



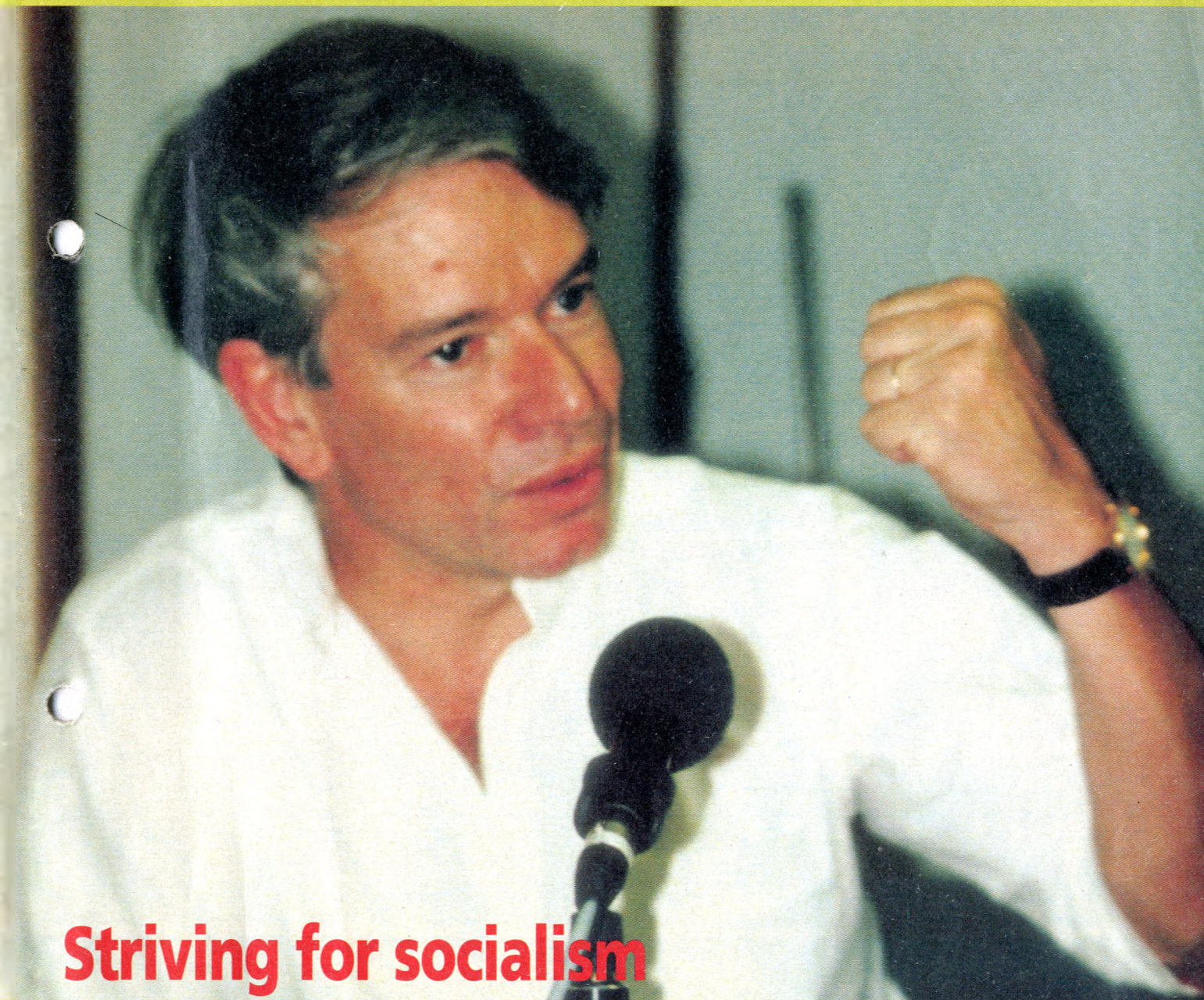
NEHAWU

Worker

VOLUME 5 NO.1

MARCH 1997

Magazine of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union



Striving for socialism

Nehawu CEC chart a way forward
Should criminals be unionised?
Public sector merger is off

CONTENTS

March 1997



An interview with Jeremy Cronin on the striving for Socialism ... Page 6



The struggle for narrowing the wage gap in companies continues ... Page 17



Nehawu marching for the transformation of private health ... Page 20



The Nehawu brigadeers in Cuba ... Page 42

Highlights Corner	2
Letters to the editor	3
Interview	6
SACP Deputy General Secretary, Jeremy Cronin	
Nehawu CEC charts the way forward	12
Public sector merger	13
Narrowing the wage gap	15
Private health strikes	16
Gauteng input on public health restructuring	21
Update on the nursing transformation	22
Strategies for organising nurses	23
Makgane visits the North	25
The public sector and the transition	27
Members' forum	30
Alienation – alien nation	30
Nomvuyo Ngwaxaxa	
The December 1 fallacy	31
Puddy February	
Unions in the new era	33
Should criminals be unionised?	34
Economic liberalisation	36
Why trade unions should invest	37
International update	39
The unfinished story	40
Ratsholo Makhetha visits Cuba	
Seen at a Nehawu meeting	44
Thesis of the 17th congress of the CTC	47
Book review	51
Poetry corner	52
Tribute to Leepile "Leps" Mohoje	53

EDITORIAL BOARD

THE EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

Nehawu National

Office Bearers

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Neal Bob Marley Thobejane,
Nehawu general secretary

ADDRESS

8th Floor

North State Building

Cnr. Kruis & Market Str.

Johannesburg

PO Box 10812

Johannesburg 2000

TEL: (011) 337-8516/7/8/9

FAX: (011) 337-9018

E-MAIL:

nehawu@wn.apc.org

INTERNET:

<http://www.gnc.org.29/Cosatu>

NEHAWU REGIONAL CONTACT NUMBERS

Gauteng

Phone (011) 337-9203/4

Fax (011) 337-9203/4

Mpumalanga

Phone (0132) 43-5159

Fax (0132) 43-2352

Northern Province

Phone (0152) 291-1418

Fax (0152) 291-1210

Free State

Phone (051) 448-0075

Fax (051) 448-8933

Eastern Cape

Phone (0431) 43-2876

Fax (0431) 43-8623

Western Cape

Phone (021) 244-580/1

Fax (021) 244-667

Northern Cape

Phone (0531) 816-486

Fax (0531) 814-406 or 33598

North West

Phone (0140) 814-585

Fax (0140) 813-942

KwaZulu/Natal

Phone (031) 368-3196

Fax (031) 368-3618

Editorial Comment

A number of members started writing articles, we are particularly excited by this development. If comrades start also responding to debates and stating their comments, there will be a connection between editions. We need to however appeal that comrades must use simple and accessible language – no dictionary. We are starting to see articles in other languages, and we are not going to translate in order to encourage you to learn them.

The South African Communist Party

As we promised, we held an interview with the Party's Jeremy. A small critique of our own conclusions is:

The SACP has, and still fail to rise to expectations of what the Party of Hani and Slovo set. The leadership by the Party is not felt anymore, i.e. even located within the context of the current situation.

We did confirm that Cde Jeremy was silenced, although the comrade indicated that the matter was taken up with the ANC and resolved. The point is: if the ANC can threaten in whatever way, a key leader of another Alliance partner – then our democratic revolution is in a serious danger.

Cde Jeremy is silenced, Cde Charles is noticeably quiet (he silenced himself to survive), Oom Ray is strategically deployed to Uganda. The Party is gradually becoming another department of the ANC. It is well good for the Party to say, we have members in the Cabinet, MECs who hold office bearer positions, etc. But the question which remains is: what Party program are those comrades following, if they are accountable to the ANC first – how can they operate differently from the mainstream (which is dictated upon).

The two caps debate need to be understood differently, an MEC who is a provincial secretary of the Party – can never be critical of the ANC and governance, without being silenced of conveniently using his/her Party position conveniently.

We appeal to our members who are Party activists, to ensure that we dedicate our time and effort towards building the Party, signing the debit order and building the structures.

Alliance and Transformation

The Nehawu CEC in December adopted a discussion document called Alliance & Leadership, and the paper have consolidated Nehawu's response to the Cosatu, ANC, & SACP discussion documents.

"The key challenge facing the democratic movement today is how are we going to ensure a thorough – going process of social transformation in our country in a manner that benefits the majority of our people who were oppressed"

"The individual struggle for self-enrichment has begun to take hold and replacing our common vision for collective advancement".

The democratic nature of our Alliance organisation, means that always you will have individuals who want to direct the movement into their own direction – we have always ensured that our organisation remains democratic and accountable, that such fears and threats are dealt with.

"We have always been mindful that the post 1994 period is going to sharpen the class contradictions in our society and within the broad democratic movement. Therefore some of the tendencies emerging within the ANC were to be expected. Our historical role is to ensure that the character of the ANC remains mass based and biased towards the working class. This must be seen as an arena of struggle. *The struggle for the heart and soul of the ANC has intensified*".

Organisation is not about individuals, the above reference to individual leadership highlight our weakness and failure to protect our leadership. The democratic forces in our country are turning organisations into individuals, a personality cult is becoming a good concept, and that is why you have a dictatorship existing in all organisations.

We will visit the ANC President and/or Secretary General for our next edition, so that they can clarify this dangerous trend.

*Let us not loose sight of our strategic priorities!
The ultimate role of any revolutionary, is to end democracy!*

– Cde Bob Marley

Cde Blanchard is free

As reported in our last edition, we are excited to indicate that the support and solidarity given was successful. Cde Blanchard Yapo Achi, General Secretary of SYNCMP – CI of Cote – D'Ivoire is free.

Cde Blanchard was released by the court in October 1996, with all other arrested colleagues, pending judgment on the 20th January 1997. The January date was shifted to the 17th February, and the courts continue to postpone their decision further and further.

Long Live International Solidarity!

Members Death Benefit

On the first of January 1997, the R3000-00 death benefits started operating. The following are the provincial updates for the period 1 January – 28 February 1997:

Free State	11
North West	8
Eastern Cape	11
Western Cape	1
Kwazulu Natal	6
Northern Province	14
Mpumalanga	16
Gauteng	11
Northern Cape	4

The above statistics indicate that NEHAWU have lost 82 members in a period of two months, we paid out R246 000.00 towards such.

Cdes, it was shocking to discover that we lose so many members, 82 in two months is 41 in a month and 1,4 members a day. A union with 158 000 members lose a member because of death a day, every 24 hours?

We will publish these statistics in all our editions.

To the families of all those comrades who passed away, to our institutions, branches and provinces – we send our condolences.

Highlights Corner

The Rape Crisis

In South Africa today, a woman is raped every 34 seconds.

Well, much has been reported on this matter. If the judicial system get restructured, the police and communities unite against this trend – we will be able to reverse the statistics. But if all current initiatives and trends fail – all women in South Africa would have been raped within fifteen (15) years.

Now, the rape crisis is not a women's problem, it affects literally everybody. The main appeal here is, let us regard rape with seriousness, let us not make jokes about rape. One shop stewards who is an office bearer in the Free State, said during and informal discussion in the office that the women who got raped asked for it. Well, comrades said he was just joking – these kind of jokes are sexist, are reactionary and cannot be tolerated by our organisation, and we must ensure that society condemns such.

In Mpumalanga a man raped a goat four months ago, and two months ago another man raped a chicken. Both these cases were reported on national media, worse, the chicken man admitted to the police that he had to take out

lust/pain.

It is a threatening development – we must all help to stop rape.

Alliance and Leadership

The democratic breakthrough came with confusion for the democratic forces, governance has developed democratic dictatorship within organisation – and the kind of leadership which will emerge in the COSATU September Congress, ANC December Conference and SACP next April's 10th Anniversary Congress – will all determine the way forward, not only the leadership but resolutions with quality of discussions.

The initial NEHAWU national structures have resolved that as COSATU, we must deploy comrades into the ANC and SACP leadership, we must openly caucus who we prefer and do ground work to ensure their election.

NEHAWU will be speaking to the NUM before their congress about Cde Kgalema Mothlanthe, we will be speaking to Cde CR to check the permanency of his strategic deployment. We have also decided to deploy Cde Fikile Majola into the SACP, Cde Jeremiah Sithole into the ANC NEC. NEHAWU will avail its president, Cde Vusi Nhlapo for one of the COSATU presidency positions. The other positions, including ANC presidency will be finalised by our structures in April – so that we can start open caucusing early.

Appointments

Cde Joseph Lekola has been appointed as our new Media Officer. All media engagements are to be undertaken by the comrade, including this magazine.

Cde David Makhura is our new Education Secretary, the comrade will introduce the education corner from our next edition. We look forward to this combination of an academic and a politician.

Lastly, Cde Cyril Langbooi has been appointed the Public Health Sector Secretary. Comrades from this sector are without a national chairperson, Cdes must prepare for their NSSSC.

Important for all workers

Thank you very much for the Nov/Dec 1996 Volume 4 Number 6 issue of *Nehawu Worker*. As a fully registered Nehawu member, I really enjoy reading our magazine. It is educative and full of important information for all our members. We wish you to keep it up and appreciate it a great deal.

– JM Lebelo
member from Northern Province

Managed Health Care – a response

Dear Khumbu

I am responding to an article written by you late last year in *Nehawu Worker* on the subject of Managed Health Care. Whilst we clearly respect your right to independent thought, the fact is that Nehawu and Medscheme are both stakeholders in the wider health care industry and could perhaps be communicating on issues beyond just collective bargaining.

In your article, I noticed a few factual errors and a few more philosophical differences which I would like to explore with you. Could I ask you to read the following comments, possibly prior to an informal meeting, to explore the several common areas of agreement which we share.

Firstly, the factual matters I would disagree with:

United Healthcare has not teamed up with Sanlam, but only Southern Life and Anglo American. Sanlam is a major competitor of theirs (and ours) and so is SA Drug-gists, which has now purchased NMA.

Managed Health Care is NOT a "health insurance scheme," but a range of interventions in the health care process which are designed to reduce costs. Managed Care can therefore be applied in different ways to any existing medical aid or health insurance scheme.

You state that "a number of

Letters to the editor



medical aids within Medscheme will merge. Some of these are not organised and might erode our representivity." It is important to understand that the medical aids we administer are similar to provident funds, in that they do not employ anyone. Only Medscheme employs the staff, and when medical aid schemes merge (to create a larger and more secure risk pool) it has no direct effect on employment at all, nor on your representivity in our company.

In your concluding paragraph, you refer to "medical aid members who form only 3% of our population." If you are referring to the country's population, approximately 20% of SA's population is covered by medical aid schemes. Admittedly this is not enough but it represents close to 50% of those citizens employed in the formal sector.

May I now take the liberty of discussing Managed Health Care and its role in our health system:

Your articles seems to equate Managed Care with capitalism and profit maximisation, ignoring the fact that managed care in various forms has been practiced in the public sector for some time. For example, "cheaper medicines" and "busy doctors" are undoubtedly factors of our public hospitals, far more so than in the private sector.

Whilst managed care cannot claim to be the only means to affordable health care, the NHIS Report (which you appear to support) is in favour of several managed care initiatives, such as the cost effective use of generic medicines in line with the government's Essential Drugs List Policy.

Most governments agree that an

effective health system needs both strong private and public health sectors. We need both regulation (to protect the old, poor and sick) and deregulation (to unbundle monopolies). This has been recognised by the NHIS Report and is clearly part of government thinking. History shows that neither the public nor private sectors can do it alone in achieving the three objectives of access, affordability and quality.

Nevertheless, I believe that there are many areas in which we are in agreement. Most of the players in health care would support the key principles of the NHI proposals you refer to. One of the members of the NHIS Committee (under Olive Shisana and Johnny Broomberg) is now the managing director of our Managed Care Division. And Medscheme is certainly in favour of cross-subsidy and other socially responsible principles proposed in the NHIS.

At the same time, we support the core package proposal of the NHIS which will effectively double the number of people covered in the private sector. Within Medscheme, we see great opportunities for synergy with the state and for job opportunities for staff – something which we hope you will support.

I offer you the opportunity to engage with us further in discussing both Managed Health Care issues and broader health care issues. There is not need for absolute consensus between us but there are opportunities which could be mutually beneficial. We would be happy to arrange a few hours for you (and perhaps a few others within Nehawu's executive) to meet with some of our Managed Care people.

Disagree with them afterwards if it is still your conviction, but at least do so on a informed basis, having engaged them on these important issues.

Thank you for taking time to read my comments. I trust that they have contributed in some way to a broader understanding of the complexities of the health care debate.

– GM Taylor, Director: Human Resources and Public Affairs, Medscheme

Successful comrades!

Here they are, the comrades who were negotiating with LifeCare! These comrades (in the photograph) and Lifecare employees together brought Lifecare to its knees and made Lifecare respect the workers' rights. They started by organizing a national march on 4 December 1996 to Lifecare Head Office. After the march, they brought all Lifecare hospitals to a standstill, in a national strike.

What a festive strike! Since this company was formed 40 years back, they had never experienced what happened in December. It was for the first time that a national strike took place in their hospitals. After all, we think that they have learned the hard way. They will now respect Nehawu and its members.

— Nico Chauke,
full-time shop steward —Gauteng



From left they are: Mpho Chiloane – N. Province; Priscilla Mbanda – W. Cape; Lorraine Nophondo – E. Cape; Tshwana Majoro – Free State; Winston Mabaso – Mpumalanga; Doris Makgamathe – Gauteng (also national co-ordinator); Busisiwe Phosa – KZN. Seated is full-time shop steward Nico Chauke – Gauteng.

To all Nehawu structures: Indemnity Case of Thoko Magcai vs Clinic Holdings (CHL)

Comrades, this is a follow up to my report dated 23 January 1997 (indemnity case). Through a phone call from the attorneys on Friday 24 January 1997, the final decision of the office bearers was conveyed to me. A written document was also read to me over the phone.

I was expected to respond that very minute. I have already explained in a previous document that both offers were neither relevant nor favourable to myself. The issue of paying the court expenditure on my own should the case continue I do not find acceptable. I also find it mind boggling. It

reminds me precisely of the philosophical writings of George Orwell in his book "Animal Farm."

My proposals were never supported and backed up. Instead, I was pushed into a corner to accept CHL's ridiculous offers.

After a lot of wrangling, I had no choice but to take the six months package with a good reference so as to venture forth into other avenues in the job market after completion of my studies. The final agreement was reached on 31 January 1997. But to date, I have still not received the money as promised, within two days.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who made a positive and constructive contribution towards making this case a success. It was the first of its kind, very strenuous to solve but educational, eye opening and fulfilling. I am not fully content with the proceedings, as I was never give a

chance to express my side of the story as far as the indemnity issue was concerned.

I would also like to extend my sincerest gratitude towards the following comrades for their outstanding support and contribution in making this case a successful event:

Cde Phillip Dexter, Cde Sisa Njikelana, Cde Selby Mbatha (President's Office) and Cde Bheki Mkhize (former Nehawu President), all the comrades working at the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) library, Cdes Shirley Miller and David of Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) library.

I would be failing dismally if I forgot to thank my children for their understanding, patience and tolerance they displayed throughout my two year ordeal.

Lest we forget, allow me to salute the fallen heroes, Cdes Victoria Mazibuko (Senior Professio-

nal Nurse, Natalspruit Hospital), Vuyani Mabaxa and others. "Your blood was not shed in vain. May your dear souls rest in peace".

Cde Vuyani in his last prophetic poem "Just in case I die," mentioned that he will participate now and beyond as an ancestor. He also mentioned that amongst us there are those that will survive forever to be legends. History is both an indictment and a judge.

Cde Victoria was a fearless, formidable stalwart. She displayed her unique resilience during the "Kangaroo" court case of the South African Nursing Council (SANC) vs Cde Sheila Brackenshaw-Ntshupo, during those dreadful years. In my imagination, I was under the illusion that by now the Natalspruit Hospital would long ago have been named the Victoria Mazibuko Hospital. Remember, lollipops are not forever, and too many of them leave a bitter aftertaste in the mouth. My membership of the organisation continues. The buck stops here!

– Thokozile Magcai

Letter of complaint

As a member of the union, my problems at work place are as follows:

The increment: I've received a letter of rationalisation, which means I'm without a supervisor. It is stated in the Nov/Dec Nehawu Worker that increments and promotions are only going to be for those with supervisors. I want to know whether at long last I am going to get the increment, or what?

Hidden information: I would like to know whether it is right or wrong when somebody's head hides away information from him or her? Mr HM Toerien, Assistant Director of Comm-Activation was given my promotion letter to give to me but even today I don't know what happened to the letter.

– MM Mthombeni

Cde Johannes Donson
Asstraat 30
Bridgeton
Oudtshoorn
6620
16 February 1996

The Editorial Collective
Nehawu Worker
PO Box 10812
JOHANNESBURG
2000

Geagte Cde

Ek het die Nehawu Worker Nov/Dec 1996 gelees en besluit, omdat ek desperaat is aan u te skryf. Ek sien op 'bl 2 Highlights Corner' dat alle Nehawu lede 'n begrafnis dekking het vanaf January 1997. Nou vra ek die vraag, hoekom weet ons as shop stewards dit nie, en dit word ook nie aan ons bekend gemaak nie. Tans is ek 'n shop steward by SANDF Infanterie Skool, Oudtshoorn waar daar 'n berg van probleme is. Ek sukkel dat die unie moet betrokke word en sy rol speel, maar ek maak nie hond of haar af nie. Dit is ook een van die redes hoekom ek gebruik maak van die geleentheid om aan u te skryf, miskien is daar a manier hoe u kan help. Die voorsitter, Wilfred Alcock verwys my eerder verder weg inplaas daarvan om te kyk na die probleme.

Tans is hier al vier lede oorlede, en telke maal vra die lede vrae soos die, "help die unie nie sy lede geldelik nie." Elke maal moet ek met 'n skaam gesig nee sê. Dit is ook nie vir my nodig om sulke inligting uit te ruik of snuffel nie, want hier is vier office bearers wat ook 'n probleem is. Hulle is juis hier om die probleme aan te spreek maar niks gebeur nie, en hulle kom ook nie by die werksplekke uit nie.

