

stagnant or declining national growth rate. Unions attempted to improve this unequal system by reforming the system of worker exploitation through improved wages, working conditions and increasing access to professions previously restricted to whites only. From the late 1960's onward the role of unions has been broad and encompassed community objectives as well as providing various forms of community support. Unions briefly worked together with firms in the 1980's to provide some financial support for primary education and sports scholarships in black communities that were cut-off during the apartheid regime.(DeFrozo, 1996: 333) This extended role into spheres outside of the workplace allowed unions to develop a mass base of support across the entire country.

Instead of taking a narrow economic focus "the unions embraced a philosophy of political unionism, emphasizing the common interests of workers and community groups and the advantages of coordinated mass action".(Harcourt, 1995: 5) Thus, during the 1980's it was virtually impossible to distinguish labour activity from political activity. Although strikes and stay-away campaigns resulted in no pay for workers, figures show that the majority of African workers were willing to sacrifice their much needed pay-cheques in the interests of progressing with the broader struggle for democracy. This sacrifice is even more inspiring when considering the horrific conditions of deprivation that Africans were forced to live under.

During the period of 1985-94 unions periodically met with the business community in ongoing negotiations regarding the restructuring of the economy and workers rights under democratic rule. These meetings were monumental, as they were the first examples of cooperation between capital and labour and more importantly between Africans and their historical oppressors. Prior to the 1994 elections the union federations were also primarily responsible for the massive public education campaign regarding the pending reforms, citizens rights, political party platforms, and the specific functioning of the election in order to sure a peaceful and successful transition.

After the election of the ANC government unions worked together with government and business to create policy and influence decisions made regarding public policy and legislation. As a result, public expenditure on social services such as education, health and sanitation was increased. Not only did spending increase but access to social services was expanded and improved so that those who live in extreme poverty are able to utilize public services. With a key goal of protecting exploited workers, unions have also focussed on improving wages, ensuring job security and providing safe housing for workers and their families. In addition they have attempted to reduce racial inequality by standardizing wages in industry and increasing wages of blacks relative to their white counterparts. Unions have desperately tried to prevent South Africa from becoming a depository for cheap third world labour amidst persistent unemployment and declining growth.(Benner, 1996: 3)

The South African labour movement capitalized on key strengths and tactical strategies in order to dismantle the apartheid system. When examining the tactical strategies utilized by the opposition movement it becomes clear that the movement was based on five tactical approaches to end apartheid. One of the most overwhelming tasks was the massive education campaign the movement embarked upon. COSATU ensured that citizens understood the functioning of the