

SALHA 176: SACCAWU

# SACCAWU

## NATIONAL ORGANISING AND BARGAINING CONFERENCE

19TH-21ST MARCH 1993

CATHOLIC RENEWAL CENTRE  
KENSINGTON, JOHANNESBURG

" DEFEND OUR GAINS:  
ADVANCE TO WORKERS  
POWER "



UNITY, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM!

# SACCAWU NATIONAL ORGANISING AND BARGAINING CONFERENCE 19 - 21 MARCH 1993

19 MARCH 1993

10H00 - 10H15	Opening	Setena Khaile
10H15 - 10H20	Adoption of Agenda	Setena Khaile
10H20 - 11H00	Introduction of Guest	Papi Kganare
11H00 - 11H45	Assesment of Campaigns	Bevil Lucas
11H45 - 13H00	Question for Discussions	
13H00 - 14H30	LUNCH ***LUNCH***LUNCH	
14H30 - 15H15	Assesment of OCBU	Motsomi Mokhine
15H15 - 16H00	Questions for Discussions	
16H00 - 16H15	BREAK***BREAK***BREAK***	
16H15 - 17H00	Wage Policy	Gordon Young
17H00 - 17H15	Questions and Discussions	
17H15 - 18H00	Developments in our Sector	Shasika Isaacs
18H30	SUPPER***SUPPER***SUPPER	

20 March 1993

09 H 00 - 09 H 45 :	Gender and women appression	Patricia Appolis
09 H 45 - 10 H 00 :	Questions and discussion	
10 H 00 - 10 H 45 :	Affirmative action and equal opportunities	
10 H 45 - 11 H 00 :	Question and discussion	
11H 00 - 11 H 45 :	Strategic unionism with special reference to current struggles	Leonard Gentle
11 H 45 - 12 H 00 :	Questions and discussion	
12 H 00 - 12 H 45 :	Organising strategies	Biko Sekgabi
12 H 45 - 13 H 00 :	Questions and discussion	
13 H 00 - 14 H 30 :	Lunch	
14 H 30 - 18 H 30 :	Commissions	
18 H 30 :	Supper	

21 MARCH 1993

09 H 00 - 10 H 00 : Commissions  
10 H 00 - 12 H 00 : Commission report - backs  
12 H 00 - 13 H 00 : Resolutions  
13 H 00 : Closure and Lunch



# ASSESSMENT OF THE ORGANISING AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UNIT (OCBU)

This assessment draws on a number of observations made in relation to the activities of OCBU and is meant to be both critical and provocative, whilst also making several suggestions in respect of how OCBU should conduct its activities.

The assessment should therefore not be seen as conclusive but rather an input on several critical issues confronting us this year.

## A. STRATEGIC HANDLING OF NEGOTIATIONS

This section is geared at looking at our "strategic" handling of negotiations during the course of 1993 and to draw some broad guidelines for our negotiating teams for the realisation of our demands this year.

This can however not be effectively done unless we refer to how capital expects this year's negotiations to go.

### I. CAPITAL'S BARGAINING EXPECTATIONS FOR 1993

By and large, capital expects labour to moderate its demands relative to previous years. This expectation is based, inter alia, on the following factors:

- the effects of the current recession, particularly the high unemployment rate
- in the light of the 1992 NUMSA strike, the extra caution, even uneasiness of workers to embark on industrial action to back their demands.
- the increasing presentation of a shorter list of demands, even one (1) demand (on wage increases) by trade unions.
- the increasing preparedness by trade unions to settle for relatively lower wage increases and sometimes, no wage increases in exchange for job security.



- the growing role trade union officials are playing in macro-economic and macro-national issues, leaving very little time for them to diligently pursue company and plant-based issues.

It is also important to note that many companies have thus decided to offer and/or budget for 10 % - 12 % wage increases for the year. Other companies have decided to link such wage increases to increased productivity, job flexibility and/or casualisation. Others have hinted at wage settlements for a longer period than twelve (12) months, e.g. 18 or 24 months.

Secondly, many companies have also indicated their unwillingness to negotiate and/or settle on any other issues except wage increases.

We can therefore expect a lot of companies to adopt a tough approach to negotiations this year. This may include a provocation of labour to embark on industrial action so that mass dismissals can be effected and thus trade unions weakened.

Given the above scenario, how can we relate to capital's plans and expectations?

To successfully answer this question, let us briefly look at where we are presently in terms of our strengths and weaknesses.



Most of us will agree that we are no longer what we used to be . A number of factors can be blamed on this. Some of these factors are:

- our militancy and capacity to engage employers in battles for the advancement of our interests are not the same as before.
- our policies on fundamental issues confronting us, e.g. retrenchments, have not been clear enough to assist us to defend our rights.
- many members are demoralised owing to limited servicing, or even lack of it including the relative unavailability of officials.

Notwithstanding the above, our strength lies primarily in our long-established tradition of militant struggle which we need to revisit. This however will not be enough unless we thoroughly implement democratic worker control and the accountability of all officials in line with the broad objectives and policies of the Union.

## 1. HOW ARE WE THERE?

The successful prosecution of negotiations on our part can only be obtained if we assert our ideological supremacy on capital. This means among other things that we cannot simply accept that there is a recession and therefore we should agree to low or no wage increases.

We need to set specific guidelines for our collective bargaining agenda this year, and these could be some of them, viz.

- a clear resistance to compound wage negotiations with other issues, principally retrenchments/rationalisation, productivity, etc.
- not to link our wage demands to the (current) inflation rate as it affects the "lower income group" differently but negatively from all other "groups", nor to link them to a company's current performance.
- to focus on and activate our national demands against wage freezes, retrenchments, job flexibility, casualisation and sub-contracting.
- to consistently work towards setting industry/sector based wage rates and other employment conditions.

The above can be fully implemented if we engender a spirit of unity of purpose and in action across our companies and localities. It is therefore crucial that we should return to our basics in approaching negotiations with employers. These are the basics that need to be emphasised, viz.

- demands put to employers must be fully mandated by the majority of the members concerned and must never be changed without due regard to the democratic process.
- general meetings and report backs must be thoroughly arranged to ensure maximum attendance and participation by members
- national negotiating teams must prioritise issues to be negotiated in line with the Union's collective bargaining agenda and should ensure that there is constant and systematic consultation with OCBU on these issues.
- no settlements or agreements should be entered into if they contradict Union policy without prior reference to OCBU

In conclusion, it is also expected that there should be increased co-ordination of disputes across companies and sectors in order to pool resources and become more effective.

## **B. STRIKES AND OTHER DISPUTES : CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE HANDLING AND CO-ORDINATION OF STRIKES AND OTHER DISPUTES**

This is a general assessment of the strikes and other disputes we had over last year. A deliberate approach was used here not to cite specific companies but rather to make general observations which can inform our future plans for similar actions.

The most important observations are that :

- there is sometimes a mechanical approach to negotiations, whereby the following steps are predictably implemented, viz.
  - \* one or two initial negotiation sessions
  - \* a dispute is declared
  - \* mediation is arranged, where negotiations continue
  - \* a conciliation board is set up, where negotiations continue
  - \* mediation is arranged again, where negotiations continue
  - \* balloting of members takes place, after which further negotiations continue
  - \* a strike commences, and negotiations continue
- disputes are sometimes declared prematurely
- there is a lack of thorough preparation for strikes
- many officials and negotiating teams are not sure how to handle and co-ordinate strikes
- "senior" officials intervene and settle the strike/dispute
- Union branches and members are not informed about the issues in dispute and progress or lack of it in negotiations.
- community support is galvanised at a late stage of the dispute or strike, and no feedback is given to the community once the dispute or strike is resolved.



What can be seen from the above observations is that in several respects our use of the strike weapon is not calculative.

## **I. PLANNING FOR AND CO-ORDINATING EFFECTIVE STRIKES**

It must be categorically stated here that a strike is the best "battle-axe" used by organised labour to induce agreement to its demands. Therefore, we should as a rule thoroughly prepare for this action and ensure that it is effective, lest it becomes a hot potato for us.

It is proposed here that certain ground rules should be developed. Some of these could be :

- any dispute declared should be immediately communicated to the OCBU Head-office and all branches
- a planning meeting of the negotiating team, involved officials and OCBU should immediately thereafter be convened
- should a strike be decided upon, the following should be done, viz.
  - \* all branches should be informed and their respective roles canvassed
  - \* an official(s) should be designated to co-ordinate the strike
  - \* the community should be informed and its role canvassed
  - \* the strike should be periodically evaluated, e.g. once a week
  - \* no other officials should get involved in the strike without the express consent of the parties involved in the planning meeting

## **C. ASSESSMENT OF STRUCTURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section is meant to appraise our structures in OCBU and make recommendations on restructuring, where appropriate. We will however not deal with other relevant structures, e.g. company councils as these are covered in another input to the conference.

### **I. PRESENT OCBU STRUCTURE**

As can be seen from the attached diagram marked "A", the National Office Bearers oversee the work and activities of officials within OCBU. These officials (excluding organisers) in turn report to the National OCBU Co-ordinator, with National Sector Co-ordinators fielding reports from officials dealing with companies falling within their respective sectors.

It has however become apparent that this structure needs to be further strengthened to ensure maximum accountability of all officials, particularly

those in Union branches and to further enhance co-ordination of OCBU across branches and at Head office.

At the Union's last NEC meeting the National Office Bearers made recommendations for a new structure (see diagram marked "B"). The chief motivation is to integrate branch secretaries into the activities of OCBU and establish a clear line of command and accountability.

In summary, the recommendations are that:

- national negotiators should as far as possible co-ordinate companies whose Head offices are located at or near their places of residence.
- branch secretaries should field reports from national negotiators located in their branches and liaise thereon with the National OCBU Co-ordinator.
- there should no longer be national Sector Co-ordinators and their responsibilities should be transferred to the National OCBU Co-ordinator
- branches should appoint OCBU co-ordinators
- organisers located in branches should be designated geographical areas to co-ordinate

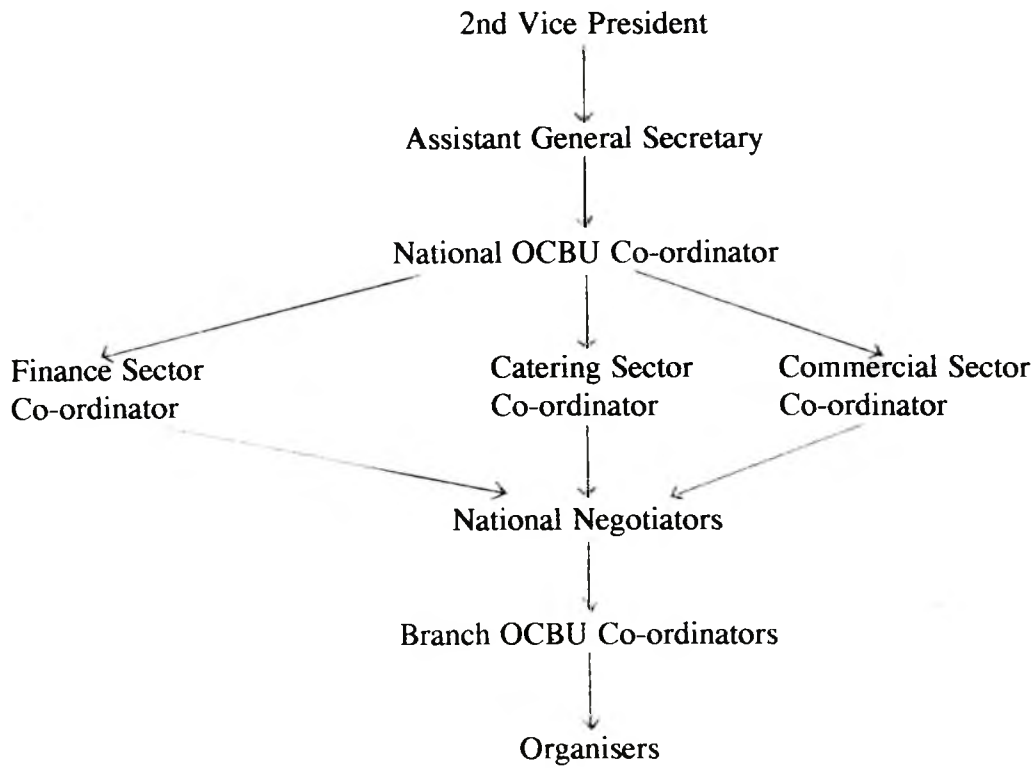
It can safely be concluded that this year will be one of the toughest for our collective bargaining program. It is therefore crucial that we should prepare ourselves accordingly, by particularly correcting the mistakes of yesteryear. Chief among these are the increasing negative bureaucratisation of the Union, negotiating without clear or absolute mandates and lack of or limited consultations within the Union.

Secondly, we will have to watch the macro national situation affecting collective bargaining very closely as developments at that level will impact directly on our negotiations agenda. One such development is the proposed "reconstruction accord" by COSATU.

It would be irresponsible if it is not submitted here that the "reconstruction accord" and the current thinking among COSATU's leadership on the macro-national situation pose a real threat to our collective bargaining agenda. However, as this is the subject of another input to the conference, it is hoped that we will reflect on it and ensure that it does not compromise our collective bargaining agenda.