Hierdie tydskrif, Nehawu Worker, moet ons inteken daarvoor of hoe, want ons kry van dit as een van die Cdes miskien Kaap toe gaan dan bring hy/sy 'n paar saam om tussen die lede te versprei. So gaan dit ook met die T-hemde, caps, en sweetpakke. Die lede vra vrae oor die goed, want hulle sien die ander lede dra dit. Ek het al navrae gedoen by die Kaap maar niemand gee vir my 'n positiewe antwoord nie.

Ek het al 'n brief en 'n fax gestuur na hoofkantoor toe maar geen verandering het nog plaas gevind nie, en die gevolg gaan wees dat lede vertroue in die unie gaan verloor en bedank. Ek sal dit waardeur dat as u my meer inligting sal kan stuur rondom die begrafnis dekking, sodat indien 'n lid sterf ek sal weet wat om te doen. Die shop steward council van die SANDF sit in die Kaap. Al die shop stewards is van die Kaap. Dis net ek wat van Suid Kaap is. As ek moet Kaap toe om die council by te woon; is daar glo nie geld nie. Kan u dit glo, en dis vergaderings wat ek moet bywoon.

Groete

J. Donson.

Striving for socialism

We have come through more than two and a half years of the democratic government. What are your impressions of your performance during this time?

We should not underestimate the real achievements that are being made. There are forces in our society trying to undermine the democratic revolution. Part of their agenda is to continuously sow demoralisation, pessimism and even a racial sense that black people can't really govern the country. We must not fall into an agenda of despair and demoralisation. That agenda is being promoted all the time in the commercial media. These forces are very active and effective in that area. But that does not mean to say that because there is such an agenda that we should fail to look at ourselves critically. We are progressing, yes, absolutely. We have consolidated democratic governance at three levels of our country. At the local government level things are often chaotic. I think your union would know better than the SACP, perhaps. There's a lot to be done there. But we have now been through two rounds of major elections. We have got one of the most progressive constitutions in the world... it is a socialist-friendly constitution in many respects. It proclaims that things like housing, water and other basic social needs are fundamental human rights. And if that is not socialism then I would like to hear when our capitalism proposes to deliver those things regardless of affordability. Whatever the difficulties and problems within our broad movement, the opposing political forces are in chaos, whether one is talking about the National Party, Inkatha or the ultra right. That too is an achievement of this last period – that the opponents of the ANC can only run negative campaigns. They have no

SACP Deputy General Secretary, Jeremy Cronin reflects in Nehawu Worker on a range of issues, amongst them "two caps", the public sector and a socialist South Africa. An interview by Nehawu General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary

vision of where to go. It is our victory that forced them into that state of strategic and organisational confusion. I think we all knew that the hard area was going to be economic transformation. Winning an election, as we did in April 1994, gives you the right, but not necessarily the powers and capacity, to rule. One of the greatest obstructions to ongoing transformation is the public sector. Whether it is the security forces, the judiciary, parastatals or municipalities, the structures we have inherited are very often bloated, corrupt, inefficient, the wrong people in the wrong place. This is a huge struggle to be waged and one which we underestimated. Another great obstruction to transformation is that although our opponents are politically disoriented, forces opposed to the ANC alliance remain very powerful in the economy and huge transformation battles remain to be done there. But even on the economic front, we have had some gains.

There have been serious problems in the functioning of the alliance in driving the transformation agenda. Take, for example, the announcement around the macro-economic strategy, or the privatisation announcement in December of 1995. What is your assessment of the weakness within the alliance?

I think all of the alliance partners are asking that question, including

the ANC. I am speaking now for the SACP, but I have just come from an ANC NEC lekgotla. There is a serious concern about the functioning of the alliance from all three alliance partners as well as serious commitment on the other hand to the alliance. The core of the problem probably lies within the ANC itself, and the ANC is saying this of itself. As a political organisation it has been run down very seriously since April 1994. When we complain about the alliance, we're often talking as Cosatu or as the Party about government, and not about the ANC. If you look at...let's say GEAR. As an official in the SACP, I was consulted very late. But I was consulted a week before it was announced publicly by the relevant ministers, along with Cosatu officials. We complained that it was far too late. But as an ANC/NEC member, I had never heard of GEAR until long after. That reflects the weakness of the ANC itself. I think, therefore as alliance partners of the ANC, it is hard to find that ANC with whom you can interact, whether it is on a national level, provincial level or the very local level. I am not saying that our own SACP structures are always that strong, they are not necessarily. But perhaps the most profound weakness has been the organisational capacity of the ANC. I think there is a commitment now to ensuring that there is much fairer consultation within the ANC first and foremost. The most serious problem with



GEAR is that it was basically driven by a small group of technocrats and then put on the table as non-negotiable. We have made progress on that front, I think, many things are under discussion now.

You're saying we often make the mistake, when we talk consultation as the party or as Cosatu, that we're often talking of government and not the ANC. What is the difference in practice?

That is the problem, there hasn't been a big difference. But the ANC as a political organisation must assert its strategic leadership of the process. In other words, obviously an ANC minister must be technically competent and must rely on a ministry to elaborate policy and so forth. We as political formations or

as a trade union movement don't necessarily have the capacity to develop a macro-economic policy clearly. That is a government function. But unless there is a strategic political oversight over something like that, you will end up by having policies that are developed by technocrats, often joined from the World Bank or the IMF. You must draw on whatever expertise you can find, but they must not be in the driving seats. The transformation agenda must be set politically. It is not the ministries that are in power, it is the ANC with its political vision and its alliance and its Reconstruction and Development Programme. That's the mandate it has.

There's been a reference to a political centre being established. Do you know what

happened to it?

We are making progress in that respect. We are not necessarily using the word "political centre" as such. We need to strengthen the ANC. Individual ANC ministers are not answerable in the first instance to their ministry but to the ANC's national executive committee and the ANC's conference. Their policies and so on must be within this framework. So that means rebuilding the ANC's capacity to act as a political centre. The ANC itself is saying this itself from its *lekgotla*, it needs to work very closely, in constant consultation at all levels with its alliance partners and with the broader MDM. There's not one unique political centre. What we are talking about is the capacity to provide political leadership in all ways at all levels. It is not a theoretical

thing, it is developing that organisational capacity. You might be a local councilor, in the intelligence services, or in the army or police. If you are an ANC member, you still remain an ANC cadre and you have an answerability to that. You are a cadre in the transformation effort. It is also trying to re-assert, among others, that sense of political purpose, political centre and the common vision.

There is an outcry about the conduct or understanding of people who have been elected into government as members of parliament and so on, both at the provincial and at the national level. Even the new Constitution is structured to give powers to individuals.

Clearly government has to govern. That requires making decisions and implementing them. You can't necessarily wait. I mean, as the SACP or Cosatu, we can't tell government that, you can't reshuffle the Cabinet until we have had a thorough going discussion throughout the alliance. Clearly you have to invest powers and authority and capacity in a premier or in a president. I think that is correct. We may or may not like or agree with certain decisions made but we need to accept the necessity of leadership. But we can even actually see around us the reality in many cases of patterns of patronage developing, of comrades saying "well, we're not going to speak out on this matter because I am going to lose my job". That is why we need to counter-balance the danger. The main way we can do it is by continuously consolidating our organisa-



tions. And being answerable. We need loyalty, but also comrades who are prepared to speak up, and speak up critically where they feel it is important to do so. We have to uphold democracy by having regular conferences, with the possibility of re-electing new officials and so on. The stakes are higher now and so are the rewards. If Cosatu, for example, is strong and effective, then there is no way that a president of our country is going to appoint a labour minister without some kind of consultation with Cosatu. Cosatu won't have a veto right but if we are strong in our own right then the president's prerogatives will be exercised within that framework. If we are weak then we will be by-passed.

According to media reports at one point it was suggested that the President did not agree with you on a particular thing because you were using your SACP cap conveniently. How can people be enabled to speak out

on certain things?

I don't want to comment specifically on my individual case. We as the Party and ANC have discussed that matter through and we have resolved it to our mutual satisfaction. Clearly many people in our country occupy a variety of positions. Some comrades are ministers but also members of the National Working



Committee of the ANC. Comrades are Cosatu shop stewards but also chairpersons of ANC branches or SACP branches and so on. So the question of many caps, or two caps, presents itself at all levels throughout our organisations. It is basically a strength of our movement that there is an important overlap in membership and in leadership between organisations and between leadership positions. At all times people, for instance, who might be leaders in two organisations, need to accurately and fearlessly represent a mandated position of their formations. If there is a

conflict it is seldom strategic because our alliance is based on a common strategic vision. But there are instances, and have been in the recent past, where there are differences of outlook between the SACP and Cosatu on certain issues. In so far as someone like myself speaks for the SACP, I must do so fearlessly and I must represent accurately the decisions and mandate to the best of my ability for the SACP. When I speak or act as an ANC/NEC member, then I must follow in a loyal way the majority decisions made in that organisation.

Many comrades are beginning to argue that the alliance must at least be main-



tained until 1999. Do you think 1999 has got any relevancy to the maintenance of the alliance or to the alliance itself?

I think the alliance must continue to 1999. But I believe it must continue beyond that too. If you think about

1999, you're starting to make the alliance a narrow electoral reality, and I think that the alliance is and must be something much more profound than just something that is convenient for elections. Elections are very important. But the alliance represents the fact that in South Africa the huge majority of our people were and remain the historic victims of a terrible system of racial oppression. We have got a huge task on our hands to overcome that terrible legacy of centuries of colonial oppression and decades of a special kind of colonial oppression. We have got to rebuild our nation and we have got to unite the maximum number of forces behind us for the basic national democratic tasks that lie ahead of us. A breaking apart of the alliance would be a moment of defeat for the progressive project, not an advance for it. If it breaks we will have to live with the realities. But we won't give up on our commitment to socialism.

If you see the alliance going beyond 1999, at what stage do you think it would have served this purpose in terms of the two stage theory?

I think as the SACP, one of the things that we've been very busy with in the last four, five, six years is to look at where we are in South Africa. And also to try to learn lessons from the serious crisis that hit the international communist movements from between 1989 and 1991. We are actively revisiting this idea of two stageism. What was correct about the two stage thesis was that it pointed socialists in South Africa to the National Liberation Struggle.

But it tended to make us postpone serious thinking about socialism. We said the struggle is the National Liberation Struggle, is Umkhonto We Sizwe, is the Freedom Charter, is the mass uprisings, the UDF. All of that was right. And then we said we will come to socialism somewhere at some future

date. We are now thinking seriously about what we mean by socialism in South Africa. Since our last congress (9th) as the party we have advanced a new slogan which I think marks a significant strategic shift in the party. Our slogan is **Socialism is the future**. We have always said that but we are now saying **Build it now**. I think that is starting to move away from our mechanical two stageism. We are not saying we are about to implement a full blown socialism tomorrow in South Africa but we are saying that we can't postpone the question of socialism for some second stage. When the Minister of Health says that health is a fundamental right and should be freely available to every South African, that is not capitalism. We say that is an element of socialism. You are taking health care out of the market and making it a basic human right. We must claim that as socialists, not full blown socialism, we don't have a socialist health dispensation yet, but we have elements of socialism which we are starting to develop. The workplace forums begin to develop elements of socialism. It is a much more dialectical approach to the connection between the National Democratic Struggle and the socialist struggle that we are trying to advance now.

On the economic front, would you see the black empowerment initiatives, whether in the form of the Johnnic or some of the bits in the JCI, as part of the agenda to create building blocks for socialism?

The possibilities exist, but there are other agendas at work as well. Clearly one of the vulnerabilities of capital in our country, private capital, is that it is very white and it is very male and that makes it vulnerable ideologically. So their vision of black economic empowerment is to create a new black elite so that capitalism itself is not challenged in our country. It is up to us as the party, as the ANC, as Cosatu to take up the agenda of black economic empowerment but with a working class perspective. That means many things. It means resisting this



narrow elite approach to black economic empowerment. Black economic empowerment means empowering workers. That means empowering unemployed rural black women and so forth. For example it means challenging the monopoly of ownership, as well. Black economic empowerment at the ownership level, also means many things. It doesn't just mean shuffling boardrooms. We are starting to see the development of co-operatives, some of the trade unions like NUM have got an interesting experience on that level. At Zebediela, workers now own a massive commercial farm. Those co-operatives are also elements of socialism as far as we are concerned. We need to learn from those experiences, popularise them, correct them where mistakes are being made.

When will the 10th party congress be held?

We have a congress every three

years and so it will be not later than April next year.

Isn't this strategically a problem because the Cosatu one is in September and the ANC one is in November? Wouldn't you have all the leadership gone by the time your congress comes?

No, no, we are convinced that we will retain a leadership. Party comrades are very devoted to the party. It is good that there are communists active in other organisations. The question is to find the right balance, and we think we did that very well in 1994. We had an adult discussion before April 1994, in the party leadership. And I think we did better than the ANC in respect of where we deployed ourselves.

How does the party see the public sector, and particularly the public sector unions in Cosatu in the process of the social transformation task?

It is a critical and a very difficult

role. The first key battle is the defense of the public sector when we talk about the socialist vision and the daily struggle against capitalism. To suggest that the public sector is always inefficient, always corrupt, always useless and that a large amount of it must be privatised is a problem. There is underfunding, it is poorly resourced – that's the public sector as well. So there is a daily struggle to be waged in the defense of the public sector first and foremost. But secondly, it is not just defensive, it is the restructuring and transformation of that public sector for which we must fight as well. We know that every single time people mention the word restructuring on the news or whatever, they see restructuring and privatisation as if they are the same thing. Part of our battle is to say, yes, restructuring of course, but restructuring doesn't mean privatisation. They are not the same thing. I think we know we have inherited a useless under-

funded, poorly-trained and racist public sector. A fragmented public sector from the apartheid past.... We clearly do have to look at right-sizing. But the left has got to confront that problem intelligently and strategically. If we fail to admit this to ourselves as the left, we just get completely defensive and we say:, we must defend the public sector. Then we will start defending the past rather than the future. So we are going to need to become more specific. It is up to the public sector unions themselves to elaborate on this. It requires a strategic courage on the part of progressive public sector unions to be in the vanguard of transformation, in intelligent and constructive ways. Not every job can be defended or should be defended. There are jobs which have no logic in a democratic country. That's difficult for trade unions, because the bread and butter of trade unions is the defence of jobs and so forth. I am convinced that the defence of the great majority of jobs is part of the struggle and needs to be waged. It involves redeployment, upgrading and training of public sector employees. Public sector unions have been at the front of proposing imaginative changes, real strategic transformation, intelligent structuring. If you are not in the forefront of that, others will set the agenda. That's very hard, it is a very hard challenge.

ne government intends to cut back a lot of public sector jobs. But if that is looked at within the context of the need for the massive job creation programme of the RDP and the promises which have been made to our people, what will the party's attitude be towards such an announcement of 100 000 jobs each year?

It can't be done like that. In other words what I was trying to say is we mustn't approach the question of public sector jobs driven by the logic of budget deficit reduction. If we start as accountants, and look at public sector employment as accountants and we allow that agenda to drive the process, then

we are in trouble. That doesn't mean to say that the left must be bad accountants and we can afford just to spend money when we don't have the money. The agenda must be democratisation, transformation of our country, the RDP. That must be the agenda. What's required in terms of budget deficit reduction and so on must be subordinate to that issue. So first and foremost we have to ask what kind of public sector we need, and what kind of transformation. What we are restructuring is necessary as a result of that. Then we need to look at the resources we've got, we always got

“
If at the end of this year there are another 2 000 clear socialists, active at the factory floor level, active in parliament, in government, then we've done something this year. So, those are our priorities for the year as the SACP
 ”

to do that, and how best we manage that process. But if we start the other way round – and these are some of our concerns around GEAR – as it tended to start the other way round. It was looking at the reality from the viewpoint of accountants and macro economists rather than as politicians committed to transformation. It could be that jobs will have to be cut here and there, but this has to be a coherent part of genuine democratisation, genuine job creation and real transformation. If we are convinced that

it's that, then it's one matter, but if we've got to cut jobs because of the budget problem, that's not good enough. We cannot allow that. That's what I mean by saying we've got to set the agenda, but we won't set the agenda if we are just defending jobs. We've got to set the agenda for transformation, creating an effective public sector and so on. In that context we must be prepared to discuss what it involves by way of many things.

Finally, from yourself, what are the key challenges for the party in your view between now and the 10th congress?

We think that the outlook in 1997 is different from 1991. I think all around the world, socialist forces, left forces are regrouping. In some countries like India and Italy. Communist parties and former communist parties, are now in government. Back in 1991 the South African party was being told that it was a dinosaur left over from the previous era, and that we were somehow unique in South Africa. That's not true and I think we need to be much more assertive as a party. We need to project that much more effectively into the South African political debate, socialism is not dead. It's had serious problems, we are not running away from that, but we are not isolated. Secondly, we need to work on the organisational capacity of the party. We are going to throw a lot of time and effort into political education and cadre development. We are not talking about millions of comrades. We are thinking of the 2 000, 3 000, 4 000 comrades who are all in critical places in the unions, shop stewards, local councils and so on. If at the end of this year there are another 2 000 clear socialists, active at the factory floor level, active in parliament, in government, then we've done something this year. So, those are our priorities for the year as the SACP.

What is your message for Nehawu members?

Socialism is the future. Build it now!

Nehawu CEC charts the way forward

Our Central Executive Committee (CEC) met from 11 to 13 December 1996 to take stock of our performance during 1996, and to define the challenges confronting the union in 1997. This was a historic CEC. It was the first since the implementation of the realignment programme and it brought in new branch leadership from the newly established sectoral branches.

At the opening of the CEC, Comrade President, Vusi Nhlapo had this to say:

"We are meeting at a very critical point in the history of our country. All our provinces are faced with different sets of challenges, politically and economically. The Western Cape Province is fighting a battle against the appointment of former National Intelligence Service (NIS) Director General, Neil Barnard. The Eastern Cape administration has reached a crisis point and the Northern Province is going through a very testing political period. These problems apply differently to all our provinces. The time has come to assess the present state of the nation. It is time to take stock of the state of the Alliance. Is it written in stone? Does it exist? Can it be adapted? These are the questions to be answered.

Whilst it is true that we have a government that is more sympathetic to workers, the unfortunate part is that there are many of our comrades in government who seem to have forgotten where they come from. Decisions are being taken without any form of consultation. The decision about the Gauteng Health Restructuring Plan is a case in point.

The unions face other challenges. There are presently talks that the Public Service will be reduced by 100 000 jobs every year. There is also talk that the government wants to renege on the April 1996 wage agreement because they now realise that they cannot afford it. We must look

Nehawu's CEC met in December last year. Assistant General Secretary Fikile Majola reports back from it



at the salary disparities in the public service. We need to examine the salary packages paid to the Directors and decide whether it is justifiable to pay Directors General the same salary irrespective of the sizes of departments they control. But we must also look at the wage disparities across all sectors of the economy. Many public servants already earn on average more than what other workers earn in other sectors. In the eyes of the public the rising public service wage bill is going to be problematic to justify if public service delivery is not improved. If we do not strike a balance between our struggles for a living wage and the need to improve service delivery the public will never support us. These comrades, will be our challenges in 1997".

Our challenges

In the context of these daunting challenges, the CEC declared 1997 the year in which a thorough-going transformation must become a reality. The CEC vowed to mobilise the entire union membership and our communities around a programme that meets the basic needs of our people. The programme will

seek to refocus our people back to the national democratic objectives as articulated in the RDP-base document. The ultimate test is going to be our ability to fuse our own workplace struggles with the broad national objectives of our national democratic project.

Crime Prevention Campaign

Crime is one of the most serious social ills posing a threat to our newly won democracy. With a full understanding that the safety and security agencies will not solve the crime problem without the full involvement of our communities, the CEC made a call to all our members and shop stewards to take an active part in Community Policing Forums. To give effect to the slogan "Don't Do Crime" our membership is called upon not to buy or encourage the sale of stolen goods. We must volunteer where we stay to participate in any anti-crime initiatives. This would include working as police reservists.

Education Campaign

We must restore and build a new culture of learning and teaching in our schools. The CEC resolved to give the union's full support to the initiative by the Department of Education for infrastructure development by building new schools and rehabilitating those that were destroyed during apartheid rule.

Part of this initiative is the development of our human resources by training and retraining our teachers. Our schools must be rid of gangsters and drug trafficking. The institutions of higher learning must be opened to all, especially the previously disad-



The public sector merger

vantaged black students. The union will support the student movement in the fight against financial exclusion. We must rebuild and strengthen the Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTAs) in our schools to enhance the participation and contribution of our communities in the education of our children.

Privatization

The CEC took a milestone decision on the issue of privatisation. The union remains opposed to privatisation which is part of the neo-liberal force's agenda to cut down our public services. However, the CEC decided that in the process of restructuring our economy, it may be found that certain functions should never have been taken over as the responsibility of the state and therefore need to be sold off. In this process, it is certain that many other sectors and companies will have to be nationalised such as those in health, welfare and education. The criteria on whether to sell-off, have nationalisation or partnership should be the strategic nature of any operation in the economy. It includes the ability to preserve and create more jobs and the expansion and improvement of service delivery. We must resist attempts by neo-liberalism to reduce the role of the state in the economy.

