

# PENSIONS: A TANGLED LIFELINE

FOR MANY rural South African families their weakest or eldest member is their strongest hope of an income - a social pension.

Not that this is much for a family to live on. The maximum payment for African pensioners is R65 a month, paid in double batches every two months. It is less than 40 percent of what white pensioners get.

But where millions are landless and jobless — and research presented at the Carnegie Poverty Conference showed this to be the case in the bantustans, where 51 percent of black South Africans live — the meagre social pension becomes a lifeline.

But it is a precarious lifeline that is often cut by uncaring officials and tangled by gross mismanagement.

It is a lifeline too short to reach tens of thousands who need it. Several bantustan governments have simply run out of cash for pensions and have just blocked off all the new applications.

In addition, KwaZulu has introduced regulations to limit the back-payment. This saves the KwaZulu government huge sums each year.

In the areas earmarked for removal, it is alleged time and again that delays and withholdings of pensions are some of the more subtle pressures designed to get people out of their 'black spots' or 'badly situated' farms.

Many old people rightly regard their pensions as an unquestionable right. One old man put it this way to the Durban Advice Office of the Black Sash:

'I paid my taxes to prime minister Malan, Strydom, Verwoerd, Vorster and Botha - now I must have my pension for my old age.'

Governments do not see it quite that way, as KwaZulu's former secretary of Health and Welfare let on when he was trying to explain why he had underestimated his 1983 budget by R31-million.

'Pensions had always been our lifeline in the past. It was a quick way of saving,' Dr Gemedie told the Assembly at Umtali.

'What happened was that a number of pensions were dropped by the computer and in some way this enabled us to effect some savings.'

'Unfortunately, pensioners are now aware of their rights, thanks to the legal aid and the Black Sash.'

Advisors go into battle for pensioners on several fronts:

● Investigating delays between application and first payment. These delays can sometimes be counted in years, not months. The Black Sash tells of a Mr Maphuthulo of Inanda, Natal, who first applied in 1981. He lodged a third application in September 1983 because the first two had been fruitless. By April 1984 he had still not received a penny.

The Black Sash points out that delays mean savings to the KwaZulu government. Unlike Pretoria, which backdates payments to the time of application, the Buthelean government backdates only to the start of the two-month period in which the pension is approved.

'A person who applied in March 1983 and who is paid in May 1984 will have lost R742 to KwaZulu through a delay over which the applicant has no control,' Jillian Nicholson of the Sash points out.

Delays are of course related to bantustan governments, heavily dependent on Pretoria for cash, just running out of funds for pensions.

This has happened in Ciskei, in KwaZulu and most recently in Lebowa.

The Black Sash quotes reports from an official in charge of pensions in the huge KwaZulu township of KwaMasbu that no new applications were paid at all in 1983. Even those who had applied in February 1983 had been told they would have to wait until the government got more cash in April 1984.

● The second area in which advice office workers lock horns with officials is in the review of pensions. All disability grants awarded to people who are not permanently disabled are subject to review. But some, in certain bantustans, are reviewed more frequently than others. In KwaZulu reviews take place every six months.

Reviews are also required where pensioners are too frail to

as an indirect pressure to force them off the land.

Government officials have told 80 year-old women to 'go and find a husband to support you' when they applied for pensions.

This is just one example of the approach officials have taken when faced with pension applications.

For many people in communities under threat of removal, the income from workers' compensation, unemployment benefits and pensions is their only means of survival. But this means they remain dependent on the government for an income.

Government officials have not been slow to take advantage of this dependence — and people see this

In Driefontein, where community leader Saul Mkhize was shot dead in 1983, the commissioner suddenly announced that pensions would no longer be paid out from the Corner Shop general dealer in the area. Instead, old age pensioners would have to travel 30 kms to Dirkesdorp to get their money.

The community protested, and finally the officials scrapped the new plan.

On many occasions government officials have refused to give people the pensions that are due to them. They say no new pensions from

## TESTIMONY

'I live in Driefontein. I am 84 years old. I was born in May 1900.

I am a widow. My husband died in 1960. For a number of years I went a 'lot of times' to Wakkerstroom, paying about R4 each time for transport to apply for a pension. But the black clerks and the magistrate chased me away. They told me to go home, my children must give me money; and that I was not old enough. They told me to get another husband — this was from a black clerk.

In March I asked the Black Sash to write a letter about my pension. In June 1983 I got a letter from the commissioner at Wakkerstroom. I went to see him as requested but the black clerk said he was waiting for the magistrate. I went again and this time the clerk wrote a letter to the police at Dirkesdorp that I must make a sworn statement there. I went to Dirkesdorp and they asked me questions and wrote down what I said. I am still waiting.

collect their own money and use procurators.

Advice offices in Natal find that pensioners are not advised in advance that their pensions are due for review. Their pensions lapse and it is often six to eight months before they get any payment.

'The whole object of having a procurator is to avoid travel and worry for the pensioner. It is an object which is totally defeated by the present chaos with review documents,' says

Ms Nicholson. She relates the case of Mrs Mthembu, a very frail old lady who is unable to walk without assistance. Her daughter is her procurator.

'In March 1983 there was no money at the payout and the clerk told the procurator to come back in May. When there was still no money Mrs Mthembu was taken in a taxi to the magistrate's office and review documents were completed.

September came - no money. October - the Department of Health and Welfare denied any review application had been received. November - time to get legal assistance. And in January Mrs Mthembu's pension was reinstated - a year after it was stopped - and R520 in arrears was paid.

Ms Nicholson alleges the KwaZulu government is 'reluctant' to pay arrears 'which should have been paid as a matter of course.'

She says the Durban Advice Office, by legal action and threats of such action, has extracted R58 018 in arrears - for just 150 of the pensioners affected.

● The third major area of battle is over 'names dropped by the computer'. Advice offices state that this is the catch-all explanation for pensions which are stopped for no clear reason.

Ms Nicholson describes the gross maladministration of pensions as a form of 'human torment'. She points out that the pension is often the very means of livelihood for the pensioner and his or her whole family. They describe how they beg and borrow to stay alive, how every two months their day's wait at the payout ends in despair - how they do not know how much longer they can survive.

Pretoria, in explaining its meagre social allowances and extremely harsh means test, says its pensions are a bonus, a 'little extra' for the aged in a non-welfare state.

'Those who live closer to the dependent know better

## The pensions the aged are not sure of getting

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Driefontein will be accepted. Lawyers took up the case of five pensioners from Driefontein who had been refused, and challenged the Department of Cooperation and Development. The pensioners won their case — and their pensions.

Others applying for UIF have not been given registration forms or a UIF stamp to make their forms valid.

In Wakkerstroom there have also been problems with workers' compensation. One man who had been paralyzed in a truck accident had to be transported many kilometres to Wakkerstroom — because officials

would not allow anyone else to write out the application for workers' compensation for him.

In Wakkerstroom, many people applying to the Department of Cooperation and Development for unemployment insurance have been told to come back on a certain date. When they return, they are given a later date — and still no UIF.

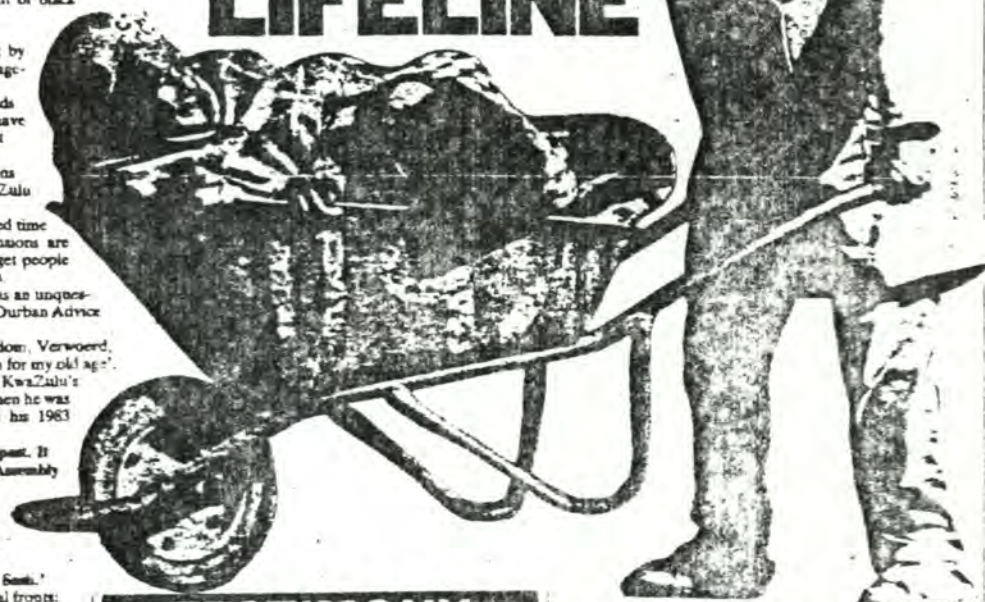
Many old people have no birth or baptism certificates, while passes that were issued in the 1930's do not show their age. Clerks often guess their age, and then write it in their reference books. Many people complain that these estimates are com-

pletely wrong — which often means they can't get their pensions.

