Discussion papers

Towards global social movement unionism? Trade union responses to globalization in South Africa

Andries Bezuidenhout
University of the Witwatersrand

Towards global social movement unionism? Trade union responses to globalization in South Africa

Andries Bezuidenhout

Table of contents

List of acronyms

AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labour-Council for Industrial Organisations
ACTWU	American Clothing and Textile Workers' Union
ANC	African National Congress
AZACTU	Azanian Council of Trade Unions
CAWU	Construction and Allied Workers' Union
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CEC	Central Executive Committee
CEPPWAWU	Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers' Union
CGIL	Italian General Confederation of Labour
COCOSA	Coordinating Committee for South Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CUSA	Council of Unions of South Africa
CUT	Workers Centre of Brazil
CWIU	Chemical Workers' Industrial Union
CWU	Communication Workers' Union
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FAWU	Food and Allied Workers' Union
FEDSAL	Federation of South African Labour
FEDUSA	Federation of Unions of South Africa
FOFATUSA	Federation of Free African Trade Unions of South Africa
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation
ITS	International Trade Secretariat
LRA	Labour Relations Act (1995)
MERG	Macro-economic Research Group
MUA	Maritime Union of Australia
NAAWU	National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union
NABC	National Association of Bargaining Councils
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions
NALEDI	National Labour, Economic and Development Institute
NCOH	National Council for Occupational Health
NEDLAC	National Economic, Development and Labour Council
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
NUTW	National Union of Textile Workers
OATUU	Organisation for African Trade Union Unity
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
POPCRU	Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union

PPWAWU	Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers' Union
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAAPAWU	South African Agricultural, Plantation and Allied workers' Union
SACCOLA	South African Consultative Committee on Labour Affairs
SACCAWU	South African Commercial, Catering, and Allied Workers' Union
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SACTWU	South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union
SADWU	South African Domestic Workers' Union
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAF	South Africa Foundation
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers' Union
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
SARHWU	South African Railway and Harbour Workers' Union
SASBO	South African Society of Bank Officials
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union
SATUCC	Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council
SCTU	Swaziland Congress of Trade Unions
SIGTUR	Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights
TGWU	Transport and General Workers' Union
TUC	Trade Union Council
TUCSA	Trade Union Council of South Africa
UAW	United Auto Workers
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Globalization is associated with increased reliance on the regulation of economic relations by markets. National governments turn to liberal approaches to macroeconomic management, implying privatization, monetary liberalization, reduction in import tariffs, labour market flexibility and fiscal discipline. Countries are also becoming more closely connected as trade barriers are dismantled. India reduced its average import tariffs from 82 per cent in 1990 to 30 per cent in 1997. Brazil reduced its import tariffs from 25 per cent in 1991 to 12 per cent in 1997, and China from 43 per cent in 1992 to 18 per cent in 1997 (United Nations Development Programme, 1999, p. 29). Likewise, South Africa reduced its average import tariffs on manufactured goods from 14 per cent in 1994 to 5.6 per cent in 1998 (ILO, 1999, p. 76). This puts workers in one country in competition with each other, which opens up the danger of a "levelling down" in wages and working conditions.

The flow of money and goods between countries has also increased. Foreign direct investment grew to $400 billion in 1997, seven times what it was in real terms in the 1970s. Goods exported now average a value of $7 trillion. Multinational corporations have been growing at a rapid pace through mergers and acquisitions; 11,300 took place in 1990. In 1997, the number more than doubled to 24,600 and $236 billion was spent in cross-border mergers and acquisitions. Numerous multinational corporations now have annual sales totalling more than the gross domestic product of many countries, including South Africa (UNDP, 1999, pp. 31-32).

As workers across the globe are become more closely linked through common employers, or through the threat of factories relocating to areas where labour is docile and cheap, trade unions have increasingly become aware of the need for a different approach to their campaigns. Recent events, such as transnational industrial action in the Australian dockworker strike, and the involvement of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in social clause campaigns during the Seattle talks of the World Trade Organization, have indicated that organized labour understands that national responses to the effects of globalization are not sufficient in themselves (Taylor, 1998).

However, Lambert (1998, p. 73) argues that many unions have been responding to globalization through a form of business unionism. This approach is "characterized by a narrow workplace focus" and a "failure to engage community organizations." There is no "vision of social transformation". Business unionism becomes global business unionism when unions "accept the logic of globalization as a reason for their engagement."

This form of unionism is bound to be unsuccessful, since it does not address one of the core reasons why the position of workers in the world economy has been weakened. It takes a narrow national focus on an economy that is in practice not only national, but also global. Richard Hyman argues: "Rather than a crisis of trade unionism, what has occurred is a crisis of a specifically narrow based type of trade unionism" (in Munck, 1999, p. 12).

Lambert argues that an alternative form of unionism has been emerging, that of global social movement unionism:

> Global social movement unionism arises when unions are conscious of the linkage between workplace, civil society, the state and global forces and develop a strategy to resist the damaging pressures of globalization through creating a movement linking these spheres (1998, p. 73).

He uses a historical example from South Africa to illustrate his point about social movement unionism:

> Union leaders in South Africa who were active in the 1970s and 1980s are likely to have a deep understanding of this approach. They became conscious that the Apartheid state could not be

brought to its knees through a narrow workplace focus, no matter how militant that focus might have been (Lambert, 1998, pp. 73-74).

But the South African form of social movement unionism was tied to a very specific local campaign   the anti-Apartheid struggle. In that sense, although drawing on global resources, it was still not *global* social movement unionism.   Hence, on an economic level, the new South African state still embraces globalization. It is here that social movement unionism, based only on national campaigns, cannot advance globalization with a "human face" (see UNDP, 1999).

This case study surveys the response of the South African labour movement to globalization. It attempts to indicate how far unions in South Africa have maintained their position with respect to traditional constituent demands, whether they are adapting to a changing environment by organizing new constituents, whether they are addressing new concerns by developing new perspectives on civil society, and whether they are enhancing their image as a major social actor.

Part 1 of the study provides a historical overview of traditional campaigns organized by the labour movement. The involvement of South African labour in the struggle against the Apartheid state resulted in a democratization of labour relations institutions and broader social institutions. Workers' rights are formally entrenched in the new constitution and labour, business and government negotiate economic and development policy on a regular basis in the National Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). Since the 1980s, there has been a trend towards broadly representative centralized collective bargaining in several industries. A free collective bargaining process is provided for by law, and legislation has recently been promulgated to protect basic labour standards and promote employment equity.

This democratization process, however, takes place in the context of a macro-economic environment which is increasingly hostile to the *social regulation* of labour relations. The reduction of import tariffs, privatization, monetary liberalization and a tough stance by the new government on fiscal policy, facilitate certain pressures towards *regulation by markets.* To meet new pressures brought about by the government progamme of tariff reduction, employers resort to casual labour and the intensification of work; calls for 'labour market flexibility' challenge the centralized institutions and minimum labour standards which have resulted from campaigns since the 1980s. Webster and Adler (1998) call this process of political democratization under the condition of economic liberalization a "double transition".

Part 2 provides an overview of new campaigns taking place in the context of globalization. Specific attention is given to changes in membership campaigns, the structure and finances of unions, global and regional campaigns, collective action and institutional benefits, collective action and social alliances, and changes in public opinion towards unions.

A fundamental premise is that trade unions are located in different parts of the world and they are operating under different political regimes. Hence, they have followed different paths of development. Unions in Western Europe, for example, went through mobilization in the 1960s and early 1970s, corporatism in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and then decentralization, flexibility and decline (Regini, 1992). This usually happened in the context of social or liberal democracies. Many trade unions from the South, however, were involved in broader struggles for democracy under regimes of labour repression. This form of unionism took on the character of a social movement in South Africa and Brazil (Webster, 1985; Seidman, 1994).

But as some of these campaigns paid off, the resulting process of democratization took place in an economic environment that was hostile to trade unions and labour rights. COSATU, which traditionally operated as a social movement union federation, then faced a new challenge: to defend existing rights under globalization.

This has forced some of the unions in the South to turn their attention outwards and, like those in the North, to demonstrate solidarity with other social movement unions in their struggle for recognition and political democratization.

Using the South African case study as an example, this paper attempts to assess the possibilities of a broader global social movement type of unionism emerging as an extended agenda for action.

PART 1

1.1   Introduction

The rise of the independent trade union movement gave workers an opportunity to become involved in the democratization process and to take part in a parliamentary democracy for the first time in history. Institutional fora such as NEDLAC made it possible to shape the transformation process in such as way that it takes a progressive form. This possibility was described as "radical reform" just before and after the 1994 elections (Adler and Webster, 1995).

However, since then the view that economic relations in South Africa can be socially regulated to bring about a more equitable society, has been influenced by the economic transition shaped by globalization. As in the rest of the world (UNDP, 1999) instead of a more equitable distribution of resources through social regulation, South Africa has moved towards increased reliance on market regulation. Instead of radical reform, Webster and Adler (1998) now describe this as a "double transition", based on a process of "bargained liberalization". The dominant discourse influencing policy makers changed from a "language of rights" to a "language of the market".

This section describes the impact of the trade union movement on the democratization process, as well as the impact of the return to economic orthodoxy on the labour movement. The section provides:

> a few comments on the labour movements that emerged before the independent trade unions of the 1970s;
> a description of the conditions which led to the emergence of the independent trade union movement and its campaigns;
> a discussion of the political transition in the early 1990s and the campaigns to enshrine labour gains in the constitution and legislation; and
> a description of how globalization affected the new government's macroeconomic policies.

The analysis provided here is by no means exhaustive   it is merely intended to provide a cursory outline of important themes and to give essential background information on current shifts taking place in the context of globalization. The discussion focuses on traditional trade union *campaigns*, but also comments on the *context* in which such campaigns took place. Part 2 focuses on more recent campaigns.

1.2   The rise of the labour movement

Labour movements in South Africa go through cycles of organization and disorganization. A number of unions emerged as social movements when industrialization was sparked by the discovery of gold and diamonds in the late 1800s. However, several of these movements disappeared again. In many cases, unions were not able to sustain themselves because of 'legal', as well as illegal forms of harassment by the Apartheid state. Structures were vulnerable, since leaders who openly associated with the liberation movements could be prosecuted under legislation designed to destabilize oppositional politics.

The first major labour movement to organize black workers emerged in the 1920s, in the form of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU). This general union, which achieved considerable success originally, later collapsed after failing to respond to massive growth by adapting its organizational structures. Pleas to break the general union down into smaller industrial

unions were rejected. It was also plagued by internal corruption and bureaucratization (Simons and Simons, 1983, pp. 353-385).

Whereas the ICU expelled Communists from its ranks, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was openly aligned to the Congress movement and basically became a union movement in exile when many of its officials and office bearers were banned by the Apartheid government. By the 1960s, SACTU had disintegrated internally. However, from its new office in London, the exiled SACTU continued to play a role in the anti-Apartheid struggle. In 1990, it returned to South Africa and merged with COSATU (Roux, 1990).

Hence, the ICU collapsed because it was not able to adapt its structures to cope with a rapid expansion in membership. It was plagued by internal strife and corruption. On the other hand, even though the union federation was not officially banned, SACTU basically went into exile, since many of its leaders were banned, jailed and harassed by the Apartheid state machinery. Unionists learned from these experiences, and the labour movement which became strong after the 1970s was careful to build accountable workplace structures and to avoid open involvement in liberation politics.

As a result, South Africa is one of the few countries where trade unions have gained members in recent history (see tables 1 and 2). Of the different trade union federations, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is currently the strongest, with an estimated membership of 1.7 million. This success can be traced to certain structural conditions coupled with effective forms of organization which took advantage of these conditions.

1.3   The rise of the "independent" trade unions

Ever since the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, black African workers were excluded from the legal definition of 'employee'. They were not allowed to strike legally, while white workers were able to bargain collectively for wages and conditions in Industrial Councils, which covered industries with sufficient employer/employee representation. By the late 1960s, South Africa was experiencing phenomenal economic growth, but the wages of African workers were kept relatively low. There were import-substitution industrialization policies, a considerable involvement of the state in the economy through public ownership of large corporations, and foreign exchange controls. A relatively high gold price coupled with cheap labour provided a secure tax base. However, the emergence of militant social movement unionism was a substantial challenge to this system.

