

Towards a "living wage"

Workers demands over sixty years

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A turning point in South African trade union history occurred in 1981. In that year, FOSATU issued its demand for a living wage of R2 per hour for all workers. This was the first time in the history of the South African labour movement that any major union organisation had dared to demand a living wage. In previous years, unions and federations had made demands for increases, notably SACTU's pound-a-day campaign of the 1950s. They represented substantial increases, but were never put forward as affording a decent standard of living.

No trade union, until 1981, was confident enough or bold enough to demand a living wage. The trade union movement in 1981, however, was very different compared to any previous era. It had, the year before, finally won legal recognition for African unions after a long battle, and in the following five years the membership of trade unions doubled. The workers' greater strength and confidence and experience of huge victories - made it possible to launch the living wage campaign of 1981 and placed it on the agenda for the whole movement, and it has now been taken up by COSATU.

What is a living wage?

The living wage is part of the history of the trade union and labour movement. The earliest reference to the living wage was made by a radical writer in 1874:

The first thing that those who manage trade societies should settle is a minimum which they should regard as a point below which they should never go ... Such a one as will secure sufficiency of food, and some degree of personal and home comfort to the worker; not a miserable allowance to starve on, but living wages.

(Lloyd Jones in The Beehive, quoted in S Webb, Industrial Democracy, 1987, p 587)

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The living wage became one of the policies advocated by the Independent Labour Party within its general programme of "Socialism in our Time", after the fall of the 1924 Labour Government in Britain. (1) The ILP was then an important socialist organisation affiliated to the Labour Party, and it advocated that the priority of a future Labour Government should be the achievement of a minimum living income for all and that other policies should centre around this aim. The policy had a number of forms but its central demand was for a national minimum wage sufficient to meet all needs, and for the wage to be supplemented by expanded social services including Family Allowances.

Wages constitute one of the major factors in the economic and social life of any industrial community. In order to live, that is to provide themselves with food, clothing, housing and all the other necessities of life, workers and their families depend almost entirely on wages. Obviously trade unions and their members should seek to achieve high wages in order that workers might be able to satisfy more of their basic needs. Arguably high wages can be considered as having important advantages for the economy as a whole, because they ensure a high level of demand for goods and services, and they also stimulate improvements in productivity.

For workers and their organisations, it is desirable that workers should be paid an adequate living wage which may be determined by their basic needs. The application of this principle is ideal for the practice of regulating wages. Although the idea is still vague, a living wage is usually considered as the amount sufficient to provide for the basic needs of a family of average size. (2) These basic needs are understood by some people (mainly employers) to mean enough for the mere subsistence necessary to maintain physical health in the short term. Others (the trade unions) think that a living wage should provide at least a few simple comforts in addition to a meagre subsistence.

Basic needs

According to the International Labour Organisation, basic needs as have two elements: they include certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption: adequate food, shelter and clothing are included, as would be certain household equipment and furniture. Secondly, they include essential services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health and educational facilities. (3)

Basic needs constitute the minimum objective of society, not the full range of desirable attributes, many of which will inevitably take longer to attain. The basic-needs concept is of universal applicability, although the relative importance of its components will vary with the level of development and from one nation to another. (4) The satisfaction of an absolute level of basic needs should be placed within a broader framework, namely, the fulfilment of basic human rights, thus embracing individual and group participation of the people in formulating and implementing the decisions which affect them.

It is important that wages should enable workers' families to enjoy some of the good things of life, over and above the generally agreed essentials, as mere subsistence wages are not enough. As needs change with the times, the living wage should also constantly be changing for the better, particularly in an environment of economic growth. It is difficult to estimate exactly what constitutes a living wage and various methods may be used, differing greatly from country to country and influenced by accustomed standards of living and consumption habits. Workers should not just know that they need more money in their wages. They should be able to say what they need the money for, what things they want to buy and cannot buy unless they have more money.

Just as the employers do not first work out how much money they need to remain healthy when they decide what dividends to pay themselves, workers also do not want only the minimum amount of money to stay alive. They want to be able to live full and comfortable lives.

