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# Transport & General Workers Union

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Bi-Annual Congress 24 - 26 May  
1991, Johannesburg

Progress Report  
December 1989 - May 1991

This report of our activities in Transport & General is dedicated to Themba Duma,  
our organiser who died in tragic and mysterious circumstances.  
Comrade, your dedication and friendship advanced our union and the struggle in  
South Africa



*Slain Pietermaritzburg T&GWU organiser Themba Duma*

*Pic: Aron Mazel*

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# Introduction

We have entered the period of the 90's in our political, economic and social lives. We are facing the challenge of transfer of power into the hands of the people.

The working class is part of the challenge that everyone will have to meet which is striving for a National Democratic Revolution. The working class must also shape political content by advancing its own class perspective through waging class struggle.

TGWU is part of the broader liberation forces in South Africa. The political and economic crisis which we face challenges us to develop strategies with more determination and commitment than ever.

In order to achieve what we stand for, it becomes an urgent necessity to look at ourselves openly and honestly and assess what we have done and achieved in the last sixteen months.

## State Of Organisation

Constitutional structures in most branches are sitting and functioning fairly well, but obviously we need to move beyond what they are at the moment to proper and rightful functioning. Our structures must become in a real sense the life-blood of the union. Our structures should be able to carry forward our objectives and articulate workers control and democracy.

We must consolidate our constitutional structures and advance the cause we serve.

# Membership

Our paid up membership is at 38545. In December 1989 we were at 27751 in terms of paid up membership.

This means we have been able to increase our paid up membership by 10794 (22 percent) in a period of fifteen months. This proves that TGWU is a growing union, but we need to advance, and face the challenge of organising the unorganised, and this includes organising in the homelands.

**Membership Per Branch Per Sector. This is as follows:**

<b>Transvaal</b>	
<b>Goods Transport :</b>	7869
<b>Passenger Transport :</b>	1327
<b>Dry Cleaning :</b>	355
<b>Security :</b>	3166
<b>Cleaning :</b>	3321
<b>Total:</b>	<b>16038</b>

<b>Western Cape</b>	
Goods Transport:	1914
Docks	201
Passenger Transport	437
Cleaning	1174
Laundry :	320
Universities	1710
Security	609
<b>Total</b>	<b>6365</b>
<b>Southern Natal</b>	
Goods Transport:	3899
Docks	1286
Passenger Transport:	853
Cleaning	145
Laundry	133
Toll/Park	68
Security	745
<b>Total</b>	<b>7129</b>
<b>Natal Midlands</b>	
Goods Transport	452
Passenger Transport:	1160
Cleaning	77
Laundry	28
Toll/Park	106
Security	221
<b>Total</b>	<b>2044</b>
<b>Northern Natal</b>	
Goods Transport:	509
Docks	457
Passenger Transport:	579
Security	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>1648</b>
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	
Goods Transport:	1050
Docks	101
Passenger Transport	478
Cleaning	765
Laundry	33
Toll/Park	16
Security	1038
<b>Total</b>	<b>3481</b>

<b>Western Transvaal</b>	
Goods Transport:	1371
Passenger Transport:	89
Security	275
Laundry	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>1840</b>

<b>Unpaid Membership Per Sector:</b>	
Goods Transport	9381
Docks	98
Passenger Transport	5499
Cleaning	8225
Laundry & Dry Cleaning	431
Security	6123
<b>Total</b>	<b>2975</b>

### **Total National Paid-Up Membership By Sectors:**

Goods Transport:	15150
Docks	2045
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17 195</b>

The figures shown above clearly reflect that the Goods Transport sector is an ever growing one. As it stands at the moment within the union the Goods sector is the dominant one.

We are facing a great challenge to strengthen this sector and implement our resolution on industry wide centralised bargaining

<b>Passenger Sector Totals</b>	<b>4923</b>
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This sector has been hard hit by retrenchments and closures of bus companies, due to subsidy cuts by the state. The challenge we are facing is two fold. Firstly we need to go on the offensive with regards to recruitment, and secondly we need to fight job loss by curbing the state's ever-increasing subsidy cuts.

<b>Cleaning &amp; Security Sectors</b>	
Contract Cleaning : 5482	
Laundry S/Sector : 619	
Dry Cleaning : 355	
Toll/Park : 190	
Contract Cleaning : 6157	
<b>Total : 12803</b>	

Membership is on the up-swing at the moment in the cleaning/security sectors and we need to consolidate and strengthen these sectors despite attacks by employers and the state.

## **Assessment Of Growth And Membership**

Our union's membership is growing in particular in the Goods, Cleaning and Security Sectors.

We need to appreciate and commend the effort that has been made by our organisers and those branches that have been able to increase membership. Such an effort proves that we will be able to move far beyond where we are today, as long as we are committed to our aims as set out in our constitution, and be able to identify and correct our mistakes and shortcomings.

Nevertheless, the National Executive Committee has throughout the period under review, pointed out weaknesses that hinder membership growth. These are:

- \* lack of training and skills in organising of both organisers and shop stewards .
- \* lack of servicing of our members.

To address these problems the NEC made the following suggestions:

- \* holding of national sector seminars regularly
- \* holding of an Organising and Strategising mini-Conference by the middle of 1991
- \* conducting regular organisers' and shop stewards' training.

Due to financial difficulties, these ideas have not as yet been implemented. We trust that as soon as funding is available programmes will be developed and immediately implemented.

