour court system," the Star's editor Peter Bullock later wrote.

"At that meeting we already knew that the laws and policies there were more than 50 black trade unions in the country that were working in a most determined and a best of other redeployed team work to help those who had been deprived of so much for so long by laws and policies that once were either totally ignored or blindly followed."
Union buys into Rent-A-Bakkie

By Shadrack Mashalaba

SOUTH African Railway and Harbour Workers Union Holdings, the investment arm of the union, announced yesterday that it had acquired 49,9 percent stake of Rent-A-Bakkie for an undisclosed amount.

According to the two parties, the value was market related.

In terms of the agreement, Sathwu Investment Holdings have an option to increase its shareholding in Rent-A-Bakkie to 50,1 percent before June 1998 and further increase its stake up to 75 percent within three years.

Sathwu Investments Holdings chief executive Sandle Zungu said “We are passionate about the transport industry. We are reviving a strong brand which is a sleeping giant.

“The acquisition signals a new lease of life with prospects of outsourcing the industry.”

The deal will not only benefit current members but also will include past members who will benefit through the union’s Management Trust.

Some of Sathwu partners in the deal are empowerment groups such as Enterprising Women Investment Holdings and Durban-based Ogwani Marine. Each of them purchased 10 percent of the 49,9 percent held by Sathwu Investments.

Sathwu will have a 25 percent representation on the board.

Zungu said funding for the deal, which became effective on July 1, will come from institutions who manage the members’ pension funds.

Most of the membership comes from Transnet which manages pension funds in the region of R30-billion.

Expansion

Rent-A-Bakkie chief executive Hugh Herholdt said the deal will boost the company’s long term objective of expansion.

Rent-A-Bakkie is part of the Express Freight Division of the Rennes group. It was formed in 1970 and joined Rennes in 1987.

“The new structure will position our company competitively to fully take advantage of new opportunities arising from the outsourcing of transport requirements in the public and private sector,” Herholdt said.

Sathwu Investments has a 24 percent interest in Nedcare, R270-million worth of shares in Johoins, a joint venture valued at 51 percent with Supercure, 25 percent in Sieska and a stake in a scrap metal processing company.
The MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

(1) No, this has not been shown to be an impediment to the Government's efforts to curb corruption.

The principle underpinning discipline in the Public Service is, is that it should be corrective in nature. Deriving from this approach, good practice dictates that discipline should be dealt with confidentially in order to protect those officials who report corruption. As such, the Public Service Act does not specifically enforce the disclosure of disciplinary hearings. The consequences of the disciplinary hearings, will of course, become known as it could entail, inter alia, the transfer, discharge or reduction in rank of an official.

Chapter M of the Public Service Regulations provides for a Code of Conduct for the Public Service Regulations M 4 10 0 of the said Code of Conduct directs that an employee in the course of his or her official duties, shall report to the appropriate authorities, fraud, corruption, nepotism, maladministration and any other act which constitutes an offence, or which is prejudicial to the public interest. If an employee contravenes or fails to comply with any provision of the relevant Code of Conduct, he or she shall be guilty of misconduct in terms of section 20(1) of the Public Service Act, 1994, and may be dealt with in accordance with the relevant section of the said Act.

Shold an official who has reported any form of corruption to his immediate superiors be victimised by the alleged transgressor in any manner, such victimisation will in itself constitute misconduct on the part of the alleged transgresser and he/she may be dealt with in accordance with the relevant sections in the Public Service Act. The reason being that the latter's actions are to the prejudice of the administration, discipline or efficiency of a department, office or institution of the State.

Consider the underlying principles, no specific steps are envisaged.

Persons remitting capital abroad

(2) Whether any individuals have taken advantage of the relaxation of exchange controls permitting them to remit capital abroad as from 1 July 1997, if so, (a) how many individuals and (b) what amount had so been remitted as at the latest specified date for which information is available.

(2) Whether consideration is being given to the further relaxation of exchange controls, if not, why not, if so, (a) what is envisaged in this regard and (b) when will such further relaxation become applicable?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE

(1) Yes.

Number of members of federation of trade unions

Whether he will make known details on the number of members of a certain federation of trade unions the name of which has been furnished to his Department for the purpose of his reply, if not what is the position in this regard, if so (a) what steps and (b) when?
What percentage of the economically active population does this figure constitute? N1980E

The MINISTER OF LABOUR

Yes. The information which is obtained from the Registrar in the Department of Labour is as follows:

(a) As at the end of 1996 twenty (20) trade unions were affiliated to the federation. As at end of 1996 the federation’s affiliates collectively had 1,743,172 members.

(b) This figure represents 12.02% of the 1996 estimate of 14,407,000 economically active population or 22% of the 7,723,000 people estimated to be in registered jobs.

*24 Mr D DE V GRAAFF - Trade and Industry [Question standing over.]

Transnet monitoring devices detected

*25 Mr D M STREICHER asked the Minister for Public Enterprises:

(1) Whether her or her Department’s attention has been drawn to allegations that monitoring devices have been detected in the telephones of several senior managers of Transnet, if so,

(2) whether she or her Department has investigated the matter, if so,

(3) whether any persons or bodies have found to have been responsible for the installation of such devices, if so, (a) who was responsible and (b) for what reasons were such devices installed,

(4) whether she will make a statement on the matter? N1982E

The MINISTER FOR PUBLIC ENTERPRISES

(1) Yes

(2) Transnet Limited is investigating the matter

(3) As the matter is currently under investigation, it is sub judice and no further comments can be made at this juncture

(4) No

Building of houses in Madadeni area stopped/delayed

*26 Comdt A BLAAS asked the Minister of Housing

(1) Whether the building of houses in the Madadeni area near Newcastle has been stopped or delayed, if not, what is the position in this regard, if so,

(2) whether this has resulted in a financial loss, if not, what is the position in this regard, if so what amount is lost daily,

(3) whether she will make a statement on the matter? N1983E

The MINISTER OF HOUSING

By courtesy of the Department of Local Government and Housing of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal

(1) There has been a dramatic loss in production as a result of direct interference in the project by community leaders. Project managers and construction leaders have reported that the projected estimate of 300 houses per month has not been met as a result of this interference. Project leaders also allege that the approval format of the Provincial Housing Board of KwaZulu-Natal (in phases) has also contributed to the project delivery being delayed. The first phase of 1,000 sites has almost been completed. The approval of the second phase of this project was given on 3 September 1997 for an additional 1,500 sites and it is anticipated that the project will once more gain momentum

(2) It is the contention of the project managers and the construction leaders that they have thus far collectively suffered a loss of ±R250,000 as a result of the political interference experienced, in the project as can be inferred from paragraph 1 approximately 300 units must be delivered per month, for both parties to realise their targets. It is confirmed that this target has unfortunately not been attained due to pressure being brought to bear on the contractor and workforce. Whilst the delay at this stage has not impacted directly on the beneficiaries, sustained interference will no doubt eventually have a negative impact on the product delivered to the beneficiary on the ground

(3) No

IBA: persons appointed as councillors

*27 Mr J J DOWRY asked the Minister for Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting

Whether the persons initially recommended by the Portfolio Committee on Communications were appointed as councillors to the Independent Broadcasting Authority, if not, why not, if so, what are the relevant details? N1984E

The MINISTER FOR POSTS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCASTING

The President requested the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communications to reconsider its original five nominations for the IBA Council after one of the nominees (Mr M Mokoetle) withdrew for technical reasons. The President could not proceed with the appointment of the remaining four candidates as the Council might not then have been representative of the "broad cross-section of the population" as is required by section 4 (2) (C) of the IBA Act, 1993.

The appointment of the following five Councillors was subsequently approved by the President with effect from 1 September 1997:

Ms F L Sekhe until 30 March 1999
Mr L S Mkmamela until 30 March 2000
Mr M Boo until 30 March 2000
Ms L Lloyd until 30 March 1998
Dr R T Williams until 30 March 1998

The only change from the original nominations was the appointment of Mr M Boo in the place of Mr M Mokoetle.

Practicable defence plan/budget drawn up

*28 Mr J A MARAIS asked the Minister of Defence

Whether he or the South African National Defence Force has drawn up a practicable defence plan and budget on the basis of the Defence Review and the White Paper on National Defence for the Republic, if not, why not, if so, what are the relevant details? N1985E

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE

No, the Department of Defence has not yet drawn up a practicable defence plan and budget on the basis of the Defence Review and the White Paper on National Defence for the Republic.

The White Paper and Defence Review are two important steps in the development of a national consensus on defence in South Africa. This process has however, not yet been completed and further chapters of the Defence Review are still to be submitted to Parliament following consultations with the Parliamentary Defence committees and approval by Cabinet. There will include such important matters as transformation and the structure of the Department of Defence, with particular attention to the command and support structures of the SANDF.

The complete structure of the Department, which includes its Force Design is the basis on which the medium and long term defence plans and budgets are to be based. The determination of the administrative, command-and-control, force support and training structures of the Department is dependent on its Force Design and is one of the subjects of the transformation project. This transformation project is a scientific process aimed at greatly improving efficiency within the Department of Defence in order to amongst other things, reduce the cost of Defence to South Africa. This project is well advanced but has not yet been completed. Therefore, it has not been possible to draw up a practicable defence plan and budget on the basis of the Defence Review and White Paper at this stage.

The Department of Defence is presently advancing the transformation process with all haste, but also with the required caution so as to maintain the scientific basis and integrity of the process. At the same time the effect of transformation and the budget cuts on the Force Design are being continually reviewed. All these factors are being taken into account in the
The September commission's probe into trade unions is a constructive intervention in a complex debate where Edgerton White's question remains:

Does the economic vision of free trade require economic analysis?
Retrenchment unites black and white unions

By Abdul Milazi

The pending retrenchment of 350 workers at Spoornet because of industrial restructuring has brought together black and white unions whose constitutions are poles apart.

This unholy association has made the predominantly white unions Salstaff and the South African Footplate Association (Safsa) to borrow socialist vocabulary in their statements.

Salstaff and Safsa are both affiliates of the largest white federation and the second largest federation in the country, the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa).

In a joint statement released at the weekend, the unions accused Spoornet management of having "neo-liberal ideas of unbundling, introducing new technology, centralisation of functions, and individualisation of employment contracts".

"Wherever you go in SA you hear of a package fever where jobs are cut and people thrown into the streets."

As a result of this, corporate business does not contribute towards job creation," the statement said.

The unions claim that this world trend of company restructuring was affecting Spoornet workers.

"The new Labour Relations Act attempts to introduce a culture of economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace.

Old school

"What we see is that Spoornet is still part of the old school. They make unilateral decisions and expect us to rubber-stamp what they have decided in our books that is not workplace democracy."

In a statement, Spoornet argued that management was consulting with trade unions in the company on the matter.

However, Salstaff and Safsa claim that "a big part of our proposals made to the company are merely noted and then ignored."
Four killed in union clashes

By Abdul Mlazi

At least four people have died and about eight were injured in workplace violence since the beginning of last week as trade unions fight for members.

Black Management Forum Pretoria branch deputy president Kate Bapela said trade unionism has become a lucrative industry on its own with major federations amassing millions of rand in membership subscriptions.

Four people have been reported killed in the fighting between the South African Building and Allied Workers Organisation (Sahawo) and the National Building and Allied Workers Union (Nabawu) at Acerbricks near Vereeniging.

Sabawu national organiser Benjamin Zunza said his union, whose members are currently on strike, was fighting for recognition at the brick factory, which employs 700 people.

He claimed that Sabawu had 280 members, but the company was refusing to recognise it.

Trouble started when Sabawu members allegedly intimidated non-strikers and Acerbricks management called the police to defuse the situation.

Zunza said fighting broke out early last week at the compound when members of Sahawo were allegedly attacked by Nabawu members. "Many of our members are now in hospital with multiple injuries after they were hacked by members of the other union."

A month ago, four members of the National Union of Mineworkers were killed at the Rustenburg Platinum Mines, allegedly by the Mouthpiece Workers' Union (MWU) commonly known as Mouthpiece.

Bapela said fighting between trade unions was to do with money. "The more members a union has the more money it makes."

Although financial statements of trade unions are heavily guarded and are never released to the public, the National Union of Metalworkers is reported to be amassing about R3 million a month.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cotsatu), the biggest trade union federation in South Africa, gets about R15,6 million a year in subscriptions from affiliates.

Bapela said retrenchments were shrinking the number of union members and this had caused a scramble for remaining unionised workers.

"Trade union leaders can shout 'about socialism, but the bottom line is that everything is business these days.'"
Fawu calls in consultants to tighten controls

Bonile Ngqiyaza

Financial consultants Alexander Forbes had been called in to help the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) tighten its financial controls and ensure efficient subscription collection, union officials said yesterday.

Fawu assistant secretary-general Derrick Cela denied a report in yesterday's Sunday Independent that the union was in financial trouble and had been blacklisted by a credit bureau.

However, he confirmed that the accounts department had experienced cash-flow problems, resulting in the union not being able to pay this month's salaries.

The union — which had learnt of the fact that the department had run out of cash three days before payday — had unlocked one of its investments to obtain the R400,000 needed for salaries, and staff would be paid today.

However, a source maintained that the whole organisation was in trouble.

Continued on Page 2

Fawu

Continued from Page 1

and said financial statements, which according to its constitution should be presented to national executive committee meetings every three months — had last been presented in November.

The source said the cash crisis stemmed from long-standing debts totalling R3.6m — including a R1.7m overdraft and R1.6m in head office expenditure.

Cela denied that the head of the accounts section, Colm Gerwel, had been suspended and said a probe into the administrative lapse had been called to determine what went wrong.

In response to a Sunday Independent report that an official at head office had apparently vanished after misusing about R150,000, Cela said:

"There are only two permanent office bearers, myself and the general secretary (Mandla Gxanyana). We could not possibly have disappeared."
Union uses reserves to solve cash crisis

Accounts tightened up – Fawu

Cash flow problems at the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) have been sorted out and the union is tightening up its accounts, says general secretary Mandla Gxanyana.

Commenting on reports that Fawu was in financial trouble, Mr Gxanyana said “It is true there have been problems with cash flow. But these have been sorted out now.”

He denied rumours that the union had sold some of its investments to cover its expenses.

“We did consider doing that, but in the end it wasn’t necessary,” he said.

The union had dipped into its reserves to resolve its financial difficulties, but still had more than R600 000 in reserve.

All its accounts were now in the black except the car allowance account, “which we are sorting out now.” Fawu had asked financial consultants Alexander Forbes to work with the union’s auditors, Price Waterhouse, to help tighten up its accounting systems.

He said the problems had arisen partly from unexpected expenditure on Fawu’s conference in July. It had cost more than R1.5-million instead of the budgeted R600 000.

The conference was supposed to be held at Pentech and we were supposed to supply blankets for delegates, which we ordered from Transket. But the blankets didn’t arrive, so in the end we had to book the delegates into hotels, which we hadn’t expected.”

More national executive committee meetings than expected had been held and a special conference on the union’s constitution in Johannesburg earlier this month had also strained Fawu’s resources.

Mr Gxanyana said an employee in the union’s accounts department had been dismissed in July over alleged housing loan fraud.
Unions target ministers for apartheid damages

Numsa is instituting a civil claim against Jay Naidoo and Sydney Mufamadi for the alleged interception of union cheques, writes Sechaba ka’Nkosini

The National Union of Metalworkers (Numsa) is to institute a civil claim against Minister of Communications Jay Naidoo, and his counterpart, Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi, for damages the union suffered during the apartheid era.

The union has hired private investigators to ascertain the exact amount of money involved.

The case stems from an alleged interception of union cheques by convicted murderer and former security officer Michael Bellingan from the 1970s possibly into the 1990s.

The cheques are said to have been intercepted and deposited into Bellingan’s bank account under the alias of Nicholas Uma.

Numsa says it also wants to include Telkom and bank employees among its accused in the lawsuit for having colluded with Bellingan and the security police in the diversion of its cheques. Although the exact amount is still not yet known, Numsa officials estimate it at well over R2-million.

Numsa made its intentions to sue the government known as early as 1994, when a bag containing information on Bellingan’s diversion of fraudulent cheques destined for Numsa was found in his wife Janine’s locker at work soon after she was bludgeoned to death in 1991.

Numsa sources say the union has now gathered enough evidence to proceed with the charges. Numsa deputy general secretary Peter Dantjie confirmed this week that the union wants to be compensated, not only for the violation of its rights, but for all the money lost during that period.

“We believe we have a good case against the state. Once our investigations are complete, we will definitely file for damages,” says Dantjie.

Minister of Transport Mac Maharaj and some current and former Transnet executives are also said to be similarly targeted by the South African Railway and Harbour Workers’ Union (Sarhwu) for the three-month-long railways strike in 1987.

The strike resulted in the deaths of some Sarhwu members and scores more were injured during clashes between the strikers and scabs employed by the company.

Six Sarhwu members were subsequently sentenced to death for alleged murder and intimidation but released in 1983.

The three ministers and Transnet executives add to a long list being compiled by unions as they prepare their final submissions for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in about two weeks’ time.

Other companies to be implicated in the hearings include wine cooperative KWV, Sasol, Kinross Mines and Zedelcam Citrus Estate.

The unions contend that these companies unwittingly or unwittingly collaborated with the state in suppressing human and trade union rights during the apartheid years.

Although the TRC Act does not allow for institutions and organisations to be sued, insiders say the unions are working on a detailed strategy to ensure that members and families who suffered during the period are amply compensated.

The National Council of Trade Unions’ general secretary Cunningham Ngoukana says “We know it might take longer than we expect, but we are going to encourage our affiliates to make sure that justice is done for their members and families.

“Police killed, injured and set dogs on our members during the period and that in itself is a criminal charge. Some cannot afford to feed their families as a result. So we believe that the TRC provides us with a perfect opportunity to set the record straight.”

Most unions agree that while a broad political submission to the commission is necessary, there is also a need to ensure that those who were directly involved are punished through criminal justice procedures or civil suits.
Demands from Satu members pay off

The group of Satu members who have been demanding action to stop racist attacks at the Union have finally been heard.

After a series of marches and protests, the Satu members have managed to get their voices heard. The union has promised to take action against racists and to ensure a safe environment for all members.

The Satu members have been working with local authorities and have managed to get the necessary changes made. They are now demanding that the union continues to take action against racists and to ensure that all members feel safe and respected.

The Satu members have been working hard to make sure that their voice is heard. They are now demanding that the union continues to take action against racists and to ensure that all members feel safe and respected.

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Sarhwu buys 50% of Bond Industries

Johannesburg - A consortium led by Sarhwu Investment Holdings, the investment arm of the South African Railway and Harbours Workers' Union, had bought 50 percent of Bond Industries, a privately owned materials handling company, for an undisclosed amount, Sandile Zungu, the chief executive of Sarhwu, said yesterday.

The acquisition forms part of several deals that have catapulted Sarhwu from a shoestring investment outlay of R400 000 to more than R400 million worth of investments within six months.

These deals include stakes in Nedcare, Johnnie, Rent-A-Bakkie, Supergroup, Avis, Uitrans, and Supercare.

Sarhwu Investment Holdings will hold an effective 40 percent of the venture, while a partner in the consortium, Marole Motor Holdings, will have the remaining 10 percent.

Bond Industries was wholly owned by the Sonkele Trust and has an estimated annual turnover of R300 million.

Zungu said the deal would consolidate Sarhwu's position in the transport sector and forge synergies with Rent-A-Bakkie, a truck rental company in which it recently acquired a 50 percent stake in conjunction with the Remmes group.

Bond Industries has strong brands such as Fantuzzi, Yale and Terberg for which it has the licence to market, assemble and manufacture in South Africa.

Zungu said Sarhwu would continue to seek out unlisted companies and private deals in order to participate actively in growth opportunities.
Fawu sits down to discuss its cash doldrums

Reneé Grawitzky

THE Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) financial crisis, exacerbated by its investment arm's refusal to sell off its shares in Real Africa Investment, will be the subject of discussion at a weekend national executive committee meeting.

Union sources said the union was not facing a financial crisis but financial mismanagement.

As a result, the Gauteng region had adopted a resolution two weeks ago that each region should become responsible for finances "as money was going missing on its way to Cape Town, the union head office".

Fawu head office said last night that the union was well on its way to sorting out its financial difficulties.

Union sources said the leadership had approached Kwezani, the union's investment company, to sell its shares in Real Africa Investment, which are worth more than R6m.

It is understood that the investment arm refused this request after obtaining an opinion from a leading financial institution on the ramifications of the move and the possible impact on the price of Real Africa shares.

Last month Fawu leaders acknowledged "cash flow" problems resulting in a delay in paying the salaries of staff. This followed reports that the union had a huge overdraft.

Fawu head office said last night that since the initial reports, the union had implemented a number of processes to alleviate the problem. The national executive committee would receive an update on the union's financial position.

A union source said the Gauteng region had written a letter to the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) asking it to intervene, but had still not received a response.

He said this was despite a resolution adopted at the recent Cosatu congress to intervene in unions which faced problems.

"Cosatu is not doing so in this instance," he said.
Writers get their books in a mess

Funders tell Cosaw to account for missing aid donations

GILLIAN ANSTEY

THE Congress of South African Writers has been wracked by allegations of financial mismanagement and its general secretary has been suspended.

The congress's overseas funders have demanded detailed information on how their money has been spent.

An auditors' report dated July 14 reveals expenses of almost R200 000 without supporting invoices. There are also no invoices for expenses recorded as refunds to employees.

