A Shopsteward must be a disciplinarian - page 8

Government’s VAT Hike, a slap in the face to workers - page 17

WORKERS CELEBRATE MAY DAY
Welcome to another issue of an exciting Shop steward publication that is fully packed with information detailing the struggles and the developments that affect the workers and the working class. We have celebrated our International Workers Holiday - May Day across the country.

The turnout on May Day demonstrated the amount of work that has gone into ensuring that COSATU remains united organisation that is characterised by discipline. We commend the workers for showing marvellous discipline and for embracing the concept of worker unity. We are committed to continue to build a COSATU, whose influence on society remains based on its organised power, its capacity to mobilise, its socio-economic programme and policies and its participation in political and social alliances.

We remain true to our constitution and founding principles of one Country - One Federation, One Union - One Industry, Paid Up Membership, Worker Control, worker Solidarity, non-racialism and Unity. We are unapologetic in our belief that factory-based struggles cannot be divorced from politics. Even from a pure working class and economic position, we believe it is completely wrong to only limit workers to factory-based issues.

Politics determine who holds state power; who makes the laws; who controls the police, the courts, the army and prisons. All these issues affect workers everyday and cannot be ignored. Without addressing these questions the factory gains made by workers will be in danger of being wiped out.

We have learned from our common, painful experiences that we can win battles on wage increases at the work-place level, only to have those eroded by increases in transport costs, municipal fee rates, increase in electricity tariffs, food, children’s educational fees, tax, erosion of pension funds through rising costs of living, etc. It is for these reasons that from the onset, COSATU decided to participate in the political sphere. We are unshaken members of the Alliance because all our struggles are political in nature.

National Minimum Wage

The debate around the Minimum Wage over the last couple of years has been heated, antagonistic and sometimes downright acrimonious. COSATU has been at the forefront of the debate and has been relentless in its campaign for the adoption of a legislated national minimum wage. We have fielded attacks and pushback from big business, government political parties and trade unions in the process.

They have all attacked the idea of a minimum wage for different reasons but we remain untrusting in our quest to ensure that we ultimately have a legislated National Minimum Wage. We have consistently argued that while the figure of R3 500 was a clear rejection of the figure of R2000 that was first proposed by both government and big business, it still fell short of the federation’s initial proposed figure of R4 500.

We continue to acknowledge that the figure of R3 500 does not address the minimum living standards of an average South African household. We are not indifferent to some people’s legitimate frustrations and unhappiness with the proposed R3500 figure given the high cost of living for workers. However, what we find most scandalous though is the fact that currently around half of all workers are earning below this figure.

We continue to argue that anything above the figure of R3500, no matter how inadequate, will have a material impact on improving the wages of half of South African workers, or 6 million of our brutally exploited workers. This figure will give us a significant starting base and something to work with as we continue to negotiate and fight our way towards a living wage.

A cursory examination of the lofty formulations of some of the critics reveals that they take a reductionist and populist view in rejecting the Minimum Wage, while they contribute very little by way of solutions. The problem with political tribalism is that it breeds the fallacy of composition, where we end up dismissing an entire idea or concept on the grounds of one or two components we don’t like. The federation is of the view that very little will be achieved in an environment where people are unable to offer cogent facts to support their positions.

Some of the most vocal critics of the minimum wage are people who have done nothing themselves, and whose only contributions are their complaints and moral exhibitionism. It’s all a very well being publicly and fashionably militant about the national minimum wage but it does not solve the economic facts that have to be factored in when talking about the minimum wage. Ours is part of a globalised capitalist system and we need to acknowledge that workers are already being replaced by mechanisation and automation. As and when we take decisions, we have a responsibility to think about the unemployed and the possible blowback effects of our decisions. We need to tell workers the truth and not be tempted to claim easy victories.

A NMW is not a silver bullet by itself but needs to be combined with developmental labour market and economic policies, which tackle the cheap labour basis of our economy.

A meaningful National Minimum Wage must be an important element of a new wage policy, which begins to recognise the dignity of every worker in our society, and overcomes the legacy of apartheid wage structures. The struggle for a Living Wage will be a long and difficult one, which includes the struggle for affordable basic services, transport and food, and decent wages and working conditions and will only be achieved through the collective power of workers.

Bus Strike

We have seen workers pushing back against employers during the Bus strike. The rise of prices of basic necessities dictates that salaries of workers are also increased to ensure that they are able to provide for their families.

We continue to call on all workers to fight for what is due to them. This is the best way to make sure that employers feel the pushback. We have seen the unity by the unions in the sector and we encourage it.

Public Service Wage Negotiations

We have seen the intransigence of the employer in the public service and we commend our unions for not backing down. The unity of the working
Class struggle is a political struggle!

Workers join millions to celebrate the ideals and teachings of the late German Philosopher and thinker, Karl Marx as the working class globally marked his bicentenary birthday on May 5.

‘The history of all previous societies has been the history of class struggles’; Karl Marx

True to his teachings and revolutionary ideals, workers must continue to aspire to live true in the meanings of his words, and ‘to change the world’.

Workers must be acknowledged for showing confidence in their trade unions and the federation by coming out in thousands to join in the May Day celebrations in all nine provinces.

An injury to one is an injury to all!

In this edition, we continue to embrace Going Back to Basics Campaign and cover issues which display the unity and cohesion of COSATU and its affiliates through organizational actions on the ground.

We feature articles on collective bargaining, strengthening organizational discipline to newly elected shopstewards, share information on how domestic workers may join SADSAWU and be organized in all communities, and also expose our readers to how the national minimum wage is understood by workers and the public.

On international sphere, COSATU has continued to strengthen solidarity actions with the people of Swaziland, Palestine, Cuba and other countries.

We trace the history of Cuito Cuanavale which was led and influenced by the Cubans and share developments in Brazil.

We welcome all young workers elected and look forward to provide them with a platform to share their experiences at the workplace as part of strengthening the hegemonic influence of the federation.

It is not yet Uhuru!

Aluta Continua!
COSATU celebrates Workers’ Day

South African workers joined the largest federation on the streets on fourteen cities on Workers Day to March and demand decent work and economic growth to benefit all the masses. May Day in South Africa was first declared a paid public holiday after the democratic dispensation in 1994. Workers since the inception of the International Workers Day which is commonly known as ‘May Day’ have been defying the apartheid regime by demanding the day to be recognised.

The day came after on May, 1 in 1886, more than 300,000 workers across the United States walked off their jobs to demanding an eight-hour workday. From that day henceforth proletarian organizations have continued to stop working on May Day to demand decent working conditions and a living wage. The celebrations in South Africa were held under the Theme ‘Building Unity and Cohesion of COSATU to advance the National Democratic Revolution.’

‘COSATU organized fourteen May Day marches in nine provinces,’ said COSATU General Secretary, Bheki Ntshalintshali. ‘Workers marched in all these cities to demand a national minimum wage, banning of labour brokers, full implementation of the National Health Insurance, scrapping of etolls of freeways, prosecution of all involved in state capture and corruption and also supporting the bus sector strike and public servants still in negotiations,’ said Ntshalintshali.

All marches and rallies were addressed by COSATU National Office Bearers and Central Committee Members.

Eastern Cape
In Eastern Cape, the May Day celebrations commenced with a march to the KwaZakhele Police Station led by Alliance partners and communities before all marchers assembled at the Isaac Wolfson Stadium in Port Elizabeth. Workers demanded a Jobs Summit to gather all social partners to tackle the challenge of high unemployment.

Free State
In QwaQwa, workers marched on the streets of Phuthaditshaba after a gathering of all community stakeholders and Alliance leadership to demonstrate the plight of the residents and workers in general about poor quality of municipal services.

Gauteng
Thousands of workers in Gauteng gathered at Vanderbijlpark after assembling at Lermas Park and marched to employers such as Acelor Mittal to demand the nationalization of Iscor and decent work for all workers in the province. Workers raised the issue of scrapping of etolling system on freeways.

May Day celebration at Isaac Wolfson Stadium in Port Elizabeth

Workers and communities marching in Port Elizabeth
In KwaZulu-Natal, workers led marches and celebrations in four centres: Durban, Kokstad, Mangazol and Nquthu in which workers demanded protection of jobs and also the unity of the federation. The main march in the province commenced in the Durban City centre until all workers were addressed at the Curries Fountain where COSATU traces its origins since 1985.

Limpopo

In Mokopane, workers commenced the day by cleaning and painting two creches in the township of Mahwelelang and led a peaceful march against crime and gender-based violence until all marchers were addressed by the leadership at the stadium.

Mpumalanga

COSATU Mpumalanga led a successful march to the Department of Land Affairs in Emnako to demand land for productive activities to create jobs for communities and also demanded justice for farm workers who were unfairly dismissed by Umbhaba Estate.

North West

Workers in North West marched in Mahikeng against poor quality of health care services in the provinces. The march came after many communities showed their disapproval of the leadership of the provincial government. And communities have since called for the premier to step down.

Northern Cape

Workers in Northern Cape led marches in three areas: Kuruman, Calulina and Kimberley to demand decent jobs and an end to state capture which has robbed communities to receive quality services from government departments. Workers in the province remembered 51 workers who passed on in 2003 whilst they were on their way to participate in a May Day event in Bethlehem.

Western Cape

Hundreds of workers gathered at Keizergracht, in Cape Town and painted the Mother City centre in red as they demanded a reliable, efficient and affordable public transport system. Other demands workers demanded were about occupational health and safety across all workplaces, promotion of the struggle for a living wage and recruitment, retention and servicing of all workers at the workplace.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) said the working way to QwaQwa, when their bus drove into a dam near Bethlehem, Free State on 1 May 2003. We will never forget those workers and May Day is a sad reminder of that tragedy. The turnout on May Day demonstrated the amount of work that has gone into ensuring that COSATU remains united organisation that is characterised by discipline.

We commend the workers for showing marvellous discipline and for embracing the concept of worker unity. We are committed to continue to build a COSATU, whose influence on society remains based on its organised power, its capacity to mobilise, its socio-economic programme and policies and its participation in political and social alliances.

He said ‘We remain true to our constitution and founding principles of one Country - One Federation, One Union - One Industry, Paid Up Membership, Worker Control, worker Solidarity, non-racialism and Unity.’

Meanwhile, global federations also led successful May Day marches across the globe. The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) said ‘workers from around the world organized mass strikes, demonstrations, rallies for the 1st of May in every country of the world, celebrations that honored the 132 years of the May 1st events and projected their internationalism and solidarity. Workers of the World United!'

The Shopsteward
At its Collective Bargaining & Policy Conference from the 15th to 18th March 2018 under the theme “Transforming the Criminal Justice Cluster in defence of the working class struggle for the advancement of the National Democratic Revolution”, POPCRU held a productive Collective Bargaining and Policy Conference attended by over 200 delegates emanating from across its structures countrywide, and with invited delegations from local and international labour formations on the African diaspora, the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU). As a norm, this purposeful conference wasn’t an end in itself or for mere conformity, but a means to an end which was defined by the need to thoroughly analyse past experiences within the sectors we organise in, and to ponder on more effective and efficient approaches in improving our functionality for the future ahead as we approach a historic 30th anniversary; a three decade of militancy within the criminal justice cluster which is a significant milestone considering the many challenges faced in a pre- and post-democratic South Africa within these sectors.

As a norm, this purposeful conference wasn’t an end in itself or for mere conformity, but a means to an end which was defined by the need to thoroughly analyse past experiences within the sectors we organise in, and to ponder on more effective and efficient approaches in improving our functionality for the future ahead as we approach a historic 30th anniversary; a three decade of militancy within the criminal justice cluster which is a significant milestone considering the many challenges faced in a pre- and post-democratic South Africa within these sectors.

This platform not only provided the much needed framework for taking POPCRU forward in light of its upcoming 9th National Congress and 30th Anniversary in the next year, but also repositions it in line with the needs and aspirations of its members and for the benefit of all South Africans in the 21st century. This will further strengthen POPCRU as a labour movement for transformation and a strategic axis within the security environment by shaping the organisation’s resilience, enhancing its transformative capacity and its ability to adapt to changing situations so that it continues to serve and lead its membership by way of also expanding its scope to recruit members from all departments and law enforcement agencies within the criminal justice cluster.

The aspects of the conference included the lengthy engagements on measures in renewing the organisation in line with the current-day realities faced by labour, and in response to the material conditions South African society finds itself. It further looked into the impact of signed agreements over the past years, ideal

A POPCRU member is our priority!
policing and corrections, constitutional amendments and the proposed South African Police Service (SAPS) structure. All these were considered with the sole aim of ensuring we come up with proposed legislative frameworks that we will be lobbying for, to be enacted with the objective of transforming the Public Service, and in particular, the South African Police Service, Correctional Services and Traffic.

Our need to renew the organisation is centred around the fact that unionism is not a static concept, but that its continued existence and strengths heavily rely on the evolving nature of the workplace dynamics, which aren’t independent from the material conditions we find ourselves in, and therefore indicating that our members’ needs are bound to change from time to time. It is therefore important that as a majority union in all sectors we organise, we must continuously renew ourselves in line with members’ needs by way of reorienting ourselves, readjusting ourselves, being inclusive and representative in decision-making and most importantly, being a worker-driven and worker-controlled organisation, yet without losing our character.

This we aim to achieve by, among others, ensuring that we improve on our educational programs to develop relevant curricula for members at all levels, expanding our scope to recruit members in all departments and law enforcement agencies within the criminal justice cluster, through upholding service delivery to members, capacitating provinces with sufficient human resources for legal services in order to address backlogs, through promoting training and development programs to produce CCMA commissioners and ultimately court judges, the promotion of extra mural and wellness activities and influencing policy reviews and changes within the criminal justice cluster.

Although there have been to a certain extent, meaningful contributions towards transforming the public service, there remain challenges in that the implementation of legislation has not been fully effected, hence our decision to discuss ideal policing within sectors not optimally doing so. There has also been lack of proper consultation of major stakeholders by the employer, especially on key appointments. We are of the view that there is a need for proper monitoring mechanisms for these legislations, and for that purpose we will be developing monitoring tools to ensure there is compliance with the legislations and policies, and further ensure that the policy positions find space within the SAPS for consideration and implementation on curbing crime, improving levels of safety and security and visible policing.

The improvement of the allocation of resources within the SAPS and the insurance that satellite police stations are converted into fully fledged stations is yet another urgent need, especially in light of the senseless attacks that police stations have been facing recently.

We are further to ensure that we lobby for Community Policing Forums (CPFs) to play a meaningful role of educating and empowering communities to participate in the fight against crime, thereby ensuring safety for all citizens. For this to be effective, there must also be proper and consistent screening of CPFs and their roles must be clearly defined.

The restructuring process in the SAPS is one unavoidable factor that needs to be addressed by doing away with the top-heavy structure, and we believe, as part of this process, the strengthening of the Police Secretariat must be done, and must directly report to the Minister. The current Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977 should also be extensively reviewed to address current inconsistencies, and the SAPS must be completely demilitarised to reflect the ethos of civilian service. One of the major challenges has been the inaccessibility of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) within the service, and we will be taking up this matter in ensuring they are confidential and placed widely available to members. We will also be working towards ensuring Reservists are integrated into the SAPS and are subjected to a proper training and development on policing and crime fighting.

As it relates to Corrections in South Africa, we are of the view that as it is currently run, it leaves little to be desired in terms of fulfilling its core role of rehabilitation. The Department of Correctional Services continues to experience intense challenges after 24 years of our democratic breakthrough, and is permeated with overcrowding, staff shortages, alien infrastructure and the lack of resources to appropriately meet its rapidly increasing demands. This has seen an average of 85% of reoffenders over the years, and has effectively increased the prison population rate while the staff complements decreases.

Rehabilitation is a societal responsibility and can only take place in a safe and secured environment for offenders, officials and stakeholders. For this to take place, it requires that offenders also play a productive role instead of remaining idle. Firstly, we believe that in addressing the lack of rehabilitation within our correctional services, the first aspect that needs to be addressed is the effectiveness of sentencing options. This, we believe is a viable aspect as it assists in reducing overcrowding and ensures that people with minor sentences are not turned into hardened criminals.

This can only be possible once there are clear monitoring strategies for those sentences to community service, rehabilitation programs are developed for offenders who are sentenced to community service and a multi-departmental approach is taken in assisting offenders, with specific role played by the Department of Social Development. Secondly, the need to ensure our Correctional Centres are self-sufficient will go a long way in ensuring inmates do not remain idle, but produce the food, furniture and maintain the infrastructure they use. The current tendency for the provision of these services has done nothing to skill inmates, and has drained the much needed budget that could have been channelled towards ensuring rehabilitation programs are in effect. Equally important is the proper implementation of signed resolutions. It is disheartening that the Correctional Services failed to properly implement GPSSBES Resolution 2 of 2009 which was signed to introduce 7 Day establishment as well as a new shift system.

The non-implementation of this Resolution is another challenge which has demoralised officials, consequently leading to a large influx of resignations. The management has not been doing its utmost best to avoid these types of resignations, which could have been resolved by properly implementing signed Resolutions and maintaining high morale as this is of a significant value, more so in a workplace whereby staff operates under conditions of physical and psychological strain.