The emergence of COSATU can be traced to the early 1970s. In January 1973, an estimated 100,000 workers went on strike: the strikes started in the Durban-Pinetown area and expanded across the country (Webster, 1995, p. 1). They were significant in that they happened spontaneously, i.e. they were not organized by existing trade union structures. But after these strikes, workers started to organize themselves into unions, following the British model of workplace organization based on shop stewards. These new unions were referred to as 'independent trade unions', since they were seen as separate from existing unions dominated by white workers and the state (Maree, 1987, p. viii; Wood, 1999; Friedman, 1987).

Learning from previous experience, many union organizers were careful not to be openly associated with the liberation movement - instead, they concentrated on building durable shop-floor structures based on shop stewards committees. At first, the movement struggled to survive but from the late 1970s on, membership rocketed. Unions began to develop an alternative collective bargaining strategy by ignoring the government-sanctioned system of formal exclusion and they started to sign recognition agreements with individual firms. These agreements were based on common law and resulted in the emergence of an alternative decentralized collective bargaining system. In 1979, there were five recognition agreements in place   by 1983 they had increased to 406 (Maree, 1987, p. 8). In April 1979 several unions formed the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), with an original membership of around 20,000 (Buhlungu, 1999, p. 4).

Faced by this challenge, the Apartheid government set up the Wiehahn Commission of Enquiry in 1977. Based on the recommendations of the Commission, the government passed the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act in 1979. African workers were included in the legal definition of 'employee' and were granted limited rights. The Wiehahn system envisioned incorporating the emerging trade unions in the centralized Industrial Council system, but instead, unions continued to expand their shop-floor structures. They used the legal space created by the new Act, specifically the legal concept of 'unfair labour practice', to successfully challenge employers in the Industrial Court. Only later, when they were much better organized on an industrial level, did unions take up collective bargaining on a sectoral level (Friedman, 1987).

From the 1950s when it was formed, the Industrial Council system was dominated by the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA), a loose federation of trade unions which mostly catered for white workers. However, when these unions were challenged by the newly emerging independent trade unions, they unsuccessfully attempted to accommodate the interests of black workers. Some of the affiliates, for instance, had separate branches for black and white members. By the early 1980s it became clear that TUCSA would not survive as a federation and in 1986 it was disbanded (Bendix, 1996, pp. 201-210).

In 1985, unions affiliated to FOSATU, together with several others including the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), formed the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). COSATU brought together 33 unions representing a paid-up membership of 462,359 workers. This represented 33 per cent of workers who were members of registered trade unions (Buhlungu, 1999, p. 4). The new federation affirmed its commitment to the tradition of worker control. Structures were set up in accordance with this principle, where elected shop stewards played a central role. At its founding conference, COSATU committed the federation to the principles of the Freedom Charter, but did not affiliate with any political party or organization. In founding COSATU, five core principles were accepted:

non-racialism;
worker control;
paid-up membership;
international worker solidarity; and
one industry, one union: one country, one federation.

In 1986, another significant new federation was formed when the Azanian Council of Trade Unions (AZACTU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), joined forces to form the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU). The newly formed federation had an estimated membership of 200,000. Whereas COSATU adhered to the principle of non-racialism, many of the affiliated unions insisted on black leadership. Like COSATU, NACTU mostly organized blue-collar workers. Currently, NACTU has an estimated membership of 370,000 (Buhlungu, 1999, pp. 4-5; Bendix, 1996, pp. 211; 227-229).

From the mid-1980s onwards, the new independent trade unions started using the Industrial Council system to bargain with employers at sectoral level. In several industries, such as motor manufacturing, steel and engineering, clothing and textiles, Industrial Councils became central to unions' negotiating strategies. However, they continued to base their shop-floor structures on shop stewards committees. At factory and company level, they also continued to bargain collectively using recognition agreements. In effect, a dual collective bargaining system had developed, where negotiations took place at industry- as well as at company level. It should be noted, however, that these Industrial Councils were only established in industries where the union movement was strong and had sufficient representation. The significance of these fora for industrial relations as a whole in South Africa is sometimes overestimated, especially when the Councils are blamed for so-called rigidities in the labour market. Only 36.4 per cent of non-agricultural private sector employees are covered by Council agreements (ILO, 1999, p. 98).

During the 1980s, following changes to the legislative framework governing employment relations in 1979, the Apartheid government went some way towards allowing trade unions and

employers to construct a bargaining framework within the legal parameters. However, towards the end of the 1980s, government became uncomfortable with the growing strength of COSATU. In 1988 it attempted to close down some of the legal space created for the union movement by amending the Labour Relations Act. The amendments changed (by codification) the definition of an 'unfair labour practice', and enabled employers to sue unions for damages caused by illegal strike action. This resulted in widespread protest from unions. Strike action forced employers to reconsider their position and negotiations between COSATU, NACTU and the South African Consultative Committee on Labour Affairs (SACCOLA), an employers' organization, resulted in an accord which condemned the changes to the Labour Relations Act. The government was forced to reconsider its position and accept that it would have to include organized labour in policy processes before changing the regulatory environment. The National Manpower Commission was established as a tripartite forum in which such negotiations could take place. This meant that the labour movement had become a national force to be reckoned with.

1.4   The transition: Political democratization

In 1989, F.W de Klerck took over from P.W. Botha as state president, and in early 1990 the government lifted the ban on all the major liberation movements. As a result, the ANC, the Nationalist Party government and several other political parties began negotiations on the nature of a post-Apartheid society. COSATU was closely involved in these negotiations, and established a formal alliance with the ANC and the SACP.

Simultaneously, another process of realignment was taking place. This eventually resulted in the formation of a new trade union federation whose membership surpassed that of NACTU when yet another new federation was formed in 1997. Many of the trade unions that were affiliated to the old TUCSA never formally joined a federation. The largest of these unions organized public sector workers, who were mainly white bureaucrats. When it became clear that the Nationalist Party would not be in government indefinitely, some of these unions began to see the need for a trade union federation that could protect the interests of their members in the public service. As a result, the Federation of South African Labour (FEDSAL) was formed. By 1994, FEDSAL had 230,000 members.

In 1997, however, FEDSAL merged with a number of other unions to form the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA), and succeeded in expanding its membership among black employees. FEDUSA currently has a membership of 540,000.

The process of transition before the 1994 elections was peculiar in terms of policy-making and governance. The country was technically still governed by the Nationalist Party, but as the ANC role in negotiations became stronger, the lack of government legitimacy to make decisions became quite stark. In 1991, for instance, the government changed the system of taxation on sales from a general sales tax (GST) to a value added tax (VAT). This affected the price of basic goods, with considerable economic implications for the poor. COSATU campaigned against the unilateral decision, and the government responded by setting up the National Economic Forum to consult on major economic decisions as part of the policy process. This forum, coupled with the National Manpower Commission, represented a shift towards a corporatist mode of policy-making. During the 1990s, several other fora were set up to provide space for participation, not only for trade unions, but for stakeholders from civil society in general. These fora included the National Housing Forum and the National Electricity Forum. The government's lack of legitimacy to make decisions, coupled with a well-organized civil society in general, led to this increase in "participative democracy", albeit not formalized constitutionally.

The trade union movement, recognizing its growing role in the formulation of public policy, was mindful of the fact that it was based on fora which were fragile and temporary. Unions also realized that the gains made in terms of organizing workers were not legally entrenched as rights. Already at its 1989 National Congress, COSATU resolved to draw up a Workers' Charter to spell out certain basic rights which would enable trade unions to remain an independent force in society. In 1990, the issue received renewed attention. Both COSATU and NACTU took part in the process,

which became known as the Workers' Rights Campaign. COSATU adopted a document spelling out workers' rights at a special congress in September 1993. The document recognized the gains made by the labour movement, such as participation in decision-making at various levels, including plant-level collective bargaining based on recognition agreements, industry-wide participation in Industrial Councils, and national fora, such as the National Economic Forum and the National Manpower Commission. But to formalize these gains, the document made the following demands:

> First, that the new government should sign "the international labour law conventions of the ILO concerning freedom of association, collective bargaining, workplace representation and the other conventions dealing with fundamental rights."
> Second, that the country's new Bill of Rights should guarantee the right of workers to "join trade unions... strike on all social, political and economic issues... [and to] gain access to information from employers and the government."
> Third, that "the new constitution and law should ensure that civil society, including trade unions, is able to be actively involved in public policymaking".
> Fourth, that labour legislation must be changed to provide a single statute to govern labour relations "for all workers throughout the economy", as well as legislation governing basic conditions of employment for the whole economy. It also argued that negotiations with trade unions should be mandatory, and that centralized collective bargaining arrangements should be instituted in every industry.

Also in 1993, while COSATU was campaigning for the entrenchment of basic labour rights in the country's Bill of Rights, the Nationalist Party policymakers were expressing concern about the trend towards centralization in industrial relations. Already then, the "language of rights" used by the labour movement was challenged by the "language of the market". These calls were legitimated again in 1996, when the new government abandoned a macroeconomic policy which prioritized the social regulation of economic relations.

While the ANC, the Nationalist Party, and other stakeholders were negotiating the nature of a future dispensation, COSATU, and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) in particular, were busy formulating a strategy for social transformation in a post-Apartheid society. The strategy saw a central role for the state in the reconstruction of South African society. Gotz (1999) argues that this document was used by the ANC negotiators as a trade-off to convince the "left" to accept certain concessions made to the Nationalist Party in an attempt to break the deadlock in the negotiations. One must keep in mind the escalating levels of violence in the country and the concern of negotiators about an apocalyptic outcome to the process. The strategy was taken on board by the ANC as its election manifesto, and, after eight drafts, became known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

The RDP, even though considerably watered down and vague in terms of specific goals compared with the original document, maintained that the state should play a central role in the reconstruction process. Significantly, the labour movement had succeeded in shaping the agenda, at least on a formal level, of the ANC, its alliance partner. The ANC, in its turn, was able to use COSATU structures to campaign in the 1994 elections. At that time, it seemed possible that the labour movement, through its alliance with the ANC, but still maintaining its independence, could drive a programme of "radical reform" using policy-making institutions and its strategic alliance with the strongest political party to drive a process of national reconstruction aimed at meeting basic needs.

In 1994, the ANC was elected as the majority party in the new Government of National Unity. During the first years after the elections, COSATU was able to achieve many of the goals set out in the Workers' Rights Campaign:

> First, the National Manpower Commission and the National Economic Forum were replaced by a new body, the National Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC).

Second, through negotiations on a new constitution and mass campaigns, COSATU succeeded in entrenching several workers' rights in the Bill of Rights. These included the right to strike and to form trade unions.

Third, the new government ratified several international labour Conventions.

Fourth, a new Labour Relations Act was negotiated in NEDLAC, formalizing several campaigns of the late 1980s and the early 1990s. While not succeeding in demands for mandatory centralized collective bargaining, dispute resolution mechanisms were streamlined and certain organizational rights were operationalized. The Act provided for workplace fora which, although COSATU is still sceptical about their usefulness, provided access to information and a form of co-determination at workplace level.

1.5   *Continuities: Economic orthodoxy*

The philosophy of the RDP, coupled with the potential impact of reform in the labour relations environment based on "empowerment", provided a powerful alternative to the Nationalist Party's Normative Economic Model, which argued for a limited government role in economic and development policy. This alternative "language", as indicated, was a "language of rights". In 1993 a group of researchers, the Macroeconomic Research Group (MERG), attempted to translate this "language" into a "programme" based on a macroeconomic model. They used a neo-Keynesian approach, which implied a central role for the state in rectifying structural conditions created by the Apartheid economy. This programme was never taken up into the structures of the ANC, for various reasons (see Marais, 1998; Padayachee, 1998). At the level of formal policy the ANC had seemingly adopted a left-Keynesian stance, but already in 1993 it had made a number of concessions on economic policy. According to Webster and Adler (1998, p. 14), these concessions signalled a move to the right, well in advance of the formal adoption of liberal macroeconomic policies in 1996.

> They accepted a constitutional clause which guaranteed the Reserve Bank its independence and "agreed to retain its highly conservative governor";
> they agreed to retain the Nationalist Party-appointed Minister of Finance;
> in November 1993, ironically at the moment when the MERG released its neo-Keynesian report, "the ANC concluded a secret \$850 million loan agreement with the IMF." Webster and Adler (1998, p. 14) point out: "In return for the loan the ANC agreed to ease monetary policy, to prioritize inflation reduction, to contain government expenditure... and not to raise taxes."