It is important to note that workers find it difficult to live decently on their present wages, because they cannot afford adequate health, recreation and education needs for their children. In many cases they are faced with the difficult choice of paying for high transport costs and rents or food. Economists have worked out subsistence measures which include the amount of money which a family with an average number of children needs:

- (i) To buy the minimum amount of the proper food which they need to stay healthy.
- (ii) To buy enough clothes to keep them warm in the winter and cool in summer.
- (iii) To buy fuel for cooking and soap for cleaning.
- (iv) To pay rent for a proper home.
- (v) To pay the fares they need to travel to work or school. (5)

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The calculations of these subsistence measures are, however, not always accurate and they bear no relation to the idea of a living wage. Their aim is to set lower limits to survival - not to assess the costs of a full human life. Basic needs may also be interpreted subjectively as the satisfaction of consumers' wants as perceived by the consumers themselves, rather than by physiologists, doctors and other specialists. (6) It is only workers themselves who know and can determine their living standards, thus knowing what to spend their money on. Therefore workers should be given opportunities to earn incomes necessary to purchase the basic goods and services.

AFRICAN WAGE DEMANDS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The early years

As early as in 1854, dock workers in Cape Town struck for an improvement in their wages. (7) In the first few years after the discovery of gold, the mine workers fought against the bad working conditions in the mines. In 1907 black mine workers went on strike to demand higher wages. In 1913 they struck again to complain about their living conditions and low wages. (8) The struggle for higher wages by African workers started in earnest after the First World War, a period of general industrial unrest.

The cost of living had gone up and there was also a serious drought and crop failure, which caused many people to leave the overcrowded reserves to search for work in towns. As a result of these conditions, a chain of protests was set off as workers began to demand higher wages. In 1918 the African sanitary workers - "night soil boys" - in Johannesburg went on strike and demanded sixpence a day more on their wage. Also in that year thousands of miners all over the Witwatersrand refused to buy food from the mine stores until prices came down.

The South African Native National Congress (which later became the African National Congress) also led the protest by calling for a general strike for a shilling a day increase in wages. (9) In 1919 another attempted strike took place in Bloemfontein, when Africans demanded a minimum wage of four shillings and sixpence a day. Masabalala, an Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) leader in Port Elizabeth, organised Africans to demand a minimum living wage of ten shillings a day and membership of the ICU. (10)

In 1920 about 70,000 mine workers stopped work for 12 days demanding more pay. African protests subsequently merged into a combined demand for increased wages, objections to the colour bar, and an attack on the pass system. Giving his presidential address in May 1919, S.M. Makgatho of the SANNC (ANC) referred to the two-fold problem of the Africans as the need for a living wage and the "infernal pass". (11)

The first widespread effort to organise African workers came with the rise of the ICU during the 1920s. The ICU promised to win higher wages and better working conditions for the African people. In its Economic and Political Programme for 1928, the ICU called for a minimum wage of five pounds per month (plus food and housing in country districts). (12) The ICU leadership also relied on negotiations through the Wage Board established under the 1925 Wage Act to investigate and implement minimum wages in particular cases. After the collapse of the ICU in the late 1920s, Clements Kadalie set up the Independent ICU in East London. In September 1929 he organised a strike demanding an increase from three shillings and sixpence to six shillings and sixpence in daily wages for rail and dock workers. (13)

It is hard, today, to understand what these demands meant. We no longer use pounds and shillings and even a rand, though it has the same name, has a different buying power today compared with just one year ago. At the end of this article we give a table which converts the wage demands we mention into today's money. It is useful to look at this table and at the graph that goes with it to get a better understanding of the value of workers' wage claims.