The reports also states that Morakabo Seakhoa, who has been suspended as Cosaw's general secretary, received cheques of close to R16 500 without any supporting documentation.

He also received loans and salary advances of R10 600 which were not recorded as such.

Lisa Combrink, Cosaw's former vice-president, resigned last week in dissatisfaction with the way the problems had been handled.

She said the auditors, Fischer Hoffman Sethole, had said it would report Cosaw to the auditor general if its executive did not come up with a set of financial checks and balances.

The auditors' report lists a number of administrative irregularities, such as no authorisation of staff salaries, salary changes not being kept on file, and no record of money received from subscriptions.

There is also a row involving Seakhao concerning the ownership of a Cosaw car. The car is registered in Seakhao's name, but Cosaw is paying for it.

Seakhao was officially suspended on June 4 on grounds of possible irregularities relating to Cosaw funds, but was recently asked to compile a report for an overseas funder, the Swedish Writers' Union. On October 24, the union's secretary, Anna-Lena Lofberg, responded to the report, saying it was vague. She said it was not possible to imprint anything else with the union until the report had been completed.

John Stanghellini, president of the Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers' and Translators' Association, has also requested detailed information on how its funding is being spent.

Cosaw was established in 1987 to assist writers. For the last financial year, it received a R50 000 grant from the Department of Arts and Culture and almost R500 000 from the Swedish Writers' Union, plus other funding.

In commenting on the allegations of financial mismanagement, Walter Chakela, the president of Cosaw, said, "The information is not accurate. You must allow the process to run through. We've been working on the problems and have managed to trace a substantial number of missing vouchers."

"Admittedly, we need to change certain things and are in the process of restructuring the administration in order to get things to run more smoothly.

"Asking about requests from overseas funders for more detailed reports, Chakela said the organisations always asked for them. He said they were sent an initial audit report, and said the latest one would be ready soon.

"Combrink said Chakela had not replied to her letter of October 6 requesting an annual general meeting — and neither had he responded to her letter of resignation two weeks later.

"Seakhao said he could not comment on the issue, saying Chakela was in charge of dealing with the media.

"Contacted on his cellphone, Seakhao said he was in the Cosaw office and "had been for weeks".

He declined to comment on whether his suspension had been lifted.
Global economy thins out union membership

Geneva: Sweeping changes in the global economy have led to a dramatic drop in trade union membership over the last decade, producing a vastly different labour landscape, a report issued yesterday by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) said.

Globalisation, favouring capital mobility, new production methods and flight to low-wage countries, risks dividing the workforce and widening social inequalities, the World Labour Report 1997-1998 warns.

Union membership over 10 years to 1995 fell in all but 20 of 92 countries surveyed for the report. In 1995, membership stood at 164 million workers (not including China) compared with a global estimated workforce of 1.3 billion.

Less than one-fifth of workers in 48 countries were union members, and only 14 countries did the rate of union membership exceed 50%.

Central and Eastern Europe saw the steepest plunge, with an average decline of 37%. However, the main reason was the ending of quas-obligeatory union membership after the breakup of the former Soviet bloc, the ILO said.

South Africa was one of the few to register a huge rise in union membership, after the demise of apartheid in the early 1990s. Bangladesh, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Hong Kong also saw membership rise.

Swelling unemployment in rich European countries and the pressures of globalisation were the main factors shrinking unionisation, according to the ILO.

Droves of industrialised countries had shifted production to poor countries with low labour costs, leading to the disappearance at home of low-skilled, labour-intensive jobs — traditional bastions of unionisation.

Also, “white collar” workers in the rich world’s growing service sector were less attracted to unions while new groups, including women, the young, and the highly skilled proved more difficult to organise, the report said.

New groups, including women, the young and the highly skilled, proved more difficult to organise.

Some countries had squelched unions in the hope of attracting foreign investment. Social policies also had a negative effect on unions.

Restrictions and anti-union activities remained pervasive in many countries, the report said.

The globalisation of the financial system shifted power to the international financial markets, a change that inevitably affected worker and union strategies.

“The big question for the unions confronted with globalisation of the economy is how to mobilise on an international level the capacity to act that they’ve lost on the national level,” ILO director-general Mr. Michel Hansenne said. He cited as examples cross-border campaigns against firms using child labour and “sweat shop” workers.

Hansenne said the numbers “tell only part of the story” and union influence in many cases was still strong. — Sapa-AFP
NP requests more time on private prisons bill

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — Draft legislation necessary for the tender process to build SA's first private prisons to proceed was held up in Parliament yesterday when the National Party (NP) requested more time to consider its position.

NP MP Gert Oosthuizen told Parliament's correctional services committee the NP supported the Correctional Services Amendment Bill, but had serious reservations about the tender process linked to it.

It would be difficult, once the bill was passed, to pursue "many unanswered questions" about the "prequalification (tendering) phase" conducted by the public works department, which had produced a short-list of five consortia from 42 applicants, he said.

The NP also wanted to know more about the international companies which had tendered and why public works insisted on the short-list being kept secret.

Committee chairman Limpho Ham agreed to the NP request in a bid, he said, to maintain the unity which had prevailed in the committee. The parties will meet again this morning.

The African National Congress asked public works director-general Spho Shezi to ensure that parliament could check on the contracts awarded because of the legislation's effect on future correctional services policy.

The bill makes it possible for the construction of four prisons under government's R1.6bn pilot operating partnership programme with the private sector to proceed.

However, government wants the bill passed before the current legislative session ends on Friday, so that building can be completed by end-January next year and construction can begin next April.

The five consortia are headed by international companies considered experts in the private prison field, with a minimum 40% local black empowerment component.

Oosthuizen accused Shezi of "threatening" the committee by warning that if the bill was not passed in time, the consequences for SA would be "quite disastrous".

Shezi said government risked being sued by the short-listed consortia and the international companies would "pack their bags and leave", denting foreign investor confidence.

Shezi responded that he had spoken "openly and honestly" so that members could make informed decisions.

Split looms as largest Fawu regional executive suspended

Renée Grawitzky

CAPE TOWN — The Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) Transvaal regional executive was suspended at a weekend national executive committee meeting for allegedly contravening the union's constitution.

Union sources warned last night that if the suspension of the regional leadership of the union's largest region, if not immediately addressed, could precipitate a split in the union.

The suspensions occurred amid heated debate around the union's alleged precarious financial position and came in the wake of a round of suspensions and dismissals of union officials earlier this year.

The national executive committee was held to discuss the union's financial position which reached crisis proportions after the payment of staff was delayed. The union's general secretary, Mandla Gxanyana, presented a report compiled by Alexander Forbes on the union's financial position.

Gxanyana said the national executive committee had accepted his department's six month plan which would phase out the debt and normalise the situation. Branches and regions would be asked to adjust their budgets to fit in with the plan.

Union sources said, however, that there were some problems around reports that the union had managed to sort out its financial position by recovering R6.4m for the sale of Real Africa Investment shares which had not been approved by the union's investment company.

The union failed to respond on the recent suspensions which allegedly occurred after the Transvaal regional executive committee announced that in line with a regional decision, subscriptions would not be sent to the union's head office but diverted to a special account held at the regional office.
Travel firm sees red on Numsa debt

FRANK NXUMALO

Johannesburg — A prominent travel company threatened yesterday to apply for the liquidation of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), after the union failed to meet the company's Wednesday deadline for settling a domestic travel bill of about R200 000.

"They (Numsa) have not paid, and they are making all kinds of excuses. They obviously don't have the money," said a company source.

"If they do not pay in a day or two, we are going to apply for the liquidation of Numsa and will hold the national office bearers responsible in their personal capacities."

The source said a disturbing pattern was emerging with the financial behaviour of a number of unions, namely that if they were in the red with a travel company they simply switched to another one without even trying to settle their previous debts.

However, while acknowledging the bill, Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said the amount owed was less than R200 000 and the union had not defaulted on the Wednesday deadline as they had not promised to settle by that date.

"We said we were going to pay them this week but we never specified any date. The amount we owe them, less than R200 000, is too little for the liquidation of Numsa, that's just highly impossible," Ntuli said.

He added "What annoyed Numsa is that they just rushed to the press."
Union numbers expected to grow

TRADE UNION DEHTIST

[Diagram]

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Unionisation in the public service was expected to far exceed that in the manufacturing sector, in line with international trends, Sociology for Work Unit deputy director Ian Macun said at a workshop on Friday.

Macun said international trends had shown that although union density in the public service was about 54% — lower than countries such as Japan, Germany and the UK — it was expected to rise. The public service was likely to become the highest concentration of union activity as compared to the private sector.

Industrial relations in the public service, he said, was moving ahead of the private sector despite its difficult history, complex systems and processes. Public service

— Public service unions to increase

he said, was that there were staff shortages coupled with public servants being subject to very poor salaries and working conditions. There was a high staff turnover.

The perception at the time, he said, reinforced by National Party comments, was that public servants were lazy and inefficient.

Until 1993, there was no formal collective bargaining arena.

Despite its rapid mutation into the field of industrial relations, the sector faced a number of difficulties. Macun said pressure to rise wages at the bottom end could militate against a model of social unionism in the public service.

In addition, he said that rapid unionisation coupled with a high level of competition between the numerous unions could lead to a more volatile industrial relations climate.
Students ‘caused damage of R4m’

Jacob Dlamini

CAPE TOWN — Tertiary institutions lost 100 days and suffered more than R4m in damage as a result of disruptions caused by students over a 12-month period from July last year, Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu said yesterday.

Figures released by Bengu show that the Eastern Cape technikon lost 34 teaching days between March and April after students seized the campus, took staff members hostage and stole the institution’s vehicles.

In the same period, Fort Hare University lost 21 days after students disrupted lectures in protest at moves by the administration to increase fees.

The disruptions occurred mainly at the formerly black institutions, while the historically white campuses suffered minimal damage.

At Venda University, students demonstrating against a fee increase broke down doors and forced the closure of the campus for 11 days.

North West University lost 14 days and suffered the worst damage when students went on a rampage, disrupting classes and looting the canteen.

There was widespread intimidation of students and teaching staff.

The disruption resulted in a loss of R3.5m in salaries and wages.

Technikon Northern Gauteng outside Pretoria suffered R1.426m in damages when students looted 92 computers, destroyed kitchen equipment and stole various stock. The technikon has since laid theft charges against two students in whose rooms some of the stolen computers were found.

Fifteen days were lost at the University of Zululand when protesters demanded the registration of all students, including those who owed the university money.

 Pretoria Technikon incurred damages estimated at R108 000 and lost one teaching day when students defied a court order and gathered on campus for a march to the Union Buildings without the rector’s permission.

The universities of Natal and SA lost two days each and suffered damage of R68 867 as a result of student, teacher action.

Bengu also said that government had issued 66 940 loans and bursaries for tertiary study last year and 52 684 this year.

This year’s packages, financed through the Tertiary Education Fund of SA, were worth R263.7m.

Government expected to finance more than 80 000 students next year to the tune of R500m.

Fawu leaders reject suspension

Reneé Grawitzky

TRANSVAAL branches of the Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu) have rejected a national executive committee decision to suspend regional leaders after violating the union’s constitution, sources said yesterday.

On November 1 Fawu’s national executive committee suspended the Transvaal regional leadership after it called for members’ subscriptions to be diverted from the union’s head office and put into a special account, pending the outcome of an investigation into the union’s financial position.

Sources said the region had also questioned Alexander Forbes’ assistance to the union in resolving its financial position and establishing proper financial administration systems.

The resolution also called on the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cecatu) to intervene in the current tensions over financial mismanagement.

The national executive committee decided to take strong action against the Transvaal regional leadership for allegedly acting unconstitutionally by trying to divert union funds from head office.

Union sources indicated that subscriptions from the Transvaal region accounted for close to half of the union’s monthly income of R1.2m.

Fawu head office advised Transvaal branches and regions that the suspension of the regions’ leadership was taken in the interests of protecting the funds of its members against any form of corruption or fraudulent actions.

Union sources said the national office bearers had briefed the branches about the suspensions and would effectively put the region under the control of the Cape Town head office pending an investigation to ascertain how this resolution had been reached.

Suspended Transvaal leaders intend to meet today or tomorrow.
Fawu furor epitomises unions' deep dilemmas

The furor at Fawu (the Food and Allied Workers' Union) continues — and it epitomises many of the problems lying just below the surface of the trade union movement.

"It's a question of money and power, not workers' interests," noted a former leading figure in the union.

The ideology of the early trade union movement had often given way to contradictory considerations involving shareholdings and boardroom power plays, he said.

His comment made all the more pertinent the advice extended to Fawu members this week by octogenarian honorary life president, Roy Alexander.

She admitted to receiving "a great many telephone calls" from Fawu members "I tell them all they should stay with the union, they should make the union their union.

Were she five years younger, she might be tempted to answer calls to intervene, but ill health and age made this impossible.

"I am not directly involved. It is something for Cosatu to handle," she said. "And if Cosatu has done all it can and still can't clear up the mess, then the workers must go to the minister of labour; he is, after all, our minister of labour."

Cosatu is, in fact, already involved and has the Fawu issue on the agenda for its executive meeting on Monday. The labour minister, Tito Mboweni, has been briefed and the ambassador to China, Chris Dlamini, a former Fawu president and sweet workers' union leader, has also been mediating.

The registrar of unions and provincial directors of labour may also soon be briefed to act. In the meantime, the leadership of the suspended Transvaal region — the largest in the country with 62,000 members — was meeting late yesterday to map out its plan of action.

The regional secretary, Tobago Masele, refused to comment, but it seems that the regional executive has taken the decision that the region's subscription money be paid in to Cosatu — depending on the decision made by the federation's executive on Monday. The region's subscriptions, which account for more than a third of such income nationally, are being withheld from the Cape Town head office.

An attempt last weekend by the national office bearers to seize control of the region was rebuffed. Branch delegates and staff members refused to accept the appointment of the former regional secretary, Funky Konawe, as a caretaker and expressed confidence in the existing — suspended — leadership.

Several branches and officials in KwaZulu Natal, the Northern Province and the Free State have over the past week indicated support for the embattled Transvaal region. But reports have continued to circulate of defections and resignations from the union, especially in the Western Cape.

There is thus tremendous pressure for an urgent resolution. "It would be a tragedy for the labour movement if any union fragmented," said a Transvaal official. "But for a union with the history of Fawu, it would seem so much worse."

Founded in 1943 as the Food and Canning Workers' Union, the union turned into Fawu in 1987 when food and canning and several other unions became the first to heed the Cosatu call to unite to form a single union in each industrial sector.

It had weathered the pressures of the World War II and the brusque confrontations in the immediate aftermath.

It went on to survive the anti-union onslaught spearheaded by the Suppression of Communism Act. Thus saw the union's founder, Ray Alexander, banned in September 1953 and other organizers harassed, jailed and restricted over the years.

The first union with a strike fund — started in 1945 — and the first with a building of its own, it sometimes limped on, often to the forefront of the trade union anti-apartheid struggle. As such it touched many lives.

The first union meeting I addressed, for example, was in a fishmeal factory canteen in 1982 — on behalf of food and canning.

As a young journalist, together with a young student, I had been recruited by the banned, but still secretly active, Ray Alexander to hand out union recruitment leaflets. But the workers wanted to know more.

The message was simple in those grim days: the need for unity and solidarity in the face of a brutal and racist state. The hope was for democracy and worker control.

The political climate since those days has changed radically — and favourably for workers and their organizations. But the need for unity and solidarity seems just as acute now when confronting new sets of problems which threaten to wreck the union.
Union investment must serve members
Trade unionists 'told to resign'

By Joshua Raboroko

TRADE union leaders elected as local government councillors will have to resign from unions.

However, the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) decided at its fifth annual congress to allow its shop stewards to stand for municipal elections.

Samwu Gauteng secretary Mr Victor Mhlongo said yesterday the resolution followed intense debate over whether the union's shop stewards serving as councillors represented a conflict of interest.

Mhlongo said being a leader in both the union and government constituted a serious conflict, adding that "one cannot be an employee (trade union leader) as well as be an employer (councillor) at the same time.

The union urged members to support the municipal elections and to meet parties such as the Pan Africanist Congress and Azanian People's Organisation "to make mutual agreement or strategise together for a democratic local government and in opposition to reactionary forces".
Public sector unions in no rush to talk to govt about retrenchments

CAPE TOWN — The two biggest public-sector unions yesterday set several preconditions to negotiations on government’s proposal to introduce forced retirements in the public service. Congress of South African Trade Unions, the National Union of Public Service Employees and Allied Workers’ Union (NUMSA) and the Public Servants Association indicated yesterday they did not share the same urgency as government, which faces persistent but genteel problems due to overstaffing. Both unions said they were not prepared to negotiate on the matter until an audit had been carried out to determine the size of the public service departments (estimated at 1.2 million employees). Other options had to be explored before forced retirements were considered. The unions said forced retirements would cause considerable hardship, particularly where government had not provided any redeployment options or voluntary severance packages.

The current retrenchment package was too costly and too arbitrary. It was too complex to calculate the value of the 30-year salary of an employee. The average salary of a public servant retrenched under the government’s plan was calculated to be more than double the average salary of a public servant. The government could not put the cart before the horse. NEC and union leaders had said that the implementation of the new plan would be difficult. The NEC had decided against outsourcing and voluntary severance. The government had to first consult with the unions before implementing the new plan. The NEC had also decided that the current package was not adequate and that a new package was needed. The NEC had decided that the government should consider alternative solutions such as training and development. The NEC had also decided that the government should consider the possibility of reducing the size of the public service through natural attrition.

It was only then that the issue of surplus staff could be discussed. Once a proper audit had been done, the government would be able to determine the size of the surplus staff. The NEC would be willing to discuss the issue of surplus staff. The NEC had decided that the government should consider the possibility of reducing the size of the public service through natural attrition.
Unions rush to sell their souls

Are unions losing sight of the fight for workers’ rights in their quest for investments, asks Charlene Smith

In the rush to tap into the R250-billion held in退休金 funds, are trade union investment companies at risk of selling their souls? If they manage to overcome the barriers employers are almost certain to set up, accessing that money will make them wealthy beyond the wildest dreams of most capitalists — and place under their control an amount similar to half of our gross national product.

But in the process, are they forgetting their raison d’etre — fighting for better worker rights — or will they become better equipped to ensure those rights?

This year has seen the lowest strike activity yet by unions, although the Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration is staggering under almost 50 000 cases in its first year. Are unions too busy playing the market to monitor worker rights?

Certainly job losses are looming very seriously, with about 100 000 jobs likely to be shed in the gold-mining industry soon, and 35 000 already lost in the second quarter of this year.

One economist, who did not want to be named because his organisation is working with unions, said: “There is a belief that unions will become corporatist and labour harmony will occur, but in Israel, the Histadrut, Israel’s powerful labour federation, controlled large slices of the economy and that did not lead to labour peace or entirely successful businesses.”

In fact, it led to some spectacular disasters. Joey Abraham, economic counsellor at the Israeli embassy, notes that the Histadrut control of the economy began before Israeli independence in 1948 when unions became involved in businesses, including the Bank of Palestine. In large measure, he believes, this labour involvement in economic activities led to a smooth transition of power. By the late 1970s, the Histadrut was an enormous economic force, controlling several major corporations and a number of medical aid schemes.

Their problem, Abraham says, is that they controlled the company and the union. In the early 1990s there were a number of hunger strikes as union-controlled companies went bankrupt. Abraham says: “You can’t be a manager and a worker. While the Histadrut appears to contradict this, they are different to managing corporations in a global environment. Decisions have to be taken by a single manager and not a show of hands.”

He says that although union investment companies in South Africa are important to boost affirmative action, potential problems in 10 to 20 years’ time have to be considered.

South Africa union investment companies are running on the yellow brick road as fast as they can, stopping only briefly to look into the latest pot of platinum (who wants gold?) proffered by an eager running mate — and not all are proceeding with the care and consultation necessary for mega-million deals. Watch this space for some spectacular crashes.

The exceptions are Hoskins Consolidated Investments (HCI) under Johnny Copelny and Marcel Golding, who respectively head the investment companies of the South African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (Sactwu) and the National Union of Mineworkers. They were hit hard, however, by the recent market volatility and two poor investment decisions.

The most cautious and transparent group by far is the National Education Health and Allied Workers’ Union (Nehawu) investment company run by Washington-raised and South African-born Rudy Roberts.

Last week it held an unheard of — in the notoriously secretive union investment circles — workshop with unionists and investors to cover everything from good corporate governance to presentations from would-be investors and stockbrokers, and a lot of healthy discussion between the parties. It was an education for both.

Magolo Slovo, assistant general secretary of Nehawu, the largest public-sector union, notes: “The business environment is almost foreign and is sometimes regarded with suspicion by unions. For a trade union to get involved in investment companies has its own dangers. We are quite cautious about how we balance that with the traditional role of unions. We want to get involved first to benefit union members. It is important for the trade-union movement to influence economic growth and for workers to get involved in the economic mainstream.”

But the benefits are slow to trickle through to workers. HCI made an R8-million contribution to the Sactwu education fund this year and pays half the tertiary education costs of 2 500 members’ children, but R8-million for a R1-billion company is small potatoes. There have been other smaller donations, but nothing of much import.

