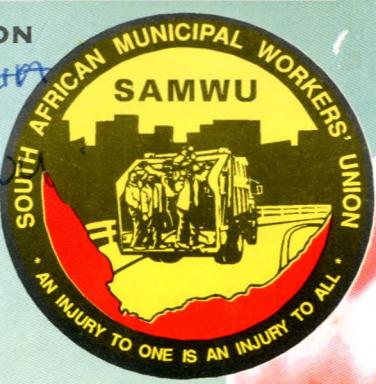


# WORKER'S

# NEWS

PROCESSED



JUNE 1997

**It is foreign companies that want to buy our services! Workers and communities want services according to need, not foreign profit!**

TRADE UNION LIBRARY AND EDUCATION CENTRE

**But the private sector can increase prices if they want to! Women need affordable water for their families!**

**We are not giving our water to the private sector! They will will be managing it for better delivery!**

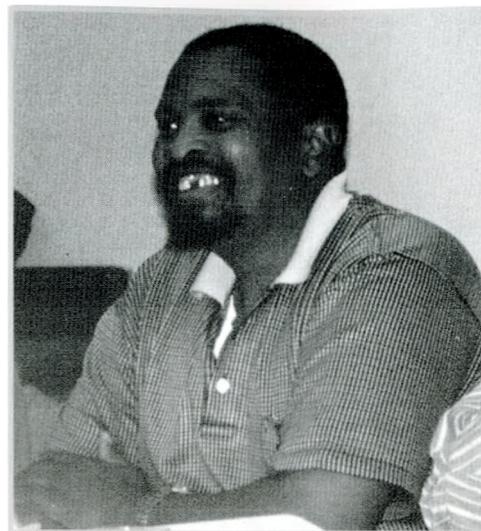
## In this issue

- THE WAR AGAINST PRIVATISATION
- SAMWU'S NEW CONSTITUTION
- FIGHTING BASIC CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT BILL

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## Message from the President...



Welcome to SAMWU's first magazine. This is the magazine for all comrades so do not take it home and hide it under your pillow - carry it around and share it with other comrades and your family and community.

There are many challenges facing SAMWU members and officials at the present time. Our jobs are at risk from privatisation. Our communities are at risk because big business wants to take away the little services we have now. It is our job to politicise communities to take our anti-privatisation campaign forward.

Comrades, we must guard against corruption. Multinational companies are prepared to pay a lot of money to get what they want. We are also having a problem with our comrades in SANCO who are bidding for a 30 year contract for Nelspruit's water and waste services.

We don't want to end up like Britain where people are buying water in bottles from shops because the water from the taps is undrinkable. We don't want to be forced to buy bottled water that is more expensive than beer.

The next challenge we face is i-GEAR. SAMWU is opposed to

this new economic plan of the government. It is not there for the workers - it is a plan that moves away from the RDP. Big business supports i-GEAR, but workers must start a campaign to put the RDP back on track.

As municipal workers we are in the centre of the RDP programmes to provide housing, water and other basic needs. It is up to us to see that the RDP is implemented within Local Authorities.

As an organisation, we have been silent on the issue of primary health care. We should not discuss only our own interests, but also question other areas where services could be better. We must also guide government rather than just pointing fingers.

Black empowerment is undermining our union. Black empowerment simply means that a bigger stake in the economy is being sold off. This does not necessarily help our workers or make service delivery any better.

We need to debate this issue in our structures and come up with clear policies around this issue.

We are all affected by the restructuring of local government. The ANC has started a forum to deal with local government policy formation. At the moment, there are no effective structures to enforce accountability of councillors. Also, when the former Black local authorities merged with the former white local authorities, it left us with the situation where conditions of employment and salaries were not the same. We are busy reaching agreement in the bargaining council at the moment to standardise these things.

There are serious problems with the Masakhane campaign. MEC's are saying that if municipal workers do not pay for their services, they will be dismissed. Municipal workers cannot be singled out like this! Even if we all pay, local government will never be financially viable. Only water and electricity can ever make a profit for government.

Regions must meet with MEC's to address the issue of local government funding - underfunding is a weakness that has existed for years. Last year, I visited a local authority that was closed down for four months because there was no money. Workers were told to go home, and the community went without services. This should not happen.

Within our union, education has been a weakness in the past. Now we have Regional Education Officers in charge of education. But comrades must not expect the REO's to run around all the different local authorities in a region. The REO's are there to co-ordinate regional education,

and train the organisers and shop stewards, so that these people can then go back to their workplace and educate their workers.

There have been rumors that COSATU will split from the alliance with the ANC-SACP. Let me reassure you that the alliance is not breaking. As partners it is acceptable for each of us to have different policies, because we each have different mandates from our members. Workers need the alliance now so that we can help to restructure the public service. There will be no other time when we can rebuild local government. Comrades, attend your alliance meetings and use your criticisms to build and not break the alliance.

We are also fighting against the Employment Standards Bill. Our demands for a 40 hour week by the year 2000, as well as guaranteed maternity leave for 6 months - four months paid - have not been met. At the time of going to press there was still a deadlock on this matter. We need to have a clear guarantee that the 45 hour week will be phased down to 40 hours within five years, and our maternity demands need to be met. I appeal to all comrades to participate in any mass action organised by COSATU.

Do you know that we are members of an international organisation called Public Services International (PSI)? PSI assists unions around the world, and it is helping to build stronger unions in Africa. We are busy setting up "twinning". This is where our regions share ideas and information with an overseas trade union of their choice. Western Cape is already holding discussions with a Dutch union, based in Amsterdam. If regions

are unsure how to go about this process, contact Head Office for further details.

On a local level, SAMWU must unite with other COSATU affiliates. Locals must be revived and have clear programmes. Please, comrades, get involved in doing this.

A Resolution Committee has been set up by the NEC to draft SAMWU resolutions to the COSATU Congress. Regions have been consulted on this, and once the drafts have been finalised all members should read them. It makes the drafting process much easier if structures are giving constant feedback to their regional offices. Also, you should ask your regional offices for copies of NEC minutes. These will inform you about what is going on at national level. We do not want people to be cut off from each other.

Structures should have strike funds for those times when we will be out on strike and not getting paid. Workers on the ground must start discussing this with regions.

You will find a guide to SAMWU's new constitution inside this magazine. One of the main changes is that there will be greater representation of women in SAMWU on all levels. This is very important. There is no place for discrimination against women in a progressive movement. (This includes sexual harassment!)

Phambili ngamatungelo oomama, phambili!

*Petros  
Mashishi*

**PRESIDENT OF SAMWU**

# Fighting privatisation on many fronts

*SAMWU continues to fight against the privatisation of more and more services. Every region is facing different struggles, but let's not forget that we are all fighting against one thing: the notion that services should be provided for profit and not to meet needs. Let's learn about each other's struggles so that we can prepare for united mass action!*

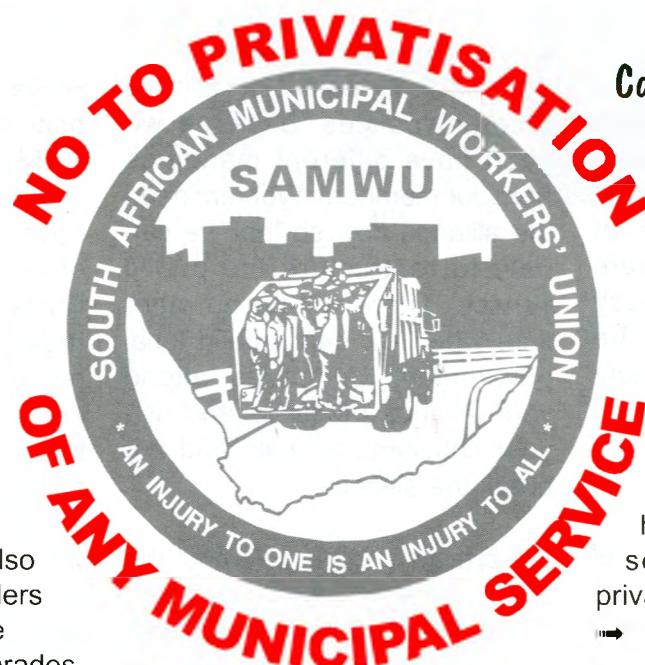
**Cde Alfred Sithole  
reports from Northern Province....**

Local Authorities here are proposing to privatise the security departments of Duiwelskloof and Potgietersrus TLC. In Naboomspruit, it has been proposed that meter reading services be contracted out to private companies. Council has also spoken of putting out tenders for the maintenance of the Tzaneen cemetery. So comrades can see that we are fighting privatisation on many fronts!

**Cde Thobile Maso reports from the Eastern Cape...**

In Queenstown, council is attempting to privatise the refuse collection service. IMATU has joined SAMWU in rejecting this. At the moment we are trying to arrange a meeting with community structures in order to put our position forward to them. Umtata municipality proposed privatisation of the ambulance and fire departments, but noting union opposition, scheduled a meeting with SAMWU and IMATU to discuss this further.

Our Aberdeen comrades are to be congratulated! We have heard that they have gone from door to door in their communities educating others about the dangers of privatisation!



**Free State Regional Secretary, Jonas Nhlapo, reports...**

Comrades, we have good news to report. Welkom City Council was proposing privatisation of the cemeteries maintenance, but after talks with SAMWU, put an end to their plan. Meter reading has been privatised for many years, but we now want to reverse this.

Because of a shortage of labour, private cleaners were brought in to some of our municipalities. There have also been prisoners working in the parks. Comrades, we regard prison workers as a poor excuse for slave labour! The question of whether prisoners should be unionised is an interesting debate! We will be demanding that Council disclose the terms of conditions they have with private and prison workers.

**Cde Sanjay Tuckooriah  
reports from KwaZulu-Natal...**

Privatisation is rife in KwaZulu Natal! After a massive march on Friday 9th May, SAMWU handed the Mayor a demand that a list of all proposed privatisations be handed over to SAMWU. So far we have discovered that these services are about to be privatised:

- Newcastle - water
- Matatiele - caravan park, crusher plant
- Scottburgh/Umzinto North - parks & gardens
- Verulam - parks & gardens
- Zinkwazi - traffic

We have also called for an end to all forms of privatisation in the Industrial Council. We are hoping to be successful.

**Sam Mazabane reports from North West....**

We received a detailed document from Klerksdorp City Council and found that many departments of water and waste have already been privatised or partly privatised. Roads have been partly privatised, and some sewage departments. We will be investigating each service as this privatisation has formed a framework upon which future privatisation can be built. We will keep all comrades updated!

## Privatisation in Mpumalanga...

Over the past two months, Mpumalanga has made headline news with its anti-privatisation fight against Nelspruit TLC. There is a story on page 8 devoted to SAMWU's research in the Nelspruit area, which we urge comrades to read.

At the moment, SAMWU is still awaiting funds from the government so that we can appoint a consultant to draw up a worker and community based public sector plan for water and waste services. We will keep you informed through news bulletins that will be issued by fax to your Regional Office by Head Office.

