



**ZABALAZA
FOR SOCIALISM**

South Africa's Trade Union Movement

For Discussion, Dec 2023

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Profile of the economy

For more than a decade, the South African economy has been stuck in a deindustrialising and stagnant mode of development. There are a number of factors which have plunged the economy into a deep crisis. These include: low growth, rising debt levels, significant capital outflows, and dysfunctionality of state owned enterprises and municipal functions. This crisis is the foundation for the unemployment, inequality and poverty that marks post- Apartheid SA.

Between 2012 and 2021, the economy has been growing on average at 1%. This has led to a reduction of income per person of 5.6% during this period. The debt has steadily been increasing. In 2000, the debt to GDP ratio stood at 39,6%, but this increased to 70% by 2022. Debt to GDP ratio means the amount of debt compared to the value of production of the economy.

We can see the real state of the economy from the depth of the unemployment crisis and the low levels of investment in the real economy. The rate of unemployment has grown from 36,4% in 2010 to 44,3%. Over the next decade, employment is expected to grow at an average of 1.2% per year. But the labour force is expected to grow at 1.5% per year. That means that unemployment is expected to grow even further.

The South African economy is on a deindustrialisation trend. This is highlighted by two statistics:

- Investment in the manufacturing sector declined from 20,1% of GDP in the 2000 – 2009 period to just 14,3% for the 2010 – 2019 period.
- Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into South Africa declined from 2.3% of GDP in 2013 to 0.7% in 2022.

Over time, the structure of the South African economy has significantly changed. The manufacturing sector is now just 11.5% of GDP. Meanwhile the Finance and Business Services is 24%.

The South African economy suffers from structural weaknesses. There has been a failure to diversify from mining and other raw materials. There has been a failure to industrialise. This has been reinforced by a small consumer base. This has locked the South African economy into an export and financialised mode. This tends to make the mass unemployment crisis worse.

Profile of the workforce

Precarious work

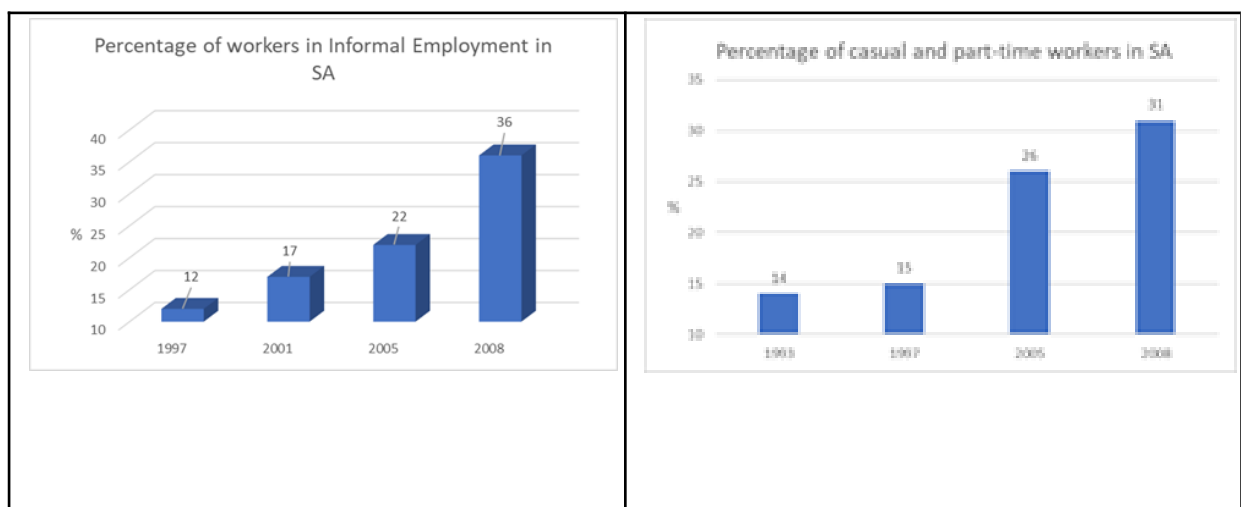
The ILO defines precarious work as:

- work that is low paid,
- work that is insecure (there is poor protection from termination),
- work that lacks benefits and social protection, and
- work over which there is minimal worker control and exercising of rights.

