

CLUW meeting June 20, 1995

We went to SA to visit workers & communities and to be able to report to workers here on the status of workers there. We thank CLUW sisters for your contributions to our trip.

Cole and I had been part of the ILNAA whose goal was to stand in solidarity with the SA trade union movement in its economic (such as) and its political objectives (the overthrow of apartheid). Because of ILNAA, we were hosted in SA primarily by the Metalworkers union.

We visited the cities of Durban, Johannesburg and Capetown, went to 8-10 townships outside those cities, visited some work sites, some people in their homes, and met with a few labor and political officials.

AS YOU KNOW, SA is in a state of transition. It's been one year only since the election took place to install a temporary national government to begin the transition from apartheid to democracy.

WHEN WE WERE THERE the 1st budget of the new SA was passed. There was great dialogue taking place on who should be given amnesty for past crimes. People were working on their first voter registration drive, to get all people registered for the 1st democratic elections at the local level that will take place on October 31. They need to set up voting boundaries, precincts, city council structures, etc., etc.

Another thing that's happening is this. In years past, the civic organizations in the townships had boycotted services and fees of the apartheid regime. Much of the land, housing and public utilities were owned by the regime. People had refused to pay rather than give \$ to the regime.

But now the new government has to figure out how to get people to pay something so that there is money to make improvements. But people don't want to pay because there are yet no improvements. So government leaders like Moses Mayekiso are campaigning for people to pay their fair share. The ironies are many.

Today there is a group of officials in power, composed of the ANC with the massive support of trade unions. On the ground, there is some skepticism about public officials. What should be workers role vis a vis the new government? What should be co's role vis a vis the new government?

I cannot emphasize enough: Everything, but everything has to be redone. The scope of what needs to be done is

overwhelming. I think it's accurate to say we came back with both some skepticism, and a great deal of hope.

We're going to show some of our slides. I'll go through some quickly because of time, but will stop for a few questions as we go along.

South Africa's history draws many parallels to the U.S. Cities look a lot like Chicago; they are made up of people of all races.

Outside the cities are the areas called TOWNSHIPS - Areas where black WORKERS under apartheid had to live; because of economics, these areas are still segregated in the same way they were prior to ending apartheid.

HOMELANDS - Rural wastelands where those not useful to the white run economy were forced to live; old people, etc.

Now that people are no longer officially segregated, impoverished people from the homelands are moving to the townships, and have set up massive squatter camps.

And then there are the RURAL FARMLANDS and the question of who owns the land is a primary issue of concern.

CAT + Canon Cork