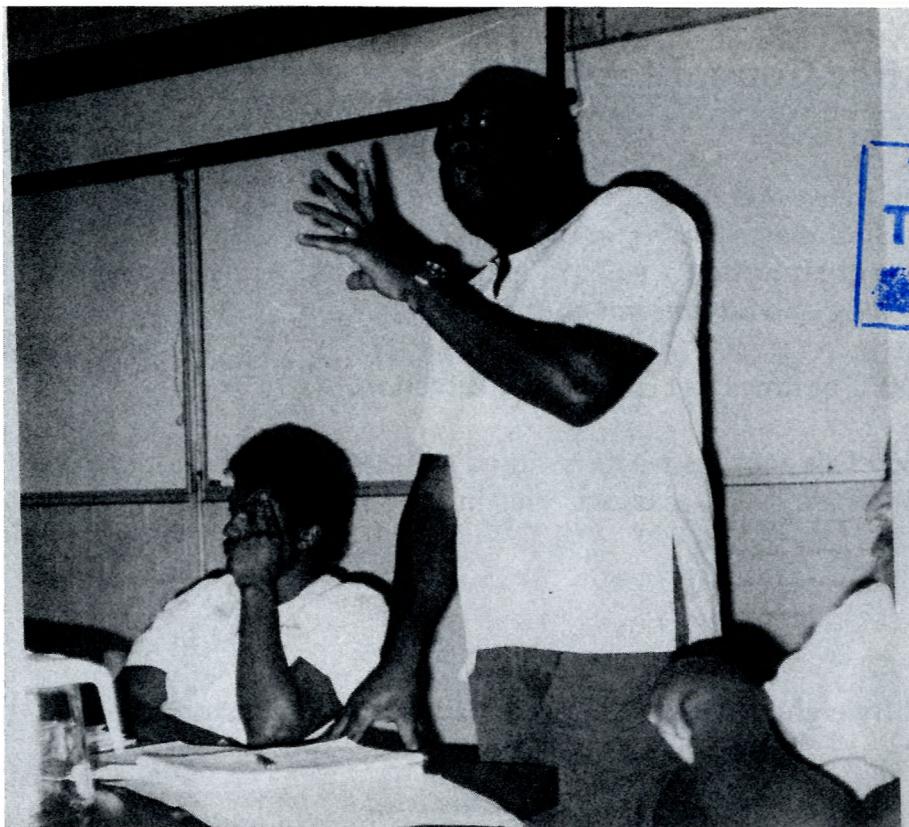
## **Constitutional Structures Of The Union**

### **BRANCHES**

There is an imbalance in the constitutional functioning of our branches. Our branches are suffering from the following:-

- Lack of resources,including finance.
- Non - functioning of constitutional structures such as locals.
- Lack of follow up on national issues.
- Rumour mongering, in particular among the officials, which at the end of the day affects co- operation and collectiveness within the union.

In attending to the above problems, the NEC has appointed comrades General Secretary and 1st Vice-President to deal specifically with branches.



*The First Vice-President addresses the NEC of 22 May 1991 soon after his release from Robben Island*



*Transvaal Delegates at T&G NEC of 22 May 1991*

## National Executive Committee (NEC)

For the past 15 months, the NEC has encountered a number of problems such as:

- Regionalism
- Lack of participation by worker delegates
- Lack of taking criticisms constructively and in a comradely way by NEC delegates
- National issues of the organisation are not properly discussed, especially issues that should contribute to the building and advancement of the union.

This meant that the NEC at times lost control and direction.

During the last period of six months we have noted an improvement, in particular the manner in which the NEC conducts and debates issues. This indicates a tremendous improvement and intention to advance.

## Staff

The union employs fifty eight officials. We have held two national staff meetings during the period under review.

We have identified that there is an organisational break-down in understanding between our officials and the constitutional structures of the union. Officials are not confident that their interests are being taken care of in the organisation.

This Congress needs to discuss how we make our officials participate, and feel part of, constitutional structures so that they retain their confidence in the organisation.

Another problem area is around skills training and training on labour matters. We believe this area needs urgent attention so that organisers can work with confidence and accurate knowledge in their daily work.

The NEC decided on the following to address these problems:

- that we need to develop organiser training programmes
- branches need to conduct regular staff and staff/BOB meetings

We believe the above suggestions will help to stop rumour mongering amongst the staff as such rumours impinge on co-ordination and collectiveness within the union.