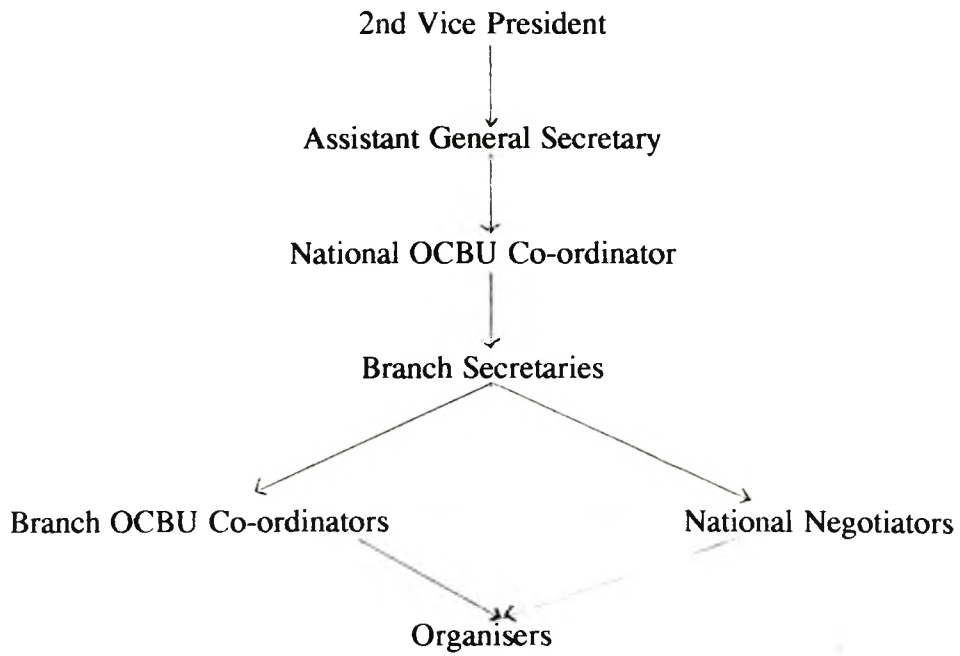
"A"

### PRESENT OCBU STRUCTURE



"B"

### PROPOSED OCBU STRUCTURE



# **SACCAWU WAGE POLICY**

**Information  
for the hotel and retail sectors**

**JULY 1992**



### Summary

1. Regionally based hotels, like the Mount Nelson and the Vineyard Hotel (in Cape Town) pay their cashiers much higher wages than the giant in accommodation, the Protea Group. Most of the group's wages are below the AWARD average.
2. There is no parity for hotel clerks in the Protea Group. Protea Ritz pays its clerks R248,08 per week. While Protea St. Francis pays only R155,77 per week.
3. Two Protea hotels viz. Protea Kango and Protea St. Francis pay waiters a weekly wage that is below the Hotel Trade Wage Determination. Their waiters earn R121,15 and R99,23 per week respectively.
4. The weekly wage for general assistants in the hotel sector is only R164. This is R50 less than the AWARD average of R214 per week. Chefs earn an average weekly wage of R198, which is only R9 more than the R189 paid to clerks. Cashiers on the other hand, earn R22 less than clerks at R167 per week.
5. There are small wage gaps between grades of workers in the retail sector.
6. The wage board for the Commercial and Distributive industry sets wages for workers in the retail sector. The wages it sets are far below negotiated settlements. For example, general assistants earn R204 per week, on average. While the wage board sets a wage of R129,69 per week.

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## Introduction

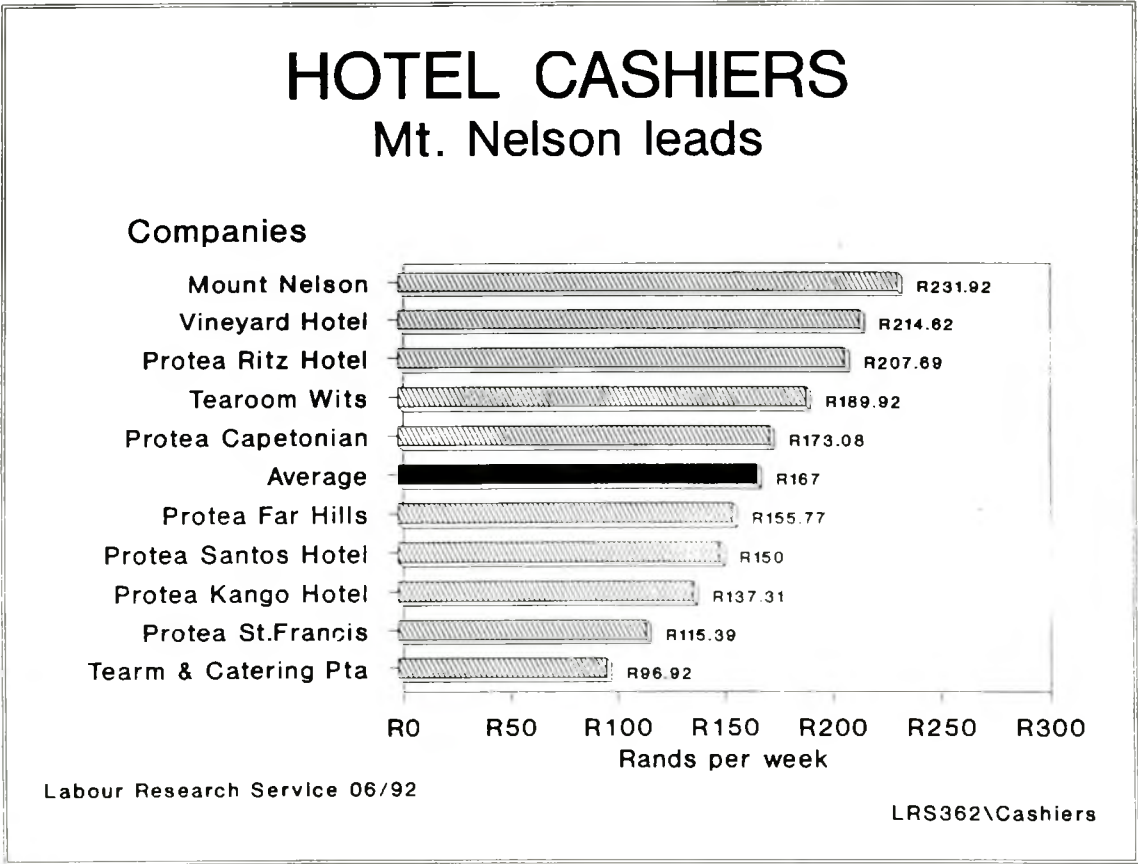
The problems surrounding SACCAWU'S wages are numerous. On analysis, large disparities are revealed. A clear guide-line in the form of a wage policy is needed.

This report contains the findings of research into the problems with wages in the hotel and retail sectors of the economy. All wages used in this report are drawn from AWARD, the Labour Research Service's Actual Wage Rates Database.

HOTEL CASHIERS

Wide wage gaps between grades

The graph below shows the average weekly wages of cashiers in the hotel sector. Note that most of these hotels are in and around Cape Town. According to our Actual Wage Rates Database (AWARD), the Mount Nelson Hotel pays cashiers the highest wages. Second is the Vineyard Hotel which is a relatively small hotel. It is interesting to note that a small hotel like the Vineyard pays a much higher wage than the giant in accommodation, the Protea Group.



## HOTEL SECTOR



This situation could have been prompted by company bargaining fora. These levels of bargaining are very strong tools used by companies as a measure of cutting costs on wages in most industries. This practice is very detrimental to unions' well being and eventually undermines all the progress they have made in their respective sectors.

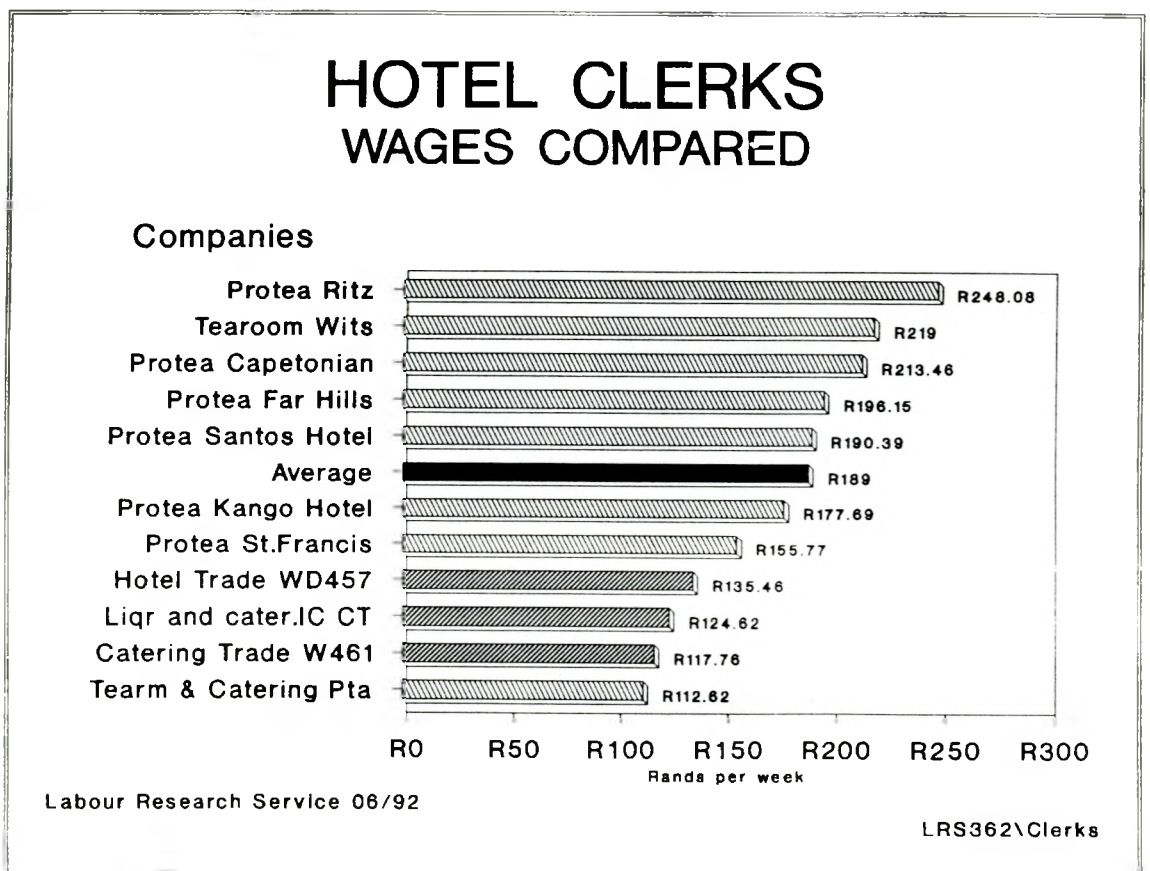
In the graph, Protea hotel wages are staggered. They range from R207,69 per week for cashiers at the Ritz Hotel to R115,39 for those at St. Francis. Most of the group's wages are below the AWARD average of R167 per week.

## HOTEL CLERKS

### Wage Comparison

Clerks in all but two Protea Hotels earn wages above the AWARD average of R189 per week. As shown previously, the wage spread among clerks within the Protea Group is still very big.

Protea Ritz, which tops the log, pays R248,08 and the Protea at St. Francis pays R155,77 per week. This means that Protea Ritz pays R92,31 more than Protea St. Francis.

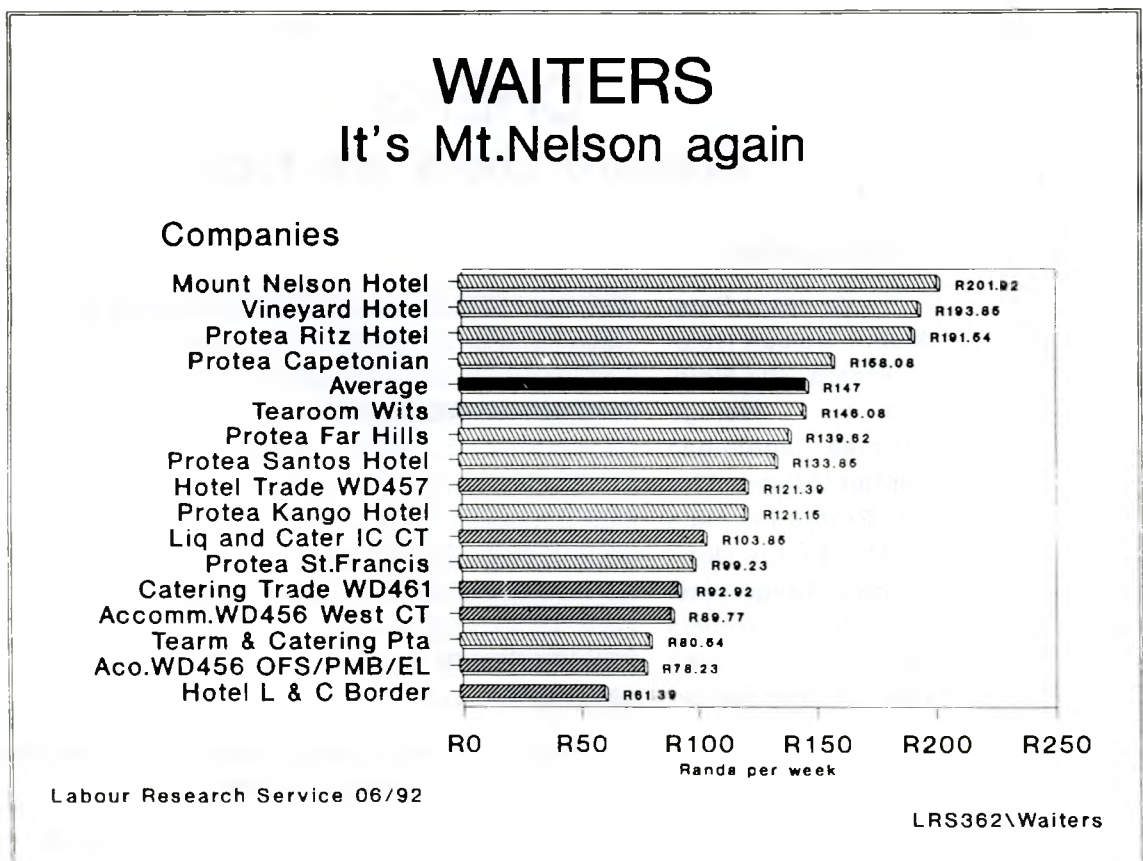


## MOUNT NELSON PAYS TOP WAGES . . .

### To waiters

Waiters at Mount Nelson top the log with a wage of R201,92 per week. Following closely behind is the Vineyard Hotel with a weekly wage of R193,85 for its waiters. AWARD puts the average wage of waiters in the hotel and catering industry at R147 per week.

Two Protea hotels, namely, Protea Kango and Protea St. Francis pay waiters a wage that is below the Hotel Trade Wage Determination No.457. Their salaries are R121,15 and R99,23 per week respectively.