In late 1995, the Government of National Unity announced a programme of privatization. It was clear that an alternative language was developing, showing continuities with the Nationalist Party programme. In 1996, a business think-tank, the South Africa Foundation (SAF), released a document which proposed to increase growth through a programme of economic liberalization. Significantly, it introduced the "language of flexibility", arguing that the South African labour market was rigid as a result of the Bargaining Council system and other regulations applied to the labour market. The release of this document was the first real challenge to the "language of rights" in the public domain. In the context of globalization, the government had to scale down "restrictive" practices and allow the market to determine the level of wages. The document argued that the labour market had to be more flexible (see Bezuidenhout and Kenny, 1999).

Even though arguments that the labour market was rigid had no empirical foundation, and still do not, the issue of labour market flexibility became a major public debate after 1996. Several studies, including some made by the ILO (Standing et al., 1996; ILO, 1999), showed the contrary the labour market was extremely flexible. But the "language of flexibility" had now become a wider critique of the legitimacy of the labour movement's position in society.

Following a rapid depreciation in the value of the rand in 1996, Trevor Manuel, the newly appointed Minister of Finance, released a new macroeconomic strategy in Parliament, called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). This strategy supported the broad approach

proposed by the South Africa Foundation as favoured by the Nationalist Party in the early 1990s. It committed the government to speeding up privatization, to monetary liberalization, fiscal discipline, and a "flexible labour market", even though the chapter on the labour market was "brief and vague", in the words of Maria Ramos, Director-General of the Department of Finance.

Of course, COSATU reacted strongly to the government position that the new strategy was "non-negotiable". This is understandable, since the government is required by the NEDLAC Act to consult the social partners in NEDLAC before making policy decisions on the economy and labour. The federation was unable to use its position in NEDLAC or as an alliance partner of the ANC, to shape the broad principles underlying the country's response to globalization. Instead, they are allowed to negotiate the details in NEDLAC, with the Chamber dealing with fiscal and financial policy becoming virtually defunct. "Radical reform", became a process of "bargained liberalization". Instead of shaping South Africa's broad economic policy, COSATU had to focus on negotiating draft legislation, such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and the Employment Equity Act. These negotiations were influenced by the calls for "labour market flexibility", which had redefined the policy agenda towards the "language of the market". Apart from these negotiations, they were involved in monitoring trade negotiations, such as the agreement with the European Union, and attempts to keep the "social clause" on the agenda, with partial success (see Gostner, 1997).

1.6   Conclusion

The labour movement in South Africa took the shape of social movement unionism. From the early 1970s onwards, the independent trade union movement slowly opened up space for itself through campaigns linked to the broader anti-Apartheid struggle. South Africa was transformed from a labour repressive society based on racism to one in which basic labour and human rights are enshrined in the Constitution. In the 1990s, unions attempted to use their alliance with the new government to bring about a more egalitarian economic order. Instead, in 1996, the government announced a new approach in the form of GEAR, which embraced the concept of globalization. The state withdrew from economic restructuring to enable markets to operate "freely". The "language of the market" became dominant and closed down some of the space available for the labour movement to insist on including social concerns in economic policy.

Nonetheless, commentators still disagree on the extent to which globalization is affecting national sovereignty. In the South African context, Webster and Adler (1998, p. 1) propose that certain arguments exaggerate the power of globalization. They point out that all capital should not be equated with financial capital, and that "many firms are highly immobile and employers may not only be profit-maximizers, but also risk-avoiders interested in steady, long-term and sustainable profit." The global is shaped by the local, they argue, and South Africa has built the institutions in which a class compromise can take place to repeat the political compromise on an economic level. Central to this class-compromise is organized labour's ability to shape the outcomes.

A more cynical analysis argues that the labour movement's participation in new institutions such as NEDLAC, has led to labour's "institutionalization" into a liberal project (Barchiesi, 1997, p. 210).

Other authors are more tentative. Klerck (1998) argues that South Africa's collective bargaining arrangements are shifting "between neo-liberalism and corporatism", and that one has to take contradictory forces into account. Buhlungu (1999) argues that the labour movement, through its involvement in several institutions and in the context of globalization is "gaining influence", but "losing power" in the process.

It is clear, however, that globalization, as an economic force or as an ideology, has fundamentally reshaped South Africa's approach to managing its economy. But this process took place in a context of political democratization   not only in terms of a parliamentary democracy based on constitutionalism, but also in terms of structures such as NEDLAC where policy can be shaped. But COSATU's position as part of a social movement has also been altered. The labour movement now has to defend gains made as a result of campaigns for labour rights and political

democratization in the context of globalization. As indicated, Webster and Adler (1998) describe this as a process of "bargained liberalization". However, institutions where liberalization is negotiated can themselves come under pressure. Therefore, a narrow approach *exclusively* based on campaigns in the nation-state is no longer an option for progressive trade unions. In this context, Part 2 provides an assessment of more recent union campaigns in response to globalization in South Africa.

PART 2

2.1   Introduction

In the new dispensation, the labour movement formalized many of its campaigns of the 1980s as gains. However, increased reliance on market regulation forced the labour movement, and specifically COSATU, to consider new campaigns. In fact, in 1996 the union federation established a "Commission of Enquiry" to assess the movement's position in the context of these changes. The Commission was chaired by Connie September, then second vice-president of COSATU, and became known as the *September Commission* when the final report was published in 1997. This report provides considerable insight into the thinking of trade union leaders in the context of the double transition.

This section draws on the September Commission report, as well as several surveys, interviews and other studies to describe how union campaigns have changed in South Africa in the context of globalization and the double transition. A central argument is that COSATU as a union federation is undergoing a transition of its own.

This transition has to do with the fact that the federation has realized many of the objectives it fought for in the 1980s. In the context of a parliamentary democracy, the federation is losing many of its social movement characteristics and, even though economically located in the developing world, is moving into a position similar to many Western European and North American unions. This is linked with the fact that COSATU's gains are coming under threat as a result of competition for investment from neighbouring countries as well as Asia. Whereas COSATU used to draw on support from unions in the North, the federation now finds that it has to support the struggles of social movement unions in countries where basic human and labour rights are still denied by authoritarian regimes.

Consequently, COSATU as a union federation will retain some of its social movement characteristics, while exhibiting some similarities with the "older" unions of the North.

2.2   Membership campaigns

Standing (1997a) argues that globalization leads to a segmentation of labour markets. This has to do with new opportunities opening up globally for skilled professionals, but also with the casualization of work at the 'lower' end of the labour market. No reliable data are available on the extent of casualization in South Africa, but a number of studies indicate rapid casualization in several industries including mining, retail, construction, transport and manufacturing (see Bezuidenhout and Kenny, 1999).

It has to be noted that this process of casualization is taking place in a labour market that is already historically segmented (Kenny and Webster, 1999). In addition, there is no comprehensive social security system that can alleviate the social impact of underemployment (Bezuidenhout and Kenny, 1999).

However, since the early 1970s, trade union membership as well as trade union density has increased as a result of successful membership campaigns. A total of 673,000 workers were members of trade unions in 1976 (see table 1). In 1998, the number had increased to 3.8 million, of whom more than 1.7 million were members of COSATU. Union density in the non-agricultural formal sector of the economy increased from 18 per cent in 1985 to 51 per cent in 1998 (see table 2).

According to Barrett (1993), this growth in membership can be attributed to the successful organization of three major sectors in the economy. Unions in the manufacturing sector currently

account for 30.2 per cent of COSATU membership, the National Union of Mineworkers accounts for 14.9 per cent and public sector unions account for 36.4 per cent.

These three categories of union account for almost 82 per cent of all COSATU members. The remainder are unions organizing construction workers, agricultural and plantation workers, and workers in the service sector (see table 3). Rapid growth in public sector union membership reflects large-scale restructuring in that sector. Where workers felt secure in their jobs in the past, retrenchments and outsourcing are contributing to insecurity. Another factor is the privatization of certain sectors. It should be noted here that FEDUSA, the second largest union federation, has a strong membership base among white-collar workers, mostly in the civil service and the public sector.

Membership campaigns have been successful in manufacturing and the public sector, where workers seem to have relatively stable jobs. However, unions have been less successful in 'vulnerable' sectors   particularly services, construction and agriculture. Included in the service sector is the large number of African women engaged as domestic workers. The inability of unions to organize 'vulnerable' sectors is reflected in the fact that men make up 71 per cent of union members, while women, who are mostly employed in the informal sector and casual jobs, only constitute 29 per cent of members. However, 37 per cent of men in formal sector employment are union members against 32 per cent of women in the formal sector. This implies that women in formal employment are more readily organized than women in casual jobs and the informal sector (Naidoo, 1999, p. 18). Unions have also not been able to attract younger people. Only 7 per cent of workers between the ages of 15 and 24 have joined a trade union, against 35 per cent of those between 25 and 34. This may relate to the high levels of youth unemployment, but when one considers only formal employment, the proportion of young workers who are members of unions is still significantly lower than older workers (see table 4).

The increased casualization of employment contracts also has the potential to erode the membership base of unions in well-organized sectors. The September Commission expressed concern about COSATU's record of not organizing the "growing layers of 'flexible' workers". It pointed out that, if the federation continued with no change, "subcontracting, casualizing [and] labour brokering [may] become more common... Ultimately COSATU could end up being based in a shrinking section of the working class, as happened to trade unions in a number of countries" (COSATU, 1997, p. 125). The Commission proposed six themes for organizing casual workers. These included an annual campaign to recruit vulnerable workers; the creation of advisory services; advocacy through statutory bodies such as bargaining councils and wage boards; educating union officials and shop stewards; centralized collective bargaining to institute minimum labour standards; and insisting that parastatals and the public services comply with minimum labour standards.

Apart from proposing strategies to unionize casual workers in relatively well-organized sectors, the September Commission also recommended certain strategies to organize 'vulnerable' workers in 'vulnerable' sectors.

On the recommendation of the September Commission, the Sixth National Congress of COSATU, held in 1997, resolved to start a process to form trans-industrial "super unions". This touches on one of the founding principles of COSATU, namely "one industry, one union". The 1997 resolution therefore adapted the COSATU model of industrial unionism to a form of trans-industrial unionism.

Since the 1997 National Congress, several unions have merged, notably the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) and the Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPWAWU) into the Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (CEPPWAWU). Currently, the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union (SATAWU), itself the result of a merger, is in the process of merging with the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU). However, these fusions did not involve unions operating in "vulnerable" sectors merging into strong industrial unions.

Hence, the September Commission proposals for dealing with the casualization of work in well-organized sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing and mining, can be accommodated within existing union structures. The proposals focus on advocacy within existing regulatory frameworks, such as bargaining councils, wage boards and agreements between unions and individual firms. The introduction of advice centres for casual workers indicates a different approach to servicing a certain layer of employees. Unions will have to link up more closely with advice centres, community-based organizations and other civil bodies if they want to succeed in representing these workers. Another point is that union membership fees are subtracted from salaries by stop orders. This method of financing is based on the assumption that workers have a permanent and consistent flow of income, which is very often not the case with casual and/or subcontract workers. Unions will therefore have to rethink their approach to signing up members and collecting union dues.

The fact that the September Commission put these issues on the agenda does not, however, mean that the labour movement is acting effectively to address them. As the Commission itself acknowledges, responses are generally piecemeal. Attempts to deal with casualization and workers in vulnerable sectors remain rhetorical to large extent.

2.3   Structure and finances of unions

Since the early 1990s, COSATU has undergone substantial structural changes, partly in response to the challenges posed by globalization, but also as a result of engagement in various national institutions, such as NEDLAC. In addition, the coming of parliamentary democracy opened other avenues for the labour movement to influence policymaking. As a result, COSATU is losing some of its characteristics as a social movement union.

There has always been tension in trade unions between 'democracy' and 'efficiency'. This tension plays out on many levels - between members and officials, between members and elected representatives, and between the structures at different levels   local, regional and national (Buhlungu, 1999). In this context, the 'independent' trade union movement in South Africa is largely based on organization at workplace level based on shop stewards. The shop stewards have always been central to plant, local, regional and national structures. COSATU and its unions have maintained the principle that the number of representatives on executive committees who are shop stewards, i.e. actual wage workers, should be greater than the number of union officials, i.e. people employed by trade unions or federations. Shop stewards and officials are not allowed to take decisions on behalf of workers without proper mandates.