The magistrates office in Wakkerstroom no longer has any disability grant application forms — it has 'run out'. When people apply for the grant, they are sent to the district surgeon. When they arrive there without the forms, the doctor refuses to give them a medical examination. And so they get no grant.

The people believe that all these methods are used by the Department of Cooperation and Development to deny the income to the community, and this way force them off the land.

An old man pushes his wife towards the pensions queue



**ELLIOT MGADI** was an organiser for the Northern Natal African Landowner's Association (NNALA), an organisation formed in 1957 to fight the removal of people from African freehold areas. These freehold areas had been bought by Africans before 1913 but were not scheduled for black occupation in 1913, nor were they released in 1936 with the 1936 Land Act.

In 1963 Elliot Mgadi was banned for five years. In 1976 the people of Roosboom, where he lived were moved to Ezakhen — later to be incorporated into KwaZulu.

100 000 people from the freehold areas around Ladysmith are threatened with removal. 12 000 people from Matwane's Kop are under immediate threat.

How has political organisation in the rural area changed since the 1950's? Elliot Mgadi talks about this period.

Tell us about the 1950's and the formation of the NNALA?

It was formed in 1957/58. The

#### BANISHMENT

**I**N THE early hours of May 1977, four police cars drew up outside the home of Winnie Mandela who was active in the Black Parents Association and the Black Women's Federation.

The police carried a slip of paper which was to drastically alter her life. It empowered them to pack her belongings and transport her to the distant town of Brandfort in the Orange Free State and make her stay there in virtual solitary confinement.

One month earlier Dr Mamphele Ramphele, superintendent of the Black Community Programme's Zanempilo Clinic near King William's Town and the mother of Steve Biko's son, had suffered the same fate.

She was served with a banning order restricting her to Tzaneen in the Northern Transvaal. But not satisfied with tearing her away from her friends and family, the government later added a clause to her order in October of the following year, prohibiting her from treating patients at two sub-stations near Leneyne townships in the Northern Transvaal.

In the last year alone two more activists have been added to the list of people banished under the 80-year-old provision.

Steve Tshwete, president of the Border Region of the United Democratic Front, was declared a 'citizen of the Ciskei' and made an undesirable alien in South Africa. He was told by the South African Department of Home Affairs that he was unwelcome in South Africa and must apply for permission to cross the Ciskei borders into South Africa.

He appealed against the order which restricts him to the powerless banustan, cuts him off from his place of birth, King Williamstown and prevents him visiting Springs, his place of birth. Judgement has been indefinitely postponed.

Abel Dube spent over two years in solitary confinement under security legislation. He was released only after a mounting public outcry, and banished immediately to Messina in the Northern Transvaal. He was provided with a job and accommodation on a copper mine. His family lives 500 kilometers away in Soweto.

The tactic of banishment to silence government opponents was devised in 1903 in Natal out of an amendment to the Natal code of Native law. Twenty four years later, in 1927 Albert Hertzog was so taken with what he called 'an excellent provision' that powers to banish dissenters were extended to all the provinces.

At the time Hertzog said it could be used against stock thieves but there is good reason to believe the

## A proud history resisting removal

Rural resistance — Elliot Mgadi tells it like it was

reason for forming it was that all these people who were affected by this black spot removal thing should come together and form a body of their own. In other words that we should form one body. We felt that this body would encourage those who were resisting because if you feel you are alone you will think that you are wasting time.

How was this formed?

When it was formed I had to go to these people in charge of the areas. In these areas people buy land as a syndicate and then elect a chairperson. All of this land was of course bought before the 1913 Land Act. My business was to meet with this elected committee and then suggest

that their area join the Association. It was formed in Northern Natal but we intended to cover the whole of Natal.

Who was eligible for membership?

The NNALA was an association of communities. Individuals did not join. Instead the committee in each area would put it to their members and then whole committees would affiliate — for instance Roosboom and Matwane's Kop.

The NNALA was started by the Liberal Party. What was the relationship between the NNALA and ANC?

We had a very good relationship with the ANC. In any area you

would probably find 50 members of the ANC. The ANC supported this work and Chief Lutshaba was very happy about this. Although the ANC was against the removals at that time, it did not have an organisation to fight removals.

What were the difficulties in forming the rural organisations?

At that time the security branch was very active. So some people were afraid to attend meetings. Each meeting we had, the security police would attend. They had their own way of finding out. They had a lot of informers.

Why do you think the NNALA was not very successful in resisting the



1964 — Natal people meet to fight removal

removal?

Well I wouldn't say we did not succeed. We were working against the law. People were removed in terms of the law. But we certainly managed to delay the removal. At Besters it took them seven years to move the people. It was really delaying tactics. In the meantime they intimidated people and tempted them with offers of better land.

What lessons can be learnt from the NNALA?

It made these communities become politically motivated. I used to deal with leaders but after that we planned with the leaders to hold public meetings where we got the chance



Winnie Mandela (l) and Steve Tshwete (r), banished



Just the stroke of a pen and opponents of apartheid can be banished, sent into exile in far-away places. Since 1903, the government has dumped hundreds of its political enemies in the veld, often without water or shelter, far from their homes and families.

people he really had in mind were political leaders and members of the Industrial Commercial Workers Union.

No official records were kept of banishments before 1959, but there were numerous individuals against whom the 1927 Act was used.

Typical were six Africans who in 1935 were removed from Matwane's Kop near Rustenburg to Steenbokgat where there was neither water nor accommodation.

They contested their removal in court arguing that a person couldn't 'be simply dumped in the veld'. They demanded compensation and said if they were to be removed, it had to be to a hospitable spot.

They lost their case. Another person similarly affected was James Sofasonke 'We shall all die together' Mpanza, after whom the current Sofasonke Party is named. He had founded a squatter settlement on open ground in Orlando and led hundreds of people out of the overcrowded location.

The government issued a removal order in 1936 banishing Mpanza to the farm 'Coldplace' in the Ixopo district of Natal.

The use of banishment increased considerably when the National Party came to power. Banishment began to be used as a reprisal

against leaders in the tribal reserves who led opposition to the new apartheid laws.

Those who resisted the introduction of Bantu Authorities, Bantu Education, passes for African women or those who refused to cooperate in the culling of cattle and the enforced fencing of land were all victims of this harsh measure.

Between January 1948 and December 1958, 81 people were banished to various places which had the same things in common: They were desolate, arid and isolated.

New legislation in 1956 closed loopholes in earlier laws. It stated that orders which allowed the Minister of Native Affairs to banish people, did not have to be served personally. All that was required was for a copy of the banning order to be left at the home of the person concerned.

By December 1967, after the government had started clamping down on leaders of the African National

Congress, the Pan African Congress and trade union leaders, 147 people had been banned to various barren and inhospitable areas. Sixteen of these fled South Africa.

Banishment was used less often during the 1960's and by the end of 1972, there remained just one person still serving a banishment order. Laynas Mashile, chief of the the Mapulana community, had been banished in 1963 from Bushbuckridge in the Eastern Transvaal, to Glen Grey in the Transkei.

But two new banishment orders were served in 1974, two more in 1976 and a further two in 1978, bringing the total to seven.

#### OPPOSITION TO THE BANTU AUTHORITIES ACT:

With the Bantu Authorities Act, the government attempted a form of indirect rule through chiefs and headmen who supported its cause. This entailed realigning land and forcibly removing people to settlement villages through 'betterment' schemes.

The Matlala Reserve outside Pietersburg was the scene of militant opposition to betterment schemes in the early fifties.

Up to his death in 1945, Seagwan Matlala, chief of the Matlala community rejected 'betterment'. His wife, Makwena, acting as regent for the four-year-old heir to the chief, township, Iloa Matlala, continued this policy and was made to suffer for it.

She was the first person to be banished under the Nationalist government. Officials set Joel Matlala up as chief and opposition to the betterment schemes reached boiling point. In 1952 he was stoned to death.

Mass arrests followed and Makwena, though she had not been in the area at the time, was also arrested. Her people, led to believe she would be allowed to return home, collected R400 bail for her release, whereupon she was immediately issued with another banishment — this time to King

William's Town.

Unable to speak Xhosa, with little money and totally isolated, Makwena suffered incredible hardship. Two years later, 12-year-old Iloa was also deported to King William's Town.

Between 1953-1955, 21 people from the Matlala community were banished to various parts of the country.

Joel Matlala's death led to Maphuthi Sepao's husband being arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. She and her five children were, even a day's notice in which to move to Tobiasia Location in the Northern Transvaal.

Estrom Hloniyane served a five-year sentence for his alleged part in the killing of Joel Matlala. On his release in 1955 the police demanded that he pledge support for the new government policies.

