CHICAGO SUPPORTS SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS - APRIL 26-28, 1994

CCISSA and the many organizations that make up Chicago's anti-apartheid movement are shifting into high gear as the date for South Africa's first non-racial democratic election draws near. The election, which is scheduled for April 26-28, 1994, marks the end of three hundred years of minority control of South Africa's government.

Chicago organizations have joined together to form the Chicago Committee for Fair Elections in South Africa which is taking up fundraising and recruitment of election observers. The Chicago Committee for Fair Elections is coordinated by Professor Harold Rogers of the Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid.

Opinion polls inside South Africa indicate that the African National Congress (ANC) holds a clear majority of support, particularly among first time voters. However, the intent and will of this majority could remain unrealized unless there is an effective voter education and registration effort. Of the estimated 21 million eligible voters, 18 million have never before voted and have no experience with electoral laws and procedures.

Black voters will need to contend with organized right-wing political violence intended either to cancel the balloting or reduce voter turnout, for harassment and intimidation of voters whose employers wield excessive control over their lives.

Chicago has a long history of opposing apartheid and of providing direct support for those who struggled directly with the vicious apartheid regime. Now, those forces need our support in order to assure a fair and free election in April.

Here's how you can help:

Become an election observer

Observers will travel to South Africa and will be assigned to a polling place to observe the election process and to report any irregularities that they see. It is hoped that the very presence of these interna-

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Rev. Frank Chikane (right), General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, seen here with Rev. Molefe Tsele, recently spent some time in Chicago and met with CCISSA activists. Rev. Chikane stressed the importance of continued international support for South Africa after the elections. Chikane noted, "The real struggle begins on the 28th."

Upon his return to South Africa, Rev. Chikane was appointed to the Independent Electoral Commission which will oversee the South African elections.
Chicago-Alexandria Sister Community Project Update

In April 1990, the Chicago City Council passed a resolution linking Chicago and Alexandra Township (Alex) in South Africa as sister communities. The Chicago-Alexandria Sister Community Project (CASCP) works with the Alexandra Civic Organization (ACO) to promote this relationship, and to provide solidarity in the struggle for education, housing and health care for all Alex residents.

Chicago Supports ACO Leadership Development

In December, the Chicago Alexandra Sister Community Project contributed $1000 toward the expenses of leadership development workshops for ACO’s newest leaders. With the upcoming elections, many ACO leaders, including former General Secretary Moses Mayekiso, will be shifting to national and regional governmental and organizational positions. While the ACO is proud to share its’ expertise in this way, the elections are creating a leadership drain on the local organization.

ACO’s Training Programs include workshops on organization building, leadership skills, and analysis of the current situation in South Africa and Alexandra as well as a discussion of critical issues facing the Civic movement.

In response to ACO’s request for leadership development support, the CCISSA Board of Directors has also decided to dedicate the 1994 Soweto Day Walkathon proceeds for this use. The Walkathon funds will be divided between the ACO and a community in Angola for their leadership development campaigns.

ACO PREPARES FOR ELECTIONS

by Stan West

Stan West of WVON radio in Chicago recently visited Alexandra. Here Stan shares some of his observations.

Thousands crammed the center today for day two of the ACO’s Congress which is held every other year. Speaker after speaker expressed excitement about the upcoming April 27th election which will give every South African a chance to vote. There’s also a local election going on right now for the chairmanship of this civic organization. After a secret ballot, Mzwanele Mayekiso, formerly the international representative for the South African National Civic Organization, is elected the new chairman. He wins by three votes over Mary Nkele Ntingane. Ntingane may later be nominated by ANC leadership to a position in the new interim government, possibly even joining Winnie Mandela, Moses Mayekiso and other grass roots leaders as members of parliament, locals predict.

Ntingane challenged the ANC and the civic organizations to be more inclusive of women. “Women want to be equal to men. But when one looks at what menfolk are giving us, it is less than equal,” she said.

The two day Congress highlighted local resident concerns about area as well as national problems. There was spirited discussion about how many of Alex’s 400,000 residents living in a one-mile radius have been forced to “move into a graveyard in order to survive!”