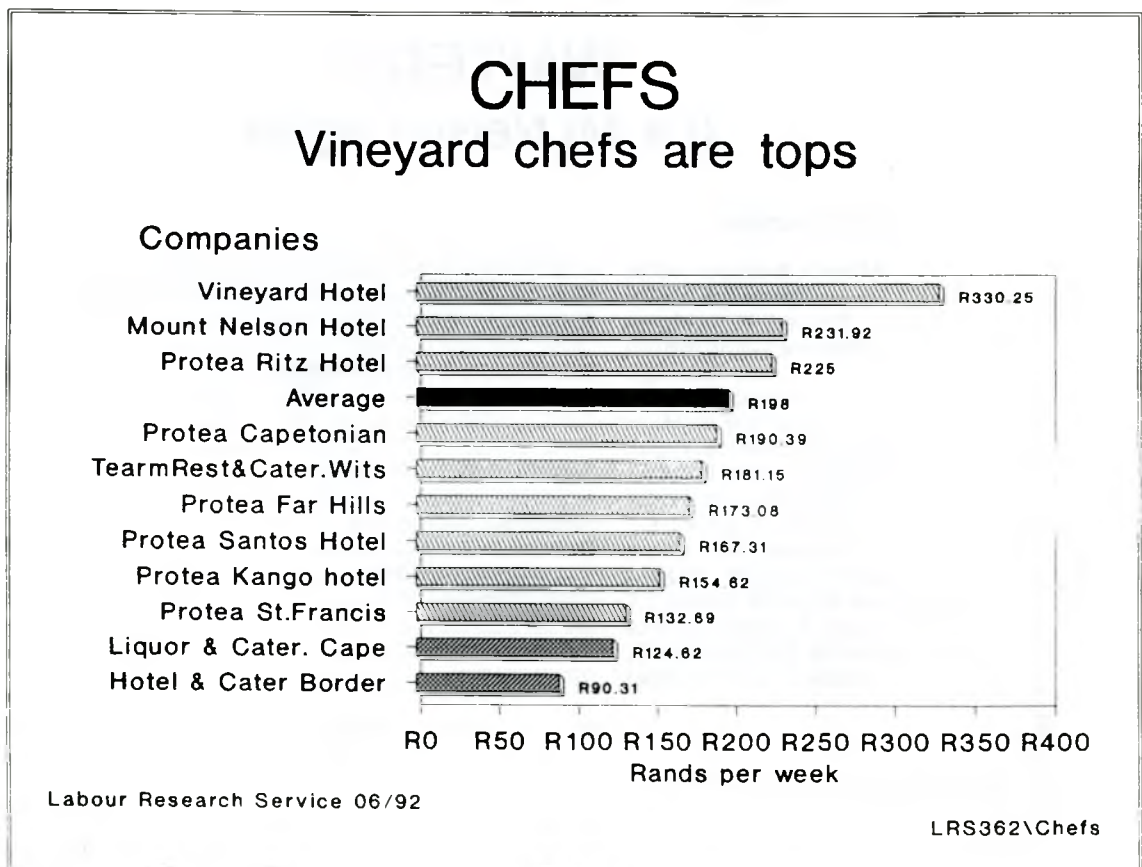


## VINEYARD HOTEL CHEFS

### Highest paid in the industry

Chefs working at the Vineyard Hotel in Cape Town earn the highest wage by a very big margin. They earn R330,25 per week. Following far behind in second position is Mount Nelson hotel where chefs earn R231,92 per week. This means that chefs at the Vineyard Hotel earn 42,4% more than chefs at the Mount Nelson Hotel.

Chefs at the lowest paying Protea St. Francis Hotel earn a weekly wage of R132,69. This is some R65,00 lower than the AWARD average of R198 per week. In essence chefs at the Protea St. Francis Hotel earn only 40% of the wage that chefs at the Vineyard Hotel earn.



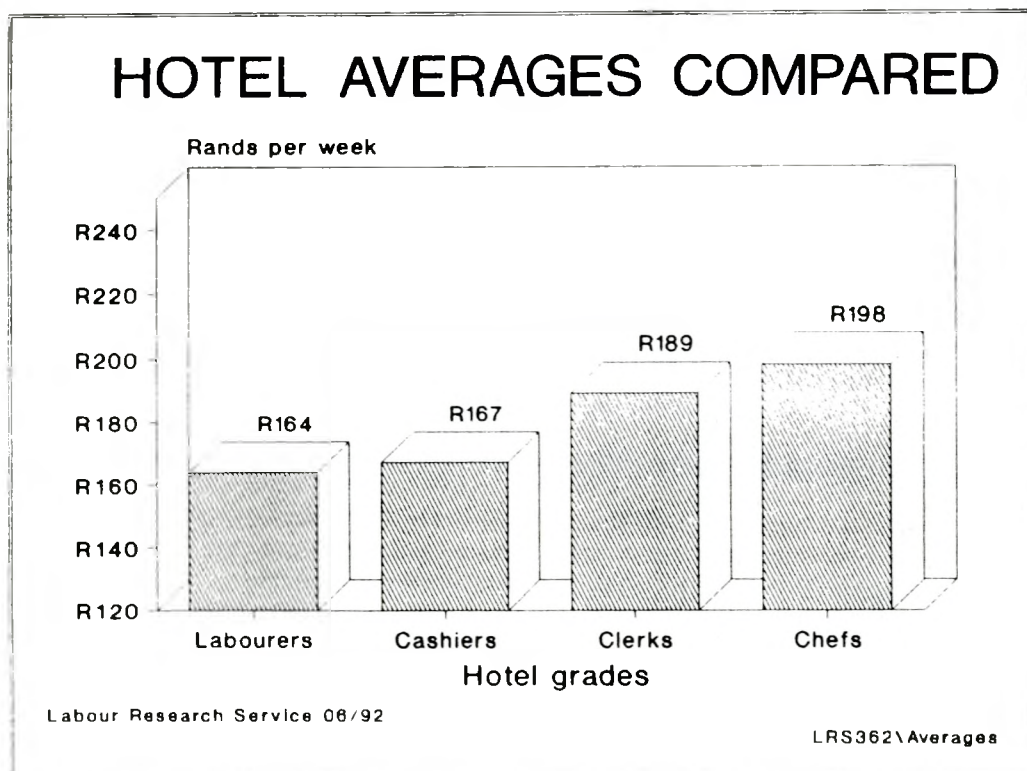
## HOTEL SECTOR WAGE GAPS

### Averages compared

Chefs in the hotel sector earn an average wage of R198 per week. This is only R9 more than clerks in the same sector earn. Yet there is a large difference in the skills required for these two jobs.

The largest gap exists between the wages paid to cashiers and to clerks. Clerks earn R189 per week, on average. This is R22 more than the average weekly wage of R167 paid to cashiers.

Labourers in the hotel sector earn R164 per week, on average. This is R50 less than the AWARD average of R214 per week for all labourers (Wage Review No.8, March 1992). There is, however, only a small gap between labourers and chefs in this sector. Chefs' wages are only 21% more than that of labourers.





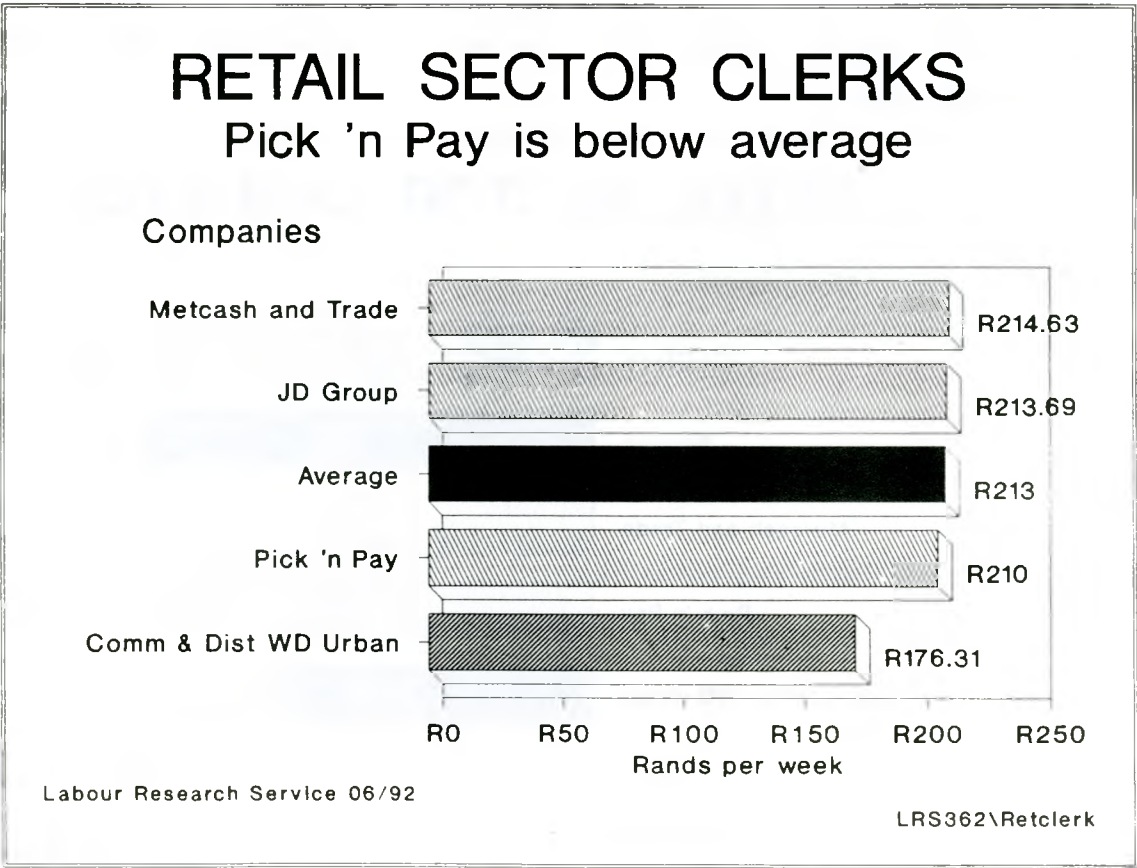
## RETAIL SECTOR

SMALL WAGE SPREAD

For retail sector clerks

The absence of big gaps between wages for clerks in the retail sector is quite conspicuous in the graph below. Metcash and Trade is the top paying company. There clerks earn R214,63 per week. Clerks working for Pick 'n Pay earn only 2,2% less than clerks at Metcash and Trade. Pick 'n Pay pays R210 per week to its clerks.

While the big retail groups pay similar wages to clerks, wages for clerks who fall under the Commercial and Distributive Wage Determination earn far less. The wage set for clerks by this Wage Determination is only R176,31 per week. This is some R38,00 less than what clerks at Metcash and Trade earn.



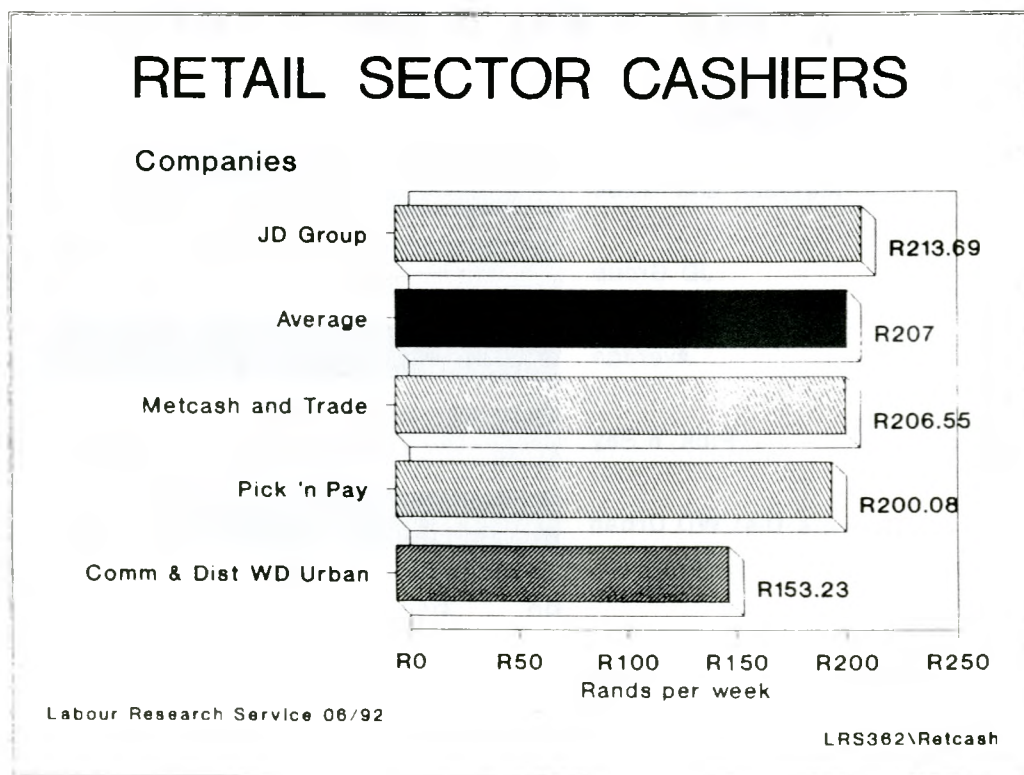
## RETAIL SECTOR CASHIERS

### Score with the JD Group

Cashiers working for the JD Group are the highest paid in the sector. They earn R213,69 per week. Although this wage is the highest in the sector, it is still very far below the Labour Research Service's housing based living wage estimate of R263 per week.

Metcash and Trade and Pick 'n Pay are below the AWARD average at R206,55 and R200,08 respectively. This in essence means that cashiers in the retail sector do not earn a living wage.

Again the wage board has set wages for workers in the Commercial and Distributive Trade that are much lower than the rest of the industry. Cashiers whose wages are set by the wage board earn only R153,23 per week. This is R60,46 less than the JD Group pays its cashiers.



