

on a gentle hillside surrounded by green fields of flourishing crops, with the farmers in the fields, the women about their homes and the children, all in neat uniforms, in their schools. I am quite sure that the Chief would welcome a visit from you and we would be happy to arrange it.

It is horrifying to think that these solid houses must be demolished, the life that has been established there destroyed, and the people uprooted, with what is left of their property after the demolitions, and dumped on bare ground in a forest of shiny tin toilets, there to try to re-

establish themselves as a community and somehow find a means of earning their livelihood, having been deprived of their cattle and their farms.

I am sure you would agree that no ideology can provide an adequate excuse for such inhumanity perpetrated by man against man. There is no friction in the area of Mophoestud. The surrounding white farmers use the available labour provided by the village as and when they need it. It is a peaceful, settled little black community, quietly going about the business of providing for itself and husbanding the land and its resources.

I have met the people of Mophoestud. I have spoken with them. I am deeply impressed with their dignity and their integrity. They do not wish to move. They are doing everything within their power to prevent themselves from being moved. I hope that you will do everything within your power to ensure that they are not moved, and that they are no longer harassed by the authorities who are trying to make "voluntary" a removal which the people resist with every fibre of their being'.

Jill Wentzel

National Vice-President

An empty table labelled independence

by Dr Margaret Nash

SHOULD CISKEI join Transkei to form one independent Xhosa nation as Pretoria was proposing? In 1976 Chief Lennox Sebe dismissed the question out of hand, declaring '... Our people cannot eat flags or constitutions ... Is any benefit to be found in one destitute family joining another to sit down at the empty table?'

During that same year the Herschel and Glen Gray districts, comprising 45 percent of Ciskei land area, were ceded to Transkei, and some 50 000 inhabitants trekked south to Thornhill and Zweledinga ('the promised land'). For Ciskei the net result was less land and more hungry people.

Yet, in December last year, against the express recommendation of his own Quail Commission, Chief Lennox Sebe led his people to an empty table labelled independence. And Pretoria notched up another victory in the campaign to rid the Republic of political and other obligations to three-quarters of the South African population.

That campaign, expressed in homelands consolidation and massive population removals, is at once simple, sophisticated and incredibly ambitious. Simple in that it aims to excise from Republic territory a series of black homelands not exceeding 14 percent of the whole and establishing in them eight or nine (or ten ...) independent black nations.

If you live in the Fairest Cape it is easy to know little and care less about happenings north of the Hex River Mountains. Easy that is, if you are white.

But Group Areas removals affecting over half a million 'coloured' people and 'coloured labour preference area policy' penalising a quarter of a million Africans in the Western Cape are also part of the Grand Plan.

So, the things that distress us locally — pass arrests, dawn raids, destruction of plastic squatter shelters, dogs, teargas and shooting — do not happen by mischance. Without them the homelands resettlement policy cannot work.

Similarly, homeland casinos with the gambling, blue films and sex across the colour line, forbidden in the Republic, are not simply the result of entrepreneurial vigour. They are the outward and visible signs of the largest single item of world trade — tourists; particularly the kind of tourism that exploits Third World countries as playgrounds for the spoilt children of First World affluence.

Government spokesmen defend the homelands and resettlement policy in terms of ethnicity and the right of each group to preserve its identity and develop along its own lines. They say little about the devastating economic and social effects of the policy.

Economically the facts are stark. The 1913 Land Act enabled the white minority to effect a primitive accumulation of capital (land, minerals and other assets) at the expense of the blacks. Africans, driven into reserves and locations comprising six percent of the land area, could no longer sustain

themselves by farming, and ever greater numbers were forced into the migrant labour systems.

These workers lacked bargaining power, so the surplus value resulting from their work accrued to the ruling class. In 1970 the top 10 percent of the population received 58 percent of national income while the bottom 20 percent received only two percent. White South African living standards are among the highest in the world, while the diseases of poverty — TB, kwashiorkor, gastro-enteritis and its adult cousin cholera — ravage the black population, particularly in the rural areas.

