

# WORKERS' NEWS

SALTA 23<sup>rd</sup> SAMWU



MARCH 1998 THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPAL WORKERS UNION

## LIFE IN THE RURAL AREAS

## ARE WOMEN IN SAMWU ORGANISED?



**SUPPORT  
FAWU'S  
FOOD  
SECURITY  
CAMPAIGN**

# **CONTENTS...**

## **Presidential Message**

2

## **Debate Corner**

4

## **Life in the Rural Areas**

The struggles of workers in the rural areas  
Public partnership for rural water delivery

6  
8

## **Phantsi i-privatisation, phantsi!**

Voelvlei and Nelspruit fight back  
National Anti-Privatisation Workshop  
Wade Refuse - waste removal privatiser  
Privatisation in the Eastern Cape and KZN  
GEAR, Privatisation and public sector reform

10  
12  
14  
16  
18

## **Abafazi**

Women are becoming Office Bearers  
Are SAMWU women unorganised?

20  
22

## **Workers of the World Unite!**

Why Cuba says no to privatisation  
Report from the PSI Congress, Japan  
Solidarity against privatisation with Botswana

24  
26  
28

## **Know your LRA**

How to deal with retrenchments

29

## **Worker Culture**

Cultural groups from around the country  
Comrades making it in community radio

30

## **Health, Safety and Environment**

Asbestos poisoning and acetaldehyde

31

## **COSATU News**

Forward to April - month of mass recruitment!

33

## **Affiliates Solidarity**

Let's support the FAWU food security campaign

34

## **SAMWU pays tribute to fallen comrades**

36

38

# **Message from the First Vice-President**



Greetings to all you comrades! I hope that you enjoyed your festive season and are ready to face the challenges facing us as a union.

Our Congress in October 1997 came out with resolutions and we need to implement them. SAMWU will produce a booklet with all the resolutions for comrades to refer to. This booklet will be available from your branch offices soon.

Unless we are paper tigers and not acting as a collective, we shall fail to achieve the aims of our last Congress.

We are starting with our wage negotiations at a central level on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March and hoping to conclude by the end of April. This is the first time in our history where we hope we will be able to achieve a single minimum in the sector. With constant consultation and mandate process, we hope we will be able to achieve the above.

# The National Office Bearers of SAMWU

*Elected at the 5th Congress of SAMWU, October 1997*

WORKERS UNION

SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPAL WORKERS UNION



**Desree Tlhoaele,  
Second Vice-President**

**Xolile N xu,  
First Vice-President**

**Petrus Mashishi,  
PRESIDENT**

**Roger Ronnie,  
General Secretary**

**Mncedisi Nontsele,  
Deputy General Secretary**

**Klaas Rens,  
National Treasurer**

Privatisation is the challenge and we need to campaign strongly against it. We seem to lose sight of the fact that the loyal servants of apartheid are still feeding our elected comrade councillors with false information.

These officials hide their incompetence in managing Local Government by proposing that privatisation is the route to alleviate poor services in Local Government. During the apartheid era, Local Government in advantaged areas rendered the best service!

What is stopping democracy from rendering the best services now in the disadvantaged areas? We must be vigilant and be prepared to go a little further in providing services to the disadvantaged community.

The 30<sup>th</sup> July agreement at the National Bargaining Council developed guidelines which say that the preferred option to providing services is the public sector. We need as workers to use the guidelines and agreement to our advantage. We must also use SAMWU's Emergency Plan.

It is important to read page 11 for more information about this Plan.

We need to start implementing our resolution on Socialism to its fullest. We need to actively build the SACP which the congress identified as the main vehicle to achieve our resolution.

Regards,

**Xolile N xu  
First Vice-President**

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# Calling all Comrades!

*This is your page for letters on any issue, in any language. If you want to complain or if you want to compliment, feel free. The best letter will win a Revolutionary Book!*

## Winning Letter

Dear Comrades,

Revolutionary greetings from the Western Cape! "The Volkstaat" As a member of SAMWU, I'm very worried about the lack of commitment of all our comrade leaders to campaigns, especially the Anti-Privatisation campaign.

Comrades, it is common knowledge that since SAMWU's inaugural Congress we have adopted resolutions against privatisation. Now that we have a democratic dispensation in our country, all of us take it for granted that every thing will come on a platter. But what happened? Our own comrades have changed!

Everybody talks about strategic placements, black empowerment and development of the poor. But there is one thing that people at grassroots question: that leaders took up management positions and turned out to be exactly like the old order. Disciplinary after disciplinary. Comrade Leaders, I don't want to encourage ill-discipline, but I must make a point, that our grassroots expect a more sympathetic approach from you.

The other point I would like to make is how do we see ourselves transforming our municipalities? What strategy do we implement in order to ensure worker control of workplaces. How do we get rid of the old order? Privatisation is profit for the bosses - hardship and job losses for the workers.

Comrades, we have experienced our comrades turning against us in Local Authorities. But for them, I also have a message. I will quote Jose Marti - a Cuban hero. "A true man does not seek the path where advantage lies

but rather the path where duty lies and this is the only practical man whose dreams of today will be the law of tomorrow. Because he who has looked back on the upheavals of history and has seen civilisation going up in flames crying out in bloody struggle throughout the centuries, knows that the future well-being of man without exception, lies on the side of duty."

Comrades, we must win the battle against this dragon - privatisation! The only way we can win is through solidarity. I quote comrade Fidel Castro - "Those who hold high the idea of solidarity shall never be weak."

Phantsi I-privatisation, phantsi! Viva Comrades, Viva! Adios Companeros, Adios Companeras!

Yours in struggle,  
Henry Venter,  
SAMWU Shopsteward



Dear Comrades,

Magazine's name and contributions

I have found the September issue of the *Workers' News* very interesting. I also request that the magazine be sent to each and every SAMWU branch every time to reach the readers.

I have also suggested the name to be *Workers Bulletin*, alternatively *SAMWU Bulletin*. The news inside should be sent by the local branches, they may have problems in workplaces, or interesting and entertaining stories.

I really plead that this magazine be a success.

Yours in struggle,  
Mandla John Mbokane  
Bronkhorstspruit

Dear Comrades,

We are very angry that our Provincial Secretary of Mpumalanga was thrown in jail recently. How it happened was that SAMWU marched in Ermelo on March 26th, 1997. More than eight months later, our P.S. Cde Pogisho Pasha was suddenly arrested on November 26th, 1997! According to the state docket, Cde Pasha is accused of delaying the traffic on Ermelo's main roads, although SAMWU was given permission prior to this to march legally.

In our march, we had demanded an end to racism in the Ermelo TLC, and an end to unfair labour practice. We also marched to support the demands of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

In the province, we view this case in a very serious light. Cde Pasha was forced to spend more than 12 hours in jail, and he still must appear in court. We regard this incident as a victimisation tactic against SAMWU. The Province is going to respond to this when Cde Pasha appears in court.

Away with attacks on the union, away!

Louis Thabetha  
Provincial Chairperson: Mpumalanga



**Send your letters**  
**to:**  
**Debate Corner**  
**SAMWU Magazine**  
**Private Bag X/9**  
**Athlone 7760**  
**Cape Town**

## Anti-privatisation Competition

**C**alling all members, shopstewards, organisers, administrators and office-bearers!

SAMWU needs a national logo and slogans for our anti-privatisation campaign. A logo that makes people throughout the country think immediately of SAMWU's campaign against privatisation.

There are many creative and talented workers in SAMWU. We have rich histories, cultures and traditions to draw on. Don't let down the struggle: we don't want to ask private sector artists to draw a public campaign logo!

The slogan must be short, in any language. It should show clearly our struggle against privatisation and our struggle and commitment



to improve the workplace and service delivery to the community.

We already have one slogan from the Northern Cape: "Moenie vat wat nie aan jou behoort nie!" And of course, the favourite, "Phantsi i-privatisation, phantsi!" If you want to design something around these slogans, please do so.

Give your ideas to your shopsteward to be passed on to Head Office. Closing date for submissions 31 April, 1998.

# Life in the Rural Areas

So often we only pay attention to the needs of communities in the bigger cities and towns in South Africa. This does not mean that we do not take an interest in what is going on in the rural areas. Indeed we often pass very fancy resolutions about what is needed and what is to be done rural areas. More often however, we just seem to ignore what happens there.

However, figures released by the government drive home the point that we need to give the same, if not more, attention to what is happening in rural areas. The struggles of workers and communities in the urban and rural areas are two sides of the same coin. For us in SAMWU, this struggle takes on even greater importance. As municipal workers, we have a major role to play in extending and maintaining services in the rural areas. This is why we have always argued for a new local government system which links urban and rural areas in single local government structures.

Rural local government, which essentially has the same powers as urban local government, lacks the capacity (financial, administrative and technical) to address service backlogs. Many rural councils do not employ their own staff and are not able to raise any finances to support service delivery. This seriously undermines the realisation of the RDP objective of meeting basic needs. But the problems are not only caused by under-resourced local government structures. The origins of the problems are to be found in the apartheid policies of the old regime. These include the special dispensation given to white farmers and the migrant labour system.

More generally, the local government service delivery culture was always in favour of the minority of citizens. For millions in rural areas, this has meant untold suffering.

The migrant labour system, the cause of the break up of thousands of South African families, gave rise to:

- ◆ the creation of dormitory townships on the outskirts of our towns and settlements.
- ◆ thousands of informal settlements.
- ◆ the breakdown and neglect of service infrastructure in rural areas.
- ◆ ever increasing levels of poverty in rural areas.
- ◆ an increasing burden on women to support their families.

The government will shortly be releasing a White Paper on Local Government, which will guide new legislation as we move towards fully democratic local government after the 1999 elections. A special focus of any new local government system must be on addressing the situation in our rural areas.

This will mean taking decisive steps such as:

- ◆ allocating much more financial and technical resources to rural areas.

**In 1996 there were 43 million South Africans**

**57% of South Africans live in URBAN areas**

24% of urban people do not have adequate services (5.8 million)

**43% of South Africans live in RURAL areas**

75% of rural people do not have adequate services. (139 million)

- ◆ building and strengthening capacity within rural government.
- ◆ introducing co-operative arrangements between different local government structures.

Many of our members are already involved in ongoing struggles to bring about a better life for rural communities. This struggle must be intensified. In many cases, political and personal opportunism is the cause of ongoing suffering. In other instances it is quite simply the restrictions which the GEAR policy places on the ability of rural local government to extend and deliver services.

As SAMWU members, we need to join hands with rural communities in determining the type and form of rural local government structures we want.

# Workers are struggling in the rural Western Cape...

The hot, dry and dusty town of Saron is a small, rural town with only 17 council workers. These workers are all members of SAMWU, except for one very old lady who remains a committed IMATU member! The workers of Saron have a very hard time - they have all been working for the municipality for two years but are still on contract.

All are married with children and are paid only R165 per week. Strangely enough, the women clerical workers are paid even less - a paltry sum of R147 per week. None of the workers is entitled to any benefits. In fact, when *Workers' News* met with all the workers they had a long list of grievances - no pension, no safety boots, no bonus, no health and safety precautions, no sick or holiday leave. Ironically, it is only of the only municipalities in the rural North West branch of the Western Cape province that offers a 40 hour working week!

It is clear that these workers are committed to service delivery, although political games played by National Party provincial government members try their best to defeat the spirit of these workers. The workers spoke of a desperately needed water project that was planned for the area, but cancelled at the last minute by the previous MEC for Local Government, Peter Marais.

When asked how they view their role in the community, they told *Workers' News* that it is difficult to feel committed as contract workers, but they try to do their best.

What follows is an extract from the Saron municipality newsletter. It tells of community projects frustrated by the lack of funding trickling down to the council from the NP Provincial Government.

"Dit is duidelik dat die weerhouding van fondse en inmenging met ontwikkelingsprojekte deur die voormalige LUR vir Plaaslike Regering, Mnr Peter Marais,

polities gemotiveerd is. Die probleem het egter net Saron gemeenskap se toewyding tot die soek na regverdigheid aangevuur en het die Saron gemeenskap, nou meer as ooit tevore, verenig.

Die aankondiging deur Mnr Peter Marais om die Oorgangsraad te ontbind, het as n groot skok tot die gemeenskap gekom. Die Oorgangsraad en die gemeenskap het die besluit verwerp op grond van die volgende punte:

- Daar was nooit met die Plaaslike Oorgangsraad gekonsulteer nie;
- Ingevolge die Kommissie van Ondersoek se verslag is die huidige Oorgangsraad aangeprys vir sy uitstekende bestuursvernuf end het die minister dus geen rede om administrateurs in die dorp aan te stel nie.

Die Saron Belastingbetalersvereniging het 'n Hooggereghofgeding teen Mnr Marais aanhangig gemaak. Die Oorgangsraad verwelkom en ondersteun die inisiatief deur die Belastingbetalersvereniging en wil verder ons dank uitspreek teenoor almal was die Plaaslike Oorgangsraad steun in hul strewe na n beter lewe."

**Party Politics in the Western Cape mean that ANC dominated councils such as rural Saron often lose out on funds**

## Masakhane in the rural areas of Northern Province

SAMWU members in the Northern Province are actively participating in Masakhane campaigns. One example is in the small town of Naboomspruit where SAMWU members played a very important role in spending their free time on a Saturday working free of charge to clean up areas that are

neglected. You can see these comrades, led by Branch Secretary Josephine Lelaka, on the cover of this magazine. This form of commitment to service delivery must go hand in hand with our fight to ensure that adequate resources are made available to local government to meet its service delivery responsibilities.

Our last Congress clearly identified the important role that local government workers in the delivery of services. We need to ensure that, as SAMWU, we take control of the restructuring process to ensure that redistribution of resources and services takes place to disadvantaged communities.