The South African Rail and Harbour Workers’ Union (Sarwu) Investment Fund, headed by Sandile Zungu, has ambitious programs to set up business development programmes for its members who lose their jobs. “We want to say, you can invest your R40 000 or so redundancy package in a house or a taxi, but in a year’s time you can be queuing for piece work. So, rather invest in equities, money markets or your own business. If you open a spare you must know how to read a balance sheet.”

But the problem is, Sarwu’s investment company was set up only eight months ago, and there is no way it will be ready to put these programmes in operation for the estimated 30 000 workers who will lose their jobs as the Transnet stable privatizes next year.

Sarwu has 50 000 workers, almost half employed by Transnet. It set up the investment company with seed capital of R400 000. With the help of some canny investments, including those in Johnnie’s, it is now worth about R400-million — but the repayments of preferential shares and investments mean no returns for at least three years. This dilemma troubles Zungu, but he says it is also a reason why Sarwu is investing in companies in the transport sector as its focus.

“We cannot win in the market any more on the basis of being black and having contacts. Everyone has that. We have to manage our assets better and make wiser investments.”

“Transport, the industry is turbulent at present, we either get into it and influence the situation or we let others do it and rest with their choices — we would rather be part of the new direction it takes. Of course there is a conflict of interests in unionizing in companies we have shareholders in, but through that process we can influence the way workers are treated and the creation and retention of jobs.”
Fedusa gearing up 'to be strong Cosatu alternative'

Renée Grawitzky

THE Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) would emerge next year as a strong alternative to the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), newly appointed general secretary Chez Milam said yesterday.

This would be achieved by the adoption and enforcement of a six-point strategy to strengthen affiliates and raise the federation's profile in broader national debates.

Milam reiterated that Fedusa was apolitical and not aligned with any political party. The federation's first concern had to be to the affiliates and affiliates' concerns had to be directed towards its members. Policies often confused these roles and obligations which could prove problematic for the trade union movement.

"The organisation has to get the basics in place, and not lose its focus by becoming wrapped up with a political agenda," Milam said.

He outlined the six-point plan which included building Fedusa's profile in Parliament to effectively engage on key policy areas, the building of provincial structures to engage with provincial governments, and the establishment of sector union structures to ensure a greater level of coordination between unions operating in the same sectors. Such structures were being established in the public service, transport and mining.

The federation had to ensure better interaction between affiliates and the National Economic Development and Labour Council.

There was a need to build a consciousness among affiliates as to the importance of and the role of the federation. "It is not our role to duplicate affiliate functions but to push a national agenda," he said.

There was also a perception that members were mainly conservative white male Afrikanders. This was not the case and membership spanned the full political and cultural spectrum.

Finally, Fedusa would continue to pursue effective education and training around the Labour Relations Act and the establishment of a legal committee to assist affiliates.

Milam has recently taken over from Danhauser van der Merwe. Prior to joining Fedusa, he was the national legal advisor for the Hospital Personnel Trade Union of SA while occupying the position of acting general secretary of the union for a short period. He has a legal background and also worked as an industrial relations consultant for a number of years.
LABOUR  Vavi outraged by comparison to whites by Jay Naidoo

‘Cosatu betrayed by its hero’

FRANK NDZIMALI
LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg — Zwelinzima Vavi, Cosatu's deputy general secretary, yesterday launched a blistering attack on Jay Naidoo, the now-retrenched telecommunications minister and former Cosatu general secretary, for allegedly dragging the name of the labour federation through the mud by implying that trade unionists were behaving like disgruntled whites.

Addressing the sixth national bargaining conference of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) in Johannesburg, Vavi said all that white people wanted was to protect the wealth they had accumulated during the apartheid years. They appointed blacks to token managerial positions but did not want them anywhere near their affluent suburbs.

"When the former Cosatu general secretary joins this choir and sings this song, it is rather disappointing. Worst of all is the implication that Cosatu is no different from disgruntled whites."

"If this way Tony Leon addressing a DP meeting in the affluent suburbs I would understand, but this time around it is a former Cosatu leader. This is indeed a huge stab in the back by a workers' hero," he said.

Vavi, who had just returned from a trip to Brazil, said thousands of its workers were being retrenched every day since the stock market crash a few weeks ago.

To make this worse, two leading employers, Ford and Volkswagen, had closed.

Vavi said Brazilian authorities had responded by raising interest rates from 21 percent to 42 percent.

Vavi said employment levels in South Africa had been falling since the 1990s, despite claims to the contrary, while business had been pressing for more and more concessions from the government.

He said business demands worldwide were similar, which meant that governments tended to create climates that were conducive to investor confidence, that left business to business, that privatised state assets, reduced deficits, retrenched public sector workers and abided by the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank.

Vavi said the result had been the creation of small states that functioned as co-ordinating centres for business interests, and the insecurity of millions of workers in South Africa and the rest of the world.

He said business had to ask itself how many jobs had been created in South Africa in this "perfect climate of investor confidence."

Vavi said 171 000 jobs were lost last year alone and that 300 000 workers in this country faced retrenchment by 2000.
Cosatu ‘disappointed’ by Naidoo’s comments

Reneé Grawitzky

THE Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) said yesterday it was disappointed that its former general secretary — now communications minister — Jay Naidoo had accused the federation of adopting the same attitude as disgruntled whites.

The federation was responding to comments made by Naidoo at the weekend during Cosatu’s KwaZulu-Natal regional congress when he said the federation should not only criticise government’s growth, employment and redistribution strategy (GEAR), but should rather put forward alternative proposals.

Addressing a Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union bargaining conference, Cosatu deputy general secretary Zwelethuza Vavi said it was disappointing that Naidoo should join the ranks of Cosatu’s critics.

“On earth can Jay liken us to disgruntled whites, whose demands were to protect their accumulated possessions and retain political and economic control? This is unbelievable.”

Vavi said Cosatu’s critics, including African National Congress-alliance leaders, “conveniently forgot” that the federation had tabled its policy document on job creation and infrastructure development two months before GEAR was announced.

Cosatu’s proposals had been rejected, but “these comrades all of a sudden forget that it was organised labour that put forward a serious policy proposal on how to deal with problems of unemployment”.

He said Naidoo’s attack on Cosatu represented a “huge stab in the back” by a worker hero. Vavi said the federation felt obliged to challenge Naidoo as he enjoyed a high level of credibility in the eyes of the public and if unchallenged, the public would continue to believe that Cosatu only shouted slogans.

Vavi said Naidoo’s attack “played into the right-wing agenda”, which sought to isolate Cosatu before dumping it.
Naidoo accused of back-stabbing unions

Former Cosatu leader is told that government policies are not creating jobs, but swelling the ranks of the unemployed

By Edwin Naidoo

Former Cosatu general secretary and now Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting, Jay Naidoo, has been accused by his former comrades in the trade union federation of stabbing them in the back.

The accusation was made by Cosatu’s deputy general secretary Zwelizima Vavi during a stinging attack on the Government’s Growth, Employment and Redistribution (Gear) programme, which he said had contributed to the rising unemployment in the country.

This was Cosatu’s strongest criticism of Gear so far and the first one in which it has accused the Government’s macro-economic policy of directly causing job losses.

Speaking at a Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union bargaining conference in Johannesburg yesterday, Vavi said it was “rather disappointing” that Naidoo had rounded on Cosatu in labelling the organisation “no different from disgruntled whites” because of their opposition to Gear.

“If this was Tony Leon addressing a DP meeting in the affluent suburbs, I would understand. But this time around it is a former Cosatu leader. This is indeed a huge stab in the back by a ‘workers’ hero’. This comrade may not have realised how he played into the right-wing agenda, which seeks to isolate Cosatu before dumping it as a useless dog,” he said.

However, Naidoo said his comments had been taken out of context and misconstrued “It is up to us in government to deal with Cosatu in a genuine way, and my comments were made in a particular context, not to undermine Cosatu but in a context of how to strengthen it.”

He said the fact that his criticism was made at a Cosatu meeting and not to a group of businessmen indicated his commitment to transformation.

“I made the point that we have made mistakes and if we only focus on mistakes, we do not move forward as a country. My statement has been misconstrued,” he said.

Vavi told workers that Cosatu had presented an alternative to Gear two months before its release, dubbed “Social Equity and Job Creation: the Key to a Stable Future”, which focused on job creation, but the proposals were rejected.

“They were labelled dangerous, unrealistic, voluntarist and coming from people who do not understand the challenges the country is facing,” he said.

Although he did not present current figures, Vavi said 171 000 jobs were lost last year and it appeared that the figure would be the same, if not more, this year if moves to axe at least 50 000 temporary teachers went ahead.

Vavi also said the job losses were driving living standards down.

“Without any real social security system, this means the working class as a whole is on the receiving end of poverty.

“Over the past few years, real wages have been going down. This is a fact that is contrary to the has that our wage demands are unreasonable and not in the interests of the unemployed.”

He said business should say how many jobs had been created since they applauded the Government’s “pragmatic macro-economic policy” in June last year and endorsed its “non-negotiability”.

“How many jobs have they created in this perfect climate for investor confidence? They must not tell us about the billions they have invested. We want to know the number of jobs created since Gear was put in place.

“The opposite will be the answer: instead of job creation, there have been more job losses.”
Sarhwu’s investments grow tenfold

Johannesburg — Sarhwu Investment Holdings, the investment arm of the South African Railway and Harbours Workers’ Union (Sarhwu), has marshalled its investments from a shoestring outlay of R400 000 to R690 million in nine months, Sandile Zungu, the chief executive officer, said yesterday.

Sarhwu, a shelf company started in October 1996, is 90 percent owned by its Enablement Trust and 10 percent by Sanlam. Sanlam extended loan facilities which boosted its funding base of R270 million, secured in Johannesburg through Transnet’s Pension Fund.

“We have surprised everyone, including ourselves,” Zungu said. “This has come as a result of management, supportive partners and financial institutions and, of course, a bit of luck.”

Zungu said Sarhwu had targeted non-listed companies which would add value to its core businesses in financial services and transportation.

He said Sarhwu would expand in the next year to information technology and telecommunication. He said Sarhwu would expand in the next year to information technology and telecommunication. He said Sarhwu would expand in the next year to information technology and telecommunication. He said.

“Our role is to facilitate the entry of workers into the mainstream economy in the wake of significant unbundling by major conglomerates,” he said.

SHOESTRING SUCCESS Sandile Zungu

PHOTO SHUNNERS
SA unions buck world trend in membership

Reneé Grawitzky

SA had bucked an international trend of declining trade union membership, with union numbers in the country increasing 130.8% since 1985, the International Labour Organisation's (ILO's) world labour report, released in SA yesterday, said.

ILO regional director for Africa Eneas Mabere said the “disturbing” worldwide trend was associated with reduced democracy, globalisation of financial markets, reduced public sector employment and a move to low-wage economies.

The adoption of certain government policies also had an effect on unions while some governments adopted restrictive policies with regard to recognising unions “in the hope of attracting foreign investment.”

Union shortcomings could have compounded the problem, the report said.

Mabere pointed out that declining union membership did not automatically mean the influence and power of unions had diminished.

Regarding debate on different models of industrial relations, the report argued that “we must move beyond the entrenched camps” in this debate.

While on occasion good economic performance could be attributed to deregulated labour markets, similar results could be achieved where there was more regulation backed by a broad social consensus.

One of the report’s authors, Francois Eyraud, said ultimately “it is not possible to formulate a single ideal model of industrial relations that is more conducive to economic growth than any other.”
Farm unions black female boss spurs race card
Nactu plan to upgrade its leaders

Congress reveals that only a few understand the dynamics of labour

By Abdul Milazi

Empowering women and building leadership capacity within affiliate unions forms the integral part of the National Council of Trade Unions' plans for 1998.

According to Nactu general secretary Mr Cunningham Ngcukana, the federation's affiliates "lacked capacity to tackle and grapple with the many issues facing the labour movement".

Nactu got its wake-up call at its national congress a month ago, where it was found that only a few people within the top leadership structure had the ability to understand social and economic developments, and how they impacted on workers.

Ngcukana said Nactu had then resolved that leadership in affiliate unions needed education and skills to tackle macro-economic and social issues. "The ability to handle researched information by affiliates is limited."

To address the situation Nactu has resolved to develop its leadership at all levels to enable even branch leadership to be able to develop policies.

The federation will also research and carry out empowerment programmes for affiliates, and enlist the services of consultants in areas where the federation did not have the expertise.

According to trade unionist and labour expert Mr Ashley Shezi, the move by Nactu would see the end of the "so-called brain drain" which has plagued trade unions and federations since the 1994 national elections, where most of the top leadership joined the government or the business sector.

"If Nactu could develop its overall leadership as planned, it would remain strong even if a few individuals at the top decided to leave. It would remain with a strong leadership pool," said Shezi.

Shezi argued that the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) faced the same problem after leaders such as Mr Jay Nadoo, Labour Minister Mr Tito Mboweni and Safety and Security Minister Mr Sydney Mufamadi left for government. Cosatu suffered a further blow in the past few months when National Union of Metalworkers' long-serving general secretary Mr Enoch Godongwana joined the Eastern Cape provincial government as MEC for finance.
L.H. Workers Organisations

1998 - 1999
Fawu asks members to discuss issues

Renée Grawitzky

The Food and Allied Workers' union (Fawu) yesterday attempted to explain away internal divisions which have wracked the organisation in recent months, appealing to "dissidents" to allow differences to be debated within union structures.

Fawu general secretary Mandla Gxanyana said it was inevitable that "conflicts of opinion and approach will arise". The crucial point, he said, was "how we facilitate these debates". He called on parties to maintain order and to comply with the union's constitution.

Gxanyana's response comes in the wake of a Business Report article claiming disenchanted members were planning to form a new union. Tenions mounted last year after numerous suspensions and dismissals of union officials and staff.

There were also allegations of financial mismanagement by the union's head office in Cape Town.

A union source said there was general discontent over allegations of corruption. The leadership denied accusations that certain companies financed the union.

This was after large numbers of workers in Transvaal stopped sending their subscriptions to head office. Late last year, the union's central executive committee suspended Transvaal regional leadership.

Meanwhile, the Chemical Workers Industrial union has yet to resolve its problems with BP workers who refused to pay their subscriptions to head office in protest against the sacking of Abraham Aguilhas, who was removed first as union president and then as shop steward at BP last year.
Defunct Meat Board to take over Abakor

LIVESTOCK farmers, consumers and other stakeholders in the now defunct Meat Board are set to acquire a 50% stake in loss-making Abakor, the state-controlled abattoir company.

The shareholding in Abakor will come about as a result of the Meat Board restructuring the R550m owed to it by Abakor. The debt stems from Abakor's purchase a few years ago of an offal company and deboning plant from the board.

The board was dissolved last year, and a liquidation committee is collecting outstanding debt.

Land and Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom is reportedly keen to extend the lifespan of the executive committee of the Meat Board, with the aim for the committee to take over, or co-manage, Abakor and guide it to privatisation.

On the committee are Agricultural Marketing Council member Dame Claasen, Meat Board vice-chairman Tim Davidson, specialist Les Kugel and beef producer Pieter de Klerk.

Clasen, who is responsible for overseeing the board's liquidation, said: "Abakor is too vital for the emerging farming sector to allow it to be lost to the country."

He said Abakor "has absolutely no cash flow left" but would not divulge the extent of its financial woes. Government was looking at injecting some money into the corporation to revitalise operations. The amount under consideration was not known.

Hanekom reportedly held a special meeting with stakeholders in Cape Town last night to thrash out details of the debt-for-equity swap.

Abakor owns 10 abattoirs and has been operating below capacity for a number of years owing to insufficient carcasses passing through the slaughterhouses. At one stage producers in Natal applied to government to bring in live sheep from Australia to boost turnover at Cato Ridge, but the request was turned down on grounds of animal health considerations.

Indications are that the swap is motivated by the need to wind up the assets of the Meat Board and to restructure Abakor to serve the emerging livestock farming sector.

Trade unions meet to plot strategy against Rio Tinto

Renée Grawitzky

TRADE unions from 12 countries gathered in Johannesburg this weekend to adopt a strategy to challenge the industrial relations policies of Rio Tinto, the world's largest mining company.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said that the company could face international pressure due to allegations of human rights abuse and union-busting.

"Rio Tinto has called such allegations "sweeping and ill informed."

The conference, hosted by the NUM but organised by the 28-million-strong International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, is intended to create an international network of all unions dealing with Rio Tinto.

NUM international secretary Sphi Ndebele said the union's participation stemmed from its involvement with Rio Tinto subsidiaries in SA, including Richards Bay Minerals and Palabora Mining Company.

The network would facilitate a regular exchange of information between unions on company strategy, collective bargaining and other matters.

The international union federation accused the company of union-busting and anti-union practices.

The international campaign would also attempt to put pressure on the company to recognise union rights and adhere to minimum social, health and safety standards.

"Rio Tinto's London spokesman, Peter Dalling, said the conference was an attempt by Australian trade unions to bring their grievances against the company into the international arena."

They were raising issues such as human rights violations, poor environmental performance and anti-union attitudes, "when in fact the whole issue is our desire to bring work practices in the New South Wales coal industry in line with international norms", Dalling said.

Australian unions were challenging the introduction of individual employment contracts, which they believed was an attempt to crush unions.
Unions to hound Rio Tinto

FRANK NDELANO

In this scheme of things, a unionised worker can choose to negotiate individual conditions of employment or a “staff contract” with the company and “free himself” from the union.

However, ICEM accused Rio Tinto of victimising “award workers” or those workers who choose to remain unionised.

The unionists, hosted by South Africa’s National Union of Mineworkers, will deliberate strategy on the way forward over a three-day period and meet President Nelson Mandela yesterday morning.

Rio Tinto is listed in the UK and Australia and has assets worth more than $3.5 billion, a turnover of $3.5 billion and a net profit of $1.1 billion, according to 1996 figures.

It directly employs 51,000 people and operates more than 60 mines in 49 countries, including South Africa’s Palabora mining company and Richards Bay Minerals.

The theme of our campaign against Rio Tinto should be that the company must respect union and labour rights wherever it operates. We must say that fundamental labour rights are not negotiable,” said John Mautland, the Australian labour leader.

“The right to freedom of association and to bargain collectively should not only be a right but should be actively promoted, that as a global corporate citizen Rio Tinto must respect these basic labour rights.”

Mautland warned Rio Tinto that there was nowhere for it to hide in the world.

“We must make it clear to Rio Tinto that we will pursue it to the ends of the earth if it continues to be an abuser of workers’ rights.”

That is nowhere in the face of the earth, not in the developed world nor in the developing world where it can practise union-busting and its denial of workers’ rights,” he said.
Rio Tinto accuses union of ‘exporting’ an Aussie dispute  

FRANK NXUMALO  
LABOUR EDITOR  

Johannesburg — Rio Tinto urged Australia’s Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) yesterday to come back to the negotiating table instead of “exporting” its failed battle over much-needed productivity to South Africa and the international arena.

The statement comes in the wake of a weekend gathering in Johannesburg of trade unionists from 14 countries, spearheaded by former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, which lambasted the mining giant for allegedly bashing unionism in its worldwide operations.

Wells Nuli, the spokesman for Rio Tinto (Palabora), said the dispute between the union and the mining company was “an Australian problem”.

He said “Rio Tinto believes the union is exporting the problem to Rio Tinto operations internationally and to South Africa. The dispute that has been taking place at Hunter Valley, Number One was about work performance practices and not about union rights.

“Rio Tinto recognises union rights all over the world, that is the right of association and collective bargaining. Rio Tinto does not employ child labour, and Rio Tinto wishes to work with the unions.”

Nuli said the only solution in Australia was for the union to sit down with management and try to resolve the whole issue “Whatever happens, that will prove to be the only solution,” he said.

“As far as sweeping and ill-informed attacks on Rio Tinto’s environmental and human rights performance, we can only say that wherever we operate, we work as closely as possible with our hosts, respect the laws and customs of the communities, attempt to minimise adverse impacts and endeavour to bring lasting benefits and opportunities to the areas in which we operate.

“We are recognised as the world leader on these issues in the international mining industry, and we welcome informed and serious public scrutiny of our actions.”

He said what was happening in Australia was that industry in general was in favour of both freedom of association and of individual contracts, if employees wished to have them.”
Labour digs publicity pitfall

Unions aim to pull Mandela into Australian dispute

The Johannesburg conference hosted by the National Union of Mineworkers (Num) last weekend to pressurise international mining giant Rio Tinto appears little more than a publicity stunt to indirectly involve President Nelson Mandela in an Australian union squabble.

The irony is that Rio Tinto has an excellent business, industrial relations and social responsibility track record in SA. The group pioneered many of the labour and social responsibility initiatives that subsequently spread throughout the local mining industry.

That stemmed, in part, from its position as a multinational corporation with highly visible investments in southern Africa that attracted a lot of attention from activists in the late Seventies and Eighties.

Rio Tinto’s SA operations — the Palabora copper mine and a 50% stake in titanium producer Richards Bay Minerals — are a minor part of its international mining empire, which spans Australia, southeast Asia and the Americas.

That being the case, a central objective of the international unions in coming to SA must be to garner publicity, such as the picture published of Mandela with former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, who participated in the conference.

The roots of this lie in the pressures on the Australian coal industry to survive in the highly competitive global coal market.

Contract coal prices for 1998 delivery have been forced down by US$4/t-$5/t from current prices of about $40/t. This is hitting Australian coal exporters hard as they are high-cost producers compared with the major companies in SA and South America.

A number of Australian coal mines are up for sale, but there are few takers. Amcu chairman James Campbell last year said Amcu was watching developments in Australia but felt a number of labour issues had to be resolved before the group would consider investing.