Social Transformation

The CEC noted the discussion papers released by the Tripartite Alliance partners in their attempt to provide a theoretical and programmatic guidance to the democratic movement in this period of transition. This and other policy questions will be debated in our National Policy Conference in May 1997. ♦

The meeting took place from 11 to 13 December 1996. The Central Executive Committee (CEC) highly appreciated the enthusiasm and energy of the Cosatu Assistant General Secretary, Cde Zwelinzima Vavi, in attempting to broker the demarcation of branches where an impasse existed. On the basis of our own experiences since the start of the process in 1992, we knew that the inability to merge with Samwu was not based on demarcation of branches. There are three main levels involved:

- Based on the autonomy of Cosatu affiliates from the federation, it is, and always has been difficult to force mergers on affiliates or on upholding the decision of the federation. We strongly believe that this is one of the September Commission's terms of reference and therefore it will be dealt with in the September congress.
- There is the broader demarcation debate within Cosatu of industries and sectors which must represent the future. It has been stated that if mergers take place they will inform the debate. But there has been a delay to the extent that it would be illogical not to wait for six months. The September congress will take a final decision on the demarcation of Cosatu, including that of the public sector unions.
- There are no common features or/and similarities between Samwu and Nehawu. We both represent membership which is diversified in job functions and experience different political outlooks.

Decisions made by the CEC

- The Nehawu CEC then decided that:
 - The Nehawu and Samwu merger be suspended indefinitely;
 - A new merger committee be

In December last year the union's Central Executive Committee met to evaluate the process and progress of the public sector merger. Nehawu General Secretary Cde Bob Marley reports

established, to look into the feasibility of:

1. Merging the public service affiliates first (Nehawu, Sapsa, IPS and Sadtu).
2. The location of Popcru in the process, and of assisting in their organisational development.
3. The location of communication as a separate sector in the demarcation debate.
4. Bringing Samwu into the public sector union now or later.
5. Establishing a public sector co-ordinating committee (PSCC).

The Nehawu and Samwu merger is off! During the last week of January, Nehawu reported the above CEC position to Samwu and Cosatu in the PSMC meeting. Following their respective caucuses each came up with a position.

Cosatu's position

The committed and enthusiastic Cosatu AGS felt betrayed and actually said we did not trust him and that this decision was not within his mandate of implementing a congress resolution. He said that we are avoiding confronting the real problem by taking a short way out - not giving leadership.

Cde Vavi spoke to the Cosatu

General Secretary and President. Cde Gomomo came to the meeting to indicate that this was a wrong position which they could not support. But of course, they can only refer it back to the CEC to see what happens next.

Samwu's position

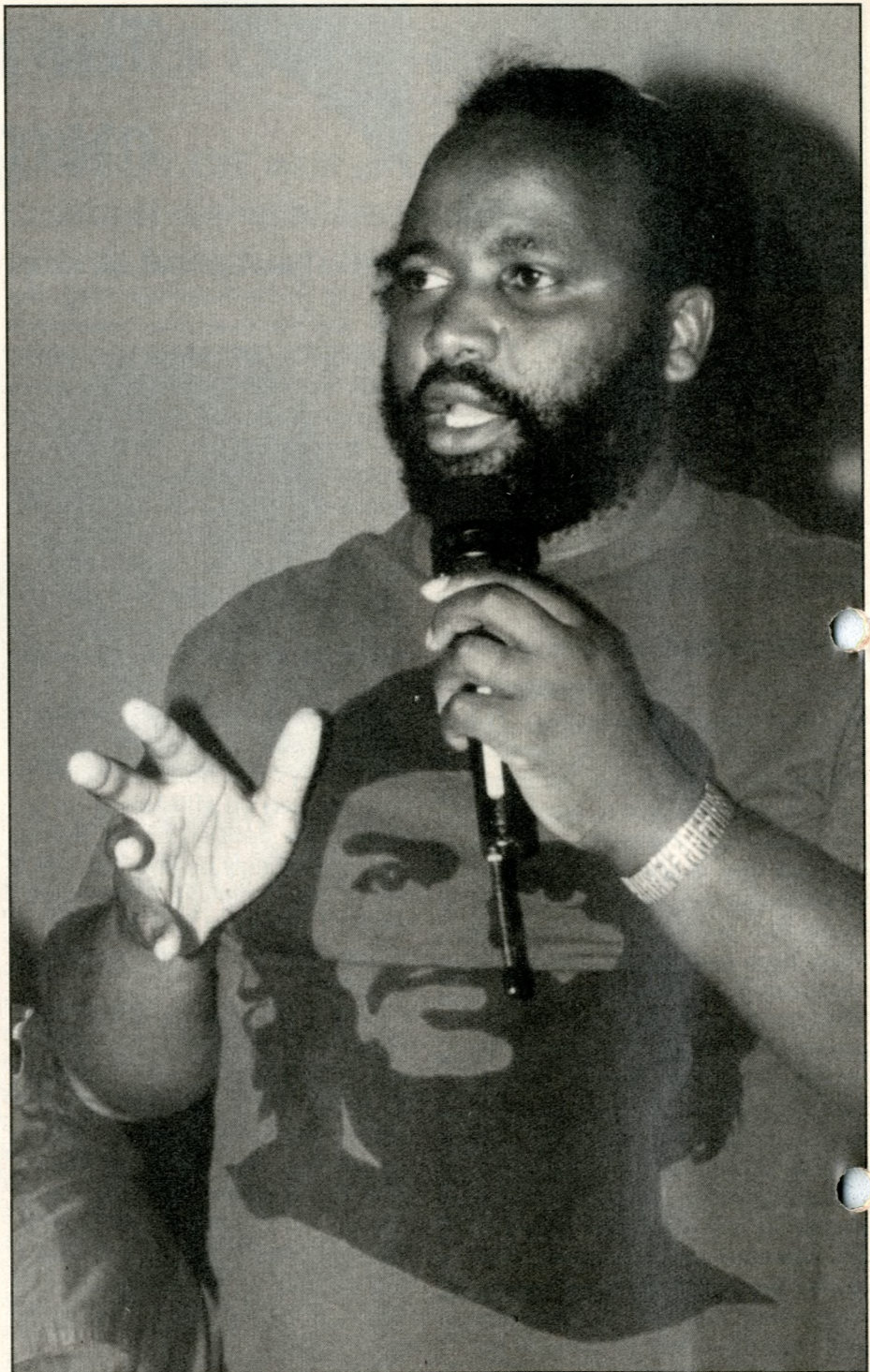
Despite Cde Mashishi's indication before the caucus that the comrades were shocked and had heard what was negative and unexpected, the General Secretary articulated the following position. He said that in Samwu's policy conference in November 1996 they took a position similar to the one presented by Nehawu. The federation has accepted public sector unions into the federation in numbers – to the extent that this move undermined the merger objective – as it was done without a commitment by those formations to mergers. Secondly, with the September and Demarcation commissions currently underway, it made logical sense to wait for the Cosatu congress and finalisation of such policy to inform all merger processes.

Cde Zweli now felt even more betrayal and said it would not in any way change their position.

Way forward

Cosatu's April CEC meeting will receive the task above. The Cosatu September congress will deal with this matter on two fronts:

1. The Cosatu public sector unions have failed to implement the resolution of the 1991 national congress that they merge before the 1994 congress. It is now 1997 and they must be in defiance. The congress must take a decision to reprimand the public sector unions, mainly Nehawu and Samwu.
2. Located with the demarcation debate, the congress will resolve on a strategic demarcation of the federation into sectors and/or industries. As such that decision will answer the question of who must merge with who. It will further indicate what we do with those affiliates which defy congress resolutions.



Cde Bob Marley, Nehawu General Secretary

Options include expelling them, forcing them or suspend them.

This will give all of us direction on where we go with the mergers.

In Conclusion

The merger of Nehawu and Samwu has been suspended until the Cosatu congress in September this year. The PSCC has been established to ensure that joint campaigning of Cosatu

public sector takes place.

Sadtu, IPS, Sapsa, Samwu, CWU and Nehawu must now start discussions within their formations of what the best road is that congress must take. In debates, comrades must avoid narrow individual perspectives, but think of what is in the interest of the public sector unions both now and in the future! I rest our case! ♦

Narrowing the wage gap

In some situations or companies some gains have been won. But there are gross situations. For example, you get a managing director of a company does not see the shame in earning an abnormally high salary whilst the minimum wage in his company falls far below living standards – in fact where workers earn as little as R400 a month.

Could this be the trend with all capitalists? One would think capitalists are Christians who feel for their neighbours and other people in the society. And that they would not engage in inhuman practices. However, many workers lead their lives under difficult and impossible working conditions.

How low can they go?

In some SAVF (Suid Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie) institutions workers earn as little as R400 a month. Is this acceptable? The answer is definitely "no!" How do you know whether the wage gap is narrowing or widening if you have no information as to how much the highest paid person, like a managing director of a company, earns?

Most welfare institutions are getting government subsidies. They also engage in their own fund raising programmes. Amongst other things, it means they would take 90% of income of all their occupants such as aged people or children staying in their institutions or homes.

Bear in mind, also, that services in most of these settlements are still not integrated. The majority occupation is still racially based and there is no developmental vision of engaging in human resource development for both workers and occupants.

Some general assistants are given indoctrinating names such as 'care workers' and get exploited and

The struggle for narrowing the wage gap in companies is one of many struggles workers have long engaged in. National Social Welfare Sector Secretary, Nomaphelo Maqanda, reports that the struggle continues



wrongly utilised as trained nurses doing auxiliary nursing tasks or delegations.

In conclusion

All companies in the social welfare sector, especially private and NGOs, should be invited to commit themselves to improving the lives of the people of South Africa. Especially considered should be those who were previously marginalised. Workers' wages in this sector should be improved and integration of services to all citizens of our

country should be done without discrimination.

It must be stated categorically, though, that improving workers' lives must not be mistaken as an exchange for retrenchments. This would be an arrogant way of dealing with the situation. For all these reasons, centralized bargaining in this sector becomes crucial.

All organisations must be committed to the delivery that everyone expects from the state. They must also ensure fair services to their constituencies. ♦

Private health strikes

The South African Tuberculosis Association (Santa) and Lifecare strikes were unique! Firstly, they took place during the festive season. Secondly, for the first time workers in private health were engaged in a nationally co-ordinated action. Thirdly, the strikes gave specific focus to specific sectoral needs without compromising the important principle of solidarity within the union in general. That we were able to wage and win a strike during the festive season serves to dispel the myth that workers will never fight at this time. We have proven that workers can wage a battle any time of the year if they have needs to be addressed.

An account of the Santa strike

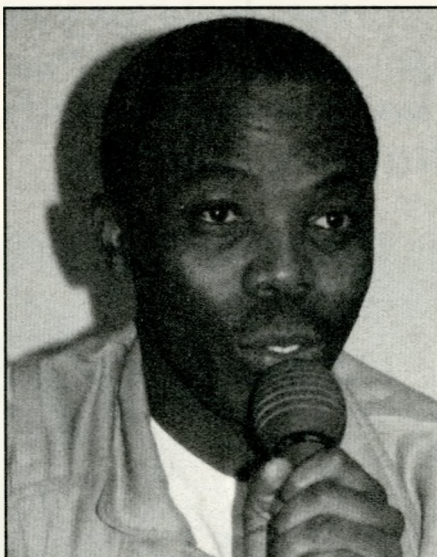
This article is a general account of the strike. Because some managers read our newsletter (which is a good thing!) it would be tactically wrong for us to reveal details of our tactics. We might still need to employ them in other strikes. So, in dealing with this matter I will avoid details that are considered to be too sensitive.

The word "Santa" for most of us brings to mind Father Christmas. But for others, especially Nehawu, it stands for the South African Tuberculosis Association – an employer who employs shrewd and sly tactics to destroy Nehawu.

How did strike start?

Early in August 1996 things were looking fine. We were sure of an early settlement. Comrade General Secretary and two negotiating team members, Cdes Nomhle Dambuza and Vuyelwa Qamba, brokered an independent deal. This was good it meant that we were settling at R1 425.00 minimum wage which is what we wanted because it brought us on par with the state minimum wage.

New ground was broken in strikes over the festive season. Private Health Sector Secretary, Khumbu Magudulela, reports



Leaked information

A national negotiations forum was convened. Just when we were about to strike a deal, we intercepted a document which stated that all non union members have already got what we were negotiating. That was the beginning of a confrontation. When we asked Santa management why they struck a secret deal with us and then pretended that they were bargaining with us they said the non union members also must negotiate. It was clear that the non union members were preferred. We said that management has a right to negotiate with any group of employees. However, before negotiations take place there must be certain minimum conditions met. (1) Any organization concerned must apply for recognition. (2) Before a recognition is granted they must prove that they represent a sufficient number of employees.

This did not happen. Moreover, we do not know of a union called 'non union employees.' It was obvious that these people were

organised by management in order to undermine Nehawu and the whole collective bargaining effort. This put pressure on the collective bargaining exercise to achieve more than what the non union members got. This to prove that the effort of belonging to the union and negotiating wages every year is always relevant.

More than about wages

In the eyes of the public, the strike was about high wages. To us, it was more about the union's integrity and it was also socio political. We knew and accepted that Santa could not spend further. But the danger was, had we accepted it, Santa is known to be harbouring some of the worst conservative matrons and administrators. Accepting their offer could have meant arming them with a propaganda tool to use against the union.

It is no secret that management wants a union-free workplace. Nehawu we cannot be seen to be directly or indirectly supporting that management objective. To strike was not only about money, but also about integrity so that management does not repeat their negative action again.

Socio-political

Santa is not necessarily a private company. It is an association not for gain. It could therefore be regarded as a non profit making organisation. But then workers are not only paid from profits. Therefore the status of Santa does not give it a license to exploit workers.

Through the Department of Health the government is funding the employment costs of Santa at

100%. Every cent they receive from the government is paid to the workers. The question is: why then does Santa not give workers everything that the state gives, including paying for a housing allowance? Why doesn't the government completely run Santa? That is for everyone to answer.

The government claims it does not have money to pay for an increase for workers and fulfill other promises. I accept that there might not be enough funding. However, if the government pleads poverty then their expenditure must not be wasteful. There are three TB institutions that the government pours money into. They are Santa and Lifecare and some state hospitals. Should we not just have one TB institution?

Should the state take over Santa?

TB is a curable disease. To avoid people getting infected, you need to improve the quality of people's life. There must be decent housing, proper food and clean water. If the government took over Santa the commitment to cure TB would lie with it rather than with certain individuals for whom the existence of TB does nothing more than gua-

rantee long term employment. On the other hand, a vigorous transformation drive is needed at Santa.

Not an easy strike

The strike was not easy, especially because it presented an extra psychological burden on the workers, their leaders, patients and their family members. We are grateful that it was ultimately resolved. And we scored major victories both in money and politically. After almost 27 days of strike, an agreement was signed on 13 January 1997. See the box for some of the important elements of the agreement.

1. Wage increase

(See the box below)

2. Night duty allowance

R200-00 per hour

3. Uniforms and protective clothing for occupational therapy assistants

R400.00 per year for uniforms and shoes to be paid to the supplier directly for those who are currently receiving the allowance.

4. Housing allowance

A joint meeting with the Department of Health will be organised to

deal with this issue.

5. Full-time shop steward

A sub-committee will be established to deal with the following issues: the benefit of a full-time shop steward, viability, duties and functions and appropriate procedures

6. Transformation

Santa has accepted that there need to be transformation. A task team will be set up with the following terms of reference and goals:

- Improvement of service delivery;
- Creating conditions conducive to sound and harmonious labour relations;
- Determine powers and functions of transformation committees;
- Build on the work already undertaken;
- Effect Nehawu representation on the Santa board of trustees to enhance access to information, build the required trust and strengthen the relationship between Santa and Nehawu
- Make representation to the Department of Health on the further funding of Santa centres;
- Restructure the present system to expedite substantive negotiations between Santa and Nehawu;
- Recommend a new bargaining arrangement.

CATEGORY	MINIMUM	% INCREASE
Nursing assistant	R1 673-00	12.25%
Enrolled nurse	R2 323-00	10.5
Professional nurse	R3 403-00	8.5
Non nursing staff	R1 425-00 from 1 July 1996 R1 450-00 from 1 Nov 1996	12%
People earning from R2 200-00 per month and more		10%
Seamstress	R1 673-00	12%
Handyman	R1 673-00	12%
Driver	R1 673-00	12%
Administration clerk	R1 673-00	12%



Nehawu marching for transformation. Lifecare national co-ordinator, Cde Doris Makgamathe in front

7. Health and safety

A health and safety committee will be established in each centre.

8. Staff development

The transformation committee will deal with this.

9. Meals

R4.50 per day

10. Sick leave

Thirty working days over a cycle of two years. Six days may be taken without a medical certificate. An additional one month sick leave will be provided for serious illness.

11. Medical boarding

Two months salary will be paid to an employee who has been medically boarded.

12. Medical aid

A non compulsory Nehawu medical aid will be implemented with employer worker each contributing 50%.

13. Job evaluation

There will be a job evaluation

before the start of negotiations this year.

More than money

There has been far more than a monetary gain for the workers. For example, for the company to accept transformation and a job evaluation system means management will no longer be able to take decisions which manipulate workers. A skills-based job evaluation system means there is a good chance of getting rid of favouritism. An individual employee will be remunerated according to what he or she is worth.

The strike was a wonderful and rewarding experience. We exposed the bad things that must be avoided by all of us in similar situations in future. We realised that even though women leadership is sometimes not visible in our national structures, the people who were prominent and vociferous during our action were women shop stewards. Even though some of us were beginning to miss home, our families and the Christmas spirit, we were always comforted by

Sister Dambuza and Sister Qamba to always remain strong. The strike also exposed to us how dear some of our comrades are to their families. Comrade Sipho (Mtimande) Ngwenya did not hide the fact that he was missing his wife and children. However he still maintained a very high morale until the last day.

The Lifecare strike

For me, it was very interesting to deal with two very powerful strikes at the same time. It represented the courage and determination of the workers and all those who directly or indirectly had a role to play.

From the outset, even though we could not prove it outright, it seemed that Santa and Lifecare management were communicating with each other and sharing information. This is because the same tactic of giving unorganised workers preference over Nehawu members was also used at Lifecare.

Even though both Santa and Lifecare tactics during the strike were similar, Lifecare was more backward and the most exploita-

tive. Coupled with that, they were completely overwhelmed by the unity and power of the workers. Senior professional nurses took to the street together with other workers. Management had tried to attract them away from the union by introducing huge increases.

Employer's reaction

If we were still in the FW de Klerk era, I imagine we would have had an ultimatum to dismiss workers. It would have been carried out and that would have also resulted in workers defying the ultimatum. Police would have been called. Dogs would have been set against the workers and teargas sprayed over them. There probably would have been sjamboking. We would have had a very nasty battle.

Fortunately that time has passed. Gone are the days when workers would have been subjected to torture and other forms of brutality for merely exercising their right to withhold their labour. Unfortunately, some employers really are missing the days of apartheid.

Lifecare tried to get the strike declared illegal. But they forgot that they did something illegal themselves. The Lifecare dispute was declared before 11 November 1996. This meant that the new LRA and all its structures, like the CCMA, did not have jurisdiction over the strike.

It also meant that workers had to conduct a ballot. That ballot had to be declared procedural – only then could the strike resume. That procedure could consume a lot of time. We were worried that the more time taken on procedures, the more it affected the workers' morale.

A lucky thing

Fortunately Lifecare management came to our rescue by doing something that justified and gave us an excuse not to proceed with the ballot. Before a ballot could be held they released a pamphlet encouraging workers to take what the company was offering. We quickly checked their action in terms of the new act. We found out that should

it be found that whilst a particular procedure is being implemented (in this case a ballot), no party must engage in any action – that will be an unfair labour practice. To correct that, an aggrieved party will be justified in not following any procedure in response to that act of unfairness.

For us it meant that there was no longer a need to hold a ballot procedure and workers could justifiably go on strike without risking the strike being declared illegal. But it



also meant that those who wanted to proceed with the plan by continuing with the ballot could still do so. That is why we had a strike at Lifecare starting at different times in different places. So Lifecare's use of the old tactic to argue illegality didn't work – thanks to the provision of the new LRA.

During the 4th day of the strike Comrade General Secretary had his leave cancelled as we recalled him to boost our team. Unfortunately, he could not stay with us for the duration of the strike as he could not cancel his holiday planned for somewhere in Kwazulu/Natal. So, he had to leave us. But we were left with an assurance that wherever he went he would keep his cellular

phone open for us to contact him in case there was a need.

About Lifecare

It is one of those areas where we feel the government is wasting our taxes by enriching a few privileged white capitalists at the expense of the health of our people. I am not going to deal much on that as the funding of Lifecare and Santa is the same, and was explained before. However, there is one factor I must highlight. The government pays Lifecare per bed occupancy. This means that for every person they admit, the government pays a fee. What makes Lifecare a bit different from Santa is that not all the money goes to either employees' or patient care. A chunk of it must be saved to be declared as profit at the end of a financial year. You can then see the immorality where some money given to Lifecare by government is being pocketed by capitalists. This is a main reason why government must take over the running of Lifecare. Unfortunately, at the present moment the government is not keen to entertain this idea. However, we must continue to raise this point whenever we meet with either the comrades in government or the ministers who are responsible.

We all know for sure that TB is a curable disease. Lifecare is a profit making company whose primary purpose for admitting TB patients is strictly business. We know what the wiping off of TB will mean to their business. It is my argument that there will never be a desire to wipe off TB as long as there are still companies who do business and expect profits from such patients.

A controversial point

I know I am raising a controversial point which, when it reaches the company concerned, will not be palatable. However they are welcome to bring an argument that will prove me wrong. It is my argument also that Lifecare is part of the old arrangement. Therefore they do not fit into the present and

do not belong to the future. Remember, they have been in this so-called business for over 40 years. Forty years back from now – what year was it? Who was ruling the country then? The year is 1957 and Strydom was prime minister, almost nine years after the Nats came into power. This means that they were still at the early stages of implementing apartheid. Imagine, during that time Lifecare secured a contract to run hospitals. This must obviously tell you who their friends were. This little story must tell us all, including the Department of Health, that if we are looking at service delivery, quality patients' care and transformation in general, it would be hard to come by unless there is decisive action from the government.