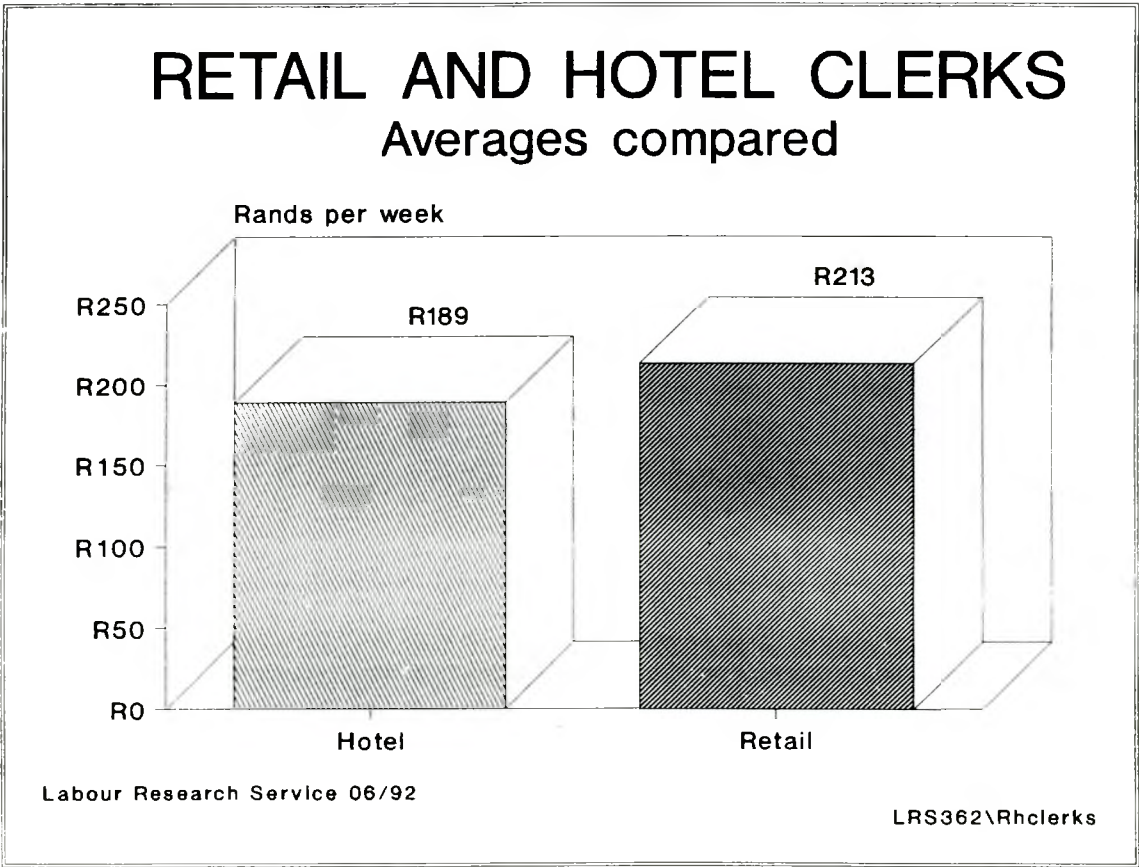
## HOTEL AND RETAIL SECTOR

RETAIL CLERKS

Fare better than hotel clerks

Hotel clerks earn an average wage of R189 per week. Retail clerks earn slightly more - they are paid R213 per week, on average. This means that clerks in the retail sector earn R24 more than clerks in the hotel sector, on average.

None of the clerks in either sector exceed the Labour Research Service's living wage estimate of R263 per week.

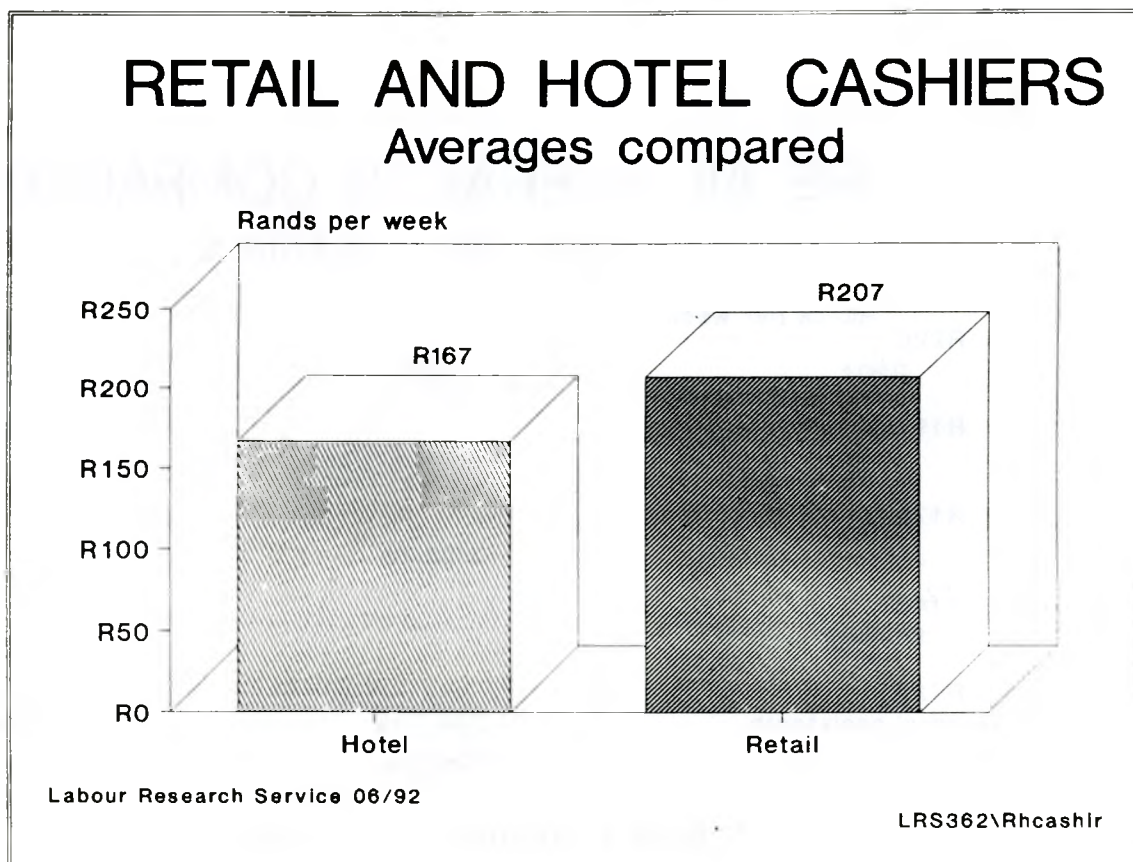




## RETAIL SECTOR BEATS HOTEL SECTOR

### Cashiers in retail earn more

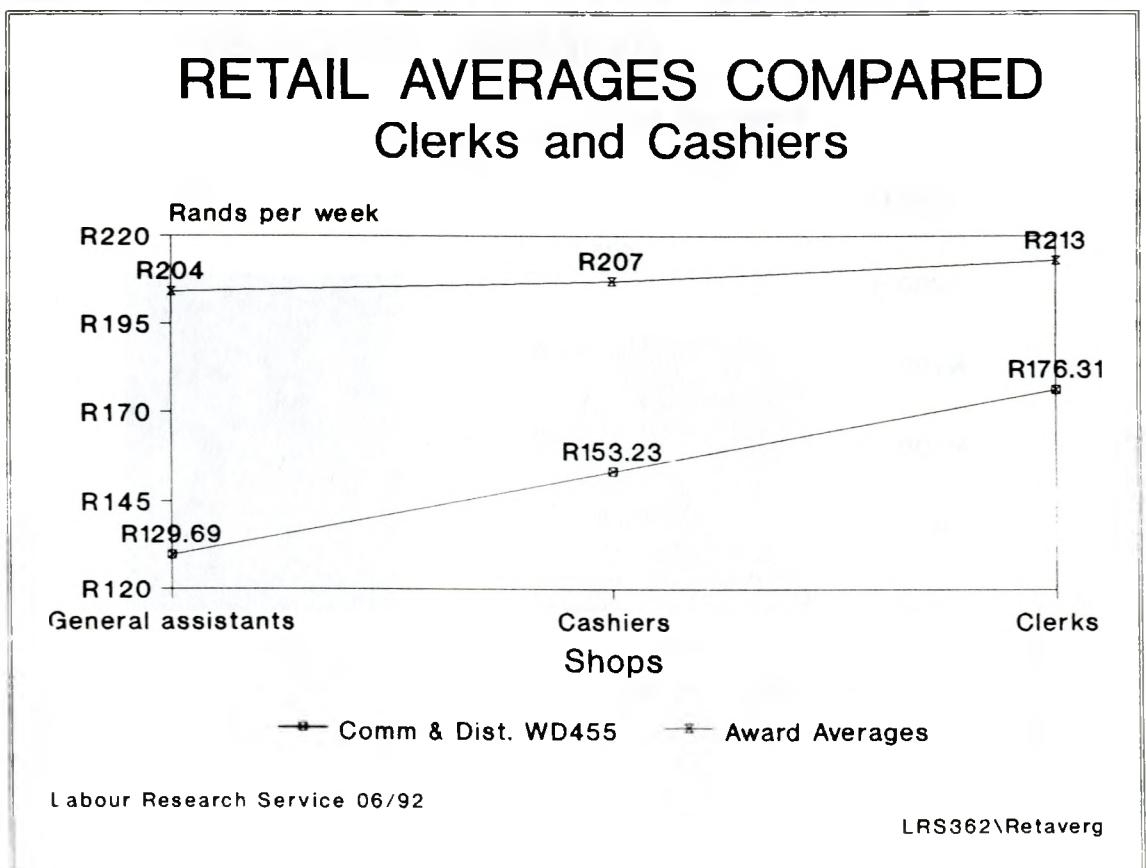
Cashiers in the hotel sector earn less than their counterparts in the retail sector. Cashiers in the retail sector earn R207 per week while cashiers in the hotel sector earn only R167 per week, on average. This means that companies in the retail sector pay cashiers 24% more than those in the hotel sector.



**RETAIL AVERAGES COMPARED****Clerks and cashiers**

The graph below compares wages set by the wage board for the Commercial and Distributive Wage Determination to the average wages paid by companies on AWARD in the same sector.

The largest difference is between the wages paid to general assistants in the sector. The wage board has set a weekly wage of R129,69 for general assistants falling under the afore-mentioned Wage Determination. While the AWARD average for general assistants in the same sector is R74.31 more at R204 per week, on average.



## **WAGE POLICY**

The graph also shows that there are larger gaps between the wages paid to general assistants, cashiers and clerks under the Wage Determination than there are between the same grades on AWARD. For example, clerks under the Wage Determination earn R46,62 per week more than general assistants under the Wage Determination do. While clerks on AWARD earn an average of R9 more than general assistants on AWARD do.

## WAGE POLICY

### Introduction

If you proceed on a long journey into the jungle without a map, you may get lost. Or you may end up further from your destination than when you started.

So, you need a map.

A wage policy is your map for wage bargaining over the next five years. It aims to guide you to your destination safely, by the shortest route.

There are two important concepts here:

1. Destination - the wages you want, realistically.
2. Route - your technique for obtaining these wages, or the stages along the way.

Many unions do not know where they are (ie, what their wages are).

Many unions do not know in what direction they are travelling. Sometimes they are moving in many directions at once!

And sometimes, when the union has a destination, it's possibly unrealistic.

A great deal of work therefore has to be done:

1. to establish what present wages are, for all grades at all companies.
2. to decide on the destination (not just the desired minimum, but also the grades, differentials, service increments if any, non-cash benefits etc.)
3. to work out the tactics and stages by which the minimum wages and other grades will reach this destination, and bring all bargaining units onto a converging path.

Crucial to this process is AWARD, the Actual Wage Rates Database managed by the Labour Research Service. By sending all signed wage agreements to AWARD, unions help to build up a comprehensive and computerised record of all their wages. From this, detailed analysis can follow.

01/04/99 Many ideas are now outdated and will have to go. For example, company bargaining is now positively harmful in many industries. This is because companies do not compete with themselves, but with other companies. Where wage costs are important to competitiveness, high wages at one group of company cannot co-exist with low wages at another group. Company bargaining will in the end merely depress wages, in that company, to the level which the poorest subsidiary can pay.

In the end, employers cannot offer to pay more than their competitors pay. For example, Checkers had central company bargaining on wages - but Shoprite did not and paid lower wages. Now Shoprite has swallowed up Checkers.

Bargaining on the minimum wage only will also have to go. Far too many members in the higher grades are ignored. This strategy leaves the company full freedom to set wages for higher grades unilaterally. Unions must bargain over the whole grading structure.

The reduction in wage differentials needs thorough re-examination. It would seem sometimes that the higher grades are expected to subsidise the lower grades. But skilled workers' wages are set by the market - they cannot be kept below market rates. Very often, the small increases agreed for the higher grades are fictional - the employer pays more, indeed whatever he/she has to, to secure the skilled workers that are needed. The wage agreement is disregarded for the higher grades in this case - and the union loses control.

Workplace bargaining cannot occur on the same issues as central bargaining. We used to think we could have both. But now we know that one will squeeze out the other. Unfortunately, strong workplaces are reluctant to give up their privileges of local bargaining. But their absence weakens the central bargaining forum. Central bargaining should bring better benefits for all workers and remove the distinction between weak and strong workplaces. Instead of bargaining twice on issues, unions should ask for a clear division of labour between central and workplace bargaining fora. Wages and other general issues should be bargained only at central level.

Finally, industrial councils must be protected. They have considerable powers. If we are in favour of centralised bargaining, then everything must be done to ensure that existing structures are maintained and even strengthened. Already, several industrial councils have been destroyed, and not only in the hotel trade. Now they will have to be re-built from the ground up. The same mistake should not be made with those councils which



remain. In the western Cape, unfortunately, the hotel industrial council has been neglected as a bargaining forum - though it is overloaded with grievances which should really be dealt with at local level!

We cannot simply blame the employers for low wages, if our wage strategy is ineffective.

The results of the failure to agree on a comprehensive wage policy can be seen if the following problems emerge:

1. Huge wage gaps between large companies and small companies.
2. Industrial councils are not made proper use of - the focus is on individual grievances.
3. Trade unions have to respond to management initiatives, instead of taking the initiative themselves, like NUMSA's demands for workplace control.
4. Unions lose control over all wage rates except the minimum.
5. Unionisation is limited to a small portion of the workforce, therefore the union's power is reduced.