Furthermore, there should be improved measures in place to ensure the security of staff while they are conducting their duties, this should be coupled with the provision of safety equipment when required to curb incidents of attacks on members, and the payment of danger allowances. These challenges have had a multiplier effect; exposing weaknesses in administrative practices of correctional facilities whilst compromising the well-being of both correctional officers and the offenders. Over and above physical and emotional constraints, these calamities have limited the prospect for proper implementation of effective programs of rehabilitation as officials are simply unable to deliver comprehensive programs due to overcrowded facilities coupled with inadequate human resources. This also impinges the safety of correctional officials, who are often attacked by gangs; a common scenario we have come to see as normal under the circumstances.

Part of the mistakes committed by the department of Correctional Services has been the introduction of outsourcing and privatisation. These have had adverse effects on inmates labour and social reintegration, which added on the mammoth challenges faced by Correctional Services today. We will be pushing for Correctional Services to develop policies which will enhance better employment opportunities for inmates on their release, address the long standing challenge of staff shortages and overcrowding for improved productivity and subsequently better service delivery, and that they should work closely with the Department of Social Development for better reintegration of ex-offenders.

To this extent, POPCRU is determined to take care of its members’ needs by continuing to provide and deliver professional and high-quality service that will keep its membership committed to the union’s vision by ways of constantly bargaining for decent wages, workplace health and safety, and overall improved working conditions, develop a policy position for the establishment of an enforcement agency within the Collective Bargaining Councils to enforce the implementation of signed agreements, and ensure that our policy position on nationalisation of traffic is fully implemented.
A Shopsteward must be a disciplinarian to strengthen progressive trade unions in the workplace

‘The exemplary vanguard role of the Communists is of vital importance. Communists should set an example in fighting bravely, carrying out orders, observing discipline, doing political work and fostering internal unity and solidarity’—Mao

By Norman Mampane

Discipline displayed in practice at COSATU affiliated trade unions march in Johannesburg
Discipline is the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behaviour or more able to control themselves according to certain rules. Discipline is not something you have or don’t have; nor is it something you’re born with. It is a decision you make to do something and see it through to completion, or a decision to do some things consistently or not to do some things.

Marxists have emphasised that ‘the revolution, in other words, consists not merely in the transfer of power from one class to another; but also in the transition from one form of power to another. The task, as Marx put it, was to analyse the form of power appropriate for the economic emancipation of labour’ [Marx 1973a, The Civil War in France, p290].

Such transfer of power warrants a legislated responsibility in terms of the Labour Relations Act, as amended. There are contradictions workers face at the shop floor level!

There are various perspectives on how shopstewards are expected to execute their ‘legislated’ roles at any given time. Many argue that Shop stewards are the foundation of the Union. It is through them that Union is able to exercise democracy and workers control. The duties of a shop steward are part of the balancing act between the wishes of management and the needs of organized labour. Some says Shopstewards are members elected by union members in their department or shift, according to the union constitution. They represent that constituency. Shopstewards are accountable to the workers who elected them. And accountability or being accountable is highly associated with discipline!

What is discipline?

Discipline is the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behaviour or more able to control themselves according to certain rules. Discipline is not something you have or don’t have; nor is it something you’re born with. It is a decision you make to do something and see it through to completion, or a decision to do some things consistently or not to do some things.

Marxists have emphasised that ‘the revolution, in other words, consists not merely in the transfer of power from one class to another; but also in the transition from one form of power to another. The task, as Marx put it, was to analyse the form of power appropriate for the economic emancipation of labour’ [Marx 1973a, The Civil War in France, p290].

The Shopsteward

The character of disciplinary power is such, he argues, that its mechanisms cannot be grasped by a ‘juridical’ consciousness, which sees in power nor more that the ‘enunciation of a law’ from some central organising instance; no more than the issue of prohibition from above. First, the ‘productive’ character of disciplinary power is missed by a consciousness associates all power ‘negatively’ with ‘prohibition’ or ‘repression’. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. [D&P, p.194]

Disciplinary power is not merely exercised as a prohibition on those ‘who do not have it’; rather it ‘invests them, is transmitted by them and through them’. Repression, rather than being the essence of this power, is only ‘limit’, power in its ‘fustrated’ or frustrated’ or extreme form. ‘The juridical model of repression corresponds perhaps to the penal law where the sovereign exercised his right to legislate over the life and death of his subject. But with the emergence of the disciplines, power is directed positively at ‘the body and its forces’, to make it 'useful and docile'; to train it, educate it, force it into habits, to 'carry out tasks, perform at ceremonies, emit signs'. There is a resemblance between discipline and democracy! Marx demonstrates the advantages of the application of ‘discipline’ as they enhance ‘co-operation’. ‘...being independent of each other, the workers are isolated... They enter into relations with the capitalist, but not with each other...’ [Marx, 1976, Capital, I, p 451]

Lack of exercise of ‘discipline’ results in repression!

Repression, from this point of view, appears as the encroachment of another person’s will onto this right...’ ‘...Meanwhile, the basis of discipline appears as the development of large-scale collective organization, in opposition to the individual commodity owner.’ [Struggle Against Discipline: The Theory and Politics of Michel Foucault, Bob Fine, 1977a & Foucault M., 1975, Discipline and Punish, Allen Lane] ‘...skills and collective discipline alone can provide the conditions of a struggle that can rock the pillars of an established ‘capitalist’ order...’

Over the years, the training of shopstewards on ‘discipline’ has been promised on the following disciplinary codes;

- A leader and /or an employee must strive for the maximum unity of purpose and functioning of the federation;
- A leader and/or an employee must observe disciplinary codes, behave honestly and carry out decisions of the majority, and of the collective and of higher bodies;
- A leader and/or an employee shall respect decisions taken by the federation in terms of its structures, whether or not he/she personally agrees with them and must report such decisions in a positive manner to avoid undermining them;
- A leader and/or an employee will not behave in a manner that brings the federation or its structures into disrepute or which manifests a flagrant violation of the moral integrity expected of a leader;
- A leader and/or an employee shall refrain publishing, leading and/or distributing any media, which purport to be views of any organised grouping, faction or tendency within the federation;
- A leader and/or an employee shall defend the unity and integrity of the federation and its principles and combat any tendency towards disruption and factionalism. This includes combating propaganda detrimental to the interests of the federation and defends its policies, aims and programs.

Compliance with all these ethical values and standards by all leaders and employees is therefore necessary! [COSATU Leadership Code of Conduct]

Today, the burden amongst, and within, the newly-elected shopstewards is to answer the question on how best can they carry every second the responsibility of shouldering the process of sustaining a moment of ‘Going Back to Basics’ and ‘rebuidling’ the organization on the ground?

What is revolutionary discipline?

Historically revolutionary discipline was first adopted by revolutionary parties, guided by revolutionary programmes. Karl Marx founded the First Communist International on the principles of revolutionary discipline.

The defeat of anarchism led by Bakunin and the triumph of Marxism marked a historic milestone in the development of working class movement. Revolutionary discipline belongs to the subjective factor of the revolution and is informed by the vision of a new society free of oppression and exploitation. The critical question is how to change the world [Karl Marx in Renton 2001:107]

Revolutionary discipline is underpinned by revolutionary consciousness, a product of revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice.

Shopstewards as leaders should be the champions of theory and revolutionary practical! On the issue of revolutionary discipline, high sounding phrases not matched by action, are mere words. More significantly revolutionary discipline is conscious observance of rules inspired by revolutionary morality and political consciousness. Revolutionary discipline is the embodiment of new morality that reflects profound interests of working class people and social progress. [Revolutionary Discipline: Perspective of the ANC, October, 2011]

How can progressive organizations resolve issues of splits or factions?

The answer is a struggle for discipline!

‘The basic conflict between exploiter and exploited under capitalism produces many grievances among working people. But trying to address them individually won’t do it. Workers have little power if they withhold just their own labor-they are too easily replaced. So even basic acts of resistance require individuals coming together to fight.’

[Marx’s Theory of working class revolution, Alan Maass, October, 2010]

The longer a struggle carries on, the more the need for unity asserts itself and the more its participants can become committed to solidarity as a principle! Revolutionary discipline is a necessary ingredient to determine whether a class struggle moves forward or backward! ‘Above all, working people involved in any kind of struggle ultimately have to confront the divisions built up in their ranks and as the struggle continues, feelings of solidarity and a sense of the wider questions at stake start to become as important as the original issues...’-

Marx.

Application of revolutionary discipline drives workers to overcome what separates them and to unite and fight...’
but whether there will be a revolutionary reconstitution of society, on this basis depends on the class struggle, on the discipline of social forces associated with a new way of organizing society to overcome the power of the old ruling class.

Discipline must be administered without fear or favour

A disciplined Shopsteward at all times is a master of all circumstances at the shop floor level and radiates confidence of the members in the authority of any organisation. This process cannot take place in a vacuum. After discipline has been implemented for a while, there will be a difference in opinion and it will transform into a struggle. When differences arise, ill-discipline begins anew. It is not possible to have discipline every day or every year. When discipline is talked about, then there must be ill-discipline. Ill-discipline is unconditional. Sometimes there is no discipline even when discipline is talked about. Therefore, it is necessary to do something in order to attain discipline. To talk all the time about discipline, and never about struggle, is not Marxism. ‘This is dialectics,’ argues Marxists. One cannot talk about discipline alone without talking about struggles and contradictions!

The context in this regard is derived from the 8th National Congress resolutions around ‘Consolidating Working Class Power for Quality Jobs’ in which the federation eloquently admitted that ‘we have inherited a rich legacy of democratic and militant trade unionism from our predecessors, directly from the 1973 Durban strikes that led to the resurgence of the democratic trade union movement 32 years ago. We owe it to these pioneers to sustain, build and strengthen COSATU. The recent Central Committee re-anchored such a spirit by re-emphasising ‘Building Unity and Cohesion of COSATU to advance the National Democratic Revolution’.

This theme reflects the area(s) focus of our work from the last Congress, where we agreed to focus on building organisation, protecting jobs, pushing for economic transformation and building unity. We have intensified our workplace visit campaigns by listening to the workers and also addressing all their challenges as we have done for the past years. COSATU continues to lead the members and unions in their struggles and campaigns as a way of building strong workplace organisation, and also consolidating their unity, cohesion and organisational power. The Federation remains resolute in its commitment to fight for workers rights and socio-economic justice for all!

In the recent years, the 2017 Central Committee [CC] has wittingly confirmed our shared perspective to deepen appreciation of the complex challenges facing the working class which demands of us a longer-term vision to build a strong trade union movement and to re-assert working class leadership. We reasserted that ‘the march to our longer-term vision demands patience, resilience, bold thinking, foresighted and visionary leadership. Without confronting the power of the white monopoly capital we are all doomed.’

Certainly such a ‘march’ demands unwavering commitment to organizational principles regardless of short-term defeats, retreats and provocations.

Newly-elected shopstewards have a duty to re-assert working class leadership where they are employed and/or are organizing workers.

COSATU remains a giant and the leader of the pack

Today in South Africa, there is not a single organisation or institution that can claim to have defended the workers and the poor better than COSATU.

COSATU has silenced the doubters and proved wrong the cynics, who argued that this giant federation had lost its power.

We remain the biggest workers’ formation on the continent of Africa and we shall continue to grow our numbers by organizing the unorganized.

We have a recruitment campaign that will see each COSATU member recruiting one member a month called: ‘Each one recruit one, our power and strength is in our unity and numbers’.

We led the charge and ultimately defeated the reactionary lobby groups like the Free Market Foundation and the South African Institute of Race Relations as well as backw ard-looking political parties like the DA and other Federations in their attempt to attack the National Minimum Wage and Collective Bargaining.

Discipline becomes critical to achieve all the deliverables. All that is required of trade union members in a proletariat state is that they should understand comrades discipline and the necessity of uniting the workers for the purpose of protecting the interests of the working people... Role and functions of the Trade Union under the New Economic Policy, Decision of the CC(RCPB), January 12, 1922]

When Marxism argues that the employed proletariat, the working class in this sense of the word, is the revolutionary vanguard class force, it is not arguing that workers are necessarily the poorest of the poor. However, the working class is exploited by capitalism, but it occupies a critical strategic place within modern production itself. The working class is united and disciplined by capitalist production itself, and it is unity and discipline that can be turned strategically against capitalism for thorough transformation. The job of workers is to provide social forces to ensure revolutionary transformation of our society.

‘Being a shop steward does not give the employee the right to behave however he/she likes whenever he/ she likes. While he/she is not acting in his/her shop steward capacity he/she can be treated just like any employee. Furthermore, even where the shop steward is carrying out union activities he/she is still obliged to do so honestly and within the law.

Thus, where a shop steward, during a legitimate strike, starts destroying property he cannot simply hide behind his shop steward mantle in order to avoid discipline or criminal prosecution. Thus, managers do have the right to discipline shop stewards but this must be done for fair reasons and in a fair manner. Ignoring the legal procedures is extremely dangerous when disciplining any employee, but to do so in the case of a shop steward can cause irreparable damage. [Dismissing Shop Stewards Is Not Easy by Ivan Israelram, 2015]

An organizational discipline becomes a critical component of ‘Going Back to Basis’.

Legislated responsibilities

Item 4(2) of the LRA’s Code of Good Practice: Dismissal states that discipline against a shop steward should not be instituted before the employer has first consulted with the trade union. These consultations should be aimed at seeking ways of resolving the problem without resorting to discipline. The purpose of this provision is to allow the parties to find a solution that will reduce the likelihood of industrial unrest provoked by the dismissal of a shop steward. However, while employers are required to enter into such pre-dismissal consultations in good faith, this does not mean that the employer is required to accept the trade union’s proposals for avoiding the discipline of the shop steward. That is, where the parties have thoroughly explored the alternatives in vain, the employer may then go ahead and institute disciplinary steps.

Currently a debate has been introduced as to whether we should call employees representing workers ‘shopstewards or stewards’ based on the changing nature of work and different connotations attached to a particular workplace. Some workplaces are plants or site whilst others may be called shops.

The term ‘shop steward’ is a colloquial one and refers to the employee elected as the workplace representative by fellow employees who belong to the relevant trade union. The Labour Relations Act (LRA) officially refers to shop stewards as “trade union representatives”. Section 14 of the LRA gives these representatives (shop stewards) a number of special rights such as the right to:

- Assist employees in disciplinary and grievance hearings.
- Monitor and report any of the employer’s contraventions of the law to the appropriate authorities.
- Take reasonable time off with pay during working hours in order to perform these duties.

Dealing with contradictions in the context of Discipline and Ill-Discipline

The study of Politics, Aristotle declared, is “to consider what form of political community is best of all for those who are most able to realize their ideal of life” (The Politics, Book II). This question has vexed philosophers, statesmen, politicians, and citizens from Aristotle’s time until ours. Machiavelli gave guidance to the Prince on maintaining power; Bentham gave guidance to the legislators on promoting “the greatest happiness of the greatest number”.

Happiness depends on individual factors such as personality, income, health, and the individual’s perceived freedom to make important life choices.
Happiness also depends on social determinants such as the degree of trust in the community, and on political factors such as the government’s adherence to the rule of law. Has South Africans in the period under review enjoyed “political or economic happiness, and if the answer is no, what were the contributory factors?”

If, the answer is yes, what were the contributory factors to be sustained? If the answer is no, has that have to do with the downgrading of the economic status to technical recession and/or lack of accountability in governance? Or this was caused by the effects of state capture? Mao in unpacking dialectics as a tool to analyse had this to say, ‘... Accuracy and inaccuracy are the unity of opposites. The two-point theory is correct, while the single-point theory is incorrect. Historically, there is no such fact as only accuracy being free of mistakes. It is merely to deny the unity of opposites. Mistakes will still be made. It is impossible not to make mistakes.

To make mistakes is an indispensable prerequisite to the formation of a correct line. A correct line is spoken in regard to an incorrect line. The two of them of are the unity of opposites. Without contradictions and struggles, there will be no world, no development; no life, no anything. We must break down the old basis of unity, go through struggle and attain unity on a new basis. [Examples of Dialectics, : Long Live Mao Zedong Thought, a Red Guard Publication, 1959]

Discipline and ill-discipline also depicts the unity of opposites! Many will recall that after 2017 Polokwane watershed moment many thought it was an ushering of an era of unity, unity and unity. But the opposite of unity took place, disunity! Shopstewards must be empowered to manage and deal with contradictions!

Tackling ill-discipline amongst the rank and file
Anarchy does not accord with the interests or wishes of the people. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline; we cannot do without democracy, nor can we do without centralism. This unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism. Progressive trade unions are primary established to fight for better wages for workers. The late SACP General Secretary, Joe Slovo put it simply by saying:’A trade union is the prime mass organisation of the working class. To fulfil its purpose, it must be as broad as possible and fight to maintain its legal status. It must attempt, in the first place, to unite, on an industrial basis, all workers (at whatever level of political consciousness) who understand the elementary need to come together and defend and advance their economic conditions. It cannot demand more as a condition of membership. But because the state and its political and repressive apparatus is an instrument of the dominant economic classes, it is impossible for trade unions in any part of the world to keep out of the broader political conflict.