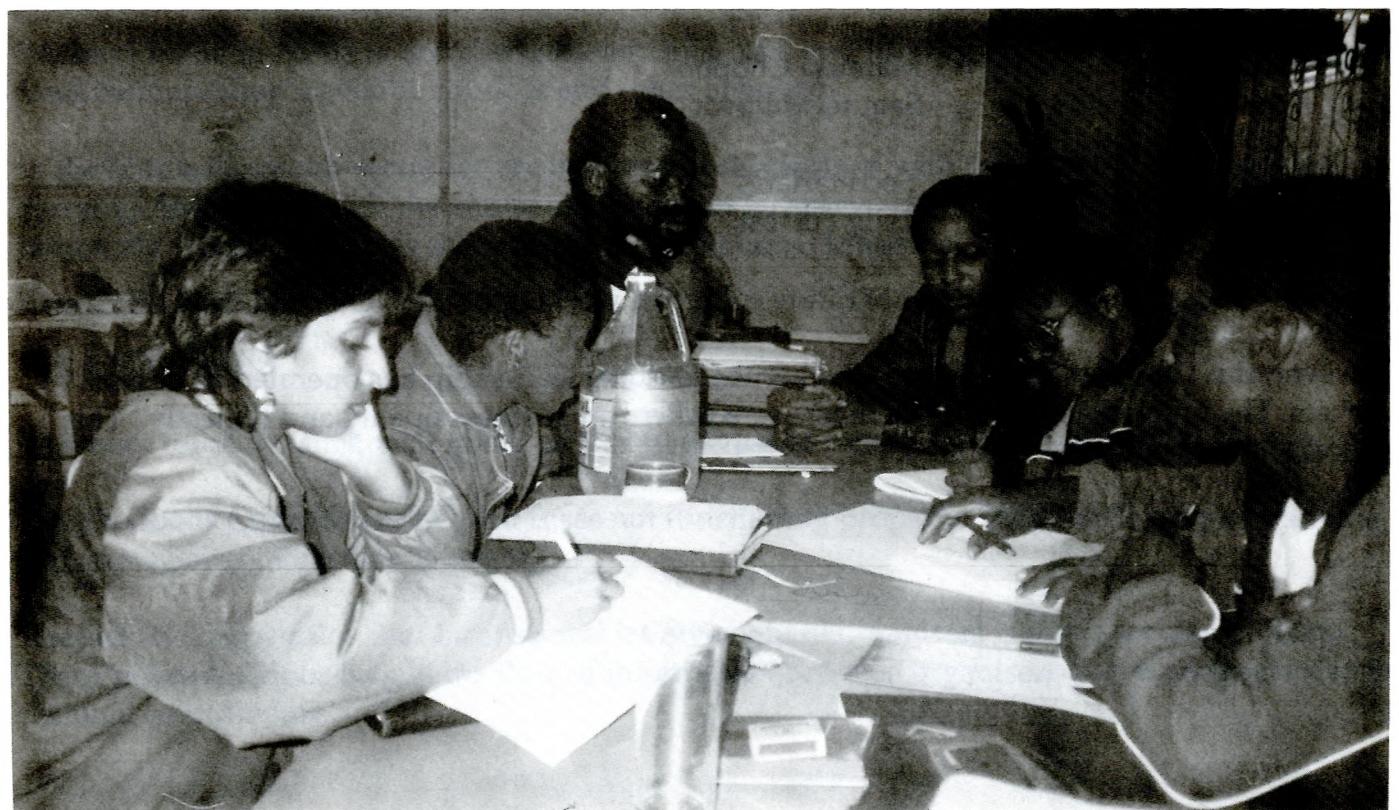
## National Office Bearers

The union has experienced a leadership crisis in the last fifteen months. Cde 1st Vice-President was sentenced to five years imprisonment by the Pretoria regime. Cde President was retrenched in 1989, as was Cmde Acting 1st Vice President, and our 2nd Vice President

Nevertheless, NOBs have functioned fairly well and co-operatively. However more work need to be done to consolidate co-operation. We wish to see worker NOBs playing a more active role in steering and building the union.



*TGWU Staff meeting in March 1990 at Wilgespruit and (below) staff meeting in March 1991 in Johannesburg*



Comrade Ndlovu's release is a result of struggles waged by workers and other progressive organisations. His release is our victory. His release was also a great relief to NOBs and the union as a whole.

The NEC has allocated tasks to NOBs in the following manner:

* Education / Information	Samuel Shilowa
* Branches / Locals	Alfred Ndlovu Nathie Nhleko
* COSATU / CEC	Vivian Zungu Nathie Nhleko Mamusa Chopho Samuel Shilowa
*COSATU / EXCO	Vivian Zungu Nathie Nhleko
*COSATU NCC	Randall Howard Samuel Shilowa Mamusa Chopho Jane Barrett / Desiree Daniels
* Finance	Mamusa Chopho
* Staff	Vivian Zungu
* Campaigns	Mamusa Chopho Samuel Shilowa
* Propaganda	Secretariate Kally Forrest

The above allocation of tasks does not dilute collective working of the NOBs and head office staff.

However, this Congress must assess whether the national leadership has operated as desired by workers. The union belongs to its members so workers must assess openly and honestly. This will contribute to building the union.

# National Sector Co-ordination

Since TGWU established sector co-ordination in 1988, much progress has been made in organising and strengthening our sectors.

However, this year there is an urgent need to put more effort into strengthening sectors organisationally. This is particularly important because of the onslaught we face from the bosses and the regime, for example privatisation, deregulation and retrenchments.

## Goods Transport Sector

A great deal of inconsistency exists in wages and working conditions in this sector. There is inconsistency between companies, and inconsistency between branches of one national or regional company. This results in employer resistance to the idea of one national industrial council.

### SUCCESSES

Progress is being made in equalising wages and working conditions within a national company and also between companies. Some companies have accepted the principle of extending the existing Transvaal Industrial Council to all their branches regardless of location. In other companies we are still discussing the principle.

We have made in-roads in our demands for child care, and literacy and in forcing employers to fund national shop stewards councils and other meetings.

In the Motor-Ferry sub-sector we are involved in discussions with the South African Motor-Ferrying Association with the aim of setting up an Industry Negotiations Agreement, and ultimately working towards the setting up of a National Industrial Council.

### WEAKNESSES

There is a lot of retrenchment going on due to increased competition resulting from deregulation.

Branch Goods Councils are in most cases not functioning properly. This blocks proper planning and strategising in the Goods sector.

The lack of co-operation and inconsistent involvement of organisers is also a serious problem. There is also a serious lack in the flow of information between organisers and branches and to the national co-ordinator.

## WAY FORWARD

- \* We need to strengthen branch goods councils, and develop regional, and ultimately one national Goods Council.
- \* We need to heavily concentrate on shop stewards and organisers training.
- \* More consistent involvement and commitment from organisers in national/regional meetings would result in the formulation and implementation of a national strategy in the sector.
- \* Flow of information must improve if co-ordination is to improve.
- \* A proper job description of the goods co-ordinator's work needs to be drawn up
- \* Employment of a second national co-ordinator needs to be considered

### Meetings In The Goods Transport Sector

The Industrial Council Working Committee consisting of two delegates per branch has met once this year.

National meetings have been planned per sub-sector ie Motor- ferrying, Car-rentals, Bulk Transport.

We plan to have two meetings of each sub-sector per year, plus one national mini-conference incorporating all sub - sectors. The above will be subject to funding.

### Disputes

National Wage Disputes took place in the following companies:

Waste - tech

South African Stevedores

Rennies Subsidiary (we have noted an extreme weakness on the part of workers)

Auto-Carriers (at the time of compiling this report we were at initial stages of the dispute procedure)

## PASSENGER TRANSPORT SECTOR

The Passenger Sector is experiencing difficulties and will continue to experience difficulties in the future. The economic down-turn aggravates the situation.



*Workers at Rietfontein branch of Wastetech during national strike, April 1991*



*National shop stewards' caucus during wage dispute with Rennies in February 1991*

## Crisis In The Bus Industry

The state is increasingly withdrawing and cutting back on bus subsidies. This means the industry is experiencing retrenchments and company closures causing enormous unemployment, and the bosses are putting the squeeze onto workers resulting in numerous dismissals, and low wages and working conditions.

Cuts in subsidies also results in bus fare increases, which in turn results in conflicts between our communities and bus operators.

This then is a broader political challenge, which needs to be addressed not by trade unions only, but also by progressive formations in the country. The withdrawal of bus subsidies goes hand in hand with the state's intention to privatise and deregulate all social services.

We need to formulate an alternative Passenger Transport Policy for a new non-racial democratic South Africa. Research is underway in this regard.