## Northern Cape reports...

At the Congress of Nogloga, which took place in Upington in April this year, we issued a strong statement against privatisation and GEAR. We in the Northern Cape believe that GEAR and privatisation are a recipe for disaster! There have been rumours that Kimberley city council has been granted a sum of R250 000 to privatise various resorts. We are in the process of carrying out a full investigation into this. We want to establish what this money is for!

## Victor Mhlongo, Gauteng Regional Secretary reports..

In the Vaal Metro, attempts have been made to put water out for tender. On the East Rand, Council is trying to privatise the crushers and bus services. In Alexandra, refuse removal has been contracted out, and a private company has attempted to take over the electricity. In Carletonville, we are holding a campaign to stop the privatisation of meter reading.

# Job creation or refuse racism?

It appears that areas that formerly fell under the Black Local Authorities are still being dealt with separately by Metro Councils, who are reluctant to upgrade services to the standard of that in former white areas. Robert Adams, SAMWU's Cape Town Branch Secretary, has been fighting this issue for several months.

## Western Cape ...

A storm is brewing in Cape Town over a proposed "Clean and Green" campaign. This campaign, backed by Ikapa Town Council and the ANC, proposes to recruit jobless people to provide a refuse removal service for townships and informal settlements. These workers will be given one year contracts at R750 per month.

SAMWU has refused to support the plan. Local Government MEC, Peter Marais, accused SAMWU of having a political agenda unrelated to the best interests of workers. "SAMWU speaks for the few who have jobs, and not for the many jobless," Marais told the press.

But Comrade Adams explains the situation a little differently. Firstly, Adams says that it is not right for casual refuse removal workers to be earning a salary that is half of what permanent municipal employees earn. "The salary of R750 being offered is not enough to live on," said Adams. The issue here seems to be about cheap labour and not living wage jobs.

"This proposal is clearly privatisation of the refuse removal services of the Ikapa areas, and it is our view that cleaning of this area should be done within a strategy that encompasses the whole of the Cape Town Municipality's geographical area."

Cde Adams went on to explain that, once again, Council was misleading the press. "If you are saying that SAMWU is against job creation, you must also explain that Council is seeking to maintain the apartheid boundaries that existed before."

Residents of the areas in question will pay existing municipal flat rates. "Although residents of former BLA's are paying different rates from residents in former white areas, it should be part of our new democracy to standardise the services".

Adams continued "If Council is serious about cleaning up the area, why don't they show some responsibility by employing more staff on a permanent basis?"

Comrades, it is clear that Council must review its political agenda. It is not being forceful enough in destroying old apartheid boundaries. It does not take a clever person to realise that playing on the feelings of desperate, jobless people is another attempt at privatisation and exploitation. It seems that the sickness of privatisation is spreading rapidly throughout all municipal services.

**Forward in struggle against privatisation of services!**

# Privatisation is widespread in municipalities

Since the 1980's under the old regime, private participation in municipal activities has been strongly promoted. the old councils accelerated this in the years leading up to 1994.

The private sector can be involved in municipalities in different ways:



municipalities employ consultants to advise them.



municipalities award construction contracts to private sector firms, for example to build houses.



specific municipal services are contracted out, such as meter reading.



the operation and maintenance of particular municipal services are contracted out.

Sometimes the contracts are very short - maybe less than one year. But some of the contracts are very long. The contract in Queenstown for Water and Sanitation Services South Africa (Pty) Ltd to operate and maintain the water and sanitation services is for 25 years.

There are fears that Mayors and Councillors could be benefitting from privatisation by taking on contracts for the delivery of basic services. They would then become small businesses, and put the profit from delivering services in their community into their own pockets.

In many cases, management is also involved.

Council managers leave their jobs and set up small businesses so that they can benefit from the privatisation of municipal services.



Meter reading has been contracted out in many municipalities. It is generally contracted out to small local businesses often lead by ex-municipal managers.



In places where refuse removal is privatised, it is contracted out to large companies like WasteTech, or to entrepreneurs (individuals who start up their own business) who live in the area.

It is wrong to think that big companies don't have a hand in these small businesses run by entrepreneurs. Companies like Billy Hattingh & Associates and Wade Refuse (Pty) Ltd are playing a big role in helping individuals start their own refuse collecting businesses. They give support to black entrepreneurs through training and giving them equipment to do the job. The entrepreneur is responsible for collecting the rubbish, and the council pays him or her for doing this.

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 try and persuade people to pay for service collection.

Some people argue that contracting out services to local residences should be encouraged because it is black empowerment through small business development. But does it really make a difference whether municipal services are privatised out to small businesses or big businesses? In the end, the big will eat the small anyway!

The effect is the same - the municipal services are no longer delivered on the basis of need, but on the basis of profit. And whether services are privatised by big companies, or by individuals living in the area, responsibility for extending and delivering the service is taken away from the municipality. Instead of the municipality employing more workers to do the job, the number of municipal workers gets smaller.

Road development and maintenance is often contracted out. In the past, a municipality would have had a road building team.

But with privatisation, that job is contracted out. This means that workers can lose their jobs or be transferred to the new company.

Often it means that workers no longer have any job security. If the private company does not have enough work, workers face being retrenched or put on short-time, or turned into second workers. It also means that the municipality loses the capacity to do road maintenance in the future.

Fire services services are also under threat - already some have been privatised. The Benoni fire and emergency services were privatised in 1991 when a private company was formed, called Benoni Fire and Emergency Services (Pty) Ltd. The Benoni Council must pay this company to provide fire and emergency services for the area covered by the Benoni Council.

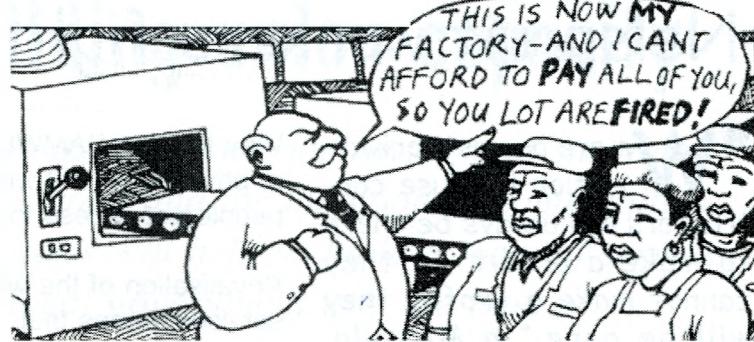
It must not only pay them enough to cover the costs of providing the service. The private company also wants enough to make a profit!

Benoni Fire and Emergency Services (Pty) Ltd is part of a group of companies falling under Fire

and Emergency Services Holdings (Pty) Ltd (FES).

Another FES company is Emergency Communication Centres (Pty) Ltd, which is contracted to do the reporting and despatching of emergency calls for the Benoni Fire and Emergency Services. We see that Benoni council must pay two private companies to provide the emergency services!

Now FES is looking around for opportunities to privatise other municipalities. Councils see this as an attractive proposal. They know that they will get a big sum



of money when they sell off their fire engines and ambulances to the private company, and they say they need this money.

But what will privatisation mean in the long term? The council must pay a sum of money to the private company each month to provide the services. What if the company finds that the money is not enough for all the emergency work it must do? Either they will not do the work, or the council will have to pay more. The community has a right to emergency services paid for by their taxes.

## The International Labour Resource and Information Group (ILRIG)

Comrades, the stories on these pages were written by Sandra van Niekerk. Sandra is a researcher who is working closely with SAMWU on researching the effects of privatisation on communities all over the world. Sandra has this message for you:

**"Hello Comrades -**

I have talked to many workers and communities, and looked at the experiences of other countries. I have found privatisation to be a very dangerous thing! SAMWU needs to collect information about what municipal services are being privatised. Please send information about your municipality to your R.S. who will give this information to Head Office

**We need this information:**

- ◆ **What services in your municipality have already been privatised? Ask the council for a full list of the services which have been contracted out and the private companies doing the work.**
- ◆ **What services is your council planning to privatise? Demand a copy of any documents showing what the council is planning, or what it is being advised to do by consultants like the First National Bank. Send your RS a copy of these documents.**

**It is your right to get this information from the council!**

Comrades, we also encourage you to write and tell us what you think about privatisation and the effects it will have on you and your community."

# Nelspruit workers fight sale of their water

**W**e are against privatisation because contractors will always be there to make a profit. If they cannot make a profit, they will be gone," a Matsula, Nelspruit worker said recently.

Many people living in the area covered by the Nelspruit Transitional Local Council (TLC) don't have water. In informal settlements, like Daantjie, water is provided through standpipes. But there are not enough taps. And often the taps run dry. In areas where there is formal housing, like Matsula A, many houses don't have water connected to the house, or meters to measure how much water is being used. Even in these areas there is often so little water that it must be switched off for some hours of each day.

It is clear that these problems with water must be solved. The council has come up with their plan. They want to privatise the water and sanitation services by giving a private company the right to extend, operate and maintain these services for thirty years.

This seems like a good plan if it will bring water to people who need it. The council says it doesn't have the money to make sure everyone has access to water. They need R300 million to extend the services. They say that only the private sector can bring in that money.

Why then, is SAMWU opposed to privatisation if it will help people get access to water?

Privatisation of the water services means that water will be provided to make a profit, not to meet a need. It means that communities will no longer be able to hold the council accountable for providing services.

Biwater, a British multi-national, has a plan to involve community, women and labour organisations as part of a consortium (group of companies) to bid for water services in the area. This is why SANCO (South African National Civics Organisation) is involved.

But workers must remember that if community organisations put funds into a privatisation project, they will be under the same pressure as a private company to recoup their investment and to see a reasonable rate of return as soon as possible.

The quickest way to make a profit is to cut costs - either by cutting jobs and lowering wages and working conditions, or by cutting back on maintenance or the quality of materials. The result of this will be services of a low standard.

So those community and labour organisations which form part of the consortium will experience

worsening employment conditions, and standards of service, so that their organisation can see a return on their investment as soon as possible.

What will happen to those

people who can't afford to pay for water? 61% of people living in Nelspruit earn less than R800 per month. How will they be able to pay enough to the private company to cover the cost of the water they get?

SAMWU believes that it is possible for the public sector to deliver water to all those who need it. Workers who have experience in being both service providers and users, must take the lead in drawing up this plan.

In April, Lance Veotte and Jerry Chaka, the national water and waste service committee co-ordinators, together with Sandra van Niekerk, visited Nelspruit to talk to workers and the community. In a general meeting of the waterworks workers, we discussed the idea of developing a plan for water to be delivered to all who need it by the municipality. The meeting agreed that a team of researchers from among themselves should gather information.

We are planning to hold a workshop to develop our plan for water service delivery. Comrades, once we have completed our plan, we hope that it will be accepted. In the meantime, let's all continue to fight privatisation!