He refused and was banished to Gingindhlovu in Natal.

Five members of the Matlala community died while serving their banishment orders and two died within a month of being allowed to return home.

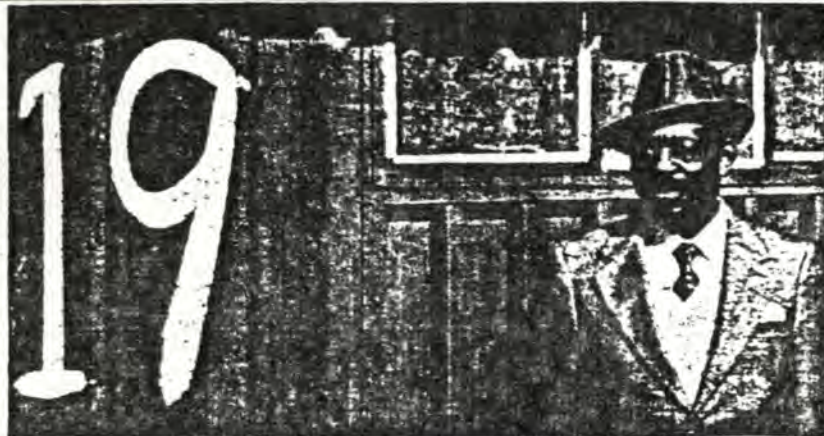
The other 16 all had their orders withdrawn by the end of 1960 after 11 to 16 years in forced exile.

#### OPPOSITION TO PASSES FOR WOMEN

Abram Molisoa, chief of the Lanokane section of the Barutse community, was deported by the state in 1957 for his vocal opposition to Bantu Authorities and Bantu Education and his refusal to use his influence to get women to carry passes.

Although not served with a banishment order, he was instructed to move to Ventersdorp. Hard on the heels of the chief's

# THE FORGOTTEN WARRIORS



Elliot Mgadi — veteran campaigner against removals

of addressing the public of those particular areas. Naturally we discussed politics right through. And people began to learn what was happening in the whole country.

**Do you think you made mistakes?**  
You go to a place and the meeting is attended by just a few people... you become disappointed. But you have to go back again. The security

police were successful in intimidating people but you have to go on.

**In 1962 you had a large meeting at Roosboom to protest removals. Who**

**attended this meeting?**

Almost the whole of the NNALA. By this time I had seen leaders of threatened black spots right down to the coast.

There were 1500 people at the meeting.

**What was the aim of the meeting?**

There were three ministers at the prayer-meeting. We were praying that God would change the hearts of the people who were governing us.

**Do you think this was naive?**

We knew we were dealing with a stubborn government. We hoped it would work but instead of it working, I was banned for five years.

**Did this banning crush the NNALA?**

I was the leader of the thing. I was banned. Then someone took over from me and he was also banned. When all the leaders are banned the

organisation dies.

**Could this have been prevented?**

This was difficult because if you were banned, people were reluctant to take over from you.

In 1976 you were moved with the people from Roosboom to Enakheni. From rural life you were moved to a town. Then in 1979/80 there was a successful bus boycott in Enakheni. Was there any difference in organising the people?

Yes because in a town you just call a meeting and people come. In the scattered rural areas of Natal it was much more difficult to organise.

**How has the situation changed since the 1960's as far as organisation against removals is concerned?**

There is no overall committee although in certain areas like Marikwa's Kop there is good organisation.

removal, state officials arrived to issue passes to women. There was immediate resistance and Mulo's Location at Linoikans in Marico district seethed with discontent.

Police intervened and the arrest of a number of people resulted in rioting and the burning of about 300 pass books. Government officials fled in terror.

But they soon returned, backed by police reinforcements. A government notice was issued prohibiting gatherings of more than 10 people in certain areas of Marico district.

But the people were in no mood to be deterred by government notices.

A commission of inquiry was appointed by the government to look into the 'uprising' at Zeerust. At the same time a procession of more than a thousand women marched to Mulo's Location and Gopane Village.

The police were waiting for them. Using batons and low flying aircraft, the women were turned back. Some were less lucky and were arrested.

Following this incident, four people from Marico came under the banishment hammer.

One, Kenneth Moseni, had been jailed for a month during the upris-

ing, and shortly after his release was promptly re-arrested and offered money to become an informer.

His refusal cost him his freedom and he was banished to Masinga in Natal.

### THE SEKHUKHUNELAND BANISHMENTS

The Bapedi, under the leadership of Moroamoche Sekhukhune, openly rejected government policies after a meeting in November 1954 where the government had tried to sell

Bantu Authorities and Bantu Education to chiefs.

But the Native Affairs Department persisted in its efforts to get Sekhukhune to accept their policies. At the same time there was a process of co-optation of local councillors concerned with pursuing their own interests.

Soon afterwards, Arthur Pherefe, Tuare, secretary to the chief, and Godfrey Sekhukhune, an outspoken opponent of Bantu Authorities, were banished to Mtsotso and Mtsuni respectively.

In July 1957 the Bapedi accepted Bantu Authorities on the understanding that the two banished men would be allowed to return home.

But the government refused to lift the banishment orders and went one step further by banishing Lo-Kgagudi, Maredi and Kgagud, Maitshane in November 1957 and Chief Moroamoche Sekhukhune to Cala in March 1958.

Moroamoche was replaced by a retired policeman.

Altogether, between 1957 and 1965 15 people were banished from the Sekhukhuneland area.

### REJECTION OF BANTU AUTHORITIES IN TEMBULAND

The implementation of Bantu Authorities would have split Tembuland into three parts and a deputation was sent to Pretoria in 1951 to notify the Native Affairs officials of the people's rejection of it.

The deputation was warned that continued opposition would lead to Paramount Chief Sabata Dalindyebo being deported and the loss of educational and other services.

But mobilisation continued and the authorities swooped. Four members of the deputation — Jackson Nkosiyan, Twala Joyi, Bangilizwe Joyi and Ngolombane Sanda — were banished to different parts of the country.

### UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT:

During the 1960's the government started implementing new security legislation. Continued opposition to the regime was dealt with by the Internal Security Act, General Laws Amendment Act, the Riotous Assemblies Act and the Terrorism Act.

Under the Internal Security Act a person could not only be banned but also banished to a remote area of the country.

Initially this was used to isolate former political prisoners after their release from prison. Frances Baard, described as a 'groot agitator', was

banished after her release from prison and banished to Matopane.

This provision was used against a number of contemporary political activists during 1977 including Dr Mamphela Ramphele and Winnie Mandela.

More recent victims have been Themba Phantsi, Phando Mfene, Thabo Zani and journalist Zwelakhe Sisulu.

Used in conjunction with detentions without trial, banishments and beatings are an important part of the draconian measures the Nationalist government has used to silence those seeking justice for their people.

### CONDITIONS OF BANISHMENT

Families of banished people were sometimes allowed to join them but it was stressed that this was a concession and a privilege, not a right.

People were invariably banished to places unsuitable for families. The absence of basic amenities and employment opportunities coupled with harsh and conditions meant that few families could join those in banishment.

Moreover, the monthly state allowance of R4 that was sometimes provided or the income that could be obtained from local employment was barely enough for one person to survive on, let alone an entire family.

Rural people who left their homes to join banished family members, also risked losing their land, while urban people jeopardised their residential rights.

Huts were rarely provided for deportees.

One deportee was given a rat-infested room in which to live. His bed for two years was a sheet of corrugated iron, supported by two boxes.

A particular notorious banishment camp was Frenchdale, 80km from Mafikeng. A newspaper report of June 1964 described the camp as follows: "Twelve bleak, round huts on a fenced-off part of the farm, about two square city blocks in size, are the homes of six banished people."

There were no trees in this semi-desert scrubland, with knee high weeds instead of grass and the nearest water three-quarters of a mile from the camp.

The nearest shop and telephone was 12 miles away.

Ploughing was forbidden. Instead, deportees were offered work on a farm at R10-12 a month or had to settle for a monthly allowance of R4.

The distances separating the banished from their families were great and visits were infrequent.

They lived lives of extreme poverty, utter boredom and loneliness.



**M**UCH OF the burden of survival in the overcrowded banustans falls on the shoulders of women.

They lead a life of grinding hardship in the forgotten areas of South Africa, walking many miles to fetch water and firewood, and planting and harvesting crops — if there is land available.

But in many areas, the land is dead. The women, children and old people who are condemned to live there cannot grow what they need to survive. Yet the wages of migrants are still pitifully low on the basis of the myth that their families can feed themselves off the land.

People depend on a cash income of some sort. But few can rely on pensions, UIF or money sent home by migrants.

Local jobs are scarce and the work is hard — building dams, working on road gangs, clearing bush, putting up fences, or farm labour. Wages and working conditions are appalling, but without other options, few women can afford to refuse them.