But the tradition of 'worker control' seems to have undergone changes in the past decade. These changes should be seen not only in the context of the labour movement's involvement in more structures, such as NEDLAC, but also in the context of the rapid growth of unions from the late 1980s until recently. The average size of a trade union affiliated to COSATU is just over 100,000 members, with structures spread geographically across the whole country. This massive growth had certain implications for trade union structures:

The influx of a large number of new members put pressure on the existing traditions of worker control. Many new shop stewards were appointed, who did not necessarily share the collective memory of the post-1973 model of organization (Marie, 1992, p. 21). A survey conducted in 1991 found that 28 per cent of COSATU shop stewards were in their twenties. This implied that many were not experienced and did not share the "union traditions of democratic worker control" (Collins, 1994, p. 30).

The increase in membership "necessitated complex nationally centralized structures." This resulted in a "greater division of labour and responsibilities between structures and among staff" (Marie, 1992, p. 21).

A large membership body demands greater focus on servicing, which meant a shift from an organizing model of trade unionism towards a servicing model (Marie, 1992). Apart from more demands for effective servicing, shop stewards were required to attend more and more meetings at different levels. Many unions responded to these demands by reducing the frequency of

branch meetings, to enable shop stewards to engage in regional and national structures (Collins, 1994, p. 31).

To deal with the increased work load, the number of full-time shop stewards has been expanding, enabling elected representatives to play a more central role in the daily running of union matters. This practice has been criticised for removing shop stewards from the daily experience of the workers they are supposed to represent (Collins, 1994, pp. 33-34).

However, several surveys have found that members of unions affiliated to COSATU still regularly elect shop stewards, usually by secret ballot (Collins, 1994; Wood, 1999). A survey conducted in 1994 found that 84 per cent of shop stewards were elected by members, 13 per cent were appointed by union leaders, and 1 per cent were appointed by management. In a 1998 survey, the number of shop stewards elected by members increased to 92 per cent. Only 3 per cent of workers reported that shop stewards were appointed by leaders, with management appointments remaining constant at 1 per cent. These figures actually imply an expansion of shop-floor democracy in terms of the election of shop stewards. Indeed, 93 per cent of workers interviewed in 1998 pointed out that shop steward elections are held at least every three years (Wood, 1999, pp. 10-12). The 1999 COSATU National Congress mandated the federation to coordinate shop steward elections for all the affiliates on an annual basis. In future, these elections will take place at the same time, giving the election process a higher profile.

A major shift, which occurred from 1994 to 1998, is *how workers view the role of shop stewards*. In 1994, 26 per cent of workers felt that shop stewards "had the right to represent workers' interests as they saw fit, or that they had discretion within a broad mandate." In the 1998 survey, this number increased to 50 per cent. Wood argues that this could reflect the "increased complexity of the bargaining environment", where "industrial relations are increasingly institutionalized." The proportion of workers who felt that shop stewards should be dismissed when they failed to do what their constituencies desired remained constant at 93 per cent in both surveys. Wood concludes: "It is evident that an increasing number of workers are willing to trust shop stewards to engage with management on their behalf, as long as they report back from time to time"(1999, p. 13). However, 71 per cent of the workers interviewed in the 1998 survey said that they attended union meetings at least once a month. This number had declined from 77 per cent in 1994 (Wood, 1999, p. 9).

There also seemed to be a *generational shift* in terms of worker opinions on the role of shop stewards. Younger workers were more likely to give shop stewards a broad mandate, or treat them as a form of indirect democracy. The views of older workers, however, conformed much more to the militant form of direct participation based on worker control, as table 5 illustrates. The data confirm the view that the role of shop stewards as "simple bearers of the mandate" (Marie, 1992, p.23), is changing towards a role of active representation with more discretion.

Apart from changes in the relationship between members and shop stewards, there also seems to be a shift in the role of full-time union officials. This has to do with the complex challenges posed by rapid transformation. Unions tend to rely more on experts to respond to pressing deadlines, leading to what is described as 'bureaucratization' (see Buhlungu, 1997, p. 44). A new generation of officials "are coming in at a phase where there is an increasing tendency for officials to lead office bearers rather than the other way round" (Collins, 1994, p. 37). Concerns were also expressed about the 'brain drain' from COSATU. Experienced union leaders were lost to Parliament, the structures of the governing African National Congress and, ironically, big business and some of the unions' own new investment corporations. According to Baskin (1996, p. 15) COSATU lost about 80 of the 1,450 officials employed by affiliates in 1994 alone. In 1999, six of COSATU's four national office bearers left the labour movement, some to pursue careers as parliamentarians, and one as a provincial premier.

In the 1970s and 1980s, many unions had a policy of not paying their officials more than the highest paid workers in the industries which they organized (Buhlungu, 1997, p. 17). However, in response to the so called "brain drain" of union officials (Buhlungu, 1994), COSATU and its affiliates have been moving towards higher remuneration structures in an attempt to retain

experienced officials. Standard union packages include benefits such as a car allowance, housing allowance, medical aid and provident funds (Buhlungu, 1997, p. 17).

A consequence may be that union officials move further away from the class position of their members. Internally, the movement has also seen an increased wage gap between officials at different levels. Packages are generally linked to grading systems. Table 6 provides a breakdown of the remuneration packages of trade union officials from Buhlungu's survey.

The survey also showed that 63.4 per cent of employed officials did not see themselves working in the union movement in five years' time (see table 7). Furthermore, it indicated that a majority of [union] officials (57 per cent) had only been working in the union for four years or less (see table 8).

This implies a careerist attitude among a large proportion of union officials, as well as inexperience resulting from rapid staff turnover. According to Buhlungu (1997), this means a process of "generational transformation" is taking place among trade union officials.

The above structural changes relate to individual unions. But COSATU has also consciously engaged in a process of organizational restructuring in order to "co-ordinate and reinforce the collective bargaining strategies of the affiliates" in the context of the "likelihood that collective bargaining will come under increasing pressure from employers under the guise of international competitiveness and 'globalization'."(COSATU, 1997, p. 192). These changes implied the setting up of new decision-making bodies and stronger implementation structures.

A new body, the Central Committee, was set up to enable the federation to speed up policy decisions. As the second highest decision-making structure, this body meets annually to consider policy matters. The first Central Committee meeting took place in June 1998. Apart from the annual meetings, a Central Executive Committee (CEC) was set up to meet twice a year with the national office bearers to consider policy matters.

The National Executive Committee, which in the past met only six times per year, was made smaller, and now meets once a month. This body considers operational and administrative issues and is responsible for driving the negotiations strategy of the federation. Also, instead of once every four years, the National Congress now meets once every three years.

Hence, not only globalization, but also a phenomenal growth in membership, have affected trade union structures, specifically unions affiliated to COSATU. This, coupled with union involvement in more and more centralized structures, such as NEDLAC and bargaining councils, has led to shifts in traditions based on worker control. Although members generally still elect shop stewards, there are indications of a generational shift, not only among members, but also among full-time union officials. As a federation, COSATU has responded to the demands of centralized structures for a more involved approach from the federation by creating bodies that meet on a more regular basis. It has also moved towards a more central role for the federation in coordinating affiliates. In the future, COSATU as an organization may begin to show more similarities with the older trade unions of Western Europe and North America. However, the traditions of unions as social movements may persist, or be revitalized, in the context of campaigns to defend the gains made in the 1980s and 1990s. The following section discusses new campaigns linked to globalization.

2.4   Regional and global action

All three of the major trade union federations, COSATU, the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA), and the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), are affiliated to the International Congress of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Several other unions are affiliated to the ICFTU International Trade Secretariats. In addition, both COSATU and NACTU are involved in the Organization for African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), as well as the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC).

Transnational involvement is not new to the South African labour movement. The nature of campaigns may be changing, or increasing in frequency and intensity, but South African unionism has always been tied to international dynamics. However, engagement with organized workers and bodies set up by or "for" them, has certainly not been unproblematic. It has been characterized by

immense levels of solidarity at times, but also by suspicion and animosity. Significantly, the relationship between South African unions and global players, such as ICFTU and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was shaped by the internal struggle against Apartheid, as well as by global Cold War politics. Southall (1995) argued that COSATU was able to draw on resources from unions in the North while maintaining its independence through a policy of non-alignment. However, now that COSATU has achieved many of the campaign goals of the 1980s, its position as a recipient of assistance is changing to one where it is forced to become more outward looking and to contribute to the struggles of other social movement unions in Southern Africa and Asia.

Following internal persecution by the Apartheid state in the 1950s and 1960s, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) went into exile, along with several of the liberation movements. At that time it used its links with WFTU to lobby in the ILO against the representation of the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA), which was a racially based federation. Following this, and several other campaigns, South Africa was expelled from the ILO in 1963 (Southall, 1996, pp. 8-9).

When small industrial unions emerged after a wave of strikes in 1973, several trade unions from across the globe, mostly affiliated to ICFTU, offered assistance. ICFTU itself became more involved in assisting the emerging independent trade union movement. In 1974, it set up the Coordinating Committee for South Africa (COCOSA), which, according to Southall (1996, pp. 10-11) became involved in industrial action to boycott South African goods, assisting the emerging trade unions with legal costs, pressing transnational corporations to recognize South African trade unions, and channelling and coordinating financial assistance from ICFTU affiliates to South African trade unions (more than US$6.6 million from 1976 to 1984).

ICFTU and its affiliates provided funding to a broad spectrum of the emerging black unions - to FOSATU (later COSATU), unions affiliated to what became known as NACTU, and other independent unions (Fraser, 1991, p. 27). However, in the context of the Cold War, COSATU actively pursued an approach of non-alignment. Likewise, NACTU was not formally affiliated to ICFTU, even though its predecessor, CUSA was (Southall, 1996, pp. 10-11; Naidoo, 1991; Ngcukana, 1991). SACTU in exile was not only suspicious of ICFTU's role in South Africa, but was originally also hostile towards the emerging independent trade union movement. The Congress insisted that it was the sole representative of the South Africa working class abroad and that funding to South African unions had to be channelled through SACTU. However, ICFTU and its affiliates maintained direct links with South African trade unions. In fact, South African trade unionists formed networks with many unionists abroad through attending short educational courses. Southall (1996, p. 15) argued that this resulted in "a formidable network of personal, sectoral and professional contacts which proved of inestimable value during particular industrial struggles or when unions became subject to political attack."

> These networks supported campaigns of South African trade unions in various ways:
> Especially in the 1970s, when trade unions campaigned for recognition, South African unions organizing workers in subsidiaries of multinational corporations linked up with trade unions representing workers at factories in home countries.
> A second form of linkage involved South African unions calling on trade unions in the same transnational corporations abroad for more generalized campaigns.
> Many South African trade unions linked up with International Trade Secretariats.

International solidarity became prominent especially in industries with globalized production, such as steel and motor manufacturing, and in industries that were particularly vulnerable to tariff cuts, such as clothing and textiles.

In the case of NUTW and ACTWU, unionists had first established personal contacts through international meetings. ACTWU vice-president John Hudson (1991, p. 41) pointed out that his union members were particularly interested in NUTW because of "a desire to further contribute to the fight against Apartheid." Through their involvement, the unions supported each other on

matters such as health and safety training, and exchanged research materials on companies operating in both countries. When NUTW merged with another union to form SACTWU, they also drew on the experience of ACTWU, which had gone through a merger previously. Hudson mentioned specifically that his union learnt a lot from NUTW organizing strategies.

These "direct links" were sometimes successful in campaigns, and sometimes not. Southall (1996, pp. 15, 17) argued that South African unions formed closer links with trade unions generally affiliated to ICFTU more than WFTU, since they were linked through transnational corporations. Unions organizing in former Socialist countries could not offer the same level of assistance as their counterparts in the capitalist world. Towards the end of the 1980s, SACTU "quietly buried" its opposition to direct links, and in the context of the British anti-Apartheid movement, had a much more harmonious relationship with the TUC.

