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COMMISSION

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REPORT ON RELOCATION, REMOVALS AND RURAL AREAS -- UDF EASTERN CAPE REGION

We looked at urban and rural removals, dividing rural removals into forced collective removals of communities and the removal of individuals.

URBAN REMOVALS

In Port Elizabeth, communities in Veeplaas, Soweto, White and Red Villages ~~are~~ are in the process of being re-located in Motherwell.

The Administration Board, with the aim of "upgrading" the areas, demolishes existing houses and residents are given a temporary site to build a shack until they get a house in the new area. Crosses are placed on the doomed houses and if the owners don't demolish them themselves, officials arrive with bulldozers and after placing the belongings outside, demolish the shacks. If residents rebuild them they are evicted by force -- police with rifles and dogs.

Once in Motherwell their problems increase:

- * A deposit on a shell house in Motherwell is R4 000.
- * The new houses are usually "economic" houses, whereas the houses from which they were moved were probably in the sub-economic group, and residents will have to pay four or five times as much rent.
- * Transport costs to town are double those from Zwide to town, for example.

Civic organisations have not, to date, developed a presence among the shack dwellers, nor suggested strategies for those facing relocation to adopt. However, since Pecco has taken up the rent increase issue, such a presence could develop.

It was also suggested that contact be made with the FOC + Carrying + General Workers Unions - whose members live in the shack areas.

We felt the relocations issue should be discussed with Pebco, as it was primarily a civic organisation's responsibility, although one which UDF could support.

While we are not saying this should be Pebco's sole objective, we felt as it has already acted to the rent increase, by incorporating on-going issues connected with relocations, the rent issue could be taken up as a long or medium term programme.

URBAN REMOVALS SHOULD BE TAKEN UP BY THE HOUSING COMMISSION

FORCED COLLECTIVE RURAL REMOVALS

In the Eastern Cape people in areas such as Mgwali, Mcoiplous and Glenmore face removal into a homeland, or further into a homeland. (However, many/feel imminent removal is unlikely because of the financial demands on the South African government.)

As these areas all fall within the UDF's Border region, we felt we must speak to the Border UDF before making any major commitment.

One suggestion was to supply information on these removals to our organisations, as we often tend to overlook this issue.

FORCED REMOVALS OF INDIVIDUALS IN RURAL AREAS

Humansdorp was given as an example of this. Many farmers are selling their farms to people from the Transvaal, when the new owners arrive, previous workers are sacked. The evicted labourers stream to urban areas only to be hounded by the pass laws.

According to people in Cape Town who have worked with workers forced off farms, these people are very apathetic and very unlikely to risk what little comfort they have. Around Grahamstown it has also been difficult to persuade farm workers to unite. In addition, those remaining behind on the farm are eager to seize the vacated positions.

We felt this issue could be partly addressed by:

- * focussing on influx control, the pass laws, homelands, jobs, housing and squatting.
- * pushing for rural workers to have the same right to live and work in the city as urban people.

THE UDF'S ROLE IN RURAL AREAS

Some ground was covered in this field during the anti-election campaign, particularly at Jeffrey's Bay and Humansdorp. Contacts were made with teachers in the communities, and it was also felt that Dower students from rural towns would provide important links. *Contact should also be made with sports bodies, church groups, etc.*

In addition, UDF has a strong presence among affiliated organisations in Graaff-Reinet and Cradock, *who keep in* contact with the publicity secretary. Various organisations in Queenstown have affiliated, and Kirkwood's sports club has asked to affiliate.

~~We felt once the Front had established itself in small towns it~~ would be able to reach people on farms. It would also be possible to organise in rural industries such as saw mills.

The major problem with reaching rural areas are manpower and funds. We felt it would be preferable to begin closer to home, perhaps in Humansdorp. A workshop run by headquarters, was one suggestion.

Because of the size of the area, each town would have to be treated according to local demands.

We recommend that the UDF establish a committee, with a lifespan of about three months, to ascertain the need for a rural organiser, and to collect as much information on the issue as possible.

(Stone said the question of a rural organiser had already been raised by the E Cape region. National office had asked for a budget. It was estimated ^{costs for} two organisers and a car and office allowance would amount to R54 000. ^{Got R10 000 - assumed by anti-election campaign.} No reply on the matter has been received.)

GENERAL - OBJECTIVES FOR THE FRONT AND HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM

The UDF must continue to exist as the real opposition to the Government.

In order to enhance our position as the major opposition to local governments, the UDF must develop strength in civic structures.

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