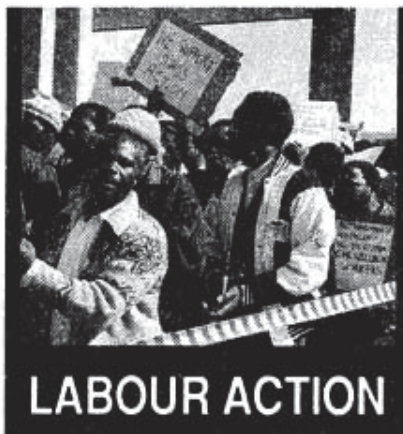


## COSATU Women's conference

A day of Action to highlight the need for men and women to share domestic responsibilities will be recommended to the National Women's Coalition by COSATU women. This arose out of COSATU's 2nd National Women's Conference, held in Johannesburg, to coincide with National Women's Day. The conference called for a Family Code in South Africa, along the lines of the one in Cuba, which promotes equal domestic responsibilities for men and women.

The delegates set themselves other concrete tasks. Certain laws that discriminate against women - Basic Conditions, UIF and taxation of married women will be targeted for changes. Better representation of women on decision-making structures will be campaigned for, from COSATU, to peace committees, to economic reconstruction committees and also in government. And a deadline of 9 August 1993 was set for the drawing up of a Women's Charter. A campaign programme concentrated on maximum grassroots participation by women right across the political spectrum.

Some tensions around the relationship of women within the alliance were exposed. Delegates complained that COSATU women were not consulted by the ANC



Women's League (ANCWL) on anything. They criticised the internal workings of the ANCWL which made communication and co-operation difficult. The SA Communist Party told the Conference that it participated in the National Women's Coalition (NWC) through its gender desk. Concern was expressed that divisions in the alliance were revealed to Democratic Party, National Party and Inkatha delegates at NWC meetings because there were no prior consultations or caucuses.

Representatives of the ANCWL and SACP gender desk present promised to take the concerns back to their organisations with an invitation to meet to discuss the matter by the end of August. The matter has been brought to the attention of the broad alliance secretariats.

The Conference addressed COSATU's economic policy in some detail. The main thrust of its recommendations were that women must have a greater say in the design and delivery of social services, and women's financial and social independence must be promoted through economic policy. This would include equal taxation, access to land, houses, social services, protection from domestic violence and equal access to the courts. Affirmative action programmes were proposed



*Women are workers and parents... delegate at the conference*

*Photo: William Matla*



to give women greater access to traditionally male jobs and industries; and addressing the equalisation and easing of the load at home.

COSATU women want to see a more gender sensitive approach to economic matters, and called for direct representation of women in all economic negotiation forums. The lack of information on women in the economy as well as women membership of COSATU was noted.

It was reported that most COSATU affiliates are appointing gender co-ordinators, but all are voluntary positions undertaken by staff who have other pressing responsibilities in the unions. The CEC will be asked to encourage the employment of full-time gender co-ordinators, and to make the post of COSATU's gender co-ordinator a permanent one with a seat on the CEC. ♦

(FIONA DOVE)

### Below inflation wage settlements

June-August is the time when most unions settle wage agreements. SA Labour Bulletin presents a round-up of wage settlements. It shows the major unions (SACTWU, NUMSA and NUM) struggling to keep up with inflation.

#### SACTWU

SACTWU has wound up agreements covering 109 000

workers in the clothing and tanning industries. Some textile negotiations are still underway.

In clothing, workers won agreements worth R150 million for the twelve months of their duration. The agreements cover improvements in wages, provident funds, sick funds, annual bonuses and, in some regions, the setting up of short-time funds.

Regional negotiations for workers in clothing were run together for the first time. Machinists, comprising 60% of workers, won increases varying between 14% and 15%. In money wages, this meant R22 for workers in the Western Cape (R95,26 per month), R23 in Natal (R99,59 per month), R22 in Transvaal and R22 in the Eastern Cape.