Only two unions have adopted a comprehensive wage policy. They are the National Union of Mineworkers and Transport & General Workers' Union. They use it to:

1. Equalise wages for each grade in the whole industry.
2. Introduce an acceptable grading structure, uniform at all companies.
3. Make progress towards a living wage.

There are many advantages of a wage policy along these lines. Firstly, it promotes solidarity in that everyone in the industry

is aiming for the same target wage. Secondly, anomalies in wage structures are eliminated and a uniform grading structure is adopted. Thirdly, it can ensure that everyone gets an inflation increase, even if their wage is relatively high. Fourthly, it is easy to get co-operation between factories as wage differences will be reduced and progress is made towards the target wage curve.

### **SUGGESTED POLICY DIRECTIONS**

What follows are some suggestions for the policy direction which the union can take to alleviate the problems being experienced with members' wages. Since these are only suggestions, further study is needed before a final policy is agreed upon and implemented. The hotel and retail sectors are dealt with separately.

#### **Hotel Sector**

1. The union needs to identify central bargaining levels. There are three levels to choose from: national, company and regional.

Hotels in different parts of the country are affected by the economic characteristics of the region they reside in. For this reason, it is suggested that central bargaining at a regional level is chosen.

It is possible to conduct central bargaining at all three levels i.e. national, company and regional, on the condition that a clear division of labour is defined for each level.

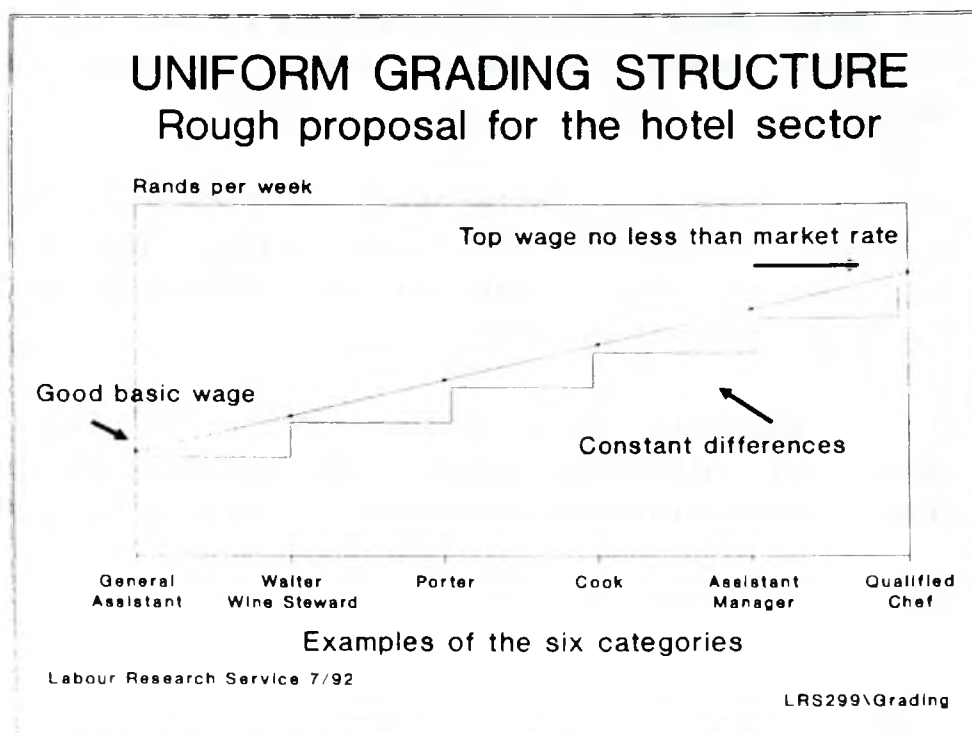
For example, recognition agreements, union rights and pension/provident funds could be bargained for nationally, while wages and working conditions are bargained for at the regional level. All other local issues and grievances could then be bargained for at company level. Whatever bargaining levels are decided on, it is vitally important that they be co-ordinated at a national level.

2. The union needs to create a uniform grading structure. This structure must then be implemented nationally. There may however, be variations according to the star ratings of hotels.

The graph below illustrates our suggestion for a uniform grading structure which relies on the following principles:

- a) there should be a good basic wage;
- b) the highest wage should not be less than the market rate;
- c) wage differences between each grade should be constant.

Each of these principles will be dealt with below.



3. Part and parcel of creating a uniform grading structure is deciding on the number of grades. There should not be too many. We suggest no more than six categories (see the graph above).

Together with a constant progression of grades (as shown in the graph), a clear career path for members would then be mapped out. This provides workers with an incentive to improve their skills in order to progress along the career path.

4. A basic wage for the lowest grade must be set. A good basic wage is one that is firstly, not lower than the Poverty Datum Line and secondly, takes account of the different star ratings at hotels.

It is suggested that hotels be divided into three separate groups: those hotels with a one star rating, those with either a two or three star rating, and then hotels with a four or five star rating. Restaurants could also be another division.

5. A top wage for the highest grade must be set. This wage cannot be lower than the market rate for that particular level of skill i.e. a qualified chef.

Once the basic and top wages are set, the grades in between should be inserted along a straight line as shown on the graph above. A straight line provides uniform differentials between grades.

6. Once target wages for all grades have been set, negotiated increases for each of the grades should never be below the rate of inflation.

In conclusion, the adoption of these proposals would result in:

1. All bargaining units negotiating for the same target wages.
2. All bargaining units negotiating for the same uniform grading structure.
3. The wages in different bargaining units would begin to converge.
4. The union would regain control over the wages of all grades (not just the basic grade).
5. All grades would get good increases.
6. The lowest grade would get a good basic minimum.
7. A clear progression path up the wage curve would be provided.

## Retail sector

The existing policy of the union for the retail sector is:

1. Group bargaining for the big chain stores, and
2. The Wage Determination.

Although group bargaining works for workers in the big chains, it does not help those union members working outside of the chains. The union needs to give attention to workers who cannot be bargained for on a group level such as those in small shops. These workers are mainly protected by the Wage Board for the Commercial and Distributive Trade which sets pathetically low wages.

There are big differences between the retail and hotel sectors. While regional and national centralised bargaining is possible in the hotel sector, it is still a long way off for the retail sector.

What follows are suggestions for what can be done.

1. Bargaining in the retail sector should be nationally co-ordinated. This means:
  - Formulating a uniform grading system so as to ensure that workers doing the same job get an equal wage;
  - bargaining on the wages of all grades not only the basic minimum;
  - this includes setting target wages for all grades which all bargaining units of the union can strive to achieve over a period of time.

2. The retail sector is quite big and dispersed hence it needs to be segmented. The segmentation could take the following shape:
  - Food chains
  - Clothing chains
  - Wholesalers
  - Small shops etc.
3. Frequent and regular investigations by the Wage Board into wages in the retail trade should be done.

The union's role should be:

- To submit proposals to the Wage Board in the Commercial and Distributive Trade. The union should forge ways of influencing decisions taken regarding the wages of its members. The proposals that the union sends to these bodies are important as they would be a form of pressure on these bodies.
- Campaigns could also be used as a means of pressurising the Wage Board to consider proposals that have been sent to it.

To conclude, the adoption of these proposals will result in:

1. All bargaining units aiming for the same target wages and uniform grading structure.
2. Company level bargaining being retained but would be better co-ordinated.
3. The Wage Determination being retained for small shops but an energetic strategy must be followed to enforce minimum wages set in the Wage Determination.



## GENDER AND WOMEN'S OPPRESSION PAPER

The purpose of this paper is :

- \* to give participants an understanding of gender and women's oppression.
- \* to give an overview of issues of special interest to women.
- \* to identify key demands which are a priority to women.
- \* to identify how these demands can be successfully taken forward in SACCAWU.

### 1. DEFINING GENDER AND WOMEN'S OPPRESSION

In order to understand what gender is, it is important to make a distinction between sex and gender.

Sex relates to the biological differences between men and women. It relates to the physical make up of women and men. There are of course physical differences between men and women. But these differences have nothing to do with insubordination of women.

For example women are able to give birth because of their biological make up whilst men cannot. But this does not mean that women are the sole carers of the children.

Gender is not physically determined but is socially constructed. In society women and men are assigned different gender roles. These roles are internalised through a process called socialisation in which the society's institutions like the schools, family and Church play a powerful role. Thus girls learn to cook and look after the children because this will be their role when they grow. Likewise boys learn to play with cars and guns because they will be the breadwinners and protectors of their families when they grow. Thus we see that gender is socially constructed and is referred to as gender relations.

What we also see that is the gender relations is an unequal one where women are placed in a subordinate position to men in society.

So the problem is not specifically women nor men but rather the social relations between the two. If we are to take up the oppression of women, we have to tackle this unequal relationship.

So thus there are inequalities and imbalances which need to be corrected. These we can refer to as gender issues. There are also other issues which are specific to women which also

oppresses women which have to be taken up.

The contention here is that although women need to lead this struggle for equality it is also men that have to change to enable this struggle to be successful.

In SACCAWU this inequality can be corrected by different means to destroy the assumptions made about women.

2. GENDER ISSUES WHICH RELATE TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

2.1. Presently SACCAWU is fighting for Centralised Bargaining.

This is a very important campaign for our Union. We are struggling to achieve better working conditions and benefits for all our members. These issues are always a priority in the Union and Gender issues like Parental Rights have not been seriously taken up.

If and when we achieve Centralised Bargaining we would be able to take up gender issues seriously. However we cannot wait for Centralised Bargaining before we take up these issues. Our tasks now are to popularise our demands, to table it at the meetings with the bosses.

The key issues that we need to place our demands around are :

2.2. JOB SECURITY/RETRENCHMENTS

Job security and retrenchments are a common problem facing all workers but female workers are worse affected. Female workers are often the first to be retrenched because the work done by women is undervalued. It is also because of the belief that men are the sole breadwinners in their family and women work for extra pocket money.

Maternity leave and job security for female workers are only guaranteed at those companies that have managed to achieve maternity and job guarantee.

There is no legal provision for other women who go on maternity. The B.C.E.A. does not provide job security. So women who go on maternity leave can be dismissed.

It is thus important that the demand for a moratorium on retrenchments be taken seriously. This demand should however be gender sensitive, i.e. it should include aspects which affect women. In the meantime, we should try and negotiate as many agreements as possible in order to protect women workers. We must also try and change legislation on maternity.

### 2.3. PARENTAL RIGHTS

SACCAWU is well known for our advanced Parental Rights Agreements. As a gender sensitive Union, we are saying that both parents are responsible for upbringing of their children and that the bosses must make provision for this - " Workers are parents too ".

However, only a few companies have parental rights agreements - eg. Game, Makro and Foshini. We need to extend rights to all members whilst we are fighting for Centralised Bargaining.

### 2.4. CHILD CARE

Women workers experience problems about childcare. They are expected to carry the burden of childcare.

Some employers eg. Pick-n-Pay have committed themselves to open negotiations on childcare. This was never followed through. This issue must be revived if we are to ensure that both parents taking responsibility for their children, as well as making sure that the bosses take responsibility for childcare.

However, before we embark upon this, we have to be sure what the bosses must do. Should they provide childcare leave, childcare facilities at the workplace or in the community, or should they give a childcare allowance or give workers a educational allowance for their children. These are issues that we need to do research on and debate and take a position on.

### 2.5 WAGE POLICY: EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

Work done by women workers are undervalued. Bosses also tend to pay women less wages for the same work that are done by men. The bosses try to get away with this by putting those jobs on a lower grade and lower pay scale. This the bosses also do with jobs that are traditionally women's work. Women's skills must be recognized and paid for.

We have to include in our wage policy the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. In addition we have to look at this issue in detail if we are serious about taking this issue forward.

### 2.6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO TRAINING AND PROMOTION

Women are in most cases overlooked when it comes to training and promotion. Thus women are forced to remain in the same job without any prospect of improving themselves. They are forced to remain in the same old boring job in traditional women's jobs or in the same job in the traditional men dominated jobs.

It is therefore important that women are given access to training and promotions opportunities especially in those jobs that are traditionally reserved for men.

When women do go for training it is important that the role of women in the family is considered. In most cases where women are given those opportunities it is their husbands who object because there is nobody to look after their children. So training courses must be gender sensitive for example, childcare facilities should be made available or training courses should be during working hours and not over weekend and preferably non-residential. In this way we are really providing training opportunities for women.

## 2.7. CODE OF PRACTICE TO END DISCRIMINATION

There is a dire need to redress the gender imbalances and inequalities at the workplace as well as in society as a whole. To ensure that this takes place, there is a need to draw up a code of practice to ensure that gender discrimination is done away with. (This code also addresses the racial inequalities). This code can include "affirmative action", employment policy, training, promotion etc. NUMSA and CWIU have put forward demands relating to a code practice.

These are the key demands that we have to include in our Collective Bargaining processes.

There are also other issues that need to be addressed. Although they are not included in our key demands they are nevertheless important.

### 3.1. SAFE TRANSPORT\SHIFTWORK

This issue effect both men and women especially in the catering sector. Although it also affects men, women are more adversally affected because of the high level of violence against women.

It is the responsibility of the bosses to ensure that workers have safe transport home. Some companies do provide transport whilst in most cases they do not and workers have to find their own way home. Workers must demand safe and free transport.

### 3.2. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This is a very sensitive issue and yet a very oppressive one for women. Sexual harassment threatens the security of women at work. It is defined as unwanted, uninvited or unwelcome attention being forced upon one. Sexual

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Identify the key demands for women workers in the following areas:
  - job security
  - maternity rights
  - childcare
  - educationa and training
  - promotion opportunities
  - sexual harassment
  - removal of discrimination
2. How should we take these demands forward in SACCAWU.
3. How can we extend the Parental Rights Agreements to all our members.
4. How can we follow up to ensure that gender issues are being taken up by the Union.
5. How can we keep records of progress.
6. Who should co-ordinate and ensure that Union makes progress on gender issues.

Harassment can be verbal or physical.