This is what the strike exposed besides monetary gains and other issues. Before I am called upon to the supreme court for defamation, let us examine the settlement agreement in detail.

1. Wages

(See the box below)

The agreement also provided for a fair disciplinary procedure. It also provided that the CCMA could be

asked to handle an appeal of some of the disciplinary matters arising from alleged misconduct during the strike.

2. Training

Management and shop stewards will be trained by the CCMA in dispute prevention mechanisms.

3. Task team

A task team comprising of Lifecare and Nehawu was agreed upon and shall do the following:

- Finalise the recognition agreement;
- Develop an affirmative action plan aimed at identifying, training and promoting suitable candidates;
- Agree upon a suitable grading system by May 1997
- Develop an improved relationship between the parties, aimed at making the union an effective stake holder in the company and at improving working conditions and the quality of patient care.

All in all it is not a bad agreement. It opens other channels for us to wage our struggles. We have all accepted as a team that the struggle is not over. There lies a long and hard road ahead. Only those with enough energy shall sur-

vive. In the end we want to see workers' lives becoming better at Lifecare – or else let us close shop.

A salute!

In conclusion, I want to salute all the workers for waging such a gallant battle against Lifecare. On behalf of the negotiating team, which comprises of Cdes Doris Makgamathe, Nico (Ndosi) Chauke, Mpho Chilwane, Phindeka Mbanda, Banothile Phoswa, Malomile, Winston (Mpumi) Mabaso and Lorraine Nopondo. In addition, I think that all of us should acknowledge that we have a wonderful president who stood by all of us during both the Lifecare and Santa strikes. Besides sacrificing his Christmas holiday and all that goes with it, he was patient with us, even if it meant having 17-hour long meetings that extended to early hours of the morning. He stood by all of us, giving advice, instructions, and doing all what presidents will do to realise a goal. Comrade Vusi, may God bless you with the wisdom, courage and vision to do to every single member of this union what you have shown and demonstrated to us. ♦

CATEGORY	MINIMUM	% INCREASE
Professional nurses	Level(1) R3 612-00 p.m Level (2) R3 786-00 p.m Level (3) R3 968-00 p.m	7.5% across the board effective from June 1996.
Nursing assistant Physiotherapy assistant Occupational Therapy	R1 673-00	7.5% from 1/8/96 and then a further 1.5% from 1/12/96 to 31 July 1997
Snr Nursing assistant Snr Physio assistant Snr Occupational therapy	R1 960-50	7.5% Across the board from 1/8/96 and a further 1.5% on 1/12/96
Enrolled nurse	R2 323-50	7.5% from 1/8/96 and a further 1.5% from 1/12/96
Snr Enrolled nurse	R2 749-50	7.5% from 1/8/96 1.5% from 1/12/96
7RHW	R1 380-00	8%
General assistants	R1 330-00	8% from 1/8/96

Gauteng input on restructuring of public health

Compiled by: Sheila Sikiti Provincial Secretary

The Gauteng Health Department dramatically announced on the 26 October 1996, its unilateral decision to restructure health services in the province. This was to be so drastically done that it would result in the re-deployment of thousands of workers and an eventual retrenchment of three thousand hers.

This action by the department sparked off a lot of protest and concern from our entire membership with a lot of them calling for an immediate strike bilateral.

Meetings were convened with the department to force them to suspend the plan as a lot of flaws were discovered in the document.

The objectives of this "plan" was to:

1. Creating equity in staffing
2. Strengthening primary health care
3. Aligning

All the objectives are supported by the union but it is the process to advance them that is problematic.

The kind of research done to collect all the said "data" in the document was unsatisfactory as a lot of discrepancies were later to be discovered.

The department agreed to suspend on the 05 December 1996 to afford the union to do our own research and come up with the alternative to the plan.

A research team formed by all employee organisations in the Gauteng bargaining council started work on the 26 November 1996 and were given until the 06 January 1997 to go to institutions, collect data, meet with the membership and shop stewards to verify the information as contained in the document.

Due to amount of work to be done the team could not conclude on the date set and had to request



extensions twice from 6 January 1997 to 21 and gain from 21 January to 14 February 1997.

Finally the team presented their document on the 20 February 1997. The research team in the review of the plan noted amongst other things the following deficiencies.

1. The plan did not consider efficiency as a strategic objective.
2. No mention of quality service delivery and accessibility to services decreased in some area.
3. Human resource development not forming part of transformation as it should be.

The team therefore came with the following recommendations on rationalisation

- Upgrading some hospitals i.e. Lenasia that were to be converted and turn them into a full hospital seeing that population growth rates around the areas are huge so as to ease the burden of bigger provincial hospitals like Baragwanath.

On equity

- Need for democratisation of membership structures.
- Not to confine the concept to staff re-deployment but also the resources read to be re-distributed to areas of need.

Strengthening PHC

- Department to employ health educators to educate communities.
- To utilise trained and experienced staff.

On aligning budget to expenditure.

- Reviewal of private sector involvement i.e. private security and nursing.
- Establishment of strict budget control measures.
- Involvement of all stakeholders.
- Human Resource Development strategy should form an integral part of any transformation or restructuring plan.

The department is given an opportunity to look through the recommendations and negotiation to resume.

The whole process has not gone without hurdles. A lot of our membership is still uncertain of what is to happen to them. Communities around the hospitals are also confused due to meetings that were convened by the MEC to try and convince them of the intentions.

Whilst the process goes there is also some opportunist who are manipulating and using the whole matter to advance their own goals.

The union is still left with the task of ensuring that the final plan does not in any way jeopardise our membership. To fight vigorously for such matters and campaign again retrenchments. ♦

*Marching against
Gauteng health
restructuring*



Update on the nursing transformation

The promise made by the union to the South African Interim Nursing Council (SAINC) not to pay annual licensing fees was carried out when hundreds of Nehawu nurses refused to pay their subscriptions in January this year. In spite of intimidation and harassment, many of our nurses put up a brave fight against the SAINC and the employers. This was done at the risk of losing their jobs. It was a heroic battle indeed.

Non payment of the licensing fees

At its meeting on 7 February 1997, the nurses' sub-committee decided that the campaign for the non payment of the licensing fees must be intensified but that the tactic of non payment be suspended. This meant that the struggle must be waged on other fronts in pursuit of the same objective. The campaign for the non payment of licensing fees is part of the broad transformation agenda.

Nehawu's achievements

When the campaign was first stated on 1 July 1996, the demand for the

*The struggle
continues for
the nursing
transformation.
This article looks
at progress*

non payment of licensing fees was part of a package of demands. Other demands included the establishment of a National Curriculum Committee, the transfer of nursing education to the Ministry of Education, the development of one four-year programme for all nurses and the opening up of bridging courses to a greater number of, amongst others, nursing assistants and staff nurses.

The sub committee was unanimous that Nehawu had achieved in one year what many organisations have not been able to achieve in many years. As previously reported in our newsletter, most of the above demands have been achieved. With some of them we

have reached in principle agreements.

The nursing Core Group will over the next weeks be working on our submission to the newly-established committee to deal with the transformation of nursing. This committee will look at reviewing the nursing Act, including the sections that provide for the payment of the licensing fees.

Shaping the new nursing Act

In the coming weeks and months the terrain of struggle is going to be the shaping of the new nursing Act, including the establishment of a new Council later this year. During the next elections for the new nursing council we must ensure that forces which belong to the apartheid past are defeated.

We are still to hear a counter argument from anyone for the fundamental principle that underpins our argument for non payment. The responsibility for protecting patients, the public and the profession is that of the state. ♦

– by Lungiswa Maqaqa, National Nurses Co-ordinator

Strategies for organising nurses

Marilyn Albert, R.N., is from the National Union of Health and Human Service Employees (1199), AFL CIO. She conducted workshops in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province during her visit to Nehawu. In her article she shares elements of her approach to organising nurses.

How would 1199 approach organising nurses in a hospital?

1199 has a methodical approach to organising nurses and other health workers. The United States (US) labour laws which make union organising increasingly difficult. 1199's approach was designed to win under such constraints. 1199 has the best record of organising victories of any US union. South African unions today operate under a more union-friendly Labour Relations Act (LRA) and enjoy more popular support than US unions do. So, some of our methods may be inappropriate in the South African context. However, many of our techniques might be useful in building large majorities of nurses in an institution, since our method is based on the principle of reaching and winning each worker by using an "in-house" rank and file committee to do the organising.

An organising campaign

Here is how 1199 approached an organising campaign. In deciding whether to launch a campaign, we discuss several questions, among them:

- How interested are the workers in the union? Did workers at the institution approach us? For example, did they approach union headquarters to ask for help?
- To what extent is this group of workers important to our strength as a union? Does the union have to make choices about how to expend its resources? Does this campaign meet the criteria for a worthwhile

Marilyn Albert, a 1199 nurse, conducted workshops in South Africa during her visit to Nehawu. Here she shares some strategies



attempt?

- What type of opposition would the union face and in what form?
- What is the relationship of the nurses to the general workers who are already union members in this institution?

Research the hospital

Hopefully, the initial rank and file committee would assist in this research. We would look at:

- The hospital's labour relations history. Were previous attempts at organising made? Why did they fail?
- The hospital's financial picture, particularly if it is private hospital.
- Current wages and working conditions at the hospital.
- The "demographic" mix of the targeted group. In the US context, often racial and ethnic information tells us how to address issues. Due to the history of racism in the US, African American nurses are more favourable towards the union, nurses who are immigrants are often more favourable, and so on.

How interested are the workers in the union?

This is the most important question the union must accurately answer. The union must not fall into the trap of getting a falsely optimistic picture from a few enthusiastic workers! Methods must be found to talk to as many workers as possible before coming to conclusions. This is where the in-house committee comes in. Having strong committees is the single most important sign of winning campaigns. The union must take the time necessary to build a strong committee. Worker to worker organising is ten times more effective than contacts from full time organisers passing out pamphlets! An in-house committee also proves that the union is "us" and not outside "agitators." The committee is initially secret, to avoid being "picked off" by the boss and to avoid scaring initially timid workers. Strategic planning will decide at what point the committee "goes public" which it must do, in order to bolster the confidence of the workers and create an atmosphere that victory is inevitable. A committee that is afraid to go public at the right time is a sign the union will likely lose the election.

First task

The first task of the committee is assessing the level of interest in the union and learning the workers' grievances. The grievances of one group are not necessarily the grievances of another! A "hot issue" in one place may be a "dud" in another! How does the committee assess interest and learn grievances? In the South African context, the grievances may be obvious. The level of interest may not be easy to assess

until the union makes it programme clear to the workers. In the US we don't call meetings right away most of the time - at least not "out in the open." Usually the workers are too intimidated in the beginning for open meetings and tactically, the union does not want to "let boss know we're here" at this stage. The committee members must do one-on-one talking to workers. The committee divides up the hospital and assigns each member from a few to several areas or floors of the hospital. We usually assign committee members to the areas they know best and are known in. It's important that committee members are respected nurses.

Charting—our most important organising tool

"Charting" is a continuous assessment of the attitude toward the union of each worker. Each member keeps a chart of the areas she is assigned to. A large wall chart of the entire institution (with every worker in the target group listed, or as close as we can get) is kept at the campaign headquarters.

The following information is on the charts:

1. Worker's name
2. Hospital ward/work area
3. Shift they work
4. Work phone number
5. Home phone number
6. Worker's home address (this may be on the chart or on a list kept separately)
7. Several spaces are left blank for period coding of the worker's attitude toward the union on a scale of 1 to 4

A "2" is someone very positive for the union and very likely to vote for the union. She may sometimes be active in the campaign. A "3" is someone who is wishy-washy and likely to vote against the union. A "4" is someone strongly against the union and whose mind cannot be changed.

1199's experience is that if we have accurately charted we can predict almost exactly the number of votes for the union. Charting is fraught with the danger of wishful

thinking. A good charter will err on the side of conservative estimates of a worker. If you can't decide if she's a "2" or a "3", make her a "3". Charting must be done continuously throughout the campaign, particularly every time something "big" happens. Workers' minds can be changed by many factors. A "1" can become a "3" in the course of a long campaign. We must have the discipline to do accurate charting. It is tedious but necessary.

Content of the campaign

The committee and the union staff decide on the content of the campaign - the approach to the nurses' grievances, tactical decisions, timing decision, and so on. In the US context, we often need to "inoculate" the workers. This means we tell them ahead of time what the union expects the boss to tell them - about how "terrible" the union is. That way the workers expect the attack from the boss and can deflect it.

"Testing the workers"

Periodically, the targeted group of workers must be tested to gauge the strength of their desire to have a union in order to see what they are willing to do. For example, will a nurse put her name on a petition that will be presented to management? Will a nurse come to a meeting called by the union off the hospital premises after work or on the weekend? These are "tests" that not only help the union assess its strength but also strengthen the nurse's commitment to the union because she has taken some degree of risk to get a union. If the com-

mittee keeps in touch with every worker in the targeted group and maintains accurate charting and then reports back accurately - you will be on the right track to winning. At the end of campaign, a few days before the vote, the union publishes a pamphlet we call "talking heads." This includes photographs of as many workers as possible saying why she or he is voting for the union. This is a dramatic public statement by workers saying they are no longer afraid of the boss. In the US context, our elections are often won or lost by one vote, so our campaigns are designed to pull out every vote. Hopefully, in the South African context, you will organise much larger majorities.

Build unity

1199 has a rich and complex experience over twenty years with the issues of so-called "professionalism" and nurses being in the same organisation as general workers. In the US context, the bosses have often used racism to turn professional workers against our union. Building and maintaining unity between general and professional workers is often difficult. But in 1199 we have many examples of each group coming to the understanding that they need the other. It is our experience that this potentially divisive issue fall away in nurses' minds once they are convinced joining our union will concretely benefit them. I hope this description of 1199's organising method is useful to Nehawu. Take what you can use and discard the rest if it isn't helpful. Good luck in organising nurses! ♦

At a workshop in Free State participants asked discussion questions about Nehawu's strategy for organizing nurses. Below are the questions the participants addressed.

- How have the organizing tasks of Cosatu affiliates changed since 1994?
- Does Nehawu need to make any changes in order to attract more "conservative workers"?
- How do we assess nurses' attitudes toward Nehawu? What are the reasons for negative views of Nehawu?
- What are Nehawu's main demands around nurses?
- What have been Nehawu's major victories for nurses? Do most nurses credit Nehawu with these victories?

On leave! Makgane visits the North

I finally managed to take a full month's annual leave, as one of the benefits of re-alignment and a flat structure of leadership developed in the organisation. Here is an account of only one week of that month.

The name Makgane (Ke Makgane wa leshing la thaba 'a ngwaname, yo a rego ke thopile dikgomo tsa Baroka ba Mmafefera 'a letlapa la bohwele bja mpholo 'a Dimo, ka ba ka thopa le Modisi wa tsona, nna mogale tatago nwetlana 'a noka maphoto malekanesetsa) is my clan name. It originates from Mafefe, Lereto ke Bauba (Bauba leakampa la madisa 'a tsate, Legorosa mogobo pele, madira a sa le morago... Bauba nkakatlala 'a kgomo tsa meradu, Tsa manaba di sit'o tshaba ge di phara Lekalanke. Re re: Tshehla tsogela batho, O tsogele bagwera ba mphato o mofsa ...).

My journey begins

Mafefe is a village right in the beautiful mountains of Sekhukhune, however the bumpy and stony road was not friendly to my new re-aligned car.

The area I visited is called Gankanoana, the chief being Phasha, Lereto ke Phaahla. It was summer time, and the area was very very hot. The weather bureau only covers Pietersburg which is about 100 km away. I cannot therefore give a scientific explanation for the heat in temperature. I can only explain this way: You can only wash with cold water to survive. You cannot cover yourself with anything when you sleep. If you have electricity, you will switch on a fan for the whole night. And there are always cold beer and drinks available (even in Mafefe). At one stage I wondered to myself, "how do all these people survive?"

Health care

It was 21h00 when my cousin collapsed with a headache so terrible that I had to rush her to hos-

A visit to Sekhukhuneland in February this year was quite an experience, writes Cde Neal Thobejane

pital. There is a clinic in the village, but it is only open until 16h00. I was advised that Groothoek, Mandagsoek or Jane Furse were the three hospitals available (each one of them was more than 120 km away).

With no option, we drove to Jane Furse. I drove at 140 km p/h on a gravel road for the first time, for more than 100 km. I now specialise in driving on gravel roads. Nurses on duty registered my cousin, took her temperature and so on. They phoned for the doctor, who came after 45 minutes because she was having dinner. Lucky for us it was not a life or death situation. The doctor checked her and booked her in. We left the hospital at 23h45.

The point is that a patient in a critical condition can die on the way to hospital – that is if you have transport available. Under the circumstances, clinics in the villages should be open for 24 hours, or at least until 22h00. Fortunately the level of crime is still low and people in those villages are naturally physically strong. The people there live very close to nature and they still understand each other.

More visits and more learning

I visited all three hospitals. The buildings are old and falling down. They were designed by missionaries ages ago in such a way that you cannot develop them without destroying them completely.

I learned from our members and communities that the Health MEC is building five new hospitals. They are

also renovating the clinics in villages into proper health centres. When I visited Mafefe I saw nurses from Groothoek in a Venture, operating a mobile clinic. It seems there is a move to rectify the past problem of inaccessibility.

On my arrival I heard that Cuban doctors working at Groothoek were responsible for the deaths of eight patients. Apparently their diagnoses during operations were wrong and these patients never woke up. I spoke to our nurse members from Mandagsoek about the two Cuban doctors there. But they indicated that they are amongst the best doctors they ever had. They had no complains whatsoever. I visited Groothoek and checked with two nurses and one clerk, who said the rumours about the eight patients are unfounded and not true. They said the Cuban doctors are doing fine. I still could not understand what caused the rumour or for what purpose.

Lastly, I met a few nurses who said they work night shift in those hospitals. During their "off" they moonlight in Johannesburg. In a month, they make more money from moonlighting than they take home from work. I raised two problems: One is that the day off given to nurses is meant for resting so that they can give quality care to patients. The other is that moonlighting encourages cheap labour, lowers the quality of our health system with hospitals running with short staff, and they all nurse for money with no commitment.

The nurses I spoke to disagreed on the basis that they are grossly underpaid and find it hard to survive. They indicated that nurses in Johannesburg are working very little compared to them whereas they have no porters, in most cases no clerks, and do doctors' functions in all emergencies. They know this is not in their scope of practice, but they also know that either they do it or patients will die.

Nehawu Northern Province needs



Nehawu Northern Province members

to indicate why the organisation level, reporting back and service of membership is non-existent. Why has the Pietersburg branch failed to visit Nebo and Burgesford areas for two years? An article giving answers is expected in the next edition of *Nehawu Worker*.

On the education front

This year the Northern Province will have 23 000 qualified unemployed teachers. The teacher training colleges continue to train more and more teachers.

I visited a high school in Ga Mampuru where there are 1 312 students all in all, with 24 teachers. They said they are 18 teachers short. But how are they surviving now? The principal is also allocated classes to teach, most of the teachers have ten periods a day. I don't have to be an educationalist to say: You can never give a quality education to those students. This big school I visited does not have Nehawu members amongst their clerical staff. I found some teachers doing things like stamping books, numbering them and typing their own tests.

Simply speaking, there is confusion with the teacher deployment, severance packages and the huge unemployment levels. This is confusing when looked at against the low pass rate, lack of schools and proper buildings.

I gave students who are used to walking 80 km a day to school and 80 km back a lift in a car. The whole village's children have to walk for so far for education. I asked myself the question: How many people are aware that these kinds of hardships exist?

Yes, most of this we have inherited from the past. The apartheid system would have made the situation even worse. *Nehawu Worker* will request an article from the Education MEC for our next edition. We need them to indicate mainly what the plan is for redressing the apartheid legacy. As for Sadtu, they need to explain why 85% of the teachers in the North are not committed to their work – but do it just for the money, employment – and as a last resort.

On the political front

Tribalism is historically one of the remnants inherited from the past, and consciously or unconsciously our own comrades and the new order are perpetuating it. In a department which is headed by a Pedi-speaking person, in the majority of cases all the support staff and positions below follow suit. Some MECs can also be accused as such. The point is that tribalism is currently not a major political factor but if not confronted it will become a serious problem. The new Northern Province regime have so far avoided confronting this reality. They have effectively swept the problem under the carpet.

The Alliance structures are very vibrant right in the villages. I was specifically impressed by the key role and participation of teachers in numbers within the ANC and the SACP. I can only hope that it is not an attempt to jump ship from the teaching profession.

Last December's ANC provincial conference succeeded in upholding democratic principles. The ANC NEC mandated high profile leadership, who attempted to preach unity as a

justification for dictatorship. But we are all happy they did not succeed. Today, very few provinces of the ANC can challenge the NEC preference for leadership, let alone individuals who get instructed not to stand for particular positions, in the name of unity. This province has the potential of being strategic if it maintains maturity and political objectivity throughout the current testing times.

The Chiefs are still highly powerful and respected in this part of the province. You have royal battles still being waged, as disputes of who must take over the throne arise from time to time. Some chiefs are progressive and some are reactionary, thus they need not yield much power. In Ga Nkoana I learned that the chief, together with business people, are blocking Eskom from coming in and providing electricity. Their argument is that if everyone gets electricity it will undermine the small business sector. Well, I also have royal blood in my system. I visited Mafefe for the first time to get to know the village and where my own people are.

And finally

Sekhukhuneland is a small district in the Northern Province therefore my experiences are not reflective of the entire province. Look at the poetry section, for the Sereto sa kgosi Sekhukhune. Comrades are again encouraged to contribute articles, poems and debates, in any of the South African languages.

The shop stewards I met in Mandagsoek indicated that we still have members but they are not active, because the last time the office visited them was two years ago. In Jane Furse the union is not visible. I went three times but did not meet a Nehawu member. In Groothoek I was told that Nehawu has just been revived, and is active. I told the Provincial Treasurer this, and gave him contacts.