The war period

The labour struggles which followed the collapse of the ICU involved mainly the organisation of African industrial unions. During the Second World War, African unions increased and became strong. In 1941 the Council for Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) was formed. Its major objective was the full statutory recognition of African unions and in 1942 it campaigned for a weekly minimum wage of forty shillings. African unions also successfully approached the Wage Board for wage determinations especially in the chemical industry, the laundry, the baking and confectionary trades. For example, in 1936 the Wage Board recommended four pounds and ten shillings weekly for bakers and two pounds for bakers' assistants. In 1938 six pounds per month was recommended

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for labourers in the commercial and distributive trade. (14)

In 1941 the Natal Sugar Industry Employees Union (NSIEU) initiated a successful struggle for a wage improvement for mill workers in Natal. This resulted in a 10 shillings per month increase in that year, followed by a Wage Board determination in 1942 which with a cost of living adjustment brought the total weekly wage to 35 shillings. (15) In mid-1941 there was a Wage Board investigation into Unskilled Labour for the Witwatersrand and Pretoria, covering 47,000 workers in 34 industries. This resulted in Wage Determination 105 which fixed a minimum wage of 25 shillings per week, rising to 27 shillings over two years. However, this wage fell below 37 shillings and sixpence per week, which the Smit Report at the end of 1942 calculated as the poverty datum line for an average urban African family. (16)

In December 1942, after a threat of strike action by workers in the iron and steel industry, employers offered an extra 3 shillings per week for labourers and 3 shillings and nine pence for semi-skilled on the existing wages of 21 shillings and 24 shillings. At a general meeting in January 1943 workers protested that they were starving and demanded immediate action to win 40 shillings per week. (17) Similar demands were also made by meat, dairy, mineral water and some municipal workers, but none of these were granted. In 1942 the Wage Board policy provoked a number of strikes in and around Johannesburg.

Among the causes of the strike wave were the low minimum wage fixed by Wage Determination 105, and the fact that workers in certain industries (mining, timber, clay and water) were bitterly dissatisfied with their exclusion from Wage Determination 105. (18) After the 1942 strikes, black union officials received an increased degree of informal recognition from employers in commerce and industry anxious to prevent unrest among their workers. (19) In 1943 a cost of living allowance was granted to all African workers except those in mining and agriculture.

The African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU) which was formed in 1941 mobilised workers in the mining industry around basic economic demands. The African Mine Clerks' Association, angered by the Chamber of Mines' refusal to pay them the statutory Cost of Living Allowance, joined AMWU. As a result of AMWU's demand for reforms which followed the spontaneous strikes in 1942, the government appointed the Witwatersrand Mine Natives' Wage Commission (the

Lansdowne Commission) to investigate wages and working conditions of African mine workers. In December 1943 the Commission recommended:

- (a) Wages and other benefits equalling an annual increase of 10 pounds and 4 shillings for surface workers, and 11 pounds 14 shillings and 7 pence for underground workers. (20)
- (b) Cost of Living and other allowances; paid leave and overtime

The state and the mining employers rejected these recommendations and only agreed to a lesser wage increase and overtime. In 1944 the AMWU conference, attended by delegates from every mine, rank-and-file workers and many CNETU trade unionists, discussed the Lansdowne Commission Report. AMWU termed the recommendations "hopelessly inadequate and unsatisfactory", demanded a Wage Board inquiry and called on the labour movement to protest against victimisation of their members. Food shortages in South Africa in 1945 made matters worse as compound rations were reduced, resulting in food protests in the mines. In March 1946, in one such protest at the Modderfontein East mine, police shot dead one worker and injured forty others. (21)

At the AMWU's conference in April 1946 workers threatened to strike and demanded the following:

- * a minimum wage of 10 shillings a day
- * family housing
- * two weeks paid annual leave
- * 100 pounds gratuity after 15 years' service
- * payment of repatriation fares
- * repeal of War Measure 1425

Implicit in these was the demand for the creation of a permanent, stable workforce in the mines and the abandonment of the migrant labour system. The demands were ignored and one-day protests occurred, leading up to the historic strike in August 1946 by an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 African mine workers. (22) After five days the strike was crushed by heavy police repression. AMWU was destroyed in the mines and numerous officials jailed. It was not until 1949 that another smaller increase of 3 pence per shift was granted, still leaving wages lower than those recommended by the Lansdowne Commission.