TGWU initiated a campaign against cuts in bus subsidies, and we drew in other transport unions i.e. TAWU and SARHWU. Meetings were also held with SABOA, the Bus Employers Association. Transport unions and bus employers share similar views on the issue.

On the 1st December 1990 the TGWU/TAWU/SARHWU alliance staged mass protest marches in a number of centres in the country. Memoranda were presented to the Minister of Transport, who did not bother to respond. This indicates how the state views the issue.

However, the campaign continues and we are drawing up a plan of action for 1991.

We are looking towards mass activities, such as:

- \* National Marches
- \* National Pickets
- \* Media Propaganda

## The Taxi Sector

A new Passenger Transport policy should incorporate the taxi industry. The taxi industry must be a well regulated industry needing state attention. The challenge facing T&G is that we cannot come up with a new Passenger Transport policy without organising the taxi industry.

Only our Western Transvaal Branch have been successful in organising taxi workers. We are making a plea to take the organisation of taxis seriously .

## National Meetings In The Passenger Sector

The Passenger sector intends to hold one national, and one regional workshop to educate and train shop stewards. Overall we need to strategise comprehensively for the survival of the bus transport industry.



*Joint SARHWU and T&G protest march against subsidy cuts in PMB December 1990*

# The Cleaning & Security Sectors

These sectors cover the following:

- \* Contract Cleaners
- \* Contract Security
- \* In-house Cleaners and Security Guards
- \* Tollgate workers
- \* Parking Garage workers
- \* University & Technikon workers
- \* Dry Cleaning & Laundry Workers

All of the above share two common features : workers are low paid, and generally work shifts.

Contract cleaners and security guards share one other important feature:- they are employed by bosses who compete for contracts, and who seek to cut costs by keeping down wages and conditions of employment . This tends to make them highly antagonistic to the union,which they see as a threat to contracts and profits. As a result there is also poor job security in the sectors - with endless unfair dismissals. These features have resulted in the need for a particular plan and strategy on the part of the union.

The 1989 Congress of the union set certain guidelines for strategies in the cleaning and security sectors. Resolutions called for further recruitment and consolidation of membership and campaigns towards centralised bargaining. The last fifteen months has seen great success in some of the sectors, and less in others. What follows is a more detailed review:-

## Contract Cleaning

A national shop stewards committee was established in early 1990.

The committee met roughly every three months . The first task of the committee was to assess membership figures, and to identify problems of verification in branches . The committee put pressure on organisers to provide accurate information on recruited membership, and also on progress in negotiating recognition agreements.

The most important activity of the committee during the fifteen months period under review, was the negotiation of an Industrial Council constitution for the contract cleaning industry.

Negotiations took place intensively with the National Contract Cleaners Association from July 1990 onwards. Three other trade unions were party to the initial negotiations - Uwusa, Brushes and Cleaners Workers Union, and the Transport Union of South Africa. Uwusa and the Transport Union of South Africa had to drop out as they were found not to be registered for the industry. TGWU took the lead in providing a draft constitution from which to negotiate, and also took the lead in negotiations themselves. The constitution was completed by December 1990, and was submitted for registration in January.

The NCCA had undertaken to start negotiating substantive issues (wages and conditions of employment) as soon as the constitution was completed. Demands covering all wages and conditions of employment were put to the bosses in December. The NCCA went back on their word, and further delayed negotiations pending the final registration of the constitution.

The negotiations for the council would never have been successful without enormous activity on the ground. This activity included a regional industrial strike in Natal in May 1990; a march of cleaners and security in all major centres on June 1st 1990; and industrial action on the part of workers in individual companies.

## Contract Security Guards

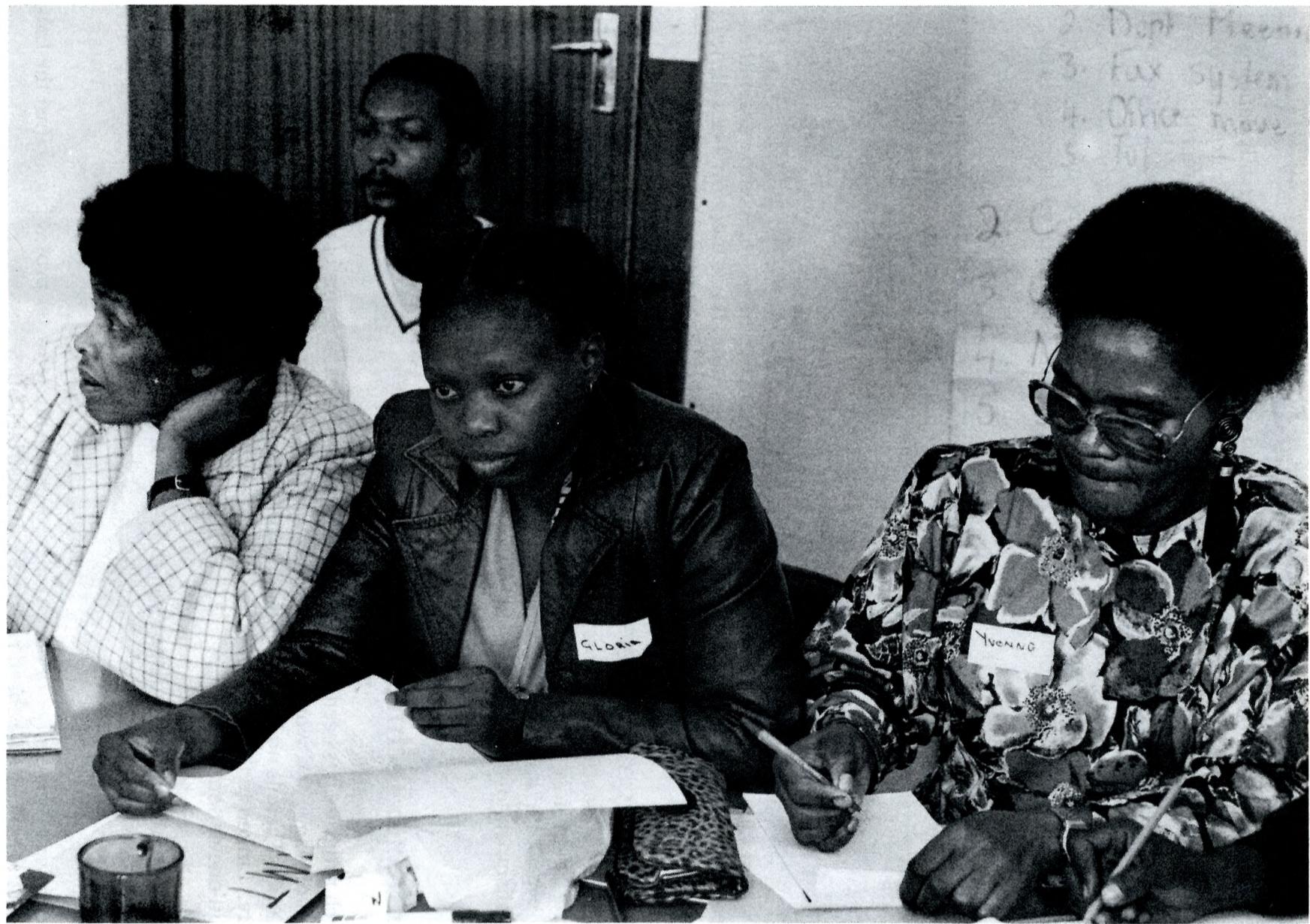
A national shop stewards council was established in May 1990. This met about once every three months - including meetings with employers association, SANSEA.