In the next edition of *Nehawu Worker*, we will introduce a new section on Provincial Profiles. All the Provincial Office Bearers are hereby tasked to prepare their profiles for publication. ♦

The public sector and the transition

Introduction and overview

The key strategic issues that face the labour movement in relation to the public sector are essentially political issues that need resolving or direction to be given on in as unambiguous a manner as possible. These arise primarily out of causes and effects on the public sector of the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa and global trends and developments in relation to the public sector and the economy. It is important to recognise this context to avoid mechanistic, dogmatic, and even unrealistic strategies and programs for the public sector. It is also important to remind ourselves of the broad cross section of the economy that the public sector encompasses to understand that innovative, diverse, and flexible strategies and tactics are needed to deal with the very real crisis that exists in the public sector. Capital, and even elements of the new government, are intent on propagating the idea that the state is bad, necessarily inefficient, and that the solution to many of the ills of the public sector is to contract out as many services as is possible, privatise what enterprises they regard as not being areas of activity that the state should be involved in, and in general shrink and limit the state and the public sector. This approach deliberately describes the symptoms of the malaise that affects the public sector as being the cause of the problems and ignores the real problems. The effects of apartheid on the public sector were many and varied, as are the of the vagaries of the market and the dictates of private capital. In an attempt to bribe the electorate the previous regime divested from the public sector and simply increased government consumption expenditure. As a result the infrastructure of the public sector is in a poor



state. Sections of the public sector have already been hived off wholesale and at a knockdown price to some private individuals and companies. The strain of the transition has led to a situation in which the state is to a certain extent dysfunctional. This has obviously contaminated the entire public sector and caused it to suffer similar problems.

The strategic orientation of labour in relation to the economy

The most important issue in relation to the public sector for labour is to recognise that it is both the key arena and prize in the struggle of the social against the market. It is the area of social activity where most of the key social goods and services are produced and distributed and it is where the majority of social rights are exercised. The sheer size of the public sector makes it an important factor in terms of the performance of the economy. For the social to defeat the crude individuality of the market the labour movement must have a vision of the public sector as it should be as part of a broader vision of the economy and articulate this in a manner that unites the broadest range of people. COSATU

has done much towards developing this vision, but has not succeeded in articulating this in an effective, holistic, and aggressive manner. The public sector is also a bridgehead for any socialist program. Through the public sector democracy can be deepened, various services can be decommodified, the market can be tackled and, if not tamed, at the very least it can be contained, and a host of social transfers can be implemented through the public sector that would ensure a significant shift towards redistribution in the economy. This runs counter to the prevailing neo-liberal view that as much as possible of the economy, and of all other aspects of life for that matter, should be the prerogative of the individual. There can be no lasting compromise between such opposing views and labour must begin to tackle this fundamental contradiction, especially within the context of the unfolding national democratic revolution. To avoid this would be to allow decisions by default that directly effect the lives of working people.

The Alliance and the public sector

The ANC adopted a specific position in relation the public sector which is recorded in the RDP base document. To it's credit the ANC in government has begun to develop policies that, if implemented, should lead to public sector reform of a positive nature. But it is clear that implementation of a transformation agenda is a more complex process than at first imagined and many of these policy proposals do not go to the heart of transformation issues, such as the relationship between workers and management, or they gloss over the ideological nature of certain decisions, for example in the case of privatisation. Specific problems have arisen in relation to rationalisation and

voluntary retrenchments in the public service, the restructuring of state assets as envisaged in the National Framework Agreement, the process of the setting up of democratic local government and the new areas of government opened up by the constitution, such as the various statutory commissions. The Alliance does not have a policy debate or discussion that deals with any of these matters in any detail. As a result government is left to take whatever decisions it deems fit, unless they are determined to be of a mutual interest between workers and management. This allows the scope for fairly important restructuring without even consulting unions and workers. A good example of this is policies around tenders and procurement, which are deemed to be the business of government alone, yet when one considers it further are essentially removing the government and the public sector from whole areas of economic activity.

Strategic opportunities

In this context COSATU and the public sector unions have real choices to make. The first is to resist all change and perpetuate the inequities and inefficiencies of the current situation. This is not really an option, but is a possibility if the unions do not respond to the various challenges. The other is to allow the government and its managers, advised primarily by capital, to lead a transformation that emphasises a narrowly defined economic efficiency at the expense of services, workers and the assets of the people. Such transformation would speak the language of the RDP and the new South Africa, talk of equity, gender empowerment, affirmative action, and all the other noble ideals that the democratic movement has as its vision. But in reality the dictates of capital and the managerial agenda would ensure that workers bore the brunt of change, were made redundant to preserve management's security and privileges, and would ensure that simple cost accounting became

the measure of efficiency in the public sector, leading to the rapid decline in the services delivered. This is a doomsday scenario, but one that is also very possible. The other alternative is for labour to set the agenda for change in the public sector. In many respects but with limited effect the progressive unions have in fact done this in any



case up until now. The advantage of this option is that it allows labour to ensure that change does not undermine the political objectives of the broad democratic movement, as well as the public and workers interests. This requires both macro and micro strategies. The sheer size and nature of the problem also means that labour must have an integrated strategy towards the public sector and have clear priorities in relation to its transformation.

Macro level transformation issues

At this level COSATU is in a strong position. The Alliance ensures it an entry level on policy making that few other organisations can boast. This does not mean that COSATU's

positions are necessarily carried by the Alliance, and labour will have to consider what options it has if the ANC in government pursues a middle of the road agenda or ignores the demands that labour should be making in relation to the public sector. It also does not mean, as the NFA has shown, that COSATU can maximise the space it has in relation to the public sector once it wins it. The re-launching of the Public Sector Coordinating Committee offers an opportunity for COSATU to develop the necessary strategy and capacity to advance its agenda in relation to the public sector. But the policy making capacity of the federation needs to be beefed up to ensure that all the current processes of reform and restructuring are carefully monitored and proposals are regularly revised by the federation and affiliates. This will limit the fragmented approach to the sector that has been a feature of labour's position in the recent past. It could allow issues such as nationalisation to be linked to restructuring that involves some degree of privatisation, by ensuring that a basket of social goods, for example, health, education, housing and welfare, are kept away from the clutches of the market and the private sector in so far as this is possible. It will also mean that unions can share information, best practices, worst experiences and case studies.

The key issues for labour to address at the macro level are;

- the nature and character of the state. The state at various levels is charged with the management and supervision of the public sector. In this respect the notion of a national democratic developmental state (NDS) for example, which is currently one being articulated in the liberation movement, does not really pronounce on the class bias and orientation of the state. This could have profound effects for labour in the public sector and more generally. Labour needs to ensure that the class character and orientation of the NDS is clearly articulated, understood and fought for.

- the relationship of the public sector to private capital and the principle of social ownership as being superior to private especially in relation to basic social goods and services. In this respect labour as an organised force has not really pronounced on issues such as the privatisation of certain state assets. No sound argument has been given for the state to give up any of its assets yet this is happening. Labour has also not clearly outlined any alternative forms of communal private ownership that could be put forward in relation to this process, or example unbundling parts of the private sector into cooperatives and worker share ownership schemes.

- the issue of the budget and the proportion of expenditure that is defined as consumption expenditure (within which salaries are included). At the moment international comparisons are used to explain the size of the salary bill, but not anything else. Labour must offer alternatives that allow for a decrease in consumption expenditure but that also address the income differentials between public sector workers and that improve and increase the share of income to the poor, women and other marginalised or discriminated against groups.

- the principles whereby appropriate staffing levels for the delivery of goods and services in the public sector at the various levels is decided. Currently the only measure is money, not what services are needed in the community. This has the perverse effect of always forcing downsizing of the public sector, even when the population is increasing, services needed to be extended to groups that previously did not receive them and no other considerations are taken into account.

- the principles for determining the appropriate levels for service delivery and the relationship between national, provincial and local government. The public sector is still fragmented even at the level of public administration,

“
It seems clear that in the short to medium term labour needs to do a number of things; identify key areas of the public sector, defend these to remain in the public sector or ensure they are nationalised if they are not already so
”

where different government departments duplicate functions and services. For example health is a service managed at three levels of government. It should be managed at local level, monitored at provincial level and overall policy formulation should be at national levels.

- the issue of social accounting which could ensure better monitoring of the performance of the public sector in general. (Conrad's input needs to come in here)

Micro level transformation issues

Much of the management discourse on public sector transformation emphasises principles of a micro nature. Some of these revolve around management practices, such as ensuring devolution of services and functions to the lowest level possible, or the reorganisation of work into teams as against hierarchies, for example. Labour should actively investigate each of these issues and proposals by management. It is often the case that these types of suggestions are dismissed out of hand by labour, since they very often come with an agenda of removing job security or labour standards. But these types

of issues are not necessarily interdependent and labour could delink the ideological agenda from the reform of administration, management and work, and take the lead on these issues. Some of these issues, for example the devolution of responsibility to appropriate levels could be beneficial to transforming some jobs from bureaucratic ones to positions where individuals can use their skills and initiative.

(I think a summary of some of the micro level proposals we made should go in here.)

Priorities

It seems clear that in the short to medium term labour needs to do a number of things; identify key areas of the public sector, defend these to remain in the public sector or ensure they are nationalised if they are not already so. These are education, health, housing, water, electricity, and welfare. The last of these is a misnomer but refers to pensions, grants and cash transfer payments. A good example of what can happen if such a strategy is not pursued is education and the rationalisation process where key teachers have left the public service and drawn the better off students into the private education sector. This in turn has a negative effect on public education and inequality rises. This must involve a "basket of goods" that can be traded, e.g. privatisation of state mining interests for nationalisation of health.

Define a medium terms vision of the role of the public sector in relation to the kind of society we want. This would ensure equity, affordable services, full employment etc. (Karl, I think this is an argument for social democracy, but don't tell anyone!) For example, devolution of service delivery functions but provincial and national monitoring.

Define key short-term objectives in relation to improving the quality of goods and services the public sector delivers. (Again, the micro strategy comes in here.) This must include a framework for social accounting. ♦

Are you suffering from alienation? How are we going to deal with racial divisions in our country? And should office bearers have cell phones? These are some of thought – provoking issues being raised in *Nehawu Worker's* members' forum. Have a read and decide for yourself!

Alienation – alien nation

Despite its popularity in the analysis of contemporary life, the idea of "alienation" remains an ambiguous concept with elusive meanings, the following variants being most common:

Powerlessness

Powerlessness: the feeling that one's destiny is not under one's own control but is determined by external agents, fate, luck, or institutional arrangements – as is the case with MDC (Mpumalanga Development Corporation). As a worker and a family bread winner, your whole future is whipped from under your feet – suddenly you are jobless, homeless and helpless. Or as in the case of the newly employed official who has got it all: wit, enthusiasm, good human relations, tertiary qualification, but the employer/manager feels threatened (for no apparent reason) and silently swears to himself/herself that this individual will never survive at the workplace. The employer/manager will sabotage every advancement opportunity of this targeted person until they are forced to resign or slowly dwindle away.

Meaningless

Meaningless: refers either to the lack of comprehensibility or consistent meaning in any domain or action or to a generalised sense of purposelessness in life. This is what you see in people who work but are not motivated in any way. They are the ones who would rather concentrate on dodging work and turn that

**Compiled by:
Nomvuyo Ngwaxaxa,
Mpumalanga Province**

into a career, which bears fruitless trees

Normlessness

Normlessness: the lack of commitment to shared social prescriptions for behavior, cultural estrangement, social isolation and perhaps self-estrangement.

Causes of Alienation

There are at least five casual theories of alienation, viz. the economic, technological, sociological, philosophical, philosophic existential, and psychological. The economic theory is identified with Karl Marx, a philosopher, for who the epitome of evil was the property system and especially private ownership of the means of production. This economic root established the basis for the expropriation of the worker, both as a person and as a producer, and led inevitably to the alienation of man from man.

Those who emphasise technological sources are concerned not simply with the direct impact of automation but basically with the ascendancy of the technological spirit. The argument is that people become alienated by being forced to adjust their lifestyle to the machine.

The dominating sociological thesis today is that alienation is the

middle term in a formulation that reads "the decline of the local community based on the traditional and the corresponding emergence of a secular society based on the large scale and mass action leads to a sense of alienation. This in turn finds expression in a wide variety of disorders, including apathy, inter-group hostility, and volatile social movements seeking direct influence on the political process. The influence that alienation has increased in the modern era is difficult to document, as it is probably based on a too romantic idea of the pre-modern community."

Manifestations of alienation

With respect to conditions, the main principle to be recognised is that alienation is not a free floating element or force but operates rather within the limits of social structure. The emergence of protest movements has at least as much to do with the level and kind of social control applied by authorities, or the political structure of the community, as it does with the degree of alienation.

Finally, one of the four major mechanisms may generally be invoked to make predictions about the manifestations of alienation. Alienation either:

- Turns inward on self, hence the development of physiological stress symptoms;
- Generates the need for substitute satisfactions, hence the search for "community" in social movements

or the emphasis on leisure pursuits among alienated workers;

- Generalises out of the domain of its origin into other spheres of life. For instance, it causes those who feel powerless to avoid politically relevant information because in their world view knowledge is not power, since control is impossible.

Overcoming Alienation

For those who follow in the Marxian tradition, the necessity for economic

change is central. This is because they hold that socialism will not only alter the work relationship and the production process but will sustain the necessary moral climate and thought ways. And if the economic revolution is not easily achievable at the national level, there are instructive models to be found in communication societies where the aim is to encourage active and shared participation in meaningful work.

If "creative work" is the primary solution for the Marxist, "commit-

ment" is the key for the Nehawu worker. In so far as a solution is possible, the existentialist finds a solution. People can transcend themselves by creating a meaningful existence out of their own freedom of choice. A solution is not merely a matter of bringing an individual's repressed strivings and unconscious needs to awareness through therapy. It is also a difficult matter of developing a less repressive society and culture, a challenge for us all. Forward with the struggle! ♦

The December 1 fallacy

The reasons for and solution to the present socio politico alienation displayed by large sections and strata of the Coloured community was done a horrible injustice on December 1. In the interest of short term political gain, narrow ethnic chauvinism and polarisation of the South African nation, whose fabric the National Party destroyed through institutionalized racism, December 1 is no better than its progenitor and protégé – the National Party. It was an attempt to chase Coloured people into a Coloured laager against the tide of transformation, equitable redistribution of national resources and the building of one South African nation.

Turning the minds of the people

There can be no doubt whatsoever that the degree of oppression against Coloured differed sharply from that meted out against Blacks. This was not done by accident but through design by the various Nazi-Afrikaner political scientists within the National Party. The desired effect is alienation in all spheres of life from the African majority of our country for effective political subjugation of the latter. Coupled with

by Puddy February, Nehawu Western Cape Province

this, years of bombardment with anti-Black propaganda through, amongst others, school history texts, magazines, print and electronic media and films underscored and increased anti-Black sentiment. This pervades the very being of Coloured people: their racist songs, jokes, jibes – even their lullabies from the cradle forces them to sleep. Otherwise some Black bogey man or the milkman will catch them and presumably eat them up.

Thus Blackness was, and is equated and associated with negativity: stupidity, laziness, sickness, the devil incarnate and all the social woes of this world. Racial discrimination against Africans and alienation from Africa is thus a logical conclusion of the above.

Like the Whites

Coloured people see themselves as an extension of White South Africa. They see themselves as appendages of the white middle class and actively participate in discrimination against Africans either by commis-

sion or omission.

The White ruling bloc further compartmentalised civil South Africa by sub-dividing it into smaller ethnic minorities like Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Indian, Greek and so on. Servicing and budgetary allocations correlated with support at the polls. This balkanisation facilitated effective control.

The December 1 movement wants to utilise Coloured slave history as a bulwark against the African National Congress in a misguided, childish attempt at politicking. The denial of the Coloured history is total; all relevant traces of it has been obliterated by the National Party. The present urbanised and rural components of the Coloured generation has no sense of slavery and it basically leaves them cold. The present Coloured has no affinity to the African. Certain physical Caucasian attributes like white skin, straight hair, pointed nose, and so on are stressed as positive. Negroid features are stressed as negative although there is no scientific basis for this perverted attitude. Even the African is subjected to Black beauty treatment in the form of toxic skin lighteners. Misplaced differences in culture and language are also used as a pretext to differentiate

amongst the so-called races and ethnic groupings.

Achievements of the struggle

The patronage and clientalism of the ruling White minority firmly put the Coloured within the White camp where they can be located today. The political rumblings like marches by reactionary religious groupings – both Christian and Moslem – and other quasi-interest groupings against socio politico issues (like abortion and the omission of Christian prayers from parliamentary life) is an inevitable development in the new democratic order with its opening up and deepening of democracy.

The boldness of the marchers, though, cannot but evince a wry smile: we in the ANC have done a job well. We fought and died for unfettered peaceful protest action. Political clientalism has it that a support base must be rewarded financially and otherwise. Thus the allocation of grants, pensions, bursaries and other social securities to Coloured skewed against African is no accident. This preferential treatment has all changed, of course, with the advent of political justice with parity in salaries, equal opportunities in career options, subsidisation broadened to all South Africans, rationalisation of services and transformation of the whole society.

Divided we will fall

The current spate of socio politico cultural formations must come clean with their aims and objectives. They must not pander to transient cultural and religious notions of Coloured people under the pretext of a renaissance. The ANC must be clearly challenged on its policy with regard to transformation and affirmative action. Our membership deserve far better than being accused of alleged discrimination against fellow South Africans by way of policies and at a grassroots level. The ANC is not guilty of discrimination against Coloured

people of the Western Cape. In fact, the ANC is not even the governing party in this province. All protest action should be directed against the ruling National Party's Kriel who promised Coloured people, in exchange for votes in the 1994 elections, a Western Cape free of Africans and the ANC. The location of parliament is coincidental. Kriel's office must deal with the problems of his voters in the first instance and those of the province in general.

One identity, one nation

South Africans need to build and forge one single nation with a common South African identity. The economy which has been ravaged by mismanagement needs to be restructured. A quality life for all needs to be ensured within our borders. This is an ideal only the ANC can inculcate and realise as a political party at this juncture in our country's history. It is precisely for this reason that a significant section of the Coloured community joined the ANC to fight alongside our African sisters and brothers. They did this by military and peaceful ways to rid our country of apartheid with all its inhuman and wasteful characteristics. It is a cause we have entered as Africans and not as some backward Coloured political partner to shape it, steer it and monitor it in our constitutional structure. We have shed the ethno baggage bequeathed by Verwoerd, Vorster, Botha, de Klerk and their predecessors to embrace our true African ancestry. We have done this to fight a system of sophisticated genocide by a White ruling elite in collusion with South African capital.

The Coloured community is not confused or in trauma regarding their political home. It is a simple phenomenon of people voting for a political party they identify with, namely the National Party of de Klerk. December 1 obviously saw a political gap in this voting mass affiliated to the unfriendly White laager and wants to exploit it. This is at the cost of unity and further fragmentation of the South African electorate.

The Coloureds in the White laager realised that Africans can govern a country. They realised that they do not want to dispossess them or rape their wives and daughters. They are therefore looking for a new political home, in fact, a dungheap where they can rule and live out the rest of their unspent misplaced superiority. The ANC is not such a home with its policies and track record of non racialism, equality, accountability and democracy – hence the trek between the dregs of our political spectrum: the National Party, the Democratic Party and religious parties.

Where votes will be cast

Even though the malicious lies of the National Party during the 1994 election proved unfounded, Coloured people who cannot be won over to the ANC will be stuck with their reactionary parties for some time. We are thus quite comfortable to contest the next general election without them. The ANC is not accountable to its enemies with regard to policy which has been developed by our rank and file membership under the guidance of democratically elected leadership. We are confident of another landslide victory in the next general election. Credentials and vision for a restructured South African speaks for itself: the building of a single South Africa cognisant and respectful of multi-cultural and lingual diversity.

Thus our former friends and enemies in December 1 should take heed. They should not fall into the trap of creating political monsters and miniature Franksteins at the expense of gullible voters weaned from the racist National Party. The most offensive of this is attacking the ANC in the process – ostensibly as a factor which impeded Coloured socio politico economic mobility. We have liberated South Africa. Those not in our fold will be won over in time. Others will remain where they are to take their racist ideology and backward philosophy to their graves. ♦

Unions in the new era

I usually refer to our trade union as a developing labour organisation in a developing country when confronted by the membership about the scarcity of benefits, as an organising tool, in our union.

In actual fact, it has always been a mammoth task and exhaustive effort to succeed in defending the financial status of the organisation. Whilst staff associations were exhausting their unavailable funds on benefits, unions were exhausting their unavailable funds on benefits to gain a quantitative membership. Our union was redirecting its funds to capacity-building programmes for the recruited membership, in order to gain a qualitative membership.

But the latest developments and achievements in the Social Benefits have come to my rescue. Credit should be given to the comrades in that structure for a job well done.

What has prompted me to write are my experiences of the CEC meeting on 11-13 December 1996 and the debate on the issue of benefits. The reality that our union is developing was in fact evidenced by the kind of discussions the CEC was engrossed in as far as honoraria for office bearers and shop stewards are concerned. Irony caught me bare handed, to say the least. And I've just observed a need to share the experiences with the other comrades, so that they should exercise extreme caution when taking the debate further, and not be ruled by emotions.

It is not my intention to revisit the CEC decisions, or, even worse, to repudiate them. I had enough chance in the CEC to raise my contrary views. There are more realities of an organisational nature that one needs to interrogate, and in fact be informed by, when in an attempt to confront and address the realities on the ground, if I may quote the CEC terminology on benefits.