Tshepo, a woman from Tzaneen, spoke about temporary work on a farm in the Tzaneen area.

"We toil hard on the farms of the rich farmers, mixing mud and waiting at 4 am as if we are donkeys, but getting no pay," she said.

"And while we are toiling on the rich land producing bananas, mangoes and avocados, our children are starving."

Malnutrition is widespread and mortality rates are high.

Child-care is a huge problem. Working women have little choice but to leave their children at home where there are few people to look after them. And resettlement often destroys the social bonds that people have been able to rely on in the past.

Because the government provides very little money for health care in rural areas, there are few clinics. These are often hard to get to, and health costs money. So people often put off going to the clinic until it is too late.

In many areas ideas about men being the head of the family remain. Once married, custom has it that a woman must consult her husband on all decisions she takes.

In Bochum, in the Northern Transvaal, women complain they can't make decisions about which field to hoe, or which crop to plant, without their husbands.

But with men away, women have started to take these decisions. This sometimes causes tensions, but often men who have been away are relieved to find the women have found ways to support the family.

In some areas, women now attend community meetings. Although men still sit on one side and women on the other, women's ideas on issues to do with boreholes, schools, buildings and land are being taken more seriously.

This is important because often it is the women who have to implement the decisions taken — and live with the consequences.

Government officials have tried to exploit the absence of men during forced removals by, for example,

calling meetings during the week when they know most men will be away.

In Magopa the first group of people to be moved were largely women. Officials arrived while the men were at work and tried to intimidate the women — telling them they had to leave. When the men later returned, some found their homes broken down and their families gone.

But in Makgotsa, officials recently had a taste of the power of organized women. They arrived one week day, thinking it would be easy to persuade the women to sign notices saying they would move.

But the women refused. They took their sticks and pangas and axes and drew a line in the dust. Standing militantly on one side of the line, they dared officials to cross it and

force them to agree to their own removal. The officials left in a hurry.

Rural organization has at times developed out of the basic survival needs of the community. Women are starting to organize around self-help projects like vegetable and chicken-farming co-operatives, sewing and literacy groups, and brick-making projects.

In Lebowa, communal farming projects have brought women together to discuss how best they can use their resources. The first step in setting up such projects is to get permission from the chief and the *induna* to use a section of land.

Many women get no support from their husband, and have to come to terms with knowing that he has another woman and family in town. "They feel deserted, and blame the

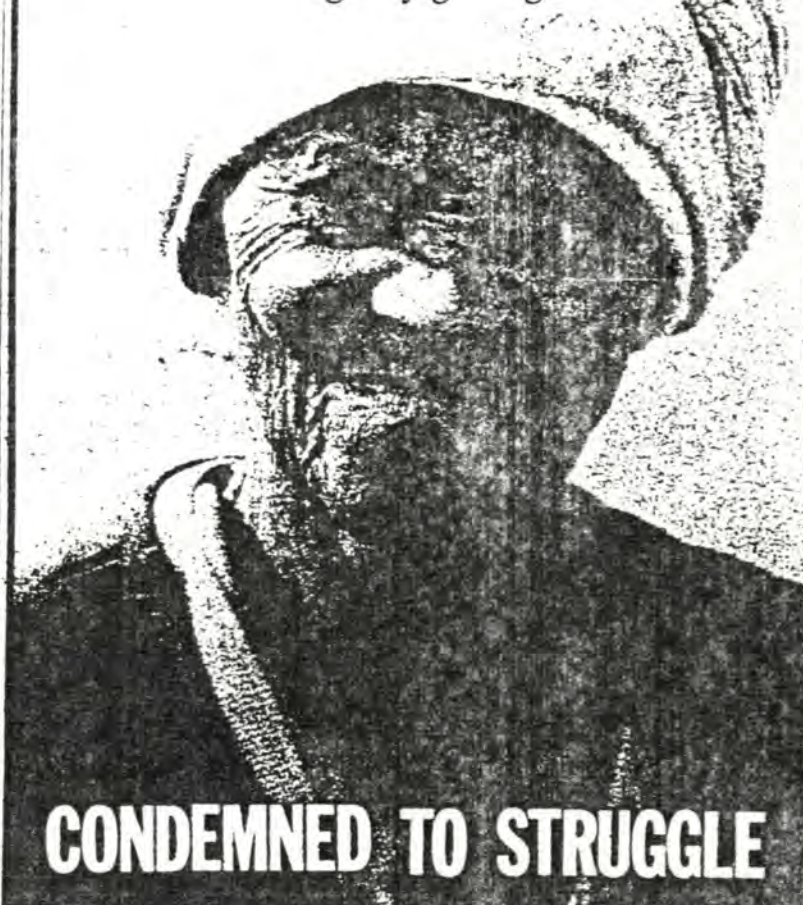
other woman. It's only when you discuss how influx control breaks up families, and forces the men to work for poverty wages, that the women start to see who their real enemy is."

Women's organization is made more difficult because of pressures to join the women's groups of the ruling parties in the banustans.

In Gazankulu the ruling party is Ximoko-Xa-Rixaka, "Whip of the Nation", which works like Inkatha. The party has a women's section — Gazankulu Women's Association (GWA) — which tries to recruit the support of women for the Gazankulu government.

The GWA, led by the wife of the Chief Minister, tells women not to belong to any other women's organization. And without a GWA membership card, women don't get pensions or other privileges.

*Rural women wage a daily struggle for survival. With no money and little food they've begun fighting back*



## CONDEMNED TO STRUGGLE

## The women organise in the struggle for Mgwali

Miss Thandi Dyoal speaks about women's organizations at Mgwali.

When we meet as women, we discuss our rejection of going away from Mgwali, because Mgwali is our home, place of birth. We want to be united in what we do, because if there is a gap between us, our enemies will find a way to defeat us.

To try and organise people on the last Friday of every month we meet for prayers in our church where everybody says whatever he or she wants to say about the move from Mgwali. So that even those who said they want to go away from Mgwali will hear for themselves what the majority of the people say. Even some of the people who say they want to move from Mgwali are given a chance to ask whatever they want to ask.

We have met some difficulties. One headman went ahead to call the police so that they may arrest the people in the night, since that headman said we hold meetings during the night.

We received guests from Crossroads in Cape Town who did some workshops with us. We learnt a lot from the workshops, because they brought us a good number of plans. Through the workshops we have won some people from the camp that said they want to move from Mgwali.

These meetings that we hold, we call them *tsapartes*. We do not invite people just from a certain part of Mgwali, but from the whole of Mgwali. We circulate our meetings from the one area to another. One week we are in one village, the next week we are in the next village.

The houses in which we hold our meetings becomes full, although we don't know the numbers of the people.

We have devised some flags with words written on them. For example, *Umgwali ikhaya* — Mgwali is our home; *Asoze aye ndawo* — there is nowhere we can go. There is nowhere we want to move to; *Nkoal ndincede* — God help me.

What we usually do when we go to a meeting with Nolzwa is we take our flags and hold them up in front of her and sing. "We are not going anywhere, Mgwali is our home."

PEOPLE IN Namaqualand are hungry. They also have too few houses, little water and no jobs. And the ranks of the unemployed are swelling as retrenchments hit workers.

But while conditions might be serious some Namaqualanders are wanting to join the United Democratic Front to discuss their problems and ways of solving them.

Reginald Jacobus, an Okiep priest, said: "Many see the UDF positively, but some of our people have been scared off by the security police and government propaganda on TV."

Howie Gabriels, National Union of Mineworkers organiser, points out that nearly 2 000 workers have been retrenched in the past year in the area. Most didn't get severance pay or notice.

Like the retrenchments at the Ochtia Diamond Mine - 100 workers were laid off and the owners decided to sell the mine.

## Where the profits grow and the people starve

Goldfields - the new owners — bought the mine agreeing that the remaining workers would not be laid off. A short while later they retrenched another 500 workers.

A worker said: "If the companies can use the workers to make money they should take responsibility for them. You can't just use people to make money — and then lay them off when they are dependent on you just because prices are low."

Since the mines own almost everything in the area, losing a job often means losing a house as well. For a time houses left by white employees stood empty, but the coloured workers are not allowed into them.

The Port Nolloth authorities have waged a vicious war against squatters and forced people to move into sub-economic housing. But a decent roof over their heads is not the end of the problem. The jobless workers and their families now have to find extra money to pay for electricity, water and rent.

So they don't. No-one has been evicted yet, but people fear the authorities 'won't be patient forever'.

There is also little public transport. An eight kilometre walk to buy food or fetch water is not unusual, and unemployed workers often have to travel 150 kilometres to fetch their unemployment benefits.

