

## No end in sight to mining talks

The latest round of talks between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and employers in the mining industry have failed to bring the parties closer to a settlement.

The NUM is demanding a minimum of R905 per month on marginal mines, and R1 325 on those that are more profitable.

### Sunday work

The Chamber of Mines offer depends on whether or not the union accepts continuous production and the removal of legal restrictions on Sunday work. If the union agrees to this, the Chamber is prepared to offer an increase of 5,5% on gold, and 6% on coal mines. Without the guarantee of Sunday work, the Chamber is offering 3% on gold and 4% on coal mines.

The Chamber's offer does not cover Anglo American mines or the marginal Durban Roodeport Deep mine belonging to Randgold. Anglo says it will table a separate offer,

encompassing an incentive bonus scheme.

Separate negotiations are ongoing with De Beers, Eskom and Iscor.

Head of the NUM's Collective Bargaining Unit, Thomas Ketsise, says that, contrary to press reports, the union has not accepted Sunday work. It will be prepared to consider it provided certain standards, as laid down by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are implemented. These include:

- that there be no permanent night shift
- proper housing arrangements are made for shift workers
- there must be a guarantee of job security, with no redundancies resulting out of continuous production.

He also says the NUM is not prepared to accept a wage offer which is conditional on productivity improvements. "The bosses must talk rands and cents, then we can talk productivity."

*Deanne Collins*

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## Victory for clothing workers

The South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union (SACTWU) has concluded wage talks with employers in the clothing industry, resulting in a 13% wage increase. Over 100 000 workers will benefit from this increase.

Elias Banda, SACTWU's national clothing co-ordinator, said that this was the first time for years that workers had achieved an increase above the inflation rate, which would improve their standard of living.

The settlement was reached only after

SACTWU members took to the streets in support of their demand for a living wage.

SACTWU's initial demand was for 15%. After several rounds of negotiations, the employers' offer stood at 10,25%. Negotiations deadlocked and a dispute was declared. Tens of thousands of workers in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Western Cape staged marches in support of their demands. In KwaZulu-Natal, workers also occupied the offices of the Clothing Manufacturers' Association.

## Dividing up the cake

The 13% increase has to cover improvements to the total wage package, including an increase in provident fund contributions, an annual bonus and contributions to the SACTWU bursary scheme. SACTWU members are now engaged in nationwide discussions as to how to divide up the money available. Other union demands which were agreed to are:

- an increase in the overtime meal allowance from R3 to R5;
- an agreement to discuss an affirmative action policy for the sector at national level;
- agreement to investigate the formation of a national provident fund;
- eight days paid leave a year for shopstewards for training.

*Rajesh Jock*

# South-South solidarity receives a boost

During the apartheid era, South African trade unions received substantial support from trade unions in Europe and North America. 'Solidarity' came to mean, for the most part, a transfer of resources from North to South.

A very different kind of solidarity activity took place in Mozambique in May this year, when three trade union educators from Brazil's 20million-strong national labour centre, CUT, facilitated a strategic planning workshop for the leadership of two Mozambican trade unions in Maputo. Convened by the International Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation (ICEF), the workshop focused on the different experiences of trade unions in Brazil and Mozambique.

The two participating Mozambican unions, SINTIQUIGRA (chemical and typographical workers) and SINTICIM (mining and construction) described how they had been brought into being in the 1970s by the FRELIMO government and given the responsibility of communicating to workers their duties in terms of the government's 'socialist' reconstruction and development policy. With the change of government policy in the 1990s they are now expected to educate workers on the 'market economy'.

## Unions in Brazil

The CUT team explained the origins of the Brazilian trade union movement in the 1930s, based on the Italian fascist model, and how the 'new' unions of the late 1970s had had to throw off the yoke of state control and build an entirely new labour movement based on shopfloor activists.

There is a great interest in Brazil in AfInca, arising from the huge influx of African slaves in the early days. The history of colonial conquest has also resulted in a shared language (Portuguese) between Brazil, Angola and Mozambique. This opened another door for the development of Brazil-Africa trade union solidarity.

The ICEF sees an obvious need for the stronger union organisations of the South to become involved in direct South-South solidarity. A number of COSATU unions have already started to assist other unions in the region, and it was an obvious next step to include CUT in such activities when a common working language existed to make solidarity work easier.

The ICEF anticipates that a further deepening of Brazil-Mozambique solidarity will follow later this year, with another exchange of experiences, this time involving Mozambican worker leadership at the local level in various provinces.

*Mike Murphy*

## WOSA supports worker action

The Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) held its fourth national conference in Johannesburg from 16-18 June.

The theme of the conference, which was attended by three hundred delegates from around the country, as well as international guests, was "the struggle for socialism continues".

### LRA campaign

WOSA has played an active role in supporting the mass action campaign against the draft LRA. The organisation has made submissions to NEDLAC calling for changes to the draft Bill. The conference resolved to continue support for the campaign, as well as to mobilise support for basic worker rights contained in the Workers' Charter.

### Right to work

WOSA has launched a national "right to work" campaign. It has made submissions to the

Constituent Assembly around the right to work, and is also opposing the private property clause in the interim constitution.

Other resolutions revolved around support for a Mass Workers' Party, against privatisation, federalism, racism and xenophobia.

### International conference

WOSA has announced that it will be convening an international conference in South Africa in the second half of next year. The purpose of the conference is to re-establish the credibility of the socialist alternative.

The intention is not to form another international or party, but to build stronger links with socialists all over the world. Other socialist groupings in South Africa will be invited to the conference, which will focus on the IMF and World Bank, racism, gender and social and cultural issues.