Australian labour leader John Maitland, who is also vice-president of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine & General Workers’ Unions, accuses Rio Tinto of attacking fundamental labour rights.

The company, unions charge, is trying to reduce union power through the increased use of subcontracting and the introduction of individual employment contracts — not only in Australia.

That’s rejected by Rio Tinto Plc public affairs manager John Hughes.

“This is a dispute involving one union — the Construction, Forestry, Energy & Mines Workers’ Union — and one mine, the Hunter Valley Number One colliery in New South Wales.

“The issue at stake is the introduction of working practices aimed at improving productivity which are accepted worldwide. They are already in widespread use among other Australian industries and have been accepted by the coal mining sector in Queensland.

“We believe this conference is purely an attempt by the union to export into the international arena a debate which it is losing at home,” Hughes says.

The Rio Tinto group last year produced 83.3 Mt of coal, of which the Hunter Valley mine accounted for 2.5 Mt.

Num president James Molitatas has tied the Rio Tinto campaign to the fight by SA mineworkers to save jobs in the face of expected retrenchments because of the low gold price.

He says Num will assist an international network of unions in its campaign against Rio Tinto.

Brendan Ryan
New union formed after Fawu splits

Pearl Sebolao

October 16, 1998

The Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu), which has been embroiled in leadership battles since last year, finally split at the weekend, with the suspended Transvaal leadership establishing a breakaway union in Johannesburg.

The leadership of the newly formed SA Food and Allied Workers Union (Safawu) said it was unfortunate that a decision to split from Fawu had to be taken, but workers had no option but to form another union as all attempts to resolve the problems within Fawu were unsuccessful.

Jan Makwero Mongwe, Safawu president and Fawu Transvaal regional chairman, said the resolution to establish a union to represent workers in the food industry had been taken after months of consultation.

Mongwe said that Safawu would continue in the tradition of worker control, ensure "proper service to members and a clean administration of their finances."

Mongwe said it was a known fact that those who were opposed to corruption and were vocal against the leadership of Fawu had been removed as shop stewards and officials of the union.

Safawu secretary-general Steve Mosaka said he could not disclose how many had joined the new union as some members still held dual membership and had not yet resigned from Fawu. He said it was a substantial number.

Mosaka said although the former "Transvaal leadership" was at the helm of Safawu, the union enjoyed strong support in other regions.

The establishment of Safawu was endorsed by Fawu honorary life president and founder member Ray Alexander Simon, who encouraged the new formation to be "democratic and accountable to the membership."

At the launching conference on Saturday, Safawu mandated its leadership to seek recognition or affiliation in union federation Cosatu, as well as ensure that Cosatu affiliates were briefed on the objectives and vision of the new union. Support for the African National Congress-SA Communist Party-Cosatu alliance was also reaffirmed.

The leadership was also mandated to set up branches in all the provinces and to hold general meetings with workers to brief them about developments. The leadership was also instructed to recruit them into the new union.
Battle to dominate food industry looks as Fawzy and rebel union square up
NUM fired me for ill-health

By Abdul Milazi

WHEN Busi Mazibuko landed a job as a receptionist at the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) head office seven years ago, she thought her rights as a fired for "continued ill-health" last year.

Mazibuko said her health deteriorated in 1996 when she suffered from severe stress due to long working hours and having nobody to relieve her on the switchboard.

"My doctor said I was suffering from the 'burn-out syndrome' and I needed to take time off to recover. I had to undergo brain-shock therapy," said Mazibuko.

Mazibuko believes the NUM gave her a raw deal after serving it for seven years without complaint or promotion because her ill health was job-related.

"Unions always complain of employers unfairly dismissing workers but they turn around and do the same thing. Where is the justice?" she asked.

She said the strange thing about the NUM's behaviour was when the then assistant general secretary Gwede Mantashe told her that her position was redundant in 1996.

"He said my new position would be that of maternal developer, a position that never existed. In January 1997 I confronted former general secretary Kgalema Motlanthe about it and he promised to look into the matter," she said.

She claims that nothing was done until she was dismissed for being ill.

"NUM never gave me a hearing. I was fired just like that. I did not choose to be sick."

Only when she took her case to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) did they give her a hearing, at which they upheld their decision to fire her.

Her arbitration hearing was postponed last week to March 1 day at yet to be set because of time constraints.

Mantashe confirmed that Mazibuko was fired for "continued ill-health" but declined to comment further as he claimed the matter was sub judice.

Mazibuko said taking up her case was not for personal glory. She wants to set a precedent for scores of union employees who have been exploited.
Union still seeks to join Cosatu

THE SA Food and Allied Workers' Union (Safawu) said yesterday it would still go ahead and apply for affiliation to the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), despite the union federation's call to its affiliates partners not to give the splinter union any recognition.

The new union, which announced its split from the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawa) at the weekend, would approach Cosatu for affiliation before the end of this week, Safawu secretary-general Steve Mosela said.

Mosela said the union had begun the process of registering the new union in terms of the Labour Relations Act. Reacting to the formation of the rival union, Fawa said claims made by Safawu about its support base in Gauteng conflicted with the decision by four out of the five branches in Gauteng to reaffirm their support for Fawa.
Cosatu defers admission of Fawu splinter group

Johannesburg — Cosatu had deferred taking a decision on the affiliation of the South African Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Safawu) to the end of next month, the labour federation has said.

The decision has drawn the ire of Safawu, which has accused the union umbrella group of “bas and of dragging its feet on the issue, despite the availability of concrete evidence” of corruption in the ranks of its rival, the Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu).

Safawu was formed out of a Fawu splinter group at the weekend following a long-standing dispute with Fawu’s central executive over allegations of corruption. It is now seeking Cosatu affiliation.

Cosatu said a decision would be made when the two-man task team of Sam Shilowa, Cosatu’s general secretary, and John Gomomo, Cosatu’s president, reported to the central executive committee.

Teboho Moseke, Safawu’s general secretary, said the union viewed Cosatu’s inaction “as the primary reason for the failure to resolve the problems of corruption, fraud and mismanagement plaguing Fawu since 1994.”

He said “Safawu represents a growing number of frustrated workers nationally who no longer wish to be associated with a union whose financial statements have not been audited since 1995, where services are lacking, and where there is a total lack of transparency and accountability.”

Nwethu Mpathi, a Cosatu spokesman, said the problem had dragged on for so long because of a clause in the old constitution that prevented the labour federation from intervening in an affiliate’s problems unless asked to do so by the affiliate.

She said Fawu had for months not only felt “competent” to handle its own in-house problems and acted independently of the union federation, but had been perfectly empowered to do so in terms of the old clause.

But the clause was amended at the labour federation’s congress in September. This could result in a full commission of inquiry ending in a disciplinary and/or other corrective measures, she said.

The earlier problems at the South African Domestic Workers’ Union and how they were handled by Cosatu were a precedent that could be followed in Fawu’s case.

Shilowa and Gomomo met the old Fawu in Cape Town yesterday but the contents of their findings and recommendations will not be known until a central executive committee meeting scheduled for March 31 and April 1.

If Safawu’s claims are anything to go by, it represents 70 000 members, mainly from Gauteng, of the old Fawu’s 120 000-strong membership.

Moseke’s faction was always outvoted four to one by the rest of the regions at the old Fawu’s five-region national executive committee meetings.
Split in CWIU draws focus onto labour

Renée Grawitzky

A SECOND Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) affiliate has been racked by division which has led to a group of workers breaking away from the Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) to form a new union.

The split comes on the heels of the formation of the SA Food and Allied Workers’ Union, a breakaway from the Food and Allied Workers’ Union.

Labour observers said although the developments were not an aberration and could be traced back to the late 1980s when splits occurred in a number of Cosatu affiliates, they raised crucial concerns around union competitiveness and possible instability within the labour movement.

Wits University Sociology for Work Unit researcher Ian Macun said unions were becoming more prone to internal tension over servicing members and leadership problems.

Durban-based consultant Pat Stone said expressions of disaffection came in many forms and when organisations were under strain, as the union movement is now, people became critical of the leadership.

The recent formation of the Oil, Chemical, General and Allied Workers’ Union under the leadership of former CWIU president Abraham Agulhas comes in the wake of months of tension between BP workers and the CWIU.

Tensions began simmering last year when Agulhas was removed as president while three members of the Western Cape branch were suspended for six months.
Recent splits are threat to worker unity

By Abdul Milazi

THE recent splits within affiliates of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) threaten the very core of the federation's worker unity campaign relaunched soon after the 1994 national election.

The campaign dubbed "one industry, one union" is in jeopardy after some members of the Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) formed a splinter union, the South African Food and Allied Workers Union (Safawu), in protest against alleged corruption among the union's leadership.

While Cosatu general secretary Sam Shilowa was trying to facilitate talks between the two unions — suspended Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) president Abraham Agulhas formed his own splinter union — the Oil, Chemical, General and Allied Workers Union (Oegawu).

Cosatu spokeswoman Nowetu Mpatu said the federation did not tolerate splinter groupings as they threatened worker unity.

"Each union has a constitution and policies which are clear on how to deal with corruption, maladministration or putting an organisation's name into disrepute.

Mpatu said Fawu had a long-standing problem which started in 1994 when the leadership was accused of corruption by members.

She said, however, that Cosatu did not intervene at the time because it was not approached to do so by the union because of the non-interference clause in its constitution.

"Our old constitution stated that affiliates should first attempt to solve their internal problems on their own, and only when approached, should the federation intervene."

Split unfortunate

She said the CWIU split was unfortunate because its president Agulhas could have avoided his suspension by adhering to the union's constitution when he staged a march against Paper, Print, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPwawu), another Cosatu affiliate without a mandate.

A former shop steward at BP in Cape Town, Agulhas was suspended by Fawu for five years for violating union policy and bringing the union's name into disrepute.

"Unfortunately this was a leader who was supposed to know the procedure," said Mpatu.

Safawu has since applied for affiliation to Cosatu, which was immediately turned down by the federation.

It is not clear whether Agulhas' Oegawu will make a similar attempt...
Union gets stolen money back

THE Food and Allied Workers Union is making significant progress in recovering thousands of rands fraudulently stolen from its coffers, the union said yesterday.

Fawu president Peter Malepe said at a press conference in Johannesburg that the union was also cleaning up the corruption which saw a splinter group being launched last month.

Malepe said in the past few weeks there had been public concern about events leading to the formation of the South African Food and Allied Workers Union, which was launched on February 14.

"Many questions have been asked about where Fawu stands in relation to this grouping and to certain problems within the union like fraud and corruption," Malepe said.

Investigations have been extended to all levels of the union, he said.

Fraud cases included a subscription cheque for R10 135 from Sea Lake Industries, which was taken by a KwaZulu-Natal Midlands branch secretary who cashed it.

Fawu also fired a salary clerk for diverting money due to a bank for housing loan instead, Malepe said.

Fawu private investigator Jayendra Surgu told the press conference that in the Western Cape it was discovered that subscription cheques from a fishery company had been deposited into a bank account held by a group of gangsters - Sapa.
Workers' load eased by unions

MS Lilan Malan casts a giant figure in more ways than one. Because of her and other union workers like her, factory workers’ problems are now more likely to be socio-economic than work related.

Women may still be afraid to go to work on trains and buses, but when they reach the factory door, they find their working lives dramatically improved.

Today there is negotiation where before there was tyranny and being “put off” summarily is a thing of the past.

Malan traces the reforms in labour relations in the industry to the 1994 political reforms in the country.

She is the first woman regional chairperson of Sactu, the South African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union. She began as a shop steward in difficult days for the union 15 years ago and rose through the ranks to senior shop steward and plant-level negotiator for the bargaining council at Charnfit.

Today, in addition to her role in the union, she is a liaison counsellor at Charnfit, advising staff on matters as diverse as alcoholism and child care.

She is also on the company’s management committee and the health care management committee.

Malan has seen the changing face of unionism in the clothing and textile industry and says “We have succeeded in narrowing the gap between management and workers and have opened avenues in which to negotiate.

“In the strikes of 1996 (following failed wage negotiations), we hit the hell out of them — big,” she says wryly.

Malan says job losses in the clothing industry were big three to five years ago but the situation is stabilising now, to the point where factories are recruiting again. At the time of the retrenchments, the industry was hard-hit by illegal imports and second-hand clothing sales, as well as informal vendors and street markets. Liquidations of some of the smaller factories then resulted in job losses, in some cases with no retrenchment packages because of the liquidation of the company.

Last year 700 workers lost their jobs when the House of Youth and Funfils closed both were under the Dermar stable, part of the Seardel group. These workers received retrenchment packages.

Malan says most of them were absorbed back into the industry.

Sactu has some 55 000 members and was formed almost ten years ago, the result of a merger between three smaller unions in the region.

Sactu is also the fourth biggest union affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Also at the meeting between the Cape Times and union members were Ms Valda Hercules, Ms Frances Eksteen, Ms Revon Erasmus, Ms Christine Jules, Ms Ratu Ramperthab, Ms Emma Bosman and Ms Marlene Roberts, a shop steward.

All the women, with the exception of Erasmus who joined this year, had between 15 and 20 years’ experience in the garment industry. All followed their mothers into the factories, as had their mothers before them.

The clothing and textile factories are the biggest formal employers in the Western Cape, offering some 50 000 jobs. Retrenchments from these factories therefore have a ripple effect on the economy of the region.

Ramperthab recalls that when she was 15, her mother was retrenched, leaving her father as the sole breadwinner for the family. “I had to leave school and go into the factory. At that stage I was paid R12.50 a week for marking button holes.”

Today Ramperthab is a machinist, a better paid job. The majority of the women work as machinists and earn about R348 per week. The highest-paid workers on the floor are the cutters at about R600 a week. “But there are relatively few of them,” explains Malan.

The women believe their union has achieved a better life for them, including the introduction of bursaries, given by Sactu, for their children’s education.

With the exception of Erasmus, they all took part in the 1996 strikes when workers were asking for an 11% increase and management would not move from 7%.

As a result of industrial action, the union won 91.3%. “The women are not to be messed with in this industry,” says Malan.
Fawu uncovers subscriptions fraud

FRANK NXUMALO

Johannesburg — The Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu) said yesterday that it had uncovered fraud within its ranks totalling R500 000.

Fawu said it had made investigations following allegations of fraud and mismanagement by some of its former leaders who splintered into the South African Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Safatu) last month. “The formation of Safatu, largely premised on allegations of corruption within the union, could have been averted if the comrades involved had been a little patient with processes which we have put in place,” Fawu said.

Fawu acknowledged that its system of income control was ineffective, and it had begun to revise its managerial and financial systems to block loopholes.

“The majority of this work has been completed, and Fawu is already in a better position to monitor its income on a daily basis,” the union said.

Sources close to Safatu said the full story of corruption in Fawu had not been told and that there was R1.2 million unaccounted for. The sources accused Fawu of creating a false impression that its rivals “had been in a hurry to form Safatu.”

Fawu said the fraud was mainly of subscriptions cheques.
Small firms are going under faster

Johannesburg – The Food and Allied Workers’ Union says it is making significant progress in recovering thousands of rands that were fraudulently stolen from its coffers.

Fawu president Peter Malepe told a press conference yesterday the union was also cleaning up the corruption which had caused the formation of a splinter group last month.

He said that in the past few weeks there had been public concern regarding events leading to the formation of the splinter group, the SA Food and Allied Workers’ Union, on February 14.

"Many questions have been asked to where Fawu stands in relation to this grouping and to certain problems within the union, like fraud and corruption," said Mr Malepe.

"Following a mandate given at a Fawu conference, the leadership has employed a private investigator to bring some resolution to the issues of corruption and fraud within the union.

He said the investigations had been extended to all levels.

Mr Malepe said although the splinter union claimed to have left its union because of fraud and corruption, Fawu only became aware of the breakaway during the launch on February 14.

"The union is revising managerial and financial systems to correct loopholes in the system," he said that the Fawu appeared to have already started investigating the allegations and had made significant progress.

"Fawu acknowledged that its previous managerial and financial systems to correct loopholes were ineffective, but said that towards the end of last year it had started revising its managerial and financial systems to correct loopholes.

"The formation of Safawu, which was largely premised on the allegations of corruption within the union, could have been averted if those involved had been a little patient with processes which we have put in place," said Mr Malepe.

Fawu was pleased with the investigations and had broadened the scope of the investigator nationally, including previous fraud cases totaling R500 000.

The cases were incomplete due to a lack of cooperation with police and the lack of follow-up by a former Fawu official, said Mr Malepe.

Fawu secretary-general Manda Cxanya said that at the moment, the union had not discussed the possibility of meeting Safawu, but did not disallow a future meeting.

Safawu said it was trying to recruit mainly among Fawu memberships, but the majority of the more than 131 000 members had remained loyal to the union.

DILBERT by Scott Adams

Performance Review

Alice: I had to denk you for not keeping me informed about your project.

Dilbert: May I take a peek at your computer?

Alice: You have twelve unread messages.

Dilbert: Well, it’s a little late for that now.

Unions call for Mugabe talks

Harare – Zimbabwe’s labour movement has offered to negotiate with the President Robert Mugabe’s government after claiming success in this week’s national strike.

Gibson Sibanda, president of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, said: "We genuinely seek a solution to the pressing economic issues through participation in economic decision-making.

Mr Sibanda, claiming a 90% average support rate in the stayaway, said: "The workers finally have realised they need to work nationally to counteract the effects of price increases and higher taxes.

Commerce and Industry ground to a virtual standstill despite repeated appeals by the government for a return to work.

The ZCTU said it would not set any ultimatums. Mr Sibanda said the unions would hold a special meeting tomorrow to assess the situation and then consult its members – Supe APF.
Staff's fraud and corruption exposed, Fawu announces

Renee Grawitzky

THE national leadership of the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) announced yesterday that an internal investigation had uncovered numerous acts of theft, fraud and corruption by a number of staff and union officials.

This comes in the wake of a split in the union, with officials from a number of branches breaking away to form the SA Food and Allied Workers' Union.

They broke away amid allegations of mismanagement of union funds by the national leadership.

At a press conference in Johannesburg organised by the Congress of SA Trade Unions and Fawu, the union highlighted the details of an investigation conducted by a private investigator.

Fawu said a number of incidents of subscription fraud had been discovered in the Natal Midlands, where a union official had cashed a cheque made out to Fawu at the Standard Bank.

In the Western Cape a similar incident occurred, also involving Standard Bank.

The union intended taking action against the bank and those involved to reclaim the misused funds.

Standard Bank said yesterday it would be happy to investigate the matter if Fawu could provide the necessary details.

The union said it was committed to maintaining a clean and accountable administration.
A meal will not buy our compliance

Workers' Union president Visu Uthathiri in response to an article in Business Day last week

There are no secret deals or back-door meetings between government and unions. The government is committed to promoting fair and transparent negotiations. The government believes in open dialogue and collaboration with all stakeholders to achieve common goals. The government is determined to ensure that workers' rights are protected and respected. The government is committed to ensuring a just and equitable society for all.

The president of the United Communist Party of South Africa (UCLP), members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have met with government officials to discuss the ongoing wage negotiations. The government has committed to negotiate in good faith and to meet the reasonable demands of workers. The government is committed to ensuring that the interests of all workers are protected and respected.

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Gangs in union

Union subs scam

R30 000 creamed
d off fishing workers

"Every month we send hundreds of letters to companies asking for donations. In early 1996, we received a cheque for more than R1 000. We reckoned the cheque was a donation to our organisation," he said.

"We saw the cheques as an opportunity to do good and as grace from God. I am a full-time pastor and I would not defraud anyone," Standard Bank media relations manager Erik Larsen told the Cape Argus that the bank accepted it had been negligent and would refund Fawu as soon as possible.

"It's obvious the account was opened for fraudulent purposes," he said.

Standard Bank had also contacted the police. "We have also thoroughly investigated any complicity by the bank staff and the results have exonerated everyone," said Mr Larsen.

I&J refused to accept blame for channelling funds to Fawu. A statement by the company's corporate affairs manager, Sharon Mattinson, said it could not be held liable for the loss of the money.

"We cannot go into detail as the matter is sub-judice, but, regrettably, it would appear that on receipt of union subscriptions by Fawu they experienced administrative handling problems and monies have gone astray," she said.

The Fawu investigation is part of a wider probe into allegations of corruption within the union which have highlighted inadequate systems of control over the accounts.

The union recently said in a statement: "Since the latter part of last year we have begun to revise our managerial and financial systems to correct loopholes in our organisation."

"The majority of this work has been completed and Fawu is already in a better position to monitor its income on a daily basis."
Investment companies buy into fast food chicken franchise for two unions

Finger-lickin’ good for labour

RAVIN MAHALAJ

Durban — The investment companies of two Cosatu-affiliated trade unions had bought a 53 percent stake in Chicken Management Services (CMS), which controls the franchise and operating interests of 21 Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) outlets, Chris Tod, the chief executive of CMS, said yesterday.

Tod would not reveal the value of the deal.

The two unions involved are the National, Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union (Nehawu) and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa).

The CMS group represents one of the five largest KFC franchise groupings in the country, with a projected turnover of about R50 million. KFC accounts for more than 40 percent of quick-service restaurant franchises.

Of the remaining 47 percent of CMS, 37 percent is owned by Futuregrowth Structured Equity Fund, which is a division of Southern Life Association, and RMB Corvest Management holds 10 percent.