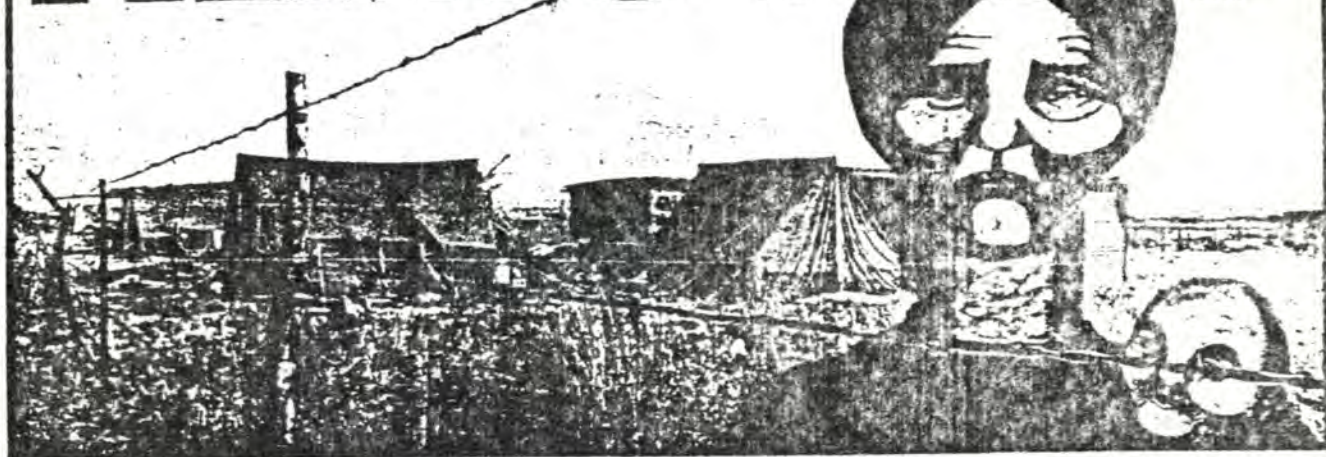
And in Namaqualand no work or unemployment benefits means starvation. The land is too dry to farm. For years people have planted grain, but regularly there has been no rain. Wealthier farmers have left the area to produce in the rainy areas, taking their farming equipment with them.

Goats and donkeys are eaten. Now, for some, daisies, mice and fish are main sources of food — if they can catch them. Others have resorted to collecting innards from the abattoirs.

So it's no surprise that the Namaqualanders dislike the government which they say is too busy spending money trying to muzz the banustans work. The UDF alternative — fighting for food, transport, water and jobs through organisation — is the only hope in people's lives.

Namaqualand may have pretty flowers, but its people cannot live off daisies.

# REMOVALS



Even the US government formally protested against the forced removal of Magopa. These people owned the land themselves.

But when thousands of rent-paying tenants are evicted there is little protest or publicity.

Throughout South Africa, these quiet removals continue from white, Indian, coloured and African-owned land.

These events are part of the same process of forcing African people into the bantustans and impoverishment.

## OF A QUIET KIND



A 'silent victim'. No-one hears when tenants are moved

IN THE 1960's and 1970's there were massive removals from non-scheduled, non-reserved land (land which has not been set aside for African occupation in terms of the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts).

One of the reasons behind these evictions was security. The du Toit Commission of 1959 pointed out the danger of platteland whites being 'overwhelmed' by an increasing black population in white rural areas.

But the main reason for these evictions was the necessity for the restructuring of farm labour. Both the South African Agricultural Union and the Natal Agricultural Union supported the abolition of labour tenancy. This resulted in massive evictions and removals.

In the 1980's the reasons for moving labour and rent tenants changed. Consolidation of the bantustans and security are now the main factors.

Large numbers of African people living in these areas contradicts the idea of separate areas for whites and blacks.

And the government wants maximum con-

trol of all farmworkers and African people living in white rural areas. It hopes to prevent guerrillas moving easily among the black community.

The government is frank about its intentions. Last year Deputy Minister Henne van der Walt, when criticised by the Conservative Party for not moving enough people admitted:

'If we concentrate only on the so-called black spots or poorly situated areas, are these the only removals that should take place? It has been said that the most dangerous situation which has arisen in Zimbabwe was due to the fact that the government did not give enough attention to the black people on the farms in the rural areas.

Before Overwacht (a relocation area of 200 000) came into being, the white : non-white ratio on white farms in the Free State area was 1:15.

As a result of people moving voluntarily to Overwacht, we are reducing the ratio. At least 150 000 souls were moved there, so the ratio is down to 1:13.



'Illegal' tenants moved to Mpendle receive no compensation

'Is this not something which has been achieved? This kind of thing is not mentioned in reports in respect of removals because the people go there voluntarily.'

The proposed Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill (now to be reformulated) envisaged greater control of Africans in 'white' rural areas, including the creation of tenement boards.

These would decide on how much labour each white farmer would need and order the eviction of excess people. The redrafted bill is likely to include the same emphasis on security in rural white areas.

## The law of the land keeps out surplus people

Most of these removals are implemented in terms of Section 26 of the 1936 Land Act. This section states that Africans may not live on or congregate on land which is non-scheduled, non-prescribed or non-trust land (land specifically set aside for African occupation).

Only the following people are allowed to live in white rural areas:

- registered owners of land,
- farmworkers,
- dependents of the above.

An owner who allows Africans illegally on his land is guilty of an offence unless he can show that the Africans are being evicted. This means that both owners and rent-paying tenants can be prosecuted and the owner can be forced to evict his tenants.

## Removal by legislation affects thousands

OFFICIAL FIGURES on the number of forced evictions distort the truth, according to a Black Sash field worker.

According to official figures, 6 489 landowners and tenants were prosecuted in 1982, under Section 26 of the 1936 Land Act. This section deals with rent-paying African tenants on white and Indian owned land.

But this is not all. According to the field worker, these figures only cover the people brought to court. Landowners threatened with prosecution unless they evicted their tenants would not appear in these figures. And the prosecution of the landowner might mean the eviction

of many tenants. Thousands would thus be affected by the prosecution of just a few.

There were most prosecutions in the Orange Free State (2 755), the province where the Deputy Minister boasted of having reduced the black/white ratio on farms from 15:1 to 13:1. He said these people moved voluntarily. 'We did not force them to get onto a truck.'

However, legislation which results in the eviction of tenants is as good as a forced removal. The only difference is that these people are forced to find a new home themselves.

## Roosboom people fled from removal, only to be driven off again

**I**N 1976 after a long struggle the people of Roosboom were moved to the township Ezakheni. African people had bought Roosboom before the 1913 Land Act prohibited this.

Although many people worked in Ladysmith, about 17 km away, they lived a rural life. People could not adjust to township life. Rentals were high and township life violent.

A number of tenants, after trying life in Ezakheni, attempted to recreate their rural life by moving back to an Indian-owned farm adjoining Roosboom. Here the people had cattle although they were dependent on earnings from people working in Ladysmith.

Under section 26 of the 1913 Land Act they were illegally living as rent-paying tenants on non-scheduled, non-released land.

In October 1983 200 people from this Indian-owned farm were moved to Compensation in the Mpendle district. Those working in Ladysmith were forced to become lodgers in the already overcrowded townships of Steadville or Ezakheni while their families moved to Mpendle.

STATE OF THE NATION spoke to one of the people who was moved.

**Why were you moved from Ladysmith?**

At Ladysmith we were staying on the Indian-owned farms. We used to be visited by Drakensberg Administration Board officials. They used to send one official. The official used to go around to our houses. At one time the official came and wrote numbers on our doors.