## Workers are suffering in the former Transkei...

Thobile Maso reports from the Eastern Cape that one of the areas most affected by the apartheid policies of the old government is the former Transkei area. Here communities and workers continue to be confronted by the most terrible living and working conditions and the problem does not seem to be getting any better.

When the notorious Matanzima regime accepted "independence" for the Transkei, they changed what was known as village boards into municipalities as part of the process of turning the Transkei into a country. More importantly, what they did not do was to develop the necessary capacity of these municipalities to carry out their tasks. Town Clerks and other workers were simply never trained and infrastructure was almost non-existent.

With the exception of Umtata and Butterworth, the income of most of the municipalities was restricted to collecting fines arising from the "arrest" of goats and cattle for illegally crossing the town and through the sale of firewood. This partly explains why workers in these municipalities earn starvation wages. In Lady Frere, the approximately 20 workers employed there have never

received an overall in all the time they have worked there. They are paid R110 per month and no UIF and retirement fund deductions are made. Yet the Town Clerk earns R2500 per month! The same situation exists in places in Elliotdale. The bottom line is that these towns do not have the necessary tax base to support themselves, which condemns workers to a life of slavery.

Things have not improved much since the 1995 local government elections. Our struggle is further hampered by un-cooperative councillors and senior municipal officials who are resisting transformation.

Municipal workers continue to work under terrible conditions. They are seen simply as a cost and not as part of an investment in correcting the situation. As such workers here are under the same privatisation threat as in other parts of the country.

It will take a long time and much resources to develop the required infrastructure in the small municipalities in the former Transkei. This has already led to calls for more direct private sector involvement. We have a big responsibility as SAMWU to defend the interests of our members and the broader community against these privatisation threats. But this also means that we have to go that extra mile to show that the public sector option remains the best and the correct option.

**Build urban-rural solidarity!  
Forward to a better life for all!**

## Making Public Partnerships work in Rural Water Boards

*Comrades, the rural areas are often the places where new ideas begin, only to spread to the cities later. In the North West province, SAMWU is trying to team up with the Rand Water Board in order to extend services to disadvantaged areas and prevent privatisation. SAMWU's partnership with Water Boards across the country will stem from the success of this rural project...*



**T**he legacy of Bantustan government has created serious problems with service delivery in the rural areas. Years of neglect by the apartheid government have left many areas without even the most basic infrastructure necessary for everyday life.

A typical example of the problems this has created can be seen in the TLC's of Winterveld, Soshanguve, East Rural Councils and Mabopane in the North West Province. These TLC's previously fell under the homeland of Bophutatswana.

Mines in the area receive bulk supply from Rand Water Board (RWB). A branch of the North West Water Supply Authority (NWWSA) called ODI Retail - a bantustan creation - was left to provide community water supply. This was provided on the basis of standpipes designed to provide 25 litres of water per person per day. In turn this has lead the community to resort to tapping into the basic system. This disrupts flow to the standpipe and has also created much leakage.

NWWSA has had to face financial cuts and also suffers from poor management. So the Department of Water and Forestry Affairs (DWAF) has sought Rand Water Board's assistance. Rand Water is willing to provide support, but not take over directly. Instead, they proposed that a Section 21 company be established. A Section 21 company is a not-for-profit company.

SAMWU took a policy conference decision in October 1996 that we were not in favour of Section 21 companies. This meant that we could not agree to the Rand Water Board proposal for the area. Although the formation of a non-profit company that would save the workers' jobs and start a regular supply of water to the community sounded good at first, SAMWU saw that a non-profit company is a prime target for those who want to privatise our water.

This is because it is easier for a private sector company to privatise a water supply that never belonged to local government in the first place.

At the same time, SAMWU saw that Rand Water Board was losing out as they were not able to bill the communities for water that was being taken illegally. For example, in Klipgat, a very small rural community falling within this area, 98% of people don't pay for water. This is because they are not billed in the first place. Communities in the area are receiving water free of charge by illegally tapping into the main supply.

However, in the long term they will lose out, as nobody will be prepared to upgrade water facilities and infrastructure in those areas. For example, to install a water supply to each stand the area needs stormwater drainage systems to be built. Without this infrastructure, water dams up and creates health hazards for the community.

In order to solve these problems SAMWU proposed this solution:

That the Rand Water Board should employ the 100 workers of ODI Retail for a transitional period, and build the capacity of these workers until they can be transferred to a the Water Department of a District Council.

In the proposal, the recommendation is that both Rand Water Board and the Department of Water Affairs assists with financial backing. The comrades of the North West Province are now going to set up a follow-up meeting with the four TLC's and the other role players to resolve the matter.

We all agree that water is necessary for life. The RDP states that there must be a standpipe within 200m of every house. The RDP also states that "parastatals must be structured and run in a manner that reinforces and supports the RDP." A national delegation, including our President and General Secretary will be meeting with the Rand Water Board on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998. The meeting will try to develop a future model for Water Boards and parastatal operations in the rest of the country to deliver services as laid down by the RDP.

**In the meantime, comrades, we urge you to be wary of proposals to form Section 21 companies in general. Please contact your Provincial Office the minute you hear of any of these things happening to your water supply.**

# Water workers under attack in Voelvlei...

SAMWU signed the Essential Services Agreement in the Bargaining Council last year. This agreement means that those workers who fall under essential services may not all go on strike at once. There has to be a skeleton staff of workers left behind at each plant who will make sure that the service is not interrupted, in such a manner that the health and safety of the community is threatened.

But at Voelvlei Dam, Western Cape, 45 SAMWU members have been found guilty of misconduct because they attended a provincial anti-privatisation march. Management alleges that they did not leave behind enough staff for the plant to continue functioning in terms of the agreement.

But the workers left behind a skeleton crew in the form of IMATU, and at no time did the plant stop running.

This leads us to ask some questions -does a skeleton crew have to be made up of SAMWU members, even if enough IMATU members are left behind to run the plant adequately? Does the agreement not also cover management personnel, who can also form part of a skeleton crew?

The simple answer to this question is that although a framework Essential Services Agreement has been concluded at national level, the practical arrangements still need to be negotiated out at plant level. The onus is on management to start this procedure. This was never done at Voelvlei. In fact, management seems to think that SAMWU must inform workers and implement this agreement.

They are wrong! In this case, the shop steward, Cde Roger Oerson, says that management is using the Essential Services Agreement as an excuse to break the union.

"We are committed to service delivery and will always arrange a skeleton staff so that services are maintained," said Cde Oerson.

"There was not a life threatening situation at Voelvlei Dam. Privatisation is always an issue in SAMWU, and management is trying to break us on this issue."

Management at Voelvlei divided the workers into two groups for the disciplinary hearings and refused to let the workers appear together. They also gave disciplinary letters to maintenance staff, although the Agreement states that only operational staff may face charges.

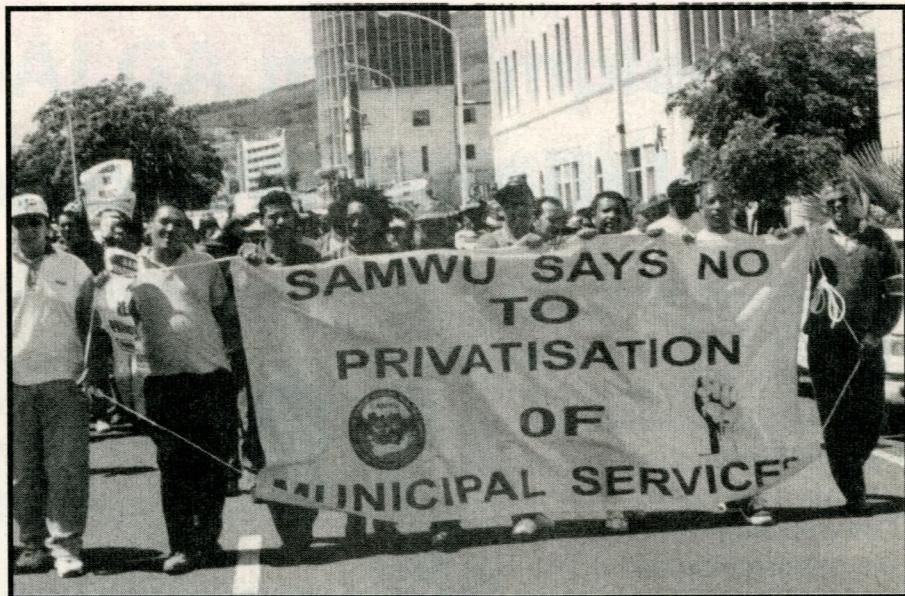
The Voelvlei workers decided to appeal against the judgement of misconduct. In addition, they have chosen to take the case to the Bargaining Council. Some of the Voelvlei workers have been worried about taking the first case of this kind to the Bargaining Council. "Die disciplinary brief lyk soos 'n baie gevaaalike ding. Ons wil nie ons werk verloor nie." (The disciplinary letters look dangerous. We do not want to lose our jobs).

But as Cde Oerson says, "it is up to us to prove this point here. If management are able to stop us from attending SAMWU actions, then it will break the unity among water workers throughout the region, and in fact throughout the whole country."





Voelvlei water workers attended this anti-privatisation march in Cape Town. Their employers are now trying to discipline them by arguing that they were in breach of the Essential Services Agreement. SAMWU believes that this is not legal, and is challenging the employers in the Bargaining Council. We will let you know what happens.



## Nelspruit water workers engage the Alliance

SAMWU in Mpumalanga took its anger to the streets many times last year, protesting over the Nelspruit TLC's decision to privatise water in the area to a British multinational.

In a march on November 20, 1997 over 5000 SAMWU and COSATU members marched on the streets of Nelspruit and Witbank as part of the anti-privatisation campaign.

In Nelspruit, SAMWU's President Cde Mashishi led the march to the TLC Offices where he asked the TLC to reconsider their decision to privatise. "Council should rather consider the SAMWU Pilot Projects which show the way for municipalities to continue delivering services," said Cde Mashishi.

SAMWU's General Secretary, Cde Roger Ronnie led the workers to the Witbank TLC on the same day. Cde Ronnie appealed to the Witbank Mayor and other TLC's to join SAMWU's campaign against privatisation, and discourage the Witbank TLC against following the same route as Nelspruit.

SAMWU in the Province informed the Councillors that they owed it to the masses not to privatise any basic needs in Local Government, as this would result in a lack of accountability and reduce the standard of the service.

The latest development in Nelspruit was the Alliance Water Summit, which took place on the 8th February 1998. The Alliance partners, including some ANC Nelspruit Councillors, all agreed that, by attempting to privatise the water, Council had only explored one option to solve the service delivery problem. The Summit agreed that the COSATU vision for water must be explored. The ANC agreed in the meantime that the implementation of COSATU's Emergency Plan would be negotiated to bring about immediate changes. The deadline for these negotiations was set as March. The Summit also agreed that the Alliance Secretariat would monitor the process and that there would be a follow-up Summit on the 8th of March. The privatisation process remains on hold.

Comrades, the Emergency Plan is a way to improve service delivery starting immediately. These are the main points of the plan:

- Staff and resources must be re-organised to meet needs (for example, workers can be redeployed to service disadvantaged areas)
- Fix obstacles to service delivery (for example water leaks, unused reservoirs or other resources)
- Place workers according to their skills and organise the unorganised
- Achieve legitimacy for the Plan by engaging DWAF, encouraging illegal connections to be replaced in line with the RDP with water meters
- Encourage workers to manage service delivery by becoming more accountable and responsible
- Involve the community at all times through meetings and debates
- Use the campaign to highlight development needs in other sectors, and the RDP requirement that government fund basic services
- Use physical resources, such as requesting funding from government that would have been allocated for councils to investigate PPP's.

# ANTI-PRIVATISATION

## National Workshop 1997

In December 1997 SAMWU held a national anti-privatisation workshop in Johannesburg.

The workshop focused on:

- ❖ developing an approach to the anti-privatisation campaign,
- ❖ a campaign strategy for the water and sanitation services,
- ❖ a national strategy for the campaign



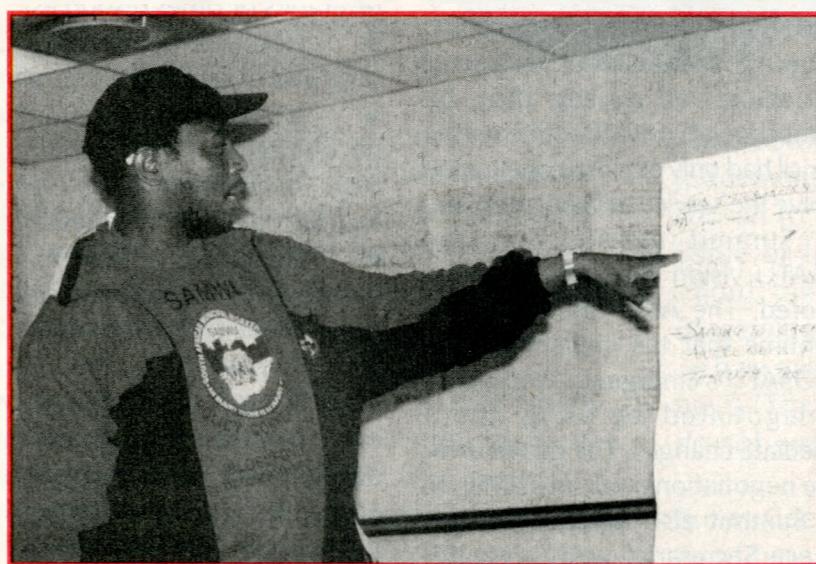
*Comrades from the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Northern Province debate how to take the anti-privatisation campaign forward.*

Officials, Workers and National Office Bearers came from all the provinces to attend the workshop.

These same comrades will now assist in the development of the campaign in their provinces.