Especially in our country, where racist domination and capitalist exploitation are two sides of the same coin, it is even more clear that a trade union cannot stand aside from the liberation struggle. Indeed, the trade union movement is the most important mass contingent of the working class. Its organised involvement in struggle, both as an independent force and as part of the broad liberation alliance, undoubtedly reinforces the dominant role of the workers as a class. In addition, trade unions’ and workers’ experience of struggle in unions provide the most fertile field in which to school masses of workers in socialist understanding and political consciousness.’

The interconnectedness between class struggle and revolutionary discipline is vividly exposed by how Slovo upholds the role of Trade Unions.

He further said ‘...Without open public elections, complete participation of the mass of the membership in all decision-making, day-to-day accountability of officials, etc., trade unionism would lose its effectiveness.

The fundamental purpose of Marxism theory discipline education is to cultivate the Marxism theory accomplishment for the educated, in order for them to grow up to be a consciously Marxist. The fundamental standard for measuring the effect of Marxism theory course education is whether the educated really have an overall understanding and clear cognition on “what is Marxism”, and learn to think like Marx. And in a certain sense, the overall understanding and application of discipline

Enhancing the Principle of Workers’ Control
“Let a hundred flowers blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend” and “long-term coexistence and mutual supervision”–how did these slogans come to be put forward? Respect for workers’ control within the federation is, amongst, the importance discipline which every Shopsteward must carry! Shopstewards must appreciate the human development does not happen in a vacuum. Mistakes will be committed and contradictions will always happen. However, mistakes such as ill-discipline must be minimized to rebuild strong and vibrant organization on the ground.

...Therefore, it is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues’, argued Mao. ‘Many do not admit that contradictions still exist in socialist society, with the result that they become irresolute and passive when confronted with social contradictions; they do not understand that socialist society grows more united and consolidated through the ceaseless process of correctly handling and resolving contradictions’, argued Mao.

Trade Unionists as a Disciplinarian-
What must be done?

Newly-elected shopstewards must be practitioners of discipline in every aspect of their ‘legislated’ responsibilities as workers’ representatives to achieve organizational objectives; viz, representing workers in all workplaces.

According to a recent survey by America Online and Salary.com, the average workers confess to wasting 2.09 hours per 8 hour workday and this doesn’t include lunch and scheduled breaks. Companies are under the assumption that a certain amount of time is wasted, and that is factored in when determining employee pay. When discipline is missing, there is a tendency to drift in all directions leaving loose ends and uncompleted tasks. Staying focused and on track is where discipline comes in. There is an over used cliché, “there are too many irons in the fire”. Focusing on one task at a time until it is completed and completed on time and in within budget is true discipline at its best.[7 Powerful Characteristics of Discipline, 2012]

Simply put, discipline is managing time in the most effective way. It is completing each and every task in a preset time frame. Discipline is the ability to stay focused and on course. It is always keeping commitments we make with ourselves and others. Many shopstewards must appreciate that first of all, from its forming process, Marxism theory is the unity of theory and practice. We know that Marx himself was a staunch fighter of the proletariat, and his lifelong fundamental goal is to overthrow the bourgeois rule, establish communism, and realize the liberation of mankind. In order to achieve this ideal, showing of discipline in class struggle become imperative!

Let’s go back to Basics. Organize, organize, organize and organize!!
Campaign Strategy on Occupational Health & Safety

Key Focus on Agreement in the Nomination and Election of Health and Safety Representatives

The ILO Constitution sets forth the principle that workers should be protected from sickness, disease and injury arising from their employment. Yet for millions of workers the reality is very different. The ILO estimates that 2.02 million people die each year and South Africa is not in an exceptional situation.

COSATU Occupational Health Safety, HIV and Aids Policy Co-ordinator, Jacqueline Bodibe writes about a campaign to eradicate non-adherence to issues of health and safety at the workplace. COSATU acknowledges the importance of occupational health and safety, and have realised that there is insufficient adherence to the Occupational Health and Safety Act by the employers.

There is a need to campaign and mobilise our members around the right to nominate and elect health and safety representatives, and further election of a strong and effective health and safety committee, whose role is to make sure that workers are protected from unsafe conditions in the workplace.

Very important is adherence by employer, effective monitoring and evaluation is central to the campaign.

Legal framework

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, section 17 (health and safety representatives) states that every employer who has more than 20 employees in his employment shall within four months after commencing of business designate in writing for a specific time health and safety representatives for that workplace.

The General Administrative Regulation of 25 June 2003, section 6 (negotiations and consultations before designation of health and safety) states that the employer shall in any workplace where there must be a health and safety representative in terms of section 17(1) of the Act within four after the commencement of these regulations meet with the registered trade union of that workplace in order to consult or bargain in good faith an agreement concerning the following:

1. Nomination or election of health and safety representatives;
2. Term of office of the health and safety representatives;
3. Circumstances and the prescribed manner in which they may be removed as health and safety representatives;
4. Manner in which vacancies are to be filled;
5. Manner in which health and safety representatives must perform their functions in terms of section 18 (1 – 4);
6. Facilities, training and assistance that must be provided to a health and safety representative in terms of section 18 (3).

The Occupational Health and Safety Agreement must follow the same conditions as applicable to collective agreements in terms of the Labour Relations Act. A dispute shall exist if agreement in terms of sub-regulation (1) is not concluded on the arrangement and procedure for nomination and election of health and safety representatives in the workplace.

The trade union can refer the dispute to the CCMA or Bargaining Council. The CCMA shall attempt to resolve the dispute through conciliation. If still unresolved then through to arbitration, taking into account the objectives of the Act and the proposals of the parties, determine the arrangement and procedure for the nomination and election of the health and safety representatives.

The employer shall ensure that the designation of health and safety representatives is in accordance with the agreement.

Recommendations

COSATU must have a campaign on Occupational Health and Safety Agreements. As a point of entry trade unions and employers must conclude Occupational Health and Safety Agreement. Affiliates must develop programmes to realise this campaign, some of the key campaigns are development of the OHS model agreement, pamphlet and poster and meeting with the employers.

This campaign will be a catalyst to revive COSATU health and safety month, revive the importance of health and safety representatives and committee, and overall importance of Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace. Activism around health of workers and their safety is critical.
COSATU submission on Foreign Service Bill

COSATU Parliamentary Coordinator, Matthew Parks, has made a presentation before the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation and argued on issues affecting public servants as and when they are deployed in various missions across the world.

1. Labour Relations, Policies, Codes and Directives

COSATU’s main concern with the bill is the blank cheque it gives to the Minister and the Department to determine labour relations, policies, codes and directives. This is a major source of contention and anguish for our members in Dirco and other affected departments.

Dirco like all other public service departments falls under the Public Service Collective Bargaining Council. It is the PSCBC which collectively negotiates public service labour relations and conditions of service. This is no reference to this in the bill. There is no provision for collective engagements between the department and unions to negotiate such policies. This is in complete contradiction with PSCBC rules and regulations and practices.

We are also deeply concerned that since the previous decision by the Portfolio Committee for this bill not only to be tabled but engaged upon at the PSCBC that we believe this has in fact not happened. The bill was tabled at the PSCBC but no engagements have taken place on it to our knowledge. COSATU is equally alarmed that the bill does not provide for internal engagements at Dirco between the employer and employees and their union representatives.

COSATU Proposal:

1. The bill needs to be engaged upon at the PSCBC.
2. The bill needs to be amended to state that the F5 labour relations, policies, codes and directives will be engaged upon with employees and their union representatives at the PSCBC and internally in Dirco.

2. Recalling of F5 Personnel from Missions

COSATU is concerned again with the blank cheque that has been provided to the employer to determine how and when F5 personnel can be recalled from missions. There is no provision provided for these policies to be engaged upon at the PSCBC and internally with employees and their union representatives.

The recalling of F5 personnel will have a serious detrimental effect upon the affected employees and their families. F5 personnel receive certain conditions when posted overseas. These include paid accommodation for their families and schooling for their children. A sudden recall may then result in their family members also being abruptly recalled. This can result in their children being pulled out of their school year before its completion. It will also have a significant negative financial impact upon them.

In simple words a recall will result in immediate punitive consequences for the F5 personnel and their families.

This is regardless of whether or not they will be found guilty in a later disciplinary process.

COSATU Proposal:

1. The recall procedures and policies need to be amended to state that the F5 labour relations, policies, codes and directives will be engaged upon with employees and their union representatives at the PSCBC and internally in Dirco.

4. Heads of Mission

The memorandum of the bill speaks to the criteria and requirements for the appointment of Heads of Mission. The bill is silent upon what are these criteria and requirements. There have been numerous instances where questionable Heads of Mission have been appointed e.g. instances where they were clearly unqualified in the field of international relations or had criminal convictions or when linked to serious criminal activities or were simply unqualified to represent the nation as a Head of Mission.

The bill does not provide for any role for Parliament to oversee or be apprised of the appointments of Heads of Mission. Such roles exist for some Parliaments internationally. COSATU would not want to see a situation where Parliament had to authorise the appointment of Ambassadors and the resultant delays and political stand offs as seen in the United States.

There would be value in requiring Heads of Mission designate to present their vision and credentials to the Portfolio Committee before being deployed for courtesy, protocol and information purposes as well as to provide space for Parliament to interrogate and share their views on South Africa’s relations with the affected country of deployment.

COSATU Proposal:

4. The bill needs to be amended to require Heads of Missions present their credentials and visions to the Portfolio Committee for engagement before departing for their deployment.

5. Conclusion

COSATU would like to thank the Committee and its Members for arranging this important engagement with COSATU on this critical bill for workers and the state. Whilst COSATU welcomes the intentions of the bill we are concerned about certain critical provisions.

We strongly believe that there needs to be an engagement on it at the PSCBC. We believe that the bill needs to be amended to provide for labour relations, policies, codes and directives to be engaged upon at the PSCBC and with the department’s employees and union representatives. This needs to include in particular the policies and conditions related to the recalling of F5 personnel from postings.

Lastly, we believe that there is a need to provide a role for the Portfolio Committee when Heads of Mission are appointed and that this can best be done by their presenting their credentials and visions to it prior to being deployed.

www.cosatu.org.za

April/May 2018 • The Shopsteward 13
Community Participation is Key to a Transformative, Competitively Growing Mining Industry

by Sello Helepi

The economy

The Ministry of Mineral Resources is currently consulting with mining communities, listening to their views on how the mining industry affects them. Thus far, it has interacted with stakeholders in four provinces, with the remaining five to be completed in the coming weeks.

Initially, some commentators expressed reservations about the process being too complex, even doubting if it will happen at all. Anchoring the Ministry’s approach is the political will to engage the communities, and the need to bring about regulatory certainty to the sector. Communities affected by mining embraced this opportunity for active engagement and participation and are making well thought-out, structured and valuable inputs into the Mining Charter. Mining communities engaged to date, in at least 4 provinces, have expressed overwhelming appreciation for the Minister’s responsiveness in including them in what they want to see in the Mining Charter and frankly express what they don’t like to see in it.

This kind of engagement empowers communities with information, offers them a platform to be listened to and gives them direct access to engage with their public representatives.

Mining is an important economic activity. In the context of our country, we should aim to ensure that mining occurs in a transformative and competitive environment. This places the imperative on the sector to, on the one hand, grow the economy and, on the other hand, ensure that economic growth accrues for the whole of society, and for communities directly impacted upon by mining.

The Department of Mineral Resources is currently initiating bold initiatives to re-invigorate the industry and unlock its real potential. One of the areas that stand to be positively impacted by a re-invigorated mining industry is the redress of past inequalities and the transformation of South African society. The Mining Charter, which is a tool for transformation, is a powerful pact between all stakeholders to contribute towards the achievement of an equal, non-racial and non-sexist society envisioned in our Constitution.

Alongside the transformation pillar is the strategy for competitiveness and growth. Mining’s contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has fallen from 21% in 1970 to 6% in 2011. However, the sector still represents 60% of exports. Granted that commodity prices

The Shopsteward
have bottomed of late, the pressing challenge to the sector is to revision by finding new innovative ways to exploit existing resources while we share the benefit with communities. Recent statistics show that South Africa is endowed with abundance of ore reserves amounting to more than US$2.5 trillion in value.

According to Statistics South Africa, the mining sector accounts for 7.48% of GDP and is ranked 5th internationally in terms of mining contribution to GDP.

Transformation and competitive growth will best serve the country when they happen in an environment of mining communities that feel and see the benefits of mining. Our participative democracy, which is at the heart of broad-based socio-economic transformation, intends to move mining communities from the periphery to join the pact. The recent judgement of the North Gauteng High Court regarding the need to consult effected mining communities about the Mining Charter, which is contemplated in section 100 of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act 28 of 2002 (MPRDA), reinforces this view.

Quality community consultation and engagement are building blocks for good governance, good business and good management of results for everyone.

Consultation, therefore, is a critical part of fostering involvement and engagement where community expectations are considered by regulators.

A concerted national effort of deep partnerships and collaborations in the true spirit of our participative democracy is underway to bring about a much-needed sunrise to the sector which is the lifeblood of South Africa.

The size of the industry is currently R230 billion and has been contracting in recent years. This contraction must be arrested by all of us. The re-visioning process currently underway could breathe life back into the sector. Some economists even estimate that there will be an increase of up to 80% in investment with stabilisation of policy. Herein lies the potential to trigger an investment boom.

Business Monitor International (BMI), a division of FitchGroup, also released a note that if efforts to deliver an improved Mining Charter agreed by all stakeholders are successful, they will revise the country’s regulatory sub-Saharan mining risk/reward index low score. Currently, South Africa scores 50 on the overall risk/reward index, is placed third among 16 African countries. Globally, South Africa is placed 34th, behind Botswana (23) and Ghana (23).

Community engagements on the Mining Charter reveal huge potential of the sector to deliver a better life for all. When one truly makes concerted efforts to inform, consult and listen to their communities on the one hand, and communities are engaged and actively participate on the other it always makes for healthy democracy where citizens are involved and have a sense of ownership of decisions made to benefit them.

Affected mining community stakeholder groups sent their representatives to engage with Team DMR on behalf of their members and to make structured inputs into the Charter process. Communities took specific issue with the proposed Mining Transformation and Development Agency which was designed to manage shareholding on their behalf and, instead, suggested, perpetual Community Trusts.

The decision to engage is both fulfilling and informative as communities raise a variety of transformation and trust issues. Team DMR is taking heed of their submissions.

In the community consultations meetings that have happened to date, salient issues have been made by the community participants. Critically, what has come forth is that there is a trust deficit between communities and the Department, on one hand, and the mining companies, on the other hand. Communities are of the view that the Department is ineffective and, at times, seems to serve the interests of mining companies instead of their own - as owners of the land on which mining occurs. In most instances, communities perceive officials to be colluding with companies for their own selfish interest - including corrupt behaviour.

Regarding the mining companies, communities see them as interested only in profit making without regard for their welfare and livelihood.

Some examples pointed to are how mining companies pollute water resources and the environment in general; how where relocations occur the industry disrespects their graves and how blasting ruins people’s homes.

It is in this context that we need to appreciate the importance and relevance of the Mine Social Labour Plans (SLP). The SLP, born out of the MPRDA, are designed to actualize the goals of the Mining Charter and benefit mining host communities and labour sending areas among others.

Therefore, the need to manage openly and improve mining-government-community partnership and dialogue in implementing SLPs is paramount.

There needs to be adequate consultations with communities by mines in the formulation and implementation of SLP projects.

These must be monitored regularly, and companies would need to ensure community access to the mines’ SLP documents, to enable communities input in how projects are structured and designed to benefit them. But also, it is about the mining companies cooperating among themselves and pooling SLP projects to achieve maximum impact in communities.

Linked to this aspect is the view of communities about the failure of the industry to comply and fulfill its commitment, and the failure of the Department to enforce regulation. This breeds conflict between the community and the other actors. It further impacts on their perception of the Mining Charter, that it should not be merely a social pact but an enforceable tool. It is, therefore, important for the industry to appreciate this as we search for a global compact for transformation and competitive growth.

These issues, among others, demonstrate that for mining to happen so the country and everyone benefits, greater effort should be invested by the DMR, the mining companies, labour and communities on building and restoring trust.

The immediate challenges are, therefore, the need to create structured, regular engagements between mines, DMR and affected communities. In addition, it is important to rehabilitate and restore mined land; address the problems of greed and corruption manifesting in the industry; ensure transparency and accountability in the awarding of prospecting and mining licenses.

The participation and views of the affected communities, as we work towards finalizing the Charter, are critical since they reflect the aspirations of the people. Inputs from all community engagements will be fed into the Charter task team.

Other non-Charter inputs, that is, those issues in relation to the Department or specific mining houses and communities, are being directed to sections of the DMR to process.

The Department has committed itself to exert the much-needed impact and effort to respond to the needs of its clients, that is, employers, trade unions and communities.

This presents the new dawn of hope characterized by trust-building collaboration for the mining sector with a promise to deliver a better life for all.
What do you know about Domestic Workers Rights including labour laws?

Who is a Domestic Worker?

A domestic worker is a gardener, driver or person who looks after children, the aged, sick, frail or disabled in a private household, but not on a farm. This is the view taken in the Unemployment Insurance Contributions Act, 2002 (Act No. 4 of 2002).

The Domestic Workers’ Act

The Domestic Workers’ Act sets out minimum wages for domestics and specifies working conditions such as hours of work, overtime pay, salary increases, deductions, annual and sick leave. This legislation also lists the urban areas (classified as A Areas) where one minimum wage applies. A second minimum wage applies to domestic workers in non-urban areas (B Areas).

