

SUPPORT TO COSATU

The following information is to help broaden our understanding of South African labor. The South African labor movement has been built under the most difficult circumstances of oppression and apartheid. It is sophisticated and steeled with years of experience in dealing with the most ruthless exploiters, both South African and transnational. South African labor is now united in its vast majority under the banner and program of the newly formed Congress of South African Trade Unions--COSATU--a new militant union federation.

Recognition of COSATU and respect for its struggle is the first consideration in aid to South African labor. Will Black South Africans trained in Israel by the Hisadrut program be supporting the program of COSATU? Or will they support a racially exclusive union grouping like Buthelezi's UWUSA, United Workers Union of South Africa?

COSATU

COSATU elected Elijah Barayi, of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM-SA) as President; Chris Dlamini of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union as First Vice-President; Makhulu Lidwaba of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa as Second Vice-President; Jay Naidoo of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union as General Secretary; Sidney Mafumadi of the General and Allied Workers' Union as Assistant General Secretary and Maxwell Xulu of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union as the Treasurer.

Among the demands made by the COSATU launch conference were:

- The repeal of the pass laws. (Should the regime fail to comply, COSATU will start a defiance campaign, including the burning of passes).
- The immediate lifting of the State of Emergency.
- The withdrawal of the racist troops from the townships.
- The unconditional release of Nelson Mandela, and all political prisoners and detainees.
- The repeal of orders restricting individuals and outlawing organisations.
- The dismantling of the Bantustan system.
- An end to the migrant labour system.

The COSATU unions commit themselves to:

- Worker control;
- Non-racialism;
- Broadly-based industrial unions;
- The struggle for political rights;
- Representation based on paid-up membership;
- Cooperation at the national level in the new federation;

A broad range of resolutions at the launch conference dealt with organisation against the apartheid regime. Some of the issues covered were:

— **Industrial unions** — There must be one national union in each industry.

— **A Living Wage** — There must be an ongoing campaign for a national minimum wage, linked to the inflation rate.

— **Unemployment** — All workers have a right to work. Overtime must be banned, and all should work a 40-hour week. Workers must fight the introduction of technology that costs jobs.

— **Strikes** — All workers must have the right to this democratic form of struggle.

— **Women** — Because women are exploited on the basis of sex, class and race, workers must fight all unequal and discriminatory treatment of women at work, in society and in the Federation.

— **Worker Education** — To combat the present education system which is undemocratic, divisive and serves the interests of the ruling class, there must be education programmes to politicise, mobilise and organise the working class so that they can lead the transformation towards a society that serves the needs of those now oppressed and exploited.

— **Disinvestment** — An essential and effective form of pressure on the regime that must be supported.



Labor Committee of the Seattle Coalition Against Apartheid
For more info: 329-0120 or 722-3725 labor donated

large South