### Reports to provinces

A full report of the workshop is available from all provincial and branch offices. A summary of the workshop recommendations was circulated to branches and provinces for mandates in the runup to the February CEC. This includes the draft vision document on the water and sanitation services.



*Cde Jackson Monnelwa from the Free State presents his group's ideas on how SAMWU can intensify the Anti-Privatisation Campaign*

A follow-up meeting was held in early February with the NOB's to complete outstanding tasks. This will be circulated to Provincial Executive Committees in time for the CEC. Once the CEC has approved the recommendations, copies will be made available to all workers.

## Strengthening our organisation

In the meantime, it is vital for the a successful campaign that we have strong workplace organisation. We need to ensure that we have regular depot, shopsteward, area councils and branch meetings and report backs.

Privatisation in the local authorities is widespread and we need all our workers and shopstewards to be the eyes and ears of the union. It is necessary that all relevant information on privatisation is reported to the branch, the province and national offices as soon as you hear of it. This will enable us to respond immediately and effectively. This information is also necessary for the running of the campaign as a whole.

## COSATU

It is important that all members attend COSATU activities and meetings. SAMWU has been able to put privatisation on hold in Nelspruit, Newcastle and Port Elizabeth, with the support of COSATU.

Comrades, we cannot fight privatisation on our own. Privatisation is part of a globalisation of the world economy by capital. We also need to support the struggles of workers in other affiliate. Many of the other unions are facing job losses also as a result of globalisation. Let's get involved in each other's campaigns! Unity is strength!

# SALGA must implement Agreement!

Comrades, in the September issue of *Workers' News* we told you about the SAMWU victory in the National Labour Relations Forum (NLRF) last year. The NLRF has now become the Bargaining Council. Along with the unions, all local authorities are represented in the Bargaining Council as part of the South African Local Government Association, (SALGA). Last year, SALGA agreed with SAMWU and IMATU in a Bargaining Council meeting that local government should remain responsible for the delivery of all basic services. So the NLRF for Local Government adopted this position:

***Clause 5.3 (v) The parties to the NLRFLG support local government as the preferred form of service delivery and before PPP's or any other form of privatisation is considered, local government be given the opportunity to ensure the effective functioning of such service delivery.***

But since then, SALGA's members have not implemented this agreement.

Now, the Tygerberg Transitional Metropolitan Substructure - part of the Cape Metropolitan Council - is saying the agreement is not valid. They say that SALGA had no mandate to make this agreement on their behalf.

They also say that the Bargaining Council had no power to make this agreement. SAMWU disagrees with this. All agreements made at the Council are made in good faith and are binding on all parties. The case is now being heard by an arbitrator, who will listen to both sides and then make a decision in a week's time.

The reason for Tygerberg challenging the agreement is because they want to privatisate basic services. Even though the case is being heard in arbitration at the moment, Tygerberg pushed ahead last year and privatised the waste services of Khayelitsha. Although this was only privatised a few months ago, the community is already experiencing problems.

This arbitration is therefore important for SAMWU as a whole. This case is important for two main reasons:

1. If we lose it means that Local authorities don't have to implement agreements they make with the union;
2. this will undermine the union;
3. local authorities will go ahead with privatisation.

Please comrades, discuss the agreement with other workers, and make everyone aware.

Get your shopstewards to meet with management to highlight that SAMWU will be taking this agreement very seriously, and that our response to any unilateral outsourcing or privatisation will be to take management to arbitration!

# Waste no time in fighting the private waste removers!

by Sandra Van Niekerk, ILRIG

Many of you are familiar with Billy Hattingh and Associates and the rubbish collection projects he puts in place. Billy Hattingh's company does not collect rubbish itself. Instead, it acts as a consultant and sets up an arrangement in which the municipality enters into a contract with individual entrepreneurs, who then collect the rubbish. Billy Hattingh and Associates is paid to provide back-up support to the entrepreneurs, like skills training and financing for equipment.

It is important to remember that Billy Hattingh and Associates is not the only company that operates in this way. Wade Refuse is involved in similar projects in Daveyton and Tembisa. Comrades will remember that in the June 1997 edition of Workers' News we looked briefly at how Wade Refuse was involved in Daveyton.

An example of this is Daveyton, where Wade Refuse (Pty) Ltd negotiated a five-year contract between the Greater Benoni Council, and a small company called Daveyton & Etwatwa Refuse Removers (DERR).

DERR consists of five local residents, who started collecting refuse from houses a few years ago. This group charged R2 for each dustbin of rubbish collected.

The Benoni Council stopped them because they were dumping the rubbish illegally. Wade Refuse then came up with a plan for the five individuals to form a company, DERR, which could then enter into a contract with the council. Wade Refuse supports DERR by giving financial and managerial help. As DERR moves around Daveyton collecting rubbish, they are also supposed to persuade people to pay for service collection.

Wade Refuse also has contracts in municipalities, like Balfour, where they are involved in collecting domestic rubbish directly, rather than sub-contracting it out.

Wade Refuse argues that the system they have set up in Daveyton and Tembisa is a way of sub-contracting the community to collect rubbish. They argue that this is in line with RDP programme - it meets a basic need by contributing to a clean and healthy environment; it builds capacity; and encourages the development of small businesses.

## Does this system contribute to the RDP?

◆ Who benefits from entrepreneur contractors? Is the community empowered, or is it only the individual entrepreneurs who benefit?

- ◆ To what extent is the community actually in control of the process? To what extent is it the company which is actually directing the process?
- ◆ What gains does the company make from the process? Wade Refuse is part of a much larger company, which is one of the dominant players in the waste management sector.

## Who is Wade Refuse?

Wade Refuse is a subsidiary of EnviroServ Holdings, a very large waste management company operating in the southern hemisphere. It was formed out of a merger between Waste-tech and EnviroServ in the middle of last year.

Before the merger, EnviroServ was strong in Gauteng, while Waste-tech was strong in Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. With the merger, EnviroServ Holdings now has a presence throughout the country. It is clearly one of, if not the most, dominant waste companies operating in South Africa.

Even though there are about 80 other contractors operating in the waste management sector, they are mostly small companies, and can't compete with EnviroServ Holdings for resources.

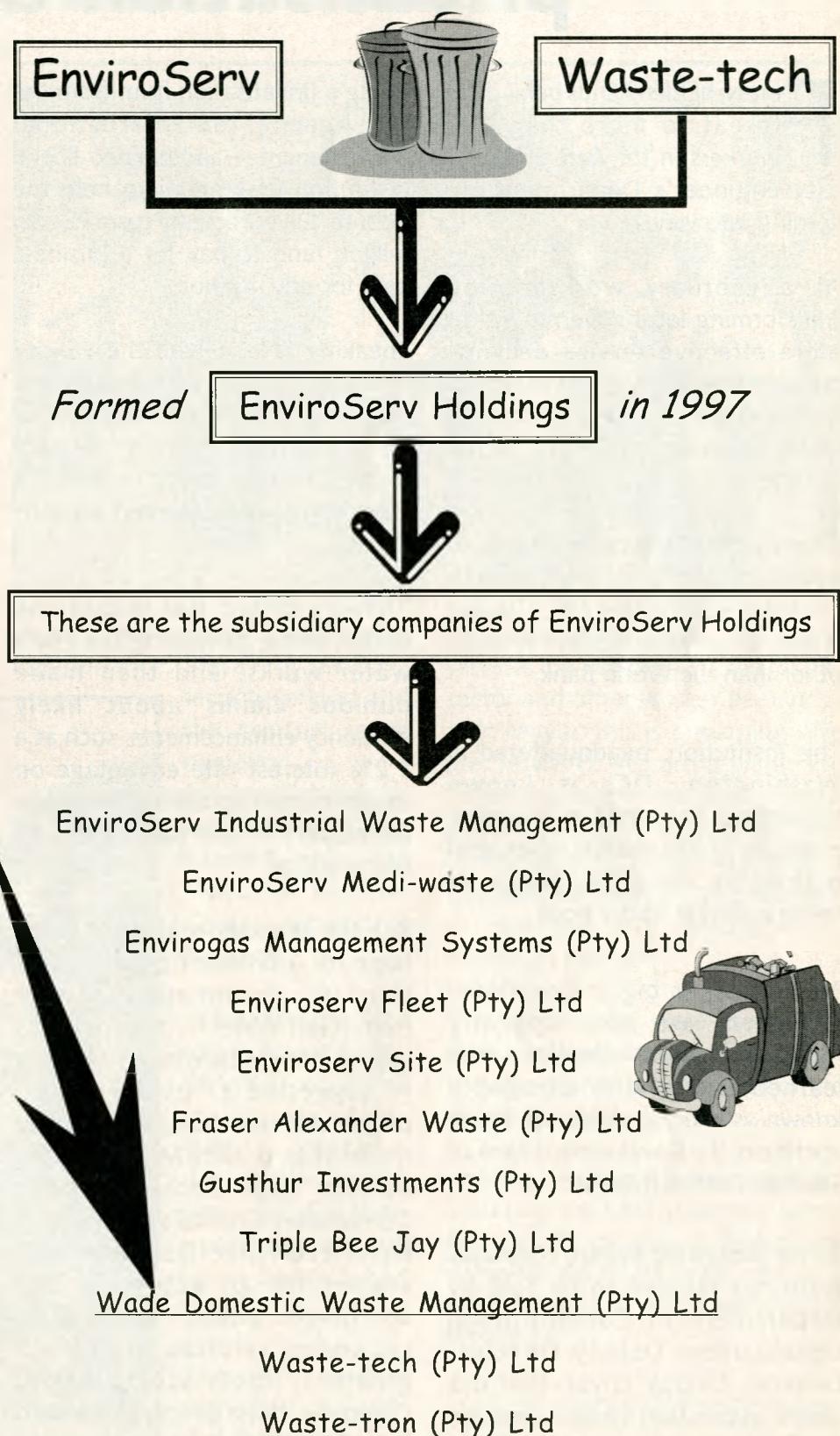
The merger also means that the only high risk hazardous waste sites in the country are now owned by one company. Since these sites are costly and capital-intensive, it will be difficult for other companies to get involved. The operation of these high risk sites is one of the money-making areas of waste management.

Rufus Maruma, the chair of EnviroServ Holdings, is chair of the Consultative National Environmental Policy Process (CONNEP). CONNEP is responsible for producing the framework for a new national environmental management policy, and is supposed to represent all stakeholders. Clearly, the interests of business are well represented. Through the chair EnviroServ will have a direct voice in the process of drawing up environmental policy.

We can see that Wade Refuse is part of a larger company. This larger company is one of the key private sector companies involved in formulating environmental policy for South Africa. Comrades, we need to ask what implications will this have for environmental policy that is developed?

Comrades, is domestic or industrial rubbish being collected by any of these companies in your area? Please let us know which companies are operating in your area, the exact area they cover, and what kind of contract they have. This information will help us build up a clearer picture of Wade Refuse and EnviroServ Holdings.

## Apart from Wade Refuse, EnviroServ Holdings has many other subsidiaries.



# Behind Port Elizabeth's privatisation drive

**F**inally, hidden hands behind the threat to more than 900 workers in the Port Elizabeth City Engineer's Department are coming into view.

At a February workshop on transforming local government for more effective service delivery, convened by the Western Region of Eastern Cape Cosatu, more than 50 trade unionists finally got to the bottom of the privatisation drive.

The agency most involved in persuading PE councillors to consider selling the city's water works to private bidders is none other than the World Bank.

This institution, headquartered in Washington, DC, is known throughout the world as a leading promoter of free-market misery and destruction, under the guise of being a banker to the poor.

Several other big international financiers are also applying "pressure" to PE officials, it was learned, along with an agency known as a key architect of 1980s apartheid, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

As the workshop began, comrades were not pleased to be told by Department of Constitutional Development Deputy Director-General, Chippy Olver, that our union opposition to privatisation had led to the "failure of the RDP."

Using a privatisation fund from the US Agency for International Development—another neo-liberal institution pretending to help the poor—Olver recently gave PE two million rand to pay for a business plan for privatisation.

Speaking after Olver, the PE city treasurer admitted that privatisation was pushed by World Bank staff—led by Junaid Ahmed, deputy resident representative—during a week-long visit eighteen months earlier.

Ahmed's mission had studied one option alone, privatising the city's water works, and then made dubious claims about likely efficiency enhancements, such as a 1,2% interest rate advantage on capital-related borrowing for private developers in contrast to the PE municipality.

But the workshop also provided hope for a different future. David Pienaar, a Johannesburg lawyer from Rand Water—the country's largest intermediate buyer of water—suggested a "public-public" partnership based on a water utility model instead. Litha Mcwabeni, the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council's specialist on

Local Economic Development, argued for an approach that combined public ownership, expanded services and much greater cross-subsidisation. Comrades, this is directly in line with both SAMWU's pilot projects and

the RDP vision of government provision of water.

Patrick Bond, an economic policy lecturer at Wits University, argued for higher infrastructure levels with more explicit economic linkages, so that providing municipal services becomes a growth strategy that can compete for the billions of rands in state subsidies now going into the city's Coega development. Sandra van Niekerk of the International Labour Research and Information Group in Cape Town presented options for public sector reform as a means of improving services.

But even if these arguments make good sense, they may not win the day. A 1997 report by the PE Municipality's Director for Administration conceded there was "pressure for Port Elizabeth to carry the [privatisation] investigations further... from banks and commercial concerns". Several international banks as well as multinational water privatisers Generale des Eaux and Lyonnaise des Eaux, and SANCO's investment arm Metsi a Sechaba Holdings, had all met with PE officials under pressure from Olver and others in central government.

SAMWU Provincial Chairperson, Sandile Mqaka forced Olver to agree that money could also be made available, in future, to those who want to investigate a public option, not one based on greed, job losses and attacks on consumers.