To whom does the Domestic Workers Act apply?

To the estimated 1 to 1.5 million workers in the country who work as domestics, gardeners, childminders (including drivers of children) and those who look after the sick, aged or disabled in private homes. The legislation also covers domestic workers who work as independent contractors.

What is the Minimum Wage for Domestic Workers?

The Shopsteward

Hours of Work, Leave and Dismissal

According to the legislation, domestic workers should work no more than 45 hours a week, and should not work more than nine hours a day if they work a five-day week, or more than eight hours a day if they work for more than five days a week.

Domestic worker should work no more than 15 hours a week overtime, and no more than three hours on any one day. They should also receive double pay on Sundays or public holidays.

Employers whose domestics live on the property may deduct 10% of their salary for accommodation, providing the accommodation complies with the minimum standards laid down in the legislation.

An employer wishing to dismiss a worker must give a week’s notice if the domestic has been employed for six months or less and four weeks’ notice if he or she has worked for more than six months.

Domestics are also entitled to severance pay of one week for each year of service, as well as four months’ unpaid maternity leave.

The only condition of this is that the domestic has been employed for more than six months. Domestic workers and their employers must contribute 1 percent of the wages to the Unemployment Insurance Fund as from 1 April 2003. The only condition of this is that the domestic worker works more than 24 hours a month. Registration cannot be backdated.

An employer may require a medical certificate before paying workers who are absent for more than 2 consecutive days or who are often absent (more than twice in an 8-week period). Fees that are paid for medical treatment by an employer may be deducted from the workers’ pay.

Is there a union for Domestic Workers?

Yes, there is - the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers’ Union (SADSAWU).

Can Domestic Workers receive training to upgrade their skills?

Yes. This year a massive training project, the Domestic Workers Skills Development Project, was launched. Financed by the Department of Labour’s National Skills Fund to the tune of R120-million, the project aims to train 27 000 domestic workers around the country over the next three years. Trainees will receive formal recognition for their skills.

The training is being overseen by the Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Seta), which has set up a discrete chamber for domestic services, based in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape.

Visit the Services Sector Education and Training Authority website for more information, or contact their office on (041) 582-4000.

UIF for Domestic Workers

Domestic workers and their employers must contribute 1 percent of the wages to the Unemployment Insurance Fund as from 1 April 2003. The only condition of this is that the domestic worker works more than 24 hours a month. Registration cannot be backdated.

• Where one household employs more than one domestic worker, only one domestic employer registration is necessary.
• If a domestic worker is employed by more than one employer each employer must register separately and ensure that the domestic worker is registered. This also applies to agents or bookkeepers administering the affairs of more than one domestic employer.
• Separate registrations are also required in cases where a commercial employer is also a domestic employer. Registration and payment of contributions of domestic workers may not be included in that of a commercial enterprise.
• People employed by businesses that are run from private households are not regarded as domestic workers.
• People employed by corporate entities as gardeners or cleaners in housing complexes are also not regarded as being employed in private households.
• Companies, Close Corporations, Partnerships and any other Corporate Bodies are not domestic employers.
• It is deemed fraud when beneficiaries who are receiving benefits return to work, but fail to inform the Fund about their new status and continue to draw benefits.

For more information visit www.sadsawu.com
www.labour.gov.za where you also find a link to the Provincial Offices and Labour Centres.
Call UIF Head Office
Tel: (012) 337 1700

www.cosatu.org.za
1. Introduction

COSATU is deeply disappointed with government’s VAT hike. It effectively punishes the poor for the sins of the rich. COSATU does not want to see government collapse due to its precarious financial straits. However these are largely self inflicted by rapacious political elite and their lecherous friends. Now government has passed the bills to workers to pay. COSATU condemns the VAT hike in the strongest possible terms. We hope that government is actually listening to the anger of workers and their struggling families.

COSATU feels government took the easy route out in seeking to address its burgeoning revenue shortfalls. We feel there were many alternative options to address the shortfalls, albeit requiring harder work and creativity. Nonetheless they existed and still exist. Equally painful, is the fact that this VAT hike, the first in 25 years, is hurt the working and middle classes. This year’s tax hikes essentially thrust of government’s 2018 budget

2. Reasons for the VAT Hike

COSATU understands that there are essentially six key reasons why government dumped its responsibilities upon the backs of the impoverished:

- Need to ensure the fiscal sustainability of the state.
- Need to assure the rating agencies that government has the revenue streams to stem the bleeding and salvage the state’s finances.
- Rapidly rising levels of revenue lost to rampant levels of corruption, irregular and wasteful expenditure.
- Collapsing state owned enterprises and their need for constant massive bail outs.
- Rapidly declining revenue collections by SARS under a deeply compromised leadership.
- Declining SARS revenue collections due to an economic downturn, 1% jobless economic growth rates, 36% persistent unemployment levels and thousands of retrenchments across all economic sectors.

COSATU agrees with government on the need to address these existential threats to both the state and the nation. Workers will be and are already the first victims of these crises. However we do not agree with some of government’s methods to address these crises. The major thrust of government’s 2018 budget interventions has been to saddle the poor with not only the VAT hike but also a barrage of other tax hikes. Nowhere in the above six factors can it be said that workers are the cause of the crises.

It is not workers who have mismanaged the state. It is not workers who have R50 billion worth of stolen assets identified by the recently awakened Hawks. It is not workers who have reduced SAA from being the pride of Africa to the verge of complete collapse despite repeated billions of bail outs. It is not workers who have reduced Eskom to a slush fund for the Guptas. It is not workers who have doubled the size of cabinet. It is not workers who wrote off hundreds of millions of Rands of tax due by notorious gang leaders and smugglers. It is not workers who smuggle in billions of Rand’s worth of clothing and tobacco. However, we do agree with government that it is workers who are the first to suffer when we were downgraded by the rating agencies for the shenanigans of our politicians and their benefactors.

3. COSATU’s Reasons for Opposing the Anti-Poor VAT Hike

COSATU rejects with utter contempt the VAT hike for its reasons, its impact and for the need for sustainable solutions to government’s many crises. It is not workers who ran amok with taxpayers’ monies, why send them the bill? Send it to those who stripped the state.

3.1 VAT is Regressive

VAT is a regressive tax. No matter what spin academics may indulge in, it is REGRESSIVE. Yes an intellectual coffee table discussion may delude itself into believing that it is progressive since the rich spend more and thus more VAT revenues might come from the rich. However, this misses two glaringly simple obvious facts. One, the richest 10% own 90% of South Africa’s income. Two, the poor are the most dependent on their meagre wages and feel most painfully any further reduction in them and their ability to feed their families.

3.2 Barrage of Tax Hikes and Economic Context

Workers over the past three years have been subject to a barrage of tax hikes. These have previously included income tax hikes upon working and middle class families. This year they have come full force in the form of the VAT hike, fuel and RAF hikes and adjusting income tax brackets for the bottom three income groups for 2% whilst inflation is 5.4%. Eskom is now threatening NERSA that it will collapse if it is not given a R66 billion injection to recover lost revenue. This could amount to a 30% electricity tariff hike.

3.3 Future Sustainability

The VAT hike has come into effect. Workers’ pockets are the poorer for it. What guarantee do we have that government’s finances are now sustainable and that we will not see another VAT hike in 2019 or 2020? The underlying causes of government’s financial crises remain. We still have 1% jobless growth. Though it is hoped the planned Presidential Jobs Summit may lay the foundation to turn the economy around. We do strongly...
applaud the efforts by the President. Indeed a breath of fresh air that was long overdue. We welcome the suspension of SARS Commissioner. This should have happened years ago. However, we are deeply disappointed that 7 months after it was called for by the previous finance minister, we have yet to see the commission of enquiry into SARS. This needs to happen as a matter of the highest urgency. A suspension of a captured commissioner will not uncover all the rot that was infecting SARS. The commission must be effected. It must happen urgently and get to the bottom of what was going on at SARS and identify those who must be removed. We remain deeply concerned about government’s plans to rescue Eskom, SAA, SABC and Denel.

We applaud the President’s initial interventions, the removal of corrupt boards etc. However this is not enough. Comprehensive forensic and criminal investigations of these SOEs are needed. The corrupt must be removed. Captured contracts cancelled. Sustainable plans developed. Otherwise they will continue to drain and threaten the state’s very survival.

Eskom in particular continues to be bedevilled by a corrupt parasitic callous and reckless core who show no regard for their treasonous and toxic behaviour. Beyond these initial welcome interventions by the President, we have seen little action by the state to recover stolen assets, arrest those involved and prosecute by the state to recover stolen assets, arrest those involved and prosecute.

We therefore call for the following progressive tax proposals from the Judge Davis Tax Commission.

- Cancel the VAT tax hike to 15%.
- Increase company taxes to 30% or 32% which should generate an additional R13 to R26 billion in revenues.
- Increase estate and inheritance taxes.
- Crack down on the massive rise in illicit tobacco and clothing customs fraud.
- o An estimated R7 billion worth of illegal Chinese clothing imports occurs annually. SARS previously used to impound R500 million to R1 billion illegal clothing imports annually. Recently this fell to less than R7 million. Illicit tobacco is estimated in the billions.
- Increase capital gains tax to 45% which should generate R4 billion in revenue.
- Increase income tax for incomes above R1 million to 45%. It could raise R5 billion.
- Introduction of a tax category for the super rich.
- Introduction of solidarity tax, whose aim is to cap the growth of earnings of the top 10% and to accelerate the earnings of the bottom 10%.
- Introduction of tax on both domestically produced and imported luxury items, but a higher tax on luxury items which are imported.
- Increase in the dividends tax to encourage re-investment, job-creation and to reduce the financialisation of company assets.
- Impostion of a land tax to aid the process of land redistribution.
- Zero-rating of medicines, water, domestic electricity and public education.
- Introduction of export taxes on strategic minerals, metals and other resources to support downstream industries and to promote value-addition.
- Introduction of investment tax credits to encourage local procurement of machinery and equipment.
- Increase taxes on financial transactions e.g. capital gains tax above certain levels to limit short-term capital flows and to encourage productive investment, and speed pumps on short term capital flows to discourage hot money.
- Introduction of tax on firms that resistant to closing the wage gap.

Government needs to work with the United Nations and other relevant bodies to see how illicit financial flows can be stemmed. Between 2001 and 2010 it is estimated that US $84 billion left South Africa. This translated into lost tax revenue of R376 billion between 2001 and 2010 according to Global Financial Integrity. In other words almost 15 times the estimated revenue the VAT hike will generate in 2018/9.

5. COSATU VAT Reform Proposals
5.1 Need for VAT Reform

South Africa’s VAT is a destination-based credit-invoice system with a standard rate of 15% and zero ratings and exemptions on some goods and services. VAT has remained consistent in its share contribution to total tax revenue, with its share from 1994/95 to the present between 24% and 27% of total tax revenue. VAT has proved successful if considered solely from the perspective of revenue-raising. Nevertheless there are concerns about VAT and its impact on the costs of the poor. We believe that CIT and PIT should shoulder a larger proportion of total revenue collected, and should grow. This is due to VAT’s regressive nature and its adverse effect on income distribution.

Our view, however, is that VAT reforms should be initiated to make it more equitable and to make a more substantial contribution to the welfare of poor households, and that this can be done without unnecessarily generating less revenue from the VAT.

We therefore call for the following reforms:

- The zero rating of additional necessity items.
- The introduction of a second, higher VAT rate on luxury consumption items, possibly of 20%.

In believing it is necessary to expand the number of zero rated items, and impose higher VAT charges on luxury items, we differ from the position taken by the Davis Tax Committee. However, South Africa has substantial experience with the VAT, both on the part of the revenue authority and vendors, and we believe introducing an additional complexity (a second higher rate) can be accommodated. The extension of zero rating to additional items would simply extend existing administrative arrangements and is not likely to generate significant further collection costs.

We also believe that differential VAT rates are particularly appropriate for South Africa given the persistent high levels of inequality. A multi-tiered VAT system could also incorporate distributional considerations. We therefore propose the institutionalisation of a structure of progressivity in VAT through multiple rates. We propose an increase from the current two-tiered VAT structure to more tiers, including zero-rated, standard, and luxury goods. We propose a multi-tiered system as VAT is a highly regressive tax and has an adverse effect on income distribution. A revised system will help counter this.

5.2 Need to Expand VAT Exempt Products

COSATU’s other affiliates, in particular SACTWU, regularly explore the budgets and spending of their members. SACTWU’s research for example suggests that there are a number of grocery items purchased by most low income workers and poor households which are not currently zero-rated. For instance, such workers regularly purchase white bread and/ or white flour, from which they make white bread. They also regularly buy white sugar (with which to make bread, and to put in breakfast and tea and coffee, amongst other things).

We are acutely aware of the health challenges posed by such foods. Yet we are also aware that simple carbohydrates and sugar are used by poor families as sources of energy in a context in which their budgets are so squeezed that they can barely afford healthier foods. The realities of grocery spending amongst poor households therefore leads us to call for the zero rating of the following additional items, in addition to the retention of existing zero rated items as given in Schedule 2 of the VAT Act:

- Fresh and frozen poultry (pieces and whole).
- Bread flour.
- White bread.
- White and brown Sugar.
- Canned beans.
- Margarine.
- Polony.
- Basic and essential medicines.
- Matches and candles.
Coal and coal stoves.
Soap and washing powders.
Essential toiletries.
Pay as you go cell phone costs.
Public education and education-related goods, e.g. stationery, textbooks and uniforms.
Energy saving appliances including energy saving light bulbs (which would have a positive green economy spin-off).
Water and domestic electricity:
A graduated tax regime could be utilised with different consumption levels tax at different levels so as to distinguished between essential versus luxury use. In other words the first 2.5kl of water consumed monthly by a family of four could be VAT exempt, the next 5kl taxed at 15% and water usage above that at a luxury VAT rate. The same could apply for electricity consumption. Similar progressively increasing levels of exempt and rate increases are already utilised by some municipalities.

5.3 VAT Exemption Challenges

In our view such extended zero rating is likely to have a real impact on the affordability of necessities for poorer households, with the revenue reduction (tax expenditure) that is entailed covered by the higher VAT rate on selected luxury consumption items. We recognise a number of challenges to extended VAT zero rating, which are used (indeed over-used) in arguing against such extension. As briefly noted above, we do not anticipate significant additional compliance issues and administrative costs, because the extension of zero rating represents the use of the existing VAT 'infrastructure', an infrastructure which is familiar to both vendors and the authorities and which requires no sweeping changes to effect further zero rating.

The main objections to which we give consideration below are firstly that the benefit of such extension will not be passed on to consumers, and in particular poor consumers, and secondly that even if significant benefit shifting does not occur in favour of vendors, rich households also benefit, and will benefit more in absolute terms than poor households. We recognise that the benefit of zero rating will not be passed on in full to households, in other words that the additional cost of zero rating will be borne by the fiscus in the form of additional tax expenditure, and that the benefits will be shared between vendors and households, with this relative distribution determined by elasticities of demand and supply.

Although we also recognise that the nature of many markets for these items for poorer households are characterised by considerable price dispersion on the part of retailers (since in particular rural households lack alternatives), this in itself cannot be an argument against poverty-oriented adjustments to the VAT, any more than any arguments about oligoplastic structures in the food production chain can be. Neither can low consumer literacy be a counter-argument: that is, the assumption that many households may not be aware of extended zero rating and may not be able to assess the impact or non-impact of this on their own household budget and the prices they are charged. Such arguments simply point to broader challenges and the need for additional, coordinated and more assertive reforms in the competitive structure of many markets, as well as for effective communication to consumers about policy changes intended to benefit them. These challenges, we would argue, are not particular to VAT reforms but constitute the underlying context for any activist tax policy in South Africa.

Furthermore, it cannot serve as a rebuttal to the VAT to argue that some benefits are not passed on to intended beneficiaries, since this challenge is inherent to virtually all public spending, with the possible exception of well-targeted direct income transfers. We are not in favour of fiscal transfers to vendors, but we recognise it as an inevitable component of zero rating, which could however be reduced through competition policy measures. We recognise, secondly, that extending zero rating to these items would also confer benefits on richer households. Indeed, in absolute terms the benefits would fall to a larger extent on richer households, who consume more of everything, not just luxury items. Again, however, this is not different from challenges in the zero rating of any VAT and does not constitute, by itself, an argument against removing all zero ratings.

The aim of zero rating is to counter some of the VAT regressivity, and this is achieved if one considers proportional rather than absolute consumption: even allowing that some of that benefit is passed to vendors, we would argue that the proportionate benefit of these measures is larger for poorer households than for rich households, and thus that equity is enhanced. In other words, there is an equity gain from a 7% saving on items that make up 5% of a rich household budget, even if (unsurprisingly) the Rand savings accrue far more to the rich than the poor. We would also argue that the social cost of, for example, malnutrition, and its negative impact on longer-term growth and changes in per capita income via poor educational outcomes and the like, needs to be considered in this context as well. Following from this argument, the goal of extended zero rating should not only be understood in terms of equity objectives, narrowly understood, but also in terms of ensuring basic needs are met for poorer households.