Tod said the transaction had allowed management with long service and those from primarily disadvantaged communities to gain a “meaningful equity stake in the business that they helped develop, in partnership with the trade unions.”

The decision by the unions to get directly involved in business would also influence business transformation in the country and those would increase shareholder value, Tod said. Profit-sharing schemes would be created so that all employees would be able to share in the company’s growth.

The company would pursue expansion aggressively in South and southern Africa, he said.

The union investment companies had identified food services and related enterprises as strategically compatible with their investment focus, where they could initiate empowerment within targeted businesses, Tod said.
Cosatu, Fedusa compete for members

SA's two largest trade union federations — the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) — are locked in battle to capture the hearts and minds of workers to increase membership.

Cosatu launched its April recruitment drive on Monday while Fedusa has been recruiting members and affiliates since the recent appointment of general secretary Chep Milam and his deputy Dennis George.

Milam said Fedusa did not need Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki to help the federation recruit members. "We can do it on our own," he said.
Seven unions join Fedusa

By Abdul Milazi

THE Federation of South African Labour (Fedusa) made history by becoming the first trade union federation to receive seven new applications for affiliation in one month.

The possible signing of the seven unions, the National Union of Leather Workers, Professional Transport Workers Union, Motor and Transport Workers' Union, Hairdressers and Cosmetologists Trade Union, Food and General Workers Union, South African Security Workers Union and the United Chemical Industries and Allied Workers Union of South Africa will push Fedusa’s membership to 550 000.

Fedusa assistant general secretary Dennis George said the applications would be discussed and considered at the federation’s next national executive committee on April 7.

“Fedusa is extremely pleased that certain other large trade unions are busy consulting their structures on the issue of affiliation to Fedusa,” he said.

Independence

He argued that international trade union organisations preferred trade unions to be politically independent and to advance the interest of their members.

George also said talks between Fedusa and the National Council of Trade Unions (Nactu) for a possible merger were at a sensitive stage.

Asked if a merger with the Pan African Congress (PAC) aligned federation would compromise Fedusa’s non-alignment policy, George said “a lot of things have changed tremendously since the 1994 elections”.

However, he did not say whether this meant Fedusa would opt for a “marriage of convenience” despite Nactu’s politics or if the black federation would discard its political stance.

A merger between Fedusa and Nactu would create a giant with close to a million members and would seriously threaten the Congress of South African Trade Unions’ position as the country’s major trade union federation with 1.7 million members.
Sarhwu investment arm to list on JSE

Johannesburg — Sarhwu Investment Holdings, the R600 million investment arm of the South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union, planned to list on JSE before the end of the year, Sandile Zungu, the chief executive, said yesterday.

“We need to enhance our capacity to fund our intended growth of about 10 percent and the listing will allow our individual members to become direct owners of shares in the company,” Zungu said.

He said it intended placing shares with pension and provident fund schemes held by Cosatuaffiliated unions to ensure that benefits accrued to the broader working masses.

Sarhwu yesterday signed a deal to buy a 20 percent stake, valued at more than R24 million, in Roadcorp, the JSE-listed R112 million-a-year transport logistics company. It has an option to purchase a further 15 percent, which can be acquired over the next two years.

Through this deal, Zungu will become the non-executive chairman of the Roadcorp board of directors in addition to two other Sarhwu directors.

The Roadcorp deal follows on the heels of an 8 percent stake purchase in Mercantile Bank, valued at R600 million, last Friday.

Since the beginning of the year, Sarhwu has concluded three other deals with JSE-listed information technology companies valued at over R100 million in the past two months.

It acquired a 5 percent stake in Spescom, an information technology company for R26 million, 20 percent of TTI Technology Holdings for R83 million and 40 percent of MGX, a data storage documentation company for R47 million.

Through its 14 percent holding in Union Alliance Holdings, it also has a 20 percent stake in Prodigy Asset Management, a new asset management formed with Investec, Southern Life and Aegon Insurance.

Last year it marshalled its investment from an outlay of R400,000 to more than R100 million within nine months and concluded strategic deals with partners such as Rent-A-Bakkie, Avis, Bond Industries and Nedcare.
Unions to reap R250m from agency deal

Reneé Grawitzky

PUBLIC Service unions could reap up to R250m a year in terms of an agency shop arrangement under discussion with government in the public service co-ordinating bargaining council.

Between 300 000 to 400 000 public servants, who do not belong to unions, will be required to pay 1% of their salaries up to a maximum of R100 a month to these unions as part of an agency fee. A similar arrangement already exists between government and teachers where non-union members pay only R7.50 a month.

The new Labour Relations Act grants unions the right to demand agency shop arrangements whereby the employer agrees to deduct a fee from non-union members.

These funds must be paid into a separate account administered by the union and cannot be used for political purposes or expenses that do "not advance or protect the socioeconomic interests of employees". Unions began demanding such arrangements as they felt non-union members benefited from their efforts during the collective bargaining process.

An agency shop arrangement in the mining industry differs from the proposed public service arrangement in that management and the National Union of Mineworkers jointly administer the funds to ensure the broader workforce benefits.

The public service draft agreement provides that funds collected will be deposited into separate trade union accounts. These funds will be proportionate to union membership in the council. The funds will be used mainly for union purposes allowing them to enhance their collective bargaining capacity and training. No reference is made as to whether non-union members will be targeted.

In line with the act, union accounts could be audited annually and opened for inspection to any member of the council or any employer. The fee must be equal to or less than the union's membership fee but where two or more unions are parties to the agreement, the highest subscription rate will apply.
Cash-strapped Nehawu's books under scrutiny

DURBAN — Independent auditors have declined to express an opinion on last year's financial statements of the cash-strapped National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu), after raising concerns about a R1,3m loan for the purchase and maintenance of a house, expense payments of R7,1m and a R750 000 investment with Nedbank.

The auditors' report was discussed at Nehawu's four-day congress, which ended in Durban yesterday. The congress decided not to adopt the statements, saying the central executive committee should do so after addressing concerns raised by the auditors.

Nehawu treasurer-general Jeremiah Sithole, who was replaced by Lindelwa Dytuwa, said the union had overspent by R6,27m on its R33,52m budget last year and had a bank overdraft of R2,5m.

The auditors said there was no agreement to support the granting of a loan to Future Investments, a company Sithole and had been created by the union to purchase a house in Walkervile, Gauteng. An initial loan of R550 000 had been granted for the purchase, but this had since risen to R1,3m. The house had been purchased for "ununion activities", and the additional R750 000 loan spent on "maintenance".

Sithole said an agreement to grant the loan did not exist because the directors of Future Investments were also national office-bearers of Nehawu. However, an agreement would now be signed, Sithole said.

On the failure of the auditors to confirm the existence of R750 000 in a Nedbank investment bonus account, Sithole said this was because auditors did not have the bank statement when drafting their report. The statement had since been made available.

The auditors said they had not been provided with supporting documentation for expense payments, which were selected for testing, totalling about R7,1m.

Sithole said it "takes time to get statements from suppliers". However, he also called for officials not to stay in expensive hotels, fly by plane and hire cars.

The auditors said they were unable to verify Nehawu's membership and subscription revenue, or the validity of sundry income. There was a "material breakdown" in the controls over the payroll, and they were unable to determine the validity of the salary expenses.
share millions

Unions are 'not keeping' their R120-million promise to Modibane Transport

BY ALI MPHAKI

BUSINESSMAN Joe Modibane is claiming close to R120 million from two trade unions for shares he was promised but not given in a black economic empowerment deal involving motor group Super Group Ltd.

Modibane is now in the process of instituting legal proceedings to recover the losses he incurred, after protracted negotiations - with the Motor Workers' Investment Company (MIC), represented by Marcel Golding, and Sactwu Educational Trust, represented by Johnny Coppley - to refund him bore no fruit.

He says in terms of an agreement between Modibane Transport and the unions, there was to be an allocation of shares to his company in the listing of Super Group last year, but this was not honoured.

As far as Modibane was concerned, an agreement had been reached to divide the 11 percent stake equally, with the unions to take 5.5 percent and Modibane the remaining 5.5 percent stake in the pre-listing of Super Group.

Modibane had arranged finance for about R30 million of worth of shares for his company.

For various reasons, chief of which in Modibane's assessment and understanding being the unwillingness of the MIC/unions to share their stake with another black person or company, Modibane Transport was not allocated shares.

Modibane's contention is that the unions procrastinated until listing, but at a meeting held at Super Group after the listing, an agreement was reached by the unions to compensate Modibane.

The union groups (MIC) form the largest single black shareholder in Super Group and Modibane says their unwillingness to share the 11 percent stake continues to puzzle him - seeing "their commitment to black economic empowerment" as "My company is wholly black-owned but it is treated like a pariah by these groups, which are supposed to represent black progress. Simply put, we feel robbed by the very same people who are supposed to represent workers' rights and economic empowerment. We might be wrong in our understanding of how black economic empowerment should work, but this current situation is an anachronism."

Modibane laments Modibane says Super Group chairman Dr Larry Lopeschitz has said that unions should compensate him (Modibane) and that he has actively encouraged unions to compensate Modibane and so settle the matter. Other Super Group top management people support this stance - but lately the unions no longer respond to phone calls and letters from Modibane.

City Press found this same response when we tried to obtain comment from Golding.

For three weeks now we have been leaving messages with his secretary in Cape Town, who promised that he would respond to our inquiries as soon as he received our message - but to no avail.

The last straw was when we phoned Golding on his cellphone yesterday, but the person who answered claimed it was not Golding's cell number and that he knew nobody by that name.

Attempts to talk to another MIC executive Paul Nhuma, drew a blank as we were told he was on leave.

Modibane says that the MIC/unions are morally and ethically obliged to review their position.

He has already sent them two letters tabled some ideas to seek a mutually acceptable settlement to the matter. Apparently, the unions did not find the proposals acceptable, even though they did not table counter proposals.
Memories

Union strength

Going from

#Focus
Communications workers form union

FRANK NXUMALO
LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — A new communications trade union, the South African Communications Union (Sacu) was launched in Midrand yesterday.

The 12 000-member union would be "modern, progressive, and forward-thinking, with a strong business orientation", Danny Ferreira, the union's spokesman, said.

Ferreira said Sacu would be affiliated to the Federation of Unions of South Africa and aimed to be proactive in its approach to labour presentation, which remained its core function and concern.

"We are a new-generation union in that we are structured as a business with a national executive elected into specific portfolios and a structure of regional, local and shopfloor representation that is dynamic and well organised."

"We aim to be aggressively forward-thinking without being militant, (because) historically unions in South Africa have been reactive, using methods such as strikes in order to achieve the aims of workers," Ferreira said.

He said industrial action had a ripple effect that often backfired on workers and their families by hurting their pockets.

Sacu would offer its members, among other services, comprehensive advice and representation in all personal labour disputes, collective representation as a collective bargaining unit for wage working conditions negotiations, unique loan schemes for members in financial crisis, group life insurance and investments, and a legal help line for work and personal matters.

Ferreira said a first in South African trade unionism would be Sacu's "added-value club", whereby members would have access to additional benefits on a sliding scale of value through a continuous loyalty system.

"In other words, if a union member is continuously loyal to a particular brand or product, they benefit by securing added-value bonuses," Ferreira said.

"In this way, for example, items can be purchased by the member on a 'buy two get one free' basis; in other words, buy two tickets and get one free at a saving of approximately R17."
NUM reinstates receptionist

The National Union of Mineworkers has reinstated its receptionist Busi Mazibuko following an arbitration ruling in her favour.

According to the ruling, the NUM had to settle all retrospective payments dating from the time of retrenchment last year. The union has subsequently paid her. The ruling also gave her the right to retain all benefits accruing to her.

Mazibuko had been with the NUM for seven years and was fired for "continued ill health" last year. At the time, Mazibuko argued that her health deteriorated in 1996 as a result of severe stress due to long working hours as nobody was there to relieve her.

At the time of dismissal, she said her doctor said she was suffering from "burnout syndrome" and needed some time off from work to recover.

She also said she was not given a chance to appear before a hearing before her dismissal.

NUM receptionist Busi Mazibuko, who was reinstated after being dismissed by the union for nearly a year.

This, she said, was the reason why the matter was taken to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) for mediation.

However, the NUM stood its ground and dismissed her.

The matter was later referred for arbitration in April this year and the verdict went in her favour.

Mazibuko said she was no longer enjoying the benefit of being given a car which she had access to before she was dismissed.

The car, she said, had since been sold and to date she had not received any response from the union as to when it would replace the car.

No problems

She said she was happy that she had been reinstated. "Since I came back I have never had any problem. I am only here to carry out my duties," she said.

If the car was not replaced, she said, "I will have to take the matter to the Industrial Court for a settlement."

NUM officials declined to comment on the matter yesterday, saying it was better to talk to Mazibuko.

"The judgment was in Mazibuko's favour and you should speak to her," NUM human resource manager Seeng Letele said.
Saccawu to invest in hospitality sector

The SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) yesterday announced plans to invest in the hospitality industry, a sector in which it was an organiser.

The move was in contrast with the trend followed by most trade union investment companies, which shied away from investing in sectors in which they operate.

The union said it did not believe that there would be a conflict between the interests of the workers and those of the union's investment company.

The union's assistant secretary general, Herbert Mkhize, said by investing in the same sector where they had members, the union would be in a better position to influence policies to the interest of the workers if issues such as retrenchments and low wages arose.

"As an investor in a company where our members are working, the union would be able to introduce a system of checks and balances as it would be involved in the decision-making processes," Mkhize said.

He said the hospitality industry and the private sector, which were identified as the "primary targets" for investment were a possible engine for job creation because there was a great potential for growth.

Other industries identified were the public sector, financial services and agriculture.

The investment company would concentrate on those companies which were committed to good industrial relations, visible human resources development and job security.

Among the companies to be avoided were those which evaded tax, were anti-union and whose practices were environmentally destructive.

The union's leadership, which formulated the union's policy towards investments at a two-day conference in Johannesburg this week, also agreed that there should be a clear separation between Saccawu's core functions and the activities of the investment company. The investment company, which is wholly owned by the Saccawu Investment Trust, has since its establishment in 1986, remained relatively dormant because of divisions in the union over investments.

Mkhize said the union would create a broad framework to ensure that its core values of social responsibility were carried through by the company, but "would not get involved in the day to day activities of the company," Mkhize said.

"It would be used as an instrument in transforming the SA economy into a socialist and worker-controlled economy" for the benefit of Saccawu members and society as a whole.

Benefits to members would be in the form of educational bursaries, capacity building and housing assistance, Mkhize said.
Cosatu outlines its social investment

FRANK NXUMALO

Johannesburg — Union officials should not gain financially from union investment companies through access to cheap shares or directors’ fees, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) said yesterday.

Zwelinzima Vavi, the Cosatu deputy general secretary, outlined the labour federation’s policy proposals on union investment companies for its central committee conference. He said investment funds’ decisions should not be taken in deliberate secrecy, preventing members from participation, nor should investment companies draw on worker retirement funds to finance deals.

Union investment companies had to abide by firm principles and guidelines reflecting “firstly union goals and secondly financial returns”. He said “Workers must be part of the union investment policy development which is intended to act on their behalf.”

Among the strategic objectives of union investment were jobs creation, investing in the productive sector of the economy rather than speculative financial markets, changing patterns of ownership, control and corporate governance, and building social capital and strengthening the social sector.

The conference would consider the federation’s strategy on investing resources in socially useful projects that would lead to a rise in living standards.

“Socially useful investments can take the form of making money available from our provident funds for building houses, clinics and other necessary infrastructure,” he said.

“The majority of provident funds money should be invested in government bonds. Enabling legislation in this regard must be enacted and should include tax incentives for such investments.”

On the education crisis, Vavi said Cosatu was opposed to calls for the resignation of Sibusiso Bengu, the minister of national education. The labour federation believed a 6.8 percent budgetary cut had tied the minister’s hands, making transformation of the erstwhile segregated education system difficult.
Cosatu drive for ‘super unions’ fuels tensions

Renée Grawitzky

DECLINING levels of participation by workers in trade union structures and growing disenchantment among members have fuelled splits and tensions within affiliates of the Congress of SA Trade Union (Cosatu), the SA Labour Bulletin said in its latest edition.

The bulletin further argued that the drive by Cosatu to create “super unions” in the absence of a solid base for worker unity could increase tensions and splits which also stemmed from a widening gap between leaders and members.

SA Labour Bulletin writer Malcolm Ray said the drive towards the formation of bigger unions by Cosatu had an “offensive and defensive logic”.

International experience had shown that union mergers, depending on the reasons, could lead to worker divisions and a growing divide between leaders and members as in the case of Australia where mergers had occurred at a rapid rate.

However such developments in Canada proved far less tumultuous as industrial unions gradually evolved and were motivated largely by the practical need to rationalise resources.

Ray said tensions and splits in SA unions differed markedly but hinged on common union goals and strategies relating to democracy, accountable leadership and service provision.

He said social and economic transformation during the period survived as the prime but weakening bonding agent. There is a sense of a lack of political direction and confusion about the future of the workers’ struggle.”

Ray said the dominant view in Cosatu was that tensions and divisions among affiliates could be solved by addressing the form of union organisation. In the 1980s the move towards industrial unions provided the “core repository of unity”, he said, with mergers between different political currents in unions becoming the order of the day.

Organisational styles had been heavily influenced by the “apartheid workplace” and this weakened the ability of unions to represent a cross-section of workers, he said.

However current mergers with small unions, the affiliation to Cosatu of white collar unions such as Sasbo, the finance union and the move towards super unions could lead to larger divisions as divergent interests became more pronounced and divisions emerged between different categories of workers within unions.

Ray acknowledged this strategy had been influenced by changes to legislation such as the Labour Relations Act which advocated industrialism.

The growth in membership and greater centralisation of collective bargaining had not been accompanied by a consistent organisational logic. In many cases, he said, unions had been slow in adapting their structure and style of organisation.
The success of workers in the public
sector is crucial to the economy.
Investment companies need the
people's support to remain within
the market. The government should
provide essential goods and
services to the public sector.

The committee has heard that
people's jobs are at risk due to
cutting essential services. The
government should provide a
solution to this problem.

The government should also
address the economic
situation. The country is
currently facing a recession.

For funded, to go

Retirement

Superannuation

Superannuation is a tool for transformation, says central
colleague. 

Cosatu call to invest in socialist economy

NEWS
Labour faces wages of unemployment

SA labour could learn a lot from the labour problems in Germany, writes Thami Mazwai

THE restructuring of the German economy as a result of the unification of former East with West Germany is one of the causes of the country's unemployment problem, and has led to the search for investment being placed at the top of the country's agenda.

I was in Hamburg two days after an investment conference that was addressed by SA business leaders and politicians. South Africans are also worried about unemployment and are also canvassing investment.

The Ugandans, who are also beset by unemployment, wooed the same investors a day after SA's two-day show. A week before, one of the southeast Asian tigers also had a show in Hamburg and promised heaven and earth.

In other words, SA is competing with a host of other people and all are chasing the same investment dollar. Unemployment is a worldwide scourge and every country is combating it. There is a mad scramble for investment and nations are doing everything to outdo each other.

Let us look at just one example. Mercedes-Benz is building a small car to compete in the small to medium car sector. They had to build a plant; German states competed against each other to locate the plant in their areas.

However, other European locaties were also in the fray. The winner was France and the plant comes into production next year. German unions and activists of the SAFL were aghast.

How could a German company not start at home, particularly in the poverty-stricken east where unemployment is as high as 20% in some towns, they trumpeted?

Ascona! It no longer works that way. The French got the deal because they offered a better deal. Some countries even offer to subsidise wages to woo investors.

Mercedes, as is the case with every other company, will build its plant in an area that will give the best return. In this case that country is France. The reality is that German labour has priced itself out of contention and has lost out.

German unions have now swallowed the bitter pill and are foregoing annual increases. They are playing ball to make sure they are competitive. They realise it is better to have more people in jobs than go for high wages in which case only a few will be employed.

Unfortunately this lesson still has to be learnt by our unions and the SA Communist Party.

What is worse is that the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) argues that SA's labour costs are competitive. It produces data to prove it. It further shows that the top echelons of industry earn disproportionate salaries compared to the lower echelons.

Unless I am missing something, it is the buyers, the investors, who must say that our labour costs are competitive and not Cosatu, the sellers.

Furthermore, while the comparison between management and labour is morally correct, investors are not really interested. If they wanted to employ top management, they would listen. Investors are looking for unskilled, skilled and semi-skilled labour and it is what they must pay for them that matters.

What is also interesting is that our neighbours, hungry for investment as hand-outs dry out, are now going to overseas investors and promising a cheap and disciplined labour force. They just fall short of saying that their workers are not like those from SA. Investors are listening.

Cheap and disciplined labour might be a sweet word in Karl Marx's Das Kapital. However, if the terms cheap and disciplined are hurtful, what they mean is competitive and co-operative.

The sooner we learn that lower or competitive wages are the difference between unemployment and having jobs for the less skilled members of our society, the better it is for SA.

We must also look at the militancy of labour. Some of the strikes in the motor industry can hardly be called co-operation. Furthermore, the mayhem threatened by the SA Democratic Teachers' Union if they do not get their way is simply counter-productive.

I do not condone slave wages, nor do I think those higher up must be paid a fortune. Regretfully, if our priority is jobs, we have to accept the going wage. Thus the wage workers in other parts of the world will accept what directors and CEOs earn is for another forum and cannot be part of the debate about what workers earn.