Employers agreed to meet SACTWU in October to discuss union proposals on national centralised bargaining, a national productivity council, wage parity, multi-skill wage incentives, a national procedural agreement on grievances, discipline and retrenchment, and job grading in the clothing industry.

Tanning workers won a 14,7% increase in wages after a two week strike in early August. They received R29 per week on the bottom grades, 2,2% more than offered earlier by the employers. About 2 550 SACTWU members concerned will have their wages backdated to 1 July.

According to SACTWU's bargaining officer Mark Bennet, the union is quite pleased with the 17% to 18% increases achieved so far in the textile industry. "We are also going to resuscitate centralised bargaining through a national industrial council," he said.

#### NUMSA

At least 100 000 metal workers were still on strike at the time of writing. The strike, which started on 3 August, was prolonged when management stood firm on its final offer of an 8% increase, after NUMSA dropped its wage demand from 20% to 16% on 18 August.

The metal strike has far outstripped the 1988 action, which involved about 31 000 workers. In size and intensity it is the largest metal strike ever. At least 20 NUMSA organisers, worker leaders and rank and file members have been murdered in the run up to the strike. SEIFSA has refused to condemn the attacks, described by NUMSA as an "extensive campaign of murder and intimidation".

A Supreme Court judge ruled on 7 August that SEIFSA and its constituent associations had no legal interest in interdicting NUMSA's national strike. But a subsequent Supreme Court decision on 25 August declared the strike unlawful after SEIFSA alleged balloting irregularities. Moves to illegalise the action



## LABOUR ACTION

will undoubtedly lead to strike violence and endless litigation.

Workers in the Transkei and Ciskei joined the strike on 19 August. NACTU's MEWUSA has also voted for the strike.

The tyre strike, involving

all companies except Toyota, was called off on 10 August, after NUMSA got auto bosses in the National Bargaining Forum to agree on wages. A job security agreement still needs to be ratified.

Motor talks, covering workers at a range of garages

settlement varied widely between the mining houses. Average wage increases were Amcoal 13%, JCI 8%, Gold Fields 9%, Trans Natal 12%, Douglas 11%, Duiker 11%, Iscor (DNC) 8%.

According to NUM's bargaining officer, Martin Nicol, the union was forced to accept the low wage offer because of circumstances in the industry. He said the union made significant gains in other areas in the negotiations. "All collieries agreed to increase the employer contribution to the provident fund by 1%, bringing their total contribution to 6%. However, Goldfields has said that they will make this contribution only if its workers agree to pay an extra 1%".

Amcoal, Trans Natal and Randcoal have also agreed to begin discussions with NUM on the agency shop. According to Nicol, all employees, including non-NUM members, must contribute 1% of their basic pay to the fund. Those who choose not to will not receive the benefits negotiated by the union.

"This will help workers and the union. Expenses on training and travelling by the workers will be taken from the funds," said Nicol.

NUM and Harmony Gold Mining Company have signed a profit sharing agreement which is called a "collective bargaining fund". ☆  
(SNUKI ZIKALALA and  
LABOUR BULLETIN



NUMSA members in Germiston listen to a speaker at an open-air wage negotiations report-back

Photo: William Matlala

about 6 000 workers at three Eastern Cape companies, ended on 10 August. Workers won a R1-R13 increase on hourly wages; 20,5% on the R5,50 hourly minimum for unskilled workers, or 16,4% on the average wage rate of R7. Skilled workers received 12% on actual earnings. Employers in this sector agreed to extend the 1991 moratorium on retrenchments and made advances on workers rights.

The auto strike, affecting

and repair shops, have produced 'no real results', says NUMSA bargaining officer, Les Kettledas. "This leaves us with no option but to ballot the 70 000 workers for strike action."

### NUM

NUM has recommended its members accept the wage offer tabled by the Chamber of Mines. The union has accepted wage increases for coal mines which range from 7,5% to 15,1%. The wage