5.4 The Need for a Higher VAT Rate for Luxury Goods

We believe such a higher VAT rate should in principle be levied against luxury items almost exclusively consumed by the rich. Identification of goods qualifying for luxury taxes should consider the proportion of income spent on the good for different income groups. We propose that two lists of goods be introduced: those which prima facie qualify for a luxury tax; and those which qualify for a luxury tax above a certain price threshold.

The former list could include goods such as cameras, video cameras and recorders, decoders, satellite dishes, furs, binoculars, lawn trimmers, air conditioners, cordless telephone sets, smart phones, caravans, yachts and other water leisure equipment, dishwashers, tumble dryers and certain other electric kitchen appliances. The second list of items is consumed by different income brackets, but only goods above a certain price would be classified as luxury goods. This could include cars, motorcycles, fridges, freezers, stoves, microwave ovens, radios, TVs, watches, jewelry, sunglasses, cosmetics and furniture.

For each good included in the latter list, a threshold would be set (and price-adjusted on an annual basis) above which the good would be classified as a luxury and subjected to a higher VAT rate. This would ensure that for example basic ‘white goods’ purchased by the middle class are not subject to the luxury tax. The difference of 6 percentage points between the current VAT rate and the suggested rate of 20% on these luxury items will in our view be similar to the tax expenditure of the proposed additional zero rating.

In the case of a higher VAT rate for the consumption of luxury items, the administrative burden would increase, though we do not believe administrative costs would constitute a significant share of additional revenue collected. The key administrative challenges would of course be issues of definition and attempts to circumvent the higher rate by tax payers through relabelling practices and the like. However, there is a large amount of international experience in the administration of luxury taxes and we believe they are a viable option in South Africa.

Luxury goods generally have above-average import ratio. Any suppressed demand from luxury taxes would thus probably not have particularly detrimental effects on the domestic economy, and would actually assist in relieving balance of payments pressures. We believe the combination of increased VAT zero-rating and increased VAT on luxury goods, as proposed above, should mitigate the regressive burden of VAT and should aim at making VAT more progressive or at least distributionally neutral.

6. Conclusion

We are disappointed that instead of explaining how it will stop wasteful expenditure and looting or how it will recover stolen funds; government has rushed to punish workers by raising VAT, fuel levies and adjusting income tax brackets at below inflation levels. COSATU calls upon Parliament to reject these taxes upon the working and middle classes. Parliament and government need to engage with civil society on alternative means of explaining how it will stop wasteful distributionally neutral.
The month of April has for many years been associated with the celebrations of freedom fighters. Many South Africans woke up and slept with heavy hearts on the 2nd April 2018 after the sad news of the passing on of comrade Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela were confirmed by the family and the African National Congress. Mama Winnie died after a period of illness at the age of 81. Mama Winnie was born Nomzamo Winfred Zanyiwe Madikizela on 26 September 1936 in the village of Mhlongweni in Bizana in the former Transkei. She attended the Shawsbury High School where she matriculated with a first class pass.

Mama Winnie was born to Columbus Kokani and Gertrude Nomathamsanqa Madikizela, both of whom were teachers. As a young adult she moved to Johannesburg and became the first qualified black medical social worker at Baragwanath hospital [Chris Hani Hospital]. Research into infant mortality rates in Johannesburg’s Alexandra Township, as well as other experiences of apartheid South Africa drew her into activism. As soon as Mama Winnie was married to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, with whom she had two daughters, Zenani and Zindiswa.

In October 1958, Mama Winnie took part in a mass women’s protest by the family and the African National Congress. Mama Winnie died after a period of illness at the age of 81. Mama Winnie was born Nomzamo Winfred Zanyiwe Madikizela on 26 September 1936 in the village of Mhlongweni in Bizana in the former Transkei. She attended the Shawsbury High School where she matriculated with a first class pass.

Mama Winnie was born to Columbus Kokani and Gertrude Nomathamsanqa Madikizela, both of whom were teachers. As a young adult she moved to Johannesburg and became the first qualified black medical social worker at Baragwanath hospital [Chris Hani Hospital]. Research into infant mortality rates in Johannesburg’s Alexandra Township, as well as other experiences of apartheid South Africa drew her into activism. As soon as Mama Winnie was married to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, with whom she had two daughters, Zenani and Zindiswa.

In October 1958, Mama Winnie took part in a mass women’s protest

Mama Winnie was born Nomzamo Winfred Zanyiwe Madikizela on 26 September 1936 in the village of Mhlongweni in Bizana in the former Transkei. She attended the Shawsbury High School where she matriculated with a first class pass.

Mama Winnie was born to Columbus Kokani and Gertrude Nomathamsanqa Madikizela, both of whom were teachers. As a young adult she moved to Johannesburg and became the first qualified black medical social worker at Baragwanath hospital [Chris Hani Hospital]. Research into infant mortality rates in Johannesburg’s Alexandra Township, as well as other experiences of apartheid South Africa drew her into activism. As soon as Mama Winnie was married to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, with whom she had two daughters, Zenani and Zindiswa.

In October 1958, Mama Winnie took part in a mass women’s protest

Mama Winnie was born Nomzamo Winfred Zanyiwe Madikizela on 26 September 1936 in the village of Mhlongweni in Bizana in the former Transkei. She attended the Shawsbury High School where she matriculated with a first class pass.

Mama Winnie was born to Columbus Kokani and Gertrude Nomathamsanqa Madikizela, both of whom were teachers. As a young adult she moved to Johannesburg and became the first qualified black medical social worker at Baragwanath hospital [Chris Hani Hospital]. Research into infant mortality rates in Johannesburg’s Alexandra Township, as well as other experiences of apartheid South Africa drew her into activism. As soon as Mama Winnie was married to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, with whom she had two daughters, Zenani and Zindiswa.

In October 1958, Mama Winnie took part in a mass women’s protest

Mama Winnie was born Nomzamo Winfred Zanyiwe Madikizela on 26 September 1936 in the village of Mhlongweni in Bizana in the former Transkei. She attended the Shawsbury High School where she matriculated with a first class pass.
what she became. She became the President of the ANC Women’s League in 1993 and subsequently re-elected in 1997 until 2003. For her role in the liberation struggle, she was given the title of Honorary President of the Congress of South African Students for life!

Thousands of citizens gathered across South Africa to pay tribute to Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, the anti-apartheid leader and freedom fighter known as the ‘Mother of the Nation’ at Orlando Stadium in Soweto. Addressing the thousand mourners at the biggest township in South Africa, The Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. David Mabuza said ‘The Mother of Nation is gone. When she passed on, we heard the skies weeping as if to mirror the emotions felt by the nation and the world. Though gone from the human eye, the black fortress of human dignity cannot be erased from the grieving heart of Africa. Because you were the tender heart of poets and sweet melody of musicians, in a thousand years our children will return here and say, we love you without reservation Winnie Madikizela Mandela’. ‘Nomzamo wabantu…You are the ancient gift of our ancestors and the undying promise of our children’, said Mabuza.

Mr Mabuza said ‘Till death, you knew who your enemy was. Racial domination, class exploitation, gender oppression. Mbobodo, malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi. Proud descendant of Ngutyana and Msuthu,you fought a good fight. Leading the despised masses from the front, you grinded and crushed the tyranny of racial oppression.’ ‘In you, we learn to forgive because of your abounding love and respect for Helen Joseph, Braam Fisher, Lilian Ngoyi, Fatimah Meer, and Sophie de Brun-Williams’

‘Yours was a revolution of love seeking to usher a more humane world for all the children of our land, black and white. To usher a new dawn in human relations, you struck terror right at the heart of racial discrimination and injustice. At the end, you set the bar high and left a legacy that will live on well into the ages. Brave, tenacious, unrelenting, bold, gracious, loving and kind’, said Mabuza. ‘Our Constitutional vision of a non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous South Africa drew inspiration from the values and vision she stood for. She was one of those indestructible rocks that apartheid struck when it sought to denigrate, abuse and oppress women in our society. As a young and recently qualified social worker, Winnie Mandela was a shining example of the confluence of professional and political commitment’. Earlier in the week of April when the death was confirmed, various Alliance partners released their tributes to honour and celebrate the life and times of Mama Winnie. COSATU said ‘The Congress of South African Trade Unions mourns the death of the ANC struggle stalwart and Mother of the Nation -Mama Nomzamo Winnifred Madikizela-Mandela, who passed away earlier this afternoon. We send our heartfelt condolences to her family, the ANC and all of her friends’.

Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela will be remembered as one of the liberation stalwarts and heroines of the 20th Century and also for her firm devotion and sacrifices during the fight against the evil apartheid regime’, , said COSATU General Secretary, Bheki Ntsalshitalhi. ‘She stared down the evil apartheid regime, fearlessly fought it and ultimately outlived it. Throughout her life she remained a warrior for social justice and never shed away from speaking truth to power, even after the 1994 democratic breakthrough. She was a fearless voice and a staunch defender of the working class interests and spoke out against the perpetuation of apartheid separate development, growing inequality and deepening poverty. She championed economic transformation without fear of favour and spoke out consistently against social injustice’, said Ntsalshitalhi

The African National Congress Secretary General, Ace Magashule said ‘The African National Congress (ANC) and the nation today mourns the passing of a titan of the liberation struggle, a revolutionary, and a stalwart of our glorious movement - Mama Nomzamo Winifred Madikizela-Mandela. The ANC lowers its revolutionary banner in honour of the memory of this great woman who was so loved and revered, whose name will forever be inscribed in history as having played a formative role in the history of South Africa. Mama Winnie, as she was popularly known, would have celebrated the rich age of 82 years in September this year, but it was not meant to be.

She was first incarcerated in 1958 and over the years would face many more such detentions and banishment including solitary confinement’, said Magashule.

‘Comrade Madikizela-Mandela was an activist in her own right, and will be remembered for having stood at the forefront of the struggle for women’s rights in South Africa - taking part in a number of demonstrations against the unjust pass laws. When the ANC was banned in South Africa and the mere mention of the organisation’s name could result in imprisonment - Mama Winnie and countless other dedicated activists kept the flames of resistance burning; speaking out against apartheid, against detentions without trial, against the pass laws, and against the brutality of the apartheid regime. For this she paid a heavy price.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) said ‘We conveys its heartfelt condolences to the family of Nomzamo Winifred Madikizela-Mandela, our entire national liberation alliance and
South Africans in general. Madikizela Mandela, 81, passed away on Monday, 2 April 2018. ‘In memory of Comrade Winnie, the African National Congress, the SAPC and the whole of South Africa’s liberation movement, as well as the government should document the institutional memory that South Africa would lose without a detailed historical account of the contribution and sacrifices made by each one of our veterans to the course of freedom. This is extremely important both for young people and our future generations.

An accurate account of where our society comes from is crucial to our national vision for a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa based on social emancipation’, said SAPC General Secretary, Blade Nzimande. He said ‘The movement should, taking its cue from her revolutionary life and times, dedicate its focus towards ending patriarchy in our society and resolving the systemic problems of class, national and gender inequalities, unemployment, poverty and social insecurity’.

The South African National Civic Associations [SANCO] said ‘We remember Comrade Winnie Madikizela-Mandela as the liberation struggle’. She was the mother of the nation. A true revolutionary, who made an invaluable contribution towards building a united, non-racial, non-sexist and -democratic South Africa. She was a human rights activist and an anti-apartheid leader’. Jabu Mahlangu, SANCO National Spokesperson said ‘We convey our heartfelt condolences to the family of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and the ANC’.

The South African Women’s League painted Mama Winnie’s life and times by saying ‘The epitome of the struggle against inequalities, unemployment and poverty is no more. One of the prolific women leaders our country has had is gone but will never be forgotten. She will forever remain one of the astounding activists and embodiment of ANCWL values that we will always refer to in the struggle against emancipation of women.

She will forever remain an encouraging figure in the fight against patriarchy and male chauvinism in and outside politics. A selfless fighter of the unjust laws of oppression against the poor and the working class who earned herself a title of “Mother of the Nation” through her selflessness and love for all’.

**COSATU affiliated trade union’s messages**

**LIMUSA**

‘LIMUSA mourns the passing away of a gallant fighter for freedom, Mrs Winnie Madikizela Mandela. Mrs. Mandela has served the black people of South Africa and the continent without flinching. She dies at the time when her organization, the ANC has adopted radical economic transformation resolutions in December’, said LIMUSA General Secretary, Cedric Gina.

He said ‘She was loved by the poorest in our society and despised by the rich. As workers, we looked up to her at all times. To us, she was a freedom fighter in her own right and she must be remembered in that way. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the family at this hour of mourning’.

**DENOSA**

The Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) is saddened by the passing of Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela’, said Cassim Lekhoathi, Acting DENOSA General Secretary.

‘Her passing is a blow to the journey of South Africa towards achieving complete democracy to all people, for she was the mother-figure in the country’s democracy. One such element of democracy closest to the people is the concept of Universal Access to quality healthcare for all people’. DENOSA hopes all efforts will be put towards the success of National Health Insurance (NHI) and speedily implementation thereof in her honour’, said Lekhoathi.

**NEHAWU**

NEHAWU said ‘Mama Winnie was a caring individual who dedicated her life to the betterment of others. She was the first black social worker at Soweto after earning her degree in social work in 1965 despite severe restrictions on the education of blacks imposed by the apartheid regime. It is worrying that 24 years into our nascent democracy that social workers are not earning decent salaries, they work in horrible conditions and have to face a huge workload because our government refuses to fill funded vacant posts’.

‘Mama Winnie fought gallantly for a non-racial, non-sexist and a prosperous South Africa. Even after her gallant fight the social ills imposed on our society by apartheid still remains prevalent. As NEHAWU, we send profound condolences to her family, and those dearest to her, the ordinary South Africans’, said Zola Saphetha, NEHAWU General Secretary.

**POP CRU**

The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) joins millions of South Africans and the world in mourning the passing of one of the finest, most dedicated revolutionaries of our time, Mama Nomzamo Winifred Madikizela-Mandela’, said Nkosinathi Thelodi, POPCRU General Secretary.

He said ‘We are saddened by her passing, and will forever cherish the courage she upheld against all forms of oppression. Throughout her life, she selflessly contributed to the demise of apartheid, became the voice of the voiceless and never once wavered in the face of injustice.”

‘She touched the hearts of many South Africans and has championed the cause of the poor and downtrodden. Her resilient spirit kept many going during the Apartheid regime and we shall fondly remember her for those attributes,’ said Thelodi.

Madikizela-Mandela’s resistance against minority white rule lead to her imprisonment from 1969, much of it spent in solitary confinement.

In 1976, she was banished from her Soweto home to a remote rural area. In this period, her house was burned down, with suspicion falling on the South African security forces.

By the start of a long period of township militancy against the white supremacist government of President P W Botha in the mid-1980s, she was back in Soweto and at the heart of the struggle.

‘Those in power tried to keep her down, but she always rose back up,” said Moses Lekota from SASBO South Africa. ‘And with her mind, so will we. We will continue fighting for justice and will not stop until we have victory.’

Lala Ngxolo Mama WeSizwe! Lala kahle Gathewazi! You will never, ever be forgotten.”

**International Solidarity Messages**

The life of Winnie Mandela, “Mother of the Nation,” celebrated in South Africa

“For decades, she was the face of the anti-apartheid movement while her husband was imprisoned,” said Keith Jacobs, UNI Africa Regional Secretary. “She was a driving force exposing the gross injustices of the system built on racism and brutal suppression.”

“We lost a great leader and a true fighter for freedom, but while she is no longer with us, her inspiration remains,” said UNI Africa President Ndèye Founé Niang. “In these dark times, her example serves as a light to guiding us to justice.”
Thousands of mourners paid their last respect to Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela at Orlando Stadium on the 14th April 2018. The service was attended by notable personalities from across the globe such as Rev Jesse Jackson and countless, liberation organizations, Alliance partners and other leaders from Namibia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho. She was finally buried at Fourways in Gauteng.

The President of the Republic of South Africa, Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa delivered a key note address in which he said ‘We gather here to bid farewell to Mam’ Winnie Nomzamo Madikizela Mandela - a mother, a grandmother, a great grandmother, a sister, a great leader who we have come to refer to as the Mother of our Nation. Just as we are burdened by the sorrow of her death, so too are we comforted by the richness and profound meaning of her life. The pain we carry in our hearts cannot be extinguished’.

Ramaphosa said ‘Her formidable will was matched by a keen political sense and a presence that inspired both awe and admiration. As a potent symbol of resistance, as the steadfast bearer of the name ‘Mandela’, she was seen by the enemy as a threat to the racist state. She was an African woman who – in her life, she revealed in us. Her life was dedicated to the unity of the common humanity that, through institutions that perpetuated - in ways both brutal and subtle – the inferior status of women. Loudly and without apology, she spoke truth to the trust of her people, we will not betray or steal their resources, pledging here that we will not betray our many differences along political party and racial lines and the numerous disputes we may have are eclipsed by our shared desire to follow her lead in building a just, equitable and caring society’.

Ramaphosa said ‘Her formidable will was matched by a keen political sense and a presence that inspired both awe and admiration. As a potent symbol of resistance, as the steadfast bearer of the name ‘Mandela’, she was seen by the enemy as a threat to the racist state. She was an African woman who - in her attitude, her words and her actions - defied the very premise of apartheid ideology and male superiority. Proud, defiant, articulate, she exposed the lie of apartheid’.