Workers' jobs have become increasingly precarious¹. And this process is continuing to grow. This is true globally – over 60% of workers globally are informally employed. And it is also true in South Africa. Exact figures are hard to find because there are so many different ways of measuring precarious workers. Precarious work is called:

- Informal employment
- Non-permanent work
- Casualised work
- Casual and part-time work
- Atypical employment
- Non-Standard Employment

And each of those names has different statistics. Here are the percentages for two of them:



Whichever measure you use, the increase has been massive.

- Adcorp, the major labour-broking company, says that in the decade between 2000 and 2010, traditional permanent employment declined by 20.9% and 'atypical employment' increased by 64.1%
- Naledi, Cosatu's research organisation, says that non-permanent work increased by 371% between 2000 and 2017
- In 2019 StatsSA said that 4.7 million out of 16.3 million employed workers were casualised. This figure does not include casualised workers in the formal sector such as security sector workers (estimated at 500 000+). And it doesn't include reclaimers and migrant workers whose work is not recognised in Stats SA calculations.
- The Casual Workers Advice Office (CWAO) is one of the few organisations dedicated to working with precarious workers. CWAO says they estimate between 7 and 8 million non-agriculture workers are non-permanent.

¹ A lot of the information in this section comes from an excellent ILRIG booklet by Dale Mckinley called [Mapping the world of casualised work and struggle in South Africa](#).

Women and work

The situation for women and precarious work is even worse:

- Nearly 50 % (47.6%) of informal sector workers are women
- 96% of domestic workers are women
- There are between 40,000 and 80,000 Community Health Workers in South Africa on precarious contracts. Most of them are women.

And there's the unpaid caring work that women do – sometimes called 'reproductive labour'. It is hard to get figures on this although comrades will know about it from their personal experience.

Stats SA did one survey in 2010 called *A Survey of Time Use*. It is the only survey they have ever done which tries to measure "time spent on performing unpaid activities such as household chores, the care of children, the sick and the elderly whose burden, more often than not, falls on women".

It found that women spent twice as much time as men doing unpaid household work and were three times more likely to engage in unpaid care-giving work.

And of course women suffer on pay too. One estimate is that women earn on average 22% less than men.

Sectors of precarious work

Precarious work is biggest in these sectors of the economy:

- 33.4% wholesale and retail
- 31.8% construction

Wages

Trade unions don't seem to have been able to do much about the wages of the majority either. For example, between 2011 and 2015 the real wages of the bottom 10% of earners went down by 25%. At the same time, the average wage nationally went down by 15%.

But nothing to worry about if you happen to be a top earner - the earnings of the top 1% went up by 48%.

Profile of the trade union movement

The South African trade union movement has not matched this change in the workforce.

Trade union membership

Firstly, the trade union movement has got smaller compared to the size of the workforce. The proportion of workers who are trade unionists is called trade union density. In South Africa:

- Trade union density has gone down since 1994:
 - Trade union density in South Africa peaked in 1999 at 48% for men and 46% for women. Today it is between 27% and 29% ([OECD said it was 29% in 2019](#)).
 - That is only slightly higher than the UK at 23.5%. And it has been growing in the UK, whereas it has been shrinking here.
 - The US is far below at 9.9% and is growing very slightly.
- In South Africa, more public sector workers are members and fewer private sector workers:
 - In the public sector, for example, density grew from 55% in 1997 to 70% in 2013.
 - In the private sector, in the same year it went down from 36% in 1997 to 24%.
- Another indicator of the effective membership of unions came in the Stats SA Quarterly Labour Survey (2014). It found that employers decided on 53% of workers' salary increases unilaterally. Unions represented only 22% of the labour force during salary negotiations, and 6% of workers had no consistent increment.

Membership of precarious workers

Secondly, despite the growth in precarious work, trade union membership remains overwhelmingly permanent workers. For example, Cosatu conducted surveys in 2006 and 2012. In those surveys, 90% of unionists had permanent employment.

