

## CAMPAIGNS

# We're making knowledge our weapon

OUR education programme has failed to get off the ground because of the weakness of union education structures. The weakness of our education programme has caused weaknesses in the federation both politically and organisationally. Proper organisational training — for example organisers' courses, shop steward training, administration and financial training, which is primarily a union responsibility — has not taken place in many affiliates.

At a federation level, this has paralysed our co-ordinated national courses. This reinforces differences because no forum exists where free and open debate can take place without the restraints of our constitutional structures like the CEC and EXCO. Also, very little time is spent on evaluating and reassessing our strengths and weaknesses.

**Solutions:**  
• Our education programme has been revitalised since the Education Conference, and national office-bearers have been elected to guide the full-time staff. A number of recommendations on issues of national courses, culture, women, media and structures were taken. The implementation of these depends on the active participation of our affiliates, as much of the training will have to be done by union officials and shop stewards.

## Culture

Our cultural department has made definite progress. Affiliates and shopstewards' councils must make a more determined effort to encourage cultural responsibilities. A small number of cultural locals have been set up and must be expanded.

Regional and national structures must be established to facilitate the growth of a cultural movement. Working class culture must form an integral part of our organisational work. Culture should also become a vehicle to connect with our democratic allies and reflect the struggles we fight in our

## Violence against our leaders

AS our struggle intensifies, so does the violence against our leadership.

In the past year, we have seen the bombing of several Cosatu offices — including our headquarters. Scores of our members have been murdered and hundreds detained.

In Natal, especially in Pietermaritzburg, we see a systematic campaign of violence by Inkatha-backed vigilantes.

The Pietermaritzburg issue is not only a local issue. It is part of a national strategy by the apartheid system to subvert and destroy the democratic movement. Hence our response should be a nation-

townships.

## Media

Our media unit has made erratic progress because of the repression against our media; constant disruptions; the crisis in the printing unit which led to the dismissal of almost all the staff, and the lack of co-operation from affiliates in providing the information needed to sustain Cosatu News.

There is a big push this year to develop media training for media units at every level of our organisation — especially the locals — and in the affiliates. A variety of publications are planned and it is hoped that this, together with getting Cosatu News going again, will give us enough options to maintain media production under the Emergency regulations.

It is essential that we maintain, in whatever form possible, the voice of organised workers through our own media. Media training lays a strong basis for this by rooting media more strongly in our structures.

## Women

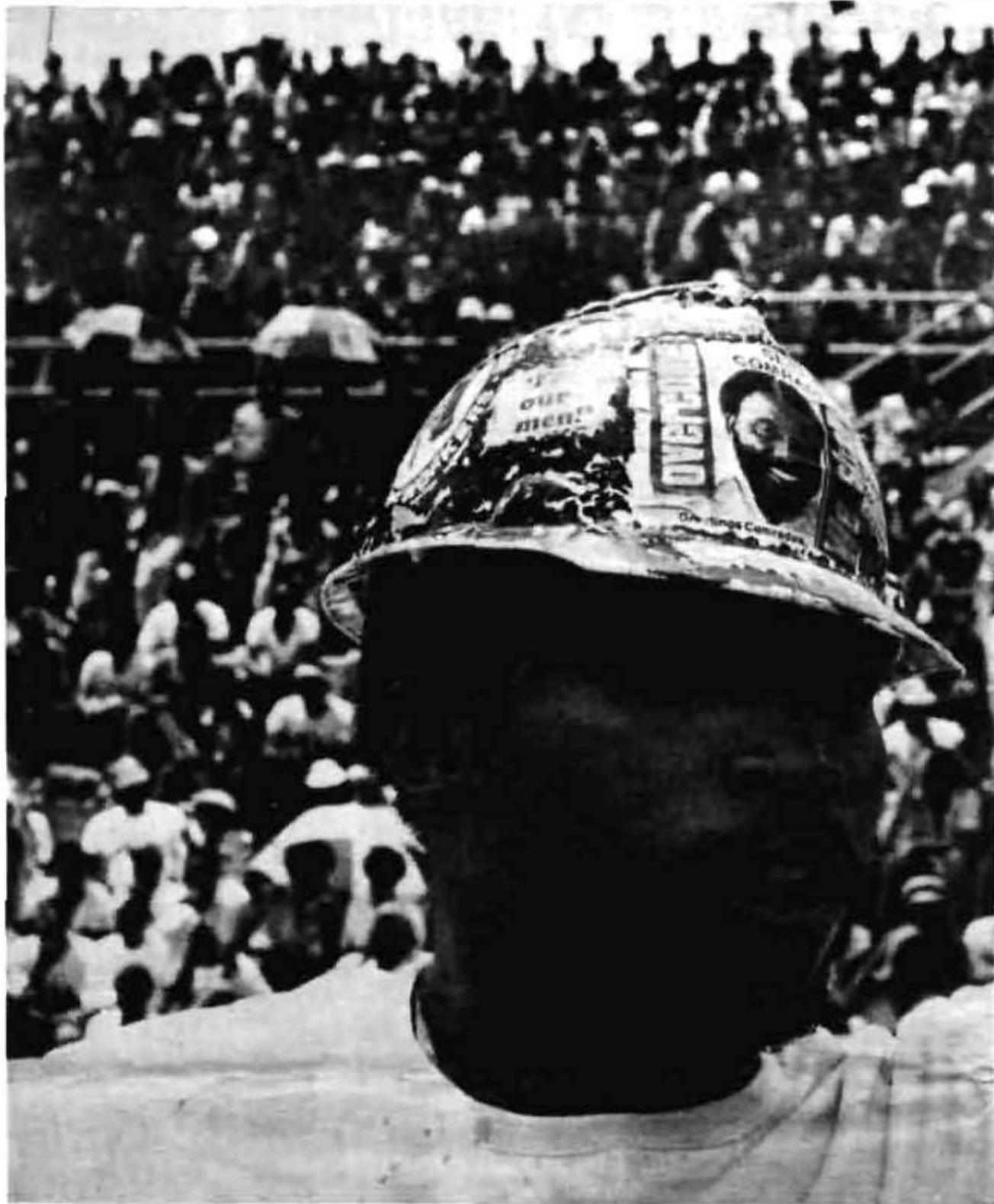
We have committed ourselves to building the role of women in our structures. The problems women face were highlighted at our second national congress in July. The Education Conference also highlighted women's issues and it was decided to hold a women's conference by April this year to identify a programme of action and elect office-bearers.