*\*Cosatu is against privatisation, not just SAMWU.  
(comrade speaking at the COSATU local)*

**Privatisation is going to be costly. It will be expensive for our communities.**  
**(comrade speaking at the COSATU local)**

# A new way of building union capacity

*As municipal workers, we are a key to extending, improving and sustaining all municipal services, for our own good and for the good of communities. Read on to see how service committees will help us build a team of service experts, equipped to take local government into the future!*

An important aim of SAMWU is to work actively to ensure that the delivery of basic services are retained by local authorities. Full community participation in seeking to deliver these services on an affordable and equitable basis has also been identified as important element in the democratic process. Playing a positive role in eradicating the legacies of apartheid in the municipal services is seen to be as important as defending and advancing the rights of workers in the workplace. Combine these three conditions with the desire to restructure municipalities means that SAMWU is faced with a huge task!

In addition, we are confronted daily by reports of the financial difficulties being experienced by many local authorities. The government has also adopted an economic policy which aims to severely cut back on the amount of money it gives to municipalities.

A few years ago, SAMWU identified the need to become centrally involved in the restructuring process. The National Executive Committee set up two working groups. The first group looked at some of the key political and economic issues in the restructuring process. The second group focused on areas like Adult Basic Education and Job Grading. These groups identified the priority areas the Union needed to give attention to and this assisted greatly in the development of our positions in respect of issues like centralised bargaining, local government training, privatisation, employer organisations etc. But these positions were essentially general positions which helped to point the restructuring process in the right direction. After this, the two groups were disbanded.

After the local government elections, the Union recognised that the process which it started a few years ago had to be taken a step further. We needed to start developing clear positions in respect of the various services provided by local government like water, electricity, primary health care and public transport etc. Positions which we could use in discussions with local communities and the employers.

A number of national and regional workshops were held which focused on these different services and again broad policy positions were developed. In order to fine tune these positions, the Union has decided to establish what is called Service Committees. The new Constitution of the Union makes provision for the establishment of the Service Committees at regional and national level. The Constitution says that the key tasks of these Committees, which will focus more on the technical aspects of the restructuring process, are to:

- ◆ Initiate worker research into the various services
- ◆ Plan education programmes as part of the policy formulation process
- ◆ Strategically assist in the development of Union policy around the different municipal services

A National Workshop was recently held to plan for the establishment and functioning of the Service Committees. The recommendations from this workshop, with one or two amendments, were endorsed by the Central Executive Committee at its meeting held on 21/23 May in Durban.

#### Service Committees will be established in 6 broad clusters:



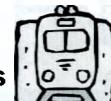
**Health** - This includes Ambulance Services and Social Services



#### Water and Sanitation



**Energy** - This covers the generation, transmission and distribution of all forms of energy.



#### Transport and Protection Services

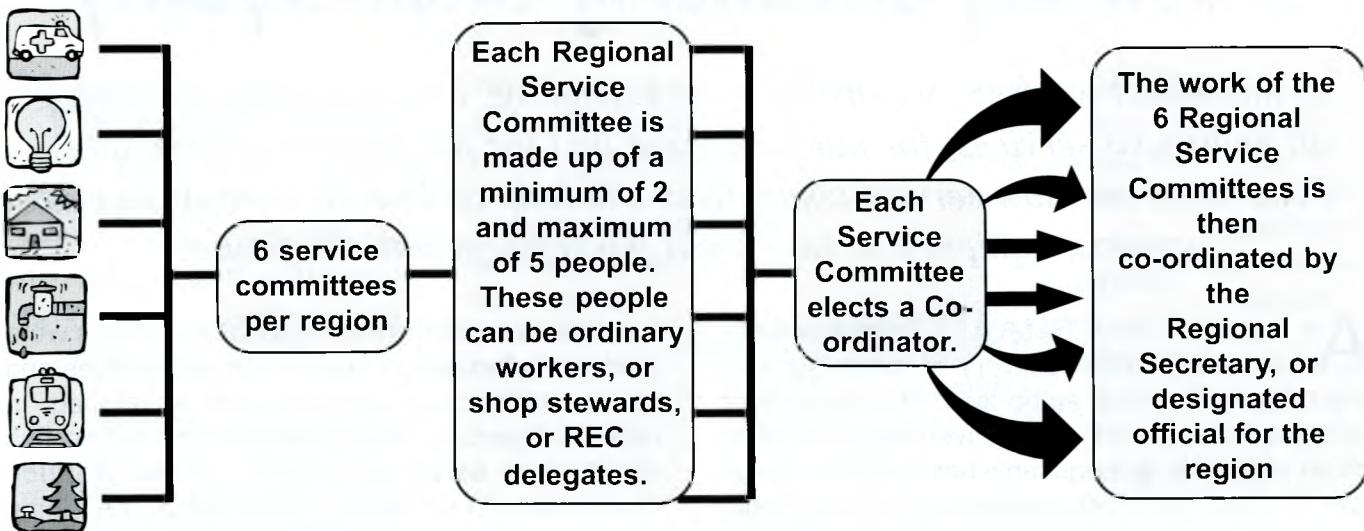


#### Housing



#### Libraries, Culture and Recreation -

## How Service Committees function at Regional level...



Each service committee will meet 4 times per year.

Special allowance will be made for a specified number of workshops per year.

including parks, halls and stadiums.

The establishment and functioning of these Committees would seek to:

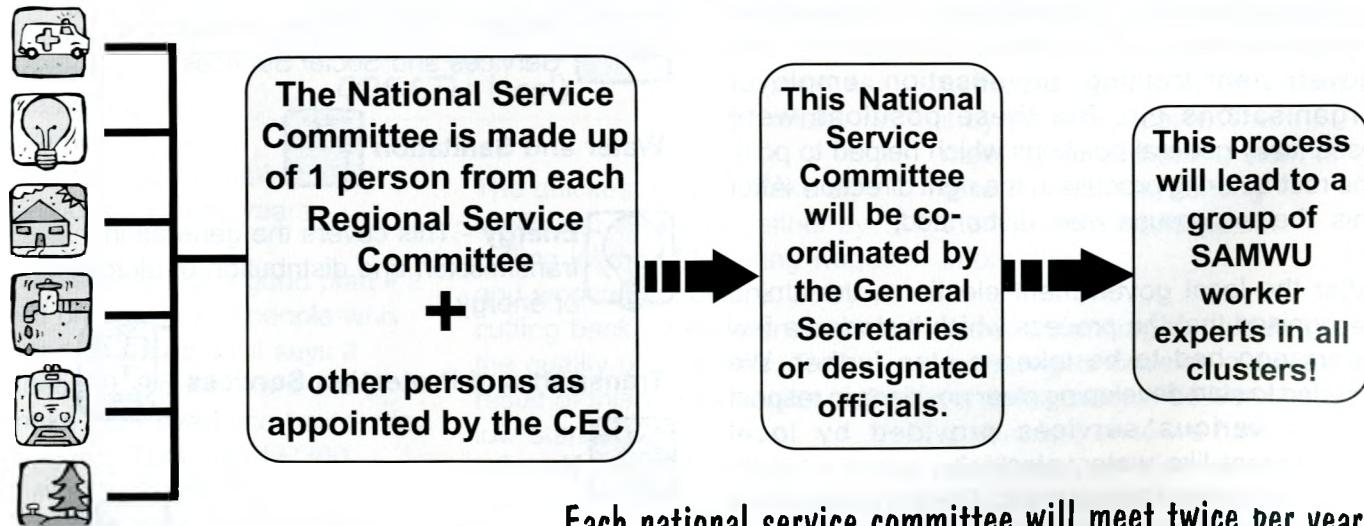
- ◆ Facilitate policy formulation
- ◆ Empower the constitutional structures of the Union to deal with the restructuring process.
- ◆ Building capacity within the Union as a whole
- ◆ Promote as much shop floor participation as possible.

Regions would have to set up the different Service Committees by the end of June this year.

The National Service Committees would all have to be constituted by the time the Central Executive Committee of the Union meets during August of this year. The establishment of the Service Committees heralds another exciting stage in the development of SAMWU as a Union which not only seeks to focus on bread and butter issues in the workplace but also on ensuring that services are delivered in a proper manner to our local communities.

Comrades who feel they can make a contribution in the various areas mentioned above should contact their Regional Offices urgently!!

## How Service Committees function at National level...



Each national service committee will meet twice per year.  
Allowances will be made for national service cluster workshops.

*SAMWU now has a new constitution. This has been extensively debated over the past two years. It replaces the old constitution first adopted in 1987, and provides a foundation to take our union into the future!*

*The most important changes are that all members will now fall under branches and that women will be more fairly represented and that members have more access to branches. Read on to find out how the changes will affect you!*

## Branches across the country

Under the old constitution, urban areas had Branches but most rural areas only had Area Councils. The new constitution aims to demarcate Branches across the country. This is good news for rural members who will now have more administrative power to look after the union affairs in their area.

A branch can be demarcated in any area. There is no minimum membership requirement. The main issue is whether it will be close enough for members to travel to, and whether it will be easy to meet there. This should help to remove the unequal status of rural areas that the old constitution created.

## A new type of Area Council

Representation to a Branch Executive Committee will, as far as possible, now be taken from each Municipality's shop stewards committee. But where there are too many municipalities, smaller Area Councils can be created to funnel representation from a group of smaller Municipalities. These Area Councils will be smaller and make meeting much easier.

## Taking steps towards the empowerment of women!

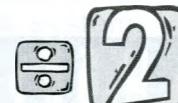
♀ Womens' Committees at Branch, Regional and National levels are now a formal part of the constitution. The constitution promotes women leadership at all levels within the union. One third of representatives on BECs and RECs are now elected from Branch and Regional Women's Committees.

♀ In Municipalities there have always been many women, but few women shop stewards. Now, women may elect women shop stewards. This will increase the number of women shop stewards in the union from grassroots level upwards.

♀ If there are too few women in a rural Municipality to achieve this, then the Area Council can elect a woman from one authority to be a shop steward in the area.

♀ The constitution has a formula to ensure representation of women all BECs and RECs. This is:

number of normal workplace representatives



number of BWC or RWC representatives to be elected to the BEC or RWC

♀ This formula will be used even if there are already women sitting on the BEC or REC.

♀ When Office Bearer elections are held at any level in the union, gender representivity must be taken into account.

♀ All of these steps should create new space for women to organise and make their voices heard when policy is being decided upon in the union.

## Regional and National Structures

These are now made up of Branch representatives. The REC and RC remain as they were. At national level, a new Central Executive Committee (CEC) and similar WEC replaces the old NEC.

**Comrades, regions will be implementing this new constitution over the next few months. We ask that you assist them by taking the implementation process seriously. We also request that you attend talks explaining the new constitution, as it will be laying a solid foundation from which SAMWU can build a stronger union.**

**THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES - WHY ARE SO FEW WOMEN EMPLOYED IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?**

# Our struggle for a Living Wage

*Wage Negotiations have commenced throughout the country. Cde Roger Ronnie, General Secretary of SAMWU, explains why the Living Wage campaign is still important.*

It is the time of the year again when our struggle for a living wage occupies centre-stage. After consulting members in the early part of the year, the Union formulated a wage demand which was sent to all the employer organisations in the country. The demand included a timetable for the negotiations.