The picture changed considerably with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with the lifting of bans on the ANC, the SACP, the PAC, and other liberation organizations in 1990. Politically, South Africa began negotiations on the nature of a post-Apartheid society. Internally, COSATU played an important role, now in formal alliance with the ANC and the SACP. In 1990, COSATU put the issue of international relations on its agenda. Jay Naidoo, then General Secretary of the federation, pointed out that this was for very specific reasons, mentioning "particularly the world restructuring of the economy, and the loosening of the political climate internationally with the formal ending of the Cold War and the collapse of Eastern European regimes." In this context, Naidoo felt that "workers are going to begin sharing common problems, particularly where there is an unbridled move to free market systems, where the lives and jobs of workers, the benefits they have gained, are being jeopardized" (Naidoo, 1991, p. 18).

COSATU began to re-evaluate its relationship with international bodies such as ICFTU and WFTU, holding its first meeting with the Executive Council of ICFTU in December 1990. COSATU also attempted to "normalize" its relationship with AFL-CIO, having already established strong links with affiliates of AFL-CIO, such as ACTWU and UAW.

In 1991, Jay Naidoo told the *South African Labour Bulletin*: "International policy has never been high on COSATU's agenda. We did not feel that it was a priority compared with building a strong internal labour movement. Also, we wanted to avoid the situation where conflicts in the international trade union movement... could divide us." He also pointed out, though, that COSATU unions had developed links with unions in Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Canada, when in need of international solidarity in dealing with multinationals. He pointed out that these unions were affiliated to ICFTU.

On 15 March 1991, COSATU appointed its first international officer, in the person of Mcebisi Msizi, who had worked for the exiled union federation SACTU. At this time, COSATU also increased its activities in Africa generally, attending the congress of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) for the first time in 1990. Apart from establishing relations with OATUU, COSATU had also been building links with unions in the Southern African region, through the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Committee (SATUCC). The federation was involved in setting up a social charter for workers' rights. Naidoo motivated the move: "Our common interests with Southern African workers will be shared, particularly as borders open up, with industry relocating, or manufacturing industry in the Frontline States being wiped out by South Africa" (Naidoo, 1991, p. 18).

Already in the 1980s NACTU had established links with OATUU and was actively involved in SATUCC. It affiliated to OATUU even before COSATU did so in 1991.

Where COSATU and NACTU traditionally drew on support from unions in the North, there was already a realization in the early 1990s that they had to engage with other unions in Africa, and Southern Africa in particular. South African unions, in the context of the Southern African region, increasingly occupy a position similar to the unions of Western Europe and the United States globally.

In the early 1990s, COSATU was also involved in other international activities, mainly through conferences with labour movements from elsewhere. They included the Indian Ocean Regional

Initiative and joint conferences with the Italian General Confederation of Labour and the Workers' Centre of Brazil.

In February 1993, at a time of increased violence in South Africa, COSATU and NACTU hosted a delegation from ICFTU, which included unionists from the Scandinavian countries, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States and Zambia. The Coordinating Committee on South Africa (COCOSA) met in South Africa for the first time since it was founded in 1976. Representatives from the ITSs were also present.

Towards the end of the 1990s trade unions became more aware of the need for global cooperation. Both NACTU and COSATU formally affiliated with ICFTU and its members. In 1998, FEDUSA also affiliated with ICFTU.

COSATU's involvement in OATUU and SATUCC led to more active campaigns in the region. COSATU's role led to the federation supporting the campaigns of other unions, rather than being supported. But individual unions have also been involved in transnational campaigns, especially in the clothing and textile industries. The result of a recent campaign is the *Maputo Declaration on the Textiles, Clothing and Leather Industries*, signed on 9 May 1999. Unions from Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe met in Maputo to discuss the state of the industry in the region.

The participants identified common problems such as the erosion of labour standards, the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes on their economies, export processing zones eroding labour standards, the impact of tariff reductions as well as large-scale smuggling of goods, and the trading of second-hand clothing intended as donations. The Declaration called for more appropriate macroeconomic policies, the promotion of worker rights, links between trade and labour rights, a more careful consideration of the reduction of import tariffs on specific industries, and the integration of export processing zones into national economies.

The involvement of SACTWU in this initiative illustrates the point that, whereas it drew on international support for recognition struggles in the 1970s and the 1980s it now contributes to the struggle for basic rights of other unions in the region. The approach of the Maputo Declaration to trade unionism reflects COSATU's and its predecessors' model of unions controlled by workers and strong shop stewards committees, linked to broader campaigns for democratization, i.e. social movement unionism.

Currently, the 'new internationalism' is on COSATU's broader agenda, and the Federation hosted several high profile conferences and congresses in South Africa in 1999. The first was the Seventh Ordinary Congress of OATUU, which was held in Johannesburg in September, and the second took place in October 1999, when COSATU hosted a conference of the Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR). Unionists from Australia, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Philippines and South Africa attended the conference. The third congress, that of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union (ICEM), was held in Durban from 3 to 5 November. Apart from these three high profile conferences, the general congress of ICFTU is scheduled to take place in Durban in 2000.

In summary, the independent trade unions which emerged in the 1970s drew on international networks in several of their campaigns for recognition, through industrial action and campaigns. They also received financial assistance from unions in the North. In the 1980s, when this union movement consolidated its structures, and in the context of the Cold War, these unions pursued an active policy of non-alignment. However, the movement continued to draw on international networks. The transition which began in the 1990s saw a process of international realignment. COSATU entered into talks with ICFTU, but also with unions in the South which were critical of ICFTU.

Towards the end of the 1990s, however, all three major trade union federations in South Africa formally affiliated to ICFTU, and are attempting to shape the direction of the federation so that it represents the interests of unions in developing countries. A good example of this is the awareness of South African unionists of the lobbying at the WTO Seattle negotiations.

2.5 *Collective action and institutional benefits*

The institutional context in which collective action takes place in South Africa has changed considerably in the past decade. The changes build on historical arrangements while attempting to introduce, albeit unsuccessfully, a new institutional framework. The Labour Relations Act of 1995 envisioned three levels of collective bargaining, and it was expected that this structure would lead to a coordinated labour market (Klerck, 1998, p. 101). This structure is summarized by table 9.

National bargaining

Since the late 1980s, the labour movement has engaged in negotiations with government and organized business at national level. New institutions were formed to accommodate the process: first the National Manpower Commission and the National Economic Forum, and since 1994, the National Economic, Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). The three major trade union federations, COSATU, FEDUSA and NACTU, all take part in NEDLAC.

NEDLAC consists of four chambers, i.e. the labour market chamber, the trade and industry chamber, the public finance and monetary policy chamber, and the development chamber. In the first three chambers, government, labour and business are represented. The fourth chamber, however, includes "civil" representatives as well as workers, employers and government (Webster, 1995b).

The NEDLAC Act establishes the objectives of the Council as follows. NEDLAC shall:

strive to promote the goals of economic growth, participation in economic decision making and social equity;
seek to reach consensus and conclude agreements on matters pertaining to economic and social policy;
consider all proposed labour legislation relating to labour market policy before it is introduced in Parliament;
consider all significant changes to social and economic policy before it is implemented or introduced in Parliament;
encourage and promote the formulation of coordinated policy on social and economic matters (Gostner and Joffe, 1998, p. 133).

Hence, the process of political democratization opened up space for the labour movement to influence policy-making. Also, its position in society is recognized through the formalization of workers' rights as human rights that are protected in the Bill of Rights enshrined in the Constitution. In the context of the double transition, however, commentators differ as to whether these institutions enable the labour movement to shape the direction of policy, or whether it merely "institutionalizes" the labour movement to accept the government's macroeconomic strategy.

The labour movement has achieved several successes through its involvement in NEDLAC. These include:

The achievement of a relatively progressive Labour Relations Act, despite certain weaknesses. A degree of success in putting human and labour rights on South Africa's trade agenda, by convincing government to require trade partners to sign a "side letter" to trade agreements, in which they commit themselves to "respect human rights and to commit themselves to work towards the ratification of core international labour Conventions (Gostner, 1997; Gostner and Joffe, 1998, p. 138).
Through the Social Clause Framework Agreement it compelled the South African government to ratify certain core international labour Conventions (Gostner and Joffe, 1998, p. 139).

Since 1996, the government's position that macroeconomic policy cannot be negotiated in NEDLAC has curtailed the extent to which the labour movement was able to use the Council to

influence the national developmental policy framework. Instead, NEDLAC became an institution in which the implementation of liberalization could be negotiated.

Also, labour's participation in NEDLAC is hampered by a lack of capacity to engage consistently in complex negotiations around issues such as trade agreements. Gostner and Joffe (1998, pp. 144-146) argue that labour representatives have not succeeded in moving from a reactive mode of operation into a proactive mode. This does not only relate to the undermining role of the non-negotiability of the macroeconomic framework, but also because labour has not succeeded in setting up functional structures, or a coherent framework of mandating. There are also difficulties in mobilizing workers around the very complex issues under negotiation.

Industry-level bargaining

Meso-level collective bargaining usually takes place in bargaining councils. These councils can be industry-wide, but some are also geographically determined. The functions of bargaining councils are to:

  negotiate collective bargaining agreements concerning wages, working conditions and other procedural issues;
  administer and enforce agreements,
  prevent and resolve disputes;
  promote and establish training and education schemes;
  establish and administer benefit schemes; and
  deal with requests for exemptions from agreements (Webster, 1999, p. 6).

It is important to note that agreements on wages and conditions reached in bargaining councils can be extended by the Minister of Labour to non-parties in the industry or geographical region where the bargaining council is registered. Employers can apply for exemption where they consider the requirements as too onerous.

The extent of the move towards meso-level collective bargaining has been overstated. As table 10 indicates, only 32 per cent of non-agricultural employees are covered by bargaining council agreements. When the Chamber of Mines is included, this figure increases to 36.4 per cent of workers in the non-agricultural private sector. The inclusion of the Transnet bargaining council (the transport parastatal) and the public sector bargaining council artificially inflates the number of employees covered by bargaining council agreements.

It is also important to note that collective bargaining at industry level is based on voluntarism. The parties can only register bargaining councils if there is sufficient representation from both organized labour and organized employers, and if both parties agree.

The Labour Relations Act also provides for Statutory Councils, sometimes described as "trainee bargaining councils". These can execute the functions of a bargaining council, but wage agreements cannot be extended to non-parties. These councils can be established in industries where employers or employees have a representation of 30 per cent. The aim of this was to break the deadlock in negotiations on voluntary versus mandatory centralized collective bargaining (Webster, 1999, p. 7).

Bargaining councils have recently come under attack, especially in the framework of calls for labour market flexibility. The South Africa Foundation (1996) blamed labour market rigidities on the extension of bargaining council agreements to non-parties. However, it should be noted that only a third of private sector employees are covered by such agreements. Also, as indicated, firms can apply for exemption from bargaining council agreements. In 80 per cent of the cases, these exemptions are granted (ILO, 1999). The South African Enterprise Labour Flexibility Survey found that larger companies between 150 and 400 workers generally apply for exemptions.

Very few firms with less than 50 workers apply. This may imply that small business does not find bargaining council agreements restrictive. An alternative explanation may be that they simply ignore such agreements (Standing, 1997b).

Nevertheless, very few new bargaining councils are currently registered and it seems unlikely that a trend towards centralization will continue. In fact, a number of bargaining councils have been deregistered since 1995.

Plant-level collective bargaining

As pointed out in Part 1, South Africa has developed a dual collective bargaining system, where wages and conditions are negotiated at industry- as well as at plant-level, the latter according to recognition agreements. Influenced by the German model of works councils coupled with centralized wage negotiations, the authors of the Labour Relations Act attempted to apply these principles. The LRA could not outlaw plant-level collective bargaining, but introduced a new concept, the workplace forum, in an attempt to facilitate a movement away from distributive collective bargaining toward integrative bargaining. It was hoped that these fora would provide for co-determination at the workplace and that bargaining over wages and conditions would gravitate towards the centre. The Labour Relations Act envisaged a transformation of adversarial industrial relations at the workplace into a regime of co-determination, where unions actively take part in efforts to improve productivity through their involvement in workplace fora.

However, since the LRA was adopted, only six such fora have been established (see Psoulis et al., 1999). Instead of this approach, there is evidence of a trend towards *lean production* based on the casualization of work and attempts to by-pass unions, instead of involving them in restructuring initiatives.