There were two central and related campaigns during the period under review. These were for the scrapping of the Security Officers Act, and for the implementation of an industrial council.

A series of rather fruitless meetings were held with SANSEA and with the representatives of the South African Police (the authority responsible for the S.O. Act). Despite a march of security guards on June 1st 1990, and the threat of national action in early 1991, the bosses and SAP remained intransigent until the last moment, the Deputy Minister of Police agreed to meet the union, and a compromise was hammered out. Negotiations are still continuing between the union, employers and the SAP representatives. Negotiations may of course break down, hence the necessity for us to consolidate on the ground and embark actively on mass action.

Linked to the demand for the SO Act to be scrapped was the demand for an industrial council to be established. The union has argued that all-wages and working conditions should be negotiated between the relevant parties, not governed by the SO Act. While the bosses have not yet agreed to negotiate the constitution, they have agreed to discuss the concept amongst SANSEA membership. A draft constitution has been submitted by the union, and full motivation has been given to SANSEA.

The first national recognition agreement in the industry was signed during 1990, with Fidelity Guards. Negotiations for a national provident fund in the industry have been targeted as a priority in the coming period. It is proposed that such a fund be based on the already established Fidelity Guards Fund.



*Steiner shop stewards hold a national meeting to discuss problems and strategise at head office in 1990*



## Laundry & Dry Cleaning

Some progress was made during the period under review, but this was scattered and generally unco-ordinated. Membership in the sector has grown in some branches and locals, but not in others.

In the absence of membership in many areas, it has not been possible to establish an effective national shop stewards structure. In the case of Steiner Services, as the only substantial national company in the sector, such a national committee has been established, but has only met once. Co-ordination in Steiner Services is made difficult by the decentralised policy of the company. National bargaining within Steiner is therefore a priority.

In Natal where membership has grown substantially, application has been made to join the existing Industrial Council for the region.

Such a strategy needs to be considered in other areas - with the view to establishing a national council in the future.

## General

Progress in the sectors has been encouraging overall, although as detailed above, there is much room for further progress and development. For the first time ever cleaning and security workers within the union are beginning to make their mark - both at the level of action through organisation and at the level of leadership.

Importantly, developments within the cleaning sectors has given the opportunity for our women members to consolidate and develop confidence.

In addition, organisers in the sectors have been given a greater degree of support than they have had in the past. Support has been in the form of written summaries of minimum wages and working conditions for ease of reference, and regular advice provided by the co-ordinator on request.

The task of organising in these sectors is no longer seen as a second grade job. Further support and back up for organisers is however required in the form of training in negotiations.

## General Co-ordination

The NEC has repeatedly pointed out the lack of co-ordination within the union.

The NEC worked out the following solutions:

- \* regular BOB/staff meetings to be held regularly at branch levels.
- \* National Secretariate meetings, consisting of all branch secretaries, to be held after every NEC meeting.

We have so far held one national secretariate meeting in March 1991. However, there is steady improvement with regards to co-operation between branches and head office, but this still needs to be further cemented.

# Education Department

Much of our educational work has been done at a national level, because there are structural problems at branch and local levels within the union, particularly cohesive functioning of education structures. Some branches do not have education structures at all, and where education structures exist they do not function properly.

Last year's education programme was unable to strike the balance between training in dealing with every day worker issues, and education of a more political and economic nature.

Education in TGWU in 1990 was experimental e.g. the formation of education and women's sub-structures. This indicates that our education programme did not focus on a particular objective.

The following are the education activities for the period under review:

The Education Department has two functioning national committees and these are the National Education Committee (NEDCOM) and its sub - structure, the National Womens Forum (NWF).

BEDCOMS (Branch Education Committees) are in the process of being restructured to make them more efficient and workable.

In 1990, NEDCOM drew up a National TGWU education programme. The main focus was shop stewards training.

## Shop Stewards Training

A number of seminars were held, albeit unevenly, in branches. Most seminars were basic in nature and also covered the pressing political questions of the day i.e. negotiations, alliances and Freedom Charter. One or two branches were able to advance to intermediate training. In 1991 , we are still on basic shop stewards training.

## Organiser Training

An induction seminar was held last year for all new organisers, as well as branch office bearers.

TGWU was also involved in setting up a Cosatu organisers summer school on labour and most of our organisers attended various courses.

## Women

The national womens forum met consistently. We have embarked on a number of campaigns and projects. The most important projects being :

- leadership and skills training
- women, the constitution and the law.



*Delegates at T&G Nedcom in October 1990 at Bobolink*

**Campaigns adopted by the Women's Forum were:**

- childcare
- maternity
- violence against women

**LEADERSHIP** : women delegates are being trained in chairing, report taking, planning meetings and speaking confidently - this is an ongoing process and three seminars have been held so far.

**CONSTITUTION** : this seminar on the constitution made important inputs to the Cosatu Workers Charter Conference.

**MATERNITY & CHILDCARE** : TGWU is at initial stages of this campaign.

**NEC Workshops**

- two workshops have been held at this level:
- the basis of the economy and
- the history of the SACP and our role in building the party.