SACTU and the pound-a-day campaign

The Defiance Campaign of the early 1950s generated a high degree

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of confidence among the people, resulting in the call for a Congress of the People to work out a Freedom Charter. Workers became involved not only in disputes with employers and the state, but became a strong part of the mass resistance to apartheid. In June 1955, the Freedom Charter was adopted by the Congress Alliance. One of the clauses of the Freedom Charter concerns work and security - calling for a national minimum wage and a 40-hour working week. Earlier, in March 1955, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) - a non-racial trade union co-ordinating body - was formed.

SACTU's basic principle was to serve effectively the interests of the workers, both the immediate interests of higher wages and better conditions of life and work as well as the ultimate objective of complete freedom. SACTU believed that the organising of the mass of workers for higher wages, better conditions of life and labour is inextricably linked up with a struggle for political rights and liberation from all oppressive laws and practices.

The poverty wages paid to African workers in the 1950s prompted SACTU to launch the famous pound-a-day campaign, following the Alexandra Bus Boycott of 1957. This was an intensive campaign which was carried out on every possible level.

According to SACTU, the living standards of the South African working population, especially of the African, Coloured and the Indian people, had for many years been far too low to afford the amenities of nutrition, housing, health, culture and recreation which could and should be provided by a country of comparable economic development. (23) In order to help solve this problem, SACTU sent a memorandum to the South African Federated Chamber of Industries (an employers' organisation) in September 1957 with the following proposals:

1. A proposal for an immediate and substantial increase in wages of all categories of workers.
2. A proposal for the immediate payment of a minimum wage of not less than one pound a day for the so-called "unskilled workers".
3. A proposal that all employers recognise and conduct direct negotiations with (African) trade unions. (24)

The campaign gained instant popularity with African workers and the black population generally. Many employers were forced to respond with wage increases.

SACTU leaders consciously linked the struggle for political rights and power to the day-to-day struggle for higher wages and improved working conditions. The campaign also converged with SACTU's plan for organising the unorganised workers. SACTU embarked on educational work and local committees began to print their own leaflets, holding mass rallies to mobilise workers around the pound-a-day demand. There was a strong realisation in SACTU that workers needed to be organised into trade unions or even some lesser form of organisation (such as factory committees) in order to win their demands on the wage front. (25)

In 1959, the campaign was strengthened by the militancy of the masses and a much closer relationship was forged between SACTU and the ANC. Out of the SACTU Conference came a renewed emphasis on forming new unions in the basic industries. The pound-a-day campaign was to be conducted in the following manner:

- (a) by building powerful unions in the transport and metal industries;
- (b) by creating workers' factory committees as a step towards the formation of trade unions; and
- (c) by demanding a minimum wage of a pound-a-day for all workers.

Although SACTU's victories on the wage front were significant, the workers' wages were still below the subsistence level as the Poverty Datum Line had increased to approximately 27 pounds per month. The pound-a-day slogan remained relevant and the organising of workers into the trade union movement was necessary to strengthen the collective struggle against poverty wages. In fact, through their consistent campaign, they popularised the need for increased wages and they scored notable victories in the metal and distributive, textile and other industries. For example, in 1960 metal workers won an increase of sixpence per hour on the basic wage, bringing it up to 3 pounds 10 shillings and 9 pence per week. (26)

The emergence of independent black trade unions

By the early 1970s, African workers in particular were hard hit by increasing prices of essential items such as food, clothing and transport. As a direct result of the higher cost of living, workers launched a massive resistance campaign. This reached a peak in 1973 when an estimated 100,000 workers participated in a

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series of short but widespread industrial strikes, centred mainly in Natal.