For the first time, SAMWU was able to submit a joint demand, with IMATU, to management. Negotiations have already commenced in a number of provinces but progress this year has been very slow. I am urging all members to make sure that you receive regular report backs in your workplace of the progress made in these negotiations.

## The fight for a living wage for municipal workers continues

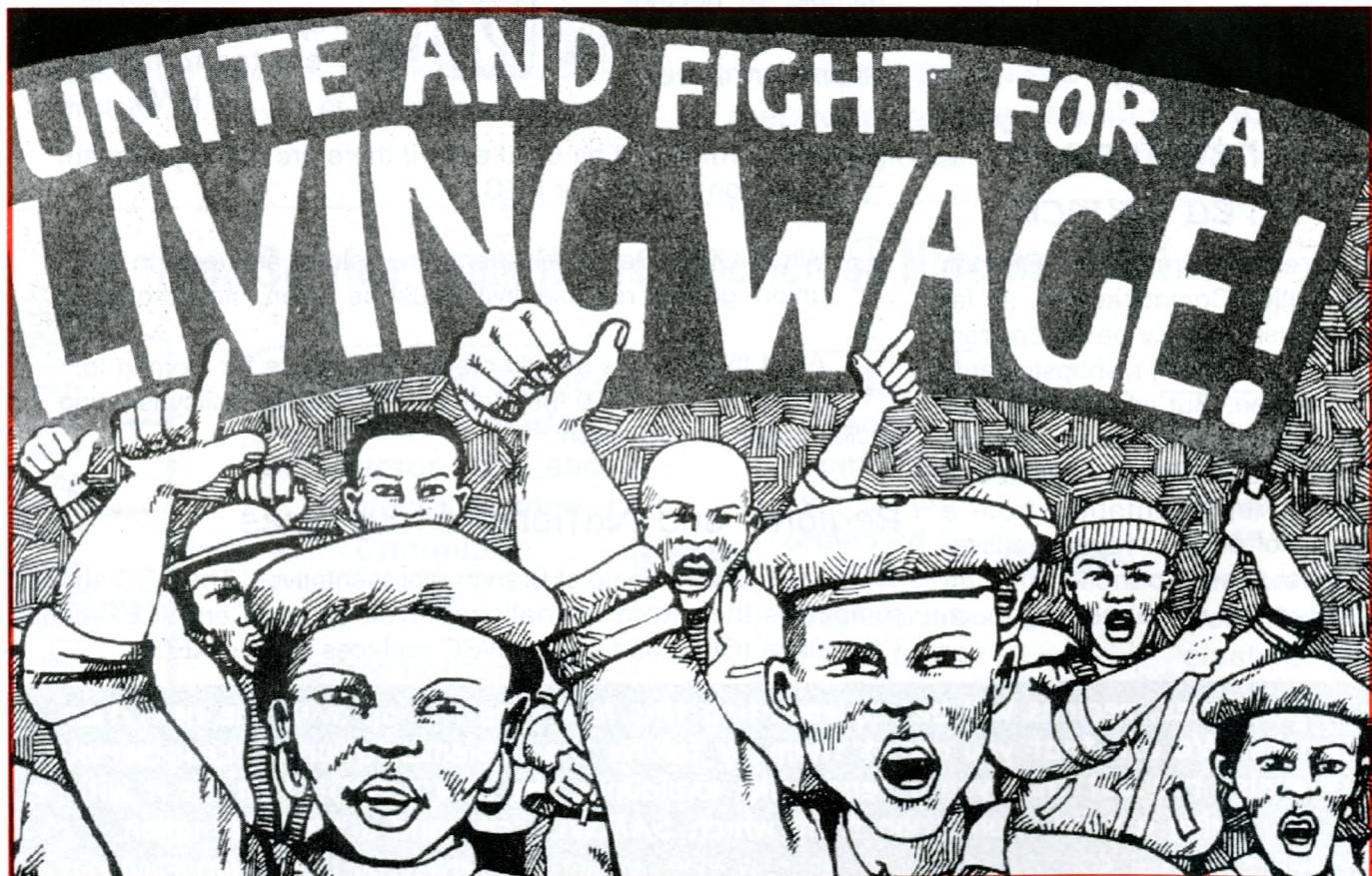
Although SAMWU's fight to improve the wages of municipal workers has seen the introduction of a minimum wage of R1000 per month, the struggle for a living wage is far from over. In some local authorities the minimum wage has not been implemented due to a lack of funds. In some areas where workers are getting R1000 per month, management has offered an increase of 2% - R20! This kind of ridiculous offer is precisely what the Living Wage campaign is fighting against.

The minimum wage in our sector is not the same countrywide.

In the big cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria the minimum is more than R1500 per month. Our demand has always been that workers who do the same work, should receive the same pay.

But how do the wages in our sector compare with wages in other sectors? A number of wage surveys are conducted each year. These surveys are normally done by organisations linked to universities but there are also some private sector companies which perform the same service.

These surveys show that the average minimum wage for our sector ranges between R1542 - R1623 per month.



From these figures it can be seen that many of our members are still earning wages which are way below the average minimum wage in the municipal sector.

Comrades, the battle for a living wage in our sector is made more difficult by the call for local government to address the basic service needs of the masses, as promised in the RDP. Many local authorities already complain about a lack of money and are saying to the Union that they cannot pay better wages and improve services at the same time! The government's macroeconomic policy, GEAR, is a problem which makes our battle for a living wage more difficult.

### Be aware of GEAR

GEAR is the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Plan. It is the government's macroeconomic plan for South Africa. We believe that GEAR is a capitalist plan that does not cater for workers. This is because:

- ◆ GEAR calls for public-private partnerships, or privatisation
- ◆ GEAR calls for the gradual abolition of exchange controls, which means that bosses can move money out of South Africa freely
- ◆ GEAR calls for offering financial incentives to foreign companies without conditions ensuring that they have a good worker rights record
- ◆ GEAR calls for a free market, the basis of any capitalist system

**Public and private sector workers fight the same battle!**

The majority of people in this country live in poverty. Even those with jobs do not earn enough and are often forced to live in houses with no electricity or running water.

When SAMWU National Office Bearers visited the Regions during 1996, many members complained that they had no houses. Their access to health care and education was limited or non-existent.

On the other hand, bosses live in luxury. This is a feature of the capitalist economic system which rules our lives. This system, which plans production according to the profit targets set by bosses and not according to the real needs of the people, also discriminates against women.

One of the key elements of capitalism is the policy of privatisation. In our own sector we can see that the government is wanting to sell off some of the services so that these services can be run by the private sector for profit.

Besides meaning that many workers will lose their jobs, it will mean that the costs of these services will increase. In the private sector, flexibility and increased productivity are two strategies which make workers work harder and increase the bosses' profits at the same time.

## OUR WAGE DEMANDS FOR 1997

**All minimum wages set during the 1996/1997 wage negotiations (i.e. before the granting of any exemptions) are to be adjusted by R450 per month.**

**All wages above the minimum are to be adjusted by R450 or 15% per month - whichever is the greater.**

**The demand for a living wage is not only about basic wages!**

It also includes:

- ◆ a forty hour week
- ◆ a living unemployment benefit
- ◆ free health care
- ◆ six months paid maternity leave
- ◆ adequate retirement benefits

The struggle for a living wage cannot succeed in one sector only. We need to join hands as workers in different sectors to take up the fight for a living wage.

The struggle of workers in the gold mines, is the struggle of the workers in the municipalities. It is only through building solidarity amongst all workers that our fight will succeed.

# What has become of centralised bargaining?

*Read on to find out how an ineffective institution is delaying the process of effective centralised bargaining for workers...*

The National Labour Relations Forum for Local Government (NLRFLG) was established four years ago. It has always been a weak structure. We only agreed to establish it in the first place to provide a platform from which to negotiate the establishment of a Local Government Bargaining Council.

First we bargained with the old regime in Local Government - now we have bargained for over a year with the newly elected Councils. The time for negotiations is now coming to an end - we have made this clear to SALGA.



## WHAT IS SALGA?

The South African Local Government Association was launched in November 1996. It is made up of the Local Government Associations in each of the Provinces.

The establishment of SALGA is a big step forward for Local Government. SAMWU has argued strongly for in the past few years for this one national body to represent all Councils on the political, economic and industrial relations front.

SALGA will become the registered Employer Organisation in terms of the LRA. It will be the employer party with whom we negotiate. The old employer organisations such as the MEO in the process of being closed down. We are told the same will happen with CLAEO now that the Western Cape Association (WESLOGA) has finally become part of SALGA.

The NLRFLG must go - it is no more than an old dog without teeth. It has little power to force Municipalities to implement agreements.

A National Bargaining Council in terms of the LRA will have the power to make Municipalities comply with its agreements.

## Negotiating for a National Bargaining Council (NBC)

The main obstacle to agreement is the employers' position on the constitutional powers of the Central National Council.

The employers are demanding clauses which dictate and restrict how SAMWU should go about negotiating wages and conditions.

Our position is that the constitution must give the NBC total power to negotiate. Once the NBC is established, it can then decide what should be negotiated centrally and what should be negotiated in divisions.

Comrades, it is wrong to legislate the manner in which wages will be bargained in the NBC constitution! It is wrong to attempt to make SAMWU give up the principle of equal pay for equal work before agreeing to the establishment of a National Bargaining Council.

Our Policy Conference last year directed that we must seek centralised bargaining. But SAMWU recognises that to set up effective centralised bargaining will take time. The key issue right now is that the Central National Council must have the power and freedom to manage negotiations countrywide. Its powers must not be limited.

There are too many other issues which need strong centralised regulation right now! Some of these issues which we need central agreement on are:

- ◆ Organisational Rights and an Agency Shop
- ◆ Pensions and Medical Aid
- ◆ Affirmative Action
- ◆ Essential Services

The NLRF lacks the power to achieve advances on all of these issues. It has served its purpose. The National Bargaining Council must be established very soon. Down with the NLRF! Forward to a South African Local Government Bargaining Council!

## STOP PRESS!

### Victory comes nearer!

At the NLRF meeting on May 30th, 1997, SALGA representatives informed SAMWU that they intend recommending to their EXCO that full powers be given to the Central Court. They have agreed to Labour's position.

Comrades, we will keep you informed, but this is definitely progress!

# Moving forward on the right to strike!

*An Essential Service is defined in the new LRA as “a service the interruption of which endangers the life, personal safety or health of the whole or any part of the population”*

*Does this include municipal services? John Mawbey explains....*

The new LRA no longer defines Municipalities as no-strike Essential Services. Instead, it allows an Essential Services Committee (ESC) under the Committee for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) to make rulings on what is defined as an Essential Service.

When the LRA was implemented in November a temporary six month order was made that Municipalities remain essential services until the ESC can hear from unions, employers and the public what local Government services the think should be restricted from striking. The ESC has however encouraged the Councils and unions to seek a negotiated agreement. There is a committee of the NLRFLG which has been negotiating on this.