There are reasons for this:

- It is more difficult to identify the employer, because of labour brokers.
- It can be more difficult to identify the workplace, as precarious workers can easily be moved around.
- Precarious workers are more vulnerable than permanent workers and therefore can be more scared of joining a union.
- It is hard to organise precarious workers in permanent union structures and to keep them as members. Tomorrow they may be unemployed again.

But an overwhelming reason is a lack of political will. A 2018 Cosatu survey found that many union officials thought that the financial and human resource 'costs' of organising and recruiting casual workers were too high compared with the 'return' in union subscriptions. So, in a world where unions operate to some extent like businesses, it's just not worth it to organise casual workers.

And then permanent workers can see casual workers as a threat rather than an ally. Casual workers cost the companies less – lower wages and no benefits. So, instead of seeing that it is necessary to join forces with them against the common enemy – the employers – they see

the casual workers as the enemy. And they certainly don't want their enemy inside their organisation.

Some facts and figures

Some trade unions (though not all) combine together as federations. The unions remain in charge of their own affairs, but in the federation they combine around key campaigns and maybe some services to their members. The three main federations in South Africa are:

- [Cosatu](#): it is the largest. It claims a membership of 1.8 million. A big majority of its affiliates are public sector unions – Nehawu, Popcru, Denosa, Sadtu, Samwu. They are also among the biggest affiliates. Cosatu has been in the Tripartite Alliance with ANC and SACP since 1990. This has dictated a lot of its policy and has limited the action it is willing to take. There are now unions, led by Nehawu, which would like to break that alliance, but there is resistance to this, notably from Sadtu and from some of the Cosatu NOBs. The hope of those wanting to break the Alliance is that they could continue in an alliance with the SACP, supporting them to stand separately in elections.
- [Fedusa](#): this federation has about 700,000 members. Its biggest affiliate is also a public sector union - the [Public Servants Association](#) (PSA), which claims 235,000 members. And its health union, Hospersa, has around 70,000 members. Fedusa has a much larger proportion of white members than other federations. It is more conservative than the other federations and its members are less likely to take militant action, including striking.
- [Saftu](#): this federation was formed in 2017. The main force behind its formation was Numsa. This was after Numsa was expelled from Cosatu in 2014, mainly for saying it could no longer support the ANC. It has about 600,000 members, mainly in the private sector. Its public sector membership is small. Its future is threatened by a conflict with its biggest affiliate, Numsa. Numsa leadership wants Saftu to support the tiny and dysfunctional political party which Numsa set up – the Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party (SRWP). So far a majority of affiliates have resisted that.

But Numsa accounts for about half the membership of the Saftu, and therefore also for half its revenue. Numsa is currently moving to expel the Numsa former Deputy President who is also the president of Saftu. If that happens, she would be unable to continue as Saftu president and this would provoke a crisis in Saftu.

- There are sizeable unions which are not affiliated to any federation. Amcu is one of the major players in the mining industry with a membership of about 170,000. Solidarity is a major, largely white union which works closely with Afriforum. It has about 120,000 members. There is also Nactu, a federation which still claims 400,000 members,. But that figure hasn't changed since Amcu left in 2017. It is marginal in its real activity.

And then there is a large number of small independent unions (more than 100) with a few hundred or thousand members each.

Key challenges of the trade unions today

Education

There is a general consensus that there is a serious problem with education and training in the unions. Either it simply doesn't happen at all, or it is outsourced through the SETA system. SETAs provide funding and accreditation. In exchange, they identify 'qualified' service providers. In general, these are not people with trade union backgrounds or even necessarily trade union sympathies. Gone are the class perspectives of the 1980s. They are replaced with technical, market-driven education.

As Khwezi Mabasa put it in his article for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation: "All these developments have replaced the values of solidarity, social justice, movement-building and transformative politics in worker education." Now the focus is on individualistic goals of getting education for personal upward mobility. For organisations, it's about getting education and training for nothing. They ask no questions about whether it's appropriate.

Meetings of structures

The Cosatu survey in 2012 found that only 37% of the workers surveyed said that their unions had meetings once a month. Also, only a third of them felt they had enough influence over shop stewards. In Numsa over the last few years it has become common to fail to have all the meetings prescribed in the constitution. The National Office Bearers simply postpone meetings of the NEC or CC.