# KwaZulu-Natal marches against privatisation!

The tranquil seaside resort of Ballito, on the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast, was set abuzz on January 21<sup>st</sup> by 200 of our members that marched in protest of the proposed initiative to privatise the Water and Sewerage Works.

The comrades showed their fighting spirit by marching more than ten kilometres in the boiling KwaZulu heat. Although comrades were peaceful and disciplined, there was a strong police presence and marchers were recorded on video by municipal officials and police.

The municipality has already privatised refuse removal, plot



clearing, parks, gardens, road verges maintenance, lifesaving services, security services and the control room operation.

At the library a memorandum was handed to the Mayor of Dolphin Coast, Mr Bonnie Maharaj.

In handing over the memorandum, SAMWU objected to the use of the video recorder during the march and said their permission should have been asked first.

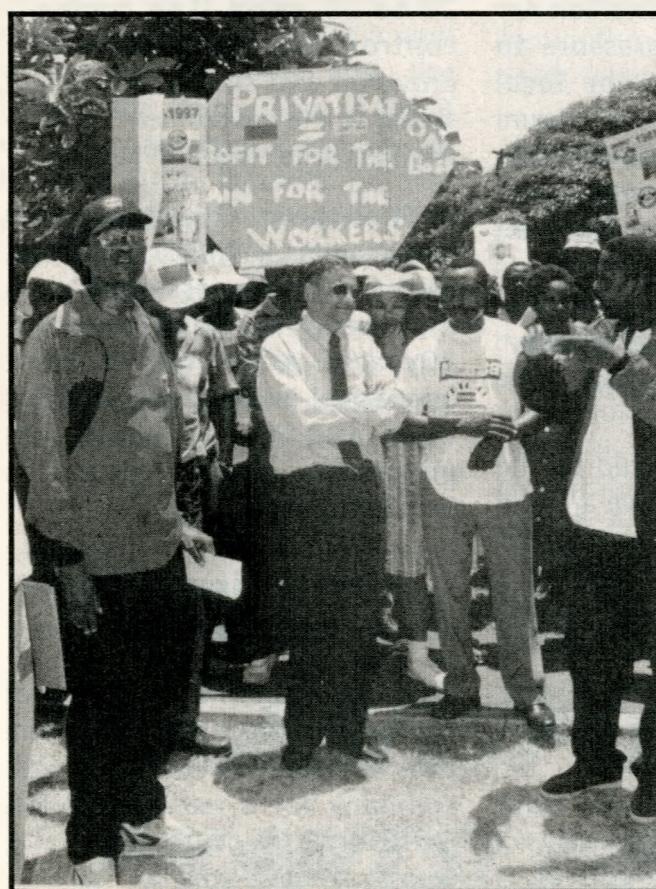
The memorandum contained demands that the privatisation

of water be stopped, the other services be restored to the public sector and other worker demands.

"Mr Mayor, this is a warning. We are SAMWU. We are a giant. We will not sitback and wait. Please ensure that our demands are met by February 28. Failure to meet our demands will leave us no option but to embark on massaction," comrades warned.

While comrades were angry that they had been recorded on video, they mostly felt that the spirit of the march was high.

SAMWU received a letter on January 23rd from the CEO of Dolphin Coast Municipality assuring us that all our demands would be dealt with as a matter of urgency at the next Council meeting.



by Sanjay Tuckooriah, KZN Media Co-ordinator.

# Gear, Privatisation and the struggle for public sector reform

by Maria Van Driel, Campaign Co-ordinator

**A**t national congresses in 1997, both COSATU and SAMWU rejected the government's Growth, Economy and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. Comrade Vavi of COSATU went on to say that it was immoral to support GEAR. But the ANC Conference in Mafikeng, did not reject GEAR, despite COSATU's position.

For SAMWU which organises the local government, GEAR is an obstacle to service delivery. GEAR promotes privatisation.

## **GEAR and Privatisation**

The September Commission criticised GEAR as a neoliberal programme serving the interests of the capitalists. Capitalists exist to make profits.

Internationally, the capitalist class is looking for secure and profitable areas to invest. Neoliberalism is the programme that governments like South Africa are implementing to assist the capitalists. The capitalists don't want to invest in countries where there are unions, and laws regulating wages and working conditions. They say this will reduce their profits. The capitalists therefore move to countries where labour is cheaper; and union and human rights are few.

Neoliberalism is being implemented even if this means increased unemployment, poverty and deteriorating working conditions for the masses.

For example, taxes for capitalists are reduced while they can take profits, made in South Africa, to another country. Often in the other country, labour is cheaper or more exploited. Other features of neo-liberalism are:

- ◆ State expenditure on basic social services like health and education is drastically reduced.
- ◆ There is pressure to privatise or to sell profitable state assets to the private sector for next to nothing. State assets are profitable because the state has already invested in setting up infrastructure like roads, equipment and other expensive resources. Examples of this are Telkom, SABC and Sun Air.
- ◆ There is also pressure to privatise services in the local government, because this is a secure investment. Everyone needs water, electricity, healthcare, and so forth. Hence privatisation is an important feature of GEAR.

## **Privatisation and black empowerment**

Privatisation has adapted to the South Africa situation. We are told that privatisation is in the interests of black empowerment. But this is not black empowerment for the majority of people who suffered under Apartheid. Privatisation only 'empowers' a few blacks. There are two reasons for using this:

1. Big companies use a few black faces, in certain positions, as a means to get government contracts

2. to try to co-opt workers and the union movement into joint ventures or partnerships, with the private sector. In this way the capitalists hope to defeat the anti-privatisation campaign.

## **Local Government under Fire**

In local government privatisation is becoming widespread and is taking different forms.

## **Concessioning**

Bulk services like water are concessioned to multinationals for 20 to 30 years. The company control maintenance, water provision and sets tariffs. This is similar to the government's Public-private-partnerships (PPPs).

In Stutterheim, Queenstown and Fort Beaufort, in the Eastern Cape, water was concessioned to a multinational consortium for 20 years. After the Alliance intervened in Nelspruit, Western Cape and Port Elizabeth, the privatisation process was put on hold temporarily.

## **Contracting out or outsourcing**

This is a common form of privatisation where the government buys the service from the private company for a particular time. Outsourcing occurs nationally, across service sectors.

This includes refuse removal, roads, security, catering, meter reading in water and electricity and health services.

Often contractors subcontract and employ casuals. The casuals work under bad conditions which affect the service and enrich the contractor. The unions' concerns about employment standards can potentially bring the union and the community into conflict with each other. For example, unemployed people in the community may be prepared to work for R500 per month and no protective clothing while municipal workers will strongly oppose an erosion of established minimum standards within the sector.

### **Joint ventures**

Joint ventures are 'partnerships' between the local authority, the workers and the private company. Often 'black empowerment' is used to co-opt workers and the community. An example of this is refuse collection in Newcastle, in KwaZulu Natal, currently on hold after the Alliance intervened. Here First National Bank, to whom many provincial governments are indebted, tried to get the 'venture' off the ground. This form can also undermine the union's relationship with its own membership.

### **Leasing**

Leasing is where a service or resource previously held is hired from the private sector. This includes

leasing management services, a proposal in Johannesburg Fire Department. Leasing is also used to introduce privatisation and by-pass opposition. In Gauteng the Emergency Medical Services, (ambulances) were leased and this has accompanied the general running down of the service. Already some specialist services and staff training have been abandoned. Now there is pressure to privatise the ambulance service.

### **Reducing Funds**

By reducing funds to public bodies the government forces them to seek private funding, or enter into partnerships with the private sector. All services in all local authorities are affected nationally. The funding crisis is public in Johannesburg. The Development Bank of SA assisted the GJTC with a conditional loan. A Committee of Ten is now busy 'reprioritising' the budget. This is clearly a move to privatise.

### **Increasing user charges**

This process prepares the service for privatisation. This is also known as commercialisation and is happening nationally, across services. Tariffs for the service are set according to private sector principles. The private sector benefits from this as the local authority has to take political responsibility for increasing the charges. At the same time, the price for the service is set. Before, in places like Springbok, Northern Cape, there were no payment

problems. But now, the price of water has increased three times and people can't afford to pay. This is what privatisation means: basic services like water for those who can afford.

### **SAMWU's response**

SAMWU is consistent in its rejection of all forms of privatisation. At the same time that we are struggling against privatisation, we also realise that we need to improve and extend service delivery to communities. This will also mean restructuring the workplace and changing workers' attitudes to their work and the community. For many years communities were excluded from decision-making. Now, it is important that communities participate democratically in the restructuring process. This is called public sector reform.

### **Towards a COSATU platform**

The 1997 COSATU Congress decided to form a platform based on demands vital for the living conditions of the working class. COSATU will engage the ANC, to accept the platform, with the 1999 elections in mind. As a participant, SAMWU needs to ensure that the demand to scrap privatisation is included in the platform and is struggled for with the ANC. We must ensure that workers' interests are not compromised.

**ASIVIFUNI I-GEAR!**

**PHANTSII I-PRIVATISATION!**

# "All comrades should welcome the quota system"

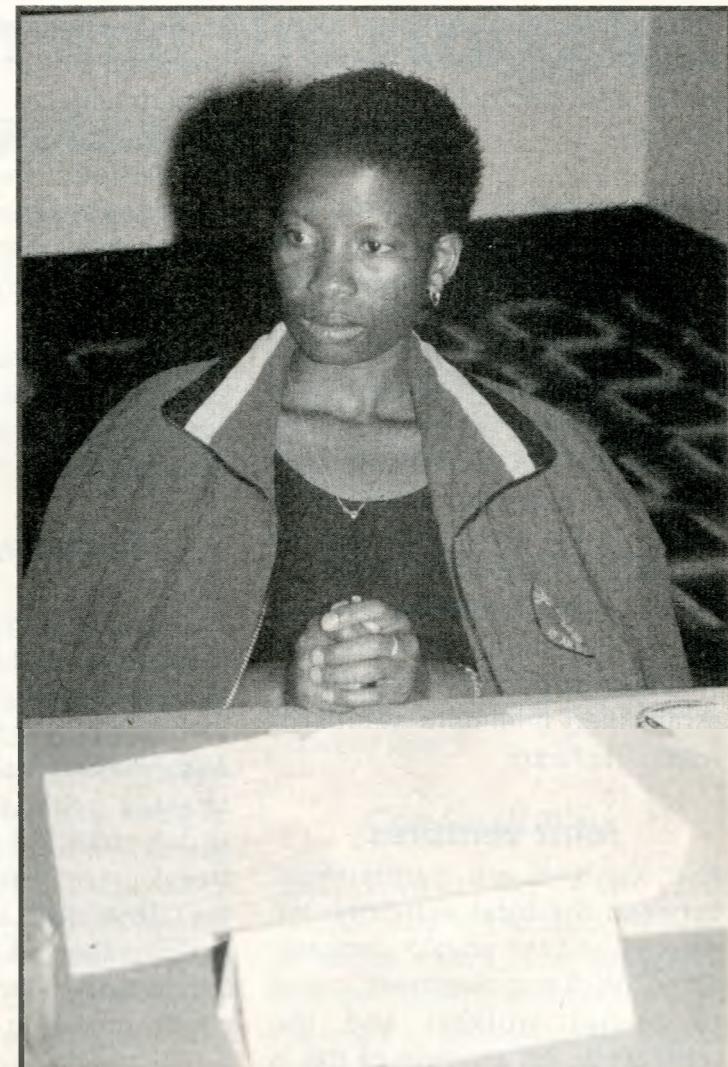
**says Margaret Thlabela, Deputy Chairperson of the Northern Province. Cde Maggie was interviewed by Northern Province Organiser and Provincial Media Co-ordinator, Cde Alfred Sithole...**

**Sithole:** Cde Maggie tell me, SAMWU adopted a new Constitution last year which gives women more opportunity to become worker leaders through a quota system. Has the new quota system had an impact on women in your branches?

**Maggie:** Well, I think it is important to note that adoption of the new Constitution has been extensively debated over the past two years and this replaces the old Constitution that was adopted in 1987. The debate in my view proceeded extremely well. The most important changes are that all members will now fall under branches and in this case Northern Province has three branches. This enables women to be fairly represented. It is a step towards empowering women because Women's Committees at Branch, Regional and National levels are now a formal part of the constitution. This promotes women leaders at all levels within the union.

The impact of the quota system is seen, in Northern Province, where women make up less than one third of the membership. This would normally mean that women have very little chance of being elected a leader. But the quota formula to ensure representation of women and of electing women shop stewards will succeed in increasing the number of women shop stewards in the Union from grass roots level upwards.

In short I believe that the quota system is welcomed in SAMWU as a whole, and I believe that this will extend to other affiliates of the Federation.



**Cde Maggie Thlabela explains how the quota system is working in the Northern Province**

.....  
Since launching Women's Structures at Branch levels, attendance and participation is very poor. Some women still believe in yielding to men.

**Sithole:** Cde are the women's structures functioning in your branch?

**Maggie:** Since the launching of this structure the only meeting held was the BSSC but few women attended.

The branch Women's Committee therefore failed. I view this as a weakness.

**Sithole:** Chief, have you had any difficulties in trying to build the women's structures in your branch?

**Maggie:** The fact is that there are few women employed in Local Government especially in the Northern Province. As a result one will agree that it is difficult to build a Women's Structure. Even after electing women shop stewards, and taking steps to ensure this structure meets regularly, you will find that the attendance is mostly from one Local Authority. But I am convinced that despite some difficulties, this provides a foundation to take the women forward.

**Sithole:** How do you feel about the Northern Province victory in gaining parental leave for SAMWU members?

**Maggie:** This is a gain which indicates that SAMWU is there for the interests of workers. We usually say that this is the beginning, the rest are still coming - ke mathomo mayo, dikgolo di sa etla! One is sceptical as to whether the National Bargaining Council is going to bring victories like our Parental Rights agreement of 20 days additional leave per year for parents to other provinces, but we hope so.