The first important agreement is that where a service is an essential service, the Municipality must reach agreement with the unions on a *Minimum Service Agreement*. This is an agreement on how many workers would continue to work and provide a service during a protected strike.

SALGA and the Unions are currently considering a proposal that the following are Essential Services within which such Minimum Service Agreements must be negotiated for each Municipality:

- Medical, paramedical, health and emergency medical rescue services
- Fire and emergency services
- Traffic services
- Provision of water, power and sanitation
- Municipal police services
- Security services at national key points

The employers have come up with other areas which they claimed are essential services such as Animal or Marine Sanctuaries and Crematoria or Cemeteries. We have rejected this. The interruption of such services does not threaten the life or health of the population.

It is important that SAMWU is not seen in a bad light in a strike. Having animals die, or bodies pile

up is not good publicity for the union during a strike. So the union will decide during a strike whether or not we have a moral duty to carry out work in certain cases, even when we are not obliged to do so by law.

The employers have also agreed that where there is a Minimum Service agreement they will not bring in “scab labour” (What the Act calls replacement labour). However we are demanding a total ban on the use of scabs. We will keep the Minimum Services running in the Essential Service - but they must not seek to bring in any scabs even in those services (such as Parks and Recreation) which are not essential services. This remains a major obstacle.

This national agreement will only provide the framework. Once it has been finalised there will have to be negotiations in each Municipality as to exactly how many workers in each essential service will continue to operate a minimum service in the event of a strike. Such negotiations have started in some Municipalities.

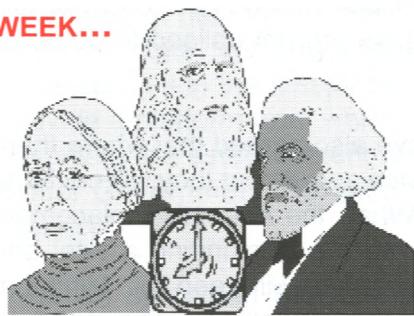
You should engage your management on these issues to speed up the process. But you should not reach any agreement until the national agreement is finalised. You must make it clear to management that such local negotiations can only be concluded once the national principles have been established.

The new LRA has not opened up a full right to strike for Municipal workers. These negotiations must achieve such rights for as many workers as possible. We want to be able to bargain and strike for wage increases without threatening human life. But employers must recognise our good faith. We will keep minimum services running, but they must not seek to undermine a strike by using scab labour. The strike is our right - it must be powerful enough to settle any dispute for any workers.

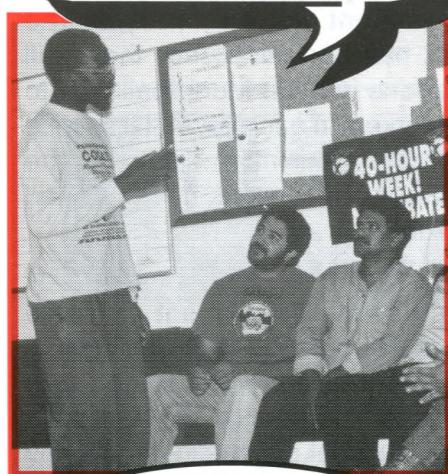
All shop stewards **MUST** take up these issues in their Municipality. Ask yourselves - which jobs would directly threaten life or health of people if you go on strike?

Comrades, we are fighting a Bill that could mean the legislation of a 45 hour week! It also means that we may lose some of our hard won rights. Read on to find out why we are fighting the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill....

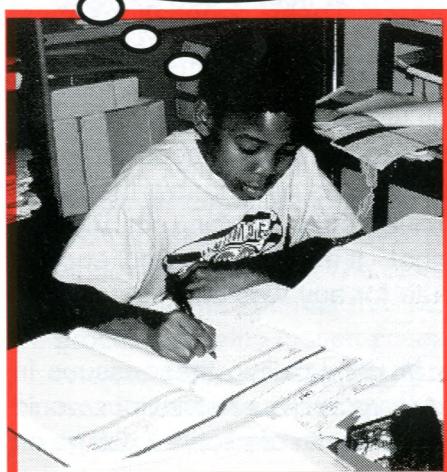
**IN 1886 WORKERS FIRST CALLED FOR A 40 HOUR WEEK...**



NO! But there are others working up to 60 hours per week! We must fight for their rights - an injury to one is an injury to all!

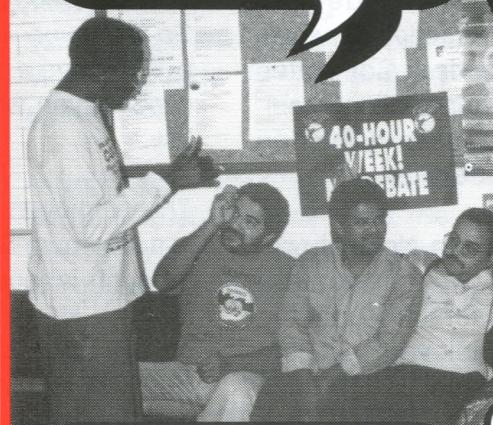


This Bill says that children can work from the age of 15! What about my education?



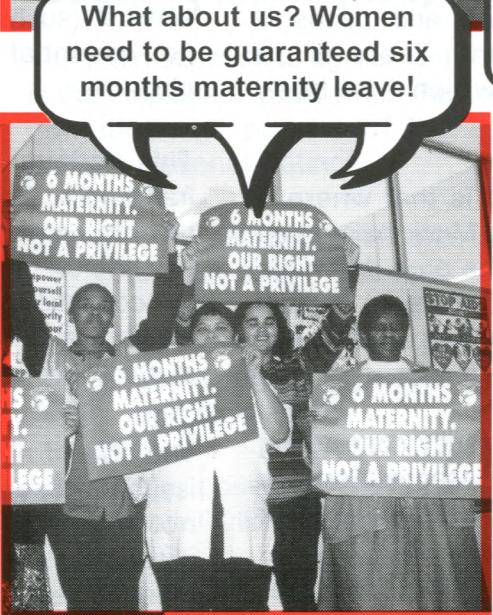
**OVER 100 YEARS LATER...**

"Comrades, we have been struggling for many years for the right to work 40 hours per week. We must fight this Basic Conditions of Employment Bill!"

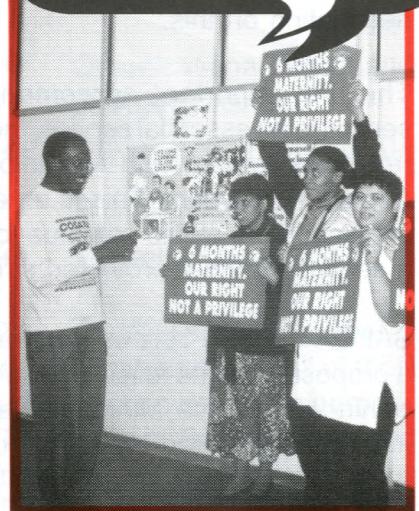


In our municipality, we only work 40 hours!

Does the Act mean that bosses can now tell us to work an extra five hours?



Coms, we agree! We reject the sexist notion that women must pay for their own maternity leave!



### **FIGHT FOR THE KEY DEMANDS!**

- ◆ Six months paid maternity leave!
- ◆ 45 hour week phased down to 40 hours by year 2000!
- ◆ No downward variation of rights!
- ◆ Minimum working age of 16!

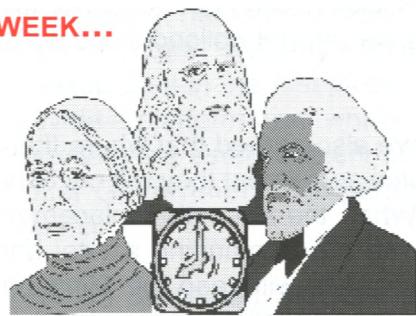
**Workers must unite against the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill!**

**FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!**

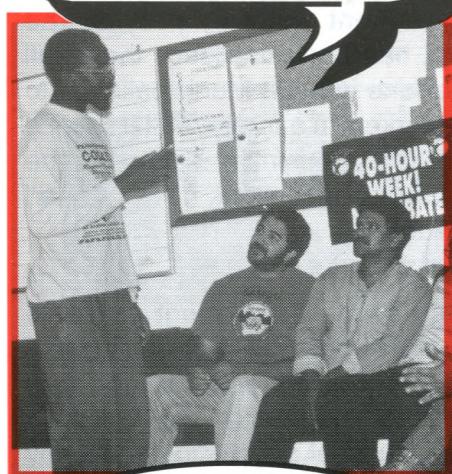


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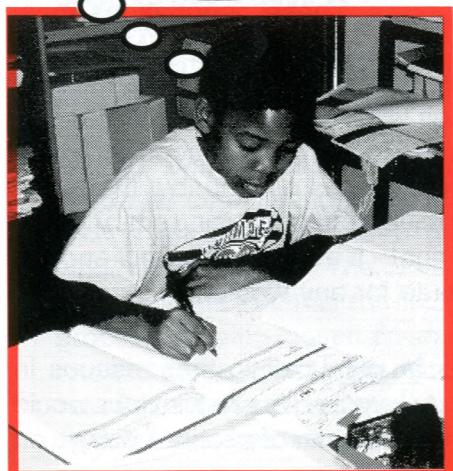
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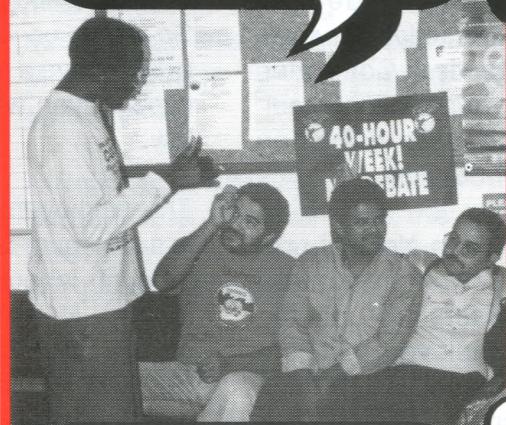