In the 1980s and early 1990s many shop steward locals met once a week. And there would be a Cosatu local also in the same week. Erosion of the structures removes or weakens worker control.

Collective Bargaining

The Labour Relations Act of 1995 consolidated many of the trade union gains from the apartheid era; gains that the black working class had fought for. But the new Act also brought with it institutions for collective bargaining and for social dialogue that were far removed from the base of the unions. Centralised bargaining brings some material benefits. It consolidates the power of workers when tens of thousands take action together. But it is really only a numbers game. It doesn't require functioning, active workplace-level organisation. So that organisation, and the consciousness that goes with it, has got lost in industries where there is centralised bargaining.

The independent black trade union movement of the 70s and 80s was built on the back of workplace-level organising. Some of the old organisers during the Fosatu days tell tales of how they ducked and dived to gain access to workers in companies in order to organise them. And by organise, we mean bring them to a state where they were able and ready to

challenge their employers on the ground, to stop work to remedy an offence by the employer rather than go and look for a lawyer.

Although many of the agreements signed at central level do permit plant-level negotiation on specific plant issues, the reality is that the level of plant-level organisation is poor. It is capable of being mobilised once every two or three years for a set piece confrontation with the employers, but for the rest of the time at local level, capacity is weak. The ability to mobilise nationally is not to be dismissed, but it is a far cry from the local level of organising of the earlier period. And it represents a weakening of the power of unions which has resulted in the resolution of local level disputes through CCMA etc rather than through workers flexing their muscles.

The question of political affiliation

Cosatu's participation in the Tripartite Alliance has seriously damaged working class organisation and also working class consciousness. Leadership in Cosatu has become a fast track to lucrative political positions. Leaders don't want to jeopardise that by upsetting too much the ANC, which is the route to those positions. That is why Saftu included in its founding constitution, as one of the 'Principles to guide the new federation': "Unions must be independent from employers (in the private and public sector) and from political parties." However, unfortunately this has not stopped Numsa from attempting to impose its party, the SRWP, on the federation.

Saftu added another sentence in that independence principle. It said "This does not mean that unions are apolitical." The distinction is clear – we do not advocate avoiding real politics because real politics affect the lives of workers. Real politics are about how our municipalities are being run. They're about the delivery of electricity. They're about the disastrous economic policy of the ANC government.

We won't be quiet about those issues. They are crucial for the working class. But we will not affiliate to any particular political organisation because this would be divisive. It was accepted, for example, that there were many members of Cosatu affiliates, especially in KZN, who in the late 80s and early 90s belonged to Inkatha. That was not a small issue when at that time there was open warfare between Inkatha- and ANC-aligned people and areas.

Trade union bureaucracy

By "bureaucratisation" we refer to something very specific. It is the creation of a layer of leaders (staff and worker leaders) who benefit from their positions in the trade union. They become more focused on their own interests as leaders of unions and less concerned with the interests of their members. They become more concerned for the stability of the union that feeds them and less likely to take risks to benefit the members.

Here are some examples of this process of creating a bureaucratic leadership:

A leadership lifestyle

The leadership has developed a lifestyle that is beyond the reach of the vast majority of the membership. They become used to what is in effect a middle class lifestyle, far removed

from the poverty of the mass of members. With medical aid, they avoid the dysfunctional health system.

And we are not talking about individuals. We're talking about a layer of leadership. In Numsa's Central Committee, for example, there are four worker delegates and one elected Regional Official for each of the 9 Regions. That's the top five, in effect, from each Region. It is the majority of these worker leaders, shop stewards from the factories, who have supported this degeneration.

And the reason they have done this is very simple. They benefit personally. A union regional leadership gets benefits simply from being in the leadership. They get regular trips to national meetings. Get to stay in nice hotels or conference centres, eat good food, drink together. A Numsa Regional Chairperson gets a car from the union; the Regional Treasurer gets a laptop so she or he can keep track of the electronic transactions that have replaced cheques. Of course, Numsa National Office Bearers who don't come from Gauteng get a union house in the JoBurg area. A nice house in a middle class complex or equivalent. And a bodyguard to carry the bag and go to fetch something that got left behind.