**Sithole:** Where would you like to see yourself as a woman worker in five years time?

**Maggie:** I think that the Constitution of SAMWU is a document that gives motives and morals to active women. As a committed and dedicated woman, I would like to see myself with other women as a National Office Bearer.

**Sithole:** How does union work affect your family life as a woman and mother?

**Maggie:** I do not have very much time at home. I used to leave my children with their grandmother maybe for a whole week, and they could not attend pre-school for these times. Fortunately I now have someone living with us to take care of them. But I usually take my kids along to meetings. My entire family are very supportive.

**Sithole:** What decisions could the Union take to make it easier for women Comrades to attend meetings and be more active?

**Maggie:** If meetings could be limited, and concentrate only on one thing i.e. if you on a Water Committee, be there only. You know Cde Sithole, it would be good to get a provincial programme for the whole year so that it will be easier for husbands to understand our programme. Husbands sometimes do not agree when things are put forward on the spur of the moment by a woman.

**Sithole:** Finally comrade, how long have you been a SAMWU member, a shop steward and where do you work?

**Maggie:** I knew you would finally ask me this question! On a lighter note, I have survived three years as a shop steward, and mind you, six years as a committed member working at the Pietersburg Local Authority as Chemical Analyst. This has built me. Wathinti Abafazi! Wathinti Imbokodo!



# Women in SAMWU are not organised: WHO IS TO BLAME?

by TRUDY WAGENSTROOM,  
Western Cape PEO

A SAMWU constitution was adopted one year ago which created space for women to organise more effectively. This was regarded as a great victory for which women had fought vigorously. A programme was adopted to launch women structures within a certain period of time. A Women's Charter conference was planned, which would chart the political vision for women in SAMWU. We can proudly say that SAMWU is

a leading union in its policy on developing women. Another milestone is the election of one woman as a national office bearer. But on the other hand, the women's structures are not emerging. The women's conference has been postponed for a third time.

We acknowledge that most black women suffer a triple oppression. We acknowledge that the emancipation

of women is one of the essential elements in building a democratic organisation and society. We blame the patriarchal nature of society, history, culture, tradition, men, policy. But we must ask: can men ever emancipate women anyway?

The two debates that follow look at our women's structures and what is needed, from what appear to be slightly different perspectives.

## Debate 1: Sisters must do it for themselves!

Women's oppression is a reality. However, we women in SAMWU need to blame ourselves because we are ultimately responsible for our own liberation. For example, where are those women who used to be active in the Women's Forum? What are they doing now, and why have they not helped to build the structures?

Women argued in the past that we didn't have constitutional powers and that was a major stumbling block to implementing women's programmes. We have constitutional powers now, yet as women we are still not active.

Women also argued that male comrades were not supportive, that they were chauvinistic and dominate. Yet who supported and agreed to the decision on a quota system? Men! These same men worked on our constitution, and, with us, motivated our position for women's empowerment and a quota system at our Policy Conference and National Congress.

Now we argue that we need to appoint a full time Gender Co-

ordinator if we are serious about building women. This is necessary but will it fully address the problem of the women's lack of will and apathy? Should we rather not examine ourselves and our own commitment to this struggle? We have the means, all we have to do is act upon these.

Part of the problem is that there is confusing and contradictory debate the "constitution." But the constitution merely enables the CEC to "demarcate constituencies for purposes of promoting equity and fair representation on the basis of gender, age, or disability."

The CEC surely needs to urgently clarify the detail of how women shop stewards are elected.

It is argued by some that the constitution does not allow for women shop stewards to have a women constituency that they can relate to and work with. They are therefore not able to mobilise the women and the relevant decisions thus remain in a vacuum.

This could be taken further by women insisting that at every workplace where there are women workers there must be a women shop steward. Women shop stewards should be elected to represent women workers only. Women need their own constituency their forum, which they can relate to.

### Way Forward:

- ❖ Women shop stewards should be portfolioised to attend to issues and problems affecting women workers and should spearhead campaigns on women and gender
- ❖ All Provinces should ensure that they have a provincial women's co-ordinator (must be a woman) whose first task is to facilitate the process of election of BWC and PWC (where these don't exist yet).
- ❖ All women shop stewards except those who are office bearers (Branches, Provinces, National) suspend their ordinary shop steward duties and as a priority for the next 3 months focus on ~~implementing~~ the women's programme.

## Debate: 2 Women's Rights are Human Rights!

Women's oppression is a reality. Through no fault of their own, women are burdened at home by domestic responsibilities, oppression and male domination. Often this continues at the workplace and even in the union. Women's structures in the union are weakened by having to fight for limited amounts of money to put programmes into practice. This impedes our development and progress as women in the union as a whole. Most attempts being made to organise women are done in ad-hoc manner. Organisers do not see women as a priority.

The Women's structures that did exist prior to the adoption of the new constitution were disbanded in order to form the new Women's Committees. While it is necessary to form committees constitutionally, there are some male officials to oversee this process and they are not taking it seriously. Many branches, in last year's shopsteward elections, ignored the quota system, so there are still very few women shop stewards. This is a further obstacle to forming the BWC's. Despite this, we have many dedicated women fighters within SAMWU. It seems that there is still confusion regarding the interpretation of the constitution in relation to women shop stewards.

One understanding of the constitution is that women shop stewards have a

constituency which consists of both women and men workers. The constitution does not list separate duties for women shop stewards. There is one set of duties. All shop stewards including women shop stewards need to get involved in all issues of the union, organisational, economic and political. They need to be involved in the restructuring process in campaigns, in COSATU (not just the gender forum). They should know all the policies of the union and should be able to defend these. They should be able at any time, to defend all workers.

One understanding of the constitution is that women shop stewards have a constituency consisting of both women and men workers. The constitution does not distinguish or separate the two (e.g. shop steward duties). All shop stewards including women shop stewards need to be involved in all issues of the union, organisational, economic and political. They need to be involved in the restructuring process in campaigns, in COSATU (not just the gender forum). They should know all the policies and positions of the union and should be able to defend these. They should be able at any time, when called upon to defend all workers, including male workers.

Of course there are some who argue that all we are doing is to create a female presence on bigger BEC and

PEC meetings, and having token women sitting on committees is not liberation, it is window dressing.

SAMWU women can strongly argue that our new constitution facilitates building women in the organisation. It not only exposes women to policy debates and decisions but women are also actively part of the decision making process. A strength of the constitution is that it ensures that a certain number of women form part of the decision making structures of the union.

### The Way Forward:

- ❖ We need a strategy meeting to do an assessment of the building of Women's Structures so far. We must set in place concrete programmes from branch level upwards to implement resolutions, and plan the women's conference, training and campaigns.
- ❖ Building Women's structures is the constitutional responsibility of all workers, not just women. Male shop stewards, as the majority, must make sure that women's issues are raised at Branch Executive Meetings. How can women put forward women's issues if they are not yet represented?
- ❖ Officials must assist women shop stewards with transport and try to hold meetings during the day in the working week, and arrange for time off for women.



Must women be left alone to fight for the effective establishment of structures - as debate one suggests? Or do we want to follow debate two which suggests that women shop stewards are no different from all other shop stewards? One thing is clear - that the CEC needs to fully clarify how the emergence of women shop stewards is promoted.

The starting point is to recognise that there are two ways in which women are elected as a shop steward. Some are elected by a normal constituency of men and women. Others are elected for a "women's constituency" as a specific step to promote women leadership. How have structures been approaching this election? Is this a constituency made up only of women? If so does this mean that she is only there to deal with the women's portfolio?

Previously the CEC noted that women shop stewards of any constituency are shop stewards with collective duties as described in the constitution. They are equal members of a shop steward committee which needs to share out responsibilities for different aspects of their work in running the union in their workplace.

Yet confusion persists - the CEC needs to clarify a single approach on every detail.

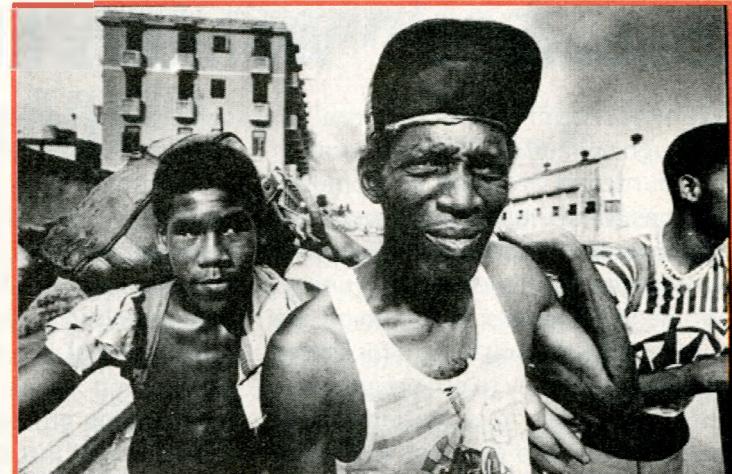
# Why Cuba says NO to privatisation

By Raul Valdes Vivo  
Reprinted from *Granma International*

In this article, Vivo, rector of the Nico Lopez Higher Party School in Havana and a member of the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee, answers the argument that some Cuban enterprises should be privatized and Cuban citizens should be allowed to become capitalists.

**E**very once in a while, in good or not so good faith, foreign observers come up with opinions seeking a contradiction in the fact that Cuba has accepted associations with foreign capital, to which end it has modified its socialist constitution and drawn up appropriate legislation, while internally rejecting capitalist investment by Cuban citizens in small and medium-sized enterprises. Those observers attribute us with feeling good in the company of big fry but feeling bad in that of small fry.

This is also one of the attacks launched by the mafioso Miami radio stations when they choose to adopt feigned social-democratic or reformist postures, although their permanent strategy is annexation under the total domination of U.S. transnationals. The response to those views, in addition to being an economic one, is also political and ideological.



1. Those foreign associations, which we would have preferred not to make, permit us to acquire capital, technologies and markets, which objectively help to counteract the economic war waged by Cuba's historical enemy, and which we are principally confronting through our own efforts.
2. Joint ventures with foreign capital have contractual time limits. They are governed by protection agreements for all our workers.
3. These presumable investments by Cubans cannot make any contribution to the country's development. Neither is it in our interest that financial and other resources be imported for the return of an internal exploitative class with foreign advisors and backing.
4. The creation of the economic seeds of a national bourgeoisie would introduce a social force that sooner or later would serve the counterrevolution. The Cuban Revolution is alert to such machinations.

## At the conclusion of the 5th Party Congress Fidel explained:

"Now, of course, I can assure you that any idea of privatizations within our industries is not in the minds of our Party cadres and leaders.

"If a sugar mill has to be closed down, it will be closed down because of the total impossibility from an economic point of view of making it profitable, useful to the economy, or transforming it into a mill without losses. And is it admissible or acceptable that what Cuban revolutionaries are unable to do, can be done by a private individual or a capitalist?"

## Cuban Workers

In incisive terms, our first secretary rejected any notion of "creating, through privatization, a wealthy class in this country, which would subsequently acquire tremendous power and would begin to conspire against socialism."

5. The Cuban Revolution cannot accept privatization, which encourages selfishness and individualism. On the contrary, Cuban government will become more efficient by consolidating social ownership of the means of production, which is a part of the constant struggle for the socialist principles of fraternity and solidarity. Could a capitalist enterprise contribute to shaping the new socialist being, as advocated by Che?

6. The creation of a new bourgeoisie, which in the former republic was anti-nationalist, would increase the potential climate for illegal enrichment and corruption.

7. It is also clear that, in order to be profitable, small and medium-sized private enterprises would have to be based on the super-exploitation of the work force. That was a familiar phenomenon in neocolonial Cuba and one that currently exists in countries which are barely able to compete with monopolies capable of a far superior labor productivity.

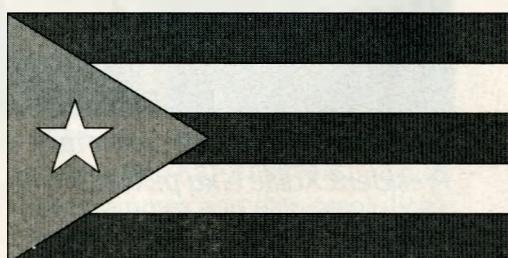
8. The 5th Congress not only rejected any idea of Cuba accepting native private enterprises but, recognizing positive international experiences and those already functioning in our country, affirms in its Economic Resolution: "In the entrepreneurial sector, small and medium-sized state enterprises must undertake a dynamic and flexible role in production and services, as well as in the creation of jobs."

We are in the presence of a trilogy of objectives expressing a single enemy strategy. In the political

sphere, a multi-party system, whose implementation would annihilate the unity that makes it possible for us to maintain our genuine democracy and real human rights. In the social sphere, the civil society supposedly found wanting in Cuba and for which U.S. academics have anti-state recipes. And in the economic sphere, the creation of capitalist enterprises.

It is insidious and false to attribute Cuba's refusal to allow such enterprises to the fact that, due to the blockade, national unity has been given priority, meaning that many problems needing to be more profoundly discussed have had to be put on hold.

Faced with a genocidal blockade, an economic crisis and military threats, far from having recourse to emergency situations and canceling the purest elections on the planet, Cuba is strengthening popular participation in its political system. It is a country where people and their representative institutions have the highest degree of debate on every important issue, every piece of legislation.



**Cuban Revolutionary Che Guevara told workers that to become "new socialist beings" they should work on behalf of society, with no idea of profit. This would build a true communist consciousness. By working for a private company, Cuban workers would only build profit for the bosses. Cuba therefore rejects capitalism and privatisation!**

The capitalist enterprises are like the piranhas, these millions of hungry, killer fish found in the Amazon River, which are capable of eating a horse down to its bones in the minimum of time.