The issue of honoraria culmi-

**Victor Sjekula
Mbanga, Secretary,
Queenstown State
Administration
Branch, Eastern Cape**

nated into some kind of confrontational debates in the CEC. CEC delegates portrayed mixed attitudes. Some came up in full support of the special benefit, other were violently opposed to it. They said it is still premature for the organisation to give in to bureaucratic development. Others just zipped their mouths, maybe in consent, I don't know.

Although many comrades claimed that they were articulating mandated positions in the heated debates, no one could be myopic of the coming in of self-enrichment and individualistic debates in the union. The fundamental principle of a collective approach to social development which used to unite the oppressed masses before, and which is fading away in the new terrain of struggle, was

given a test.

Key in the debate in support of honorariums and provision of cell phones for office bearers, regardless of its financial implications, was an interesting premise from which the debate was moved. This was the perception that there is a need for the organisation to confront and relate to the realities on the ground.

I relate this experience because these are the real debates we need to take further. All members on the ground should begin to engage in them at the beginning to mould this country for a socialist future. These are the real debates, the economic debates, that our own democracy is goaded to engage in by big business in the country, staunchly supported by the capitalists of the globe.

Whilst the democratic state is expected to respond positively to the demands of private capital and build and engage in such dialectical relationships with determinants of social development, the future of this country will be determined by how we, as the working class, fit into the new and decisive debates. In fact, by how we realistically relate to the new challenges. The signal in the crucial debate will be how in practice we succeed in taking further the argument of the growth and development approach in the building of SA's economy.

Whilst the comrades in the previous sessions of the CEC pledged their fullest support for the campaign of de-bureaucratization of the public service, they then came up in support of the advent of such tendencies in the organisation. This makes a mockery of looking at how we succeed in balancing theory and actuality in the organisational debates. It is no joke that it in fact begins to suggest the kind of positions our own comrades would buy if they were deployed into governance. It begins to interrogate the demise of cadreship, the emergence of the struggle for self-enrichment

“
I relate this experience because these are the real debates we need to take further. All members on the ground should begin to engage in them at the beginning to mould this country for a socialist future
”

and questions when we began to lose contact with the masses as a liberation movement.

There should be no attempt to oppose organisational development. But such development will always be questionable if it becomes ad hoc and responsive to realities. All the organisation needs is an intelligent

“

Whist we attempt to address such practical realities we need to be consistent not begin to contradict ourselves. What is good for the gander should be good for the goose, so the wise saying goes

”

engagement with the realities of the day. We need not lose sight of our strategic priorities.

Whist we attempt to address such practical realities we need to be consistent not begin to contradict ourselves. What is good for the gander should be good for the goose, so the wise saying goes. Allegations imposed against us, as workers in trade unionism, of being workerist should be rebutted.

Anyway, Nehawu is a developing labour organisation in a developing democratic state. This state is under siege from the far western bloc-driven neo-liberal agenda. It is therefore not immune to the current attempts by the drivers of the agenda to treat the entire world as one market place. These are the realities on the ground. ♦

Socialism is the future, let us build it now!

Should criminals be unionised?

South Africa is the 10th most dangerous country in the world. Crime is a product of the current capitalist system. Criminals are all part of the working class. As Cosatu we must establish a sector for them. Crime is better and acceptable if it is organised and professional. In the old apartheid days, for example, criminals (as members of the working class) conveniently made their activities racial. Politically it was justified crime. Crime by the previous government was perpetual. Its purpose was to oppress the majority forever – as such it was unjustified. Crime by MK was for the liberation of the SA masses. Its purpose was aimed at liberation day – as such it was justified. Crime which continues forever is unjustified. Crime which aims to end continuous crime is justified.

For example, unprofessional criminals are petty. They are dangerous as they panic and they make mistakes. They are wasteful. Professional criminals have logic, they reason, are organised, network and they have syndicates. Their only danger is their tactic to deliberately instil fear, for control purposes.

Crime in the old days

Before crime was organised in Soweto, you would lose a car in a hijacking or theft and despite being a political or community leadership person, never have the resources to get your car back. With the syndicates around, now you lose a car in the same way and we report it to one syndicate. If they agree that it was a mistake they simply network and get your car back.

Criminals who were politically correct then have now become

We live in fear of criminals every day of our lives.

Cde Bob Marley has some ideas on how to deal with crime. He invites you to respond

locked into the system. Even after liberation day they want to continue. This then shifts from being justified to becoming unjustified. Of course, some criminals argue that until capitalism is eradicated, the struggle goes on. Looked at in the 1969 Morogoro Conference, that is, the two stage theory, it might be correct to say crime (as part and parcel of the working class struggle) needs to continue until capitalism is ended, or until we have dealt with the economic exploitation of our people. Criminals must be socialists.

What is crime?

Crime is becoming enemy number one nowadays. I'm sure you are all heated up and provoked by the ideas above. I'm not going to answer the question "what is crime?" That is exactly what your articles must answer. Criminals range from, amongst others, children who steal peanut butter (like I did when I was young), to stealing cars, robbing banks, killing people, stealing government/employers property at work. (How many of our members take towels home?). But more importantly, if you harbour criminals you are as guilty as the one who committed the act. In every township and village, we know who the criminals are. There is no

need to tell the police because they also know who they are.

A lot of communities have accepted those criminals who do their deeds very far away, and who just lead a luxury peaceful life at home and in the street. When communities realise that you kill people, commit crimes right where you stay, or that you rape or do things declared immoral by that community, they will deal with you themselves, if they can. Otherwise they will sell you out to other able means like the police, for example. If you die, they will rejoice and celebrate your death.

Our own union members know criminals at work. There are those who enrich themselves, sell jobs, steal pensioners' money, take money of ghost workers and who are simply corrupt in other ways. You may say it is the police force's responsibility to deal with all this. You may say it is justified because people are just repossessing state property. You may use the usual excuse "what is the use? Even if you can report criminals, the police will do nothing". Some people fear that by speaking out they might lose their jobs because management is involved.

Living in fear

We are all living in fear. But on the other side, in the union we take decisions that we want to transform the public sector. This is a contradiction – in theory we want change, but in practice we are working against change.

All genuine fear! All of us are just victims of what capitalism created. The criminals have instilled that fear. Capitalism cannot survive without crime. That is why it ensures the above thinking. It is all so wrong. How can we all think about our own individual lives and not think as a collective/communal society anymore? If you are attacked in broad daylight today, people will not help you because they do not know you, but also because they fear for their own individual lives. What a pity.

Research which was reported

through the commercial press said that if crime continues at this pace, in five years SA will be governed completely by criminals.

Capitalism is an economic system. For it to survive it promotes the richness of a few through the exploitation of the majority. We also know that capitalism creates unemployment and it maximises profit through super-exploitation – all of which results in poverty and individualism as we all fight for survival.

The majority are exploited as part of the working class, which is made up of, amongst others, the intelligentsia, criminals and workers. All these formations fight for survival under the capitalist state. Or they fight for the eradication of this bad economic system.

Crime starts being very small from being non-existent. It develops as the system of capitalism grows. By the time capitalism reaches the imperialist state like in SA, crime reaches current proportions. Like workers, criminals are more dangerous when unorganised. When they are organised and professional, all the better.

Professional criminals do not have the political ambition to run for political office. They, however, instill fear into communities, take over decision-making informally and corrupt everyone with money. They even buy off politicians, corrupt them and govern through elected politicians.

Where to from here?

The Free State provincial chairperson likes to say: "Who said that crime does not pay? The SA State President was behind bars for 27 years."

With SA being the world's 10th most dangerous country, the South African Police Service (SAPS) alone will never solve the crime problem. Even if you pay more money to police officers and prison warders, they will be unable to deal with crime.

It is not enough to talk and talk and complain like everyone does. Here are my sober and concrete

suggestions towards this debate:

- Even if I am demobilised, I am still militant. Cde Sydney must establish a secret police force (you can call it super MK if you want). This group of able men and women must be taken out of society. They must lose all contact with the real world until crime is over. They must be trained to kill, be deployed into communities to uproot criminals ruthlessly. Crime in SA has turned too bloody violent, and you need genuine force. This will be justified crime aimed at ending unjustified crime.

- Pass a law through parliament, disarm everyone who owns a gun, including the police and bodyguards, the army, you name them. The Gun Free SA can only be made real by a law, not by voluntary handing over of weapons. This important campaign has been made a mockery of. If you carry a gun to Namibia, they keep it at the airport for you.

- All public sector workers must come forward and report all they know of or do which is wrong. If you do not trust Popcru members, report to a Nehawu office. We will ensure that the case is dealt with in full. This is a practical way of transforming the public sector. It is a positive way of contributing towards the Crime Prevention Campaign.

Side by side with the national democratic revolution, criminals are waging a vicious struggle for the eradication of capitalism. We must support their cause, which is genuine.

Criminals who kill, rape, and commit other terrible acts must be regarded as and called psychopaths – not criminals.

Until we have defeated capitalism, we must not have illusions that we can completely end crime. Crime will be in existence until the downfall of capitalism is celebrated. ♦

Nehawu Worker will start a new section on crime. Workers are urged to send in points of view, suggestions and experiences. Let others know how you think crime should be dealt with.

Economic liberalisation

What it is doing to poverty and unemployment

The opening up of the economy to multinationals and foreign capital without any barriers and restrictions imposes serious threats to SA's economic sovereignty, self-reliance and development. There is a concerted onslaught led by powerful international finance capital. Instead of cultivating policies to protect the national economy and human resource development, the government is restructuring the economy under the dictates of World Bank, IMF and other financial institutions.

This is being done without involving the trade unions and other democratic formations in the formulation of viable alternatives.

Repercussions

The steps taken by the national government is leading to the destabilisation of indigenous industries, liquidation of the public sector – both in the core and service sector, de-industrialisation through closure and retrenchment, massive growth of unemployment and impoverishment in the respective countries.

The public sector in this country has played a significant role in the process of development and provision of employment. Liquidation of this sector will have serious negative effects on the lives of many South Africans.

Apartheid left behind a stark legacy of colonial-feudal backwardness, of poverty, illiteracy and disease. It left behind a legacy of deliberately planted and unsolved tribal and ethnic divisions. These continue to feed mutual political tension and even armed conflict.

Developed capitalist countries are today, as in the past, eyeing the market for investment in South Africa. South Africa, like other developing countries, is the object

The opening up of SA's economy to multinationals and foreign capital presents serious problems unless some rules are made, argues Mike Bongumuzi Dube

of the so-called structural adjustment programme as worked out and imposed by IMF and World Bank. South Africa is a signatory to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) treaty in which the developed countries stand to gain most, while the developing countries will be picking the crumbs.

These actions are backed up by the theory of "Neo liberalism" and economic rationalism propagated by the developed countries. In our country these are reflected in the current propaganda, policy approaches and practices of what has come to be known as Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR).

Some of the strategies since 1994

Since the 1994 election, South Africa has been trying to embark on a path of development. It has done this through certain measures such as the RDP, state intervention in the matter of pooling and allocating resources, and directing investment

into certain vital spheres of economy. The government was motivated by the desire to overcome the legacy of centuries-old colonial feudal backwardness.

Rising food prices and growing unemployment have aggravated the incidence of poverty, particularly in the rural areas. Insufficient attention to investment in social infrastructure, especially in relation to education and health, has also inhibited development.

The major challenge facing the country now is the economic liberalisation programme or reforms that are manifested in the policy of IMF and World Bank.

These are some of the components of their strategies:

- Devaluation of the local currency;
- Contracting more and more fresh loans from the international financial institutions to tide over financial stringency;
- Slashing of subsidies and government expenditure on public services and social obligations, so as to reduce budgetary deficit;
- Allowing market forces to operate without hindrance, thereby removing measures of price control and allowing prices to rise and find their own level;
- Loosening trade and foreign exchange controls, reducing tariff barriers and thus liberalising imports;
- Launching a programme of privatisation and dismantling the public sector built during the earlier decades of apartheid, through various open as well as devious means;

**“
Rising food prices and
growing unemployment
have aggravated the
incidence of poverty,
particularly in the
rural areas.
”**

Why trade unions should invest

- Reducing the role of the state in the national economy;
- By offering several concessions, wooing multinational corporations and foreign firms for their investment and technology;
- Introducing flexible labour markets to suit the demands of foreign and local investors.

A combination of all, or some of these have been in operation, depending on prevailing circumstances, and taking on local colour in each situation. But whatever the specific form it has assumed, in common in the conceptual sense is liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation. This is its ideological stock in trade, based on the philosophy of the repeatedly sung glories of "Free Market" and the "Competition."

The results of several years of liberalisation in other developing countries have shown that these policies have only further aggravated the disease they were out in the first place to cure. Problems of poverty and unemployment have grown worse than before. Inequalities have widened. Access to education and health services for the mass of the poor has become more difficult.

What needs to be done

In view of dangers posed by economic liberalisation and reforms, the government needs to co-operate with trade union and other democratic forces in order to:

- Fight for full employment, the introduction and extension of social security, and the raising of the standard of living for all people of South Africa;
- Accelerate economic growth to generate more employment, to ensure social progress and workers' access to resources;
- Ensure job security, trade union and human rights and to fight against exploitation. It needs to eradicate bondage and ensure equal wages irrespective of race and gender;
- Formulate policies that are geared towards eradication of poverty and massive unemployment. ♦

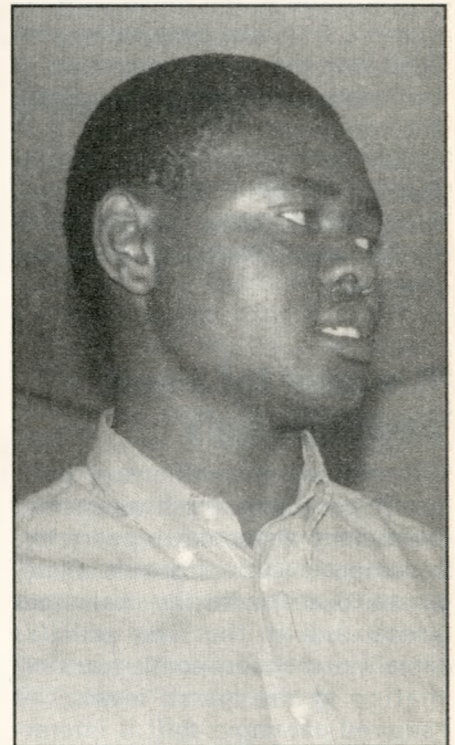
Trade unions need to start thinking seriously about the benefits of investment, argues Mike Bongumuzi Dube. Here he talks about why, and how

A dramatic paradigm shift is needed in the analysis of investment across the trade union spectrum. This is a logical and essential part of the transformation envisaged in the new economic policies in South Africa. The critical characteristic of the required shift is the move from a judgmental to a developmental role by trade unions. This reflects a changing perception world-wide of the nature of investment and its main purpose. Although there is an increasing awareness of the need for change, there is a lack of overall clarity, which the development and implementation must attempt to remedy.

Post-apartheid society and a new democratic dispensation has presented dynamic and in most cases complicated challenges. It has also presented opportunities for the entire society. For the trade union movement the 1994 elections brought more a complex and sometimes a bag of confusing items.

What the trade unions are there for

Trade unions are formed traditionally to ensure that rights of workers are protected and advanced. The process that unions follow to advance and uplift the living standards of its members is collective bargaining and collective actions. Trade unions ensure the attainment of these goals through collective action and collective wisdom. The major goal of employers, in particular private sector employers, is to open business with the aim of



ensuring maximisation of profits to satisfy the shareholders through venturing into investments.

Throughout the process of collective bargaining, unions endeavour to ensure that workers also get a share, wage or salary increases out of company profits. One prominent black businessman used an analogy regarding unions investments. He said: "It is quite encouraging to see unions going the route of investment because they can learn that increases and salaries are not paid from capital investment but are paid from profits earned through investments. The venture can improve levels of productivity, because workers now have a direct interest".

Architects of working class struggle against capital exploitation people like Karl Marx must be groaning in their graves to see working class leaders embracing the ideas of profound capitalist like Adam Smith. But the notion of trade union investment poses a basic point of departure. Organisations will have to understand and accept that change is a constant feature of reality. In addition, change is chaotic and revolutionary rather than orderly and evolutionary.

The trade union movement requires a futuristic perspective that deals with the primary objectives of the trade union movement versus the renewal/transformation that occurs in a synchronous circular fashion. The fact is that unions need sustainable financial capabilities to survive more effectively, efficiently and viably.

The need for a new paradigm shift

The old anti-investment or anti-profit paradigm is still operating, particularly at the micro policy formulation level. It is grossly inadequate to deal with the challenges presented by the new policies aimed at socio-economic transformation at the macro level. The required paradigm shift is interactively linked to major changes in the manner in which trade unions operate. This has already begun to make an impact on discourse around investment. The following are factors that necessitate the shift:

- The onslaught by employers and the state, as an employer, to down scale the work force. In the modern world class economy manual labour is regularly replaced by machines and computerisation of work;
- Globalisation of the economy. South Africa's economy used to be protected and closed. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) poses a bigger challenge to the manufacturing sectors of our economy. Foreign goods are now available to our market at very low



prices compared to locally manufactured goods;

- Union membership is shrinking in sectors like mining and manufacturing;
- Union members want material gains out of their subscriptions. Unions must be in a position to cover issues as part of the workers' packages. This includes funeral benefits, death benefits and bursaries for unions members and their dependents;
- During the 1980's workers joined the unions to fight not only for their better working conditions but also for the political situation in the country as the whole to be changed. They fought for apartheid to be eradicated. As a result of the political banning of the liberation movements, trade unions acted as the political home for the majority of workers who didn't identify with apartheid. We are left with assuming that workers who joined the trade unions during the 1980's, joined because progressive trade unions identified with the liberation movements. They presented a hope for freedom. Workers also joined because their conditions of services were disastrous. Unions presented hope for improvement;
- There is a need to provide access to quality education for millions of South African workers previously

deprived of such opportunities by apartheid policies. Although resource are limited the government has the responsibility to ensure massive education access for workers and other sectors of society, like youth and women. But the financial constraints could hinder the government from delivering that massive project at once.

What are the advantages for trade unions by venturing into investments?

Advantages to trade unions making investments include:

- Trade unions will be able to supplement income received from members through subscriptions;
- It will help the financial sustainability of trade unions;
- Trade unions will be able to offer workers incentives like funeral benefits, death benefits and bursaries for its members;
- Trade unions will be able to start participating and have a say in big business. They can share in the profits of big capital. The notion of black empowerment can be exercised effectively;
- The trade union movement will also be able to improve the conditions of services for its own staff and start to attract more skilled employees from the private sector. The competition for skills with the private sector can be enhanced.

Focused tasks with mutually understood criteria for investment

It is essential that not only the National Office Bearers (NOBs) have clear guidelines for investment but that workers also know exactly how their money is going to be invested and where. This is especially important for those worker leaders and grassroots workers who are unfamiliar with investment practices. NOBs needs to be able to justify decisions in accordance with open (not secret) criteria, and be able to make suggestions for improvement. Workers need to know about the

dividend and profit gains after each investment. They also need to know how the profits are intended to be used. Here are some examples of investment criteria and guidelines regarding positive investment:

- Investment in areas that advance the interests of and standards in the disadvantaged communities;
- Investment in areas that ensure education for the workers and their dependents;
- Investment in areas that create employment.

However, each investment portfolio must be geared towards ensuring that there is growth maximisation of workers' funds – and not the opposite.

Assessing worker investments

Equally important to investment practice is the periodical assessment of each investment portfolio. Workers' handbooks, journals or self-assessment sheets can be used to encourage worker participation in decision-making regarding investment. These guide workers and help to enable them to take responsibility on an on-going basis. They also remind workers of the criteria used for each investment portfolio and help improve workers' understanding of investment.

Worker control in investments

The inherent contradiction between investment and securing the gains and rights of workers exist. It is therefore important to make a detailed analysis of investment at the micro level and macro levels. This will help to make explicit the principles which inform the practice, as well as proposing manageable changes.

Micro practices need to be examined across the whole range of factors. The benefit intended for workers would have to be looked at. The mechanism for realising this vision of investment is worker involvement. And worker control is the key guiding principle in any investment venture. ♦



International Update

Alex la Guma Brigade

The Alex la Guma Brigade, consisting of 38 members, visited Cuba in December 1996, as reported in the last issue of *Nehawu Worker*. They spent about five weeks in Cuba. Some members of the brigade came from organisations and others went in their individual capacity.

We will be publishing a series of articles from other Nehawu comrades who were part of the brigade. They will reflect on personal experiences in Cuba. Keep reading your *Nehawu Worker*!

Blockade

Only two countries, namely USA and Israel, voted against the latest United Nations resolution calling for the lifting of the inhuman blockade of Cuba. Now the world knows why Israel is reneging on the implementation of the agreed peace deals with the Palestinians.

Arrival of Cuban doctors

The moves to improve health care services, more especially in rural areas, have been given a further boost with the arrival of 350 Cuban doctors. This should serve as a warning to the majority of our local doctors who have private practice vested interests.

International visitors

A high-powered delegation from the Public Services International (PSI), consisting of the General

Secretary, Hans Engelberts and Deputy Secretary, Alan Leather, visited South Africa. They held meetings with various affiliates of PSI and non-affiliates.

Unison visit

In December 1996 Cdes Maggie Dunn and Keith Hodgson came to South Africa as part of phase four of the joint Nehawu-Unison recruitment of professionals project. Despite the last minute notice to regions and the festive season mood, the visit was on the whole fruitful and gave the visitors a good idea of what follow-up is needed in this project. The three regions that were visited were KwaZulu/Natal, Western Cape and Northern Province. We are awaiting reports from unions which will indicate the true success of the project. Discussions on possible follow-up to this project are continuing.

Visit from GSA Mauritius

The president of the laundry workers' branch of the Government Servants' Association (GSA) of Mauritius passed through South Africa between 5 and 7 January 1997. She was on her way to Israel to attend a seminar. We organised a one-day programme for her which included a visit to our offices and meeting with NOBs who were present at the time. She was accompanied by the Acting Regional Secretary for Gauteng, Cde Shela Sikiti, on a brief visit to Soweto and Baragwanath Hospital. The president promised to come on a more direct visit to South Africa in future.