The main tasks prior to this conference were to build women's structures in the affiliates, locals and regions. Women's forums have already been set up in some locals and the needs expanded rapidly. Cosatu and its affiliates have to deal in more concrete terms with the absence of women in the senior leadership. Our principal of equality of sexes needs to be fully implemented.

al one. Yet how many affiliates, regions or locals have discussed and brought forward recommendations as to how to support our comrades in Pietermaritzburg who are dying daily?

We have committed ourselves to the defence of our organisations — yet in practical terms we have done very little. We need to realise before it is too late that building Cosatu through active involvement in the structures and campaigns we adopt is our main defence.

Strengthening our alliance with other mass-based organisations is crucial for the survival of the broad democratic movement.



# BUILDING THE

OUR executive committee has given a detailed analysis of the state of our campaigns over the past few months.

## Living wage campaign

Campaign structures, as we noted at our July congress, have been handicapped by poor union participation. However, 1987 saw massive worker action in spite of the weaknesses. We clearly identified that the main thrust of the campaign is the co-ordination of solidarity around the demands and struggles.

But this was precisely the major weakness in workers' mass struggles in 1987, from the NUM strike to Mercedes Benz to Sasol.

**Solutions:**

• Build our LWC structures.

• Affiliates must commit themselves, irrespective of their differences, to joint co-ordination of our struggles. The NUM and NUMSA, especially, because of their cross-industry bargaining, must give decisive leadership to this campaign.

• We have seen the emergence of national shop stewards' councils in different industrial sectors and in various companies — especially in FAWU and NUMSA. These need to be integrated into our campaign structures.



• We also need an immediate revival of campaign structures.

• We need this year to integrate our democratic allies into our campaigns. The LWC does not only represent a campaign for better wages and working conditions — it represents the struggle for a new society, for a new way of life where the needs of our people are met, where the inhumanity and indignity of poverty, unemployment and

starvation will be abolished.

## One union, one industry

We have, in retrospect, achieved more than has been achieved anywhere in the world. Only one merger — in the transport sector between TGWU and SARWHU — still has to be completed. The national unions must be strengthened. Our main organisational task is to build effective structures capable of carrying forward the decisions we make. The failure of us to critically evaluate the effectiveness of union structures can only weaken the federation.

Secondly, we have to draw into Cosatu those unions outside our ranks who accept our principles and policies. We need to do this fearlessly, knowing that our policies and principles are tried and tested ones. Affiliates need to build unity with other unions on practical issues that will lay

the basis for closer co-operation, and eventually for uniting workers under the banner of a single industrial union under Cosatu.

Thirdly, we need to more actively take up the issue of organising white workers into our ranks. That is the real meaning of our principle of non-racialism. The longer we delay, the more forces like the AWB/CP consolidate their grip over white workers, who are turning to them as the only force speaking to them about struggle against both the bosses and government.

The AWB recently formed a White Conservative Workers' Union — which describes itself as the "white Cosatu", organises as a white general union and refuses to register to resist co-option. They are starting to make real gains in some areas and sectors.

## Organising the unemployed

Some progress has been