‘She laid bare the edifice of patriarchy. She challenged the attitudes, norms, practices and social institutions that perpetuated - in ways both brutal and subtle - the inferior status of women. Loudly and without apology, she spoke truth to power,’ said Ramaphosa.

‘During this period of mourning many South Africans have been touching Mam’ Winnie’s wounds. It ought to have been done long ago. For she wore the gaping wounds of her people. She had been left to tend her wounds on her own for most of her life. Left alone to fend for herself only caused her more pain. But she touched our wounds all the time.

‘When we lost our loved ones, when people were in pain, overcome with anger, prone to violence, she came to touch our wounds’. Ramaphosa said ‘She bore witness to our suffering. She bandaged our wounds. We did not do the same for her. In her book ‘Part of My Soul Went with Him’, she wrote:

“I have ceased a long time ago to regret my choices as much as he bemoans his circumstances, who dearly seeks another chance to make a better life for his family.

She lives on in the engineer, who has defied discrimination and prejudice to build a career for herself in a field so long reserved for a privileged few. She lives on in the social worker who tends to those in society who are neglected and abused, offering nothing for himself but the opportunity to serve. She lives on in the Palestinian teenager who refuses to stand by as he is stripped of his home, his heritage and his prospects for a peaceful, content and dignified life,’ elaborated Ramaphosa.

Hamba kahle Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela!
Exploring the need and prospects for developing a grassroots and Shopsteward mass education movement

by Bhabhali Ka Maphikela Nhlapo

Introduction

The grassroots movement for mass education. Can it be mass based when it is not member anchored but rather shopsteward based? What is the base of a grassroots mass education? Is it members or is it shopstewards?

COSATU is a socialist trade union federation. In the Communist Manifesto Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1888) argue that, as Communists we are urged “to bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its development at the time”.

The best clarty of the property relations quaagmire comes from Ngugi Wa Thiongo. Decolonising the Mind (1986). He argues that “To have knowledge that is conservative is the need for these shopfloor meetings led by shopstewards. This will then create an alternate means of informing the working class and in the process counter the conservative messages of the media streams.

The question is this: who owns the country.

The question is this: who owns the industries?

Whose children gain from the industries?” Whilst not all of the Trade Unions are socialists and don’t necessarily subscribe to these views, the Communist Manifesto again sets out ten conditions against which we need to directly engage capital and bosses on a programme and in the final analysis provide that “Free education for all children in public schools.

Abolition of children’s factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production”. This is then the worker education challenge, “the combination of education with industrial production”.

We hope that in the final analysis all the Federations and the Labour Service Organisations (LSOs) agree that education, especially worker education should be directly combined with work processes. We equally need to agree that if such is done workers must own and control such an education process.

Problem Statement

1. Trade Unions have not prioritised worker education. The National, Provincial and Local structures are not formulated nor funded. The personnel to carry those activities are not appointed. In some instances such personnel have to take other responsibilities which make Worker education to suffer.

2. There is no more the sense of leadership and organisers accountability since the Constitution and traditions of the Unions are not drilled. There is also the poor management of worker control.

3. Much of worker education is outsourced to private providers and worse even not with labour service organisations. Even with the engagement of LSO’s the unions seem not to engage in curriculum and other forms of direction and control.

4. Shopstewards and leaders have the greater appetite for programmes that are certified. This tendency ensures that non credit bearing courses have not the much shopfloor and other branch attendances. The game is then changed from empowerment to certification.

5. The poor support of the campaigns, even the strike programmes as many workers feel marginalised and fail to respond to the issues that are at their doorstep.

6. The conservative media and not their unions are the reliable sources of information about their own Unions activities. Hence there is the need for these shopfloor meetings led by shopstewards.

7. The Unions therefore lack the necessary organisational vibrancy needed to drive the programmes, campaigns and key activities that they yearly set themselves to.

8. The growing of the bureaucratisation of Trade Unions in the same vein as the hierarchies in the workplaces (Iron law of oligarchy by Robert Michels, 1977)

Definitions and the Scripts in the Policy Discourse

Worker education is defined by all the three participating Trade Union Federation in the Worker Education Task Team of the Human Resources Development Council as in the following context:

1. That education that gives effect to the constitutional right of democratic participation in all forms of life

2. That education that is an alternative to conservative burgeo education. Through worker education workers must be able to challenge the dominant forms of social knowledge that is conservative and seeks to maintain the status quo

3. That education that is directly owned, controlled and provided by workers through many popular means and not only restricted to the formal forms. Such education must lead to greater workplace and later social solidarity.

Contrary to that the First Phase Technical Task Team Report had defined worker education as on a Three tier model

1. Technical education of a vocational nature to improve productive skills

2. Joint Management and Labour training on managerial areas

3. Shopsteward education on areas related to their positions, duties and responsibilities

What is the contrast between the two definitions?

The Trade unions definitely was coined by the Trade Unions alone and their Labour Service Organisations whilst the Phase One Task Team one was done in a Committee and diluted by the views of capital and the state.

The trade unions definition speaks of no Technical training and Joint decision making

And why has this been so?

In the current conjuncture the Worker Education Committee Task Team only allows Trade Union federations and has kicked out both the participation and the views of capital in the discourse of designing and strategising the

The available Policy choices in the act of Worker Education

There are basically three choices and streams of policy choices that worker education can take in the process of establishing a Grassroots movement. These are the well known streams of socio-political view. They comprise of the following the
conservative, the moderate and the radical. The conservatives regard the general situation as the pertaining material conditions that are a given. They further feel that those who have potential gets more reward. The moderates need change but continue to advocate for change and a fair and just situation through peaceful means. They call for more opportunities and warn at all times the overthrow of the whole situation.

The radicals however seek to have major social change through revolution if needs be. With the choice of going it alone on worker education the Three Federations have clearly made a choice on worker education. They have chosen a revolutionary path that seeks to directly confront the path of capitalism that has destroyed their jobs, livelihoods, communities, environment and their futures.

The problem of the imbalanced worker education historical accounts

At the very beginning in October 2015 of the Worker Education Committee we have agreed that the literature derives much from the Congress traditions. We then agreed that the NACTU Pan Africanist and Black Consciousness traditions and also the FEDUSA traditions should be infused in the current literature. This is critical for the imbalance that is very glaring. This is also very critical so that the basis of the South African or Azanian (in NACTU terms) worker unity can be established. We hope that all Federations and even LSOS can help us in this regard.

This is very urgent. At the incoming Worker Education Conference we need some progress or a detailed roadmap on this matter. The time for the unity of the workers on their class as opposed to their ideological orientations is now. We need to follow the dictum as espoused in Marxist literature that “Workers of all countries Unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains”

The provision, structuring and funding research

We are also engaged in a critical research on the matter of the provision, structures and funding of worker education in the Federations and their Affiliates. We hope that all comrades equally support in such an endeavour. We need to come with a recommendation to be taken to all our Federations and also the Government as to how we need to find a long term and sustainable funding strategy for this important work. We see this research to also relate to the problem of unearthig the other NACTU and FEDUSA traditions. We have contracted a Labour Service Organisation, the National Labour Economic Development Institute (NALEDI) for this exercise.

The incoming Conference will discuss in the main the findings of this study and make recommendations on how the remedies to the situation are realised.

What is the rationale for grassroots based Worker Education. How does education link with work?

According to Pam Christie, The Right to Learn(1985), education (including worker education) was conducted through various methods of socialisation and not through formal institutions. Education was also seen as part of the daily life of humanity. In such a life older members of communities taught the young about their society and their tasks and duties in relation to work. The education mechanisms were largely through songs, stories, dance, poem, initiation ceremonies and rituals. Worker education has also followed such traditions including the strike programmes, demonstrations and other collective actions that are aimed at the workers themselves and the broader communities who get affected by their actions.

The current situation under which workers are subjected

According to David McLellan, Marx’s Grundrisse (1973) the following are the key features of labour in production:

1. He argues that labour is alienated from production. For him there is more of a move for workers to play a operating and supervisory role in the production process. This for him is opposed to being rather than having labour as the principal agent of the production process, which labour is

2. The other fundamental problem is that labour time is also stolen from wealth creation

3. That labour is also not made the standard measurement of wealth creation

4. That mechanical agents that are created through labour power become the primary considerations of wealth creation also without rewarding labour of their own creations

5. That the more of the development of the new technology, the more is the alienation of labour from production

McLellan further illustrates this point through the much criticised Correspondence Theory of Bowles and Gintis and argue the following:

1. That worker education has to confront the hierarchical levels of capital power. This is clarified in the form of the bosses controlling workers. This is further compounded by the authoritative hierarchies varying from shareholders, to executives, professionals, skilled workers, semi-skilled workers and finally unskilled workers

2. The separation of knowledge from the jobs that are being performed. This is illustrated through task orientation, fragmentation and the specialisation of all job categories

3. The focus and even drilling to workers of the "correct attitudes and behaviours". These then lead to in the bosses eyes the acceptance of bosses authority, being polite, being punctual and also being positive. All these tendencies including the new notion of being part of a team are all geared towards entrenched control by bosses

What are the key features of capital production that need to be confronted by labour?

These are numerous and continue to change but the following can be seen as key:

1. The colonial structure of the economy based on extractive sectors that supply developed economies. This then leads to very low levels of manufacturing, beneficiation, innovation and low technological developments. The over reliance in Europe, US and China of even the basic primary sectors products

2. The total demise of the manufacturing sector leading to high job cuts in the higher labour absorbing sectors of the economy like mining, metals engineering

3. The poor participation levels of the state in the economy and leading to a largely foreign and highly privatised productive sectors who are only and purely profit oriented. This leads to high levels of capital flight that disadvantage the ethos of a developmental state

4. The high levels of failures of transformation. The continued fixation and oriented with sexism and the failure to affirm more black people and especially black women at the workplace. Whilst the data clearly indicate an almost equal racial and gender share of the professionally qualified, there is clear evidence of continued racism in terms of promotions and appointments at the higher levels

5. The low levels of human development investments both in the basic education and tertiary technological training also in the companies leading to inferior and low quality products that yield no or less foreign capital and other investments

6. Low levels of capital investments by both the private and public sectors. Infact both the two sectors blame each other on the failures to kickstart the low performance and therefore the failure to create more jobs. We should resist being drawn on either side

7. High levels of salary disparities between the varying hierarchies at the workplace. The Company Chief Executives earnings that are not related to the rest of the organisation and even not related to the performance of the enterprises that they lead

8. More retrenchments that have led to high profits at a rate of extremely low levels of jobs

9. The low levels of job creation especially the youth leading to youth sectoral unemployment levels higher than the international norms

What mechanisms can be applied to effect the grassroots member based worker education

A. Weekly or Monthly Lunch Hour

Workplace based meetings to confront the prevailing issues which include but are not limited to the following issues :-
1. Thorough focus on Work Organisation schemes
2. Engaging and Challenging Unfair Management Decisions
3. Focusing on the Rights of workers already achieved
4. The regular auditing the workplace provisions on key legislations at the shopfloor
5. The strategising around solidarity campaigns amongst workers and with communities
6. Directing the corporate Social Investment Funds
7. Building the technical expertise to respond to the legal challenges

B. Current legal challenges on the areas that need immediate worker education capacitation against the onslaught of capital
1. The current Amendments of Section 50 of the LRA that seeks to take the Right to strike away from workers
2. The BCEA Amendments on the paternal rights and the UIF extensions
3. The enactment of Section 53 of the Employment Equity Act
4. The National Minimum Wage outstanding areas especially in relation to the continued high wage inequalities between the grades and even the genders
5. The proposed Two Tier Qualifications system in the Policy Document of the Post School Education
6. Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill
7. Border Management Authority Bill
8. Traditional Courts Bill
9. Protected Disclosures Amendment Bill
10. Unemployment Insurance Amendment Bill
11. Mine Health and Safety Amendment Bill
12. Mineral Resources and Petroleum Development Amendment Act and Gas Bill
13. Critical Infrastructure Protection Bill
14. Communal Property Association Amendment Bill
15. Liquor Amendment Bill
16. Debt Relief Bill
17. Health Promotion Levy (Sugar Sweetened Beverages Tax)
18. PIC Amendment Bill
19. Political Party Funding Bill
20. Extended Public Works Programme

Conclusions and the future implications for Worker Education

1. Unless Workplaces become the centre of worker education, no grassroots basis of such can be found in the labour movement. Shopstewards are the core of the trade union movement but unless we ensure that all of them are geared to daily sharing and discussing critical matters at the workplaces our organisations have no future.
2. The failure to fund Worker education and even finding other fiscal solutions has a grave danger not only to education itself but it is as catastrophic as the failure to increase the levels of organisation at the factory floor.
3. The continued fixation only with accredited programmes of worker education is an impending danger of itself. These accreditation debates and shopstewards high appetites for such programmes that are certified further continue to alienate the workers from their unions coupled with the earlier reported alienation from the production process. It is my view that the scale should be more tilted onto the mass education programmes which can benefit more workers.

4. All Federations current organisation strategies are informed of buzzwords like “making the member central”, “going back to the basics”, “workplace visits” and so our worker education programmes should be directly linked to the strategies of organising. This creates the more rationale for mass based and shopfloor based worker education.
5. Our members suffer from high levels of misinformation through the conservative media and their propaganda. We also see most of our Officials and even leaders following this burgeo mantra.
6. Monthly or Bi-Monthly or even Weekly meetings are necessary to effect this kind of mass based worker education programme.
7. The need for Sector Education and Training Authorities and the National Skills Fund to give a more serious effect to the National Skills Development Strategy III demand to retain certain portions of funds for worker education. This also further calls for a better SETA understanding of worker education and at the end on the pure focus of accredited funding of worker education programmes by the SETA’s. Trade Unions on the other end need to make no apologies to obtain SETA funds which are public and also ensure that no Discretionary Grant criteria gets through without the focus on worker education. The funding problem will be continued into even the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) till 2030.

Article written by Bhabhali Ka Maphikela Nhlapo, COSATU Education and Training Secretary.
Young workers are forever vulnerable in the labour markets. COSATU at the National Congress held in Midrand resolved to establish a Young Workers Forum to organize all young workers under the federation. On the 20th-21st April 2018, a Young Workers Forum leadership was elected at Kempton Park to steer the ship on behalf of all young working class people.

The 12th National Congress painted a context which said ‘In South Africa, we remain with a highly fragmented trade union movement, yet an overwhelming majority of workers are unorganised especially in the private sector. Hence for more than half of all the workers, their wage and conditions of work are solely determined by the employer. This is more so amongst the youth, women, community care workers, domestic capacity of cadreship that would be best positioned to meet the tasks of the pillar of Organisational Building and Development Programme. This includes, the COSATU Locals as basic structures that are closest to members and that are indispensable in the mobilisation of members and in implementing the federation's campaigns’. The recent Central Executive Committees held reaffirmed to establish the forum by saying ‘we need to re-establish the kind of organisational engines and
elected to lead the forum:
1. National Coordinator: Xolani Fakude (SADTU)
2. Deputy Coordinator: Siboniso Nkomonde (SACTWU)
3. Convener: Lefa Phatsoane (NUM)
4. Deputy Convener: Morongwa Mothiba (NEHAWU)

Additional members
1. Sibonelo Tshabalala (SACCAWU)
2. Lerato Malatjie (DENOSA)
3. Makuwa Kgaladi (SAEPU)
4. Thandi Mrwarwaza (SASBO)

Young Workers Forum leadership was elected at Kempton Park to steer the ship on behalf of all young working class people.

The 12th National Congress painted a context which said ‘In South Africa, we remain with a highly fragmented trade union movement, workers and foreign nationals, who tend to make the bigger proportion of the vulnerable sections of the labour force’. The recent Central Executive Committees held reaffirmed to establish the forum by saying ‘we need to re-establish the kind of organisational engines and in implementing the federation’s campaigns’.

The launch was addressed by National Office Bearers, Young formations and Alliance partners.

The following leaders were:

1. National Coordinator: Xolani Fakude (SADTU)
2. Deputy Coordinator: Siboniso Nkomonde (SACTWU)
3. Convener: Lefa Phatsoane (NUM)
4. Deputy Convener: Morongwa Mothiba (NEHAWU)

Additional members
1. Sibonelo Tshabalala (SACCAWU)
2. Lerato Malatjie (DENOSA)
3. Makuwa Kgaladi (SAEPU)
4. Thandi Mrwarwaza (SASBO)
The 5 April decision to allow the imprisonment of former Brazilian President Lula is the latest in a series of abuses of his legal rights argued Global Unions.

Workers across the globe marched on the streets and engaged in some form of solidarity with the former president of Brazil, Lula as he is regarded for his achievement in fighting poverty and inequality in Brazil.

Lula’s lawyers have taken his case to the UN Human Rights Council, pointing to the blatant bias of judges and prosecutors and asking the Council to recognise that “the regional court which found him guilty, Judge Sergio Moro and the “Car Wash” Federal Prosecutors have violated Lula’s rights to privacy, right to freedom of movement and right to be presumed innocent until found guilty. Previous evidence submitted to the UNHRC focused on the leaking of confidential material to the media, the unlawful issue of a bench warrant, illegal disclosure of telephone intercepts, use of indeterminate pre-trial detention against “Car Wash” suspects, obtaining plea bargains and numerous examples of the prosecutors and Judge Moro’s pronounced bias against Lula.”