Speaking in indigenous languages of Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa as well as English, residents at the Sunday session emphasize, through resolution, that the Alexandra Civic Organization “must actively become involved in the election process by facilitating education and voting and organizing its constituency to vote in the April 27th elections.”

ACO has played a central role in the struggle leading to this election. This Biennial Congress is taking place 5 months before the first democratic, non-racial, one-person, one-vote elections for the national and provincial government of South Africa. And judging from the enthusiastic comments from scores of participants, this Congress is the most upbeat one in the 11 years since ACO has been in existence.

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CWED’S WANDA WHITE ASSISTS ACO WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Wanda White of Chicago’s Community Workshop on Economic Development (CWED) spent two weeks in South Africa and led a workshop on economic development for the Alexandra Civic Organization. Wanda and another development specialist from California were sent to South Africa by the US-South Africa Sister Community Project in conjunction with PLANACT, a South African economic development organization.

Wanda attended the ACO biennial conference which she described as democracy in its best form. In spite of the unsettled period of transition, she feels that the civic structure is the best she’s seen anywhere.

Wanda reports that the primary issue facing the Alex community is the building of housing in the township. There will be 1600 units built by spring. There has already been a lottery for the purchase of the improved lots. So far the focus has been on single family housing but Wanda noted a need to address the need for multi-family and small units for individuals as well.

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The Chicago-Alexandria Sister Community Project meets monthly. Call Carol at 312-327-0545 for times and locations.
Chicago Sings Out for Freedom

Michael Elliott of the Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid signs up to "keep the watch" on one of the 100 days between Martin Luther King Day and the April 27th South African Elections. Synapses Coordinator Kryes Chupp holds the sign up sheet. The 6th Annual Sing Out at the South African Consulate in Chicago was organized by Synapses. Call Joan Gerig at (312) 421-5513 for more information on the Keep The Watch campaign.

SUPPORT FOR SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS (continued)

tional observers will deter violent intimidation of voters.

We encourage Chicago churches, unions and civic organizations to sponsor an observer for the elections. Financial contributions can also be made through CCISSA to assist an observer's travel to South Africa.

Applications for election monitors are available from the Community Renewal Society, 332 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 500 in Chicago. Phone 312-4276-4830 extension 1220 for more information. Applications must be returned to CRS by March 11, 1994.

Contribute for voter education

Your financial contribution can make a difference. In this historic election, the ANC and the previously disenfranchised majority are facing an efficient, well-equipped, and experienced campaign machine that can easily mobilize voters.

First time voters are also hampered by conditions brought about by apartheid: an estimated 50% of eligible voters cannot read; more than 40% live in inaccessible rural areas; and there is great potential for harassment and intimidation of voters whose employers wield excessive control over their lives.

A number of organizations are raising funds for the elections. The Fund For Democracy is supporting non-partisan voter education and registration. The Fund for Democratic Elections in South Africa is raising funds for political campaigns and electoral efforts in South Africa. Checks can also be made out directly to the African National Congress. All checks can be sent to CCISSA and will be forwarded immediately. Contributions are not tax deductible.

Petition President Clinton

Join in the Africa Fund Campaign to petition President Clinton to support democracy in South Africa by speaking out publically in support of a fair and free election and an end to political violence which threatens the rights of South Africans to elect a government of their choice. Copy the enclosed petition, collect signatures and return them to the Africa Fund by March 1, 1994.

Only a democratically elected government that reflects the real will of the majority can realistically answer the cry for peace, jobs, and justice.

Nelson Mandela

Local Sanctions Lifted

The City of Chicago and the State of Illinois have lifted all sanctions against South Africa. CCISSA (formerly CIDSA - Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa) supported Nelson Mandela and the ANC in calling for the lifting following considerable ANC consultation with with South African churches, unions and civics. CCISSA will continue dialogue with these groups concerning the establishment of codes of conduct for corporations doing business in South Africa.