And if you look in the car parks of some union Head Offices, they look more like big corporations than organisations of the working class.

Union investment companies

Trade union investment companies were set up in the 1990s. The initial idea was in general to enter the capitalist world in order to make profit and to use that profit to benefit the union membership. The reality has been very different. The money in the investment company has become a pot of gold which, in many cases, has generated conflict as different factions in the unions struggle to control it.

Numsa is the latest in a long line of unions which have ended up with union leadership benefiting personally from investment companies. Ceppwau, Samwu, Satawu came before. So it was no great surprise to hear that Numsa's Investment Company paid R40,000 for the General Secretary's birthday party. Or that it bought his daughter a R15,000 laptop. Or that it moved against anybody who tried to expose what was happening.

Full-time shop stewards

Initially, full-time shop stewards were seen as a gain for the trade union movement. Companies were paying the salaries of some shop stewards who were carrying out duties as shop stewards on a full-time basis. Unions fought for facilities for these full-time shop stewards to support them in carrying out their duties. And gradually they became absorbed into HR departments.

As a result of this process, full-time shop stewards lived a life very different from their members on the production lines. They were office workers, with all the perks of office workers. And they didn't want to go back on the production line. So when election time comes around, those jobs become the focus of division, petty squabbles, infighting and poisonous factions, tearing the union apart.

In the same way, even part-time shop stewards, especially those at leadership level, enjoy perks not enjoyed by the members. They go away for weekends for meetings to hotels. They get per diems. They go on overseas trips. All of these are beyond the reach of the ordinary members.

Majoritarianism inside the unions

In many unions it is just about impossible for a minority voice to be heard at a national level. This is because it is provinces which are represented at a national level, not branches or locals. In other trade unions internationally, each local structure (whether a branch or a local) elects delegates to a National Congress. This means that delegates to Congress come from dozens if not hundreds of structures. This makes it much more likely that minority voices will be heard.

In many South Africa unions, only nine structures are represented – the provinces. Theoretically, it would be possible to win support for a position from nearly half of the delegates to a union's provincial congress and still not to get that position heard at the national congress. This has implications for any "rank and file" or grassroots initiative in the union movement.

Where DAF members are in the labour movement

Numsa

Some of our comrades have been fighting an open battle in Numsa for nearly a year. It started when they began to ask questions about the Numsa Investment Company and its relationship with some of Numsa leadership. The response of that leadership was to suspend nearly 30 comrades in the build-up to the Numsa Congress. Suspensions were lifted (temporarily as it turned out) by the Labour Court, and the Congress was interdicted but took place anyway. Now comrades have been suspended again, some have been expelled and others are involved in lengthy disciplinary procedures. This has become a full-scale purge, as we have seen in other unions in the past.

There is danger here for Saftu too. One of those threatened with discipline is the Saftu president, who is a Numsa shop steward. If she is expelled by Numsa she would no longer be eligible to sit as Saftu president.

The Numsa comrades who are resisting the Numsa dictatorship produced a manifesto which outlines what they are standing for in Numsa. It is included as an appendix because it may be useful to prompt debate about what we, as progressive, democratic trade unionists, stand for in the trade union movement.

Tasks for the Left

We, as part of the Left, need to come to terms with the current severe weaknesses of the trade union movement. The leadership of too many unions is now looking after its own interests and not those of its members. There are two questions that emerge from this situation:

- What needs to happen in the trade union movement to turn it round towards healthy growth?
- What can we, as a small group of activists, do to assist in this situation?

What needs to happen?

Many of the answers to this question are implicit in the challenges we have identified. They are also to be found in the Numsa manifesto. These answers include:

- Restoring the functioning of the constitutional structures
- Restoring union-generated education and training
- Reducing the standard of living of leadership so that it is closer to that of membership.
- Recruiting precarious workers.
- Re-thinking centralised bargaining in the light of the destructive effect it has had on workplace-level organising.
- Closing down all investment companies.
- Restoring tolerance and a love of debate to the movement instead of repressing all views that disagree with the leadership.
- Rethinking the term of office of leadership and maybe limiting it.
- Restoring worker control to the grassroots of the union. That might need to include ensuring that control of some of the financial resources of the union sits with the lower structures. If the Head Office controls all the money, they can starve badly behaved locals of funds.
- Re-connecting the union structures with communities and their structures.