“COSATU joins the rest of outraged workers and people of the world in expressing fierce rejection of the monumental reversal of democracy and the gains of the Brazilian people by a stage-managed coup against the Constitution and will of the people in Brazil, said Bheki Ntshalintshali, COSATU General Secretary. He said ‘The federation is very proud to have had the honour of hosting the former President and benefitted from his insightful presentation and analysis of the trends and developments in the whole of Latin America and the ugly head of US imperialism and the greed of their multinational companies in the whole region.

Comrade Lula, a tried and tested former trade union leader and inspirational leader against the military dictatorship in Brazil, is no stranger to persecution, slander and targeted assault against his personality and the good service record to humanity that he holds. It is no surprise that millions of workers and ordinary people of Brazil, were not only shocked, but took to the streets in anger against an unjust and well orchestrated coup. This reminds us of the fact that our former President Nelson Mandela and most of our leaders in the struggle against the evil apartheid system were declared terrorists by an unjust and racist system of legalised terrorism, called apartheid. It is evil systems that can or do persecute men and women of justice as criminals and terrorists’.

He said ‘The history of Brazil is littered with a lot of coups. Historians recall that In 1954 after President Vargas doubled the minimum wage and created the state petroleum company, he is said to have committed suicide in office to avoid a coup. And then in 1964 there was a U.S.-backed military coup against the democratically elected government of Joao Goulart. And at that time the military claimed it was just coming in to maintain order. Laws such as the 1968 with Institutional Act 5, which outlawed unions and outlawed any kind of social movements further entrenched this scenario, which resulted in the stepping up of torture, disappearances and other forms of persecution.’

We are not alarmed that according to poll ratings, President Lula was leading amongst the Candidates for the Presidency of Brazil in the upcoming elections and we assure him and the people of Brazil that their struggle for dignity, democracy and freedom from poverty is our struggle too.

The real enemies of justice and the greedy elites and their multinational companies responsible for plunder, shall not win the final battle against the people,’ said Ntshalintshali.
Free Palestine! says International Community

By BDS

International Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) is an international series of events that seek to raise awareness of Israel’s apartheid system over the Palestinian people and to build support for the growing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Many people remember apartheid as a dark chapter in the history of South Africa and the world. But for the Palestinian people, apartheid isn’t history; it is a brutal, daily reality. The campaign started on the week of 12th to the 18th of March 2018.

Apartheid is the Afrikaans word for ‘apartheid’. It describes the system of racial discrimination that once existed in South Africa. Today, the United Nations defines apartheid as acts “inhumane acts...committed in the context of an institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime”.

South African apartheid was established in 1948, the same year as the Palestinian Nakba or ‘catastrophe’ that saw the first 750,000 Palestinians forced from their homes. In the 1980s, these two apartheid regimes shared deep economic and military ties. Israel trained and advised the South African military, both in domestic repression of the anti-apartheid movement and in military aggression in Namibia and Angola. The theme for this year was Afro-Palestinian solidarity. The message behind the theme was to show support to approximately 40 000 African asylum seekers facing deportation or indefinite detention in Israel. The Jewish Apartheid state of Israel has not only institutionalized racism against indigenous Palestinians but also for Africans. The theme was also to highlight the shared history Palestine have with Africa’s liberation struggle against colonialism.

Oliver Tambo at the World conference for action against Apartheid in 1977 in Lagos Nigeria said “The imperialist countries provide the South African racists with the latest military equipment, planes, missiles, tanks, artillery, blueprints for armaments production and military skills. Part of this imperialist strategy is the consolidation of ties between Zionist Israel and fascist South Africa. In the Middle East, the conspiracy is to attempt to destroy the legitimate aspirations and struggle of the Arab peoples and the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.”

This year’s campaign was endorsed by over 110 organizations and had events all over the country that were over 300, the most successful we have had.

The Shadow of the Wall

The charge of apartheid has been made against Israel for many years by legal scholars and international institutions. An exhaustive legal study published in 2009 stated that Israel has implemented all the core characteristics of South African apartheid, by categorizing and segregating the population along racial lines and subjecting the Palestinian population to extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention. Racial discrimination is a fact of daily life for Palestinians in the occupied territory. Under Israeli law, and in practice, Jewish Israelis and Palestinians are treated differently in almost every aspect of life including freedom of movement, family, housing, education, employment and other basic human rights. Dozens of Israeli laws and policies institutionalise this prevailing system of racial discrimination and domination.

Segregation is carried out by implementing separate legal regimes for Jewish Israelis and Palestinians living in the same area. For example, Jewish Israeli settlers living in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank are governed by Israeli military law. This ‘apartheid’ is also institutionalised through separate legal systems governing Jewish Israelis and Palestinians living in the same area, with Palestinians in the occupied West Bank governed by Israeli military law. In 2012 the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination condemned Israel for precisely this, calling for an end to all policies of “racial segregation and apartheid.”

Many of these practices are prohibited by the UN Apartheid Convention, such as the forced transfer of communities to make way for illegal Israeli settlements and the denial of a host of fundamental human rights. Simply existing as a Palestinian in Palestine carries the risk of murder, torture and unlawful imprisonment.

The illegal Apartheid Wall, built by Israel in the West Bank, towers eight meters high, blocking access to schools, hospitals, loved ones and water supplies. Covered in watch towers, electric fences, cameras and military patrols, it is the ultimate symbol of ‘apartheid’.

The Memory of a Movement

Last year, new ground was broken when the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) published a report which not only named Israel as an apartheid state but advocated BDS tactics to bring down the apartheid regime. It is in part because apartheid is synonymous with the call for BDS that calling the Israeli system by its name is so important.

In South Africa, it took two tidal waves to bring apartheid to its knees: first and foremost from within, was a radical mass movement of poor black South Africans; but boycott, divestment and sanctions advocated by the international community and solidarity movements also played a vital role by isolating South Africa’s apartheid regime. This began as a grassroots effort by people of conscience across the world, who inspired by the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, protested and lobbied corporations, universities, trade unions, churches and finally governments to get on the right side of history.

Like us, black South Africans, Palestinians confront a brutal and profoundly racist colonial occupation; and now, like black South Africans once did, they are building a global BDS movement to free themselves. The BDS movement strives to win freedom, justice and equality for all Palestinians, calling for an end to occupation, full equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel and the right of all refugees to return home. Over recent years, despite growing efforts at repression and censorship in Palestine and internationally, this movement has grown from strength to strength. It has forced major corporations like G4S and Veolia to quit Israeli markets and won large-scale divestments from banks complicit in Israel’s human rights violations.

In 1997, Nelson Mandela famously said: “We know only too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.” This was a sentiment shared with many of us South Africans as we threw off the yoke of ‘apartheid’. But there is also a sense in which it is true for all of us. As long as the powerful anywhere can detain, demolish and destroy life with impunity, all freedom is fragile.

The 14th #IsraelApartheidWeek campaign (12-18 March 2018) is endorsed in South Africa by over 110 organizations, is an international series of self-organized rallies, protests, lectures, cultural performances, concerts, sports events, films and workshops held annually in over 250 cities, communities and campuses across the globe. With “Afro-Palestinian solidarity” as this year’s theme, #IsraelApartheidWeek focused on both Israel’s apartheid policies against the Palestinians as well as the regime’s discriminatory policies against Africans.

The campaign highlighted the plight of the African community in Palestine and hosted events, such as the celebration of the historic support and solidarity that African liberation struggles and countries received from the PLO and the Palestinian people during the 1970s and 1980s for more info go to our website:

www.iawsouthafrica.com

www.cosatu.org.za

April/May 2018 • The Shopsteward 29
March 23, 2018 marks the 30th anniversary of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, a small town in the Angolan province of Cuando Cubango, 825 kilometers southeast of Luanda, at the confluence of the Cuito and Cuanavale rivers, from which it takes its name. That remote town became a symbol of resistance and courage, after the Apartheid regime.

By the beginning of November 1987, the South African armed forces had encircled the best Angolan units in the village and were preparing to annihilate them. The fall of Cuito was imminent, which would mean a devastating blow to the Angolan government. The army of racist South Africa counted for its offensive quickly responded to the Angolan government’s call for assistance. Some dozens of thousands volunteer Cuban combatants, along with vital military equipment, traveled more than ten thousand kilometers from the Caribbean and crossed the Atlantic.

They reversed the travels of the slave ships that brought African slaves to Cuba in past centuries, and now returned to the land of their ancestors to rid the continent of racist domination. The Cuban troops went south of Angola to attack from the southwest in the direction of Namibia. Meanwhile, 800 kilometers to the east, select Cuban units advanced towards Cuito Cuanavale and there they prepared a deadly trap for the powerful South African forces that were advancing.

The objective was not only to defend Cuito, it was to expel the South African Defense Forces from Angola once and for all. Commander in Chief Fidel Castro would describe later his strategy to the leader of the South African Communist Party, Cde. Joe Slovo: Cuba would stop the South African onslaught in Cuito and then attack in another direction, “like the boxer who keeps the opponent with the left hand and hits him with the right”. On March 23, 1988, the South Africans and the puppet armed group Unit for the Total Defense of Angola (UNITA), supported by the United States, launched their last major assault against Cuito. But they were definitely stopped by the revolutionary forces of Angola, Cuba and the Organization for the Liberation of West Africa (SWAPO), with support from members of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa.

Fidel Castro emphasized the importance of the battle: “In Cuito Cuanavale the Cuban Revolution played everything, played its own existence, risked a large-scale battle against one of the strongest powers of those located in the Third World, against one of the richest powers, with an important industrial and technological development, armed to the teeth, at that distance from our small country and with our resources, with our weapons.” The Apartheid regime tried to present its defeat in Cuito as a tactical retreat. Throughout these years, some dubious authors have also tried to rewrite history, minimizing and even ignoring the relevance of the fight in Cuito Cuanavale. But the African revolutionaries never had doubts about who won the battle and its relevance.

African leader Oliver Tambo referred to Cuito Cuanavale as...
the Waterloo of racist South Africa. Nelson Mandela would say about Cuba’s participation in the fighting: “Your presence and the reinforcement sent to the battle of Cuito Cuanavale have a truly historic importance. The crushing defeat of the racist army in Cuito Cuanavale was a victory for all of Africa! That not have been legalized! The defeat of the army racist in Cuito Cuanavale made it possible that today I can be here with you! Cuito Cuanavale is a milestone in the history of the struggle for the liberation of southern Africa! Cuito Cuanavale marks the turn in the struggle to rid the continent and our country of the agreement did the withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Angola take place, since the causes of their presence there had disappeared. They returned to our homeland with their heads held high, taking with them only the friendship of the African peoples, the weapons with which they fought with modesty and South Africa.

There are millions of men and women in Cuba who assured the success of the mission, working extra hours to back up those who left for combat and made an effort so that the family of the combatant or civilian collaborator could have all what they needed. The relatives of apartheid army in Cuito Cuanavale gave Angola the chance to enjoy peace and consolidate its own sovereignty! The defeat of the racist army allowed the fighting people of Namibia to finally achieve their independence! The decisive defeat of the aggression forces of apartheid destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressor!

The defeat of the apartheid army served as an inspiration to the fighting people of South Africa! Without the defeat inflicted in Cuito Cuanavale our organizations would scourge of apartheid! ”

Fidel Castro would explain years later: “We knew, how we were going to ignore it, that those events would have a profound influence on the life of South Africa, and it was one of the reasons, one of the motivations, one of the great stimuli that drove us; because we knew that by solving the problem there in Angola, the forces that fought against Apartheid would also receive the benefits of our struggles.”

Only when Pretoria complied with the obligations agreed in the peace courage thousands of kilometers from their country, the satisfaction of the duty accomplish and the glorious remains of our fallen brothers. 30 years after the battle, our first and emotional memory is for the fighters who died defending noble ideals of justice and freedom. The blood spilled on Angolan lands was not in vain.

Today, visitors to the Freedom Park in Pretoria can see the names of the more than two thousand Cuban martyrs of anti-Apartheid, whose supreme sacrifice cemented forever the special and deep relations of brotherhood between Cuba and of our internationalists deserve special recognition. With singular stoicism they endured the absence, instilled encouragement in each letter and avoided mentioning difficulties and concerns. We will never regret having written one of the most beautiful pages in the history of solidarity among peoples and among revolutionaries.

The Cuban people, who then fulfilled their internationalist duty with arms in hand, today continues and will continue to develop their solidarity vocation, in the battles for health, education and development of the sister nations of Africa.”

Residents of Luanda bid farewell to a contingent of Cuban troops that returns to the Island after successfully fulfilling their mission, January 1989
As South Africans we must at all times disabuse ourselves of the false impression that there are options out there, legitimate, logical and mutually beneficial, that the ANC government, for reasons that may vary from not caring to not being bold enough, chooses not to take or champion. The ANC is the most rational organisation in the world but, like all rationality, it is always contested by anarchists from all extremes.

The contest of rationality by extremes is as old as human development. The current conversation about the minimum wage is yet another schism that pits pragmatism against anarchists. Every so often, throughout history, such battles are to be expected. In the late 19th century, the working class were in constant struggle to gain the eight-hour workday. Working conditions were severe and it was quite common to work 10 to 16 hours a day in unsafe conditions. Death and injury were commonplace at many workplaces.

As early as the 1860s, working people agitated to shorten the workday without a cut in pay, but it wasn’t until the late 1880s that organised labour was able to garner enough strength to declare the eight-hour workday. This proclamation was without the consent of employers, yet demanded by many of the working class. At first, most radicals and anarchists regarded this demand as too reformist, failing to strike “at the root of the evil”. A year before the Haymarket Massacre, Samuel Fielden pointed out in the anarchist newspaper, The Alarm, that “whether a man works eight hours a day or 10 hours a day, he is still a slave”. Despite the misgivings of many of the anarchists, an estimated quarter million workers in the Chicago area became directly involved in the crusade to implement the eight-hour workday, including the Trades and Labour Assembly, the Socialistic Labour Party and local Knights of Labour.

This has been the case throughout history, with some workers demanding their fair share of the pie and others demanding to collapse the whole system. Rationality has always prevailed. This goes for many victories workers have won over the years – annual leave, sick leave, retirement funds and pensions, even lunch hours. Workers have fought and won many challenges but they have always appreciated that the relationship with capital is one of convergence and divergence. We have always needed one another.Today, South Africa is debating its newly adopted minimum wage and once again radicals and anarchists are screaming ridiculous things from the wilderness hoping to win souls.

If you compare South Africa’s new minimum wage to that of the other BRICS members, at R20 per hour, South Africa becomes the second highest minimum wage country of the BRICS group. The fact that these are the very same countries we are competing with for foreign direct investment puts us at a competitive disadvantage. India’s minimum wage peaks at R2,712 per month, with other areas paying as little as R672 per month. Russia’s minimum wage is R1,968 per month with Brazil the closest to us, at R3,480 per month. Mexico is R938 per month.

China’s minimum wage peaks at R3,852 and it’s been gradually rising over the years hence. According to Tecma University, China’s manufacturing is rapidly moving to Mexico, which explains the slowing down of the Chinese economy of the last few years. China is however the best example of how to lift your wages over time. China coined the term “cheap labour eliminates cheap labour”. The current debate by Numsa and Saftu is that we need to open company books and see how the profit pie is sliced between workers and management and shareholders. Here are the facts. Inequality or a pay gap between CEOs and workers is a global phenomenon and not an RSA issue.

That is why it was tackled at Davos. Yes, you can lock your country in and open books on how much workers get vs CEOs, how much workers get vs shareholders, and then rebalance. But then it means you will never get new investments because you offer no competitive wage. So young people will have to wait for old people to die before they get jobs. But if you follow the world route, make your workers globally competitive or attractive, get new manufacturing investments, grow the economy, grow new jobs, new spending, an economic chain reaction, then the tide lifts everyone; suddenly your whole country is an economic miracle, workers are naturally paid more (cause there is more economic activity) and salaries are rising. Beyond the wage debate, the real debate is about ideology. There is an underlying sentiment of challenging the ANC on its socialist ideology, and whether we can take on capital in a misplaced capitalist vs socialist ideological battle. As a multiclass organisation, the ANC is prone to be more pragmatic that dogmatic, assessing the material realities at all times rather than being locked into ideology. No one therefore can whip the ANC into ideological dogma against the prevailing reality.

As a member of the ANC, I share Stephen Hicks’ (PhD) sentiments that Marxist socialism (Happy 200th year to the great Karl Marx) has faced a set of theoretical problems. Yes the initial hopes of Marxist socialists centred on capitalism’s internal economic contradictions. The contradictions, it was argued, would manifest themselves in increasing class conflict. As the competition for resources heated up, the capitalists’ exploitation of the worker would increase. As the exploitation increased, the worker would come to realise its alienation and oppression. At some point, the exploited worker would decide that it was not going to take it anymore and a revolution would ensue.

Yet that’s not how it worked out. The class of manual labourers which initially formed the bulk of workers both declined as a percentage of the population and become relatively better off. And the middle class grew substantially both as a percentage of the population and in wealth, as had the upper class. The worker has therefore been evolving and growing and gaining more power and resources in the process, albeit still not enough to contest the owners of capital. However, today’s worker, to a large extent, is no longer the pariah of society who can be abused at will thanks to both the cumulative power of the worker and the government of the day.