Overseas, labour has learnt this the hard way; time we also swallowed the pill.

Mazwai is managing director of Mafube Publishing
Fury over 1% salary deduction to pay for bargaining expenses

Non-union public servants must still pay dues
Call for unions to stand together

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

THE deputy general secretary of the National Council of Trade Unions yesterday advocated full participation of all the federation's affiliated unions in the National Economic Development and Labour Council.

Mr Mahlonela Skhosana said this would enhance its communication transaction with the Government.

Addressing the fourth congress of the affiliated Metal and Electrical Workers Union of South Africa (Mewusa) in Johannesburg at the weekend, Skhosana said the labour movement faced major challenges, with the coming Presidential Job Summit beginning a process of dealing with social and economic injustices.

The conference was held to discuss possibilities of forming one union in the metal sector under the banner of Nactu. A symposium on globalisation was also the main feature of the congress.

The federation's participation in the labour, business and government forum will strengthen the movement and advance the exchange of information between itself and the government, Skhosana said.

He appealed to more than 500 delegates to participate in Nedlec committees and have a direct influence on decision-making in relation to jobs and government policies.

"The Government has long extended its invitation for us to come forward but we are running short of people prepared to take part in these committees," he said.

International Metalworkers Federation executive member Mr Elkie Eeau commended the federation and the country's trade unions in general for adjusting themselves to changes taking place around them through globalisation.

"It is imperative that the trade unions form effective and strong unions to be able to circumvent globalisation's adverse effects.

"The International Monetary Fund, World Bank and multi-national companies are bent on making sure the victories you've won after such long political and labour struggles are eroded.

"Build strong unions, organise them and through education teach them self-sufficiency so that they remain independent.

Also enable them to challenge anti-union laws," he said.

Mewusa president Mr Russell Sabor said "at the heart of job creation is the conceptual framework of enhancing the quality of new jobs and improving the conditions of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities.

"Without that framework there is bound to flounder," he said.

Calling for the reinvention of the trade unions, Sabor said tomorrow's unions should be turned into educational institutions that developed leadership cadres with vision and the ability to set social principles and eradicate poverty and unemployment."
Woman heads new Motorcycle Union

Cape-Town—A South African woman has been elected the first president of the newly formed Africa Motorcycle Union, a position that puts her at the forefront of international motorcycling.

Johannesburg’s Belaia Schoeman, managing director of Motorsport South Africa, was elected to the new African body in a major development at the 1998 International Federation of Motorcycling World Motorcycle Congress being held in Cape Town this week.

Schoeman’s appointment also makes her a member of the international federation’s management council.

Own Correspondent
Unions flex financial muscle

By DESMOND BLOW

UNITY Incorpor, a consortium of seven trade unions belonging to Cosatu and Nactu, have established a joint financial services company with Old Mutual Asset Managers which will play an active role in the black economic arena.

Unity has a controlling shareholding of 65 percent in the company, Setsung Financial Services (Pty) Ltd, and OMAM, which is investing R250 million, a 35 percent stake.

Setsung has established the Infrastructure, Development and Environmental Assets (IDEAS) Fund, aimed at the retirement fund industry.

OMAM managing director Tim Cumming said once the fund had attracted an additional R250 million from the retirement fund industry, OMAM would match all inflows rand for rand until the fund reached a billion rand.

Unity chairman and Setsung director, Frans Mahlangu, told City Press the primary objective of the IDEAS Fund was to make a tangible contribution to the development not only of the South African infrastructure but also of the whole southern African region, while making it a good investment for investors.

It was intended that IDEAS would achieve a long-term real return of seven per cent a year.

Investments would be made primarily in unlisted shares of companies, and would include roads, power distribution and water supply services, agricultural projects and shopping centres in underdeveloped areas.

Mahlangu said the investments would contribute to South Africa's economic growth and it was important to build up the infrastructure of South Africa's neighbouring states and to ensure the economic stability of the Southern African Development Community region.

Benefits would flow to communities in jobs, infrastructural development and broadening ownership of assets.

An objective of the IDEAS fund was to broaden the access to ownership of South African infrastructure and to support social and economic upliftment in southern Africa.

The investment criteria would include the diversification of assets to reduce the risk of one project not performing as anticipated and ensuring that retirement funds were not subjected to undue risk.

Investments should contribute to the economic empowerment of disadvantaged communities by creating business and industry opportunities through the provision of facilities and services like electricity, telecommunications, running water and business and factory premises.

Empowerment would also be boosted by the broadening of ownership and access to infrastructural assets and finance.

Awarding tenders to contractors where appropriate and feasible.

Among the potential investments were:

- The National Housing Finance Corporation, which was created as a lending market to finance housing for low-income earners.
- The Land Investment Trust Debentures which funds land purchases for low-income housing.
- Beit Bridge Bulawayo Railway, which will enable greater trade between South Africa and Zimbabwe.
- Maputo Corridor Toll Road, a private enterprise which will allow more efficient and less costly transport between Mozambique and South Africa to allow government resources to be used elsewhere.
- Others are shopping centres in Atteridgeville and Kagiso and the new Farmers Development Corporation.

The seven trade unions comprising Unity membership are Caw, MEWUSA, NUM, PPWAWU, SACCAWU, TAWU, and TGWU.

Ten per cent of the economic interest in Setsung will be used to assist disadvantaged communities.
Union beset by internal divisions

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

The troubled former whites-only staff association, Hospital Personnel Trade Union of South Africa (Hospersa), is reportedly mired in major racial conflicts, court interdicts and the suspension of certain provincial committees.

Dismissed vice-president Mr David Tsheola yesterday accused the leadership of racism and resisting transformation from a “lily-white bastion” to a democratic workers’ trade union. He was dismissed for alleged misconduct.

Approached for comment, Hospersa president Mr Gavin Mouline strongly denied the conflict was racial.

He said the minority faction making the allegations wanted to rancalise the issue.

Meanwhile, Mpsmalanga provincial chairman Mr Mnuph Mogoboya has also been suspended for participating in unlawful acts which preceded the disruption of the union’s congress last December.

After failing to resolve internal differences through constitutional structures, the union leadership suspended the entire Northern Province executive committee which elected Tsheola, reportedly for backing its leader, he said.

Four provinces, including Northern Province, Gauteng, North West and Mpumalanga, were interdicted in the Johannesburg Labour Court last December.

Tsheola alleged that the four provinces, led by black provincial executives, mooted a vote of no confidence in the entire national leadership, which led to an interdict against them.

The leadership went ahead with the appointment of a former general secretary to a new position of chief executive officer. This was vociferously opposed by the four provinces before it was passed by the national conference.

Mouline denied the union was contemplating a split, pointing out that all the nine provinces were cited in the court application to oblige them to abide by Hospersa’s constitution following the disruption of congress.

“Insofar as transformation is concerned, Hospersa democratised in 1994 and transformation occurred and was guided by a strategic intervention programme,” Mouline said.
Financial scandal rocks Fawu

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

A NEW storm is brewing in the country's major food and agriculture union, the Food and Allied Workers Union, following the suspension of its national general secretary Mr Mandla Gxanyana over an alleged breach of the union's financial policy.

Gxanyana, the union's general secretary for 10 years, is alleged to have used union funds to pay insurance premiums for his car.

Eddy national executive member and chairman of the largest Transvaal region, Mr Ndzipho Kalipha confirmed yesterday there were conflicts around the call for Gxanyana's suspension by the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal regions.

Kalipha denied the Transvaal region supported the suspension, and also criticised the way the issue was dealt with as unconstitutional.

He said the issue was not handled in a level-headed manner and it appeared those who pushed for an immediate suspension were influenced by sectional interests and power struggles.

The Eastern Cape, Free State, and Gauteng regions had abstained from voting in a national executive meeting which sought to suspend Gxanyana.

He also said a recent national conference adopted a programme of action which had been initiated to defuse the emerging leadership conflicts, to achieve unity and allegiance to the union's principles.

The programme is intended to educate union membership to tolerate constructive debate and dissenting views and to set up effective financial control systems.
Union official blames vendetta for his troubles

Thembelihle Hlengani

MANDLA Ganyana, suspended Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu) general secretary, denied yesterday that he had breached union policy by using Fawu’s funds to pay his vehicle insurance premiums, saying these were nothing but a “personal vendetta and sign of a power struggle” by certain union officials.

Ganyana said these officials had failed to substantiate charges against him more than a month after his suspension.

Ganyana was suspended on December 13 last year pending the outcome of a union investigation of the charges.

The union said he had used its money to pay his motor vehicle insurance premiums, although union officials had agreed to pay their own premiums.

Ganyana said he had written a letter to the union requesting that it convene a special national executive committee meeting to discuss his suspension.

Fawu acting general secretary Derrick Cele said the union was considering the letter and would respond to it soon. He said consultations were continuing with other national union officials to prepare formal charges against Ganyana. The union would convene a disciplinary hearing soon.

Ganyana said the claims against him were the result of a power struggle within the union.

“If people want power, they will do anything to get it,” he said.

He said this was not the first time that “unfounded” claims had been made against him.

One of the claims was that he had used union funds to pay his wife’s monthly vehicle instalments.

An independent inquiry found this to be false, Ganyana said.

Meanwhile, Fawu said yesterday workers at the Earlybird poultry farm in Standerton, Mpumalanga, would embark on a secondary strike tomorrow in support of an eight-week action by their colleagues at the company’s Olifantsfontein farm in Johannesburg.

The union said it expected more than 1,500 people to support a march today in Olifantsfontein where demands would be handed to the company’s management.

The march is to back the union’s demand for a 10.5% wage increase.

The company is offering 8%.

The union and management have tried on several occasions to break the deadlock without success.

Earlybird human resources manager Arnold Prinsloo said the company was aware of the planned march and tomorrow’s secondary strike action.

However, Prinsloo accused the union of “resorting to misinformation” to gain support from companies expected to release their workers for the march.

He said the union had distorted facts about its negotiations with the company.

Prinsloo said also that workers at the Standerton plant did not want to take part in the strike, but were instructed to do so by the union.
Suspended official faces R50 000 fraud charge

Fawu hearing will decide on Gxanyana fate

FRANK NOLIMALO
LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg, 12—Mandla Gxanyana, the suspended general secretary of the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu), faces expulsion from the union if he is found guilty at its national executive committee disciplinary hearing set for Friday, the union said yesterday.

The committee voted to suspend Gxanyana on December 18 last year after he failed to co-operate with an internal investigation into widespread corruption charges.

Derrick Cole, the acting general secretary of the union, said even if expelled, Gxanyana would still be liable to pay at least R5 482, the amount he allegedly took from the union to pay for insurance premiums on his private vehicle between February 1995 and March last year.

Cole said the Independent Mediation Services of South Africa would chair the hearing. Gxanyana would be allowed to bring a representative of his choice to ensure a fair hearing.

Fawu, one of the biggest Cosatu affiliates, with more than 130 000 paid-up members representing about 8 percent of the country's unionised workers, has been rocked by financial mismanagement, scandal and in-fighting at central and regional levels over the past few years.

In September 1997 the union failed to pay staff salaries after being turned down by First National Bank for a R1.4 million overdraft. Earlier in the same year, Ernest Buthelezi, the former general secretary, was expelled from the union for allegedly abusing union accommodation rules.

Buthelezi claimed that the expulsion was triggered by a clique led by Gxanyana to cover up their tracks.

This only served to deepen divisions within the leadership and culminated in the expulsion of the entire Transvaal executive committee, Fawu's biggest branch.

Transvaal splintered and formed the South African Food and Allied Workers' Union (Safawu), and sought Cosatu affiliation, which was turned down in the interests of unity.

Last week Earlybird farm management in Standerton served the Fawu regional leadership with a notice of the withdrawal of their recognition agreement after the union's representivity declined to less than 50 percent.

Earlybird said the massive resignation was triggered by the leadership, calling for a sympathy strike with Earlybird Olifantsfontein despite members having voted against the proposal.

Then, as now, Cosatu strictly maintained a hands-off approach to Fawu's internal problems.

This is in keeping with one of the founding principles of the federation, namely that intervention only occurs on the basis of a formal invitation from the affiliate.

However, Cosatu is regularly updated on the affairs of its affiliates.
Mergers pave the way for superintendents

Analyze welcome moves to eliminate divisive competition and improve labor relations, writes Themba Hlengani
Cape Town council drops charges, but workers may take court action

Union off the hook in R4m scam.

NEWS

unions welcomed

By Annette Hwang

The merging of two major unions in the industrial sector is a major step toward the realization of the Nationalist government's agenda of industrialization and the creation of a new industrial policy framework. The merger of the Nationalist Congress of South Africans (NCSA) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is seen as a major step forward in the creation of a new industrial policy framework.

The merger will create a new union, the Congress of South African Workers' Union (COSAWU), which will have a membership of over 200,000. The new union will be the third largest in the country, after the South African National Union of Metalworkers (SNUM) and the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU).

The merger is seen as a major step forward in the creation of a new industrial policy framework, which will be aimed at promoting industrial development and creating jobs. The new union will be able to negotiate with employers on a wider range of issues, including wages, working conditions, and industrial relations.

The merger is also seen as a major step forward in the creation of a new industrial policy framework, which will be aimed at promoting industrial development and creating jobs. The new union will be able to negotiate with employers on a wider range of issues, including wages, working conditions, and industrial relations.
Union to fight for health, safety deal

Thembani Hlungu

The SA Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) has resolved to fight for municipal workers to receive free health benefits and for shop stewards to be able to enforce work stoppages if a workplace breaches safety regulations.

At the close of its three-day conference in Johannesburg at the weekend, Samwu adopted a health and safety agreement to be tabled at the National Bargaining Council.

This resolution includes demands for free medical care for workers, the right of health and safety to embark on a work stoppage and should they find a breach of safety regulations or hazards in the workplace, as well as disclosure of all chemicals being used in the workplace.

The conference also discussed the social wage issue, mapping out a three-year strategy to achieve a minimum wage.

Samwu general secretary Roger Ronnie said the union concluded there should be closure of the apartheid wage gap, structured along racial barriers.

"Our members must also get adequate access to social services," he said.

Delegates said employers still withheld information on workers' wages from the union. The union said this was a serious obstruction to effective bargaining and also to specifying a national minimum wage for their members.

It was agreed at the conference that unless employers released this information within three months the union would declare a dispute.

Also to be tabled with the bargaining council was Samwu's reaffirmation to parental rights. It demanded that parental rights should include 14 days of paternity leave, time off for antenatal care and 21 days' parental leave a year.

7/13/98
INSIDE LABOUR

Fawu has decided to come clean

Two critical points for the labour movement were reached last week, both of which carried the promise of ending bitter rows, but neither of which is really conclusive.

The first was the signing of a privatisation framework agreement between Cosatu, the labour federation, together with the municipal workers’ union, Samwu, and the government.

The other was the suspension of the general secretary of Fawu, the food workers’ union, and the start of a Fawu investigation into allegations of corruption.

The signing of the framework agreement brings to an end months of wrangling and sets out conditions under which the private sector may become involved in municipal service delivery and stresses that public sector delivery is preferred. But it makes no mention of the two much delayed — and controversial — privatisation deals in Nelson and on the Dolphin Coast.

The unions maintain that the new framework agreement should apply to them, but the government disagrees, and the battle should continue in the new year.

But the new year should see some of the sting going out of the most acrimonious internecine labour movement war of recent times. When Mandla Ganyana, the Fawu general secretary, was put out of office by his executive this week “pending an investigation into claims of a breach of union rules”, the first steps were taken to heal the biggest rift so far within Cosatu.

The publicly announced specific charge against Ganyana is that he paid R51.492 of union money to insure his own car. But, in internal discussions, the Fawu executive has agreed in principle to extend the investigation to include controversial share dealings, alleged bribery and a Krugerrand deal in which Ganyana was involved.

The apparent compromise solution of a Cosatu investigation about which there was little public debate, and which found that there was no fraud or corruption, certainly did not satisfy the critics.

The announcement of the new investigation is at least partial vindication of the attempts of Fawu’s honorary life president, ‘Mama Ray’ Alexander, to deal with the allegations, and of previous Inside Labour reports.

But while the investigation has been widely welcomed within Fawu and by rival union Safatu, it would be premature to expect that reunification of the two is imminent. There still exists scepticism among Safatu members about the investigation process.

Demands for a forensic audit have been rejected by the Fawu leadership, headed now by assistant general secretary Derrick Cole. It would certainly be time consuming and disruptive and would cost money which the union plainly does not have. Fawu faces a R2.2 million deficit this year, and has increased union dues from 1 percent of wages to 1.4 percent in an attempt to overcome this.

At least part of the reason for the financial shortfall is the loss of members to Safatu, which now claims that it is on the brink of becoming the larger of the two unions. This is moot, especially with large companies such as Nestlé in Gauteng remaining in the Fawu fold. But whatever the facts, at grassroots level it tends to be agreed that the split is damaging to the labour movement as a whole.

In the new year it will be up to the members of both unions to ensure they exert their democratic control and demand accountability from those they elect. Only on that basis does it seem likely that unity will be achieved.

☐ Inside Labour returns to print next month
Unions' merger is unusual

Partners in this link-up have come from different federations

Reneé Grawitzky

The launch of a new union operating predominantly in state transport parastatal Transnet could lead to a rise in mergers between unions from different federations as organised labour seeks to retain a majority presence in the workplace.

The launch of the SA Transport and Allied Workers' Union (Satawu) last week is in line also with a series of mergers and the formation of new alliances at Transnet.

Satawu official Mopalefa Musi said the merger process in Transnet was triggered by the new thresholds for union eligibility in the bargaining council and in other forums.

The new union is a merger between the SA Railways and Harbours Workers' Union (Sarhwu), a Congress of SA Trade Union (Cosatu) affiliate, the Black Transnet Allied Trade Union (Blatu), a National Council of Trade Union (Nactu) affiliate and the nonaligned Transnet Allied Trade Union.

Musi said the union comprised members from across the political spectrum. Its formation marked the first time in recent years that Nactu and Cosatu affiliates had merged.

The Labour Relations Act, he said, encouraged the formation of majority unions.

As a result of this, unions of all sizes wanted to retain a sizeable presence in the workplace. He said smaller unions could no longer afford "to be small."

Musi said in an article in the SA Labour Bulletin that other reasons for the increase in mergers were linked to the fact that majority unions carried more political weight.

"The union with the most pull will be able to influence policy and strategy development," he said. He argued, too, that unions wanted to join federations or unions such as Cosatu which had political clout.

The Satawu merger, resulting in the formation of a union with a membership of 47 000, was the first phase in the formation of a single transport union. The launch congress resolved to endorse a process aimed at a merger with the Transport and General Workers' Union in June.

The union's general secretary is Johnson Gumede (former Sarhwu administration secretary). Former Sarhwu president Bonakele Jonas is the new union's president.

Ephraim Molihako (from Blatu) was appointed first vice-president while the second vice-president is Tony Naidoo (former Tatu president). The union's new treasurer is Ezra Mabuya, who was Sarhwu's former treasurer.
'Companies serve union leaders only'

Reneé Grawitzky

UNION investment companies have come under attack by a former trade unionist who claimed the obvious beneficiaries of these organisations were the leaders of trade unions, while workers were kept in the dark.

Attorney Jan Theron — former general secretary of the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) — said in the latest edition of the SA Labour Bulletin that union investment companies did not empower workers but led to their disempowerment.

He argued that 'on the contrary, it creates an independent source of income for the union bureaucracy'.

In the article, Theron attempted to show how the establishment of union investment companies affected workers on the shopfloor, especially in the current climate of rising unemployment and the increasing outsourcing of non-core activities by employees.

Theron said the division confronting the labour movement was between those with and without jobs and also between permanent and temporary or casual workers.

The capacity of unions to meet this challenge would determine whether they ended up representing sectional interests or the interests of the working class.

Theron questioned whether union investment companies promoted the interests of the working class and rejected the argument that despite possible contradictions which may exist between capital and labour, union investment companies were a way of creating wealth, jobs and bringing about transformation.

'It would be naive, Theron said, to expect union investment companies to behave differently from any other business concern.'

'There is no evidence to suggest that they do. Business being business, union investment companies are not likely to acquire assets at a discount,' he said.

Hence, investment companies would maximise returns and invest where returns were higher, such as in financial services and hi-tech industries such as telecommunications. These were sectors, he said, in which the working class was less likely to find employment 'if this is the creation of wealth, there is nothing new about the process. Only the participants are different: the union shareholders and the entrepreneurs who cut the deals involving investment of workers' money'.
Survey reflects changing face of union movement

Parliament is now labour's main arena, writes Reneé Grawitzky

Sociologists and researchers question whether the union movement is becoming depoliticised or whether it has undergone a process of normalisation following the election of a legitimate government. These questions have been posed following the release of a survey of Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) members in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern and Western Cape.

The survey, released by Wits University's sociology of work unit last week, was intended to determine how Cosatu members understood union democracy as opposed to political democracy. The study was a follow-up to a similar survey conducted by the unit before the 1994 elections.

The results show some changes in workers' attitudes towards political issues. Workers are less likely to take to the streets to force government to meet their demands than in 1994. Support for the African National Congress (ANC) remains consistent, while workers remain convinced of the appropriateness of having sent 20 Cosatu leaders to parliament in 1994.

Unit director Eddie Webster attributes the decline in worker support for mass action to achieve broader political demands as an indication that workers are less willing to operate outside the parliamentary process. There is a growing acceptance among workers of the role of parliament "as a central arena for their political aspirations", Webster says.