**Did he ask you any questions?**

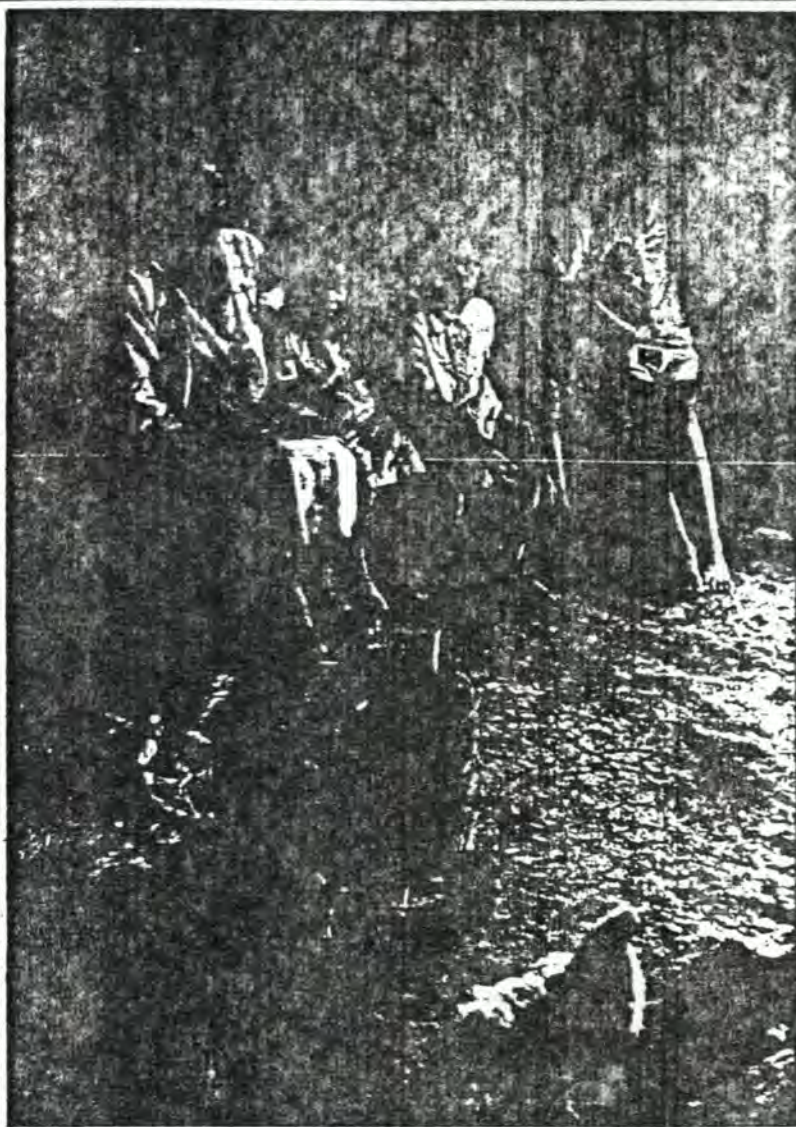
No, he just wrote the numbers. Mine was 823. When I asked my wife who wrote the number on the door, she told me it was the Drakensberg officials. I asked why they wrote the numbers on the doors. She said they told her that they do not need us on the farms. I heard people saying that the Indians who were the landowners had been threatened with prosecution.

One day we were told that we have to appear at the Commissioner's office at about seven am. At the Commissioner's office we were given letters and told to proceed to another office on the first floor. When we arrived there we were asked how much was the bus fare from Mdlanswela, the Indian farm where we were staying, to Ladysmith and back. We told them and they gave us that bus fare and then we were told to go home.

Then they came back again on another day. On that day they told us the government trucks will come on a certain day to move us. They did not tell us where. The Drakensberg officials came back again and told us to pay a visit to an area called Ntshela. Ntshela is an area outside Ladysmith. Its other name is Ematshekechabeni. The purpose of the visit was to inspect the area and decide whether we liked it or not.

A bus took us to the Commissioner's office where we were given another bus that took us to Ntshela. When we arrived at Ntshela we discovered that the area has no water. The second problem was the faction fights.

We asked the officials whether they are prepared to construct a bridge for our use. The officials said no. The area had marks showing that people once stayed there. We asked them what had forced the people who had been there to leave the place. They did not give us any answer. We decided not to accept



## 'NOTHING KEEPS US WARM IN THIS PLACE'

A story not usually heard... this man spoke about removal from white and Indian-owned land

Ntshela because:

- There was no water and grass. Our cattle were going to die.
- There was a big river to cross in order to reach home. In the rainy season this was going to create problems, especially for the workers.
- There were faction fights in the area.

We requested the officials to take us to the area of our own choice which was not far from Ntshela. They told us they were not prepared to do that.

After that visit we were called again to the Commissioner's office. On arrival we were told to sign a certain form and to choose whether we wanted to be moved to Qhuden, Nondweni or Compensation. We told them that we are not going to sign anything because we are not prepared to move. We asked the Commissioner why are we being moved. He said the government does not want us to be at Mdlanswela.

**Where are the Indians now?**

The Indians are at Ladysmith. You see, the Indians are staying in town and not at the farm. We were the only people at the farm. One of these Indians got a shop in town. We are really willing to go back to Ladysmith but it is difficult because we have got no spokesman. Look, I am working at Colenso. I only come home once a month. I pay R10 for a taxi from Colenso.

At Ladysmith I had built a four-roomed house. When we were moved I tried to strip material from my house but the officials told me to forget it, because they were in a hurry. Now I have to start from scratch. I have to buy material and everything.

I am staying at the hostel at Colenso. I have to buy my own groceries and come here and again buy groceries for my children and my wife. At Ladysmith I was at home every day. It is difficult to reach this place because it is too far from anything. There are no shops, clinics or anything. Pregnant

women suffer a lot.

The government has told us to build our own houses now. They said they will come and take these tin houses. Where are we going to get material from? Ladysmith was a better place compared to this.

The other problem in this place is that there is no firewood. We have to buy firewood or go to the forest at night and steal firewood because during the day we get arrested. This place is very cold in winter. We have got nothing that keeps us warm in this place.



Ezakheni township: 'It is too far from anything'

## Keeping a tight grip on freehold

There are the removals that hit the townships — Magopa, Mgwali and Matiwane's Kop, all communities in freehold areas which have owned the land. But the removals of tenants from white, coloured and Indian land go almost ignored.

The tenants are vulnerable and isolated. They live in small groups, threatened by both state and landowners.

The government also uses strategies that make resistance difficult. Administration board officials serve summonses on either tenants or landowners or both. Generally both landowners and tenants receive suspended sentences. But, if the landowner fails to evict tenants, the sentences come into effect.

Under this type of pressure they usually give in.

Refusing to move means the payment of fines, then a forced removal to a 'closer settlement'. It is one of four types of places that people get moved to, depending on where they come from.

According to the Department of Co-operation and Development, 'border townships are so situated that black workers in the nearby white areas can usually commute daily between their place of residence and place of work.'

Rural townships are for 'families whose breadwinners are usually employed in white areas as migrant workers or for the aged, widows and women with dependent children.'

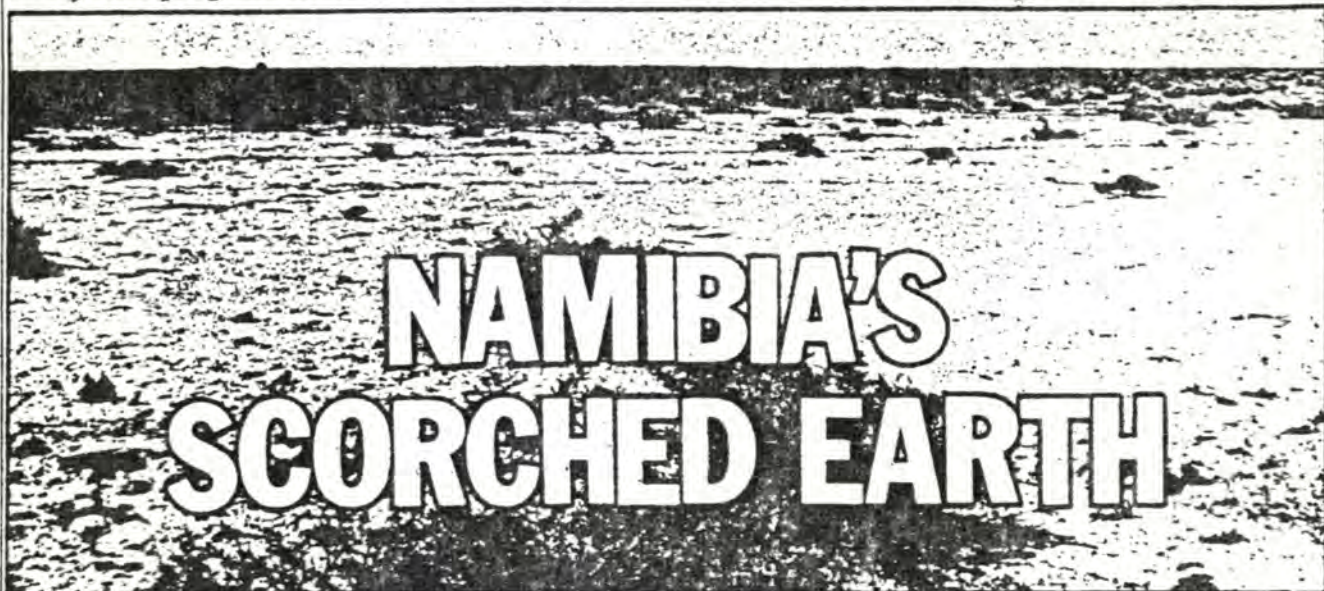
In other words these areas are too far away from employment for people living in these rural townships, to travel to work.

'Closer settlements are always the furthest from any employment and have the fewest facilities. According to the department, 'This type of residential area is developed for the settlement of squatters from white farms as well as from black spots and mission farms.' By squatters the department means rent-paying tenants and labour tenants.

It seems that at any time in Natal there are one or two closer settlements available for the dumping of tenants. At the moment these are Compensation in the Mpendle district and Frankland on the south coast.

Tenants are not paid compensation when they are moved from these types of areas. People at Cliffdale for instance had been living there for 20 years in substantial houses. They were compelled to dismantle their houses and move.

Half the population survives off the land. It isn't easy depending on ...