It is relatively easy to list the things that need to happen. It is much harder to devise a strategy for achieving them. And the strategy may be different in different unions. It may include building a rank and file movement in the union:

- Developing a platform, as the comrades in Numsa have done.
- Caucusing, openly or quietly, to win support in structures for that platform.
- In short, struggling through the union's internal democratic procedures to win back the union to worker control on the ground.

But in some situations the casualty rate will be high. In Numsa now, for example, a comrade who is known to be a supporter of such a caucus stands a very good chance of being expelled. Of course there are other alternatives, but they have their serious drawbacks too:

- Challenge the union structures in the courts for their undemocratic and corrupt behaviour. This can be combined with the rank and file option above. In fact this is what is happening right now in Numsa.
- Organise 'underground' in the workplace structures of the union and hope that you can build enough strength to take on the entrenched leadership. But it's hard to work underground in what is essentially an open, public organisation such as a union. It doesn't tend to last for long.
- Split from the union, taking as many of the members with you as possible. This is also a tough road. In 2013, Numsa members, including the former president who

resigned, Cedric Gcina, split from Numsa and formed the so-called Liberated Metalworkers Union of South Africa (Limusa). At its peak it claimed about 15,000 members. It had a firm base in a big plant – Toyota in Durban. It was supported by the biggest federation in the country – Cosatu. And yet it disappeared. It was a victim, among other things, of the ‘majoritarian’ principle in the South African labour dispensation.

When the Labour Relations Act was being drafted in the early 1990s, there was a desire to avoid a proliferation of small unions. That would make the labour movement very fragmented, and therefore weaker. So the thresholds for recognition in workplaces was made intentionally high. That makes it harder for new, smaller unions to get a foothold. It makes it easier for older, more established unions to defeat them. And setting up a new union, with all its infrastructure, is expensive, and without the infrastructure it is hard to recruit new members to pay for it.

- Leave the union and join another established union. Union mergers are not simple, but they are not impossible. Of course, there has to be another union which is close enough to the platform you have been standing on to be a possibility. It is by no means certain that you will find one.
- Focus our energies on organising the unorganised, maybe in new unions. This has happened, especially in the gig economy, in Europe and North America. New, more agile forms of organisation have grown up. In California there is the California Gig Workers Union; in the UK there is the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWUGB). This union was a break-away from established unions. It has successfully challenged the ‘self-employed’ status of gig workers. Can we learn from these initiatives?

The intention of this list of options is to demonstrate that there are no easy roads to the defeat of a bureaucratised union leadership. It has been done, but generally in unions with a more decentralised structure than we have in South Africa. There are no easy roads ahead and we will need to debate the options carefully.

What can we do?

We are just starting to discuss this problem and there are no clear answers. So what follows are ideas and thoughts that need to be debated.

The advantage of a political organisation is that it brings together experience from different places. Notably, we have comrades in community-based organisations, in organisations of the unemployed and in trade unions. That gives a broader perspective. It also offers the possibility of mutual support.

But we are a very small organisation with very limited resources. Our activities therefore need to be well targeted. In the organisation we have comrades from other trade unions and from community organisation who may be able to mobilise support. We have intellectuals, some of whom get regular airtime in newspapers, magazines and on radio and TV. If we have something clear to say, there may be outlets for saying it. And we have

comrades with considerable political experience, who may be able to offer advice based on experience.

But our role is primarily one of support for our comrades who are involved in these struggles. Those comrades should be recruiting suitable activists to our organisation. This will give the organisation a more stable base in the trade union movement. And the comrades in the different trade unions need to establish ways of communicating with each other so that they support each other's struggles. That implies having a working group of trade unionists who discuss the situations they are facing. Through discussion, they can build experience of developing successful tactics and strategy for dealing with the problems. That should include meetings, workshops and a whatsapp group for our trade union cadre, at the very least. That kind of internal organisation is the beginning of the kind of systematic work we need to be doing in the trade union movement.