**Involvement In Cosatu Education Programmes**

The TGWU Education Officer has been involved in the following areas within Cosatu:-

**COSATU NEDCOM** : Education Officer and TGWU Nedcom Chair represents T&G at this level.

**NATIONAL EDUCATION OFFICERS FORUM** : this forum has been central in COSATU restructuring and planning education programmes and assisting weaker unions with education.

**ORGANISER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING** : the Education Officer has participated at this level and helped define the needs and administration ( hence the summer school).  
TGWU is involved in a similar process of embarking on a staff development programme.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Education Officer and Aids Officer are actively participating in this committee. TGWU will be looking at Health and Safety in 1991 generally.

**Aids Education Project****HIV/AIDS Situation In South Africa**

HIV/AIDS cases in South Africa were first identified in 1982. Since then about 500 people were diagnosed as having Aids, and 220 of these died. Presently 100 000 people are said to be HIV positive. It is estimated that by the end of this year 300 000 people will be HIV positive.



*Workers at Lehmbecker in the Transvaal make their demands on COSATU's national day of action to demand childcare facilities*

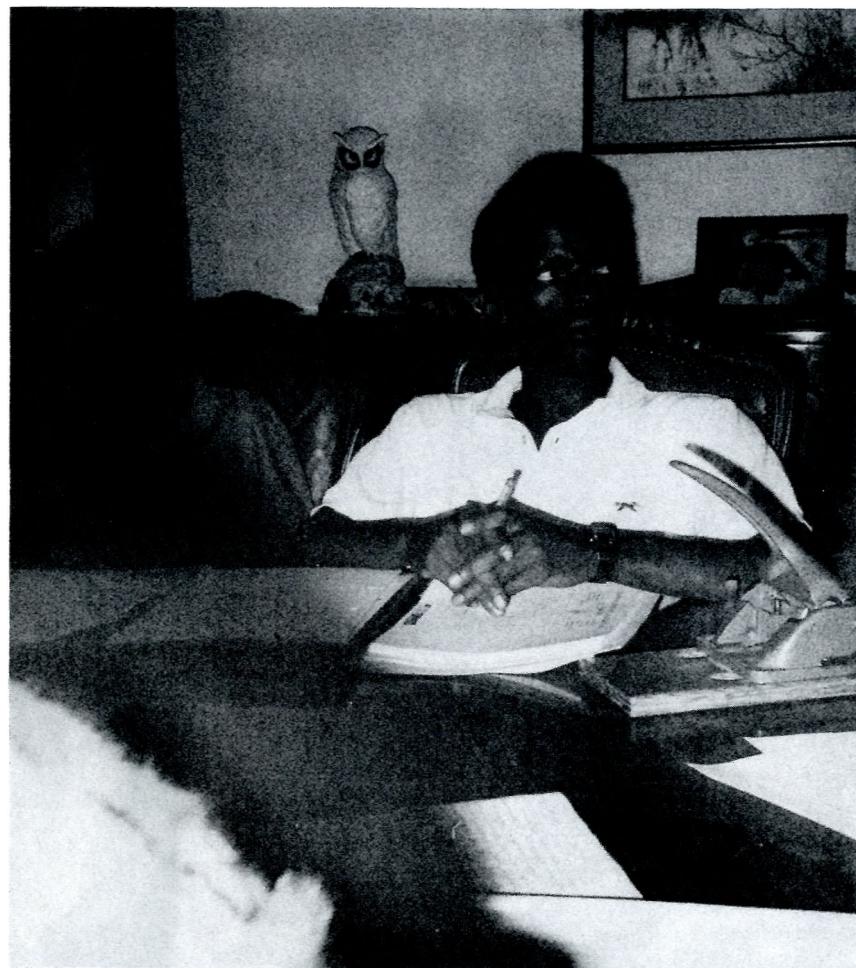
Experience in many parts of the world has shown that it is the oppressed and exploited who have suffered the most in the HIV/AIDS situation. The spread and rapid growth of HIV infection in South Africa is made worse by the living and working conditions faced by the working class.

### **TGWU AIDS Resolution**

The last Congress passed a resolution on the need for TGWU to embark on Aids education for its members. That resolution is in the process of being implemented.

In many companies organised by TGWU, employers have taken the initiative on Aids without proper consultation with the union. The union has not been in a position to challenge their approach, given that we have no systematic and constructive alternative to offer.

At the beginning of 1991 a Bafana Seripe was appointed to co-ordinate the project on full time basis. He was seconded from the Workplace Information Group (WIG). The project will run for a period of two years.



***Bafana Seripe, T&G's AIDS Education Officer at T&G Nedcom in 1990***

## Aims And Objectives Of The Project

- \* to formulate union policy on HIV testing by employers and employment of workers found to be HIV positive.
- \* educate members on ways to prevent the spread of HIV/Aids. \* educate members about how Aids is spread and how it is not spread.
- \* raise awareness about tests for HIV.
- \* referral of individuals for counselling where necessary.
- \* raising awareness around the socio - economic issues which impact on workers' lives and increase their risk of HIV infection, e.g. separation of families, single sex hostels, working hours and poverty.

## Programme for 1991

- \* visiting branches to conduct basic education workshops with the Goods Shop Stewards Councils.
- \* conducting research survey on attitudes, knowledge and practice among union members around the issue of HIV/Aids.
- \* developing educational packages and running workshops.
- \* developing union policy on HIV/Aids.

## Work Done From January to March 1991

### Basic HIV/Aids Education Workshops:

- \* Southern Natal Goods Shop Stewards Council.
- \* Eastern Cape Goods Shop Stewards Council.
- \* National Womens Forum.
- \* National Campaigns Committee meeting.

Brief discussions were also held with Rennies negotiating team, Cargo National Shop Stewards Council and Transvaal BEC. Follow up is to be made. We are also working with the Industrial Health Unit to respond to an Aids policy as proposed by the University of Natal.

## Work Done Outside of TGWU

- \* Cosatu summer school - discussion on how unions can organise around Aids.
- \* Cosatu National Staff meeting - basic information on HIV/Aids.
- \* Aids in Industry (employers seminar) - presentation on union's perspective on Aids.
- \* Cosatu Health and Safety Sub-Committee - participating in the planning for the Cosatu National Conference on Aids.