The kind of sexual harassment at work is often not easy to identify. Sexual Harassment is not about sex, it is about power. This is very important to remember.

Legal protection and a code of conduct in companies should be negotiated by SACCAWU. SACCAWU also need its own internal code of conduct.

A code of conduct should include:

- \* a statement by the employer that harassment is unacceptable.
- \* what workers can do and expect if they are harassed.
- \* what disciplinary action they can expect if they harass someone.
- \* procedure for dealing with complaints.

#### 4. THE WAY FORWARD

##### 4.1. SKILLS OF OFFICIALS IN NEGOTIATING GENDER ISSUES

Officials need to be gender sensitive, they need to be familiar with gender issues and demands, the arguments and counter arguments as well as specific women related issues eg. pap smears, cervical cancer.

Education plays a big role in making our officials gender sensitive. To do this we need to incorporate gender into our education and training programmes for officials. Gender should be a standing item in those programmes.

There is also a need to provide officials with gender orientated skills. It means that officials will have to attend specialized gender skills workshops.

##### 4.2. GENDER COMPOSITION OF OFFICIALS

Presently there is an imbalance in the ratio of female and male officials. The majority of officials are male. This makes gender education and training more imperative.

SACCAWU should encourage women to apply for jobs as officials instead of administrators.

Administrators should also be given the necessary training and education opportunities which will allow them to become officials.

The Union should not be only ensuring that gender inequalities are done away with at the workplace but we should start doing this in our own Union.

#### 4.3. GENDER STRUCTURES

SACCAWU at this point in time need gender structures due to the fact that gender has not been incorporated into mainstream planning of the Union. The Gender structures would play the following role:

- 4.3.1. a co-ordinating and lobbying role. The structures can ensure that gender issues are discussed and taken up in the Union especially the constitutional structures.
- 4.3.2. develop gender sensitivity in the Union. Both men and women members attend this structure. Thus it will ensure women do not become isolated and that gender issues are not seen as women's issues, meaning that women should be the only ones struggling around it.
- 4.3.3. developing skills and confidence of women members. This structure would serve as an educational training ground for women. By discussing gender issues, strategising around these issues, co-ordinating the structures, women will be able to develop themselves. This is important especially in the case of SACCAWU where structures are male dominated and participation of women are poor.

#### 4.4. FULL TIME GENDER CO-ORDINATOR

Given the issues that we have outlined in this paper and the challenges that face SACCAWU on the gender front, it is evident that SACCAWU needs to have a full time gender co-ordinator. All the plans and programme of work requires effective co-ordination and implementation. From experience, we have come to realise that unless we tackle gender issues on a full time basis it will not be successful. All our wonderful plans will remain on paper.



## STRATEGIC UNIONISM - REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIC INTERVENTION OR CO-OPTATION ?

### WHAT IS STRATEGIC UNIONISM ?

The term, "strategic unionism", is today used in South Africa to denote an approach which says that trade unions should be intervening in issues which are much broader than wages and job security in a way that allows the union movement to make strategic gains.

The Labour Bulletin of Nov/Dec 1992 had this to say of the subject:

" Strategic unionism is a strategy for far reaching reform of the state, of the workplace, of economic decision-making and of civil society. It is a strategy driven by a broad-based coalition of interests groups, at the centre of which is the labour movement. Strategic unionism develops a step-by-step programme of radical reforms - each of which extends the arena of democratic decision making and deepens the power of the working class."

Central to the argument, and underlying all its premises is the view that South Africa is not in a revolutionary situation and that the new world order does not put socialism on the immediate agenda. In the most extreme view of this position socialism has failed and the market has been proven to be the best means to ensure economic development. In this situation the best that the working class can hope for is some accord with the capitalists which can ensure benefits for workers.

The people who argue the case for what they call "strategic unionism" therefore invariably suggest that unions should not simply reject management initiatives. Frequently their arguments would go along the following lines when called for views around say, a moratorium on retrenchments or the scrapping of VAT: "Let us not strike against proposed retrenchments or demand a complete moratorium on retrenchments when this is unattainable in the current recession anyway", or " Let us not reject VAT entirely when a future democratic government will itself be faced by the need to have revenue to pay for social services".

Instead they will propose that unions shift the emphasis to looking at good retrenchment packages and, more to the point, shift the terrain to negotiating training for the retrenched workers. As such those workers will be employable when the economy improves and they contribute towards a greater skills pool amongst the working class which will be of benefit to the economic competitiveness of the new South Africa under a new democratic government. The line of argument concretely then leads to a position that says that unions SHOULD NOT TAKE THE COMPANIES HEAD ON in confrontation on the issue of retrenchment.

In the case of VAT the strategic unionists will argue that because the issue is tied to the future needs of a liberated South

Africa a campaign around VAT should focus on the issue of its "unilateral implementation" (ie that the government did not consult the organisations of the people). Seeing that VAT is however unpopular in the short term they will call for a scrapping of VAT on basic food and not call for the scrapping of VAT (or all consumer taxes) as such.

In both cases the conception is that unions need to be less confrontationalist and less immediate in their response because their are apparently long-term issues at stake.

Shortly after the unbanning of the major political organisations Karl Van Holdt of the Labour Bulletin had this to say:

" ..These ideas reflect a growing concern in the union movement about the serious economic problems facing South Africa. The economy is in a long-term decline, and at the same time the world economy is changing in ways that could further weaken both the SA economy and the trade union movement.

The ideas discussed in NUMSA indicate the beginning of a shift from the politics of resistance to the politics of reconstruction in the trade union movement. As South Africa struggles towards democracy, unionists are discussing their role and responsibilities of their organisations in the new South Africa.

The leadership of NUMSA is arguing that the unions need to initiate and lead the formulation of economic policy, rather than simply respond to the initiatives of the state and management. This has implications for all levels of collective bargaining.."

and elsewhere:

"... The idea of a union-led strategy for economic growth marks a break with the 'militant abstentionism' and the exclusive focus on the politics of resistance..."

The political lever that will make this possible is a SOCIAL CONTRACT with the incoming government to create the environment in which labour and capital will be forced to work together to stave off the worst of the current crisis and set a course for economic growth and development. In the terminology current used today this is now called a RECONSTRUCTION PACT. Some people in the union movement attempt to draw a distinction between a social contract and the reconstruction pact by arguing as follows:

" A social contract is an agreement between the bosses and the unions whereas the reconstruction pact is an election agreement between an incoming democratic government and the unions on the basis of which the unions will support the campaign of that political party." This is a fine distinction which misses the most important point. Under capitalism the organisation of the bosses IS THE CAPITALIST STATE. Any pact with any political party or mass organisation which has as a trade off that workers must reduce their militancy in order to support capitalist growth is the same IN CONTENT. The effect on class struggle (of both the

social contract and the so-called reconstruction pact) is the same - an agreement that the workers and the bosses will get into bed together to "save" the country.

In terms of the reconstruction pact concluded between the trade unions and the new government capital and labour will work together to ensure economic growth in South Africa. This has been stated most optimistically by Tito Mboweni of the ANC

".. Under these conditions there need not necessarily be a conflict between the interests of maintaining profitability and the demands of the labour movement for a living wage. The key factor here is productivity growth. If productivity improves fast enough, then the South African economy will be able to finance both living wages and growing profitability - and to do so in way that generates further employment." Tito Mboweni of the ANC's Department of Economic Planning.

An interesting dilemma for some trade unionists is raised by all this and was articulated by NUMSA's Bernie Fanaroff:

" .. Of course the question arises whether we should be helping capitalists to get richer. That is where the socialist debate is providing no guidance. We are forced to deal with it pragmatically, without any theoretical underpinning. " [in Labour Bulletin Vol 16 No 8 1992].

The argument goes that in the past trade unions were traditionally concerned with the so-called bread and butter issues of work ie wages and working conditions. In the pursuit of achieving these objectives workers in South Africa have gone on strikes, stayaways and go-slows.

Strategic unionism is seen as a development from this perspective both in terms of the SCOPE of union activity as well as in the METHODS used to advance workers' interests.

The past activities of unions are seen to be REACTIVE while the new unionism is seen to be PRO-ACTIVE and therefore STRATEGIC. SACCAWU in particular comes in for criticism from the leadership of other unions for being too "old-fashioned" in its rejection of Flexibility and Subcontracting and for being "unrealistic" in its demands for a Moratorium on Retrenchment. We are charged with being reactive and not strategic. These are serious allegations which we cannot ignore and that is why we need to understand why many union leaders are calling for this idea of strategic unionism and why as this paper claims we ought to reject this perspective.

#### WHY DO THESE PEOPLE ARGUE FOR STRATEGIC UNIONISM ?

These are some of the arguments which are used, with varying degrees of explicitness, by those who now use the term, strategic unionism, as a strategy for South Africa



1) South Africa is in a period of transition in which we are changing to a possible democracy. Two things flow from this scenario:

a) A new democratic government will inherit the enormous problems left by apartheid - poverty, illiteracy, unemployment etc. The only way to ensure that there is some hope of alleviating these problems is through economic growth. The trade union movement will therefore have to play a role in ensuring economic growth and development and particularly a path that will benefit the majority of the people.

b) There is some uncertainty about the full commitment to democracy and redistribution of the wealth by a new government. Alternately the new government will have its hands tied with measures that are now being put in place by the current state and capital. Trade unions need to intervene now to ensure that the future agenda is thus not set unilaterally by capital or compromised too much by the incoming democratic government.

2) The re-emergence of South Africa in the world market will mean that economic growth can only be attained if South Africa is competitive on the world market. Competition in the world market therefore demands that we can produce goods cheaply enough to beat the likes of countries such as Taiwan, Korea and Japan.

3) The reasons for the success of the above countries lies in their use of new technology and new methods of work organisation. International trends in work organisation are therefore critically important for us to imbibe and unions need to be abreast of these developments in order to gain the positive spin-offs of them.

3) South Africa is currently in the grip of the worst economic recession in its history and this has meant that there has been widespread retrenchments while wage levels have not kept up with the inflation rate. Unions have to take these factors as objective and not merely trot out routine, "old-fashioned", wage-related demands or "unrealistic" positions on issues such as flexibility and moratoria on retrenchments when these are unwinnable in the present economic climate.

#### SOME GOOD POINTS LURKING WITHIN SOME OF THE ARGUMENTS USED BY THE STRATEGIC UNIONISTS

It is clear that the world we live has changed and that South Africa cannot remove itself from the world economy and the world market. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the history of Stalinism in the Eastern Bloc countries and China have shown that socialism cannot be built in one country alone. It is also undeniable that South Africa is in the phase of change to something that can either lead to real democracy and development or else to some new form of oppression, violence and poverty.

Similarly it is also undeniable that South Africa is in its worst

recession since the 1920's. In the nature of capitalism the bosses have responded by a more recalcitrant attitude towards union demands. This is accompanied with the implementation of a programme of restructuring the economy in a way that amounts to fundamentally changing the way that capital is accumulated in South Africa and opening South Africa to the greater freedom of capital flow out of the country. An unofficial Structural Adjustment Programme is being implemented in SA (unofficial because South Africa is still not in receipt of World Bank loans).

This has meant that unions cannot conduct "business as usual" because the very role of unions as institutions which win piecemeal gains from the capitalists is being challenged by the way imperialism is responding to the current crisis.

We cannot therefore merely do everything in the way we have in the past. In order to defend the traditional areas of trade union work we are forced to be creative and shape struggles in a way that allows the working people and their organisations like the trade unions to set the agenda and not let our movement be dictated to by the bosses and their state. Within the international workers' movement Marxists have long argued that unions are faced with the choice - carry on so-called pure trade union work of wage negotiations etc and become appendages of the bosses, or broaden their scope of activity by intervening in all aspects of the social and political life of the working class and become revolutionary.

In short the need for the union movement to be strategic is clear now more than ever. The questions to be posed however is: What do we mean by strategic? ; are the people who are proposing certain positions to be adopted by COSATU and its affiliates under the banner of "strategic unionism" being strategic ?; and what are the best strategies for ensuring that we can build our strength and not be co-opted into management strategy ?

To address these questions we have to start not in the air but by looking at what is currently happening in the union movement and what is meant by the term "strategic unionism" when used by some people within the mass movement. We have to be sure that we are speaking the same language in order to arm ourselves to take the debate further.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN THE WORKING CLASS AND THE CAPITALISTS ?

The starting point for determining what our response should be to the current situation in South Africa is our understanding of the balance of forces. In other words not the promises made by this or that political leader; or the speeches made by some "expert" whose research tells him/her that we should be more "realistic"; or the company reports and economic prognoses of bosses or cabinet ministers but our strength as a movement in relation to the strength of the bosses and their state.

We can make progress in the worst of recessions if we are strong in terms of our militancy and preparedness to struggle or we can be defeated under conditions of economic progress if we are divided and demoralised. Similarly the bosses can use recessions to defeat the organisations of the working class as much as they can make gains out of wars and natural disasters. In the 1960's South Africa had the greatest economic growth rate in the world (+/- 10 %) yet the union movement and the mass movement had been defeated and was practically non-existent. In the period of the worst political repression meted out by the state against the people (1987 - 1989), COSATU had its greatest rate of growth - in fact it was the fastest growing trade union movement in the world.

From this perspective we need to ask ourselves: what is the relative strength of the working class in South Africa, and how strong is the workers movement internationally? At present the labour movement is on the retreat. Some simple statistics will show this:

- \* For the first time since the 1970's the level of wage settlements were down in 1992. In the main workers were forced to settle for wages which were BELOW THE INFLATION RATE.
- \* The growth in unionisation (the extent in which workers are joining unions) has slowed to a trickle. COSATU's membership did not grow in 1992.
- \* Although there were major strikes in the metal industry (the NUMSA) strike and in the public sector (NEHAWU), on the whole the number of strikes ACROSS ALL SECTORS came down last year.
- \* Both in 1991 and in 1992 the level of political violence initiated by the state and carried out through groupings like Inkatha have crippled mass organisations and black communities. The impunity with which these campaigns of violence have been carried out and the inability of the organisations of the people to build defence has had a demoralising effect on the African working class.
- \* In 1992 something of the order of 300 000 jobs have been lost as the bosses succeeded in implementing a programme of widespread retrenchment.
- \* At the same time all unions have experienced a hardening of attitude on the part of the bosses and a greater sense of confidence with which bosses come to negotiations. Some companies in our own sector such as Pepkor/Checkers are openly indulging in union-bashing.
- \* On the political level the Nationalist Party government has succeeded in extracting major concessions from the ANC, to the extent that it has succeeded in transforming itself from the oppressor and source of all South Africa's problems to a "major stakeholder" and partner in a Government of National Unity.