Socially the havoc is equally evident. Family life is almost non-existent for 1,5 million migrant workers and their dependants. Homelands populations comprise the aged and disabled, women and children, and the unemployed. Denser settlements are agglomerates of uprooted, atomised part-families. Many old people are so traumatised by removal as to display symptoms of organic brain damage. Memories no longer vitalise and enrich their declining years, instead, there is depression and vacancy.

Once viable villages and rural communities, swamped by thousands of new arrivals, no longer nourish their inhabitants. Instead, it is each for himself and devil take the hindmost.

Recall some of the recent reports about Laingsburg one year after the flood — the complaints about the cramped uninsulated prefabs, the dust, the sense of disorientation, of resentment and frustration. The black uprooted have not suffered the sudden loss of life on a large scale as did the Laingsburg community. But in most other ways they have been no less the victims of disaster, yet lacking the assistance of crisis squads, 'disaster medicine' specialists and an abundantly generous public.

'You cannot have a nation without people', said Chief Sebe. Nor can you consolidate a homeland without pushing and pulling its putative citizens from the white areas into the Trust farms that are to be handed over in the fullness of time.

But such resettlement is a political timebomb. People relocate in response to harassment, cash subsidies, the promise of land or at least security of tenure, and the hope of a better future for their children. But homeland leaders cannot deliver the goods and disillusion soon blankets briefly vital settlements. While the adults may sink into apathy, in youth the sap of life is still rising.

Frustration erupts into school boycotts, stoning of buses, violent clashes with army and police, detentions and seething anger. Drop-outs are quickly absorbed into the gangs that terrorise the settlements. Pupils who return to school experience little sense of reward or satisfaction. Like the alienated youth of Northern-Ireland, both scholars and drop-outs in the homelands resettlements offer fertile ground to recruiters of guerilla armies.

The SADF is rightly concerned about the security situation in the rural areas. The white presence

there is less and less civilian and therefore has to be more and more military — and dependent on the growing non-white element. As in Rhodesia in the 1970s, it is possible to manipulate black into fighting black on behalf of white supremacy — but for how long? Especially when most of the blacks, whether permanently resident in the Republic, or not, are constitutionally foreigners.

This is the context for the well-publicised changes and concessions: trade unions, better wages and job training, promises of housing, TV2 and TV3. Also for the detentions and virtual rule of terror in Venda and Ciskei, and the ex-Selous Scout military presence in Transkei — not to mention the rising tide of border warfare, urban industrial sabotage, worker and civil unrest in the Republic.

Contrast this with the jubilee of biblical tradition, the year of rejoicing in which land — held as a trust — is redistributed to the people. Good news indeed to the poor, liberation to those burdened with debt and endless wage labours (Leviticus 25). Such was the imagery with which Christ chose to begin his public ministry, the mandate he sought to fulfil (Luke 4, 18).

If as a country we stand in this tradition, as the constitution maintains, how can we endlessly blame the unrest and disorder on external forces and the communist onslaught? Can we not see that in fact the most dangerous threat to the future of any nation is a state terrorism that exiles, oppresses and drives to desperation the majority of its inhabitants?

Only justice, rule of law and full human rights for all inhabitants of a reunited South Africa can ensure the peace, security and prosperity we desire for our children.

Statement

The Black Sash is totally opposed to capital punishment believing that it has a destructive effect on society that far outweighs any deterrent advantage some people believe it might have.

We contemplate with concern the prospect of our society attempting to solve rising tension in the future by increased use of judicial killing.

We are appalled that the gallows in Pretoria allows for the simultaneous hanging of seven people and we condemn the practice of multiple hangings, the barbarity of which was made manifest in a report in The Star of 15/7/81 of the use of teargas to quieten the resisting victims of one such multiple hanging.

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