## General Assessment Of The Work Done

Judging from the discussions with members at various meetings, it is clear that the media and government propaganda have created confusion on the issue of HIV/Aids.

For example some of the views expressed by members are:

- \* Aids does not exist, it is a government propaganda to discourage birth control or sex among black people.
- \* They have not seen anyone sick from HIV/Aids.
- \* Aids can be spread through casual contact e.g. holding hands, sharing cups or spoons, working next to someone.

The education programme will have to address such views and help members to have a better understanding of HIV / Aids.

One member of the union has tested positive to the HIV test. The employer tried to dismiss him from work. His case is being taken up by the union. His case raises a number of issues which the union will have to address:

- \* Victimation of members who are HIV positive by employers.
- \* Illegal testing of workers' blood by employers and health workers.
- \* The need to organise proper and accessible counselling services for members.
- \* Confidentiality of HIV test results.

## Media/Research/Information Officer

The Information Officer has worked in the following areas since last TGWU Congress:

### Media Production

#### TGWU NEWS

We are now printing 14 000 copies of the four - paged newsletter.

There has been a much improved response to the paper with workers now asking frequently for copies. However some workers still never see the newspaper as distribution is weak in some branches.

#### General Media

Various pamphlets were produced relating to T & G campaigns, Industrial action, disputes, Industrial Council report backs, recruitment and wage determinations. A T&G Congress Poster and Cleaners Posters, as well as booklets on the T&G Constitution and T&G Resolutions were produced. The well used video library has stopped because in the end most videos disappeared.

#### Liason With The Press

Press statements and stories were given to all national papers and many regional papers. Information was also given to the alternate press, and ITF NEWS carried a number of T&G stories. All in all, T&G news was widely carried in the press so the bosses know that we are a union not afraid of taking action.

### Research

Research has been co-ordinated with a number of service organisations in areas ranging from information on companies for wage negotiations, parental rights in other countries in the world, and an overview of the dry cleaning industry. Two major areas of research currently in progress are overviews of the goods and passenger transport industries, with a view to coming up with recommendations for restructuring the industries.

# Information Gathering and Distribution

\* Newsclips are cut on matters relating to our sectors and companies we organise. These are sent to all branches.

\*Branches are sent information of various kinds, including subscriptions to a number of publications, to keep organisers abreast of current political and labour developments.

\*Requests for information come in on an on going basis from organisers.

Unfortunately branches are very weak at sending in union related information to the Information Officer. Most branches have now appointed an "Information Person" but these people seldom pass on information. This weakens the union organisationally as organisers do not have information to strategise at a national level, and the bosses can offer different deals in different regions.

## Computerisation

CGIL (Italian Trade Union Federation) and COSATU are running a project (METRIC Project) to computerise and train officials in word processing, accounting, and subscriptions programmes to increase our efficiency and financial strength. The Information officer sits on the COSATU Steering Committee for this project. Currently T&G head office has been donated 2 new computers and printers, and staff are being trained in various computer programmes. At a later date this service will be extended to branches.

## TGWU Prisoners

The Information Officer communicates with the PUTCO 4 and tries to ensure they, and their families receive financial and other kinds of support. Indemnity Forms were drawn up to apply for their release but lawyers do not feel there is much hope as they fall into the category of criminal and not political prisoners.

## Involvement With COSATU

The Information Officer attends the COSATU Goods & Services Commission, the COSATU Industrial Restructuring Committee, the COSATU Metric Project, and COSATU Media Forums from time to time.

## Employment of Research Officer

The NEC have endorsed that the Information Officer's job is too large, and that a Research Officer should be employed. The Secretariate were mandated to look into ways of financing this.

# Campaigns

The year 1990 -'91 has been the year for mass action in TGWU, in the form of campaigns which have been taken up by our members. This has also led to the formation of a TGWU National Campaigns Committee.

Mass action in TGWU needs to be intensified and we must connect this to the building of organisation. TGWU has taken up some campaigns, but has been completely inactive in others.

## **TGWU Campaigns**

### **\* Centralised Bargaining**

We have been successful to a certain extent in taking up this Congress resolution. Our efforts have resulted in us being successful in pushing for the establishment of an Industrial Council in the cleaning sector. (See Cleaning Sector Report)

### **\* Security Officers Act (See Security Sector Report)**

### **\* Bus Subsidies (See Passenger Transport Report)**

### **\* TGWU Prisoners**

The Congress resolution has not been fully implemented, in the sense that we have not yet gone out on a massive scale. This Congress needs to take up the question of indemnity seriously and embark on mass action to demand indemnity for the Putco 4, and the unconditional release of all political prisoners. COSATU also needs to get actively involved in the campaign.

## **TGWU Participation In Cosatu Campaigns**

In general TGWU has participated very actively in all Cosatu Campaigns Commissions, particularly the head office staff. On the other hand this has taken up a great deal of their time. There are however concerns that branches have not been sufficiently involved in such campaigns, and information has not been filtering down sufficiently.

T&G is involved in the following Cosatu Campaigns' Commissions:

### **Goods and Services**

The Information Officer has been the TGWU representative on this commission, but recently both a T & G organiser and worker have also been attending. Six T & G delegates attended the Cosatu Goods and Services Housing/Provident/Pension Fund Conference in 1990 and the follow up workshop in 1991.

### **Industrial Restructuring**

The Information Officer is the TGWU representative on this commission. Reports are given to this commission on the research, with a view to restructuring in the Goods and Passenger Transport sectors.

### **The Labour Relations Act**

The Assistant General Secretary has been representing TGWU on the L.R.A. working group. He has also been representing Cosatu on the NMC (National manpower Commission) technical sub committee to investigate extension of labour legislation to farmworkers. We are fighting for the extension of the L.R.A. to all sectors in particular public, domestic, farm workers and the homelands. The complete revision of L.R.A. is the other process that is already under investigation by the NMC.

All the above processes cannot be achieved without a clear programme of action which crystallises our demands so that our members can be mobilised to achieve victory.