This attitude fits the significant rise in wage strikes an increased focus on shopfloor issues, he says.

Unit researcher Christine Psoulis says the results indicate that members have sustained strong shopfloor democracy. Since 1994 there has been an increase in the extent to which members want to mandate shop stewards. She says workers now insist on consultation and constant report backs from shop stewards.

More surprising is the frequency with which Cosatu members attend union meetings. Researchers have, however, questioned what issues are discussed at these meetings as there appears to be a surprising lack of knowledge of broader socioeconomic debates such as the growth, employment and redistribution strategy and existence of the National Economic, Development and Labour Council.

Another researcher questions whether a process of demobilisation is starting to take place among Cosatu members. This, he says, is reflected in the survey results which show that a growing number of workers say they will not vote in this year's elections while support for politically motivated mass action has declined.

Unit research associate Salhela Buhlungu says the demobilisation of workers could be attributed to a number of factors — some more subtle than others.

Buhlungu says worker attitudes towards the ANC remains unchanged. However, there are some signs of future developments — such as possible growing support for the United Democratic Movement.

The ANC has not antagonised workers to the extent that they want to abandon it and form a new party. People are saying the ANC "should be given time" to deliver on its promises, he says.

In this context, Buhlungu says there is currently no room for mobilisation of dissenting views within the alliance. He says it has been an effective instrument for containment of dissenting views, and "(so) it will be around for many more years to come."

Webster agrees with Buhlungu that old loyalties and traditions also play a crucial part in ensuring support for the ANC.

Observers agree that given signs of demobilisation, one could talk about normalisation of the labour movement, which is effectively being shunted off centre stage.
Fedusa finds a labour party compromising

Reneé Grawitzky

The 550,000-strong Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) resolved yesterday not to set in motion a process to establish a labour party.

At the same time, delegates at the federation’s first national congress in Pretoria rejected the retrenchment of teachers and health workers and called on government to amend the Labour Relations Act to ensure retrenchments were the subject of negotiation not consultation.

Fedusa said section 189 of the Act should be amended to prohibit an employer from reducing staff purely with a view to increasing profit.

Fedusa general secretary Chez Milani said heated debate was expected on the resolution calling for a labour party.

Milani said delegates had unanimously opposed this, arguing that the federation should remain apolitical, independent and not compromise workers.

The resolution was proposed in view of the fact that Fedusa members did not identify with any one political party.

A number of parties based on labour interests have registered for this year’s elections. They include the Labour Party (based in the Free State), the Workers International Vanguard League and the Employment Movement of SA.

A number of resolutions were adopted in relation to public service restructuring in view of the federation’s prominence in the sector. Government was called on to allocate additional resources to deal with corruption in the public service. Delegates noted that the standard of social service delivery had declined.

It was resolved that government should prioritise education, health and welfare and to make sufficient budgetary allocations to meet delivery needs.

A range of resolutions were adopted in relation to sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS, employment equity, child labour and crime. But delegates did not adopt a controversial resolution calling for the reinstatement of capital punishment.
Workers make JSE debut

EMPOWERMENT company Union Alliance Media (UAM) plans to list on the JSE this month — the first union-owned company on the boards.

UAM is a subsidiary of Union Alliance Holdings, the joint venture trade union investment company owned by Cosatu and Nactu trade unions representing more than 1.9 million workers.

The listing, a private placing of 150-million shares, will raise R300-million at a listing price of R2. Another 100-million shares could also be issued to vendors of underlying companies.

Proceeds will be used to grow the UAM group, now comprising 18 media companies focused on television, radio, telecom, advertising, marketing, electronic media and publishing.

UAM CE Anthony Glass says the company's plans to become a "techno-media" company are in line with the emergence of a new media industry born out of the convergence of communication, technology and content.

During the past two weeks, UAM launched a brand new dedicated sports television station and acquired more than 50% of Tsvelopele, producers of popular television programme Top Billing.
Sarhwu buys 4,82m shares in Spescom

Vera Von Lees
CT(BR) 29/4/99

Cape Town – Sarhwu Investment Holdings, the investment arm of the South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union (Sarhwu), had bolstered its stake in Spescom, the information technology (IT) and communications group, to 15 percent, in line with its policy to bump up exposure to high growth companies.

Sandile Zungu, the executive deputy chairman of Sarhwu Investments, said yesterday the group had bought an additional 4,22 million shares in Spescom, bringing its interest to over R35 million.

"We will continue to increase our interests in solid and high growth companies in which we believe we can add value and in those that understand empowerment," Zungu said.

Sarhwu Investments, formed in March 1997, would also target groups that would allow it to be a significant participant in their future strategy and direction.

As part of a broader restructuring exercise, the group had offloaded interests in some of the companies in which it has held minority non-strategic stakes, including IT Technology Holdings, MGX Holdings and TCO Holdings.

Zungu said the aim was to achieve a high level of exposure to both the IT and telecommunications sectors.

"Tony Farah, the chairman of Spescom, said the company had introduced an empowerment initiative in 1996.

"Over this period we had several opportunities but Sarhwu Investments impressed us the most as a company truly representative of a broad cross-section of previously disadvantaged communities," he said.

Spescom’s share price closed unchanged at R17.13 on the JSE yesterday."
Shilowa is not solely guilty

THE Congress of SA Trade Unions on Saturday criticised media reports which alleged that newly inaugurated Gauteng premier Mbhazima Shilowa for tax evasion charges involving a trust.

The trade union federation said in a statement that Shilowa, former Cosatu general-secretary, sat as one of several trustees on the board of the Democratic Media Trust.

The trust has been listed as the first accused in a 22-count value added tax evasion charge.

Shilowa is listed as the second accused by virtue of being a trustee during the four-year period concerned.

Cosatu together with other organisations, had formed the trust to address issues which did not find prominence in the mainstream media, the statement said.

Cosatu conceded that management of the trust had defaulted in its VAT returns.

The organisation said, however, that arrangements had been made between the revenue office and the trust for the outstanding VAT returns to be paid.

Cosatu said all matters relating to the trust were not of a personal nature, but organisational, as stipulated in the founding provisions of the trust and the statute under which the trust was governed.

Sapa
Union's problems increase

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

PROBLEMS that have been plaguing the Food and Allied Workers Union over the past three years are far from over despite the intervention of leaders of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, federation deputy general secretary Mr Zwelinzima Vavi confirmed at the weekend.

The union, bedevilled by leadership conflicts, power struggles, court interdicts and splits, has now hit its executive committee's decision-making process, restrained by its own constitution from making effective decisions after last May's deadline, for an abortive national conference.

This has led to the resignation last week of the union's first vice president, Mr Dumsani Yoyo, who confirmed that by resigning he was defending the union's constitution and policies.

His departure was preceded by the reported unsupervised dismissal of second vice president Mr Patrick Shiza the previous week. It was also reported that Fawo's national treasurer, Mr Chris Plaatjes, was relieved of his post last week, because his subscriptions were not paid up from last year.

Deepening crisis

Vavi confided that "the real solution had been eluding us for some time and people had kept on criticising personalities, without considering what had been causing the stagnation, and our inability to find the way out of this deepening crisis."

He also deplored the suspension and subsequent dismissal last month of the union's general secretary for 10 years, Mr Mandla Gxanyana, pointing out that this had worsened the internal rivalry.

"We have confided to the union's leadership that allowing the internal problems to deepen further into personality confrontations would be suicidal for the union which has played such a prominent role in the federation's history," he said.

"Interestingly, all the factions say they are doing this in the interest of members," he said.
Cosatu threatens ally with wage strike

Johannesburg - Cosatu-affiliated public service unions are set to take on the government in a series of protest actions over public sector wage increases, barely a week after its ally was re-elected with a 66 percent majority.

The three unions - Sadtu, Nehawu and Popcrus - yesterday accused the government of negotiating in bad faith for its failure to review its final salary increase of 5.7 percent compared with the unions' demand of 10 percent.

Thulas Nxesi, Sadtu's general secretary, said the unions would not accept salary increases that were below the rate of inflation and demanded the closure of the apartheid wage gap between the lowest and the highest paid workers in the public service. The unions also signalised their intention to take the government on in policy issues, vowing to resist any plans to introduce labour market flexibility, as prescribed by organisations like the World Bank, warning they would not tolerate retrenchments in the public service.

Public sector retrenchments and the introduction of more flexible labour markets are two of the key challenges facing the newly-elected government, which will have to walk a tightrope between the demands of its labour allies and impatient financial markets.

The unions said the failure of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) mediators was mainly due to the government refusing to budge on its 5.7 percent offer, cutting back on funds. "It is clear the employer has indeed negotiated in bad faith. We are mobilising our forces on the ground to engage in serious, legal mass action or protests throughout the country," they said, adding they were "sure" the government would reconsider its position, "given the overwhelming mandate received on June 2, to continue with the transformation of our society."
Cosatu looks for a new generation of leaders

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

The debate among the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) about the federation's future leadership indicates how serious it is about preparing for the challenges of the new world; environment

Large-scale retrenchments - 180 000 jobs were lost last year - is continuing to be their chief worry.

The federation wants to move swiftly to fill the positions left vacant by John Gomone, Mbuyazima Shilowa, and other executives who left for parliament.

The movement's central executive committee decided in March to convene a special national congress from August 7 to 20 to deal with the elections of new office bearers.

Front runners for the presidency include popular South African Democratic Teachers Union chairman Willie Madishe and the charismatic National Education Health and Allied Workers Union president Vusi Nhlapho.

The preferred choice by major affiliates seems to be a capable leader from the public sector unions, and Madishe is likely to emerge as the winner.

Former South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union president Peter Malepe, Cosatu's current vice president, will be elevated to become first vice president, the position left vacant by Conny September.

Cosatu deputy general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi.

by Conny September

Emily Tshabangu and Joyce Phokwana, both additional executive members of Cosatu, will contest the post of second vice president.

Favourite for the position of national treasurer, left vacant by the departure of Ronald Mogokeng, is well-known Cosatu activist Wildele Nolingo.

As for the position of general secretary, it seems a foregone conclusion that current general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi will take up the position as no one else is contesting it.

Vavi stressed that if he were elected, it should be based on his abilities and not on the fact that he has been deputy general secretary for the past six years.

There will be a major tussle for the deputy general secretary position if Vavi becomes general secretary.

A leading contender is Ebrahim Patel, the seasoned chief labour negotiator in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), who is the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union's general secretary.

The Chemical Energy Paper and Printing Wood and Allied Workers Union's general secretary Muzi Buthelezi is also on the nominations list for the deputy general secretary post.

However, he emphasised that he felt his skills were needed more at the level of ensuring the successful integration of the newly formed super union.

Others contesting the deputy general secretory post include Transport and General Workers Union general secretary Rubyall Howard, Nedlac labour negotiator Khumbula Ntsha and Cosatu Western Cape regional secretary Tommy Ewema.

Intense and rigorous debate within the affiliates has intensified in recent weeks as nominations must be finalised by Jul 31.

Cosatu also plans to use the special national congress in August to launch an aggressive new recruitment drive, dubbed "Consolidation of Cosatu for the new millennium.

Also of major concern is increasing the federation's capacity to intensify its living wage campaign, job creation, attacking poverty and HIV-AIDS in the workplace.

"Looking back on weaknesses and problems in the federation, there are some mistakes that may have been costly, our campaigns have been very weak," Vavi conceded. "And we need to correct that."

Cosatu is determined to engage in more effective building strategies and to position itself to play a meaningful role in the country's transformation process.

"What should we engage in a campaign for job creation when we are losing thousands of jobs now?" Vavi said. "The best way of creating jobs is to protect and retain current jobs."

A resolution adopted at the federation's last congress in 1996 includes strengthening its structures through cadastral development to enhance their capacity to face the challenges of the changing working environment.

Shop stewards and workers will be empowered to deal with issues such as workplace restructuring, industrial policy, workplace democracy, apartheid wage gap, international competition and other matters.

Vavi also raised the issue of weaknesses in tripartite alliance programmes.

These were intended to take forward the delivery of social needs to ensure that the economy grows along with jobs and meet the needs of the poor.

Vavi said the role of the alliance in driving and monitoring transformation and policies was of great importance.

However, he added, this depended on what was politically possible and on the current balance of forces.

However
Murder not result of power struggle, says union

KIMBERLEY — The National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union (Nehawu) yesterday denied a power struggle was behind last week’s murder of its Northern Cape provincial education officer, Ashall Thembani Dyushu.

“We reject with contempt all these nonsensical utterances as they are not true,” the union said in a statement. “Nehawu is further disturbed by these speculations as it may jeopardise the police investigation or pre-empt police findings.”

Dyushu stood for the position of provincial secretary during a Nehawu congress earlier this year and lost.

He had always abided by union decisions and policies. “Standing for election does not mean a power struggle as many interpret it. He understood that the results of any democratic election should be accepted.”

Dyushu, 30, and a friend, Melan Hulana, 26, were shot dead in Hulana’s outside room in Kimberley last Wednesday.

She was found outside her room with bullet wounds to the head and neck. She died on Thursday. Dyushu’s body was found inside with a bullet wound to the head, police said.

Northern Cape police have issued a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction — Sapa
Pretoria's stance seen abroad as a sign of fiscal discipline

Unions' hand weakens but investors are happy

Johannesburg – International investors were likely to be reassured by the government's decision to take a tough stance in its wage negotiations with Cosatu-aligned public service unions, which would further enhance the credibility of its commitment to fiscal discipline, economists said yesterday.

The government said at the weekend it would unilaterally implement its final wage offer of R3.28 billion, or 6.3% percent, after talks with labour broke down.

The unions are demanding an inflation-linked rise of 7.3%. Economists said basing wage demands on monthly increases in inflation was likely to weaken the unions' hand, because consumer inflation fell to 4.9% percent in July.

Considering that the rest of the economy was losing jobs, the unions would struggle to win public support for their demands.

John Lutz, an economist from Wits University, said that with a third of the workforce unemployed, the unions had chosen the wrong environment to take on the government.

The current conflict involved more than just wages, and the government would want to assert its authority ahead of the planned restructuring of the public sector.

But the unions are still squaring up for a fight. The South African Democratic Teachers' Union withdrew from the public service co-ordinating council earlier this week. It accused the government of adopting a stance "reminiscent of the former regime not befitting a worker-friendly government".

Economists yesterday gave full support to the government's stance. They said the loss of credibility and possibly capital that would result if Pretoria bowed would be too costly.

The loss of credibility and capital would cost more than the disruption of services.

"Foreign investors are likely to see the government's stance as a prime signal of its commitment to fiscal discipline and the implementation of its Gear (growth, employment and redistribution) macroeconomic policy," said Econometrix, the economic consultancy.

She said South Africa had firmly moved away from double-digit inflation, meaning there was "no basis" for the initial union demand of 10 percent, which has since been reduced to 7.3%.

Denis Dykes, the chief economist at Nedcor Bank, said: "The financial markets will be concerned about the impact (of the government giving in) on the Budget. "The government must not be seen to be failing its first post-elections test."

"Furthermore, this stand-off might come to be seen as a watershed marking the start of the diminution of the power of trade unions and an increase in labour market flexibility, which reverses the trend of declining employment of labour."

Hanlie Faarh, an economist at FBC Fidelity, said a big problem was that inflationary expectations in the unions had not been caught up with actual changes in inflation.
NO MORE JOLLY ROGER AT THE HELM

The SA Municipal Workers Union (Samwu)'s general secretary, Roger Ronnie, has quit his post in the fall-out from the battle over how trade unions should approach privatisation. Ronnie (60), who officially stood down at the end of last week, says his immediate decision was fuelled by overwhelming “mental and physical stress.”

“I can state categorically that I wasn’t pushed,” he told the FM this week.

He will remain with Samwu and continue to work in its Cape Town national office. His duties have been handed to acting general secretary Mncedzi Nonqalense.

So complete is his break with the union's leadership that Ronnie, after six years at the Samwu helm, did not even attend this week's Cosatu congress in Johannesburg.

The 230,000-member Samwu is one of Cosatu's biggest affiliate unions. “People underestimated the pressures of being a national general secretary,” he said.

While Ronnie's health is the official trade union line for his quitting, the decision is also intensely political. The trade unionist clashed last year with Cosatu leaders over his dogmatic stance on the privatisation of municipal services.

Federation sources call him a 'troublesome fellow.' He also met with strong opposition from SA Communist Party (SACP) members in Samwu who didn’t want the union to push so strongly against a government that is associated with the tripartite alliance of the ANC, Cosatu and SACP.

Ronnie and a handful of other Samwu members led a vocal antiprivatisation drive which opposed any attempt at joint ventures, such as the public-private partnerships finalised this year between Neil'spruit and Dolphin Coast municipalities and private water management companies.

Samwu's antiwidification campaign co-ordinator, Maria van Driel, has also had the union face attacks from leaders who opposed her militant style and ideological stance. Officially, Samwu claims that she, too, left for health reasons.

In two years, Cosatu has softened its stance on privatisation and now says public-private partnerships should not be opposed ideologically.
Unions should become mutual aid societies

Labour organisations must be reinvented, writes Robert Taylor of the Financial Times

Those were the days. Now unions battle to sustain membership.

BD 28 19 99

Earlier this month delegates at the UK Trades Union Congress annual meeting wrestled with how they can reverse a four-year decline. This decline is but one of a trend throughout the industrialised world where the decline in membership has precipitated trade unions to reassess their purpose.

In many western countries, apart from the Nordic region where unions remain dominant, the decline in membership has been going on for 15 years. In the US, unions now cover fewer than 9% of private sector workers while hardly exist in the burgeoning information technology, financial services and e-commerce sector.

In the UK, private sector unions organise only 1 in 5 workers, the lowest figure since before the Second World War. The picture is similar in many continental European countries, and in Japan, Australia and New Zealand organised labour is in rapid retreat.

Unions have grown into powerful organisations in some industrialising countries, notably South Africa and South Korea, but the global collapse for trade unionism remains snarled.

Trade unions have spent much time in recent years rectifying the reasons why they are finding it hard to survive, let alone grow.

The list of causes is substantial: de-unionisation, decline of large manufacturing workplaces based on mass production, unemployment, public sector cuts, decline of collective action and rise of worker individualism, technological innovation, management theories of teamwork and streamlining business operations, the rise of small enterprises, and increased patchy, temporary and other atypical forms of employment.

Also important has been the downturn of manufacturing and socialising, and the resulting decline of mass labour movements. Trade unions need a sympathetic public policy climate, generated by a friendly state, to thrive. This is less the evidence of centralised governments struggling with budget deficits, the popular will for low taxes and the need to reassure global financial markets. Many unions are fighting against the current of the modern world.

Many are trying to restructure to stay in business. In the US, aggressive recruitment drives have been launched with limited success, most recently among health care workers in Los Angeles.

The concept of social unionism is gaining ground as unions attempt to link organised labour with the cause of the excluded, who work on the unsalaried margins of the labour market.

Trade unions in the US, Germany and UK are also trying to achieve economies of scale through mergers and acquisitions. The announcement in Genesis of a huge global union, UNI-Network International, is an amalgamation of four International federations, in evidence of structural modernisation to match the power of international corporations.

In more affluent countries trade unions are making focused appeals to young workers who, currently find unions often unsympathetic to their needs. But unions may have to be re-invented if they want to reverse their effectiveness.

Their best option might be to restore their old function as voluntary associations dedicated to raising members' value as employees. That means helping them become better qualified and adaptable. Members would pay higher subscriptions rather than lower in exchange for services such as skills training, job placement, legal advice and pension and sickness insurance.

These mutual aid societies would resemble the craft unions of the past century that achieved the status and secured protection for skilled workers, printers and construction workers.

Trade unions might thrive again through an assertion of their primary, ethical purpose of championing the professionals, doctors, teachers, technicians and other occupational groups that believe in working for the common good but whose skills and status are being ignored or dismissed.

Such exclusive bodies would cover a limited part of the labour market. Can other employers develop voluntary associations that cater for their specific needs as well? Such will depend on the future of the workplace and the structure of modern companies and market economies.

In countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Austria and the Netherlands, some unions are becoming indispensable components in companies' success by transcending traditional conflicts that used to define relations between capital and labour. They are training members in new forms of work organisation and strengthening their job portfolios.

In the UK the Trades Union Congress general secretary, John Monks spells out what this might mean by 2018 that involves making partnerships between corporate and trade unions a normality and an end to the rhetoric of class struggle and industrial conflict.

Britain's unions have their best opportunity in a generation to start to grow again," argues Monks. However, he recognises that their decline cannot be reversed without "hard choices" and rethinking unions' structures, shaped by the world of mass production, now transformed, mean they cannot start again from scratch.

Whether they have the vision, the sense and the will to modernise in ways that make them relevant to the post-industrial world remains in question. But at least in the UK and in other industrialised countries union leaders are starting to grasp what needs to be done.
Trade union body aims at wholly democratic Africa

Xolani Xundu and Sapa

THE seventh ordinary congress of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity held in Johannesburg last week has set itself the huge task of making sure that the continent is democratised by June next year.

Secretary-general Hassan Sumonu said political and social stability was a precondition to Africa's development. "The social and political instability that has characterised this century should be seen as baggage that must be left at the doorsteps of the dawn of the next century," said Sumonu.

He said the organisation had committed itself to a new Africa at peace with itself — trying to achieve participatory democracy and good governance, and where human and workers' rights were a cornerstone of the African renaissance. This renewal should, he said, be hused towards uplifting the poor and the marginalised.