Appendix: Numsa manifesto

Manifesto for NUMSA's 11th National Congress A 12 point plan to restore and revive the union

Preamble

- We are a group of experienced, militant NUMSA members, Office Bearers and staff. We have come together because we cannot sit and watch as our union, which turns 35 this year, continues to degenerate.
- The working class is bearing the brunt of the deepest capitalist crisis for nearly 100 years. A campaigning and militant NUMSA is important for the fightback: against austerity; against job losses and restructuring; against deteriorating working conditions and wages; against poor quality or non-existent service delivery in our communities; and against high unemployment and poverty.
- In this situation, as comrades loyal to NUMSA, we decided we must set out a clear manifesto which explains what we see is wrong with the NUMSA of 2022 and how we propose to put it right.
- The NUMSA we know has a long and noble history of political tolerance, militancy and democratic debate. In the NUMSA we know, the members provide direction to the leadership. But recently we have seen intimidation, violence and suspensions, just for challenging the national leadership for accountability. That is not the NUMSA way.
- We have also witnessed the nine years since the ground-breaking Special National Congress in 2013. And we have seen how those years have been wasted. The leadership has shown that it is simply not competent to fulfil the policies of the union. We can see the latest example – they haven't even been able to comply with the constitution to convene the 11th Congress. The Congress is postponed because the General Secretary's office was unable to circulate documents on time. In addition, the culture of intolerance has already resulted in Regional Congresses in two Regions collapsing. On their own, that has cost the union R1.6 million of workers' subscriptions. We don't yet know how much the postponement of the National Congress will cost.
- And the leadership has been unable to put into practice the Service Charter that was adopted at the Special National Congress. Workers used to join NUMSA from other unions because they knew we would provide good service. Now they leave NUMSA because we don't. In 2016, the 10th National Congress mandated this leadership to reach a target of 500,000 members by the time of the 11th Congress. The membership at the time of the 10th Congress was 315,278. The membership used for the credentials of the 11th Congress is 304,046. That's 11,000 members fewer – even further away from the 500,000 target.
- Our manifesto describes the failings of the national leadership. We recognise that a faction has become dominant in NUMSA. Other comrades have allowed this faction to establish its dominance by sitting by and keeping quiet. But the 10th Congress mandated the collective national leadership. They are all accountable for the current state of NUMSA.

The Plan

1. Tolerance

- 1.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** has become intolerant of differing views. It has used administrative measures, such as illegitimate suspension, to stifle space for democratic discussion inside NUMSA.
- 1.2. **We will** restore tolerance to the union in the best tradition of NUMSA's history.

2. Democracy, accountability and worker control

- 2.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** advances a wrong understanding of democratic centralism. Decisions of upper structures are enforced on lower structures without prior discussion and mandate from those lower structures.
- 2.2. **We will** restore proper democracy in the union. We will reinstate the 'Ear to the Ground' approach. Different views will be encouraged in order for the union to make better decisions. Only after thorough, open debate in the structures will decisions become official, mandated positions of the union.

3. Respect for policies and the constitution

- 3.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** is abusing the constitution and policies to keep itself in power. They have suspended leading comrades and taken over constitutional structures to build their own power.
- 3.2. **We will** restore respect for the policies, constitution and constitutional structures, and we will end the foreign practice of voting on constitutional issues.

4. Practical support for 2013 Numsa Special National Congress (SNC) resolutions:

- 4.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** was mandated by the Special National Congress to:
 - 4.1.1. Explore the building of a movement for socialism,
 - 4.1.2. Build the united front, and
 - 4.1.3. Create a new federation.
- 4.2. Nine years later:
 - 4.2.1. The SRWP is divided and this division has spilled over into NUMSA.
 - 4.2.2. The United Front is dead, and
 - 4.2.3. SAFTU has been seriously weakened, largely as a result of divisions caused by NUMSA.
- 4.3. **We will**:
 - 4.3.1. Promote a debate in the 11th National Congress on the mass-based, broad working class movement for socialism and the SRWP.
 - 4.3.2. Explore the possibility of reviving the United Front through engagement with social movements at the Working Class Summit, and
 - 4.3.3. Support SAFTU to rebuild from the ground up, establishing solid residential- based Locals around the country.