**VIVA  
CUBA!**

# SAMWU Comrades in Japan!

*SAMWU is an affiliate of COSATU in South Africa, and of Public Services International (PSI) internationally. Four of our SAMWU Soldiers recently attended the PSI World Congress to find out what challenges public sector workers in other parts of the world are facing. Delegate Gracy Qabathe reports...*

The 26<sup>th</sup> World Congress for Public Services International (PSI) was held in Yokohama, Japan from 10-14 November last year. The theme of the Congress was "Public Services for Human Needs and Dignity."

SAMWU sent four delegates: Roger Ronnie, the General Secretary; Xolile Nxu, the First Vice-President; Gracy Qabathe, Free State Treasurer; and Phinda Mhlongo, Gauteng Provincial Secretary. Other South African unions were Newhawu, who sent 10 delegates and Hospersa with 4 delegates.

Before we could go to Japan, there was a pre-Congress seminar in Nairobi, Kenya from the 3<sup>rd</sup> until the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1997. The theme of the pre-Congress seminar was "Democratising the Global Economy" - a trade union vision.

The Seminar identified problems that unions are faced with:

- ❖ Across the world, public services are under a strong criticism that they are ineffective and expensive for their value. This is leading to the collapse of services.
- ❖ Public service unions are under strong attack. There are a lot of countries that do not have bargaining powers and others with unions that are denied recognition. In some countries, union officials are under attack for engaging in union activities.



Gauteng Provincial Secretary Phinda Mhlongo and First Vice-President Xolile Nxu pictured with Comrades from UNISON, England

❖ The effects of globalisation are taking their toll. For example, workers are losing jobs because of privatisation, there is no wage or job security for many working in the public services, and child labour is rife in Export Processing Zones (EPZ's). Our country is not an exception as our government is about to start building an EPZ in Port Elizabeth.

The Seminar broke into groups to discuss these problems. We came up with a common agreement: unions should participate effectively in policy **formulation**, promote social security, and promote human resource development in the frame work of service delivery. My assessment of the seminar was that it was very effective. Because of South Africa's unique

labour history and present situation, I often felt that SAMWU was very different to the other unions present! But we all found a common goal despite the different cultural and political ideologies of the public sector unions.

Between the African delegates, there was an immediate feeling of unity even before the Word Congress began despite the language barrier because of all our different languages.

I was impressed by the fact that PSI forced unions to bring women delegates and even funded women delegates. I was also impressed by the level of participation. Comrades were broken up into very small groups so that everyone, especially the women,

had more opportunity than usual to participate.

It was interesting to note that despite our repressive past, as SAMWU and COSATU we have achieved much in a short space of time. Many countries admire us and live by our example.

At the Congress, a statement on Indigenous Peoples was presented to Congress delegates. The statement was given in Maori, the language of the indigenous people of Aotearoa (New Zealand) on behalf of the indigenous peoples' representatives attending the Congress from around the world. The United Nations has declared 1995-2004 as International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples to draw attention to the struggles and hardships of indigenous peoples who do not have the same fundamental rights as other peoples. Stressing the particular role that public sector trade unions can play in supporting and promoting indigenous peoples rights, the statement calls on PSI affiliates to develop action plans for indigenous peoples. These action plans should include issues such as employment and lobbying governments to ratify the ILO Convention on Indigenous Peoples.

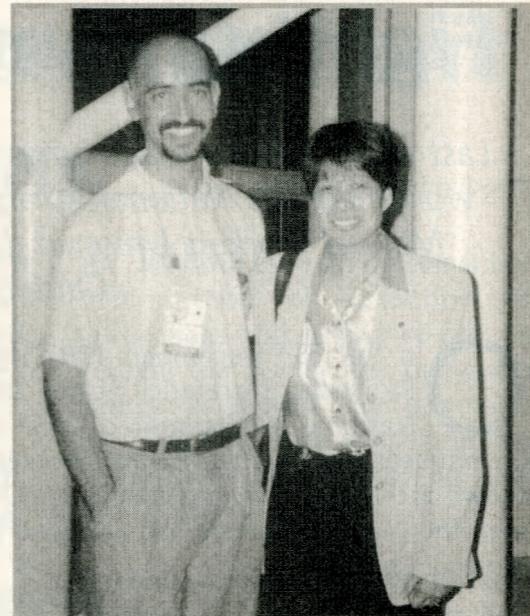
The Seminar and the World Congress are clear examples of the usefulness of belonging to international organisations, as the COSATU resolution on affiliating to the ICFTU states.

However, there were disappointments at the Congress. SAMWU realised that most women in the world are still under strong oppression, exploitation and discrimination but the situation is worst in Africa. In fact, some of the other African unions refused to

bring a woman delegate, even though this was a PSI requirement and the women delegates were funded by PSI. This showed clearly that quota systems are a good way for women to be able to be represented.

The SAMWU delegates that went to the Congress would like to ask all members to be aware of the following:

- ❖ Delegates promised to build solidarity with other African public sector unions
- ❖ SAMWU members must note that across the world, municipal workers are fighting the same problems. So ask your shop stewards and organisers to arrange educational workshops or briefings for you on problems that workers around the world are encountering.
- ❖ SAMWU women should take a special interest in international matters. Build programmes and pass resolutions from the Branch Women's Committees upwards that will support solidarity between



*Two General Secretaries ...Roger Ronnie and Annie Geron from PS Link in the Philippines*

women, and help other women workers to overcome the oppression they face within unions, workplaces and at home.

- ❖ We must fight globalisation starting now! Globalisation is a dragon that will consume us. It is up to us to implement decisions taken at the Congress to stop globalisation before it spreads!

*The Treasurer of the Free State, Gracy Qabathe is pictured here discussing public sector issues with Jichiro comrades...*



# Fighting campaigns across borders

*Last year SAMWU made a trip to Botswana in an effort to encourage the public sector workers of the National Amalgamated Local and Central Government and Parastatal Manual Workers Union in their fight against privatisation! Cde Phinda Mhlongo, Gauteng Provincial Secretary reports...*

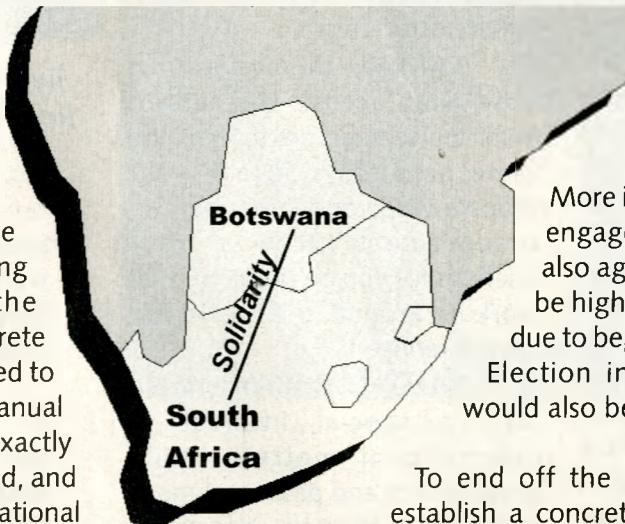
**O**n the 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1997, two SAMWU Provincial Secretaries visited the Botswana National Amalgamated Local and Central Government and Parastatal Manual Workers Union, also known as the Manual Workers Union. In October of last year, the Manual Workers had attended the SAMWU National Congress.

The two SAMWU secretaries, Phinda Mhlongo of Gauteng and Tom Ngobeni of North West Province, became immediately engaged in a lengthy discussion around privatisation. The issue of privatisation was something new in Botswana, and the government had given no concrete information about why they wished to privatise essential services. The Manual Workers Union was also unsure exactly which services were being targeted, and whether any private sector multinational companies were involved.

These were problems that sounded very familiar to SAMWU. From our own experience we know that privatisation is always done secretly and there is little available information on the companies involved. SAMWU encouraged the comrades to gather as much information as possible about any proposed privatisation, especially in the health and waste removal sectors which seemed particularly under threat.

The Manual Workers Union also asked SAMWU for advice around some sensitive political issues. It seems to be that former and present civil servants in high positions are forming private sector companies to take over services, or they have a stake in companies vying for privatisation. The comrades asked SAMWU how they could deal with this type of behaviour.

SAMWU asked whether the union is negotiating alternatives to privatisation with government.



The comrades explained that there were political differences within the union. Some members support the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) while others support the opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF). After a long debate, comrades agreed that as a union, they must engage government around privatisation. It was decided that they would arrange to meet with the Minister of Presidential Affairs, who is in charge of privatisation.

More importantly, Councillors would be engaged at their caucuses. There was also agreement that privatisation would be highlighted at Party Rallies, which are due to begin in preparation for the National Election in 1999. Community meetings would also be arranged.

To end off the meeting, everyone decided to establish a concrete programme of action to take the anti-privatisation campaigns of both unions forward. The Manual Workers Union agreed to establish an anti-privatisation committee of six people to be elected by their General Council. This committee will co-ordinate the campaign, gather information and collect data, be accountable to their NEC, and arrange meetings with other parties such as communities, Councillors, and SAMWU!

Cdes Phinda and Tom have recommended that SAMWU develop worker to worker contact with the Manual Workers Union, as there is a lot that our unions can learn from each other. "We believe SAMWU should arrange a visit by a few members of the campaigns committee. This will help us avoid a situation where contact is with leadership only," said Cde Tom Ngobeni.

"SAMWU enjoys a lot of respect amongst the Botswana comrades," added Comrade Phinda. "Visits by SAMWU members to Botswana will undoubtedly be a worthwhile educational experience."

# A basic guide to retrenchment negotiations

by Legal Officer, John Brown

The current financial crisis facing many local authorities, small, medium or large could increasingly find our shop stewards facing negotiations over proposed retrenchments. Many advisors and policy makers at national and provincial levels are either arguing for privatisation, or simply that the cost of the wage bill as a proportion of the Councils budget should be reduced.

The circumstances of retrenchment which arise from privatisation or sub-contracting out of functions differs from that a straight job shedding exercise. It is policy choice that has been made to terminate the direct provision of a service. It is not that no work exists. In such cases our first line of defence is our anti-privatisation campaign.

## All shop stewards must prepare now to fight retrenchment proposals

With the drive to "slim" the workforce the arguments will tend to be different. Management will be claiming that there are too many staff in particular services or that a particular service that they used to provide can no longer be provided. That they have to cut costs.

We need to prepare ourselves to contest the various types of argument which might be raised by management. We need to know our services, we need to develop good relations with the community to

oppose cuts in services and jobs. We need to know what services are lacking. **All in all, shop stewards need to know their Municipality in detail.**

## Know and understand Section 189 of the LRA

The terms of the LRA in relation to dismissal for reasons of "operational requirements" is in section 189. The following are some points to remember - **but please read the section for yourself:**

- ◆ Management must consult the union from when they first "contemplate" such terminations of service. We must fight employers who come to us long after the time that they first thought of and started planning to retrench.
- ◆ It is required of the consulting parties to attempt to avoid, minimise, delay the timing, and minimise the harsh result of retrenchment.
- ◆ The management are obliged to "disclose in writing— all relevant information". There is a list of items in the act. The list in the Act includes obvious issues like the reasons, alternatives considered, number of workers, proposed dates, proposed severance pay etc. This is not an exclusive list - you must seek each and every bit of information which may have a bearing on the struggle to avoid job lose. **Reasons and alternatives must be demanded in detail in writing.**
- ◆ If the worst comes to the worst and retrenchment proves unavoidable

you will need to reach agreement of the method of selection of retrenchedes and severance pay. In general the last in first out (LIFO) principle is applied - but it is not a law. The key issue which the law focuses is on criteria which are "fair and objective".

Fighting retrenchment is always hard. We must mobilise our resources fully in such cases. Shop stewards must not try and "go it alone" in such negotiations. You must insist on an official being present and consult fully with the Provincial level as well. You must not enter into or sign any agreement. It is critical that such agreements are scrutinised by the regional, and even head office before signing. Your mistake could jeopardise other workers fighting job lose.

## The key to success is to have everything in writing

From the start a key to success is to do every thing in writing. You must demand all information required by law and further detail. You must not allow them to rush you. You must seek to find alternative proposals to which management must respond.

Above all else you must consult with and advise your members, and seek their mandates. Members sometimes opt for voluntary retrenchment or early retirement packages without thinking of the life of jobless poverty in which they might become entrapped.

**Now is the time to create jobs - not destroy them;  
to extend services - not reduce them!**

# Celebrating SAMWU's Tenth Anniversary around the country!

Northern Province was the first to hold a provincial celebration of the tenth anniversary of SAMWU. Hundreds of members gathered in at the Jack Botes Hall Open Ground in Pietersburg to listen to speeches of celebration

and watch shows performed by very talented SAMWU cdes. The highlights of the day were a

speech by President Petrus Mashishi, and a traditional Tsonga dance performed by SAMWU

women from Duiwelskloof and Tzaneen, which fall under the Far Northern Branch.



## The Mashishi Cultural Group

This SAMWU Eastern Cape cultural group was formed in 1995 by Thobile Maso, who was an Organiser then, and comrade Raymond Njana who is a shop-steward.

Most of the group are labourers and three foremen who are working in the cleansing department in Queenstown TLC. Their first performances were in general meetings of SAMWU. From there they were invited to perform at the SACP's 75th anniversary and

# Comrades in Community Radio...

**V**ernon Vraagom, a shop steward from the North West branch of the Western Cape Province has been putting his talents to good use.

The comrade, who played at the SAMWU tenth anniversary celebrations and who has already produced a cassette of gospel music, was recently asked by the Radio Atlantis to write a theme song for the station.

