

January 1995

Dear Friend,

As South Africans voted in their first democratic election last year, I thought many times of how every nail in the coffin of oppression is worth driving there -- no matter how discouraging it sometimes seems.

- ◆ Inspired by striking South African miners in 1987, many unions together formed the Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid. Perhaps we didn't expect the result -- defeat of apartheid in our lifetime -- but we kept going because they kept going.
- ◆ We welcomed SA union representatives; watched the squeeze of sanctions and political pressure take effect; celebrated Nelson Mandela's release; and greeted him in Chicago. Then, the election. So much changed in a relatively short time.
- ◆ Generations of protests led to that swift reversal. The end came fast but the struggle was very long; and its lessons have yet to be fully digested.

For years I wanted to visit South Africa, but was unable to go. Coordinating the Network was all I could handle financially and energy wise. Yet, I surely have no regrets. The solidarity of unions here and there was inspiring and educational. We accomplished a lot and learned a lot. I'm proud of that, as I hope you are.

Now I am enthused to think about seeing a free South Africa! Cole Wright, recently retired from UFCW, and I hope to go March 1st to visit unions we worked with during years of protests and to inform local unions here of the progress of the revolution there. We expect to visit metal, health and mine workers unions, COSATU, the ANC and others.

The full cost of the trip is difficult and we are accepting donations for travel, as well as to bring SA unions a contribution as a sign of our solidarity while they deal with the horrible aftermath of apartheid.

Even though we closed everything else down, our bank account is still open. Checks can be written to the Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid and sent in care of: Evelyn Jones, UAW Region 4, 2700 S. River Road, DesPlaines, IL 60018.

I would be pleased to bring messages of solidarity from Chicago to those we visit in South Africa. Thank you.

As always, in solidarity,

Kathy Devine