

CWIU National Congress

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union has held a National Congress at which 200 delegates represented the 30 000 members. Resolutions on a variety of issues were adopted. On sanctions the Congress noted that only comprehensive and mandatory sanctions were likely to be effective and that the calls for such sanctions had been and are being twisted and distorted by imperialist states into ineffective selective sanctions packages, often serving their own interests, rather than the interests of the working class. The union supported the call for a cessation of a range of international diplomatic, financial, tourist, travel and sporting props to apartheid and its businessmen. The CWIU called on countries abroad to stop accepting South African emigrants, to stop allowing workers for South Africa to be recruited in their countries and for the effective implementation of the arms embargo.

On disinvestment the Congress stated that what was currently taking place in South Africa was not disinvestment. Rather it is little more than corporate camouflage which often allows the 'Disinvested' company to increase its support for the South African regime. The Congress set out a package of minimum conditions for an acceptable disinvestment to take place. These include proper notice, disclosure of information and bona fide negotiations and certain guaranteed payment.

The unions political policy was debated for an entire day. Consensus was reached on the basic principles: worker control, democracy, non-racialism. Working class leadership. organisational independence, non affiliation to political organisations, disciplined alliances with other organisations, and guidelines for such alliances, together with the assertions that only socialism can solve the current political and economic crises was agreed. The need for ongoing and open debate to determine how and what future should be built was also agreed. The major debate revolved around the need to adopt a workers charter/working class programme or the Freedom Charter. In the interests of unity and democracy neither position was adopted and the issues were referred back to the rank and file membership with a view to a further congress being convened in 3 months time. A new logo and slogan was adopted:

"A working class united, can never be defeated"