5. Education

- 5.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** has relegated Education to a back seat. Meanwhile, in the front seat the budget of the legal department continues to escalate.
- 5.2. **We will** prioritise education and training of shop stewards and Office Bearers throughout their term of office. They must be able to support their members instead of relying on outsourced lawyers. We will also revive Disputes Committees at all levels of the union.

6. Collective bargaining

- 6.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** has focused on centralised collective bargaining at the expense of weakening our workplace structures. They have brought to the National Bargaining Conference speakers who lamented the bad economy and the impossibility of demanding significant wage increases. And they have failed to organise the bargaining process effectively. The 10th National Congress mandated them “to start the Collective Bargaining process earlier”. But this year, bargaining in the Auto sector only started 2 days before the expiry of the agreement.
- 6.2. **We will** revisit the NUMSA collective bargaining strategy to accommodate both plant-level and centralised bargaining.

7. Gender and youth

- 7.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** has reduced gender, which is a crucial area of the union’s work, to just another tool in their factional battles. Both gender and youth were brought into the General Secretary’s office in order to control them.
- 7.2. **We will:**
 - 7.2.1. Lift up gender struggles and prioritise the struggle against patriarchy, Gender Based Violence and sexual abuse.
 - 7.2.2. Focus on recruitment of young workers.
 - 7.2.3. Remove substructures from the office of the GS.

8. The union bureaucracy

- 8.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** increasingly looks after its own interests instead of the interests of the membership. Leaders live a lifestyle completely removed from the conditions experienced by the members. Partly as a result of this, the salary bill of the union has consistently exceeded the Congress mandate of 50/50. In fact, in 2021 it was its highest for many years - 55% of subscriptions went to payroll.
- 8.2. **We will:**
 - 8.2.1. Undertake a discussion in NUMSA to consider a limit to the term of office bearers.
 - 8.2.2. Investigate ways in which full-time shop stewards can be made more accountable to their members and to the union.
 - 8.2.3. Ensure that union resources are used equitably in the service of members.
 - 8.2.4. After full discussion in the union structures, restructure the union’s finances so that some finances are directly controlled by Locals and by Regions.

9. Investment companies

9.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** has failed to control the NUMSA Investment Company. In fact NIC plays an active role in the internal affairs of the union. It has also never paid a dividend in its entire 27 years of life. And it has consumed more than R100 million of workers' subscriptions which it refuses to pay back.

9.2. Union investment companies present huge dangers for trade unions. In most unions in South Africa, they have been the direct cause of corruption, bureaucratisation and division.

9.3. We will:

9.3.1. Institute an immediate forensic audit of the NUMSA Investment Company.

9.3.2. In line with the 10th Congress Resolution, actively pursue, by all means necessary, the repayment of the R136.2 million that NIC owes to NUMSA.

9.3.3. Empower the trustees and implement fully the Trust Deed of the National Manufacturing Workers Investment Trust. The Trust must function correctly and receive timeously all financial statements.

9.3.4. Initiate a thorough debate at all levels of the union about the NIC. Is it serving any useful purpose to the membership? Or should the funds be brought back to NUMSA for investment in more profitable ways, to provide benefits to the members?

10. NUMSA Policy

10.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** has failed to implement the policies adopted by the National Policy Conference in 2019. As a result the union lives in policy limbo.

10.2. We will immediately place the results of the Policy Conference before the Central Committee for debate and ratification.

11. Legal costs

11.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** has presided over a massive increase in expenditure on lawyers. Legal fees increased from R45 million in 2016 to R67 million in 2019 (a 49% increase).

11.2. We will implement a more cost effective and efficient decentralised legal strategy, free of manipulation

12. De-industrialisation

12.1. **The current leadership of NUMSA** has failed to mobilise resistance to the decline in manufacturing industry. Since 1994, manufacturing industry has declined from 23% of GDP to 11%. This has cost millions of jobs. It has also cost NUMSA many tens of thousands of members. Yet, for example, when Arcelor Metal threatened closure, we went hand-in-hand with the bosses to the government to beg for subsidies. Instead, we should have mounted a campaign, in line with NUMSA policies, for its nationalisation.

12.2. We will initiate a militant campaign to rebuild the manufacturing sector.