Cde Vraagom will also be assisting the rural community of Vredenburg to set up their own community radio station which will be named Radio West Coast. "As SAMWU members we can use community radio stations to talk about our issues," said Cde Vraagom.

COSATU May Day rallies. They recently performed at SAMWU's 10th anniversary in Gauteng.

Most of MCG's songs are based on workers struggles, history of the popular struggles and the various leaders.

The name of the Group is MASHISHI Cultural Group ( MCG ) named after the first president of SAMWU who is still a president.

The group is hoping to make a cassette soon, so that they can reach more listeners. At the moment there is no community radio in Queenstown.



If you are interested in community radio, please collect some information from your branch office. It will tell you where the nearest radio station is, and how you can get involved.

## Celebrating in KwaZulu-Natal

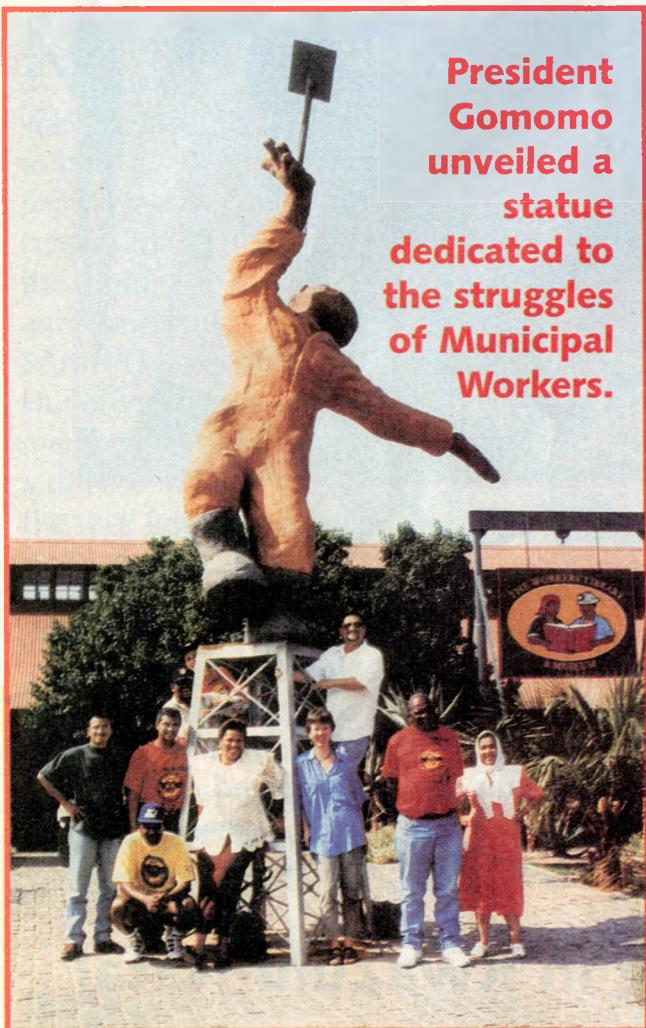
The tenth anniversary celebrations in KwaZulu-Natal were kicked off by the North Coast branch on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1998. This province has decided to hold a celebration for every branch. Although it was not well attended, those that did attend thoroughly enjoyed the music and dance items that were staged.

The dance group that performed was excellent. The age of the participants ranged from three to ten years, but their talent was far beyond their age.

The musical items were rendered by one of our shop stewards from Richards Bay. It is heartening to know that such talent exists within the Union. Yet at the same time, it saddens one to realise that we have not fully utilised this talent previously. The comrade played a variety of music, including some of his own compositions.

The function was ended by a braai. The North Coast set a high standard for the rest of the KwaZulu-Natal Branches to follow!

# Workers rally to the National Tenth Anniversary Celebrations!

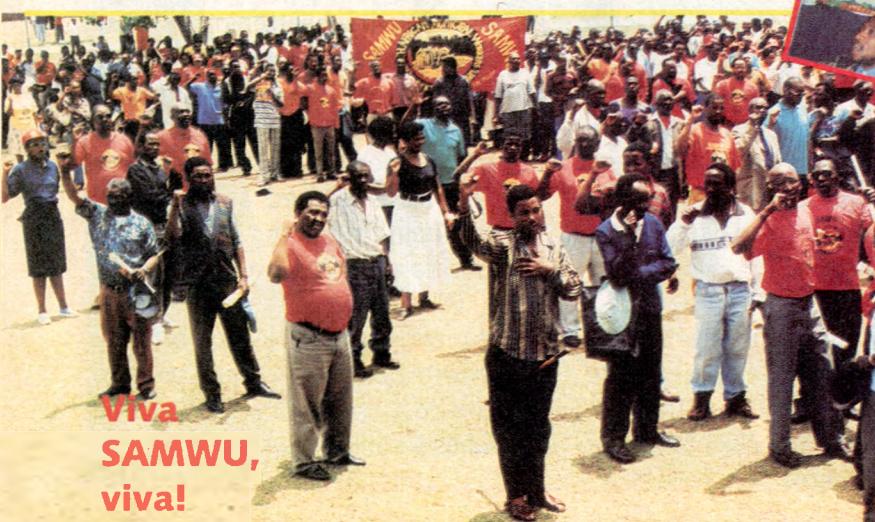


**President Gomomo unveiled a statue dedicated to the struggles of Municipal Workers.**

*COSATU President Gomomo, seen here standing in front of Deputy General Secretary Cde Nontsele, was the key speaker.*



*A photo exhibition showing ten years of SAMWU formed part of the celebrations. Comrades also listened to speeches by former SAMWU leaders. The celebrations were held at Workers' Library, Newtown, Johannesburg*



**Viva  
SAMWU,  
viva!**

# Zimpro threat to sewage workers!

Comrades, you must elect Health and Safety Representatives in all your workplaces in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. These comrades will be trained by the Union and by Council to detect and predict Health and Safety Hazards in time to save lives! Without these reps, you will work in danger!

**J**ust before Christmas last year, a team of SAMWU investigators made a trip to the Fish Water Flats Sewerage Treatment Works in Port Elizabeth to investigate workers complaining of headaches, sore throats and itching eyes and ears. The team found the workers in a bad way. The workers were not being given proper protective clothing, or anti-bacterial soap. In the past 14 years, the workers had never been de-wormed! Yet they were expected to work for nine hours a day with raw sewerage!

If this wasn't bad enough, workers were washing their overalls at home with family washing; many workers were found to be suffering from tuberculosis, and they were not given any medical aid and had to pay their own doctors bills.

Apart from management's negligence in failing to protect workers from hazards, the main problem also found was that Health and Safety reps were felt by workers to be management sympathisers who were not attending regular Health and Safety meetings. Instead of trying to resolve this, management regarded it as the workers' problem.

All these factors led the SAMWU investigating team to believe strongly that the workers at Fish Water are suffering from acetaldehyde poisoning. SAMWU has requested that management do an air quality survey at Fish Water. We believe that this will show that amounts of acetaldehyde and other volatile organic gases are being released into the air.

Fish Water Flats is using the same Zimpro method of treating sewerage as Borchards Quarry in Cape Town. *Workers' News* reported cases of acetaldehyde poisoning at Borchards Quarry waste treatment plant last year.

But at Borchards Quarry, there have been a number of improvements. The Zimpro plant was shut down, and the manager removed from the site. A case of alleged derelict of duty and gross negligence has been brought against management by SAMWU.

Other improvements are:

- ◆ Hot and cold water showers have been built

- ◆ Workers now receive two pairs of overalls
- ◆ Workers now have two lockers each - one for food and one for soiled overalls
- ◆ Workers have received cotton socks and anti-bacterial soap
- ◆ A medical surveillance by an independent doctor is being done with two other plants as models - Milnerton Sewerage Works, and Faure Treatment Works (a fresh water plant).

Comrades, if you are experiencing the symptoms described above, phone your branch office immediately.

## Asbestosis at the Athlone Power Station!

**S**AMWU is currently investigating asbestosis at the Athlone Power Station. It is an embarrassment to admit that it was a *Mail and Guardian* article in October 1997 which made us take up this issue more forcefully. It shows how important it is to always remain vigilant. SAMWU did investigate this issue in the late 1980's. Around this time the Council also introduced some measures to control the release of asbestos fibres and to medically monitor employees. Since then we seem to have forgotten the issue.

Athlone Power Station provides about 30% of Cape Town's electricity needs. The plant was built in the early 1970's, and was insulated with asbestos. Asbestos breaks down into airborne fibres if it is not properly maintained. Workers at the power station have been breathing in asbestos fibres over many years. The fibres bury themselves in the lungs. The lungs form scars and then gradually fail. In 90% of cases, asbestosis leads to lung cancer. People suffering from asbestosis die slowly,

over a period as long as 20 years. Two people from the Athlone Power Station have already died. A worker that resigned in 1994 after 26 years service, said that there was so much asbestos dust in the air that he could often not even see the person working next to him.

Though many of those dying may have contracted asbestosis before 1987 there seems to be evidence that controls were not adequate, and medical monitoring was not up to standard. SAMWU has demanded an independent investigation into the problem. Although asbestos is known internationally as a highly dangerous substance, management at Athlone Power Station are dragging their feet on this issue.

The reward of many workers for providing electricity to the communities around them seems to be a slow death. SAMWU rejects this attitude. Service providers must get the respect they deserve! STAY ALERT TO DANGER!

# Prepare for the Autumn Offensive!

Cosatu structures throughout the country are moving into top gear in preparation for the federation's mass recruitment campaign in April.

Cosatu deputy general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi says the campaign will be the biggest since the massive 1987 living wage campaign.

The recruitment drive, dubbed Cosatu's "Summer Offensive", will target industrial areas and workplaces throughout the country.

Under the slogan, "Every worker a Cosatu member! Every Cosatu member an organiser!", the campaign hopes to make the federation a home for all workers.

The idea for the organising offensive was first raised in Cosatu's September Commission report on organising new sectors and layers of workers.

Last year's national congress took the proposal forward with a resolution to have a major new recruitment drive to reach at least 50% unionisation of Cosatu affiliates in all sectors.

In November last year, the Cosatu CEC set aside the entire month of April for the campaign. The recruitment month will culminate in May Day celebrations.

Vavi said the campaign is a crucial one for Cosatu and the country in general. He says building organisation is a bottom line in enabling the federation



to achieve transformation objectives. "The campaign brings to the fore the role of Cosatu as a coordinating structure. We can't just be a lame duck federation. We need to pressureise affiliates all the time to ensure the implementation of the federation's programmes," says Vavi.

"We are all part of a broader family as Cosatu. Shop stewards will be used across the board in recruiting, not just for their own unions."

"So, for example, if Numsa is strong in the Vaal, it doesn't mean Numsa shop stewards must just sit on their hands. They must go out to recruit in other sectors. Or if construction is strong in Durban, they must go out to Pinetown and organise clothing workers."

"The same applies to the leadership of the affiliates. Some unions won't benefit directly. For example, Sactwu already has a high level of membership in their sector, so their shop stewards will go out to organise for other unions. The same applies to gold and coal mines, where NUM shop stewards will be asked to go out and recruit in other sectors."

"Though we have seen phenomenal membership growth in Cosatu over the past few years, we are still under-

represented if we compare the percentage of Cosatu members to the total numbers of employed workers."

A Naledi survey in 1993 showed that many Cosatu unions have not yet organised 50% of workers in their sectors. The campaign plans to correct this by mobilising resources across the federation to strengthen Cosatu affiliates in these sectors. Particular attention will be given to agriculture, catering and retail, transport, paper and pulp, and construction, says Vavi. Despite the membership growth of Cosatu's public service unions, the recruitment drive will also target the public service, given its strategic role in transformation.

Another focus of the campaign will be on white collar workers, whites, vulnerable workers and workers in rural areas and small towns.

Vavi points out that Cosatu regards all workers who are not members of Cosatu affiliates as unorganised. "And it is the duty of Cosatu cadres to organise the unorganised," he adds.

**“It is the duty of every COSATU cadre to organise the unorganised”**

The campaign will also seek to make effective use of the LRA's provisions on closed and agency shops and workplaces where Cosatu affiliates can reach the required threshold will be a priority.

"Where we have sufficient numbers and have reached the threshold required for this, it will give us the

right to trigger agency and closed shops. This will be part of the recruitment offensive," says Vavi.

The campaign will put Cosatu resolutions on sharing resources within the federation into practice. This will ensure that more powerful affiliates help weaker affiliates.

Cosatu's congress resolution on strengthening organisation identified the need to cultivate a new sense of belonging in the organisation. The resolution said that:

- ◆ Affiliates should be obliged to release or second staff when requested by the Executive;
- ◆ Unions should agree to cooperate and share resources, particularly in rural areas where affiliate membership is low; and
- ◆ To empower Cosatu regional executive committees to identify and encourage this cooperation between affiliates.

Planning for the campaign kicked off with a series of meetings in December last year, including a meeting of the federation's regional secretaries and organisers/educators.

This meeting developed a three-month programme for implementation of congress resolutions. The programme runs until March. It includes major groundwork for the recruitment campaign.

According to Vavi, every Cosatu structure, from affiliate workplace structures to local, provincial and national structures will be a part of the organising machinery. Every Cosatu member, shopsteward, organiser, administrator, official and office bearer will have a role to play.

National leadership from Cosatu and affiliates will be deployed throughout the month of April. No other Cosatu constitutional meetings have been planned, to allow for leadership to be out in the field. Vavi says the recruitment campaign will be an annual event. Cosatu is determined to make this year's drive a success to set the pace for the years to come.

"The state of preparedness in each region will be assessed and where weaknesses are detected, affiliate organisers will be deployed to rectify this."

A meeting of affiliate general secretaries on 21 January threw its full weight behind the campaign and agreed to kick start the planning and mobilisation process. Affiliates will be asked to release people from their other duties to concentrate on the campaign.