# NAMIBIA'S SCORCHED EARTH

**F**OR MORE than half of Namibia's population, war is the only way of life they know. Fifty five percent of the country's people live in the two northern war zones, Ovambo and Kavango.

And they have known bloodshed, fear and strife for eighteen years since the war began.

26 percent of the population is regarded as being 'permanently urbanised', mainly living in the five major centres — Windhoek, Swakopmund, Rehoboth, Walvis Bay and Keetmanshoop. A mere 200 000 people are regarded as being economically active.

Agriculture, both peasant and commercial, is the major employment. Agriculture as a whole contributes an average 10 percent to the overall gross domestic product, and between 10 and 14 percent of exports. Livestock farming comprises 96 percent of the total value of commercial agriculture.

Only 20 percent of the total agricultural contribution to the economy is provided by peasant farmers, the remaining 80 percent coming from commercial, modern farming which is concentrated in white hands.

Only 44 000 black workers are employed in agriculture, while around 120 000 peasants are involved directly as household heads in subsistence peasant farming. That figure is itself misleading, as about half a million people — half the total population are directly dependent on peasant crop cultivation for survival.

Under the notorious Odendaal Plan of the mid-60s, black Namibians were forced into bantustans which account for a meagre 20 percent of the decent stock raising land, and five percent of the arable land.

These areas, Kavango, Ovambo, Damaraland, Hereroland East and West, Kaokoland and Bushmanland — with Namaland and Rehoboth in the south, all have one common feature. They have no infrastructure for marketing and lit-

**A 17 year war. Seven years of drought. Forced removals. Crop destruction. Namibia's people will inherit a ravaged land when independence is won.**

Below: Images from a desolate and war-torn Namibia



tle development. The massive apartheid war machine has effectively taken over all functions of government and administration in the north.

Coupled with seven years of disastrous drought, which only began breaking in the north in late 1982, the lot of the Namibian peasant is a sorry one.

Adult males invariably spend at least part of their lives trying to supplement household income through

migrant labour. But a depressed job market, with unemployment estimates — no official figures are available — ranging from a 'low' of 15 percent to a possible high of 40 percent, has also taken its toll on the prospects for migrants.

In addition, an estimated 100 000 young men and women, mainly

from the north, have fled into exile, either to join the national liberation movement, Swapo, or to further their studies in United Nations and Swapo refugee programmes.

The economy in the north revolves around one staple food item — pearl millet, or mahangu. Around 40 000 tonnes of mahangu are reaped annually, all of it used for subsistence.

It is supplemented with off-season vegetable cultivation and catching fresh fish in the Oshanas — pans filled with water from the Ovambo

floor plan of the Kunene River. But the soil in the north is only arable at a very shallow level; below which it becomes too salty for mahangu.

So peasants have developed a highly efficient, low-technology method of soil management which relies on precise timing with regard to sowing, harvesting, and rotation of crops. The war and migrant labour have all but ruined this cycle.

Because Ovambo is a flat region with little ground cover, guerrillas of the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia often hide out in the mahangu fields in the late summer and early autumn when the mahangu is at its highest. This has led to wanton crop destruction by the South African military, and vindictive crop destruction in fields belonging to kraals suspected of being sympathetic to the guerrillas.

A dawn to dusk curfew, and curtailed harvesting periods imposed by the military in an attempt to limit the amount of cover available to guerrillas have also taken their toll on the mahangu harvest, leading to increasing starvation, malnutrition and a massive decrease in personal wealth.

In other non-war zone areas, the drought and an almost total lack of marketing infrastructure has also served to decrease and in some areas, destroy, peasant farming activities.

Drought cycles have led to overstocking and overgrazing and subsequent stock disease and soil destruction. Many cattle farmers in the Damaraland region resorted to poaching to stay afloat in the seven-year drought which ended in 1983, with the result that natural animal resources are now almost non-existent. Sporadic reports filter through to Windhoek of people in the Nama-speaking south eating cattle fodder to survive.

White farmer brutality towards black labour is legion in Namibia. A number of farmers have appeared in court on charges of murder after brutally beating labourers to death, or having beaten labourers to the point where they are permanently disabled.

Such is the structure of Namibia today. A post-independence government will inherit this. It is essentially a rural society, but without the social fabric to maintain it, or the economic resources to pull it out of its cycle of decay.

The end of the war will bring some relief, but without large scale land redistribution, equal access to mineral wealth, technology and education, there seems little relief ahead from the grinding poverty that is most Namibians' lot.

## THE ILLNESS OF WAR

**MANY PEASANTS**, forced off their traditional land by the intensity of the war, have flocked to the major war zone centres of Ondangwa, Oshakati, Rundu and Nkurenkuru.

Here they live in squalid squatter conditions, with no sanitation and little health care. Bubonic plague, malaria, typhoid and kwashiorkor are endemic, and seasonal epidemics of malaria and bubonic plague.

Destruction of the fragile peasant subsistence economy has led to a mushrooming of petty trading through a network of cuka shops. There are 6

## Plague and misery in squatter camps

000 licensed cuka shops in Ovambo alone, and a further estimated 6 000 unlicensed shops.

Besides a minor trade in tinned food and basic foodstuffs, the cuka shops essentially act as bars and bottle stores. Their trade boosted by the purchasing power of thousands of soldiers and policemen, the cuka shops have become breeding grounds for large-scale alcoholism and violent

crime.

Rape and murder are the order of the day, and the once-prosperous peasant farmers have been caught up in a vicious cycle of violence and social decay.

The breakdown of the peasant sector is also evident in the streets of Windhoek. Teenage prostitution, adult unemployment and alcoholism are rampant. Without massive state intervention, sociologists judge Windhoek's black townships to be 'pathological' — unable to heal themselves without outside aid.

**A**FTER THREE years of pass-burning, arrests, defiance and shootings in the Zeerust district, the government held a ceremony to announce that the Ba-Hurutshe Regional Authority was now in charge of the area.

The future president of Bophuthatswana, Chief Lucas Mangope, ruled over the ceremony and brought a satisfied smile to the face of the minister of Bantu Administration when he said: 'Lead us and we shall try to crawl.'

Mangope was ready to crawl because he had not stood with the thousands who had stubbornly resisted the takeover of rural areas by Bantu Authorities, and the extension of passes to African women. Together with his father and another chief Edward Lencoe, he had actively helped government forces to crush the Zeerust revolt.

The Hurutshe people live north of Zeerust, on the border with Botswana. Conflict in the area began in 1954 when a zealous new Native Commissioner, Carl Richter arrived, determined to enforce the Bantu Authorities Act which would make chiefs responsible for many of the tasks performed by Native Affairs department officials.

Richter soon clashed with a local chief, Abram Moilwa, who was reluctant to bind his followers to the Bantu Authorities. When Moilwa first heard about the Bantu Authorities Act he said: 'Who the hell is Verwoerd? He is just a minister. I am not afraid of him.'

In March 1957, a mobile pass unit arrived in Zeerust. Richter sent for chief Moilwa and told him to call the women of Dinokana together so they could be issued with passes. After consulting with the women, the chief decided to ignore the order.

Soon afterwards the pass unit was set up at a trading store in the area, but only 80 out of 8 000 women came forward, mostly school teachers and relatives of government officials. This was nothing new. In the first seven months of 1956, when women were first issued with reference books, 50 000 women in 38 different places demonstrated against the pass laws.

But Richter responded angrily to the Dinokana women's defiance. He called the people together and told them chief Moilwa had been stripped of his position, and would have to leave the area within fourteen days.

Hurutshe people who worked in the cities kept close links with each other through the Bahurutshe Association and soon heard of this. Led by women migrant workers, they hired buses and returned home.

They had seen the effectiveness of bus boycotts on the Rand, and began applying this tactic in the countryside. People stopped buying at the white-owned trading store where the pass unit had been set up. Over 1 000 children were withdrawn from schools whose teachers had taken out passes.