All of these indicators show that the working class is currently ON THE RETREAT and that the BALANCE OF FORCES IS IN FAVOUR OF THE RULING CLASS.

On the international level this trend can be seen in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the countries of



Eastern Europe. The resultant false sense that socialism had failed has led to the collapse of many political organisations on the Left and the triumph of capitalist ideology. The notion that the market is the only way to ensure efficiency in production has been coupled with other false notions that democracy equals parliamentary multi-party elections. This ideological victory of capitalism has made many organisations within the labour movement shift from notions such as socialism, nationalisation, class struggle, workers' control and even majority rule.

Yet the picture is not entirely one of doom and gloom for the working class and for human progress. While the collapse of the Soviet Union and the stalinist parties which ruled in the countries of Eastern Europe has led to the triumph of capitalist ideology there has not been the equivalent victory of capitalism as a viable economic and political system. In fact the capitalist world is in its worst crisis ever as countries such as Britain reach proportions of unemployment exceeding 1 million adults, the USA is being drowned in national debt and a collapse of social services and Germany is in recession and racked with racism and neo-fascism. And instead of democracy and world peace the new world order has seen the Los Angeles Riots, the Gulf War and the ethnic cleansing in ex-Yugoslavia.

With this inability of capitalism to provide decent living conditions for people and the spectre of wars haunting humanity, the search for a better way of ordering society continues to make socialism a real goal for millions of working and oppressed people throughout the world. In the old Stalinist countries of Eastern Europe where the people at least had social services and where IMF programmes of "free market" capitalism has led to widespread misery and poverty, many people are voting back into power old Stalinist bureaucrats in the belief that they are socialist. Even the rejection of Reaganomics in the USA and the support given to another capitalist government (with false promises) in the form of Bill Clinton, marks a deeper questioning amongst millions of people that the ideology of the "free market" can carry humanity forward.

In South Africa, whilst the working class is undoubtedly on the retreat and under severe attacks by the bosses and their state, yet the current period is one in which the people of South Africa are being promised democracy and the end to apartheid. However questionable these promises are (can one really expect the oppressor Nationalist Party and the SADF to hand over power to the people?) it is a fact that a whole range of areas have become open to public intervention in way that never existed before and still doesn't exist in any other capitalist country. From the promise of a Constituent Assembly, to the setting up of a National Economics Forum (NEF), to the setting up of the new National Manpower Committee (NWC), to the setting up of jointly-managed Provident Funds, the working people in South Africa have won openings to intervene in all aspects of economic, social and political life in this phase.



This tension between the POTENTIAL for new areas of intervention on the part of the working class and the trade unions and the REALITY that the working class is on the retreat is essential for understanding the role that trade unions can play at present. This tension not only gives trade unions the possibility of acting strategically but REQUIRES unions to act strategically if they are not to be part of the political betrayals currently taking place.

In short to be strategic now requires that unions START from the acknowledgement that the retreat of the working class has weakened the unions and has set back COSATU's commitment to socialism but COMBINE this with EXPLOITING the opportunities opened up by the current transition. How to take advantage of new opportunities while being on the defensive - that is the path of revolutionary strategy today in the unions as in social life in general.

A good example of a struggle which starts from the premises of acknowledging our weaknesses, where we are now, and yet gives us the opportunity to make major economic and political gains is our campaign for CENTRALISED BARGAINING.

In this regard the campaign is an important strategic one for the following reasons:

1) It acknowledges the current balance of forces ie that while the bosses are united by virtue of monopoly and conglomerate ownership SACCAWU is still forced to deal with hundreds of individual companies for the purposes of negotiations. At the same time this span of negotiations across so many companies means that SACCAWU's human and physical resources are overstretched so that we often cannot give good service to our members. Centralised bargaining is therefore a modest starting point to address weaknesses of SACCAWU and build the strength of our membership across companies and sectors.

2) But centralised bargaining, if we succeed, can take us into areas where we begin to take positions on company planning and management eg on industry wage levels, sites for investment and national training strategy. This can help prepare workers for the day when they take state power and govern this country as the economic and political managers.

This is a concrete example of how unions can start from the true balance of forces and yet make gains which can strengthen workers' right up to the state. This in my view is STRATEGIC.

In order to attain this objective it is decisive that the trade unions do not lose what is ultimately their trump card - the strength of their membership in the factories, farms, mines and stores and the preparedness of membership to strike, go slow etc. And this strength is based on what is unique to the working class in capitalist society - when they act in their own interest they act in the interest of SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

There are many good examples from the past twenty years of workers' struggles. We shall only give a few:

\* When the workers of the Frame Group went on strike in 1973 in Durban they were striking for their own interest at a time when real workers wages in South Africa were going down and union organisation for black workers was illegal. By their own methods of struggle and by fighting their own battles the Frame workers started the revival of the mass movement throughout South Africa which lead to the growth of unions and the mass organisations of the UDF.

\* When COSATU called for mass action against VAT the unionised workers acted to defend their living standards against the erosion caused by VAT. All the apologists for the state and the bosses called the workers selfish because they did not see the benefits of VAT for South Africa as a whole. Yet the actions of organised workers galvanised so many other people in South Africa against this vicious tax. So much so that today even the retail bosses are calling for the removal of VAT on basic food stuff.

\* When CCAWUSA workers went on strike against companies such as OK's and Checkers they fought for their own interests. Retail companies even accused us of harming the customers. Yet the victories won there have set the tone for model agreements in the retail sector - such as the Parental Rights victory at Pick & Pay which everyone today points as a great step forward in the Gender struggle.

Of course some people will argue that these are examples from the past and that now we stand on the threshold of a new democratic South Africa and that now workers need to temper their struggles in the interest of economic growth. The shortest answer to these people is that we are still ruled by the racist National Party and the SADF and the courts of the bosses, and the same bosses still own the factories, mines, farms and stores. The only guarantee that we will have true growth in South Africa is the same guarantee that can ensure that the new SA is truly democratic - the power of the working class!

Especially at a time of retreat, the restoring of the confidence of workers in their own class methods of struggle has to be the cornerstone of any strategy. Conversely to abandon these methods of struggle, to marginalise workers (with whatever good intentions), to reduce or belittle workers' control over their unions is NOT STRATEGIC because the potential of the period will never be realised.

#### HOW STRATEGIC IS STRATEGIC UNIONISM ?

One cannot begin to debate current ideas about strategic unionism without looking very concretely at particular struggles within the union movement in general, and SACCAWU in particular, and what the implications are for these struggles if the various options of strategic unionism are applied to them. It serves the working class little purpose if it can be argued in the abstract that this or that measure will be beneficial to the working class

or over-all development of the economy if this actually undermines the workers' struggle NOW while they are locked in battle against the vicious attacks meted out by the bosses.

Drinking water is both necessary to humans and healthy. Thirsty people in particular are in need of water. But, to a person who has been starved of water to the point of dehydration, a drink of water can only make that person sick. Similarly interrogators and torturers have often used the offer of water to quench thirst as a means of breaking detainees. Something that is true or good in general and abstract terms can be false or fatally bad in the specific.

From the point of view of the working class the measure for showing whether a particular initiative by management is good or bad cannot be whether the work changes appear on their own to be beneficial or potentially so. The question to be posed: what effect these changes will have on the relative strengths of the working class in its struggle against capital ?

Here is the central problem with the current call for strategic unionism. Without exception the call starts from the WRONG PREMISES ie not as we have been arguing from the position that the working class is on the retreat NOW and that there is a need to rebuild its strength and morale but from the union movement's POTENTIAL and RESPONSIBILITIES in the FUTURE.

As such, the strategic unionists, on the incorrect basis that the trade unions must take on the responsibility for economic growth (leave aside for the moment that their understanding of economic growth is nothing but the discredited capitalist road), call on unions to temper workers' militancy and turn away from traditional methods such as strikes. In other words because of the potential role of unions in the future, workers must moderate their struggles now, - in fact some of their struggles now may well be short-sighted and selfish.

One consequence of this perspective has been the gradual marginalisation of workers in COSATU and the growth of more and more expert-packed committees which are preparing positions for the NEF, the NMC, the National training Board etc. In an article in the Labour Bulletin NUMSA national organiser, Bobby Marie, correctly identified that this has led to a loss of democracy and workers' control in COSATU and as such a LOSS OF REAL POWER - precisely at a time when the trade union movement needs that power most if it to be really strategic in shaping South Africa's future. Amongst other things he had this to say:

" February 2 both gave and took away from the union movement. The freeing of political space has opened the way for unions to expand their influence beyond industry to the national economy itself. However, the negotiation process started on 2 February was also designed to take away.

The union movement of South Africa shaped itself both as a con-



ventional union organisation as well as a 'resistance front'. The culture which constituted the base of unions was one of resistance: ' We are part of the oppressed masses, we are in the forefront of the struggle'. This political and moral commitment challenged individuals to make enormous personal sacrifices and push the union movement into achievements well beyond the resources available. What February took away was the political challenge which provided a natural bond and coherence."

It is this sense of workers sacrificing their militancy, or the methods which can get them to revive their militancy, now for the sake of abstract arguments about the benefits of management strategies or the responsibility of reviving the economy which leads logically to the SOCIAL CONTRACT. After all what is the social contract but an agreement between labour and capital to make workers sacrifice now in return for the promises of job security and other benefits in the future.

Let us test our assertions by looking at a specific case study which is a current struggle by SACCAWU workers. Let us thereby see the differences between what one can call REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIC INTERVENTION and what is being called strategic unionism today.

#### FLEXIBILITY/MULTI-SKILLING

Flexibility of labour is, on the face of it, not a bad thing for workers. Flexibility is when workers are required by management either to do a range of different jobs or else to have different working times. The idea that workers can shift tasks and perform different jobs can be presented attractively as a package which allows workers to break with the boring routine of doing the same job day after day, year-in-year-out. Moreover by shifting tasks workers can gain an increased number of skills (some-times called multi-skilling) particularly if the combination of jobs is accompanied by training.

Flexibility of time arrangements can mean that workers can re-structure their days in a way that allows them to make arrangements to take children to school, pay accounts or even study part-time. They can even sacrifice working extra hours in peak trading periods in order to enjoy the relaxation that can be achieved in slack trading times.

Flexibility can even make some workers quite indispensable for their companies because the fact that they do a range of tasks will make it difficult for management to replace these workers and so they can be in a strong position when there is a threat of strike action.

Flexibility, in the case of a retail sector union such as SACCAWU can allow stores to have longer trading hours and thereby benefit customers many of whom are workers themselves who cannot shop during ordinary hours.

On the face of it therefore to resist flexibility, or the ill-named multi-skilling for that matter, sounds as if unions are anti-modernisation and anti-efficiency and even anti-consumer, all of which allows the bosses to be seen as progressive and the unionised retail workers as selfishly protecting their narrow interests.

Yet flexibility IS being implemented by the bosses on their terms and IS leading to overwork on the part of a few workers (multi-killing) and widespread retrenchment. Moreover the reality is that some companies such as Checkers/Shoprite and Pick & Pay are using SACCAWU's reluctance to implement their plan of flexibility as an excuse to retrench workers.

For SACCAWU members to merely endorse Flexibility now on the grounds of the abstract arguments of how useful it can be will only play into the hands of the companies concerned and so strengthen the bosses at the expense of workers. This is no mere selfish response from spoilt retail workers. This is their real experience of flexibility as an anti-worker, anti-union tactic of the bosses.

But more generally than this, all the real benefits of flexibility for workers can be addressed IN ANOTHER WAY, and a way that picks up on what HAS BEEN COSATU POLICY (now forgotten by some of our fellow union leaders) ie the call for SHORTENING THE WORKING WEEK WITH NO LOSS OF PAY. At the time it was correctly argued by COSATU that by fighting and winning a shorter working week (starting with a ban on overtime and a 40-hour week) a number of benefits could be won by workers and the economy as a whole viz:

- 1) If the existing workers worked fewer hours (with no pay loss) then the overall workload of production and distribution will require that MORE WORKERS WOULD HAVE TO BE EMPLOYED. This would go a long way towards addressing the problem of unemployment.
- 2) With shorter working hours workers would have all the benefits of more leisure time, more time to spend with children and more time to study etc.
- 3) With more workers being employed the working day for the working class as a whole can be longer thus making it possible for production runs to be longer and for INCREASED SHOPPING hours in the case of retail customers.

In short all the so-called benefits of flexibility plus the increased victory against unemployment can be won but with a boost to the morale of workers and a respect for their real experience and fighting capacity by fighting for a shorter working week rather than accepting Flexibility. Moreover this revives what is still supposed to be an existing COSATU campaign.

For these reasons SACCAWU is correct to fight Flexibility and to be suspicious of the bosses urgency to get this tactic implemented. For these reasons we need to respond to management by raising

# ***DISCUSSION PAPER ON ORGANISING STRATEGIES FOR SACCAWU BARGAINING CONFERENCE - 1993***

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The purpose of this is to assist the conference to formulate strategies and understand organising in its true meaning.

Whilst it is not an end in itself, it will attempt to focus and put emphasis on the crisis within the organising department of SACCAWU, which are a direct result of our modus operandi which in the majority of cases is haphazard.

In addition, it is just another reminder to those in our organising ranks about what has been repeatedly raised by other comrades in the past. It will cover issues in the following sequence:

## **1. ORGANISING IN VARIOUS SECTOR OF SACCAWU:**

As we all know that SACCAWU organising three main sectors namely, **COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTIVE, CATERING AND FINANCE**. The paper will analyse them one by one.

### **1.1. Commercial Distributive:**

This is the sector where we are supposed to be mainly organised, but it will be a disservice to the conference not to mention that our current membership does not constitute even a quarter of the potential therein.