Webster (1999, p. 10) argues that "attempts at productivity increases have invariably been accompanied by job losses." He quotes a survey of 165 companies employing 315,000 employees which found that "company restructuring", rather than "economic downturn" is now the prime contributor to retrenchments. Commenting on the findings of a survey on flexibility patterns in manufacturing industry, Standing identifies a trend towards different forms of casualized work in South Africa:

> Evidence   suggests that South African firms have been moving in the same direction as their counterparts in most other parts of the world, turning towards greater use of *flexiworkers*, through casual labour, contract labour, sub-contracting to smaller firms, homeworkers and other 'outworkers', and agency workers (Standing, 1997b, p. 7).

The accompanying movement towards the introduction of team work supported by remuneration structures linked to individual or team performance (respectively referred to as work process and wage flexibility), has been treated with scepticism by trade unions. In South Africa, the phrase "world-class manufacturing" is used quite often to describe the introduction of these practices (see Ewert, 1992; 1997). Instead of post-Fordism, evidence of restructuring initiatives in South Africa seems to point towards a movement towards 'neo-Fordism'. This entails only "a partial movement away from racial-Fordist regulatory practices" (Kraak, 1996, p. 42). Kraak puts it as follows:

> It has primarily to do with the intensification of the Fordist labour process and the weakening of the organized trade union movement through the introduction of more exploitative forms of work organization using new technologies. It also has to do with the partial dilution of the racial division of labour in a manner which leaves shopfloor power relations unchanged (Kraak, 1996, p. 42).

The September Commission described management strategies of retrenching, outsourcing or subcontracting as "seeking to by-pass the union by refusing to consult or engaging in meaningless consultation". According to the Commission, the dangers of these initiatives for organized labour include the "division of workers into 'insiders' and 'outsiders'", and the possibility that "union responses to restructuring may create ideological confusion among members and activists" (COSATU, 1997, pp. 96-97).

The Commission does, however, point out that in some cases unions have used the space created by restructuring initiatives to resist retrenchments and subcontracting, to win "the right to information", and to set up consultative fora. But, "in the majority of cases", unions have not engaged with these processes effectively. Even in cases where restructuring agreements are signed, unions find it difficult to actually use the gains to their advantage in practice (COSATU, 1997, pp. 97-98). Different reasons for this are mentioned. The first points to the perceived route taken by management; "most managers are more concerned to reduce costs and workers and weaken the unions, than to cooperate with unions or to upgrade the skills of their workers". Secondly the Commission acknowledges that unions lack clear vision and policy guidelines on restructuring, as well as the capacity to engage effectively (COSATU, 1997, p. 98).

Hence, in the context of the institutional environment for collective action, labour has partly succeeded in using NEDLAC to shape the nature of post-Apartheid South Africa. However, the labour movement's role in NEDLAC is constrained by a lack of capacity to shape debates, as well as the government stance on the non-negotiability of its macroeconomic strategy. NEDLAC does provide labour with an opportunity to engage in trade negotiations, and provides a platform to keep issues such as the social clause on the agenda.

In terms of industrial relations at a meso-level, it seems that the trend towards centralization has come to an end. Only 36 per cent of the non-agricultural private sector workforce is covered by bargaining council agreements and firm-level bargaining, according to recognition agreements, still forms the foundation of collective bargaining.

Trade unions have had little success in dealing with company-level restructuring and South Africa's version of "world-class manufacturing". They are still trying to find a response to the movement away from standardized contracts of employment and remuneration, towards individualized contracts and bonus systems, coupled with an increase in casualization. Unions may find themselves *defending* the gains made during campaigns in the 1980s and 1990s, and, in the process, will be forced to become more outward looking as companies seek cheap and docile labour elsewhere.

2.6   *Collective action and social alliances*

The social movement character of COSATU implied that it was in broad alliance with other social movements in its attempts to overthrow the Apartheid regime. However, these alliances also implied tensions and differences in opinion on what the struggle had to entail. Towards the end of the 1980s these tensions became less pronounced, and COSATU entered into a formal alliance with the ANC and the SACP.

During the 1990s, this alliance can be characterized as one of contradictions. On the one hand, it was a way for COSATU to increase its influence in the ANC, thereby maintaining an ANC with a "working-class bias." On the other hand, the alliance was repeatedly used to contain COSATU's militancy and to implement macroeconomic policies.

Various attempts were made from the mid-1990s onwards to define and redefine the role of the alliance in the context of this obvious contradiction. Opinions from COSATU members indicate continued support for remaining in the alliance, even though the level of support seems to be waning. Also, the ANC's overwhelming victory in the 1999 elections demonstrates that there is still support for the party. Table 11 shows a slight decrease since 1994 in support for the alliance.

In 1994, the survey asked COSATU members about their expectations on delivery from the government. As table 12 indicates, expectations were relatively high. The 1998 survey asked COSATU members to rate the government's performance and workers seemed impressed with the

level of delivery on issues such as clean water, electricity, and access to telephones. However, on housing, enough nutritional food and, notably, higher wages, opinions were more moderate to negative.

Buhlungu and Psoulis (1999, p. 11) explain the continued support among COSATU members for the alliance as an "enduring solidarity", based on the traditions and networks built up during the struggle against Apartheid. They also argue that the survey of COSATU members shows a pragmatic attitude among workers.

It should be noted that this pragmatism would imply different voting behaviour if workers, over the long term, do not view the ANC programme as acceptable. Thus, while solidarities seem to endure for now, the rift between the ruling party and the trade union movement may become more stark if current aggregate job losses continue.

Since the end of the anti-Apartheid struggle, many NGOs and community-based organizations have been demobilized, either as a result of funding being directed to other areas, or because of a view that the role of civil society has changed from resistance to cooperation with government. But in light of the magnitude of job losses, many groups have become more active again, notably progressive church groupings. Some of these have been instrumental in the campaign to cancel Third World debt, while others presented an independent voice against the casualization of work at the Jobs Summit held by NEDLAC in 1998.

COSATU has recently made an attempt to rekindle its links with civil society. In October 1999, following a resolution at its 1999 National Congress, the federation called a series of meetings on "deepening unemployment" with various other unions, NGOs, churches, sports organizations, research bodies and traditional leaders. While still formally committed to the alliance with the ANC, these meetings signal a realization in the labour movement that links with broader social movements are still important.

2.7   *Unions and public opinion*

Public opinion about the labour movement has changed considerably. COSATU is no longer involved in an anti-Apartheid struggle, and unions in South Africa are now accused of being a labour aristocracy, and sometimes a factor contributing to unemployment. However, "public opinion" is a concept that is often abused or used in a very uncritical way. Often, it is portrayed as a monolithic construct, without consideration of the different *interest groups.* The mass media play an important part in forming public opinion in general, but also in forming the image that policy makers have of "public opinion".

The mass media were controlled and censored in various ways during the Apartheid regime. Often the labour movement was vilified and on one occasion Jay Naidoo, then General Secretary of COSATU was described as the "devil incarnate". However, a vibrant alternative press, including the *South African Labour Bulletin*, existed alongside the mainstream press. The independent press provided readers with alternative perspectives on politics in general, and also on the labour movement.

In the 1980s, alongside the South African National Civics Organization (SANCO) and other exponents of mass democracy, the labour movement played a very visible role in campaigns against Apartheid. Obviously, as South Africa moved towards a constitutional democracy, this role, and people's views on the labour movement have changed. Whereas the early stages of transition were dominated by a "language of rights", this changed to a "language of the market" in the late 1990s. The shift was also reflected in the media. Especially since 1996, as net job losses in the formal economy have received increased attention, the "language of the market" has been expressed in the opinion that the South African labour market is rigid, and that the "high" cost of labour is a reason for high unemployment.

The ideology of globalization filtered through the mass media especially through the concept of labour market flexibility, which was generally treated in a very uncritical way (see Bezuidenhout and Kenny, 1999). Indeed, commenting on the way in which debates on labour market flexibility were conducted in South Africa, Guy Standing argued that in the 1990s: "most governments are

almost prisoners of international opinion... Economic policy is determined not only by realities, but by impressions that filter through a small community of commentators". He continued:

> We are told South Africa suffers from 'labour market inflexibility', that investors are put off by the regulations and trade union power, and that it has 'the highest unemployment in the world'. Although there is no evidence to support those claims (except for what all agree are woefully inadequate data), the images feed into financial brochures and shape perceptions of the country's policy. In turn, policy-makers are pushed into contemplating reforms to gain credibility. (Standing, 1996.)

It is important to note that very little research has been done in South Africa about trade unions and public opinion. Steven Friedman, Director at the Centre for Policy Studies, pointed out in an interview that the only previous research project which tested public opinion on trade unions had been conducted after the elections in 1994. The research was based on focus group interviews which had only been conducted with black participants. As a result, it did not constitute a sample from which one could generalize about the whole population. At that stage, there had seemed to be general sympathy for trade unions. However, there was a variety of opinions, one of which held that the trade union movement had behaved irresponsibly and had been disadvantaging the unemployed.

Nine out of the 12 people interviewed in the context of the present study felt that attitudes towards the trade unions were changing. However, they disagreed as to how these attitudes were changing and in which direction. One person interviewed did not think that "opinions on the whole" had been changing. Two pointed out that there was no basis for such an assertion, arguing that it was necessary to define "the public".

Niel Coleman, head of COSATU's parliamentary office, pointed out that "the public" includes more than 2 million organized workers and their families. One should recognize that there is a difference between perceptions of public opinion created in the media, and what people really think. The notion of "public opinion" is shaped by "opinion-formers", who, in many instances, are hostile to the trade union movement. The terms of the debate are often dictated by the commercial media, who use "a common sense view" on issues such as unemployment, labour market flexibility and economic policy. Chris Bonner from Ditsela also believed there was a "conventional wisdom" that supported a liberal agenda of economic restructuring. Privatization is considered a good thing in principle, and public sector retrenchments are not questioned. Notably, Tanya van Meelis and Alan Fine, both from the media, felt that public attitudes towards trade unions had hardened. However, Coleman pointed out that there is also a difference between media targeting different audiences. In South Africa, newspapers strictly directed at the "business community" tend to include the views of the labour movement more than the mainstream press, since it is in the interest of their readers to be aware of current thinking in trade unions.

Mahlomola Skhosana, Assistant General Secretary of NACTU, pointed out that there was considerable support for the trade union movement from different social groups. He mentioned support from the religious community at the NEDLAC Jobs Summit, as well as support expressed in a pastoral letter from the Anglican Church.

Adrian du Plessis and Charles Nupen believe there is a general acceptance of the role of trade unions in South Africa. Dennis van der Walt, director of collective bargaining in the Department of Labour, argued that the general public is better informed about trade unions, and that the unions are therefore in a better position today. Du Plessis pointed out that very few people believe that the union movement has no role to play. Nupen argued that trade unions are no longer seen as high profile militants because they express themselves constitutionally. In the context of globalization, some sectors of the business community see unions as potential partners through negotiation. He pointed out that, for a less significant group, attitudes are still hostile. But this hostility is not so much political rather it is informed by the opinion that unions are inhibiting the process of becoming competitive internationally.

Some respondents felt there was a change towards negative attitudes about trade unions among the black middle class and the unemployed.

Emerging organizations claiming to represent the unemployed have criticised trade unions for protecting a labour aristocracy. Two examples of these organizations are the Malamulela Social Movement for the Unemployed,[1] and the Unemployed Masses of South Africa (UMSA). These organizations' calls for labour market flexibility are often accompanied by xenophobia directed at immigrant workers in South Africa.

However, the labour movement engaged in a number of innovative campaigns to counter these claims and perceptions. When a Presidential Jobs Summit was held in 1998 to address the problem of unemployment, the three federations set up a job creation fund and called on their members to contribute a day's wage to the fund. An independent team of trustees was appointed to oversee job creation projects. The event received wide media coverage when President Nelson Mandela gave a day's wage as the first contribution. Unfortunately the collection of donations from members was not well organized, and the fund currently operates with finances considerably lower than expected.

A second campaign was for a coordinated social plan to alleviate the effect of job losses on communities and workers. The labour movement argued that there was a need for a coordinated approach from government, business, the labour movement and other organizations to set up retraining facilities, essential services and welfare to communities affected by increased levels of unemployment. The campaign has been partially successful in that government and business have agreed to set up a social plan.