The percentage of manual labour, as a percentage of the population, has been dwindling over time throughout the world. We must therefore ask ourselves whether the world that unions fight for still exists or will exist long enough and whether they should not change strategy on the battles they choose to fight in today’s world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In future, employer and employee may well not meet at all but deliver the needed outputs. South Africa’s R3,500 minimum wage is competitive enough to still attract foreign investment, which is ultimately good for the worker. Yonela Diko is currently the Spokesperson of the African National Congress (ANC) in the Western Cape.
It is nearly that critical time of the year where all sorts of political statements pop up daily in every corner of the country trying very hard to attract people, especially the working class to cast their loyalties at a particular political party. South Africa is home to many political parties, though some are just part-timers, only raring their heads towards or during election times.

The current party-buffet landscape we have, still is the same as the yester years, continually offering and proposing all sorts of political, social and economical remedies to our challenges, why not offer and implement while you still campaign for ruling party position, rather than selling lip service pre election time and delivering nothing post election.

It is time that people of South Africa demand from these so-called "our parties" the list and evidence (balances & checks) as to how far did they try to improve the lives of the people members and general and how will they be capable to implement all resolves in their manifestos. This issue of going to vote based on emotions and loyalty alone must come to an end.

The big question is why we accept such hardships on ourselves. All these people who come up with these kinds of mechanisms are there because we placed them there, and we deserve respect and loyalty in return, not what we are currently served with.

Time has come to lead, not be led by those who have no interest in our countries welfare.

Let me comment...
NEHAWU calls on the Minister of Home Affairs to be realistic

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union (NEHAWU) has called on the Minister of Home Affairs, Minister Malusi Gigaba, not to gloss over the problems of Home Affairs. Every day, citizens are subjected to long queues before they are offered services. At the centre of the long queues and delayed processes in the offices is the issue of short staffing and an overworked work force. The national union throughout the years has emphasised that short staffing is at the centre of the problems of the department especially in the ports of entry.

We have continuously pleaded with the department to fill all funded vacant posts to help deal with the huge workload and our calls have continuously fallen on deaf ears’, said NEHAWU General Secretary, Comrade Zola Saphetha.

Saphetha said ‘On the 9th April 2018 the Director General issued a circular titled ‘Reduction of the Department’s funded posts establishment’ explaining why vacant funded posts will not be filled. According to the circular, the department will not be filling all funded vacant posts because of lack of funds. Our view is that the current shortage of money is as a result of corruption, wasteful and fruitless expenditure. If the department was practising financial prudence and good governance it would not find itself in this dire situation’.

‘We call on the Minister as a matter of urgency to deal with the horrible working conditions that our members are subjected to. Most of the offices are still without functioning ablution facilities, safe and working lifts, and proper security. In the ports of entry workers do not have working tools and they are only supplied during peak seasons.

Moreover, the department refuses to pay overtime yet they expect workers to be encouraged to put in extra effort. Currently, the department does not provide proper transport for workers when they knock off late or when they have to work early in the morning yet they are expected to perform to the best of their abilities’, emphasised Saphetha.

The Shopsteward

SADTU Western Cape teachers are shocked by the untimely death of a site committee member, Ms Mapila at Middelpos Primary. It is reported that our member was shot at school in the presence of learners and teachers. This tragic event had a devastating effect on both the learners and teachers and the broader community of Middelpos’, said SADTU General Secretary, Mugwena Maluleke. Similar incidences of violence took place in various schools which became topical in society about real or perceived erosion on discipline and safety in institutions of learning.

• A teacher from the Northern Cape was brutally murdered by a learner who had accused the same teacher of deliberately failing him.
• A teacher being exposed to gross learner misbehaviour; the incident allegedly happened at Three Rivers Secondary School in Sedibeng.
• He said SADTU strongly condemns any form of violence committed against teachers by learners or any other member of society whilst performing their duties. The union is profoundly troubled by this heinous act which took place in the presence of the teacher’s children. We reiterate our call to government to ensure that our schools are safe.’It is our view that the disciplinary measures must be complemented by a form of counselling for both the learner and the teacher concerned’, said Maluleke.

‘Learners must be engaged and made to understand that violence is not the answer to any situation and that there are processes of recourse that can be followed should they feel aggrieved by a teacher within the schooling environment. We are further calling upon parents to increase their involvement in the education of their children and not leave the burden of maintaining discipline to the teachers only. The department of education must accelerate the implementation of the collective agreement on availing psycho-social support services in schools to assist the teachers in dealing with such matters’.

‘The responsibility of educating the nation can never be relegated to just the teacher and the learner in the classroom. It therefore demands that that everyone in society should denounce violence and uphold the human rights culture. The nation must stand together in protecting the profession and work towards building a more tolerant society’, concluded Maluleke.

The largest trade union in the sector, POPCRU has raised issues affecting the Department of Correctional Services.

The Department Correctional Services in South Africa continues to experience intense challenges after 24 years of our democratic breakthrough. Perforated with challenges ranging from overcrowding, staff shortages, ailing infrastructure and lack of resources to appropriately meet its rapidly increasing demands, it has in many ways lost the opportunity to implement its core task, which is to rehabilitate inmates, said Nkosinathi Theledi, POPCRU General Secretary.

He said ‘With the total number of 236 operational correctional centres in the country at an official capacity rate of 120,000, and a daily growing prison population of over 160,000 inmates, not much progress has been seen due to the fact that the staff complement stands at 34,000 expected to decrease. This situation represents the 11th highest prisoner population in the world in terms of sheer numbers, giving an occupancy rate of 133%’.

‘This year, 2018, it was reported that 6 inmates escaped from the Pollsmoor Correctional Centre in the Western Cape, a facility that is currently standing at an overcrowding rate of 252% in their remand facility’, said Theledi.

‘Most farm prisons like Baviaanspoort and Zonderwater in Gauteng including others in Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape have land which should be utilised for food production as this will cut down on costs. The training and development in the workshops should be reignited to address the idling of inmates currently underway. This will in the immediate address the challenges of gangsterism’, argued POPCRU.

The challenge of insufficient staffing is, in some cases, triggered by resignations which are at times influenced by moratoriums on promotions which limits opportunities for succession planning whilst the absence of a clear career path also demoralise employees. Consequently, some employees view their employment within Correctional Services as merely a stepping stone to a career elsewhere due to these impasses.

SACTWU holds a successful National Bargaining Conference

A total of 425 delegates representing over 100,000 SACTWU members nationally attended the Biennial National Bargaining Conference held at the Elangeni Southern Sun Hotel, Durban around the second week of March 2018. The Conference was held over four days in which the delegates were addressed by various speakers from the Alliance, government ministers and also international allies. Some of the speakers were COSATU 2nd Deputy President, Zingiswa Losi, SACF Central Committee member, Jenny Schreiner, ANC National Chairperson, Gwede Mantashe and the Minister of Economic Development, Ebrahim Patel.

‘Without a trade union workers will not be able to achieve what they do. Alone you are powerless but together you are powerful’– Ebrahim Patel at SACTWU Bargaining Conference. The Conference plenary dealt with various themes ranging from the Impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the negative impact on Bogus Co-operatives, Buy Local Campaign, the National Minimum Wage, Jobs and also Collective Bargaining.

“When we have weak trade unions we will have a weak federation. We as a federation rely on your unity, we wish you a successful Bargaining Conference’– Zingiswa Losi COSATU 2nd Deputy President at SACTWU Bargaining Conference. The main purpose was to consolidate our union’s national wage demands for this year’s collective bargaining season’, said Andre Kriel, SACTWU General Secretary. He said ‘The Conference focused on the following core issues, placing a great emphasis on the 1% VAT increase and a ban on labour brokers’. ‘Our collective bargaining demands will include a wide range of issues, mainly covering matters such as leave (annual and family responsibility), hours of work, the wage model for the industry, job grading, the closed shop, social benefits (health-care, retirement), HIV/AIDS, union facilities (time-off, resources, rights at work, closed shops), job security (including the issue of wage guarantees/promotions, affirmative action and expansion of the bargaining unit to cover more categories of workers),’ said Kriel.

He said ‘we will demand that a ban on labour brokers in our industry be included in all our collective bargaining agreements. This is about strengthening the advances already made in the Labour Relations Act but which we regard as insufficient to rid our society of this unacceptable slave labour practice’. ‘We will now, as a next step, submit our 2018 wage demands to our employer parties’, concluded Kriel.
South Africa Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU) embarked on a vigorous industrial action at Shoprite Checkers outlets across the country. The employer was defiant to resolve the demands of workers.

The parties met on Saturday, 24 March at the CCMA for the purpose of establishing Picketing Rules and the parties failed to reach agreement.

‘SACCAWU members resolved to engage in a two-day industrial action, on the 28th and 29th March 2018; which will be characterized by various forms of picketing’, said Mduduzi Mbongwe, SACCAWU Deputy General Secretary.

‘The Union challenged the Company’s unilateral change to working conditions and demanded the provision of safe and reliable transport late night and early morning shifts and be paid for by the employer, reinstatement of dismissed Checkers Sandton 23 (who were dismissed for protesting against unilateral changes to their working hours), guaranteed minimum working hours for part-time workers below 5 years service and also conversion of all part-time workers with 5 or more years of service to fulltime permanent employment’, said Mbongwe.
Vulnerable workers!

SACCAWU argued their case by exposing the employer about unsafe working conditions in which workers are exposed to as a result of unreasonable shifts where public transport is not available. A case of a worker employed at Dube Shoprite, who was robbed of everything upon knocking off at 20h00 with no transport, but was saved when a car that was driving past stopped and accosted one of the robbers who was subsequently arrested.

The Court Case was scheduled April 2018 at Orlando Court 1. Unfortunately, the Company remains condescendingly intransigent and seems to be daring workers to do whatever they want to,’ said Mbongwe. The company, in responding to the above demands simply declares that: ‘They have not changed working conditions but merely rearranged the way of work, which in any event was not canvassed nor consulted with the Union.’

SACCAWU argues that a ‘provision of safe and reliable transport late night and early morning shifts and be paid for by the employer’, must be the solution.

‘The Company are only prepared to subsidize or top up the difference between what workers ordinarily spend and what they spend when working late night or early morning shifts. The Company simply and unreasonably refuses to take responsibility of securing and funding safe and reliable transport, leaving that in the hands of workers,’ said Mbongwe.

Solidarity Actions

Various COSATU affiliated trade unions and provinces pledged their solidarity actions with workers and also urged members of the community to support the ‘exploited’ workers.

COSATU Limpopo threw its weight in support of SACCAWU strike against Shoprite-Checkers.

He said ‘Our workers at Shoprite-Checkers have for a very long time been subjected to inhuman and horrible conditions and we call upon all out locals to support SACCAWU members.’

‘We hope the company will change it’s unreasonable and intransigent position, failing which the Union will be left with no other option but to consider an unlimited duration/prolonged strike action,’ concluded Mbongwe.
On the 24th April, global federations and unions have continued to remember the 1,134 garment workers who were brutally killed after what was known later as the Rana Plaza Disaster.

This came after a five-story commercial building collapsed and killed workers and left thousand injured in Bangladesh. UNI Global Union has asked its affiliates such as SACTWU and activists to remember the lives lost and irreparably harmed by the tragedy.

SACTWU in remembering the garment workers in Bangladesh will participate in the Fashion Revolution Week sanctioned for the 23rd-29th April 2018 under the slogan ‘Who made your clothes?’, said SACTWU General Secretary, Andrie Kriel.

‘All brands sourcing from Bangladesh to take responsibility for workers making their products by signing the renewed Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety’, said IndustriALL Global Union Assistant General Secretary, Jenny Holdcroft.

The legally-binding Accord, signed between IndustriALL Global Union, UNI Global Union and 222 apparel brands, was set up in response to the Rana Plaza factory collapse in the outskirts of Dhaka on 24 April 2013. The Accord safety programme has saved lives and dramatically improved garment factory safety in Bangladesh.

The 2018 Transition Accord takes over the work of the current Accord when it expires in May and will ensure that work continues to improve factory safety - the remediation progress rate across all currently covered Accord factories is 84 per cent.

Global labour organizations are demanding that all brands producing in Bangladesh sign the 2018 Transition Accord.

DENOSA holds its CEC in Pretoria

DENOSA has held its Central Executive Committee (CEC) at Arcadia at Pretoria Hotel, Pretoria attended by nurses from all provinces under the Theme ‘Strengthening Organizational Unity and Cohesion for Optimal Member-Servicing’. COSATU 1st Deputy President delivered a message of support from the federation and he emphasised on the issue of Unity and cohesion in line with the CEC’s theme. He urged DENOSA to ‘unite in order to advance the struggle of health workers in the workplace and roll back the frontiers of a repressive shop floor against workers’. He said COSATU will always be there for DENOSA through thick and thin, as DENOSA was there for COSATU at the time it was facing rough waters.

Earlier in the week, DENOSA released a statement after the State of the Nation Address and said ‘DENOSA notes the maiden State of the Nation Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa that he delivered on a Friday under a calm environment for the first time in a very long time’.

DENOSA particularly noted the undertaking made by the president on the health front, particularly the need to realise Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for all South Africans in the form of the National Health Insurance (NHI), whose Bill will be tabled in Parliament soon. While it is a good and commendable move that government will be committing to increasing the initiation of HIV positive people into the country’s Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) by 2 million in the next two years to a total of 5 million by year 2020.

DENOSA is highly concerned that this ambition is not matched by a slight increase in the intake of students to do nursing so that overtime shortage of nurses in facilities is addressed. DENOSA warns that the country could be a victim of its own success in that increasing patients into ART without hiring more nurses will lead to high default rate, because many patients are turned away in many clinics due to long queues and the fact that there are few nurses,’ said DENOSA.

‘DENOSA CEC was held for a period of three days’, said Sibongiseni Dellihlazo, DENOSA Communication Manager.

SACTWU joins the global campaign for safe workplaces

On the 24th April, global federations and unions have continued to remember the 1,134 garment workers who were brutally killed after what was known later as the Rana Plaza Disaster.

This came after a five-story commercial building collapsed and killed workers and left thousand injured in Bangladesh. UNI Global Union has asked its affiliates such as SACTWU and activists to remember the lives lost and irreparably harmed by the tragedy.

’SACTWU in remembering the garment workers in Bangladesh will participate in the Fashion Revolution Week sanctioned for the 23rd-29th April 2018 under the slogan ‘Who made your clothes?’, said SACTWU General Secretary, Andrie Kriel.
Be not ashamed of mistakes and thus make them crimes.
Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.
Everything has its beauty but not everyone sees it.
Forget injuries, never forget kindesses.

He who will not economize will have to agonize.
I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.
Ignorance is the night of the mind, but a night without moon and star.
It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop.
Humans’ natures are alike; it is their habits that carry them far apart.
Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but it gets up every time we do.

Respect yourself and others will respect you.
Study the past, if you would define the future.
The superior man, when resting in safety, does not forget that danger may come.
When in a state of security, he does not forget the possibility of ruin.
When all is orderly, he does not forget that disorder may come.
Thus his person is not endangered; his structures and all their institutions are preserved.
Under all circumstances, love and passionate are begin of sincerity and kindness.

See what is right and to do it out of courage.
What the man may seek is in him not in the others
When anger rises, think of the consequences.
When we see others of a contrary character
We should turn inwards and examine ourselves.
Wherever you go, go all the way, not half heartily.
This is what in essence is

by Thobile Maso
Subscribe to The Shopsteward

THE SHOPSTEWARD is a unique magazine. Most newspapers and magazine owned by millionaires and reflect the outlook of the rich and powerful. The Shopsteward is produced by COSATU and gives the workers a point of view on the big issues in the workplace, the community, politics and the world. Why not make sure you get issues by subscribing?

Shopsteward Subscription
COSATU’s website offers an option to download the subscription form from there, you can print it out and resend it back to us. www.cosatu.org.za

Subscription rates
The cost of six issues is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Foreign subscription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers and students</td>
<td>R45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried employees</td>
<td>R55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO’s and NGO’s</td>
<td>R80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>R80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companies</td>
<td>R90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **South Africa**
  - Workers and students: R45
  - Salaried employees: R55
  - CBO’s and NGO’s: R80
  - Institutions: R80
  - Companies: R90

- **Foreign subscription**
  - Airmail: Southern Africa: R290, Other countries: R310
  - Surface mail: All countries: R180

Payment options

- □ Cheque Enclosed, payable to COSATU
- □ Direct transfer:
  - Banking details:
    - Name of Account: COSATU CEC
    - Bank: First National Bank
    - Branch code: 255005
    - Account number: 62345348644
    - Account type: Current

Please put in reference: SSJ & Your name

Name of credit card □ Visa □ Mastercard

Card Number

CVC (Last 3 digits on the reverse side)

Expiry date ........../ ..........

Signature .......................... Date .........................

Please post, fax or email proof of payment to
COSATU House, 110 Jorissen Street, Braamfontein
P.O. Box 1019, Johannesburg, 2000 or
Fax to +27 (0) 11 339 5080/6940
OR Email nthabiseng@cosatu.org.za