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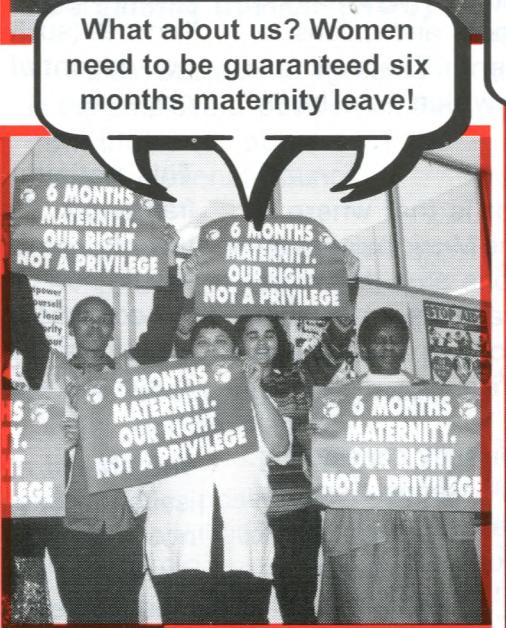
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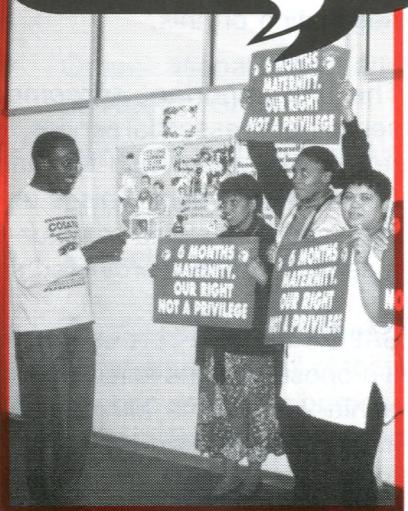


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**FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!**



# KEEPING WORKERS OUT OF DANGER...

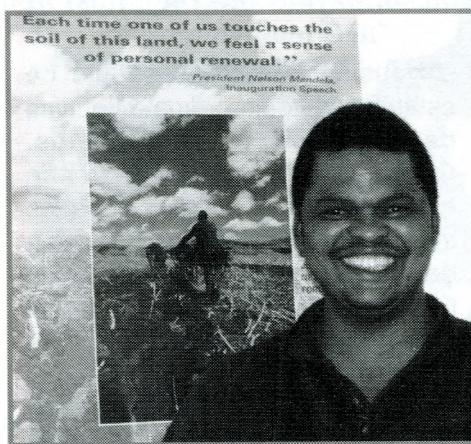
At last, SAMWU has a Health, Safety and Environment Officer. Read on to find out more about David Morake and his plans to help workers...

Q: SAMWU has never had a Health, Safety & Environment Officer before. How do you feel about taking up the challenge?

A: I am prepared to take up the challenge! There are few HS&E resources within SAMWU. Apart from setting up an office on a national level, functioning processes from branches upwards must also be put in place. Education and training for shop stewards and members must be devised and implemented with the least delay.

Q: How do you think privatisation will affect HS&E?

A: Privatisation will mean that water quality drops, as the private sector is accountable to profit not workers.



Q: What do you see as the biggest HS&E problems facing unions today?

A: Firstly, a worker could be dying slowly from working with toxic substances, without even being aware!

Secondly, within the national trade union movement, there is no co-ordination of HS&E matters.

Those unions that have officers, proceed with their own problems. Most unions also react to situations, rather than preventing them.

Thirdly, when it comes to drawing up budgets, HS&E comes last. You will find large municipalities allocating a small amount such as R2000 for one year's HS&E training.

Q: How will you solve these problems?

A: I will pro-actively train shop stewards so that they know their rights, and they know when workplaces are dangerous or unhealthy. You find shop stewards often negotiating their rights, when they should already be aware of them. Education will solve this problem!

## Can sludge kill you?

The problems in the Zimpro plant at Borchards Quarry, Western Cape began in 1987 - as soon as it was built! Workers who complained about a smell similar to burnt coffee, were told by management that this smell was normal. Mr King, the Senior Chemist, said that the wet air oxidation process used to treat waste/water sludge, would always give off this type of smell.

So was it just a strange coincidence when a doctor started diagnosing workers with severe sinus problems and other illnesses? SAMWU has been

fighting to get to the truth about the mysterious illnesses for many years, yet to this day management have still not claimed responsibility for causing illness in workers.

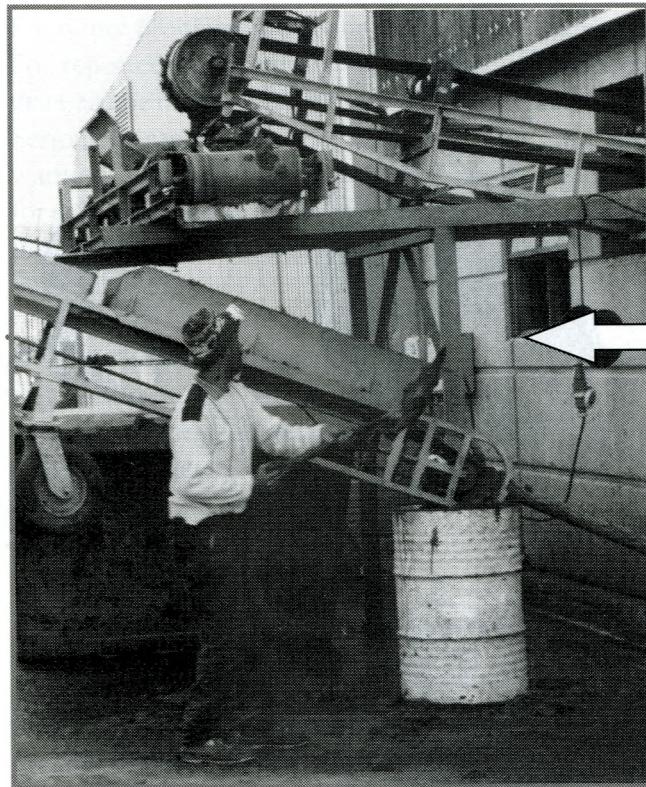
Dr Stephenson who has been treating the sick workers from 1989 said straight away that she believed the cause to be air pollution coming from the plant!

The doctor said that the highly poisonous gas, acetaldehyde, was causing the pollution. This gas causes acute and chronic asthma and respiratory problems,

and also affects the central nervous system. It is a form of hydrogen sulphide poisoning.

Despite this, there have been many gas leaks in the plant since 1989. Workers have continued to be exposed to this toxic gas. In December of that year it was found that the main holding tank had a malfunctioning gearbox. This meant that huge amounts of acetaldehyde were blowing into the holding room, where workers were working.

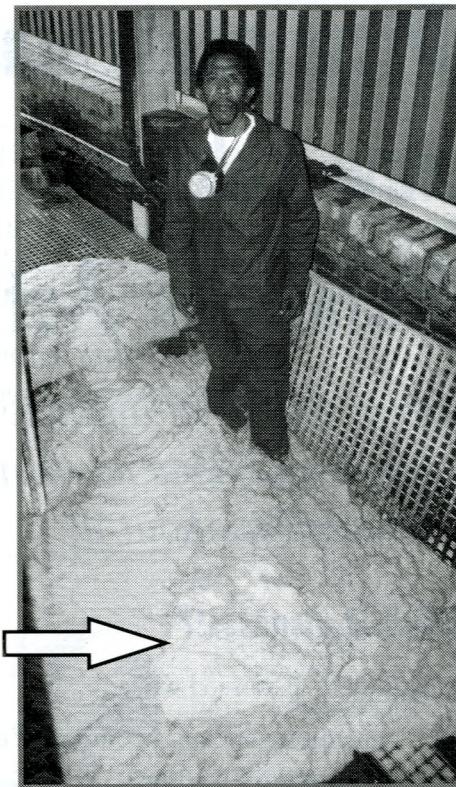
Funds requested to improve equipment at the plant took three



*These are shocking working conditions by anyone's standards.*

*This cde spends his days scooping up waste that falls off the conveyor belt above his head!*

*This cde is constantly ill - when we see that he is forced to walk around in sludge it is not surprising!*



years to materialise. During that time, workers were issued with flimsy mouth and nose masks - hardly adequate for keeping any type of gas at bay! Also, the Health and Safety officers at the plant were found not to be impartial, so workers received very little safety training.

In March, 1993, Dr Stephenson said management was "exposing workers to hazardous conditions knowingly." Yet in 1995, workers were found still to be handling sewage without correct gloves. This exposed them to worms, hepatitis A, and salmonella.

There were only two showers for 40 people and these did not have hot water. Even soap needed by workers to reduce the risk of contracting these terrible diseases was not provided. Council refused to pay for workers to see a doctor, even though they had respiratory problems clearly contracted through their work.

Eventually in March 1996 the Industrial Health Research Group

proclaimed that the airborne hydrogen sulphide level was three times above the limit. The problem was so serious that IHRG recommended that a ventilation system be installed to remove gases released during the treatment process. Until this time, workers were issued with gas masks to wear at all times.

So far, seven Zimpro comrades have died, two from pneumonia and four from throat, tongue and stomach cancer! Another worker died from gangrene. After a minor cut suffered at the plant, the workers' entire leg rotted away. Yet management maintains that the deaths are natural and not related to the gas!

Problems have continued. The lime dosing unit in the centrifuge area has malfunctioned for more than one year. Council had not asked anyone to repair this although they knew a replacement part should have been bought already. The sludge thickening unit is still 3 times over the hydrogen sulphide exposure

limit. After investigations, workers were banned from entering the unit for more than 15 minutes.

Last month, we visited the plant and took the above photos - clear evidence that terrible working conditions still exist.

A few weeks ago, comrades at the plant pasted the place with signs calling for the resignation of King. After one week, management agreed to transfer him.

Comrades, by this action it seems like Cape Metropolitan Council knows that there is a serious problem at the plant. Yet they refuse to admit publicly that these deaths are work related! SAMWU does not accept this. Why should management knowingly endanger the lives of innocent workers, and be allowed to get away with it? We say let everyone know what is happening here! Put health before secrets and profits!

If you are working in a dangerous place, let us know immediately. Your problem will be investigated.

# Dismissals under the new Labour Relations Act

*Have you been unfairly dismissed? This is what you can do about it!*



## What is dismissal?

A worker is dismissed when:

- an employer ends a contract of employment with or without notice
- the worker had a reasonable expectation that the employer would renew a fixed-term contract on the same or similar terms but the employer offered to renew it on less favourable terms, or did not renew it at all
- an employer refuses to allow a worker to return to work after maternity leave
- an employer makes the working environment unbearable, so the worker leaves or resigns

## What are invalid reasons for dismissal?

Some reasons for dismissal are invalid. The dismissal is automatically unfair if the reason is invalid.

For example:

- if the worker took part in union activities
- the worker took part in a protected strike or protest action
- the worker refused to do the work of someone who was on strike
- the worker's pregnancy or any reason related to her pregnancy
- the employer unfairly discriminated against a worker because of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, family responsibilities or religion
- the worker was forced to accept a change in working conditions

However, employers may retire someone who has reached the normal or agreed retirement age.

## When can an employer dismiss a worker?

- for misconduct (where a worker does something unacceptable)
- for incapacity (where a worker is too ill or injured to work)
- for operational reasons (if the company no longer needs the type of work, or does not have the money to pay workers - usually called retrenchment).

The new Act has set out a Code of Good Practice that all employers must follow. The Code recognises that employers have a right to operate efficiently, and to expect good conduct and work performance from their workers. But it also notes that workers have a right to fair treatment and to be protected from arbitrary actions by employers.