*T&G stevedores march in COSATU's campaign to amend the Labour Relations Act in  
Cape Town docks, March 1990*

## Living Wage

The Cleaning & Security Co-ordinator has been active on this commission, and in her absence Cmdes Goods and Passenger co-ordinators and the General Secretary have been attending this commission.

The Living Wage Campaign is focussing on issues of retrenchment, sexual discrimination, centralised bargaining and wages. This will facilitate issues being taken up on the ground.

## Workers Charter

The Education Officer and a worker sit on this commission. There has been activity at a national level and some branches have held seminars on the Workers Charter. Seminars on the Constituent Assembly and Interim Government are being planned at the moment. The campaign needs to be taken very seriously as it lays the basis for worker rights in a new South Africa.

## Human Resources/Literacy

The Education Officer and a worker sit on this committee. There are major developments on this front, with envisaged negotiations with SACCOLA on upgrading skills and literacy. TGWU will be holding a seminar to discuss our involvement in this programme.

# Retrenchments

For the last ten years, there has been no job creation and if this trend continues we will have the highest rate of unemployment in the world. Massive retrenchments aggravate this already serious unemployment situation.

Transport and General Workers Union has been heavily affected by retrenchments in the period under review, particularly in the passenger, and goods sectors, and on a lesser scale in the cleaning sector.

This poses a great challenge, the question is how do we counter retrenchments?

In the past way we have handled retrenchments in a very reformist and submissive way. We objected to retrenchments in principle, but conceded to negotiating reasonable retrenchment packages.

We believe this must change, retrenchments must be halted completely. What alternatives can we create against retrenchments? In attempting to answer this question, the Congress needs to consider training programmes, job creation and upgrading and formulation of wage policy.

We believe the fight against retrenchments needs to be taken up as an important campaign.

## Trade Union Unity

The 1989 Congress took a resolution on Trade Union Unity. Limited progress has been made but we have waged joint struggles with TAWU and SARHWU on the bus subsidy question.

**TAWU** : we have held a number of meetings with TAWU, addressing unity of transport workers. Our approach with TAWU has been to forge unity in action and a programme has been developed but not implemented as yet.

**SARHWU** : a number of meetings have been held with SARHWU on the question of unity and a great deal of progress has been made. A joint NEC workshop was held on 6 & 7 April 1991, and workers developed a programme to work towards the unity of transport workers.

There is however still a long way to go in terms of uniting all transport workers in the country - and that includes organising the unorganised. The challenges and onslaught from the state and capital dictate the need for working class unity in this country. Without unity as workers we are nothing.

## International

Our relationship with labour organisations abroad are expanding and we have connections with the following unions and federations:

- \* International Transport Workers Federation
- \* General Workers Union in Denmark
- \* FILT (Italy)
- \* Transport and General Workers Union (Britain)
- \* Finnish Transport Workers Union (Finland)
- \* FIET (Switzerland)
- \* Service Employees International Union (USA)
- \* The Independent Canadian Transit Union
- \* Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers.

International connections between workers is a crucial area of our struggle. The working class needs unity, not only in its own country, but internationally as well. The world economy is in the hands of the few, the imperialists and capitalists. We therefore need to strengthen our international working class ties.

# Finances

Our financial position has been very bleak for the last year. There is however, an improvement, in particular in meeting our administrative expenses on a day to day basis eg salaries, Cosatu affiliation fees, branch allocations.

## Self Sufficiency

Nevertheless, there is a long way to go. We are failing to pay legal fees, relief for strikers, Congress expenses and failing even to bury our own comrades.

For a long time now, the ITF has been shouldering our legal fees, education budget and our Congresses. Other unions abroad such as the Service Employees International Union, have been assisting us with Cleaning and Security programmes.

This means we have developed an unhealthy culture of over-reliance on overseas funding. We have failed to implement our policy resolution on self sufficiency. At a political level this means we are not autonomous or abiding by our own constitution.

This Congress needs to debate how we can implement our resolution on self sufficiency.

## Options

We would like this Congress to consider the following:

A three-times per annum levy deduction of R5.00 per member.

One deduction could be at the end of March, for legal costs.

The second levy deduction could be at the end of July, for the solidarity relief for striking workers.

The third levy deduction by the end of November, for our Congress.

The above ideas are to raise debate on the issue and are not inflexible in any way. We want to emphasise that we would like to see the Congress coming up with ideas on how we can build financial self-sufficiency.

# Implementation Of 1989 Congress Resolutions

Our 1989 Congress resolutions have not been fully implemented and in some areas not implemented at all. The following resolutions have been taken up:

## Women's Structures

Some branches have formed women's structures and some have not. Where women structures exist they are not functioning properly. There is also confusion about how these structures relate to the constitutional structures of the union.

## National Co-ordination

As it is reflected in this report, since the appointment of national sector co-ordinators tremendous work has been done. However, there is still confusion, as to what the role of national co-ordinators is. This Congress needs to throw light on this issue.



*Joint SARHWU and T&G National Executive Committee meeting to discuss merger in April 1991*

**National Office Bearers**

They have mostly functioned well, and co-operatively. Tasks have been allocated by the National Executive Committee.

**Trade Union Unity**

As reflected in this report, it has been taken up, but we still need to aggressively implement this resolution at branch level.

**Education Structures**

Structures have been formed at branch levels, but do not function very well. Similar to women, they also face the difficulty as to how they link to our constitutional structures.

**Security Workers**

The resolution has been taken up in a form of campaign against the Security Officers Act, nevertheless we have not campaigned effectively on the hours of work and other conditions of employment.

**Cleaners**

The building of an Industrial Council is a step towards formulating a National Minimum Wage in the industry. TGWU has been the major force in pushing for the establishment of an Industrial Council in this sector.

We need to have a re-look on how we take our resolutions for implementation on the ground. We need to create an effective mechanism of implementing resolutions.

## **Conclusion**

Comrades, much as TGWU has organisational and financial difficulties it is worth mentioning that we have still moved forward in difficult times. We are also facing greater challenges than ever before. To meet all these challenges we will need commitment, dedication and sense of discipline.

Having advanced to where we are today, we will continue to move forward.

**FORWARD TO WORKING CLASS  
UNITY, WORKER CONTROL AND  
DEMOCRACY!**