The wave of strikes began on January 9 at Coronation Brick and Tile Company outside Durban. The workers here went on strike demanding an increase in the minimum wage from R8.97 to R20 per week. (27) The strikes spread all over Natal and workers usually demanded wage increases of R20 to R30 per week. Although the workers won relatively small wage increases, they had nevertheless showed their potential power to the employers and the state. Throughout the 1970s, workers resorted to various forms of struggle in order to win basic demands, for example, the right to organise freely and to improve collectively their standard of living. In 1973 the National Union of South African Students' Wages Commissions campaigned for R30 per week for all workers. (28) The 1973 strikes engendered a new confidence amongst workers which led to the formation of new independent trade unions for black workers. As a consequence of this, by the end of August 1975 there existed a total of 25 African trade unions with a combined membership of approximately 66,000. (29)

In May 1977 SACTU submitted a memorandum to all employers' organisations in South Africa, calling on them to respond to the fundamental grievances and immediate demands of the black working class. Among the minimum and essential demands SACTU outlined on behalf of South African workers, there was a demand of a national minimum wage of R50 per week for all workers, indexed to inflation. This wage demand was increased to R75 in 1980. (30) In late 1979 and mid-1980, textile workers from the Frame Group of companies came out on strike demanding an immediate 25% increase in wages. This was the same group which had been the focus of African workers' grievances during the 1973 strikes. According to the Chamber of Industries' (Durban) survey on wage structures, the average weekly basic minimum wage for a black unskilled male was R37.83 in 1980. (31)

In 1979 the Food and Canning Workers' Union (FCWU) was asked by its members at Fatti's and Moni's to negotiate an increase in wages. Workers wanted a minimum wage of R40 a week. At that time male workers were earning an average of R32 per week and females between R19 and R27 per week. (32) The historic strike that occurred after the managements' rejection of these demands was highlighted by the strong community support of the striking workers, creating strong links between trade unions and community organisa-

tion especially in the Western Cape.

The living wage campaign

At its annual conference in 1980, the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) called for a national minimum wage of R50 a week indexed to inflation for all workers in commerce and industry. It also called for a minimum monthly salary of R80 for all domestic workers. (33) The Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) launched the first systematic campaign for a living wage in 1980. This began with a massive strike by Eastern Cape motor workers in Uitenhage in June and July 1980, who demanded R2 an hour, a 74% increase on the existing minimum wage of R1.15. At the end of the dispute the striking workers accepted R1.48 an hour after an agreement between FOSATU and the employers. Together they agreed to sponsor a survey which would attempt to establish a living wage in the area. (34)

Black wages had been, and are still, compared to Poverty Datum Lines (PDL) which attempt to calculate the minimum needs for a black family to survive. The workers and their unions argued that the PDL was a "yardstick against which to measure poverty, not a goal in setting wage levels". The workers stressed that the PDLs are calculated on the minimum quantity of basic items which a family needs to "live from hand to mouth, rather than enjoy a reasonable quality of life". According to FOSATU, a reasonable wage:

- * must cover workers' actual needs, not the minimum required to keep him alive;
- * must provide for a reasonable standard of living and not a continual struggle with poverty;
- * must provide a secure income which means that a worker must also have job security; there should be training; service allowance; redundancy pay; and benefits such as pension and medical schemes;
- * must be more equitable compared to company profits.

According to FOSATU's pamphlet, "Policy on a living wage", (1981) low wages in South Africa were a result of the powerlessness of the poor (workers) to bargain for better in the past. They also believed that management has attempted to justify the system of wage exploitation by the use of so-called scientific surveys of an adequate wage to support the needs of black workers and their families. FOSATU rejected this form of wage measurement and

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adopted instead the concept of a living wage. In rejecting the concept of PDL, FOSATU saw it as unacceptable that non-workers should have the presumption to decide what the requirements of workers should be.

FOSATU demanded that employers should start paying workers a living wage which they saw as a combination of two factors:

1. what workers themselves decide they require to live;
2. what workers are able to get from their managements at both national and plant based negotiations based on the company's ability to pay, its profits and the ability of the union to get higher wages in the company.

