

Editorial Notes

COSATU Congress

Our feature on COSATU's Fourth National Congress analyses some of the developments in the federation, as it gears up to these demands and challenges.

We publish too an extract from the newly-published history of COSATU, *Striking Back* by Jeremy Baskin, which discusses the organisational and political questions facing COSATU in some depth. The article by Geoff Schreiner provides a far-reaching analysis of a major new initiative engaged in by COSATU - negotiations with employers and the state over restructuring of the National Manpower Commission (NMC).

Wages and job security

The NUMSA settlement in the metal industry - and even more so the NUM settlement in the goldmining industry - show a new trend (see articles by Howard Gabriels, Snuki Zikalala). Unions are being forced to settle for lower wage increases (at or below inflation) as economic crisis takes its toll. The trade off is that employers are beginning to make concessions on job security and training (metal & engineering, possibly auto) or on union rights (Chamber).

Various agreements signed by NUM supplement low wage increases with bonuses linked to gold price, profit and productivity. This is a new development, compelled by crisis conditions in the industry. Business hailed the Ergo productivity deal as a 'breakthrough', but unions are unlikely to follow this route. Nonetheless, they will increasingly start negotiating around productivity in the future - and this will raise complex new questions and strategies.

All of these trends make it urgent

that unions - and federations - begin to develop wage policies linked to economic strategies. Otherwise we are likely to see increasing fragmentation and division within the working class, as the article by Carole Cooper shows.

ICFTU conference

Finally, we print a report on the ICFTU's African conference in Botswana. This continues the important international debates initiated in *Labour Bulletin* recently, and which will be continued in future editions.

New writer, editors

We are happy to welcome new writer Snuki Zikalala aboard *Labour Bulletin*. A former SACTU activist and journalist, Snuki returned recently from exile. He studied and lived in Bulgaria for ten years.

Three new members have joined our editorial board in Cape Town. They have all been active trade unionists. Henry Chipeya was the first president of CCAWUSA and co-ordinator of Urban Training Project. Currently he teaches sociology at UCT. Dave Lewis was general secretary of General Workers Union in the 1970s and 80s, and then national organiser in TGWU. He is now co-ordinator of Economic Trends Research Group. Howard Gabriels has also been a unionist for many years - starting with GWU. He then became Namaqualand organiser and then education officer of NUM, after which he moved back to SACTWU in the Western Cape. He left SACTWU earlier this year.

We welcome these new members to our editorial board. They will add vigour and breadth to the *Labour Bulletin*. ☆