Wanda White (continued)

The development of ACO's long-term plan is hindered by the need to deal with emergency situations in the township and with preparation for the elections. Three emergency problems that she observed first hand were the overcrowded women's hostel where the contract for garbage pickup had not been renewed; squatters who have settled in shacks on the river bank in danger of destruction when the river rises; and the "Beruit" area around the Modala Hostel where people have returned to homes largely destroyed by violence in recent years. The area is still quite dangerous.

Wanda encouraged the ACO to dream big dreams about what kind of community they want. She stressed that community economic development is more that just housing but also includes other community needs such as child care and health services.

Wanda found that there really wasn't enough time to do everything she had hoped to do. She believes that is will be very important to bring ACO folks here in the future to work with community development groups. She also stressed the need for leadership development.

Wanda said her trip was exciting both personally and professionally and she pledged to work with the CASCP to establish further links between Alex and Chicago neighborhoods and institutions.
Anti-Apartheid Calendar

February 13 Rally for ANC Victory 6:30 - 9:00 PM, First Congregational Baptist Church, 1613 W. Washington, Chicago (see page 1 for details)

February 20 Chicago-Alexandra Sister Community Project Meeting 5PM, First Church of the Brethren, 425 S. Central Park, Chicago

March 11 Deadline for Election Observer Application (see page 3 for details)

April 26-29 SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTION

May 14 Victory Celebration /CCISSA 10th Year Anniversary Party (details to be announced)

June 18 SAVE THE DATE! 6th Annual Soweto Day Walkathon to benefit leadership development in Chicago's sister community, Alexandra Township, South Africa and a community in Angola

Join CCISSA and the Southern Africa Response Network

CCISSA has initiated the Southern Africa Response Network to consolidate the Illinois anti-apartheid constituency into a solid, consistent voice for change in U.S. policy in southern Africa. The Network will communicate with President Clinton and our representatives to pressure the South African regime to curb township violence, halt land transfers and other moves designed to cripple a future democratic government. The network will work to end US support for destabilization campaigns in South Africa and the frontline states. The network will also be activated on behalf of Chicago's sister community Alexandra Township in the struggle for decent housing, health and education for Alex residents.

CCISSA works closely with the American Committee on Africa, Washington Office on Africa and TransAfrica in monitoring key legislation, hearings and issues that need our support. We expect the Network to be activated approximately once a month. Network members may choose to have Action Alerts sent to them for response or to have CCISSA send letters/mailgrams in their names with copies of communications sent to them.

Join CCISSA and become a part of this Response Network as we create a new era of US policy toward southern Africa.

PLEASE RETURN TO CCISSA, P.O. Box 578066 CHICAGO, IL 60657

NAME

ADDRESS ZIP

PHONE (Day) (Evening)

Enclosed is my check for:

$25. CCISSA and Response Network Membership

$10. CCISSA Membership

Send Action Alerts to me

Send letters in my name

$ Additional Contribution

Contribution for South African Election support

I would like to get involved in the Sister Community Project.

I am unable to make a contribution but would like to be on the mailing list

ACO (continued)

Nkele explained, “This is our biennial meeting. It's the highlight of our organization. It is the supreme decision-making body of our organization. Our mission is to transform local government to one that delivers services to the people through mass mobilization and participation in our community.

After April 27th, the struggle continues. We should take into consideration we will be voting in an interim government of national unity. And thanks to our sister city in Chicago, we are also to move forward our voter education program here in Alex.

There's a lot to be done after April 27th. We're accepting the fact the legacy of apartheid will be with us for a long time. The sister city should hopefully mobilize whatever resources it can, human or otherwise for consensus-building.”

Noticeably absent from the ACO Congress was Regional Civic Organization leader, Mrs. Winnie Mandela, who was attacked by assassins that weekend, ending in the death of her bodyguard. Ntngane said, “The attack on Mrs. Mandela would appear to be the same people who killed Chris Hani. We call it the third force. the government had a hand in it. And we are expecting these incidents to increase as we approach April 27th. Personally, I have no fear. We live with this every day. We are ready for whatever. Victory is near!”