They argued that a living wage could only be achieved through the acceptance by the employers and the state of the right to negotiate wages at both plant and national level. Other demands contained in the policy document were the following:

- * Unions should also have access to company profit figures and the legal rules of disclosure should apply to any wage negotiations.
- * Wages should be automatically linked to a consumer price index (CPI).
- * Any wage negotiations should take place over and above this increase, ie. should be about real rises in wages and living standards.
- * remuneration and benefits should be linked to long service with the company.
- * The shop stewards involved in negotiations should be given paid study leave to enable them to become familiar with methods of negotiation and company accounting procedures.
- * An acceptable minimum wage level is R2 per hour.

In the following years FOSATU led the battle for a decent living wage. Towards the end of 1985 most major trade unions said that the minimum wage should be at least R3,50 per hour. They began to see that the only way for workers to win a decent minimum wage was to unite and embark on a national campaign for a living wage. The formation of a new super-federation of unions in November was seen as making that possible.

When this new federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, was formed in November 1985, its resolution on a national

minimum living wage was:

- * That the Central Executive Committee establish as soon as possible what workers regard as a minimum living wage.
- * To initiate and conduct, in alliance with other progressive organisations and trade unions in the country, an ongoing national campaign for a legally enforced national minimum living wage for all workers in South Africa, through worker action and negotiation in every industry.
- * To fight for this minimum living wage to be automatically linked to the rate of inflation.
- * To have access to company accounts so that workers can see exactly how the wealth they have produced is being wasted and misused by the employers' profit system.

In 1986 COSATU affiliates in every major industry demanded a living wage of R3,50 an hour and a 40-hour working week. COSATU claims that workers cannot survive on starvation wages and that they must share the wealth they produce. MAWU began to mobilise a national living wage campaign in tandem with its negotiations in the iron and steel industry, where it demanded R3.50 per hour. The campaign was planned carefully and MAWU distributed posters, pamphlets and stickers nationally mobilising workers for the living wage. The purpose of the campaign has been to: (35)

- * build strong national solidarity among MAWU members so the union can mobilise quickly around national issues
- * combine the campaign with an organising drive to organise the unorganised metal workers
- * put ongoing pressure on the metal bosses

MAWU has submitted demands of a minimum of R4 an hour for the 1987 negotiations to the National Industrial Council for the Steel, Engineering and Metal Industries. It has joined forces with the National Union of Mineworkers in the living wage battle, beginning what seems to be COSATU's most important campaign this year. (36)

NUM has called for an urgent review of wage policies on the mines and so make miners the highest paid workers in the economy, thus implying a demand for a greater share of the massive profits made by the mines every year. This emphasis by trade unions on demanding "a share of the company profits" was highlighted during the Pick 'n' Pay strike led by the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (CCAWUSA) in 1986. By demanding a share of the

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profits, unions mean that they want a bigger share of the total revenue to go to the living wage. This means that workers require full financial disclosure on how resources are utilised and on the salaries and fringe benefits of white collar and managerial positions. (37)

CONCLUSION

Black workers in South Africa have long been involved in struggle and organisation to improve their standard of living and to achieve basic trade union rights. In the past sixty years these workers struggled successfully for significant wage demands which have enhanced the growth and success of the trade union movement. The table below lists a number of wage demands and wage victories through the last sixty years of South African labour history. In showing what their real values would be in mid-1987, this table uses a price index that the Labour Research Service constructed from three historical price index series, with estimates being made of inflation to mid-1987.

The accompanying graph illustrates the significant wage demands that have been made by major unions in the last sixty years. It shows clearly the progressive development of workers' wage demands over this period, expressed in 1987 rands. These range from the ICU's demand of a minimum weekly wage of R47,10 (in real terms) in 1928, to COSATU's demand of R219,36 in 1985. As pointed out earlier in this article, it was only in 1981 that a demand for a living wage was made by FOSATU, leading directly to the current COSATU campaign of 1987.

COSATU resolved in its inaugural meeting that the Central Executive Committee should establish as soon as possible what workers regard as a minimum living wage. Although COSATU have not yet set a specific demand, in the special campaign edition of the Cosatu News (March 1987) they call on workers to use their questionnaire designed on worker-based and worker controlled wage index systems, to fix the wage needed by workers. Cosatu News will then publish the average of the submissions received from workers.