## Dismissal for misconduct

All employers must adopt disciplinary rules that set out how workers should conduct themselves. These rules of conduct must be clear. Everyone must be informed of them unless they are so well established that everyone knows them. For example, violence at work is commonly known as unacceptable conduct.

## The Code says that dismissal for misconduct will only be fair if:

- a rule concerning conduct in the workplace was broken by the worker
- the rule was reasonable
- the worker had been told about the rule
- the employer applied this rule consistently
- the appropriate step to take against the worker was dismissal (not some lesser penalty).

For minor problems, correction will be most effective. For repeated misconduct, workers will get warnings that become more severe if the misconduct is continued. Serious or repeated misconduct could lead to a final warning. Generally workers should not be dismissed for a first offence unless the misconduct was so serious that it makes continued employment of the person intolerable.

Dismissal should be reserved for cases of serious misconduct or repeated offences.

Examples of serious misconduct are gross dishonesty, intentional damage to an employer's property, putting others safety at risk, physical assault of another worker, and gross insubordination.

The employers must look at how serious the misconduct was, and also consider:

- length of service, previous disciplinary record and personal circumstances
- the nature of the job
- the circumstances in which the misconduct took place

Even if there is a good reason for a dismissal, it will not be fair unless the dismissal goes by fair procedure.

## Fair procedure

The employer must inform the worker of the allegations. The worker must have an opportunity to respond to these allegations. The worker must be given reasonable time in which to prepare the response and has the right to be assisted by a shop steward or another worker.

After an enquiry, the employer should tell the worker of the decision taken in writing. If dismissal goes ahead, the worker should be given reasons and reminded of the right to refer the dismissal for dispute resolution. Employers should keep records of disciplinary action: the nature of misconduct, the disciplinary action taken and reasons for the action.

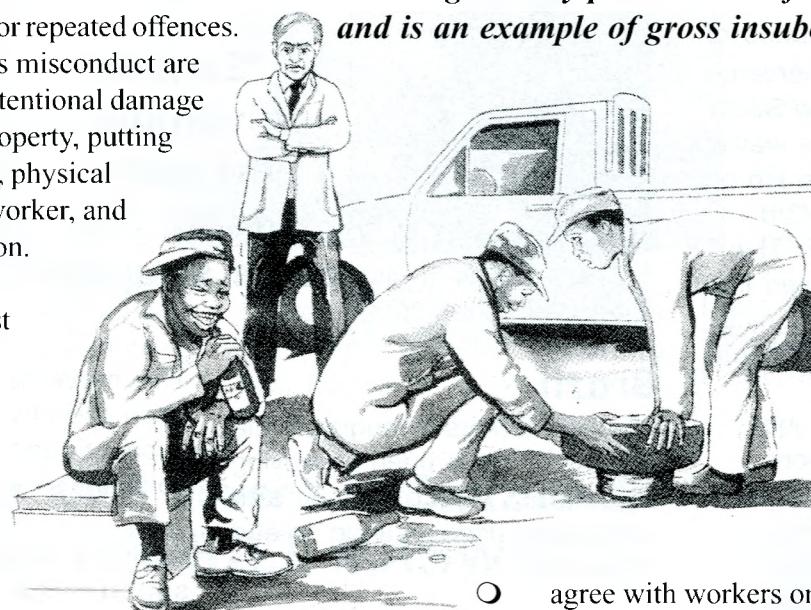
## Dismissals for incapacity

The employer must first give the worker the appropriate evaluation, training or guidance and then assess work over a reasonable period of time.

The employer must investigate whether the problem can be solved without dismissing the worker.

Dismissals for ill health and injury will be unfair unless the employer first considers finding alternative employment for the worker; or adapting the job to suit the worker's problem. It is especially important to do this if the worker was injured at work.

**Drinking on duty puts others safety at risk, and is an example of gross insubordination.**



## Retrenchments

### AN EMPLOYER MUST TRY

TO:

- avoid retrenchment
- reduce the number of people retrenched
- limit the harsh effects of retrenchment
- agree with workers on the method used to select workers that would be retrenched
- agree with workers on severance pay

### THE NEW ACT STATES THAT:

- an employer must provide relevant information relating to proposed retrenchments
- an employer must pay a retrenched worker severance pay equal to at least one week's pay for every year of completed service

## Disputes over dismissals

Disputes first go to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) or to a bargaining council for conciliation. If conciliation fails, dismissal must be arbitrated. Employer's operational requirements dismissals or automatically unfair dismissals may be referred to the Labour Court.

If a dismissal is found to be unfair, workers can be reinstated or re-employed. But if reinstatement means that the working relationship between employer and worker would be intolerable, then the worker may be awarded compensation instead. Workers can also get compensation if the dismissal was automatically unfair. Up to 12 month's wages is compensation for an unfair dismissal. If the dismissal was automatically unfair, the worker could be awarded up to 24 months wages.

Comrades, we are not the only ones fighting bad working conditions and low pay. Workers all over the world face the same issues as we do. Just as there is a global world economy, so there needs to be global worker solidarity.

Read on to find out what's happening in the rest of the world....

## **Forward to the international struggle!**

**Australia** - Thousands of public servants in New South Wales walked off the job on May 23rd 1997. This resulted from an ongoing industrial dispute over the

Government's attack on jobs and employment conditions. Public servants in other states began half-day stoppages on May 20th. These continued in different regions across the country for two weeks.

National Secretary of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) Wendy Caird said "Our members are determined to fight these attacks. It seems the only thing the Government knows how to do is slash public service jobs, sell services to multinationals and close Government offices."

The Government plans to remove most central controls on pay, conditions, hiring and firing, from the Public Service Commission and delegate them to individual departments heads who will be contracted directly to the Prime Minister.

"They are proposing a recipe for and corruption. Decades of impartial advice and public accountability could be wiped out overnight." warned Ms Caird.

SAMWU agrees! Forward to an accountable public sector! ●



**"Santos, Liverpool, the same world, the same struggle"**



**Brazil** -

25 dock workers belonging to the union CUT have been occupying the ships Marcos Dias and Vancouver since in a bid to end dismissals.

In 1991, the Federal government of Brazil decided to dismiss more than 5000 dockers in Santos.

The Sao Paulo Steel Company (COSIPA) has refused to negotiate with workers while they were on the ships. In April, COSIPA managed to get a court order for police to evacuate the two ships, and arrest all the workers on board. But workers say "any attempt to put an end to the occupation of the ships Marcos Dias and Vancouver by military force will be met by stoppages of work in all Brazilian ports."

The dockers have been widely supported - both by their own community and by dockers in other parts of the world. 500 people have been camping outside the dockyard gate with tents since April 1. More than 1000 people participated in a demonstration at Maua Square in April to show their support.

The movement also served to warn the city of the social and economic damage which the steel company's decision could cause.

During this rally a message of support from the Liverpool dockers, who face the same struggle in their British port, was read out to intense applause.

**England** -

In 1995 Dock Workers in Liverpool, the last unionized port authority in England, were dismissed. The remaining workers went on strike to protest the layoffs.

Since then the Port Authority has used scab labour from a Canadian based international company, although there has been a daily picket and support for the dockers is strong all over the world. The company, Drake International, specialises in scab labour, and advice on downsizing of staff.

**Canada** -

In Montreal, workers occupied international shipping offices to protest against the use of scab labour in Liverpool. ●

# Korean workers fight police oppression

A peaceful protest by Korean unions and community organisations, turned into a riot when police fired teargas on the crowd.

Nurses at a large hospitals said they were at the demonstration to protest the new labour laws. Their main concern was unreasonable retrenchments.

The demonstration was a turning point in the current labour struggle, as it was a joint protest with labour and citizens, fighting oppressive laws.



After the rally in a park, the crowd of 2000-3000 moved onto the streets outside to return to their homes.

Police allegedly fired gunshots at the defenceless protestors, some of whom threw rocks. When the riot ended, many workers were left injured. Korean workers reject this police oppression and demand the right to assemble in parks without police interference!

As SAMWU members, we support the Korean workers' struggle!

From South Africa to South East Asia, we say forward to socialism!

## The people shall govern in Swaziland! AMANDLA ! EMBILI MASWATI!

Our neighbours in Swaziland live under feudal oppression. In 1973 a decree banned all political parties and opposition. Freedom of speech and association is outlawed. Trade unions rights are threatened and restricted. The freedom of the press is virtually non-existent.

The struggle in Swaziland is led by the national liberation movement, PUDEMO, and the SFTU within the Swaziland Democratic Alliance (SDA), comprising thirteen progressive organisations. 1997 has been declared the year of liberation. The SFTU tabled a list of 27 demands focusing on trade union rights and democratic freedoms. The King and Government of Swaziland have made no meaningful attempt to address these demands. On the contrary

they have responded by refusing to meet with the SFTU, and by arresting its leaders.

Because of internal pressure, a constitutional review commission was set up recently. But 80% of people sitting on the commission support the monarchy! There is no meaningful representation of PUDEMO, SFTU or other SDA organisations. The proceedings of the commission are kept secret.

In March this year, COSATU and the OTM of Mozambique staged a blockade of Swaziland, completely closing the Swazi borders. This showed the international press that Southern African workers will unite to fight against oppression!

But SFTU reports that the government is delaying on key demands.



Their demands are:

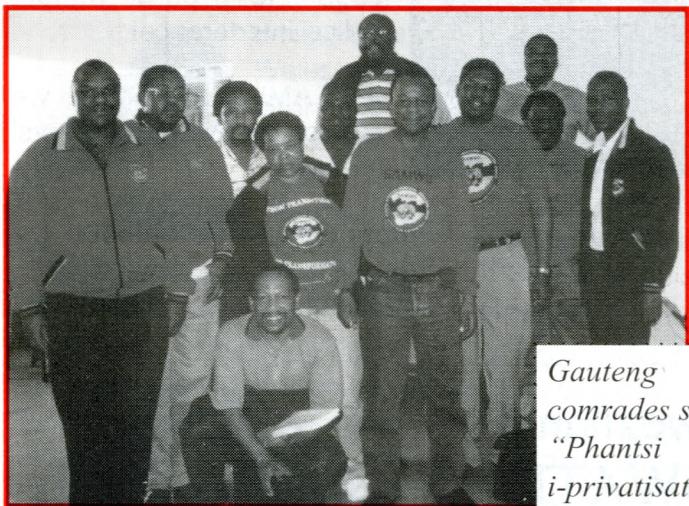
- immediate repeal of all legislation preventing the free exercise of trade union rights;
- new legislation to normalise the operation of trade unions in line with ILO conventions;
- immediate repeal of the 1973 decree outlawing democracy and opposition parties;
- a transparent and representative National Convention to lead the process of democratic transformation.

Forward to freedom and democracy!

If you want to write to comrades in other parts of the world, post your letters to SAMWU Media, Private Bag X/9, Athlone, Cape Town, 7760. We will send your messages to the comrades. Write your name and address on your letter so that they can write back to you!

# SAMWU

Comrades, we would love to fill this page with your letters and photographs. But because this is our first issue, we do not yet have any of those things. Instead, we bring you photographs of workers and officials around the country.