A third campaign was protest action against the reduction of import tariffs, especially in industries such as clothing and textiles. The labour movement partly succeeded in diverting attention away from the labour market flexibility debate to the fact that the government was reducing import tariffs faster than agreed in multilateral agreements. During the campaign, SACTWU argued that government was responsible for introducing a coordinated industrial policy framework, including effective supply-side measures, before embarking on rapid tariff reduction.

Hence, impressionistic evidence points towards a more sophisticated approach to trade unions in some sectors of the "public", while opinion in other sectors may become more negative. There is an impression that the media support a "common sense view" that globalization is inevitable and a liberal programme naturally follows. However, the announcement by the state railway company that it would reduce its workforce by 29,000, coupled with the mining industry shedding 90,000 jobs in 1998 alone, refocused the unemployment debate towards an increased awareness of the social consequences of globalization. A sophisticated response to this, coupled with awareness of the fact that globalization as practised currently does not have a "human face", may change the language and redirect policy towards the *social regulation* of economic life.

2.8 A broader agenda for union action: Towards global social movement unionism?

It should be noted that the South African labour movement was instrumental in campaigns to end Apartheid. This campaign was based on durable shop-floor structures organized through shop stewards committees. Membership of the post-1973 trade unions rocketed, not only because they were able to address the real problems of their members in the workplace, but also because unions formed part of a *broader social movement of civil alliances*. Trade unions were assisted by unions abroad   especially those organizing workers in the same transnational corporations. The South African case is an example of how workers can use their collective power and alliances with other organizations to win campaigns against inhumane social structures. After 1990, many of these gains were established as rights under a new democratic dispensation.

---

[1] Malamulela means "saviour" in Sotho.

However, the labour movement did not achieve its broader goal of transforming society economically. Instead, many of the gains are coming under pressure as a result of globalization. Global forces, coupled with local dynamics, have caused the labour movement to respond in various ways:

There is a realization that new membership campaigns will have to be taken seriously   casual workers and workers in "vulnerable sectors" will have to be organized into the labour movement. Otherwise, labour market segmentation may leave unions with a shrinking share of the working class, which could contribute to allegations that they represent a privileged minority. Proposed campaigns include special recruitment drives to organize casual workers and the setting up of advice centres. Usually, however, these campaigns remain rhetorical. Unions in general have not been able to recruit casual workers, or organize vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, construction and domestic service.

The South African labour movement has moved on from fighting for basic labour rights to maintaining these rights in the face of globalization. In the context of a parliamentary democracy, the social movement character of trade unions has become less pronounced. Also, unions have been growing and the traditional "organizing model" runs the risk of becoming a "servicing model" through bureaucratization. This is ironic as unions in the North are realizing the limits of a "servicing model" and focusing on organizing workers as part of broader social movements. There is evidence of a generational shift within COSATU, among both workers and officials. In order to respond to globalization, unions will have to maintain membership solidarity under conditions of increased individualization of labour relations and the need for coordinated centralized action and campaigns.

Democratization has led to several new possibilities for the labour movement to shape the outcome of social processes - institutions such as NEDLAC and bargaining councils are examples. However, it does seem that global competition may increase pressure to move away from centralized collective bargaining. A sophisticated response from trade unions is needed. This may include campaigns to draw attention to the "positive" aspects of such institutions, such as more coordinated approaches to education and skills development, and the formulation of industry-wide responses to increased competition. Also, unions will have to find creative ways of responding to company-level restructuring. But a company-level response is not adequate in itself. In the end, a collective "race to the bottom" will not contribute to sustainable competitiveness   therefore a global response is required, closely modelled on the South African unions' fight for recognition in the 1970s. But this time South African unions will have to act in solidarity with unions in Asia, South America and, specifically, Southern Africa.

Opinions differ on the nature of COSATU's alliance with the ANC. Considerable tensions arose when the ANC openly supported liberal macroeconomic policies. Should COSATU decide to part with the ANC, such a departure will have to be carefully orchestrated so as not to destroy the union movement itself. However, evidence points to waning, yet still significant support among COSATU members for the alliance with the ANC. Early attempts have been made by COSATU to rekindle its links with civil society, primarily around a campaign for increased levels of unemployment.

Public opinion has become a major source of contestation. Even though the public is "diverse", debates which are shaped by the media shape the policy agendas of government. The labour market flexibility debate has reshaped the agenda of "rights" towards a narrow "market" approach - a short-term approach which may have dire long-term consequences for the reproduction of the South African labour force. Some unions have found sophisticated ways of dealing with the media, but public-sector strikes, which may affect services to ordinary people, will have to be accompanied by active media campaigns. This also goes for campaigns of global solidarity. Campaigns in this regard include setting up a union-funded Job Creation Fund, campaigns around the impact of rapid trade liberalization on employment, and attempts to alleviate the impact of job losses on workers and communities through a social plan.

The South African labour movement has used various campaign modalities to draw attention to the negative impact of globalization. These include:

formally affiliating to ICFTU, and thereby taking part in attempts to influence the global trade agenda through campaigns for a social clause;

various campaigns through the ITSs;

campaigns, including blockades and "go slows" to support the struggle of unions in neighbouring countries for labour rights and political democratization;

challenging government tariff policy through protest action made possible by NEDLAC;

forming more durable organizational links with unions elsewhere when joint campaigns are undertaken; and

linking unions in similar industries at regional level through regular meetings and information sharing.

Unions have been unable to deal with work intensification and casualization, both key consequences of globalization. It is here that unions will be forced to become more outward looking, and to link up with unions and social movements globally.

Opportunities are many, but capacity is lacking at this stage. A key challenge for COSATU is to revitalize and strengthen its social movement characteristics, especially those of worker control and links with civil society. Like national campaigns, global campaigns depend on the active support of members, building on a consciousness of the importance of solidarity. Global social movement unionism provides a model for this, and is based on some of the traditions that the South African labour movement shares with labour movements elsewhere.

SOURCES

Interviews

Bonner, Chris. 1999. Director: Development Institute for Training, Support and Education for Labour (Ditsela). Personal interview conducted by Andries Bezuidenhout.

Buhlungu, Sakhela. 1999. Lecturer: Sociology, University of the Witwatersrand. Personal interview conducted by Christine Psoulis.

Coleman, Neil. 1999. Head of COSATU parliamentary office, Cape Town. Telephone interview conducted by Andries Bezuidenhout.

Du Plessis, Adrian. 1999. Business representative on various structures. Personal interview conducted by Christine Psoulis.

Fine, Alan. 1999. Times Media Limited. Personal interview conducted by Christine Psoulis.

Friedman, Steven. 1999. Director of the Centre for Policy Studies. Personal interview conducted by Christine Psoulis.

Maree, Johann. 1999. Professor of Sociology, University of Cape Town. Interview conduced via electronic mail by Christine Psoulis.

Milani, Chez. 1999. General Secretary of FEDUSA. Personal interview conducted by Christine Psoulis.

Nupen, Charles. 1999. Former director of the CCMA. Telephone interview conducted by Khayaat Fakier.

Skhosana, Mahlomola. 1999. Assistant General-Secretary of NACTU. Personal interview conducted by Andries Bezuidenhout.

Van der Walt, Dennis. 1999. Director: Collective Bargaining, Department of Labour. Personal interview conducted by Christine Psoulis.

Van Meelis, Tanya. 1999. Editor: South African Labour Bulletin. Personal interview conducted by Christine Psoulis.

References

Adelzadeh, A.; Padayachee, V. 1994. "The RDP white paper: Reconstruction of a development vision?" in *Transformation*, No. 25, pp. 1-18.

Adler, G.; O'Sullivan, G. 1996. "Rounding up the usual suspects: Recycling the labour aristocracy thesis," in Baskin, J. (ed.). *Against the current: Labour and economic policy in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Ravan).

 ; Webster, E. 1995. "Challenging transition theory: The labour movement, radical reform and transition to democracy in South Africa", in *Politics and Society*, No. 23(1).

Barret, J. 1993. "New strategies to organise difficult sectors", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 45-50.

Baskin, J. 1996. "Unions at the cross-roads: Can they make the transition?" in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 8-16.

Barchiesi, F. 1997. "Labour, neoliberalism and democratic politics in Nigeria and South Africa: A comparative overview", in *Labour, Capital and Society*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 170-225.

Bendix, S. 1996. *Industrial relations in the new South Africa.* 3rd edition (Cape Town, Juta).

Bezuidenhout, A. 1999. *"Restore profitability or we pull the trigger": The politics of productivity in the South African gold mining industry in the 1990s.* Paper presented at the Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association, Saldanha Bay.

 ; Kenny, B. 1999. *The language of flexibility and the flexibility of language: Post-Apartheid South African labour market debates.* Paper presented at the Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association, Saldanha Bay.

Buhlungu, S. 1994. "The big brain drain: Union officials in the 1990s", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 26-32.

 . 1997. *Working for the union: A profile of union officials in COSATU.* Labour Studies Research Report No. 8 (Sociology of Work Unit, University of the Witwatersrand).

 . 1999. *Gaining influence but losing power? Labour under democracy and globalization in South Africa.* Paper presented at the Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association, Saldanha Bay.

 ; Psoulis, C. 1999. *Enduring solidarities: Accounting for the continuity of support for the Alliance amongst COSATU members.* Paper presented at the Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association, Saldanha Bay.

Collins, D. 1994. "Worker control", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 33-42.

Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). 1997. *Report of the September Commission of Enquiry into the Future of the Trade Unions* (Johannesburg) (Online: http://www.COSATU. org.za/congress/septcomm.htm).

Ewert, J. 1992. "Restructuring industry on the factory floor: Neo-Fordist tendencies at Western Cape firms", in *South African Sociological Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 1-22.

. 1997. "Training for 'world-class manufacturing': Rhetoric and reality in the South African engineering industry", in *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 25-41.

Fraser, D. 1991. "The ICFTU in South Africa: Coming on strong." (Interview by D. Pillay) in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. 7, pp. 27-31.

Friedman, S. 1987. *Building tomorrow today: African workers in trade unions 1970-1984* (Johannesburg, Ravan).

Gostner, K. 1997. *Organised labour and globalization: A case of David and Goliath?* MA research report (Department of Sociology, University of the Witwatersrand).

; Joffe, A. 1998. "Negotiating the future: Labour's role in NEDLAC", in *Law, Democracy and Development*, No. 2, pp. 131-151.

Gotz, G. 2000. "Shoot anything that flies, claim anything that falls: Labour and the changing definition of the Reconstruction and Development Programme", in Adler, G.; Webster, E. (eds.) *Trade unions and democratization in South Africa, 1985-1997* (London, Macmillan).

Hudson, J. 1991. "The practice of solidarity", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. 7, pp. 40-43.

International Labour Office (ILO). 1999. *Studies on the social dimensions of globalization: South Africa* (Geneva, ILO).

Joffe, A.; Kaplan, D.; Kaplinsky, R.; Lewis, D. 1995. *Improving manufacturing performance in South Africa, Report of the Industrial Strategy Project* (Cape Town, UCT Press).

Kenny, B.; Bezuidenhout, A. 1999. "Fighting subcontracting: Legal protections and negotiating strategies", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 39-46.

; Webster, E. 1999. "Eroding the core: Flexibility and the resegmentation of the South African labour market", in *Critical Sociology,* Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 216-243.

Klerck, G. 1998. "Between corporatism and neo-liberalism? Collective bargaining and South Africa's new Labour Relations Act", in *African Sociological Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 85-113.

Kraak, A. 1996. Transforming South Africa's economy: From racial Fordism to neo-Fordism? in *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, No. 17, pp. 39-74.

Labour Market Commission (LMC). 1996. *Restructuring the South African Labour Market: Report of the Presidential Commission to Investigate Labour Market Policy*. RP 83/1996.

Lambert, R. 1992. "Constructing the new internationalism: Australian trade unions and the Indian Ocean Regional Initiative", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 16, No. 5, pp. 66-73.

. 1995. "COSATU and the challenge of the Asian economies", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 91-92.

. 1998. "Globalization: Can unions resist?" in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 22, No. 6, pp. 72-77.

Marais, H. 1998. *South Africa: Limits to change, The political economy of transformation* (London and New York, Zed Books).

Maree, J. 1987. *The independent trade unions, 1974-1984* (Johannesburg, Ravan).