Deanne Collins

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# May Day celebrations



May Day celebrations throughout the country were generally poorly attended. Here, Geraldine Fraser-Moloketsi addresses a May Day rally in Pietersburg.

## ★★ ELNA COMPETITION ★★

**Congratulations to the winner of our Elna sewing machine competition, Abram Mathibela of Middelburg! Arrangements are being made for your prize to be handed over to you. Thank you to our other readers who entered the competition.**

**Here is Abram's winning letter.**

### *What I will do with my new Elna Sewing Machine*

*An Elna machine is one reliable and dependable tool from my experience. As a past Elna user I've concluded that this is just the precise asset for investment to turn one's dreams into reality.*

*I've got a dream, and winning this prize will take me one step forward. My dream is in the direction of alleviating unemployment as a job creation idea is to start a small business which incorporates as a primary activity a tailor, then secondary will be a Dry Cleaner and in its complete form will incorporate a back up cleaning discipline.*

*To operate a small business like a tailor and a small fashion design enterprise, run individually or as a co-op in an ordinary vehicle garage, does not require a licence in terms of the interim constitution. It will be in the interests of my plans if I win this prize because it fits precisely within my approach of exploiting this primary activity to assist in financing further development of my idea, and may come just at the right time as my plans are at an advanced stage.*

## Inflation monitor: March and April 1995

Area	Consumer Price Index		Annual rate of inflation (% increase over 1 year)	
	March	April	March	April
Cape Town	170.9	173.3	10.4%	11.1%
Port Elizabeth	170.0	172.6	12.2%	13.1%
East London	168.7	170.8	10.1%	11.1%
Durban	164.3	166.6	9.9%	10.7%
Pietermaritzburg	170.9	173.0	10.8%	11.5%
Witwatersrand	167.1	169.4	10.0%	10.7%
Vaal Triangle	159.3	161.2	9.7%	10.6%
Pretoria	168.6	171.6	10.5%	11.6%
Klerksdorp	167.3	169.4	10.9%	11.3%
Bloemfontein	164.3	166.2	10.6%	11.5%
OFS Goldfields	168.3	169.8	9.8%	10.5%
Kimberley	171.0	172.2	11.1%	11.4%
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>167.8</b>	<b>170.1</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>

Source: Labour Research Service

## Maize farms hit by strike action

Widespread strikes on maize farms in the Orange Free State have highlighted the conditions under which farmworkers labour.

General Secretary of the South African Agricultural, Plantation and Allied Workers' Union (SAAPAWU), Dickson Motha, says the action was sparked by farmers discontinuing payment in kind, which had a drastic effect on already low wages. Threats of the retrenchment of thousands of workers, which farmers claim is necessary because of the drought, added fuel to the fire.

While the union was not directly involved in the initial action, it has held meetings with various parties to try and resolve the situation,

including the Minister of Agriculture and the premier of the Free State.

SAAPAWU is calling for a forum to be set up to address the condition of farmworkers and agricultural development as a whole in the region. The union has met with a number of associations representing farmers, who have agreed in principle to a forum. Differences of opinion have, however, emerged around the purpose of such a body. The farmers are against establishing a negotiating body, while the union rejects the notion of a 'talk shop' only.

SAAPAWU is calling for a national minimum wage for farmworkers of R750 per month.

Deanne Collins

# Poor manufacturing performance

The latest report by the Industrial Strategy Project (ISP) finds the South African manufacturing sector lacking in many respects.

The ISP was set up by COSATU in the 1980s. It pulled together a team of researchers to provide an analysis of the economic crisis facing South Africa. The latest report looks at the overall competitiveness of industry and also at each of the major manufacturing sectors.

## Weaknesses

The manufacturing sector is found wanting in many different areas. These include export penetration, job creation and productivity. South African companies have an extremely diverse range of activities. The ISP suggests that they need to become much more focused. The project found that there are no particular 'winning sectors' in our economy. In each sector two types of company were identified – a small group that can compete on the world market, and the majority, which lag far behind international trends.

The indepth sectoral reports highlight inadequacies right across manufacturing:

### **Chemical sector**

The ISP found that SASOL is a 'dinosaur', which uses outdated technology and is the major cause of our uncompetitive chemical and plastics industries. Major restructuring is recommended for the fuel giant, which would pave the way for the rest of the sector to become competitive. State assistance, as well as the co-operation of labour, will be necessary to achieve this.

### **Textiles**

ISP researcher, Johann Maree, who conducted the investigation into this sector for the ISP, says that the industry will have to move away from basic textiles into higher value-added products

and improve efficiency to compete on world markets.

The General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs (GATT) tariff cuts put the textile sector in a very vulnerable position. The textile, clothing and retail sectors need to work as part of an integrated chain.

### **Motor vehicles**

The rapid lifting of tariffs in the motor vehicle and component industries will lead to job loss and loss of technological capacity. Researcher Anthony Black says that structural adjustments, including the reduction in the number of models produced, standardised components and increased exports, need to accompany tariff reductions.

### **Pulp and paper**

The paper and pulp industry has been quite successful, but needs to restructure if it is to survive international competition. High prices are caused by monopoly practices within the industry, as well as outdated technology, poor work organisation and low levels of skills.

### **Building materials**

The brick and cement industries has the capacity to meet the needs of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

However, researcher Moss Ngoasheng expresses concern over the high concentration of ownership in this sector. Encouragement and support needs to be given to small producers. Skill levels and technological capacities also need to be improved.

The ISP report comes hard on the heels of other studies which have also pinpointed problems in our manufacturing sector. The challenge now is for all interested parties to come up with policy recommendations to overcome these problems.

*Deanne Collins*