Resolving to help build their countries' economies for development, job creation and poverty alleviation, member states said they would work on an alternative to the existing development framework in Africa.

“We shall campaign for an alternative framework to the orthodox International Monetary Fund and World Bank frameworks," Sumonu said.

The body backed an Organisation of African Unity resolution not to recognise military governments and said it would seek to ensure all African states had elected governments by June 2000.

The organisation would stage a one-day mass demonstration in support of this resolution on April 12 next year, calling for "speedy transformation towards civilian governments in Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and other African countries that have not democratised," he said.

The organisation would also call for democracy in Swaziland and peace in Angola and other war-torn African states. "We do not want democracy defined by the west, but (which) takes with it popular participation," Democracy should empower the masses.
Forget the gravy train. Welcome to the gravy boat.

First members of the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union raised eyebrows by holding their annual national congress aboard the Symphony cruise liner – at a cost to the union of R2 million.

The cruise ship took delegates from Durban to Mozambique, all expenses paid, in March.

Delegates from Cape Town were flown to Durban to board the ship.

But four of the 14 Cape Town delegates mixed a little pleasure with business by taking their spouses, whose trips were paid for by a "loan" from the union.

Now their failure to repay the "unauthorised" loan has angered some members of the Cape metro branch.

Before the event, the union had agreed delegates could bring wives or partners, but at their own expense.

Four members of the Metroberg branch executive took their wives, giving themselves loans under their own authority.

At the first full executive meeting after the congress, in April, it was decided the four had to repay the loans by the end of November.

But Tygerberg member David Benjamin-Swemen said not a cent had been repaid so far.

Repeated requests to have the issue discussed at meetings had been rejected. The loans had not been reflected as an outstanding item in financial statements since April.

Imatu was due to have paid the City of Cape Town R600,000 under an out-of-court settlement by April, after a pension scam involving R4-million allegedly taken by the all-white SA Association of Municipal Employees, now part of the union.
Unionists get R47m in shares

Johannesburg - The South African Railway and Harbours Workers’ Union (Sarhnu) Investment Holdings yesterday allocated 37,000 free shares worth R47 million to its members.

Each member would receive 1,000 shares valued at R1,26 each but would not be permitted to sell them until October next year.

Sandi Mabaso, Sarhnu Investment’s financial director, said the company had grown from R500,000 to R300 million in two years.

“One of our long-term objectives when Sarhnu Investment was formed in 1997 was to enable labour (to have) direct shareholding in the company. We are proud to announce the achievement of this objective in only two years,” said Mabaso.

“We are also proud to be the first trade union employee company to allocate free shares to our members. Our project, the Nosipho Share Plan, which in Zulu means gift, has been painstakingly developed over the past year.”

She said the plan involved a detailed roll-out plan to provide members with an insight into an understanding of the mechanics of share allocation and what it meant to be a shareholder.

Mabaso said the share allocation in Sarhnu Investments was structured so that the Sarhnu Enableness Trust, which represented union members, held a 63.7 percent interest.

The Sarhnu Executive Trust and employees held 21.3 percent and the Sanlam Development Fund 15 percent.

“The Nosipho Share Plan is distributing 60 percent of the Enableness Trust’s holdings to the members while retaining 40 percent to ensure it remains a controlling shareholder in Sarhnu Investments,”

Mabaso said union membership funds were not being used for transactions. Sarhnu Investments had raised funds in the financial market through a R500,000 startup capital loan provided by the union in 1997.

She said the investment company had no access to union funds, either subscription or pension funds.
Trade unions work on a response to globalisation

SA and Australian organisations plan to sign agreement to increase co-operation

Reneé Grawitzky

Trade unions representing port workers in SA and Australia plan to sign an agreement to increase co-operation between the two organisations which will lay the foundation for greater solidarity between workers.

This agreement is expected to emerge from discussions at the Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights conference being held in Johannesburg this week.

The conference, which ends today, is set to emerge with four resolutions, which will facilitate "global unionism".

The proposed agreement between the Maritime Union of Australia, the Transport and General Workers Union and the SA Transport and Allied Workers Union is part of a move towards greater solidarity between unions internationally.

Regional co-ordinator Rob Lambert said the agreement would facilitate an organisation of link between the ports of Fremantle and Durban. Fremantle has strong trading ties with SA.

The process is aimed at deepening relations between workers and building solidarity between unions internationally.

The key focus of the conference is to develop a trade union response to globalisation and the changes taking place in the work place.

Forging closer working ties between unions in the same sectors internationally is part of a union response to the power of multinational corporations.

During discussions at the gathering it became clear that unions internationally are facing similar challenges brought about by private- and public-sector restructuring.

They have yet to develop effective strategies to deal not only with increased casualisation and outsourcing, but deregulation and technological changes.

Unionists from countries in the Asia Pacific region and Africa shared their experiences of large-scale privatisation initiatives under way in their respective countries. An Australian trade union official said government functions were largely being privatised.

However, two recent high court decisions could reverse this trend as the rulings relate to wage rates to be paid by private sector companies in the event they are awarded government contracts to provide services.

In the event government contracts are awarded to private sector companies, government employees transferred to the new contractor could have to be paid the same wages and benefits as when they were employed by government.

Union officials acknowledged that these judgments could act as a disincentive for the private contractor to take over former government employees.

Some tenders required the contractor to take over former government employees. Where they did not, unions would have to lobby to ensure employees were re-employed.

An SA Municipal Workers' Union delegate said government was increasingly not "doing service delivery but rather the managing of service delivery".

Another Australian union official said state attempts to privatise electricity in certain regions had been halted, largely due to a political campaign embarked upon by communities and the labour movement.

This initiative reflected clear community opposition to privatisation. As a result the privatisation "wagon" had been slowed down in some states in Australia, he said.

Opposition to privatisation initiatives had, in some cases, led to conservative governments being ousted.
Trade Unions must adapt to new working trends

Cosatu report stresses potential new areas for recruitment and growth, reports Renee Grawitzky

The survival of trade unions in the next millennium will depend largely on the extent to which they are able to build strong internal capacity to recruit workers beyond their traditional base.

New potential areas for recruitment include workers in service jobs, the majority of whom are casual or contract workers.

A publication released at the weekend by the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (Naldeo) — the research arm of Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) — said unions would have to address crucial challenges brought about by a decline in employment in manufacturing with a move towards the service sector, changes in working time patterns, workforces becoming smaller and the introduction of new technologies.

Naldeo said globalisation had not been proactive in making moves to organize casual or contract workers who are increasingly becoming the majority of employed workers.

The publication — Unions in the new Millennium — said unions remained focused on organizing full-time workers but employment of casuals was on the increase and this undermined union power and strength.

Naldeo said unions had failed to make inroads in recruiting members in the service sector — the only sector recording a rise in employment. Employment in the service sector was increasing being characterised by the use of casual or contract workers.

Unions would have to develop strong internal capacity to organize these workers and ensure collective bargaining agreements extended to these.

SA unions faced additional problems in recruiting casuals, the majority of whom were young people. A survey revealed that unions were not attracting young people who were increasingly being identified with the labor movement.

Naldeo said trade unions should campaign for legislation to regulate the wages and employment conditions of casual workers. Such a strategy was crucial for unions to make inroads in organizing casuals.

Unions had to ensure collective bargaining agreements covered casuals and had solidarity between permanent and casual workers.

Naldeo said unions had also had to consider longer-term agreements covering casuals as well as agreements to

regulate the use of sub-contracting, new technology and outsourcing.

Naldeo director Ross Neilson said that in countries such as Holland, unions were setting up specialised organizing structures to focus on density programs to recruit casuals and part-time workers.

As membership declined in traditional sectors such as manufacturing, unions had to focus not only on the interests of existing members but to understand the preferences and interests of non-union members in order to recruit them.

A survey showed that one of the single largest factors preventing union membership from expanding was employer opposition. Other factors related to political reasons for not joining unions.

Latest statistics show that just under 59% of organized workers are Cosatu members. Although membership has grown rapidly over the past 20 years, Naldeo said, it has become clear that growth has slowed down partly as a result of recruitment efforts.

Changes in employment patterns in the economy are reflected in the increased dominance of women not specializing in manufacturing Cosatu's public Lansicence unistions now constitute 64% of total union membership, followed by manufacturing (27.7%) and mining (15.2%).

Ten years ago the picture was very different with manufacturing accounting for 55% of membership, mining 23% and public service only 9%.

Naldeo questioned whether Cosatu could rely on its largest growing public service unions to continue to grow as only 24% of service sector workers belong to unions. "The experience of other union movements, however, serves as a warning not to rely too much on this sector.

Changes in workplace organizations would require unions not only to develop strategies to recruit casuals but also to begin recruiting better skilled workers who were increasingly becoming the bulk of the employed workers.

Surprisingly, only 26% of lower-grade workers are union members while the highest proportion (46%) is found among the professional workers.

Despite this, the Naldeo research indicates that the ratio of skilled to unskilled workers will continue to change. "Over the next five years employers will reduce unskilled jobs and use new labor-saving technology.

In both cases unions would have to confront the task of recruiting more members.

The message from the Naldeo publication is clear, strong unions have a strong bargaining position.

The future survival of unions depends on membership growth and the union must develop effective strategies to engage both businesses and government.

Capable leaders with democratic union structures will also be needed.
Cosatu calls for closer watch on multinationals

Johannesburg – Multinational companies should not be allowed to exploit host communities and violate ethical codes of industrial relations conduct, Cosatu said yesterday at the Southern African Initiatives on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights Conference.

Peter Malepe, the first vice-president of Cosatu, said organised labour was not against companies making profits but wanted to share in the profits it helped produce.

"We would fight and struggle against any injustices that are going to be brought by investing companies," Malepe said.

He said the globalisation of the world economy had hit poorer countries the hardest because they did not have social networks that were as developed as those in the industrialised nations.

Wilhe Madisha, Cosatu's president, said the union movement faced momentous challenges in the millennium, including falling numbers as a result of outsourcing, privatisation, and restructuring that accompanied the globalisation of the world economy.

Les Kettledas, the labour department's deputy director-general, said "Unions should play a bigger role and put a human face on the global economy and need to diversify their activities to secure public support for those excluded from traditional forms of work."
Trade union leaders campaign for global rights of workers

FRANK NEISHMID

Johannesburg - As trade union leaders representing 10 million workers from all parts of the world and aligned to the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions gathered for their fifth congress in Durban this month, they will be acutely aware of the reality of global corporate power and the process known as globalisation.

For workers, the trend has meant radical new patterns of employer worker relations and job losses, as a direct result of an unprecedented contraction of the mining and manufacturing sectors, the traditional power bases of trade unions.

"Under the new and powerful influence of the transnational corporations, governments have often become more willing to facilitate the free flow of capital, technology, information and products," says an unions congress report.

It adds: "The real needs of working men and women are ignored in the balance sheets of corporate giants. Unemployment and destitution are still on the increase."

"Amdams awakes a Blake phrase: "who is your enemy?" and the slogan of the congress which underlines the key role played by them affiliated local trade unions in coming apart and building the new South Africa.

The new South Africa reflects what trade unions intend doing to face the global corporate power movement. In practice, it means that trade unions not only realise that they have much to do but that they are determined to defend and build global working class power to ensure that all of us survive."

The unionists will assess their achievements and future priorities in a number of important spheres, as an effective starting point for global trade unionism.

Areas of action will include vigorously pushing for global agreements between the multinational companies and government, covering such issues as union rights, equality, workplace health and safety and the environment.

The union leaders say the main difference between such agreements and the international Labour Organisation's core conventions is that compliance would be closely monitored and breaches dealt with through protests, demonstrations and calls to strike and wildcat strikes where necessary at the multinational companies' operations.

France Neishmida

Globalisation is labour's top threat

JOHANNESBURG - Reports to the second congress of the 30 million strong International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Union (ICM) show that globalisation has produced international unionised labour with the strongest threat to its survival since the industrial revolution in Europe.

The theme of the congress, Facing Globalisation: Strategies for Global Unions, focuses on the union's response to the globalisation of capital that has resulted in increased unemployment, lower share of income and highly stressful forms of work organisation.

"The oil industry has experienced massive mergers, with the three biggest companies, Exxon-Mobil, Shell and BP Amoco, now with a combined sales figure of $1.4 billion, a figure that is greater than the annual domestic product of some of the world's poor and much smaller than the annual global trade in arms that is greater than the annual domestic product of some of the world's poor and much smaller than the annual global trade in arms," says the report.

The report notes that the top 10 corporations already export $500 billion, a figure that is greater than the annual domestic product of some of the world's poor and much smaller than the annual global trade in arms. "The main result of these pressures has been a reduction in union membership, particularly in the advanced economies that have been the stronghold of trade union power," says the report.
LABOUR  Vic Thorpe says his concern is to preserve internal unity

Icem general secretary to step down

Johannesburg – Vic Thorpe, the general secretary of the 20 million-strong International Chemical Energy Mining and General Workers Union (Icem), yesterday said he was stepping down from the position in the interest of preserving unity within the international labour federation.

Thorpe has held the position for four years, since the founding congress in Washington DC.

"In answer to others who have chastised me for stepping down at a moment of maximum danger for the progressive voice of change, I want to say that I entered the movement to strengthen its cause and I step down now because I feel that our greatest need is for unity.

"In taking that decision, I am strengthened by knowing the quality and commitment of the person who will take up this office," Thorpe said.

Thorpe said he had known Fred Haggs, the sole candidate for the position of general secretary of Icem, for many years.

"We come from the same political tradition and share the same gut feelings about many challenges that face the working class and its organisation of struggle," Thorpe said.

"Fred's advantage is that he is one of the finest industrial negotiators to be produced by the British tradition, and is respected not only by our members but also by many of the global employers with whom we will increasingly have to negotiate."

Thorpe felt Icem was the most progressive voice of labour at the global level.

"It is a special comfort to know that this tradition will not be lost with Fred, but will gain in strength from his courage and experience. You can be confident that the future of this international will be safe in his hands."

Hans Berger, the president of Icem, said the international labour federation had decided to hold its second congress in South Africa to "express our feeling of oneness with a free and democratic South Africa."

Berger said "Economic globalisation need not necessarily lead to social decline and chaos. As a means of avoiding that, Icem needs to secure global agreements with and build a network of its affiliates working within multinational companies."

Berger emphasised the need for trade unions to begin to influence the policies of Bretton Woods institutions like the International Monetary Fund.

Bill Jordan of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions challenged international unions to chart a path towards achievable reform that would also deliver a world-class level of co-operation and coordination throughout the international labour movement.

Norman Jennings of the International Labour Organisation said it would be nice if South Africa was soon found on the list of countries that had ratified the organisation's convention 176 on health and safety in the mines.
Num boss Motlatsi fails in bid to head international union

By SIMBA MAKUNIKE and Sopo

NATIONAL Union of Mineworkers president James Motlatsi this week lost his bid to become president of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), losing to Australia's John Maltland.

Ian Graham, ICEM information officer, declined to comment on the number of votes cast for Motlatsi, saying Maltland's victory was "decisive".

Motlatsi later contested and won the union's vice-presidency. He will be one of the union's 16 vice-presidents.

The ICEM congress, which was held in Durban, elected Fred Higgs, a Briton, as general secretary.

The union represents 20 million workers worldwide.
Union to pay R5m after suit

JOHANNESBURG The SA Municipal Workers’ Union (Sawawa) has been ordered by the Springs Magistrate’s Court to pay members a total of R5m to 843 of its members who were dismissed in 1992 after embarking on an illegal strike called by the union.

Labour lawyer Gavin Brown said the judgment meant unions would carefully look at advice they gave to members. He said the appeal would cost the union a lot of money and that unions could be held responsible by members for bad advice. Unions should be very careful about advice in the course of disputes and strikes. They must ensure all decisions regarding strikes and disputes are taken democratically,” he said.

The workers instituted a lawsuit after being sacked for embarking on an illegal strike. They sued the union for loss of benefits and wages. They also claimed that they were wrongly advised by their union.

Sawawa’s Gauteng provincial spokesperson, Andrew Nikonyane, said the union would appeal against the decision. He said the judgment had serious implications for the union. “We are going to instruct our lawyers to set up a enquiry for appeal. The matter will be in an appeal. We have the funds, but we want to interact with our lawyers. We will have to look at our budget. We can pay the R5m tomorrow or next month,” he said.

Nikonyane said Sawawa was also instrumental in getting the workers’ jobs back. Some were re-instated as new employees but had lost their benefits. They also accepted the union’s decision and handed them over to an arbitrator in 1992. The strike happened after several shop stewards were dismissed by the Springs City Council, and subsequently led to the striking workers’ dismissal.

The Wolvekrans High Court ruled in 1993 that the strike was illegal after the union had launched an appeal for the reinstatement of the workers.

Union told to pay R5m to sacked members

Kholani Kudzu

THE SA Municipal Workers’ Union (Sawawa) has been ordered by the Springs Magistrate’s Court to pay members a total of R5m to 843 of its members who were dismissed in 1992 after embarking on an illegal strike called by the union.

Labour experts warned after yesterday’s judgment that it could set a dangerous precedent.

A total of 843 Springs council employees were dismissed in 1992 after a wildcat strike over the sacking of four shop stewards. Most of them lost their long-term benefits.

The union took the matter to the Supreme Court, but the case was thrown out because the workers had embarked on an illegal strike. However, Sawawa managed to negotiate with the council to re-engage the workers.

The employees who remained members of the union, sued Sawawa for less of money. They won their case yesterday in what is regarded as a landmark judgment.

Sawawa’s spokesperson Andrew Nikonyane said the union would appeal against the decision. Lawyers for the union. sawawa's attorney, Anton Beekem, said he did not understand how the magistrate had found against the union because the strike was spontaneous. Magistrate Sarah du Plessis said trade unions had a legal duty to protect members against job losses.

"The duty of the unions or Sawawa is job security in these circumstances, the union could have prevented people losing their jobs. People relied on their unions to give guidance.

The Springs council had agreed to take the four shop stewards’ dismissal to arbitration. The council failed to do this. The union also said that if employees were not at work then they would be dismissed.

Du Plessis said many workers testified that they would have refused to work if they were told to do so by the union.

The judge allowed the union to appeal to the Supreme Court on the grounds that the union had not had time to properly consider the matter.

The union, however, dismissed this but it “(the judgement) encourages them to act in the best interests of their members,” said the magistrate.

Labour consultant Pat Stone said the judgement could create “total chaos” in the labour relations system.

The principle of union members striking against the union is illegal action, failed to sort out the problem but for them to sort it out, he said.

It was wrong for workers to take legal action against their union if things did not go their way. Stone said.
Unions in difficult position over ruling

TRADE unions in SA have been put in a difficult position by a Springbok's Court decision in favour of SA Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) members who sued the union for more than R1 000 in wages they lost during an illegal strike.

Millions of South Africans lost their jobs in the 1980s due to illegal strikes which were mainly part of the liberation struggle against the apartheid regime.

What would happen if all those people now sued the unions for loss of income?

The truth is that they remain destitute and are living in despair because of unemployment. Some might see this judgment as opening the way for them to lodge their cases with the courts.

Unions do not have millions of rand in their coffers. In fact, they rely on monthly subscriptions from members. Should Samwu fail in its appeal, the judgment could open a flood of legal action against trade unions. This could kill the trade union movement, which has a proud record in SA.

At the same time, unions will have to weigh the perception that they are in real cases, not acting in the best interests of their members.

A total of 532 Springs council employees were dismissed in 1993 after a violent strike over the sacking of four shop stewards. Most of them lost their long-term benefits.

The union took the matter to the High Court, but the case was dropped because the workers had embarked on an illegal strike. However, Samwu managed to negotiate with the council to reach an agreement.

The employees who remained members of the union and Samwu for loss of income. They won their case on Tuesday.

Samwu is going to appeal against the judgment and costs for the plaintiff, Wenzel Rossouw, said the appeal would be opposed.

Magistrate Samue du Plessis ruled that trade unions had a legal duty to protect members against job losses. Many people joined trade unions with the sole purpose of protecting their jobs.

She said Samwu's duty, or that of any union, was to help give its members job security. She argued that Samwu could have prevented people losing their jobs by advising them that they were involved in an illegal strike and could face dismissal.

Samwu's legal secretary, Fahi Ntombela, said yesterday that the union had advised members that the strike was illegal and they could lose their jobs. She added that the union's organisation in the East Rand at the time was not as strong as it is now.

Workers, however, contended with the strike because they wanted to maintain the status quo. They contended that further litigation could prevent them from helping to do this, Lestino said.

Labour relations commission Andrew Levy said the magistrate had found that this was not the case and that the union should not have advised its members to go on strike.

"It is a very important decision. It might end up in the Constitutional Court. It is not a bad thing for unions to be held liable for going on strike, because everyone else is," he said.

He said the union had advised its members that the strike was illegal and they could lose their jobs.

He said most of the people who were dismissed by the council were different and relied on the unions for the protection of their rights and for assistance.

Lestino said people should understand how the union operated because there was no difference between unions and their members.

"The unions is the workers'Members do not take instructions, but they decide that is the tradition of trade unions in this country," he said.

Labour commissioner Pat Stoker said the decision could create "total chaos" in the labour relations system.

"The principle of unions members in the union against illegal action failed to sort (a problem) out for them in, in my view, a very dangerous precedent," she said.

Comment: Page 15