Swaziland situation

The Swaziland government arrested four leaders of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU). It accused them of contravening the public order on the eve of the three day general strike. The strike was called to push forward the 27 demands put to the government a year ago. The arrests are the latest of Swaziland's government's efforts to derail the planned action.

Unison's dispute with Hillingdon Hospital

The dispute with Hillingdon Hospital is finally resolved. The dispute was over the dismissal of the workers who went out on strike protesting changes in their working conditions. The changes came as a result of privatisation. An out-of-court settlement has been reached with the employer, but it did not result in reinstatement of the workers. ♦

HAVE YOUR SAY! SEND US YOUR ARTICLES

We encourage comrades in regions, branches and institutions, to write articles on issues affecting them, to use this edition for information flow, and for debating key strategic issues. We encourage articles to come through the region, but individual positions are also accepted. Please include your contact details. Send your articles and/or letters to:

The Editorial Collective
Nehawu Worker
PO Box 10812
Johannesburg 2000
or Fax 011- 333 9018



The unfinished story

A visit to Cuba would be a dream come true for many South African comrades. Ratshoho Makhetha was on the first solidarity brigade to Cuba in December last year. It was his dream come true

My dream, like all comrades who acknowledge the contribution of Cuban solidarity to the liberation of our country, was to visit Cuba and share with the Cuban people their experience and life. This dream came true when FOCUS arranged a solidarity brigade to Cuba. I must confess at first I had mixed feelings. I asked myself whether I should go or wait for another opportunity. My decision to go was ratified by the NEC. It was a giant step to realising my long cherished dream.

About the brigade

The composition of the brigade was a blunder. Some people who formed part of this brigade were reactionaries. Their aim was to get first-hand experience of the hardships of the Cuban people and the manner in which the Commander General President of Cuba is a dictator. They wanted to see how rife human rights violations are in Cuba. This group was identified by Cubans also who began to interrogate their credentials (Sunday Independent 26 January 1996). This is a clear indication of why some brigadistas wanted to visit Cuba. The type of questions that were sometimes asked left some of us breathless. Sometimes they also annoyed the hosts. An example of this is the meeting with the Secretary



General of CTC where a question was asked about prostitution as an industry in Cuba. In future whoever organises the brigade should interview the brigadistas.

On the brigade were comrades who came from the trade unions and progressive mass organisations. They understood the principles of socialism in the Cuban context. A split began to show amongst the members of the brigade. Comrades began to take strategic position in terms of questioning and meeting attendance. Meetings that involved politics in particular were to be attended by those that come from that field in South Africa.

Working in the fields

There were complaints about the job that was done in the fields. Some got scratches from the twigs. There were also complaints about the menu that was served as well as the cold shower that we had to take every day. It was a real challenge to us to begin to understand the hardships caused by the US economic stranglehold on Cuba. To some of us who actually understood the importance of solidarity, this was not a threat but rather a challenge to begin to accommodate others' views and give them direction and a clear understanding of what we actually stood for in Cuba.

This does not suggest that the brigade was a failure. But future people need to be politically screened to avoid misrepresentation of South Africans in the eyes of the Cuban community.

The solidarity work

The whole brigade camped at Julio Antonio Mella International Camp, some kilometers outside Havana City in the Havana Province. The camp was surrounded by large orange and sugar cane fields which were run as co-operatives by the communities. The South African brigade worked on the oranges fields and on the construction site where they were assisting in erecting a the new dining hall. I only participated in the picking of oranges and did not attempt to set foot in the construction site. This was not because I did not like construction work, but I found more challenge was in the fields.

In the mornings we awoke every time the artificial cock crowed (a recorded version). We took a bath and then went to a parade. Here we were informed about the historic days of Cuba. If there was any celebration or historic day celebrated back home it was announced at the same parade. Then it was a long walk to the fields, carrying ladders and bags that were used in the picking of oranges (mandarinas). It reminded me of back home in the old unspoiled

Africa where people sang when they were working. We would sing from the camp up to the fields and throughout the day while working. We felt at home. Sharing everything with the Cubans we worked with was a bonus. The feeling that overwhelmed us is not easy to express in words. The more we worked with the Cubans the closer we became to the Cubans and their way of life. To us it was solidarity in practice as opposed to sloganeering about the sloganeering about the solidarity. It was not enough but it meant a lot to them. They could not express their appreciation to the contribution that we were making. Of oranges that we plucked some were sent to the market, others exported and the surplus sent to the hospitals. This was the kind of economic contribution that we gave on Cuban soil.

About the co-operatives

After the revolution the farms that belonged the bourgeoisie class were confiscated and given to the peasants. Some of these farms were kept by the government. Products from these farms are taken to the market or exported. The surplus goes to hospitals and schools, except for produce from the tobacco plantations that is mainly used for export and that market. Mainly sugar cane, tobacco, oranges and naartjies are farmed. This is one of the aspects of the US demands from the Cuban revolution. They want all farms and sugar mills that were confiscated to be returned to their owner whether they are in US or any country. They must be compensated for their loss. The co-operative farms are mainly controlled by the workers. They appoint among themselves a president of the co-op and a management committee. The main objective is to see to the day-to-day running of the co-op. Work is done mainly manually because of the lack of oil and its bi-products. Some machines are rusting, even though some are still worker-friendly, and cannot be utilised. Reporting of the gross profit and the accounting is done to all members of the co-op by

the committee at the end of every financial year. This shows transparency that some countries dream about.

Visits to places

Visits to other establishments was always characterised by an accolade from the communities. Some places we visited included the young labour camp where the soldiers are involved in the coffee plantations. These young soldiers form part of the economic projects of Cuba. This does not mean that they are not ready for any invasion by the US. As they put it "in case of war we know exactly where to be at what time and what to do. We will throw aside our machetes and pick our rifles and defend the revolution. This is the vow we took in the name of Comrade Che".

In Caimito town we visited a school named after Che. It was clear that the students were in governance and control the school. As part of the practical work they do students work in the fields. This is to prepare them for the stage when they have to make a contribution in the economic upliftment of their country. It was quite impressive to hear a student saying that she would like to be a soldier after completion of her studies. They named the school after Che because Che's record and history speaks for itself and no answer can be given except for what Che was. They also are represented in the national assembly by their fellow students from all levels of education.

Cuban-South African solidarity

A visit which included laying a wreath at the Jose Marti monument in Havana town was a clear indication of how the new general appreciates the contributions made by their predecessors to the liberation of Cuba. The highlight of the day was paying homage to Alex la Guma, after whom the brigade was named. His body was laid to rest at one of the oldest cemetery in the



The Nehawu brigades in Cuba comrades Makhetha, Nkwane and Ramodise

Latin America "Columbus Cemetery." The cemetery is made of granite stone and has tombs inside. It's in the same cemetery where the Cuban soldier and internationalists were laid to rest. It was really heart-breaking to see that about 2 865 soldiers died in Angola in combat with the SADF. Some of these soldiers died in Puerto Rico. This shows how much we are indebted to the Cubans.

The Cuito Cuanavale battle, where the SADF was shamelessly defeated by the Cubans, is in the memory of every Cuban who proudly speak of how they beat the SADF. This forced the apartheid government to negotiate and sign an agreement which led to the independence of Namibia and multi party negotiations after the unbanning of political parties and the release of political prisoners.

Other events

A rally in honour of Jose Marti who worked in the leather industry and died in the war of independence was a remarkable event that showed the unity and determination of the Cuban people. Workers were presented with medals for 25 year of unbroken and dedicated service. In our country, because of the economic situation which was initiated by the past regime and the influence of the structural adjustment, it will take time before it is realised, if it ever does. At the same rally the town was declared ready to defend. This meant that trenches

had been dug and food saved and every community member prepared.

We visited the Pel de Rio province where the community had built for themselves a hospital, a school and hotel. In future people anticipate building a university in the same town to cater for the kids. Surprisingly enough, all those who went to universities in the provinces come back to work in the province. They do not move to town where there is a better infrastructure. This town is situated in forested mountains, but the escarpment has not been dented or touched by those who erected the buildings.

In Cuban, nature is preserved: "a paradise in the jungle" is a better description for what we saw. In Havana town a hospital for mentally-handicapped people proved to contradict how the Cuban health system is portrayed by the propaganda mongers of the west. The system that is currently used is 100% better than before the revolution. Patients are treated in a manner so that they are accommodated and accepted in the community. They receive physical therapy that helps them to think for themselves and be independent. It does not in any way look like a hospital but more than an old age home with more recreational facilities. We did not see even one patient tied to a stretcher like back home.

Seeing the "other side" of Cuba was provided for during our stay in Havana city where we attended the night life. The "dollar impact" on

Cuba could be seen where everyone scrambled to have a dollar. This is mainly caused by the major contribution of the hard currency by the tourism industry and the influence of the capitalists tours flocking to Cuba as a tourist attraction.

We could not see crime being committed in the streets of the city, unlike in South Africa where it is rife. People could move during the night without any fear of being mugged. People we met were quite happy and excited to meet South Africans and would always ask "are you South African, Nelson Mandela!" You would see a smile flashing on the face of the person asking the question. An article in the Readers' Digest (1992) entitled "Fidel Castro, the dictator and the drug lord" proved beyond reasonable doubt to be malicious. It attempted to defile Cuban ways and beliefs of a drug free society. It also attempted to discredit one of most the seasoned and prominent leaders of the century.

Our visits to paladors (house restaurants) provided us with evidence that there are no monopolies in the industry as everyone should house twelve patrons. Paladors served traditional Cuban meals that are not served in some of the hotels around town. The welcome was always warm at these restaurants. The fact that dollars are flooding the Cuban economy does not pose any threat to the society as there is a determination not to abolish the Cuban currency (peso).

Coming up

This article is called "The unfinished story." In the next edition the story will focus on socio-economic and political issues and the effects of the blockade. It will also focus on interviews and lectures that were held with different ministers and political leaders as well as with the acting ambassador to Cuba, Cde Lenin Shope.

Viva Cuba, Viva Solidarity! ♦

This series is written by Ratshoho Makhetha, Free State Provincial Chairperson.

News flash to Nehawu members

The launch of our own, custom designed medical aid scheme

At some stage of our lives we are all in need of top quality, affordable health care. After all it is one of the most important basic needs which affects the quality of life of every person, particularly those of us who may have a family to take care of.

Quality health care has not always been within the reach of all South African people and this has unfortunately touched the lives of many NEHAWU members and their families.

The Union and Thusano Health Care (Pty) Ltd has recently taken the important step of designing the Nehawu-Bophelo Medical Aid Plan (registered as TOPMED Nehawu) for all Union members. This new medical aid plan will be good for all Nehawu members as well as their families, throughout the country, since it has been designed to give high value at low cost.

The Nehawu-Bophelo Medical Aid Plan managed by Thusano Health Care will be administered by Sanmed, a Company which is financially strong and powerful. Over the years Sanmed has earned a reputation as one of South Africa's most respected medical aid administrators. This excellent record was recently endorsed by Republic Ratings.

Running of the scheme

The Union will involve itself very closely to ensure the smooth running of the new medical aid scheme.

Members will also be trained on how to use the scheme. Special Thusano service consultants will be available to help members with any concerns and queries.

The Nehawu-Bophelo Medical Aid Plan has many extra features such as a special low-claim bonus for each member. This no or low-claim bonus means that even if members do not claim a cent they will not lose out in any way. It is most important to remember that this no or low-claim bonus will be paid out five months after the end of each calendar year.

Special benefits for the Nehawu-Bophelo Medical Aid Plan

Unlike most other medical aid schemes the Nehawu scheme provides cover for Aids, organ transplants as well as routine, out-of-hospital expenses. The new Nehawu scheme also provides excellent benefits for those patients in need of chronic medication. If the need arises ex-gratia benefits may be granted.

- If you are a Nehawu-Bophelo Medical Aid member you will be able to use the Euro Critmed Emergency Medical Aid Services which can make a difference between life and death for you and your family.
- This service, works in a similar way as the well known 911 service overseas, and will not cost you extra. If you use this service you will not forfeit your bonus.

If you have any questions or special needs please feel free to contact your SBC Co-ordinator at the closest Nehawu Office or the National Social Benefits Co-ordinator, Billy Tshabalala at Nehawu's Regional Office in Bloemfontein, tel: (051) 44-80075

Thabo Moeti, managing director of Thusano Health Care is also available to assist those in need. He can be contacted on (011) 804-5799 or 082-414-3812. Thabo's fax number is (011) 804-5176.

Seen at a Nehawu party. . .

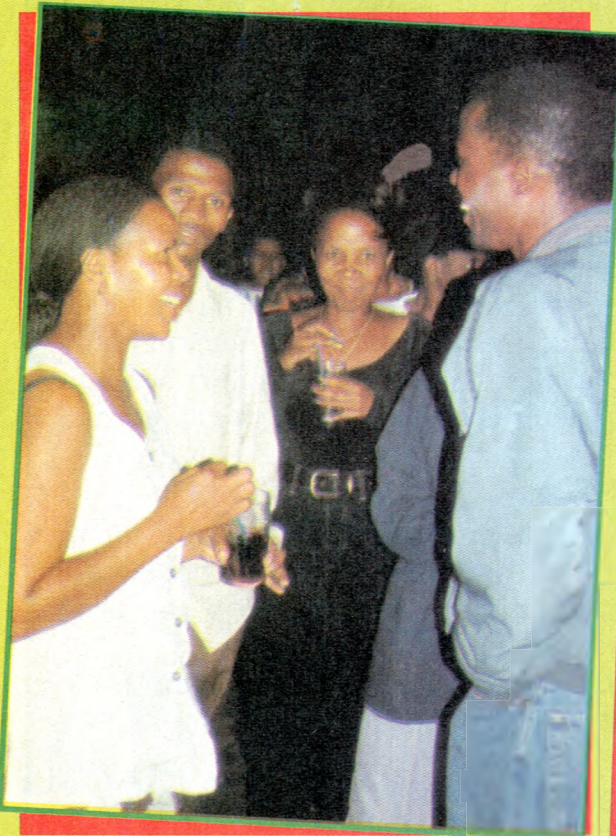


◀ The Nehawu young pioneers during the end of the year party

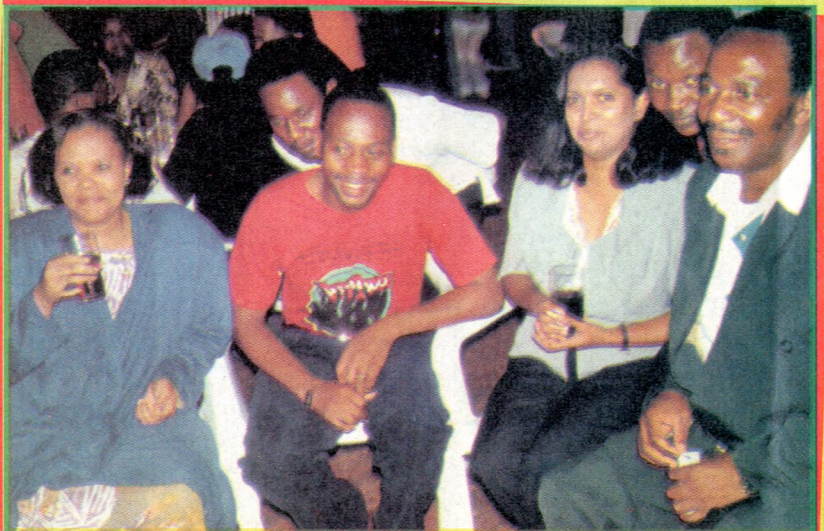
▼ Eastern Cape corner in the end of the year party



▼ The 2nd Vice President is really enjoying himself



▲ Mpumalanga stealing the show during the end of the year party



Seen at a Nehawu meeting. . .



December 1996 CEC
delegates in motion

KwaZulu-Natal staffers
during the national
staff meeting



A Nehawu popular dance



North West staffers



**Send your photos of branch, regional and other Nehawu meetings
and social events to NEHAWU WORKER for publication!**

“Meeting the basic needs ... ”

Safrican's commitment to the RDP is reflected in the

SAFRICAN FAMILY BENEFIT PLAN

- a product developed to empower ALL working people to meet the funeral costs (a basic need) for themselves and for their families;
- a product so flexible empowering ALL working people to provide for funeral costs for their extended families as well.

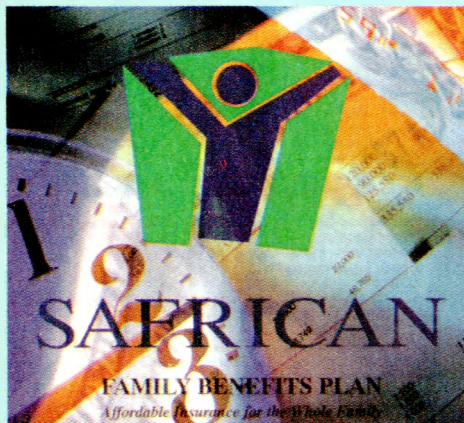
All of this at premiums affordable to ALL the workers – even the lowest paid!

For this is a Safrican product, the only community owned and community focused insurance company in our country today – **people driven**, if you like.

Ask your branch Social Benefits Committee co-ordinator or your Safrican consultant to assist you to complete the application form, and have peace of mind from as little as R9, 25 per month.

ALL WORKERS FOR THE RDP!!

ALL WORKERS FOR THE SAFRICAN FAMILY BENEFITS PLAN!!!



we are proud to be
SAFRICAN

Head Office
10th Floor Fedgen House
87 Rissik Street
Johannesburg
PO Box 666
Johannesburg 2000
Tel: (011) 332-6000
Fax: (011) 332-6999

Durban
PO Box 429
Durban 4000
Tel: (031) 304-5604/5
Fax: (031) 304-3469

Cape Town
PO Box 2555
Cape Town 8000
Tel: (021) 419-0090
Fax: (021) 419-0376

Port Elizabeth
PO Box 35036
Newton Park
Port Elizabeth 6055
Tel: (041) 34-1477
Fax: (041) 34-4208

Umtata
1st Floor LCM Ludidi Bld.
63 Madeira Street
Umtata 5100
Tel: (0471) 312691
Fax: (0471) 25847

Bisho
Bisho Business Village
Unit Nos. 4 and 5
Bisho 5608
Tel: (0401) 952900
Fax: (04010) 92818

CTC thesis continue from the last edition

The struggle for an efficient and competitive economy

The country's future is closely linked to scientific and technological development, to the growth of traditional sectors and the new branches of industry, the multiplication of international economic and commercial ties and, especially, to the effect of the present transformation and measures of the consolidation of much more efficient economic management.

An efficient and competitive economy is a basic condition to ensure the vitality of the country, and also to be stronger and more efficient politically, in ideas, in culture and in defence.

It is incumbent upon us to find the ways to that efficiency because now everything depends on our own strengths and we must make our way in world dominated by competition and the laws of the market.

To attain this objective, our actions must be aimed, systematically, at the struggle for profitability in each economic unit, at the ensuing decrease in costs, and at the demand for the kind of accounting that will ensure objectivity of decisions and an exact record of resources and how they are employed.

The union movement must intensify the struggle to generalise a work culture based on efficiency which is to be measured not exclusively by labour discipline, but also by order, by technological, administrative and financial discipline.

In this battle, it is decisive for the action of the unions to step its role in the effort to save fuel and all kinds of energy resources, to make optimal use of raw materials and to ensure the highest quality of the products and services turned out. We must set ourselves the task of



Che Guevara the Cuban internationalist revolutionary

increasing the role of emulation, free it of all in triumphalism and formalism, improve it constantly and adapt it to donations in different work centres and types of work so that it will be, today more than ever before, a vital weapon in the fight for economic efficiency.

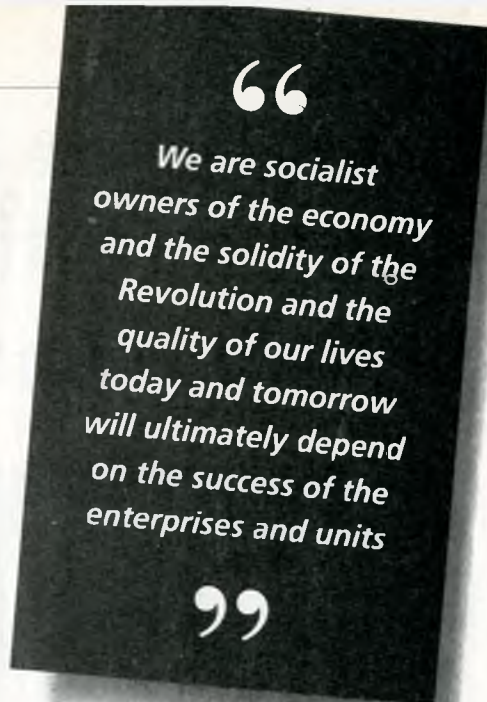
Before the Special Period, the union movement had an enormous mass of resources with which to reward the vanguard of workers. At present we can maintain only a part of them, despite the fact that expenditures under this heading are great. At the same time, other means arise and initiatives appear that can help motivate the workers. Our position is that all kinds of materials incentives that may be available together with moral recognition, which will continue playing a key role, be integrated into the emulation system in each sector and be awarded jointly by the management and the union.

The Assemblies for Efficiency will continue to be an essential instrument for channelling direct participation of the workers in the direction and control of the management of their work centres.

We must care for this method, ensure its quality and efficiency, preserve it for the objective for which it has been created, while working to eliminate all the shortcomings already detected, especially those that have to do with management and union training, strict compliance with agreements and adequate information to the workers at each moment in the process.

The Cuban trade union movement has to consider the question of economic efficiency holistically and not only from the point of view of work and its conditions. The interest of the workers is not limited to their job. We are socialist owners of the economy and the solidity of the Revolution and the quality of our lives today and tomorrow will ultimately depend on the success of the enterprises and units.