This is illustrated in companies where we have agreements and negotiating rights such as the main retail and wholesale chains.

One would rightly suspect that due to our weakness in these companies we have assisted in bringing about the mongers that we are faced with today, being high level of casualization, Job Flexibility, Arbitrary Retrenchments, Wage Freezes and the list is endless.

We still share most establishments with other unions and due to differences in approaches and strategies, we always struggle from a defensive point. The issue here, is not lack of strategies but the implementation thereof. Our previous recommendations and programmes bear testimony to this.

There are no monthly establishment general meetings, no sharp visit, no systematic programmes of shop stewards elections. The lack of activity at shopfloor has affected our constitutional structures in such a way that mostly have developed in the dysfunctional entities.

#### 1.2. Catering Sector:

Whilst this sector was developed a number of years ago, although not as long as the Commercial Distributive, it is still at an embryonic stage. It is relatively a large sector but poorly organised.

While we may boast that we have organised most of the chain hotels like **KAROS, SOUTHERN SUNS, CITY LODGE, PROTEAS (FRANCHISES)** and **SUN INTERNATIONAL**.

We should not forget that we have not done much in sub-sectors such as **INDUSTRIAL CATERING, PRIVATE HOTELS, GOLF CLUBS, CHAIN and PRIVATE RESTAURANTS, FRENCH FRY HUTS** which houses most of our potential membership which one can rightly say we have neglected.



Areas such as Eastern Transvaal, Drakensburg, Transkei, Northern Transvaal, Umhlanga Rocks etc., are mainly tourist establishment dominated and are mostly not organised. The rural project shall have to take care of these areas. As this sector is more complicated than Finance and Commerce in terms of shifts, the paper will address it properly under structures.

### **1.3. Finance Sector:**

The sector is infested with intermitted debates on Trade Unionism and its benefits, as the sector employs mostly White Collar Workers.

The fact SACCAWU has made inroad in some companies such as Metropolitan, Old Mutual, African Bank, French Bank, S.A. Eagle etc., suggest that these workers also problems that can be dealt with by a trade union. We should not be deceived by attitudes displayed by some Finance Institutions in trying to bash the union away as we tried to recruit members.

Few of our officials who are involved in this sector know exactly about these problems workers experience. In the circumstances, SACCAWU has a tacit duty to intensify organising in the sector. Organising in this sector can be achieved by clear programmes and the involvement of more officials as the sector itself is relatively big.

### **1.4. Rural project - Assessment of organising in branches:**

This concept has been a subject of debate within the union structures for a number of years now. It is supposed to have been implemented at the beginning of this year (1993).

Whilst its commencement will be a joint project of SACCAWU and I.U.F. in relation to the Catering Sector, it should not confine itself to one sector.

We know for a fact that there are a lot of other establishments falling under Commerce and Finance. We can safely say it has already taken of the ground started organising in to our ranks, although there is still a lot to do in terms of the outstanding bulk of potential membership, setting up of structures and educational problems.

The problem here is that the initiatives are taken by the head office whilst branches are sitting back. Now the head office has to stay with the burden actually servicing those workers directly. In some instances where branches were involved in the initial set up, they tend to neglect these members where from workers will communicate directly with head office and refuse to be re-directed to their relevant branches and/or locals.

Examples here can be drawn from the Drakensburg and Venda. Some management have unilaterally withdrawn union rights in hotels in the Drakensburg area such as LITTLE SWITZERLAND, due to lack of service by branches and locals.

A proper and systematic programme might assist to revive the rural project, where it have collapsed. With regard to bantustans, we are organised in most of them.

## **2. ROLES OF OFFICIALS AND SHOP STEWARDS IN ORGANISING:**

Here, it must be vividly understood what is meant by organising which does not mean recruiting. Some of our officials believe that when they are recruiting members (signing up), they are actually organising, and this believe make them to completely neglect the important role of organising which is a follow-up after recruitment of membership.

The role of officials in this case, after the majority of members have been recruited in the union would be as follows:

- Convene a general meeting of those members which shall have an educational component of introducing the members to their union.

**The Introduction will then cover issues such as:**

1. Brief history of the union;
2. Constitution and the scope;
3. Structures from shopfloor to National;
4. Duties of various structures including shop stewards at shopfloor level;
5. Meetings and sequence;
6. The process of collective bargaining between the union and the company;
7. Depending on whether the company is local, Regional or National, the establishment of company councils and/or sectorial and shopping centre councils.

It should further be noted that these points need not be taken at one go, as they will deprive the members of holding weekly or monthly meetings to learn about the union.

Once the members understand what a trade union is, which of course will be relayed to them in phases, the official will then start to initiate the process of introducing the union to the company for the purpose of gaining basic rights such as check-off facilities access and election and recognition of shop stewards. At all material times, the official will have to report to the membership of every step that is being taken by the union office.

The official prior to taking any steps to approach the company, shall make sure that the union office have company information like:

- (a) Which industry does it operate in;
- (b) Who are the suppliers, products and the clients;
- (c) Total workforce including management - positions and names of directors;
- (d) Whether there is an Industrial Council;

- (e) Whether there are subsidiaries and/or holding company and addresses;
- (f) Status of the company i.e. Local, Regional, National or Multi-national;
- (g) Internal procedures - Disciplinary, Grievance, Grades, Minimum Wage and Wage Scales.

### **3. ROLE OF SHOP STEWARDS IN ORGANISING:**

The main role of this layer of leadership is to be a link between the union office and the establishment which covers the following aspects:

1. Keep an uptodate list of members within the establishment and recruit those who are not yet members;
2. Hold regular meetings with members to check grievances and problems and also give feedback about shop steward council meeting and information from the union office;
3. Educate members regularly about the union and function of its structures;
4. Attend monthly meetings with management and give feedback to members;
5. Where there is no check-off facilities, it is also the duty of shop steward to collect subscriptions and submit same to the union office and give receipts to the members;
6. The shop steward must also attend local shop stewards council meetings and also make sure that the membership attend all general meetings convened by the local.
7. Shop stewards need to make sure that before attending meetings convened by the union, they must have a proper mandate from their constituencies so as to be able to report back to same contituencies;
8. The should also report all issues and grievances and cases handled at their establishments to the union offices.

#### **4. ORGANISING IN BRANCHES:**

The planning for organising in branches should first be discussed in branch staff meetings, and the following aspects should be looked at:

1. Identify all organised establishments within the jurisdiction of the branch and status of those companies, whether local, regional or national, and establish whether there are any agreements in existence;
2. Identify all unorganised establishments within the branch as above;
3. Draw-up a programme of targeting specific companies allocated to various branch organisers. In case of national companies, there must be liaison with other branches and OCBU at head office;
4. The branch officials should not take a lot of companies at the same time, but target a reasonable number that they will be able to deal with effectively, and then report the progress to the next staff meeting or to the secretary;
5. To be able to keep the track record, there must be a regular staff meetings, and written reports be submitted for discussion jointly, and share advises where problems are being experienced;
6. Shop stewards in a particular locality, must be encouraged to work hand in hand with the organiser and his programme as they can play an important role in recruiting new members and handling them over to the organiser to educate and build into a strong force;
7. Organising programmes must be monitored on monthly basis so that progress and problems can be identified;
8. Each newly recruited and organised company/establishment, the organiser must make sure that within a deadline of three months, that basic union rights are achieved;
9. The question of a shorter recognition agreement should also be looked at, so that the members should not get disillusioned because of a long process.

## **5. ORGANISING IN BANTUSTANS:**

Organising in bantustans has been a hectic task for almost all organisers for a long period in time. This frustration is or was brought about by the various legislations which were mainly anti-union, which were conveniently passed organised in to strong and powerful labour.

Our fellow workers have been subjected to unprecedented degree of exploitation for too long now.

Whilst this set-up is the initiative of the apartheid regime to further their own secret agenda, it is important for us as workers to view ourselves as one, so as to jointly fight all the obstacle that prevent unity amongst the workers in this country.

As SACCAWU has now started initiatives of organising in these bantustans, we need to have a clear programme unlike the way it is being done at the moment.

We have had to go out of our way to have to "register" in some of these bantustans in order to gain access to represent workers who were denied the rights to belonging to the union. Most of the national companies who have branches in these territories have also been hiding behind the issue of registration whilst we had agreements with them, and they were blatantly refusing to extend to the fellow workers in the bantustans.

The current membership we have in the bantustans is of a very low percentage compared to the potential therein. We need to remember that without a strong union structure, our members in bantustans have no protection at all. There are no wage regulating measures that can protect workers in the absence of a union. In these circumstances, we need to work harder.

It is not proper to wait for those workers to come to us when they can no longer stand against the exploitation that is meted out to them.



We should instead seize the moment and arrest the situation now. The formula that is being applied now should be overhauled so that sufficient resources and person power is channelled to these areas to do duty within a short space of time.

## **6. STRUCTURE**

Union structures are established to fulfil various tasks and responsibilities which are the integral part of the smooth running of the organisation. We need to see functions happening to justify that structures are in existence. If they do not function, then they equally do not exist.

The following levels of structures are central to the proper running of a union viz.

1. Establishment general meeting
2. Establishment shop steward committee
3. Local company council
4. shopping centre council
5. local general meeting
6. local shop steward council
7. branch company general meeting
8. branch company councils
9. branch general meetings
10. Branch conglomerates council
11. National company general meetings
12. National company councils
13. National conglomerate councils
14. Sectoral council

The above listed structures, which are the nucleus of the functioning of the organising and collective bargaining machinery of the Union are all accountable to the executive constitutional structures of the union. Here, we have conveniently listed only structures that are directly relating to the organising and collective bargaining of the union.



As mentioned above, we would once more like to analyse what is perceived to be the functions of these structures as follows;

## **7. ESTABLISHMENT GENERAL MEETINGS:**

Meet at least once a month to get following reports:

- Functioning of the union activities in the establishment viz. shop- stewards, management meetings, local shop-stewards councils and company reports etc.

## **8. ESTABLISHMENT SHOP-STEWARDS COMMITTEE:**

Meets at least once a month to:

- Monitor membership growth in the establishment;
- Take up members grievances with management;
- Represent members at hearing;
- Attend shop-stewards councils and report back to members from time to time, and submit establishment and company reports to the union office;
- Set-up and lead study circles for members through the union media resources;
- Co-ordinate and make sure that members attend to union activities outside the establishments such as general meetings and rallies.

## **9. LOCAL COMPANY COUNCILS:**

These can be established in a situation where one company is having more than one establishment in a local. The main function is to monitor the company's consistency in the application of working conditions and procedures and take up issues of common interest with management and also deal with other functions of the shop-stewards committees.

#### **10. SHOPPING CENTRE COUNCILS:**

These are established by shop-stewards from various companies operating in the same shop centre e.g. South gate Centre in Johannesburg. Their meetings normally discuss issues such as Solidarity Actions, Campaigns, Union activities in various companies.

Reports from shop stewards councils and the union office and informal education during lunch breaks to be up to date with information and union activities. Do all other functions of the shop-stewards.

#### **11. LOCAL GENERAL MEETINGS:**

These structures meetings are convened from time to time by the local office bearers. The function is to give the activity report of the union in a particular local, which will include preparations for campaigns, achievements of the union in various companies and any developments within the union via the shop-stewards councils.

#### **12. BRANCH COMPANY GENERAL MEETINGS:**

This is a meeting of all members from various establishments of the same company within the union branch. It normally sit on monthly basis to hear reports from establishments and about the process of collective bargaining between the union and the company. These would include mandate taking and reports from the company council.

#### **13. BRANCH COMPANY COUNCILS:**

This structure is established with shop-stewards from various establishment of one company within the union branch, and its function is the same as the local company council except that their activities cover the entire union branch.

#### **14. BRANCH CONGLOMERATE COUNCILS:**

The branch conglomerate council is comprising of shop-stewards from establishments of various companies which belong to subsidiaries of one conglomerate. An example is the South African Breweries, which owns Southern Suns, Edgars group, Amrel, Amalgamated Beverage Industries (formerly Coca-Cola).

This one is slightly different from a normal company council in that it draws delegates from various unions as it sometimes comprise of different industries. Its meetings normally deals with issues of common interest such as joint negotiations on conditions of work, joint negotiations on campaigns and strikes where disputes are unresolved. It is one of the most important structures of the Collective Bargaining.

#### **15. NATIONAL COMPANY GENERAL MEETING:**

This meeting usually sit once or twice annually depending on the issues to be discussed. It deals with issues that directly affect members in the whole company nation wide, such as retrenchment, store closures and other restructuring methods, which could affect the working conditions of members. It also prepare the mandate for the annual negotiations on substantive issues and get the union activity reports.

#### **16. NATIONAL COMPANY COUNCIL**

The council is comprising of shop stewards delegates from all establishments of a particular company within all the branches of the union..

It has the same functions as the branch company council, safe to say that it has additional tasks of directing the dealings between the company and the union in terms of negotiations.

## **17. NATIONAL CONGLOMERATE COUNCIL**

the composition of this structure is the same as at branch or regional level by shop stewards from various companies and unions except that this one is at national level, and delegates represent branches or regions. They also have the same functions in so far as the union activities are concerned.

## **18. SECTORAL COUNCILS**

This might sound to be a new concept of the union but, it is equally important to be established. It has been mentioned before that our union (SACCAWU) operate in three main different sectors, which in turn have sub sectors.

The idea here is to do away with different modes of operation by different companies or even establishment in are sector. Some sectors operate during normal office hours, some operate in shifts which include night duty and sundays.

The retail sector is now moving towards what is called extended hours. This different operations affect the running of our constitutional structures, especially the most important layer - the shop stewards councils.

In this case, we need to accommodate all our members in various forums. whilst most councils sit after hours during the week and others on Saturday afternoon or Sundays, mostly hotel, restaurants and industrial catering workers are on duty due to the shift work.

The sectoral councils could remedy the situation in this way, shift workers could also meet once a week during the day, and forums can them elect delegates who can represent their views a the councils. This set-up would normally apply to the catering sector.

The other sectors and or sub sectors like retail, finance, furniture can also establish structures to deal with issues directly affecting them, such as job flexibility and casualisation in retail.