"Local shopstewards councils will play a key role in the campaign as they know the situation in their workplaces and the industrial areas in the areas where they live and work," adds Vavi.

Planning the campaign will include:

- ◆ setting up task teams made up of shopstewards, organisers and senior leadership for deployment in the recruitment drive;
- ◆ the media being asked to focus on a particular industrial area, town or village;
- ◆ transport and other logistics

The plan will first be submitted to REC's for debate. The final plan will be presented to regional shopstewards councils on 28 and 29 March for final mobilisation.

"Between now and the RSSCs, affiliates will be mobilising the necessary human resources, including asking for time off, especially for senior shopstewards who know Cosatu policies."

A key aspect will be a high profile publicity campaign. While massive recruitment is the major focus of the campaign, union general secretaries have warned against simply recruiting without consolidating this.

Once workers have been recruited, there will be a need to elect new shopstewards, train them and ensure that new members are serviced adequately.

"We are mindful that the campaign may expose poor servicing to existing membership. Affiliates need to plan to ensure that no workers' hopes are dashed and that we fail to deliver. At the core of ensuring effective servicing of members is not organisers, but the shopstewards elected in the process," says Vavi.

Comrades, COSATU is calling all SAMWU shop stewards, members and organisers to actively take up the challenge and to get involved in the campaign!

Your Branch and Provincial Shopstewards Councils will keep you informed as to what you should do.

**Every worker a COSATU member!  
Every member an organiser!**



# Support the FAWU Food Security Campaign!

**F**ood Security is an issue that affects all workers and communities, and one that the Food and Allied Workers Union has prioritised. Bold resolutions were taken by worker delegates at last year's FAWU conference, who felt that Food Security was an issue that needed immediate attention.

## What is Food Security?

Research commissioned by FAWU found that there are two basic concepts covered by the term "food security".

### **National food security**

National food security refers to the ability of a country to provide adequate food supplies for its citizens. This means that the government must provide infrastructure to enable food to be produced.

### **Household food security**

Household food security refers to the ability of households to afford adequate food supplies. Household food security means that food must be available, accessible and affordable.

The main problem in South Africa is that although we are producing a lot of food, many South Africans are malnourished. It is obvious that the South African economy is still dominated by the spectre of apartheid. Under the old system, policies were directed towards benefiting the white minority. This had two outcomes: one of extreme poverty for black people and the other was a failing economy.

National Party policies failed to maintain a sustainable growth path which lead to economic difficulties in the eighties and which continues to haunt the economy in the nineties. Trevor Smith of the National Agriculture Marketing Council argues that the National Party's position was partly political. "They basically wanted to support farmers and that resulted in the idea that better prices would be better for farmers production...that basically meant that the poor people could not afford to buy food."

This is why today, poverty in South Africa has a strong racial, gender, age and regional character. Minister Derek Hanekom says that "many South Africans do not enjoy food security" and this is because South Africa has one of the worst distributions of income in the world. "The other really bad part is that food security is divided along racial lines," says Minister Hanekom. "Primarily rural Black people are suffering from food insecurity."

The options that the present government have to choose from range from trade policy through to income redistribution and education. Policies that impact most directly on labour in the food sector will be those that attempt to reduce food prices or prevent food price increases. The lowering of the import tariffs has the potential to make the most immediate impact on workers. Lowering of import tariffs means that food will come in to South Africa at a cheaper price. This will undoubtedly lead to a drop in the purchasing of South

African foods, and retrenchments of workers. Lowering of tariffs is also going to be unpopular with domestic food producers. Research suggests that trade policy will have to play a role in food security as South Africa does not have the agricultural resources (arable land and water primarily) to feed its entire population. It should however not be the only policy used to encourage household food security.

## **Food Security and Rural Communities**

FAWU believes that Food Security must also underpin any Agricultural Transformation, especially that which will lead to rural development. Minister of Agriculture, Derek Hanekom, says that the policies of the apartheid regime have had a terrible effect on black people in the rural areas in terms of the food they are forced to eat.

"People who live in the rural areas have virtually no land, and live under very overcrowded conditions in very artificial reserves...dumping grounds of black people, and that is where the food security is," says the Minister. So we can see that firstly, communities don't have the right land to grow their own food. Secondly, many of these same rural communities don't have the money to buy food.

The first thing that FAWU would like to see is a social security net by the state which will ensure access to food by the disadvantaged. FAWU believes that the promotion,

provision and achievement of food security is the most important task of the government. At a very early stage after the 1994 elections, the RDP put in place food security schemes such as school feeding. However, GEAR is a constraint to a government providing proper food security. We must strive with our FAWU comrades to promote the RDP vision of Food Security.

The RDP says that "the most important step towards food security is the provision of productive employment

opportunities through land reform, jobs programmes and the reorganisation of the economy."

Last year's FAWU Conference also proposed that legislation be passed to force companies to donate perishable and other food items instead of dumping these, as part of their strategy to restore the prices of these products. There is an enormous amount of food going to waste in our country. This is shocking when we consider that people are still dying of diseases such as malnutrition.

FAWU believes COSATU must embark on a campaign so that, in dealing with a variety of policy issues, government should scrutinise these in the light of food security policies. For example, there are a number of foreign trade policies that the government is involved with that do not make for food security in the future.

FAWU, COSATU and the SACP held a demonstration outside parliament on February 16th to protest against



such a trade policy with the European Union (EU). The EU subsidises its farmers, which allows them to sell their food in South Africa well below the costs of production here. This has already led to the loss of 2400 jobs. Another 4800 jobs are at risk. By contrast, the EU insists on retaining high import duties on food we sell in their countries. This means that it is not easy for us to sell our fruit in Europe, but it is very easy for them to make a profit here.

As SAMWU, we are involved in fighting foreign companies who are trying to buy our water and sell it back to us at a profit. In the same way, we must fight foreign interference with our food.

Food Security is a long term goal, and a far sighted strategy that will have to be developed to ensure that it is attained. All Unions have an important role to play in the formulation and implementation of such a strategy. FAWU General Secretary, Mandla Gxanyana has called on affiliate unions to prioritise

Food Security in addition to their sectoral interests. "COSATU affiliated unions have dedicated themselves to transforming our society into one that will take care of all regardless of economic status. Food security is pivotal to this vision and requires our united effort," said the Cde.

FAWU believes that food is one of the most basic human needs, in the same way that SAMWU believes that water is a very basic need. In fact, nobody can live without food and water.

Both unions agree that government has a responsibility to provide affordable food and water for all South Africans. Let's campaign together!

FAWU would love to hear what SAMWU Members think of their vision for Food Security. Please contact Kubeshni Govender, FAWU National Media Officer on 021 637 9040 with your ideas. *Photo by Benny Gool.*

# Long live the fighting spirit of Cde Nazeema Isaacs, Long Live!

Comrade Nazeema Isaacs, Shopsteward at the Tygeberg Substructure of the Cape Metro Branch, was killed tragically in a car accident on February 5th, 1998. The comrade was travelling with other shopstewards and officials to a strategising workshop when their car had a blowout. Other comrades are now at home after being hospitalised.

SAMWU held a memorial for the late Cde Nazeema on February 11th at the Elsies River Civic Centre where she had been working. We were privileged to listen to a speech by the Cde's sister, who spoke of the intense love between them. Another badly injured cde attended from a stretcher.

The late Cde Nazeema had been well known as an activist since the 1970's. Colleagues and friends paid tribute to her courageous and indomitable spirit, adding that Nazeema had always put others first, and was deeply committed to the workers struggle, as well as fighting for the rights of women unashamedly.

The COSATU Chairperson in the province, Randy Pieterse, said that the Cde was steadfast and never one to back down. She even stood up to COSATU's Pres. Gomomo in fighting for SAMWU's anti-privatisation resolution at the COSATU Regional Congress last year.

Cde Nazeema's employer, Johnny Jacobs, spoke of the boundless energy that the Cde used to transform other people's lives. He proposed that the new wing of Elsies River library that Nazeema was so active in fighting for be named in her memory. SAMWU's Provincial Secretary, Robert Adams, told of the late



Nazeema's many commitments as shopsteward, community activist, Training Board delegate and alternate delegate to the National Bargaining Council. "She set a high standard for us to follow," he said.

Messages of condolence poured in from around the country. There was a feeling that this Cde was taken from us much too soon, and that she would have emerged in the future as one of SAMWU's great worker leaders.

The General Secretary, Roger Ronnie, wrote this of the Cde: "Always a political activist, she came into SAMWU like a breath of fresh air. She saw what needed to be done and set about realising this better life for all that we all talk about and even more often do nothing about. We should hold up her contribution in the short time she was active in the Union as a beacon to guide our work. Comrade Nazeema, we will miss you but never forget you."

**In memory of our beloved Shop Steward, the Late Comrade Maria Pulane Pantu Motshabi**

The late Comrade Maria Pulane Motshabi was born on the 23 January 1963 at Dowwespruit, Makwasie district in the North West Province. She was the fifth daughter of Mr and Mrs Monei. The Cde started school at Phogole Primary School and proceeded to Motlosane High School. She went to study at Potchefstroom Technical College. She was married to Mr William Motshabi on the 28 July 1994 and they were blessed with two boys, Mosala and Thidiso. Comrade Maria got ill in July 1997 and passed away on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1997 at home.

In his address, the Southern Branch Secretary, Comrade Maxwell Dithejane spoke passionately about the fearless struggles waged by Cde Maria during the time when SAMWU was beginning to organise in the North West Province.

Comrade Maxwell alluded to the qualitative leadership skills shown and displayed and that those skills will be dearly needed when preparing for the 1999 elections and also when Makwasie Shop Steward Committee needs direction. Comrade Motshabi was a source of inspiration to the community and SAMWU Cadres in particular. She was a dedicated and committed revolutionary. She will be greatly missed by the tripartite alliance and specifically her family.

**Robala Ka Kgotso  
Motaung wa  
Mmasefatswa  
sa Tshukudu.**

# The Spear has fallen!

## Hamba Kahle, Cde Aaron Ngema

The Provincial Education Officer of KwaZulu-Natal, Comrade Aaron Ngema, passed away suddenly after a short illness on 22 November 1997.

Cde Aaron will always be remembered for his untiring efforts and hard work. He was always the last one out of the office, not just to get his own work done, but also helping others. Cde Aaron never stuck to his portfolio, but branched out and assisted wherever he could.

When times were tough and frustrating as they often get, Cde Aaron never faulted from his course and main aim - the upliftment of the Union. We can go on and on speaking of Cde Aaron, but the way Cde Mzolo, Provincial Secretary of KwaZulu-Natal summed up the life and times of Cde Aaron is really apt:

"The untimely death of Cde Aaron Ngema dealt us a severe blow. His selfless and tireless contribution towards the upliftment of the living standards of ordinary municipal workers cannot be underestimated. His fight against the privatisation of municipal services will never be forgotten. He was a cadre, a hard worker, a comrade and a friend to us all. His jokes in our PEC's will be sorely missed. To lament over his death is

not going to help us. The best gesture of remembrance will be to carry on from where he ended."

Cde Aaron's funeral was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1997 at the Methodist Church in the K Section of KwaMashu township of Durban.

The first part of the service was the religious which was conducted by Priest and for that part singing was restricted to religious hymns.

Comrade Mzolo was joined by Comrade Agrippa Kubheka from the Gauteng Province in conducting the service. They ensured that the Comrade was buried in the manner befitting his revolutionary contributions to the workers struggle. Also present from the National Office Bearers were President Petrus Mashishi, and First Vice President Xolile Nxu.

The Tripartite Alliance was fully represented, with the ANC being represented by Cde Sipho Gcabashe, KZN Provincial Secretary General. Cde Sipho took the comrades back to the first time he met Cde Aaron and the important role Cde Aaron played in the struggle for liberation. He also reminded the mourners of the important role played by the late Cde

in bringing the UDF unions and FOSATU together. Cde Gcabashe said in closing, "As the ANC Alliance we have lost . Cde Aaron never complained after the elections that he was left outside of Parliament. Instead he remained a true revolutionary of the Oliver Tambo era. We have Comrades who are in Parliament today who came through the hands of Cde Aaron."

"The late Cde played a valuable role in the formation of the SACP structures in KwaMashu, and he was an active member of the SACP until his timely death," a representative of the Party told the mourners.

Cde Nxu, SAMWU's First Vice President, urged mourners and Shop Stewards to pick up where Cde Aaron left off and to follow his example. Cde Vice asked that Shop Stewards be not only Shop Stewards at work but also to be active participants in community structures.

Other provinces which came to pay their last respects to Cde Aaron included Northern Province, Mpumalanga and Gauteng who were not deterred by heavy rain.

**The Spear has fallen.  
Pick it up!**

In the Free State we say Hamba Kahle to Cde S.P. Mabeleng; Cde S.J. Moletsane; and Cde S.K. Sephiri, who all died in November 1997. All Comrades were from the Senekal TLC. Our deepest condolences go to their families.

**N**orthern Province announces that the inquest into the death of Cde Josias Mogolla, a 56 year old worker shot dead during the 1995 Pietersburg wage strike, is finally complete. The magistrate found that three policemen can be held criminally responsible for the death of our comrade. Cde Ntoahae Theledi, the Provincial Secretary of Northern Province, has been meeting with the Northern Province MEC for Safety and Security, Advocate Seth Nthai and there is agreement that these three policemen will be tried in a criminal trial. SAMWU is calling for the full weight of the law to be thrown at these policemen. No longer can the struggle for a living wage be seen as an excuse for policemen to use brutality against workers.



# We Salute a Worker Leader



## Cde Aaron D. Ngema



**a Democrat  
a Revolutionary  
a Negotiator  
a Hard Worker  
a Trade Unionist  
an Educator**