That is why we must not turn our backs on the processes being studied or undertaken today, so that we can use the factories, or part of them, in a scale that will



allow for the best use of resources, the replacement of obsolete technologies that consume too much energy or raw materials with other that are more effective, and in other cases, concentrate production in those centres that can do it more economically.

The unions are called upon to participate in this productive re-ordering with a broad and forward-looking perspective of all the labour, social, technological and territorial consequences that may be associated with its implementation.

It is especially important to see to it that restrictive criteria, those solely linked to the present situation, are not applied, and to ensure that the need for full re-establishment of the country's installed capacities is taken into account, and that wherever possible, there should be growth so as to solve the accumulated economic and social problems.

The National Association of Innovators and Rationalisers (ANIR) must occupy a vanguard position in the struggle for economic efficiency and further strengthen its actions in all work centres.

The ANIR, with impressive equality and number of members is called upon to integrate its work closely with the grassroots union organisations and the Juvenile Technical Brigades, act daily in the

solution of problems that crop up in the course of the work and act systematically on the economy in its three main directions: the development of technologies and management methods, the struggle for production efficiency and support for the technological discipline. Its growing contribution to the Science and Technology Forum movement must become a reflection of that decisive daily battle.

The decisive effort for sugar production

So long as sugar production does not increase, the Cuban economy will not advance solidly along the road to recovery.

The last three harvest traced a declining line that cost the country a great deal of lost revenue and quite literally limited the positive effects of the growth achieved in 1994, and in 1995, so far, in the tourist industry, in most of the industrial branches and in other activities. This year, the country had to resort to external financing and undertake to pay very high interests in order to devote to sugar cane production the minimal indispensable resources for halting the sugar production decline and beginning a firm recovery stage.

At the very moment that these theses are being debated, the sugar cane harvest has begun or its about to begin in many parts of the country. When the CTC begins its final sessions, the sugar cane harvest will have practically concluded.

This is why we have included in these theses a timely call to all workers and union leaders that have to do with the coming harvest to discharge their duties with precise awareness that at that moment, in the harvest itself or in sugar production we will be helping to save the country and improve the lives of our heroic people.

Once again a decisive and indispensable task for the progress of the economy has been put into the hands of the sugar workers, and of all workers in the different enterprises the work for the harvest, making each and every one of them

a protagonist in this inevitable machete charge of the modern mambis on the Centennial of the invasion by Gomez and Maceo.

The importance of this harvest is so great that it is paramount that we give proof of the maximum determination to struggle, to work with dedication and demand quality to reduce to a minimum the possibility of committing the operational mistakes that have been made in previous harvests, raising general costs and causing losses of sugar.

The responsibility of the sugar workers is enormous for they are in the front line fighting of a battle that must not be lost. It is these workers whom we are addressing with a message of reassurance and faith and with the promise that they will have the support of the entire union movement, the workers and the people.

We are certain that during the days of the 17th Congress there will be nothing better for the Revolution, for our Commander in Chief, for the delegates and for our thankful nation than the new of a sugar harvest concluding with higher production and efficiency records and the beginning of a sustained growth cycle leading to a production level in line with the needs of the national economy.

The problem of employment and the reordering of labour

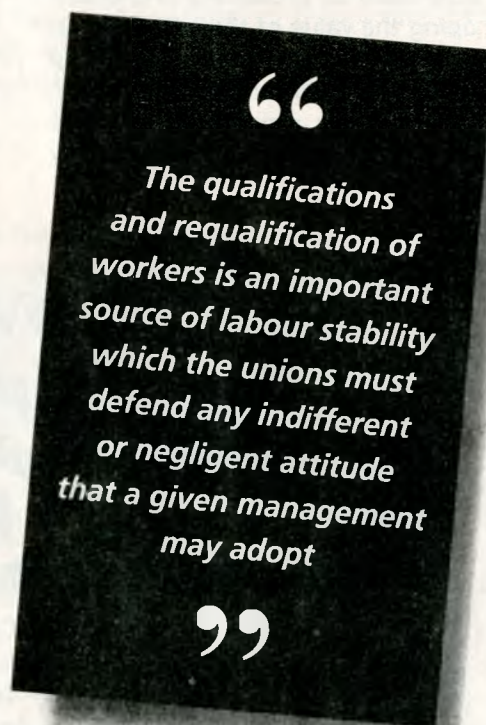
Employment, the right to a job, is one of the loftiest standards of Cuban revolutionaries and of the union movement in particular. Our socialist society will not be able to recognise itself if some day it should remain passive and indifferent to the existence of men and women able to work and without access to jobs.

But employment cannot continue to be seen exclusively as the result of political will. Jobs are, above all, a result of economic realities and it is they that determine the quality and quantity of sources of employment.

In increase the job offer and

bring it in line with the available forces, and those who enter the labour market each year, there is no other real and lasting way than increased production and efficiency. However, we will not be able to fall about a more efficient economy without first treating the conditions that will allow us to increase labour productivity and optimise the use of the available resources.

To do this, together with other essential steps, we must undertake a reordering of the personnel in each work centre, starting with those that have what they need to produce, those that are linked to



the generation of hard currency or substitution of imports, and those involved in other activities that are of vital importance for the country.

The 17th Congress of the CTC must re-affirm and enrich the definitions that our revolutionary Government, based on the opinions of the workers and the union movement, has reiterated on the reordering of labour.

The fundamental principle of the reordering of labour is that of worker will be left jobless as a result of process, which is to be governed

by the determination to find employment formulas for those workers whose jobs are eliminated.

This determination coincides with the just ideas that the reordering of labour cannot be considered exclusively as a pruning of payrolls to decrease expenses in salaries in a given enterprise branch or sector.

The true objective of the reordering will be to contribute to increased social productivity and to foster the creation of more values with the same material, financial and human resources we have available.

Our social system, with its advantages, should help us to set ourselves to the task of not only rationalising but restructuring the distribution of our labour force, which is today too much in certain centres and too little in tasks that are vital for the economy, such as the sugar industry and the agricultural sector. There are also job vacancies directly involved in production and a great number of oppositions, as useful and decent any other, in the area of health and services.

The Cuban Central Trade Union Organisation and the unions will struggle to create understanding everywhere that we have to devote to the rationalisation effort the same determination, no more and no less, as that which we devote to searching for and finding new employment alternatives for the workers that may become redundant.

Experience shows that there are possibilities for creating new jobs in the same centres and enterprises to satisfy many production and service needs that do not require investments and constitute a social need.

At the same time, primordial importance is gained by the territories, the municipalities, where, under the direction of local government, and effective effort can be made to create useful jobs in the production and services centers, to complete the labour force for sugar cane and agricultural production, and to develop new jobs in places such as organoponic facilities, truck gardens, reforestation, the manufa-

cture of alternative materials for housing construction, local industries and others.

The debates of the 17th Congress will be a good forum for an appeal to eradicate the criterion of accepting only those jobs that fully comply with the preferences of each person without considering that persons, too, can and must adapt to the requirements of their jobs at a given moment and postpone their deserved aspirations for when they are possible.

We must also reiterate that our duty, given the circumstances that the rationalisation creates, is to defend the person who has the greatest right, on the basis of ideal qualifications, to a given job, making all other considerations secondary.

We understand ideal qualifications to mean the set of requirements to occupy a certain job, as defined by mutual agreement by the management and the union, without these requirements being amenable by either party unilaterally.

We are also calling for a special zealous struggle for the rights of working women, who must not be hurt by any technocratic economist tendency or justification. Our 17th Congress must subscribe and commit its support for the platform for the defence and promotion of women that was laid down with realism and profound revolutionary spirit by the last Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women. We reiterate our readiness to seek and find balancing formulas that will provide employment opportunities for the young who enter the labour market in these times when the job offer is depressed.

The union movement insist on the importance of preserving the qualified and experienced personnel in the work centres, who may circumstantially be redundant but will be necessary tomorrow when conditions allow for production on a greater scale.

The qualifications and requalification of workers is an important source of labour stability which the unions must defend any indifferent

or negligent attitude that a given management may adopt. On the other hand, this must not be seen only as a circumstantial instrument to deal with the contraction of employment, but as a permanent premise for technological development, which also makes it possible to broaden the labour profile of the workers and their acquisition of new skills.

However, it should be pointed out that we are not for the indiscriminate universalization of this practice, for we believe that it must be implemented on a case-by-case basis and selectively, with an economic criterion, as an investment addressed to preserving and developing the value of the labour force, considering the foreseeable future of each sector, branch or enterprise.

The union movement must be alert and not allow the violation of

the rights of redundant workers who have enrolled in the employment entities. To do this, the unions must preserve their ties with the redundant workers, look after them in all ways and work tirelessly for their relocation. It is essential that the union work in advance and define with the management how they are going to fill the vacancies in each new centre or capacity created.

The legislation in force provides for the eight of the unions to underway both the jobs to be made redundant and the new employees in the work centres. The fact is, however, that in most cases this is not done. Our Congress must taken an energetic stand for preservation of the strict exercise of this union right, which should become a barrier to any irregularities or violations of the legitimate interests of the workers. ♦

Get your own copy of *The Shopsteward*

SUBSCRIBE

Annual rates for South Africa

Workers	R30.00
Students	R30.00
Salaried employees	R36.00
CBOs & NGOs	R48.00
Companies	R54.00

*Cheques or postal orders
to be made payable to:*
**National Circulation
Services (NCS)**

For subscription queries call
Tel: (011) 358-2087
Fax: (011) 726-8430

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

..... **Postal Code:**

Fill in the above form and post it, along with your payment, to:
NCS, P.O. Box 91080, Auckland Park 2006

Poetry book "Earthstepper/The Ocean is Very Shallow" by Seithamo Motsapi is rich in imagery and raises some important issues says Botsotso Magazine

Those critics who thought that poetry or art would fade with time – after 27 April 1994 democratic elections – must swallow their words. Motsapi's volume of poetry does not fall under the sloganeering label. The book's cover and title capture it's mood. Whereas his poems are rich in imagery, they are riddled by his use of Jamaican patois or patwa. The language might be African but it still remains exiled. He has therefore denied a wider readership indulgence in his poetics.

About an old friend

'The Man' is a poem about an old friend, "an almost forgotten acquaintance." They shared high hopes and positive dreams in childhood "... to be doctors, lawyers & teachers..." so they could plough their knowledge back into their village "so the blood could ebb..."

The character in the poem hoped to rescue society from poverty, but reality proved him wrong. With all his disappointments, the poet compares the friend to "... a blushing angel..." Now in his dreams are "forests" which suggest darkness or bitterness.

A warning

In 'brother saul' he addresses readers as "dear ras" which is typical of Rastas – but I won't dwell on the religion. Here he warns against too much use of marijuana or spliff, but he doesn't condemn it. Most youth who have joined Rastafarianism on all shores of South Africa did so as an excuse to smoke dagga. They end up being addicted and becoming passive in community development. This, like the use of alcohol and other drugs, is a habit. Jamaican dub poet Mutabaraka can bail me out with his poem 'Drug Culture'.

Motsapi says the youth mustn't concentrate on "spliff" which blurs their minds while "Babylon" (capitalists or imperialists) help themselves to "gold." Babylon symbolises oppression and exploitation.

Blackness

'The sun to be white' is about blackness. It doesn't concentrate on colour politics but rather on experi-

ence. Here the poet doesn't romanticise or glorify Blackness. He says it can be a "betrayal" and can also be "...a metaphor for deprivation...". But I have noticed that in most of his poems he is infatuated with "Kilimanjaro". He mentions the world. Beside victory celebrations "... the ocean clamours into a roar. ..." looking at reality "the ocean is very shallow," which means that it's still the beginning of our struggle.

Rural rejection

'Missa joe' is about a person from the rural areas who now has adapted to western ways of living "all jagged & tie" in the city. Villagers believe that black people living in the urban areas haven't got Ubuntu, a view which I partially support. This character "forgets the smiles and rivers/he forgets the ancient sugar of handshakes." To greet a villager without shaking hands is considered impolite; to shake hands in greeting shows that you respect and care about one another. He dismisses "misa joe" using English instead of his indigenous language. Even if he pretends to have forgotten his rural (traditional) life, the truth will haunt him, because "the drums won't fall asleep".

The new era

'Tousan' is about the new era, the time to reconcile. But it doesn't suggest forgetting the past. The poem reads "light tinkles off/the foreheads of visions/old warriors." Instead of them sharpening spears or polishing their guns "they sharpen their pianos." The piano symbolises peace and celebration. Through his use of pianos, drums and horns, the poet marries both the African and Western or European traditions.

Rivers and hearts

The last poem, 'river robert', is a tranquil place. Church devotees, even sangomas, usually go to a river for immersion or baptism. He says "...our lungs are full/of secret wars/and primordial fears bruise our suns." But I think instead of "lungs" he should have used "heart" because it is the human heart which hides feelings or yearnings. Whereas the river symbolises peace, there is also fear of the unknown.

PoetryCorner

This is the start of a regular poetry section. Members who are potential poets – send us your poems!

The first poem below is about the Great Hero of Africa, Sekhukhune – the strong freedom fighter who conquered the Transvaal.

Kgosi Sekukhune

Ke maphikolose 'a matswaka le mabu Theledi 'a Maota,
Theledi ka Borwa o ts'o senya, Theledi 'a Marota.
Ke masenyeletse 'a Matuba,
Masenya magadi a batho.

Tshukutswana 'a mphatana lena madira tshabang,
Tshabang mantsokodi a etla.
Ke Mantsana 'a Lehlokwa sehvirihwiri se maano,
Mphiri moloma serethe, ke tatago ngwan'a Mohube.
Ke sebolai sa Matuba ntsee ka manaka di a Ila,
Theledi 'a kgalatlola 'a Makwa.

Masileagatisa abo Ngwakwane,
Ke mogale ge a gatisa ka lekopelo.
Ke masile abo Diphale siba-siba sebatana,
Tloukgolo di a go gata.
Lena ba Mahlako 'a Makoro, ge le hloma nkutu-nkutu,
Lekutu k'eng mola lekutu e le nna?
Ke tiba ka hlako gwa tiba Nyekelele,
Kua ga Mahlako 'a Makoro?

Mmanaka-difetsaseatla Masile abo Diphale,
O re: Ga geso ga re tsorotsopege, re a purankela
Go tsorotsopa ke go lahla marumo.
Ke matopo a matshoba ba gaMoselekatse.

Nokan'e ya Bakgatla ke nokana mang?
Ke nna. Ke Moretele a noka ke retetse,
Ke reteletse maburu a ga Jubere
Ke tlo retelela le masole a Ramapantana.

Bosego nka robala boroko,
Ga ke sa tlo lora Ramantana,
Gobane bjale 'tshosane tse tsheweu.
Tse tshweu bjalo ka yena di a mo loma.

– by E.M. Ramaila

Extracts from Giyani Block

by Fred Vonani Bila

Loko dyambu ri mitiwa
hi titshava ta Riyonde;
Giyani Block u hiza nguvu
ya ntima dzwii, bya xiringa;
Nguvu ya xivuku xa rifu ni gome.

Tin'anga ni vaongori va tshama va
yimile,
Nkarhi wo yiva moya
hiloko xitereka xa vatirhi xi lumeka langavi
ra vukari.
Va yime hi swikun; wana, va tlatlambela
no pfinyana ni xihoya mapfumala-nhloko ni ncila.

Loko xintswiriri xa Rifu xi ku ntswirr-
Endlwini leyi, Rifu l munghana
wa le xifuveni-
U ntlokola bya ximememe
'ntshaveni.
Endlwini leyi, Rifu l mfukuzana-

Uguba ncele 'ka masalela ya vutomi
lebyi govekeke.
Endlwini leyi, Rifu nghala
leyi cinamiseke meno yi rindzela ximpfundlana.
U dzwavi ni phandzi kumbe m'fundhisi ni Bibebe
'xandleni,

U ngengendza matshova-nsimbhi
kumbe mafamba-borile
Umpohlo mavonina-bya-dyambu kumbe
phyembye macina-ni-tineyeleti-
Giyani Block l lwandle ra ntima;
Sikwekwetsu swenue swi mbombomela
ku nga sali ni vumbhoni ni byin'we.
Kona Giyani Block tilo ra wa,
Makhokholo ya bodzoka.
Swiluva swa vuna.

Truth will come out

They came looking for communists, I did not speak out

They came looking for terrorists, I did not speak out

They came looking for Trade Unionists, I did not speak out

Lastly, they came looking for me,

– by Cde Mnwabisi Jaxa
Eastern Cape Provincial Chairperson.

Cde Leepile "Leps" Mohoje

A man who committed much of his life to the struggle for workers' rights will be sorely missed. TP Mokoena pays tribute to his special comrade, "Leps"

Born into a working class family in Kimberley, Northern Cape on the 2nd July 1962, this son of a bank clerk and a nurse (both retired), grew up at his grandparents' home in Kimberley. First born in a family of four, with three brothers and a sister, comrade Leepile Vincent Mohoje grew up in a staunch Catholic family. As his family was based in Kroonstad, comrade Leps had to commute between Kroonstad and Kimberley almost every school holiday. His experience with arrogant and racist ticket examiners on trains between these two towns began to shape his political consciousness at an early age.

A model student

His parents, albeit with limited resources, wanted him to receive the best education around. He was sent to the famous St Boniface Roman Catholic School in Kimberley, where he completed his matric in 1982. An excellent sportsperson, with football and volleyball being his favourites, Cde Leps was unmatched in debates and academic work in general. He is described by his ex-teachers and fellow students as a model student. Armed with good marks in his favourite subjects, maths and science, he proceeded to the Technikon Northern Transvaal (TNT). There he studied for a Diploma in Civil Engineering in 1983. It was at TNT where his serious involvement in the struggle began. He joined the organisers of a strike which resulted in TNT being closed down by the education authorities. Police harassment forced him and others to move to the Mangosuthu Technikon in Natal, where he completed his diploma in 1985.



Into the union movement

His involvement in underground structures of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the democratic movement in general continued while he was working for the QwaQwa Government Service at the Department of Works. It was natural that he became one of the leading members of the committee of public servants which organised the first strike in the QwaQwa Bantustan. When Cosatu opened its hand to embrace the striking workers and their demands, Cde Leps was a leading member of the movement into Nehawu. This saw him becoming a member of the first branch executive committee.

A shrewd and skilled negotiator, he became part of almost every negotiating team with the Mopeli regime. As a strategist, he was key in determining the programme of

action and how it should unfold. This earned him a few enemies in the security establishment and resulted in his detention on several occasions. There were death threats directed at him and other comrades such as Edwin Noe, Sugar Ramakane, Ephraim Mothobi and others.

A skilled unionist

His skills and talent were recognised when he was elected regional vice chairperson of Cosatu Northern Cape/Free State. When the merger of public sector unions in Cosatu gained momentum, comrade Leps was appointed as the first national coordinator, which resulted in him moving from QwaQwa to Cosatu House. After the 1994 political breakthrough, the Free State Government requested Cosatu to second a comrade to assist with the process of transformation. Cde Leps was assigned this task. He became a non-executive director of a restructured Agri-Eco (an agricultural parastatal company) and joined a team of advisors to the MEC for Agriculture, Cde Cas Human. Here he assisted with transformation strategies for the Department of Agriculture. He was also a member of the Rural Strategic Unit responsible for human relations.

At the peak of his life and career, this cadre whose commitment to the cause of the working class and to the process of social transformation was clearly evident, passed away on 31 January 1997, after a short illness. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him, including his father Job, his mother Malepile, his sister Mamikie and his brother Tefo. ♦ *Hamba Kahle Soldier, Commissar, Cadre, Patriot!*

A special tribute

Cde Leepile "Leps" Mohoje



The profound sense of loss which engulfed me when news of his passing away reached me made me conclude that I will not – difficult as it may be – sit around and mourn. I will rather reflect on his very rich life and draw lessons from there. Words cannot begin to attempt to describe how close Leps and I were and exactly how I feel about his death. This tribute, although incomplete in content, is an attempt to capture in words what Cde Leps was.

I knew him

A comrade
A friend
A brother

This tribute is therefore titled "I knew him..."

Leepile Vincent Mohoje
That's how Home Affairs and
other official institutions knew him
To me and countless others, he was just Leps,
yes he remains just Leps
A name which became an embodiment of Love
Energy and enthusiasm
Politeness and Sincerity

He love life and all it offered
He loved and was loved by people
and there was this magnetism about him
Which attracted people

Yes, he was full of energy
and always enthusiastic about life and work in general
No task was too menial for him to carry out
He was a true cadre for the movement

His natural politeness and sincerity
made him a shining example and a role model
To many young activists
across the democratic movement in general!

But, how did I get to know you "oom"?
It's obvious, you were always there
At the right time and place
Albeit sometimes uninvited

Be it students in protest

against an Apartheid system of education!
Be it communities marching against squalid conditions in
their townships and villages!
Be it the youth marching militantly
and daring the Apartheid regime!
Be it in underground cells planning missions!
You were always there, as Leps

Broer, how could I have failed to notice you
With your Boesman character as they used to say
In an attempt to dampen your spirit
and the confidence the masses had in you!
Your easy and carefree approach to issues
Even in circumstance akin to mortality
Your patience which could be stretched on and on
Thus making an excellent negotiator that you were!

How could I have failed to notice you, swaar?
The skinny fellow, who had talent
for getting into trouble!
A generous and selfless comrade who never turned away
anybody who needed his assistance!

Comrade Leps!

Although you had a formal training as a civil engineer
You never struck me as one!
All I saw in you was cultured trade unionist
A strategist and a thinker!
A skilled and effective organiser!
An administrator of immense intellect!

Leps oom, this is what I lost in you!
I do not mourn your departure,
I mourn the loss which your departure caused
Not only to me, but to the whole movement!

Bon Voyage Brother, Friend and Comrade!

– Signed: TP Mokoena