Marie, B. 1992. "COSATU faces crisis: 'Quick fix' methods and organizational contradictions", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 16, No. 5, pp. 20-26.

Munck, R. 1999. "Labour dilemmas and labour futures", in Munck, R.; Waterman, P. *Labour worldwide in the era of globalization: Alternative union models in the New World Order* (London, MacMillan).

Naidoo, J. 1991. "More that unites than divides" (Interview with C. Mather and K. Von Holdt) in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. 7, pp. 16-21.

Naidoo, R. (ed.). 1999. *Unions in transition: COSATU into the new millennium* (Johannesburg, Naledi).

Ngcukana, C. 1991. "Rooting out dependency" (Interview with C. Mather and K. Von Holdt) in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. (7), pp. 22-26.

Normative Economic Model (NEM). 1993. *The restructuring of the South African economy: A normative model approach* (Pretoria, Central Economic Advisory Service and Government Printers).

Padayachee, V. 1998. "Progressive academic economists and the challenge of development in South Africa's decade of liberation", in *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 77, pp. 430-431.

Psoulis, C.; Moleme, K.; Spratt, J.; Ryan, E. 1999. *Workplace forums: What is their future?* Labour Studies Research Report No. 9 (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, Sociology of Work Unit).

Regini, M. (ed.). 1992. *The future of labour movements* (London, Sage/ISA).

Roux, R. 1990. "SACTU: End of an era", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 14, No. 8, pp. 47-51.

Seidman, G. 1994. *Manufacturing militance. Workers movements in Brazil and South Africa* (California, University of California Press).

Simons, J.; Simons, R. 1983. *Class and colour in South Africa* (London, International Defence Aid).

South Africa Foundation (SAF). 1996. *Growth for all: An economic strategy for South Africa* (Johannesburg).

Southall, R. 1995. *Imperialism or solidarity? International labour and South African trade unions* (Cape Town, UCT Press).

. 1996. *International labour and South African trade unions*, Labour Studies Research Report No. 7 (University of the Witwatersrand, Sociology of Work Unit).

Standing, G. 1996. "Tackling the jobless", in *Mail* and *Guardian*, 26 Nov.

. 1997a. "Globalization, labour flexibility and insecurity: The era of market regulation", in *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 7-37.

. 1997b. *Labour market dynamics in South African industrial firms: The South African labour flexibility survey*. Unpublished paper (Pretoria: Conference on Labour Markets and Enterprise Performance in South Africa, Reserve Bank).

; Sender, J.; Weeks, J. 1996. *Restructuring the labour market: The South African challenge. An ILO country review* (Geneva, International Labour Office).

Taylor, R. 1998. *Trade unions and trans-national industrial relations* (Geneva, International Institute for Labour Studies).

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 1999. *Globalization with a human face: Human Development Report* (New York, UNDP).

Vlok, E. 1998. "An unholy alliance? Organising the unemployed", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 22, No. 5, pp. 40-45.

Von Holdt, K. 1993a. "A new labour internationalism?" in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 76-79.

. 1993b. "The new world economy   Challenge by labour", in *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 17, No. 5, pp. 72-79.

Webster, E. 1985. *Cast in a racial mould: Labour process and trade unionism in the foundries* (Johannesburg, Ravan).

. 1995a. "Taking labour seriously: Sociology and labour in South Africa" in Van der Merwe, A.J. (ed.). *Industrial sociology: A South African perspective* (Johannesburg, Lexicon).

. 1995b. "NEDLAC   Corporatism of a special type?", in South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 40-45.

. 1999. *ILO research project on the contribution of collective bargaining to employment protection and to competitiveness: The case of South Africa* (Johannesburg, Sociology of Work Unit).

; Adler, G. 1998. *Towards a class compromise in South Africa's 'double transition': Bargained liberalization and the consolidation of democracy*. Paper presented at the 14th World Congress of Sociology, Montreal, Canada. 26 July - 1 Aug.

Wood, G. 1999. *Shopfloor democracy in the Congress of South African trade unions in the late 1990s*. Paper presented at the Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association, Saldanha Bay.

Annex: Tables

Table 1.   Membership of registered trade unions, 1976-1995

Year	Number of registered unions	Number of union members
1976	173	673,000
1977	174	677,000
1978	174	698,000
1979	167	727,000
1980	188	781,000
1981	200	1 054,000
1982	199	1 226,000
1983	194	1 288,000
1984	193	1 406,000
1985	196	1 391,000
1986	195	1 698,000
1987	205	1 879,000
1988	209	2 084,000
1989	212	2 130,000
1990	209	2 459,000
1991	200	2 750,000
1992	194	2 905,000
1993	201	2 890 174
1994	213	2 470 481
1995	248	2 690 727

Source: Department of Manpower (later Department of Labour) Annual Reports, 1976-1995.

Table 2.   Union membership and union density, 1985-1998

	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1996	1998
Union membership	1,391,423	1,887,940	2,130, 117	2,750,400	3,272,768	3,016,933	3,801,388
COSATU membership	400,000	712,231	924,499	1,205,307	1,205,244	1,639,865	1,713,533
Non-COSATU members	991,423	1,175,709	1,205,618	1,545,093	2,067,524	1,377,068	2,087,855
Non-unionized workers	6,451,277	6,128,560	6,026,583	5,237,100	4,484,897	4,573,067	3,746,612
Total employment	7,842,700	8,016,500	8,156,700	7,987,500	7,757,665	7,590,000	7,548,000
Total employment (excluding agriculture)	6,090,900	6,265,500	6,454,500	6,315,600	6,115,365	5,238,572	4,922,029
Union density (excluding agriculture)	18%	24%	26%	34%	43%	40%	51%

Source: N aidoo (199 9, pp. 16-1 7).

Table 3.   COSATU Union membership by sector, 1987-1999

	1987	1989	1991	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Mining										
NUM	261,901	212,000	269,622	267,630	310,596	305,937	300,430	290,216	277,718	26,555
Manufacturing										
NUMSA	130,796	188,013	220,000	180,000	169,598	185,750	182,592	177,845	173,754	169,258
SACTWU	30,538	177,908	185,740	160,000	156,500	157,450	155,005	150,355	145,844	127,000
FAWU	65,278	77,507	129,480	121,534	124,576	139,810	138,755	133,250	122,500	100,000
PPWAWU	23,310	31,151	42,962	32,000	36,630	61,463	53,900	47,468	49,422	43,000
CWIU	29,859	35,151	45,147	44,500	43,321	41,462	43,000	45,198	45,850	45,000
Construction										
CAWU	26,291	21,000	30,123	28,304	25,461	26,718	39,000	31,606	31,606	28,000
Services										
SACCAWU	56,000	72,823	96,628	102,234	102,234	105,301	108,460	111,714	115,065	118,417
SASBO						74,145	72,786	70,324	70,234	67,788
SADWU	9,402	14,525	16,462	16,652	24,149	25,149				
Public service										
SADTU				40,000	59,470	59,427	106,209	160,000	166,309	210,509
NEHAWU	9,197	14,295	18,110	44,058	63,835	96,000	120,348	179,231	190,527	230,000
POTWA/CWU		16,842	21,162	24,162	23,400	23,081	34,550	38,750	39,582	40,398
SAMWU	16,967	23,638	60,304	71,191	103,846	112,063	108,738	120,109	116,524	116,524
SAPSA							14,318	14,318	14,318	14,318
IPS						13,055	8,527			
POPCRU						40,186	43,520	47,538	44,999	44,999
Agriculture										
SAAPAWU						29,000	29,000	33,000	29,000	29,000
Transport										
SARHWU/ SATAWU	34,411	16,400	36,243	34,957	35,398	35,221	35,573	34,808	37,150	45,000
TGWU	18,281	23,182	33,324	38,022	38,482	38,270	38,653	37,822	55,438	55,438
Total	712,231	924,499	1,205,307	1,205,244	1,317,496	1,569,488	1,633,365	1,723,552	1,725,841	1,750,004

Source: Naidoo (1999, p. 9).

Table 4.   Unions and age, 1995

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Share of union membership	7%	35%	33%	18%	6%
Proportion of formally employed in unions	22%	36%	39%	37%	34%

Source: Naidoo (1999, p. 18).

Table 5.   Age variations by views on mandates issued to shop stewards, in percentages

When you elect a shop steward, s/he... Age	... can represent your interests as s/he sees fit	... can only do what the members tell them to do	... has discretion within a broad mandate	Total
18-25	47.2	27.8	25	100
26-35	35.3	42.2	22.4	100
36-45	28.1	53.8	18.1	100
46-55	22.1	56.6	21.3	100
56-65	14.3	85.7		100
Total	30.2	49.7	20.1	100

Source: Wood (1999, p. 27)

Table 6.   Salaries in COSATU and its affiliates, 1997

Salary range	Officials	Percentage
R1 - 1000	2	0.4
R1001 - 2000	31	5.8
R2001 - 3000	167	31.3
R3001 - 4000	223	41.8
R4001 - 5000	57	10.7
R5001 - 6000	27	5
R6001 - 7000	10	1.9
R7001 - 8000	9	1.7
R8001 - 9000	3	0.6
R9001 - 10,000	2	0.4
R13 001 upwards	2	0.4
TOTAL	533	100

Source: Buhlungu (1997, p. 18)

Table 7. How many years do you think you will be working for the union?

Years to stay in union	Number of officials	Percentage
1 - 2 years	153	27.9
2 - 5 years	194	35.3
5 - 10 years	86	15.7
10 years and more	116	21.1
TOTAL	549	100

Source: Buhlungu (1997, p. 30).

Table 8. Length of service of union officials, 1997

Year employed by union	Number of officials	Percentage
1973-77	2	0.4
1978-82	8	1.4
1983-87	59	10.8
1988-92	166	30.3
1993-96	313	57.1
TOTAL	548	100

Source: Buhlungu (1997, p. 21).

Table 9. Coordinated labour market as envisioned by the Labour Relations Act, 1995

Macro-level		NEDLAC	
Meso-level	Statutory councils	Bargaining councils	Non-statutory fora
Micro-level	Collective agreements	Workplace fora	

Source: Klerck (1998, p. 101).

Table 10.   Collective bargaining coverage in the non-agricultural formal sector (1993-1997)

Calendar year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Registered collective bargaining agreements in the private sector					
Registered agreements	163	156	124	139	147
Employers involved	20,702	23,745	50,194	70,387	53,636
Workers involved	313,572	353,634	823,823	810,589	775,583
Bargaining coverage (coverage rates in brackets)					
Private sector bargaining councils	765,800	731,100	783,700	925,846	886,900
NABC Coverage	737,800	703,600	755,700	895,846	857,900
Non-NABC Coverage	28,000	27,500	28,000	30,000	29,000
(% of private sector employment)	(26.5)	(25.6)	(27.0)	(32.7)	(32.0)
Chamber of mines	386,653	391,288	377,017	342,439	322,025
(% of mining employment)	(62.4)	(64.4)	(63.5)	(60.4)	(58.6)
Total private sector (Bargaining Councils and Chamber of Mines)	1,152,453	1,122,388	1,160,717	1,268,285	1,208,925
(% of tot. private sector employment)	(32.9)	(32.4)	(33.2)	(37.3)	(36.4)
Transnet	134,331	112,735	109,972	107,281	104,105
(% of Transnet employment)	(101.8)	(96.9)	(95.6)	(95.6)	(96.6)
Other public sector	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	1,250,000
(% public sector employment)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)	(71.2)
Total coverage	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	2,563,030
(% of total employment)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)	(n.d.)	(49.0)

Source: ILO (1999, p. 98).

Table 11.   Voting intentions of COSATU members

Issue	1994	1998
Alliance is the best way to guard worker interests in Parliament	82%	70%
Alliance to continue and contest the next elections	76%	63%
Will vote for the alliance in the next elections?	75%	74%

Source: Buhlungu and Psoulis (1999, p. 6).

Table 12.   Expectations and delivery

Issue	1994 RDP expectations	1998 assessment of RDP delivery
Housing	91%	55%
Electricity	85%	81%
Clean water	82%	81%
Access to land	81%	52%
Higher wages	79%	41%
Enough nutritional food	77%	53%
Telephones	72%	76%

Source: Buhlungu and Psoulis (1999, p. 9).