Gauteng comrades say "Phantsi i-privatisation, phantsi!"

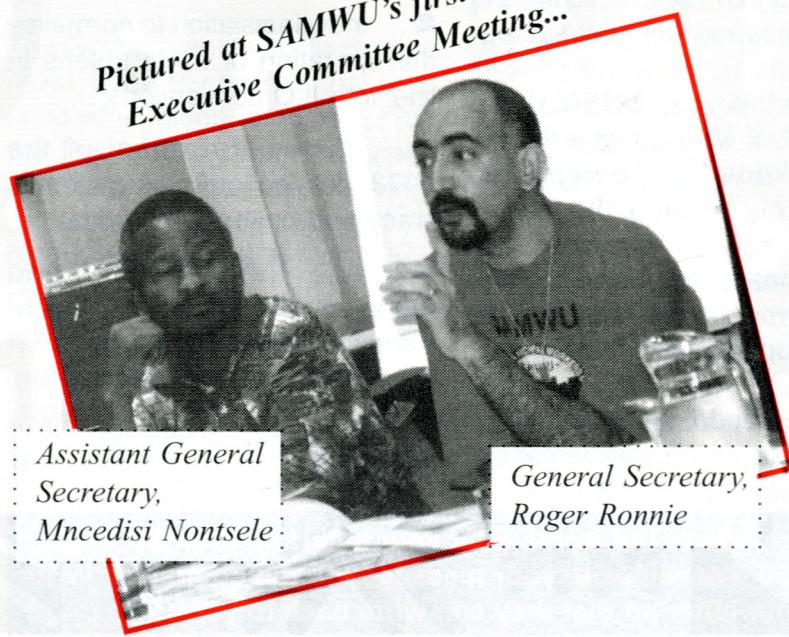


Western Cape women say "forward to women's rights!"



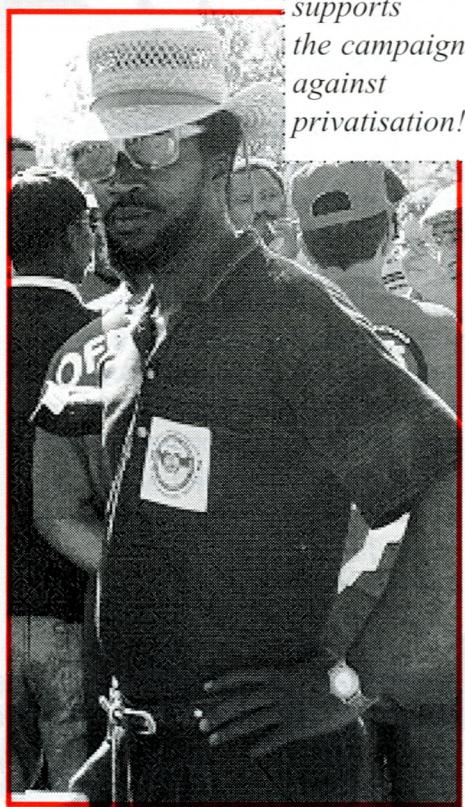
KwaZulu/Natal delegates at the April National Executive Committee meeting are deep in thought...

Pictured at SAMWU's first Central Executive Committee Meeting...



Assistant General Secretary, Mncedisi Nontsele

General Secretary, Roger Ronnie



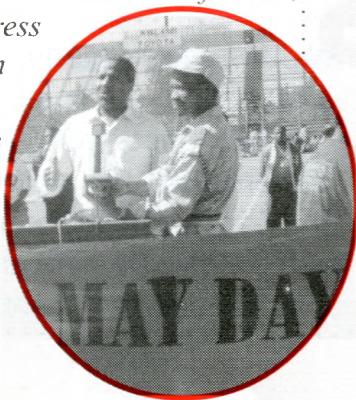
This comrade strongly supports the campaign against privatisation!

# PEOPLE

Eastern Cape Congress, May 1997



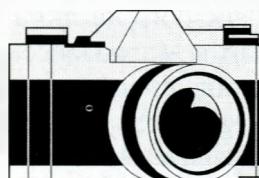
North West comrades were pleased to have James Motlasi, President of NUM, address them on May Day



Pictured here in SAMWU t-shirts are our champions of water Lance Veotte and Jerry Chaka, with some of SAMWU's Mpumalanga Comrades.



Let's keep the red flag flying high!



If you would like to appear in Worker's News send your photograph to SAMWU Media, Private Bag X/9, Athlone, Cape Town, 7760. Don't forget to put your name and postal address on the back of the photo so that we can return it to you!

# What have we done - Senzeni na?

It is funny but no laughing at all

Tears of suffering slowly rolling to the ground  
many are poor  
many are without food  
many are without jobs

what have we done -  
senzeni - na

the bosses are fat  
the rich people are the bosses  
they own the factories, they own mines  
they own wealth, they own power of our existence

what have we done -  
senzeni - na

the workers are hungry  
the poor people are the workers  
they build houses, they sleep in shacks  
they make cars, but they die without owning one  
they clean university offices, but never get education  
they dig gold in the bowels of the earth, but get none  
they cook food, but they eat dogmorn

what have we done -  
senzeni - na

the bosses are hiring and firing  
they give workers survival wages  
they take the profits  
it is a cat and mouse situation  
they never be friends  
the bosses are parasites  
sucking, sucking, sucking the blood of the workers

what have we done -  
senzeni - na

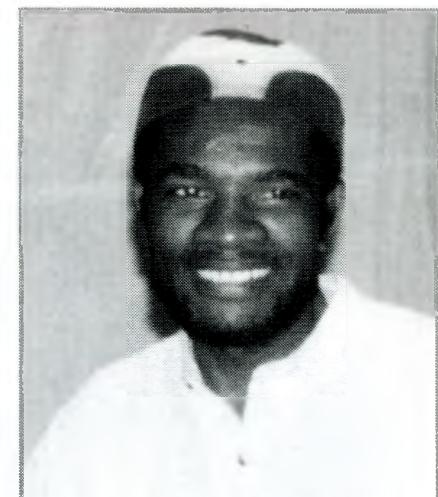
workers are many, bosses are few  
workers do all the work, bosses take all the money  
workers live hand to mouth, bosses live on profits  
workers are exploited, bosses expropriate production

break the chains united we stand socialism is the future  
build it now

what have we done - senzeni - na

senzeni - na - what have we done

senzeni - na - what have we done



Senzeni-na? was written by Cde Thobile Maso, the Regional Education Officer in the Eastern Cape. "By forming cultural organisations in SAMWU we can help to build our union", he says.

We have heard rumours that there are some SAMWU poets living in Pietersburg! We would love to publish the work of these people, and any other poets out there!



**SAMWU conveys its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of our late**

**J**ames Hlengane Mokwena, of the Potgietersrus TLC Protection Services, passed away on 20 April, 1997.

**M**oses Lazarus Maake, of the Duiwelskloof TLC Workshops, passed away on May 4th, 1997.

**M**ofu Tebogo Benjamin "Bizza" Mosala o hlahile ka di 23 September 1943 le Klerksdorp ke mora wa pele wa ntate Daniel Rabojalwa Mosala le mee Martha Morwa Mocoanyane. O kene sekolo ntatase le Itirere. A sebetsa Constantia, mme lefu le mo kgaoleditse a sebetsa Orkney Town Council. Mofu e kile yaeba sebapadi ga bolo sa Young Zebras. A kena lenyalong le halalelang le lololo Patricia Mohapi ka 1975. Ba hlohonolofatswa ka bana ba babedi. Mofu o siya mme wa hae, baena be babedi, kgaitsedi, molekane wa hae, mora le moradi. Ebile motlatsha modula-setulo lebatoweng la Klerksdorp. Robala ka kagiso mosimang wa molehe, tholo. Re tia mme re go gopola.

## 10 years of SAMWU!

We are celebrating ten years of SAMWU this year! An exhibition of t-shirts, photographs, writings, artwork, and campaign pamphlets is planned for the October National Congress.

If you have collected SAMWU memorabilia, please lend it to us for the exhibition! Your things will be returned to you afterwards. Please label any photographs clearly on the back, stating the year, event and the names of people in the photo. Don't forget to put your name and full address on the back of your envelope so that we can return your items to you!

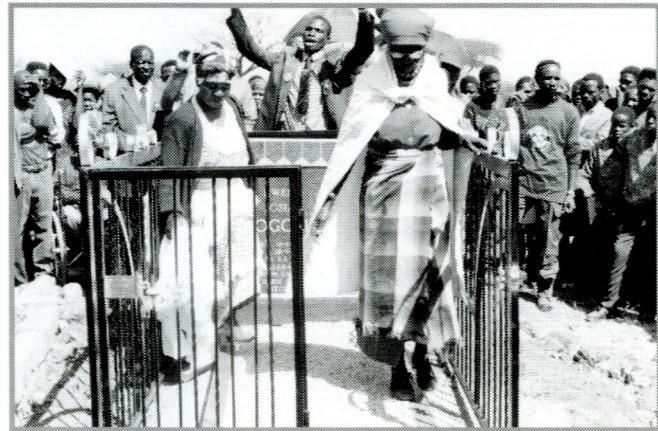
## Kwena Josias Mogolla, Rest in Peace!

The sad story of this graveside scene began on the 28th of September, 1995. Workers were gathered at the Civic Centre in Pietersburg during the 1995 National Strike.

Suddenly, one of these workers, Kwena Josias Mogolla, was shot dead by the police and municipal security.

Workers in the greater Pietersburg and Polokwane area decided to buy a tombstone that would commemorate Cde Mogolla's life as a worker hero and SAMWU member. After contributing R20 each, they raised a massive amount of more than five thousand rand!

Almost a year later the tombstone was unveiled by the local Shop Stewards Council and Cde Mathibe, who represented the National Office.



Cde Mogolla, your blood will nourish the struggle for working class emancipation!



**comrades. Their untimely deaths are a loss to all members of our union.**

**B**enjamin Makume Seboko passed away on the 29th April, 1997 after a short illness. Benjamin was born on the 9th of December 1958 in Pietersteyn. He later resettled in Viljoenskroon. Benjamin tied the knot with Sarah, and they were blessed with 4 children. In 1993, they moved to Kanana. Benjamin was employed by the Orkney Town Council.

**N**dani Matiwana was buried on June 7th, 1997 in Indwe. Cde Matiwana was born on the 9th of February 1942 at Indwe, and died while working for the Drakensberg District Council. He leaves a wife and 3 children.

**K**arabo Seretse, shop steward at Kimberley municipality, died on May 10th, 1997. Cde Seretse's trade union involvement dates back to the 80's as a shop steward with MUSA. Cde Seretse was active in the UDF, and a leading member of the Galeshewe Civic Association. He was Regional Treasurer for the Northern Cape/ OFS regions, and an active member of the SACP with a love for union education.

1997  
Campaign  
of the year



# **SAMWU rejects privatisation**



**of any municipal  
service!**