Just like the SACTU's pound-a-day campaign 20 years ago, the living wage campaign this year will popularise the need for increased wages and will also help to organise and unite workers into powerful industrial unions, thereby boosting COSATU's member-

ship and support in the coming months.

The living wage campaign highlights the importance to unions of having a national, unified wage demand, the advantages of which would be:

- * a powerful organising tool
- * a clear, unifying goal for all COSATU negotiators and shop stewards
- * a formidable influence on employer perceptions (who by contrast do not have a single position on wages)
- * a popular and effective theme for all union propaganda.

For example, the unions may take up the R4 per hour proposed by MAWU and the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) in the iron and steel negotiations as a step towards a living wage. This will gain an immense backing from the workers notwithstanding the "technical difficulties" which may arise in adjusting this demand for different industries.

A COSATU demand for R4 per hour as a step towards a living wage will become a widely popular theme in all workers' struggles. This is because it is an expression of workers' own feeling, and because of the immense authority which COSATU has amongst the workers.

Footnotes

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TOWARDS A "LIVING WAGE": WORKERS WAGE DEMANDS OVER 60 YEARS

YEAR	CPI 1987=100	HISTORICAL WAGE DEMAND (Rand per week)	REAL VALUE MID 1987 (Rand per week)	RAND PER HOUR 45	Details of wage demand
1919	5,4	2,25	41,67	0,93	African workers in Bloemfontein demand 4/6 per day
1919	5,4	5,00	92,59	2,06	10/- per week demanded by ICU in Port Elizabeth
1928	4,9	2,31	47,10	1,05	* ICU demand £5 per month minimum for all workers - 1928 Congress
1929	4,9	3,25	66,33	1,47	6/6 per day for dock and railway workers - Independent ICU, East London
1936	4,3	4,00	93,02	2,07	Wage Board recommendation for bakers assistants
1938	4,5	2,77	61,54	1,37	£6 per month minimum for shop workers (Wage Board)
1941	4,9	3,50	71,43	1,59	35/- per week for sugar mill workers (Wage Determination)
1942	5,4	4,00	74,07	1,65	* CNETU demand £2 a week for all workers
1946	6,1	5,00	81,97	1,82	* African Mineworkers' Union: 10/- a day for miners
1957	9,7	10,00	103,09	2,29	* SACTU £1-a-day campaign
1962	10,6	10,00	94,34	2,10	SACTU metal workers demand 25c/ph and a 40 hour week
1973	16,7	20,00	119,76	2,66	Durban 1973: Coronation Brick demand R20 per week
1973	16,7	30,00	179,64	2,66	* 1973 Strikes: Workers demand between R20 and R30 per week
1974	18,6	30,00	161,29	3,58	NUSAS Wages Commission Campaign "Workers need R30 a week"
1977	26,1	50,00	191,57	4,26	SACTU demand R50 per week minimum for all workers
1978	28,9	40,00	138,41	3,08	Food and Canning Workers Union demand R40 per week minimum
1980	37,3	75,00	201,07	4,47	SACTU demand R75 per week minimum for all workers
1980	37,3	18,46	49,50	1,10	SAAMU demand R80 per month minimum for domestic workers
1980	37,3	50,00	134,05	2,98	SAAMU call for a national minimum wage of R50 per week
1980	37,3	40,00	107,24	2,38	Fattis and Monis strike over R40 per week demand
1981	42,9	90,00	209,79	4,66	* FOSATU Living Wage demand: R2 per hour for all workers
1985	71,8	46,16	64,29	1,43	DWA demand R200 per month for domestic workers
1985	71,8	157,50	219,36	4,87	* COSATU demand R3.50 per hour for all workers
1987	100,0	180,00	180,00	4,00	MANU/IMF demand for metal workers in 1987 - R4 per hour minimum

* These significant wage demands are illustrated on the graph

WORKERS WAGE DEMANDS OVER 60 YEARS

REAL WEEKLY WAGES [1987 RANDS]