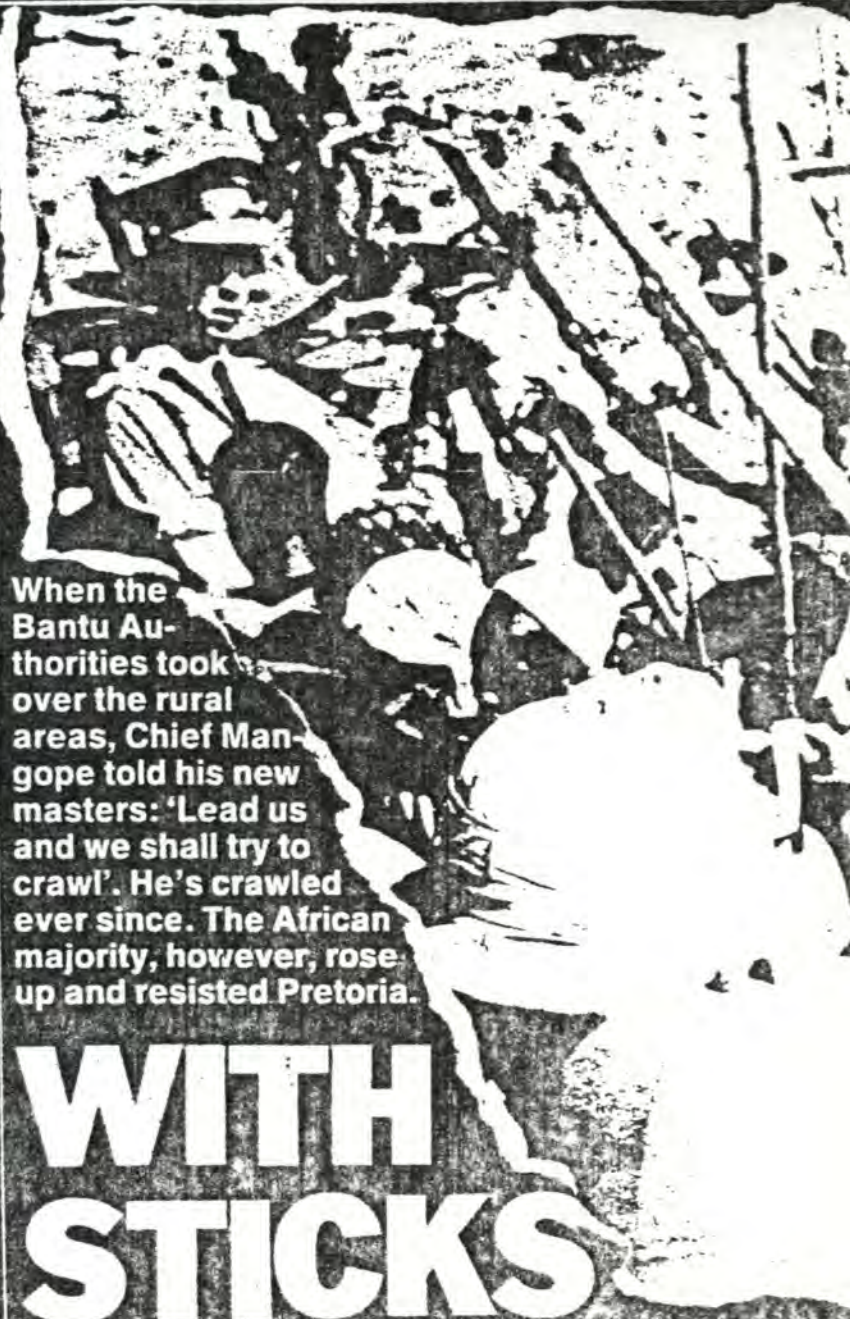
Passes that had been issued were burnt in public, and the houses of collaborators were set on fire. When the revolt spread from Dinokana to Gopane, fifteen miles away, the government began to hit back hard.

Villages where passes had been burnt were denied access to doctors and pensions. Buses to Zeerust were withdrawn and the post office in the area was closed. A mobile column of police, led by a sergeant named van Rooyen, roamed around the district, arresting, beating and harassing women, and in some cases sexually molesting them.

474 women were charged with burning their passes. They were defended when a local Anglican priest, Charles Hooper, enlisted the services of a Johannesburg advocate, George Bizos, and only 39 were found guilty.

For a while thereafter there was a lull in police activity. Then a stranger arrived in the area, lit a big fire and called on women 'to clear away rubbish' by burning it. Those who had passes threw them onto the flames.

The police mobile column soon came around with a list of twelve women they wanted to arrest. But 200 women presented themselves for arrest, all claiming that they had burnt their passes. They knew that the jails could not hold them all!



When the Bantu Authorities took over the rural areas, Chief Mangope told his new masters: 'Lead us and we shall try to crawl'. He's crawled ever since. The African majority, however, rose up and resisted Pretoria.

# WITH STICKS AND STONES

Confused policemen arranged for two railway buses to take them to Zeerust, where were told not to listen to Congress agitators. They were not impressed: 'We ourselves form a Congress village' they replied. On the day of the trial, 400 women arrived to go to court and the case soon collapsed.

In November, 1957 the government called a commission of inquiry into the Zeerust situation. There was no agenda, nobody could lead evidence and Advocate Bizos was not allowed to cross-examine government witnesses. Ba-Hurutshe who wanted to testify were stopped on their way to Zeerust by baton-charges and low-flying Harvard aeroplanes.

The inquiry achieved very little and pass-burning spread to Witkleigat and Motswedi in the north of the Zeerust district. Women were

now being sentenced to six months imprisonment for damaging government property, resistance to passes and pro-government chiefs still burned fiercely.

These chiefs began to conscript bodyguards sometimes fining people who refused to join up. Chief Lencoe's bodyguards stood at a busstop, intimidating the passengers—looking for 'ANC types'. In December a group of returning migrants lost patience with Lencoe and attacked the chief's guard.

These workers then marched on the chief's house. Lencoe had fled from the area, but his house and new Chrysler were burnt and destroyed. The houses of 36 other supporters of the chief were set on fire. Mangopa opened fire on a group of angry villagers who attacked his house.





ES

By January 1958, meetings in Zeerust had been banned and the area completely sealed off to keep migrants and other city people from entering. Under this cover the police went in hard. On January 25 four Gopane villagers were shot dead when police tried to arrest a man who was a known African National Congress (ANC) member.

The shootings shocked Zeerust people and resistance began to break down. Mass arrests followed, but out of 200 people charged with murder, five were convicted of assault and 58 of public violence. The trials were held in distant towns to prevent people attending and gatherings of more than ten people were prohibited.

Leaders of the resistance were banished and hundreds fled across the border to Botswana, including chief Mollwa who although in hiding

for two years, had kept in constant contact with his people. The Ba-Hurutshe Association, which had provided a crucial urban/rural link, was smashed.

There were small African National Congress (ANC) branches in Dinokana and Gopane, and Lillian Ngoye, Nelson Mandela and others visited families and prisoners in the area. The ANC was eventually banned from the reserves.

Although Mangope and others were eventually able to take up their jobs in the Bantu Authority, the people of Zeerust, especially the women, were not ready to forget what had gone before. 'Jail is a good school. When we went in we knew nothing. Now we are able to talk all day to our people from Johannesburg and to the women of other villages. We got organised in jail.'

## The choice of the landless: starvation or poverty wages

"THE LAND SHALL be shared among those who work it." Thirty years ago, the Congress of the People made this demand a part of their program for a democratic South Africa. But the struggle for the land had begun long before.

More than one hundred years ago, African people were struggling to defend their land against white settlers. Guns decided many battles in the settlers' favour, but the land was never completely lost. Then diamonds and gold were discovered and many things changed.

The mines needed workers for the difficult and dangerous job of digging gold, but most Africans preferred to stay on the land because profits were put first and wages were terribly low. And so the mine bosses and the government made plans to drive Africans off the land and force them into the mines.

Africans were forced to pay harsh taxes for their dogs, cattle and huts. But people with land were able to produce enough to pay their taxes, and to stay free of mine labour. Then in 1913, the Land Act divided the country up into unequal parts, with 13 percent of the land for the African majority.

Millions who rented land from white farmers were forced to leave, while those who had land in areas set aside for whites had to give it up. They were all forced to live in the tiny areas set aside for African people, the bantustans.

It was impossible for so many people to live off so little and so the long journey to the goldmines began.

The Land Act did more than just force people to give up farming. It created the bantustans and the migrant labour system, and used the pass laws to tie them together. It made sure that these people would not govern and would not share in the country's wealth. It gave apartheid an iron grip over the African working-class.

How did the bantustans and migrant labour help to keep South Africa's rulers in power and the bosses so rich? Workers were never paid the value of the goods they produced, nor did they get a wage which could support their families. Women and children were supposed to live off tiny plots of overcrowded bantustan land.

The bantustans kept wages down in other ways. Workers who grew old or suffered injuries were kicked out of the cities they had helped to build. No pensions, no healthcare, no problems for the government. And opposition to low wages, poor housing, and powerlessness was stifled by the pass laws which could banish workers to the bantustans and keep them there.

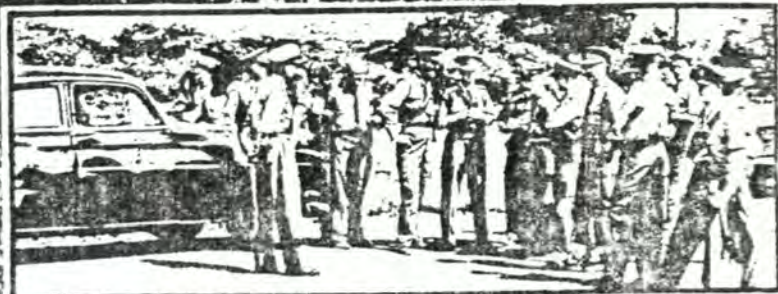
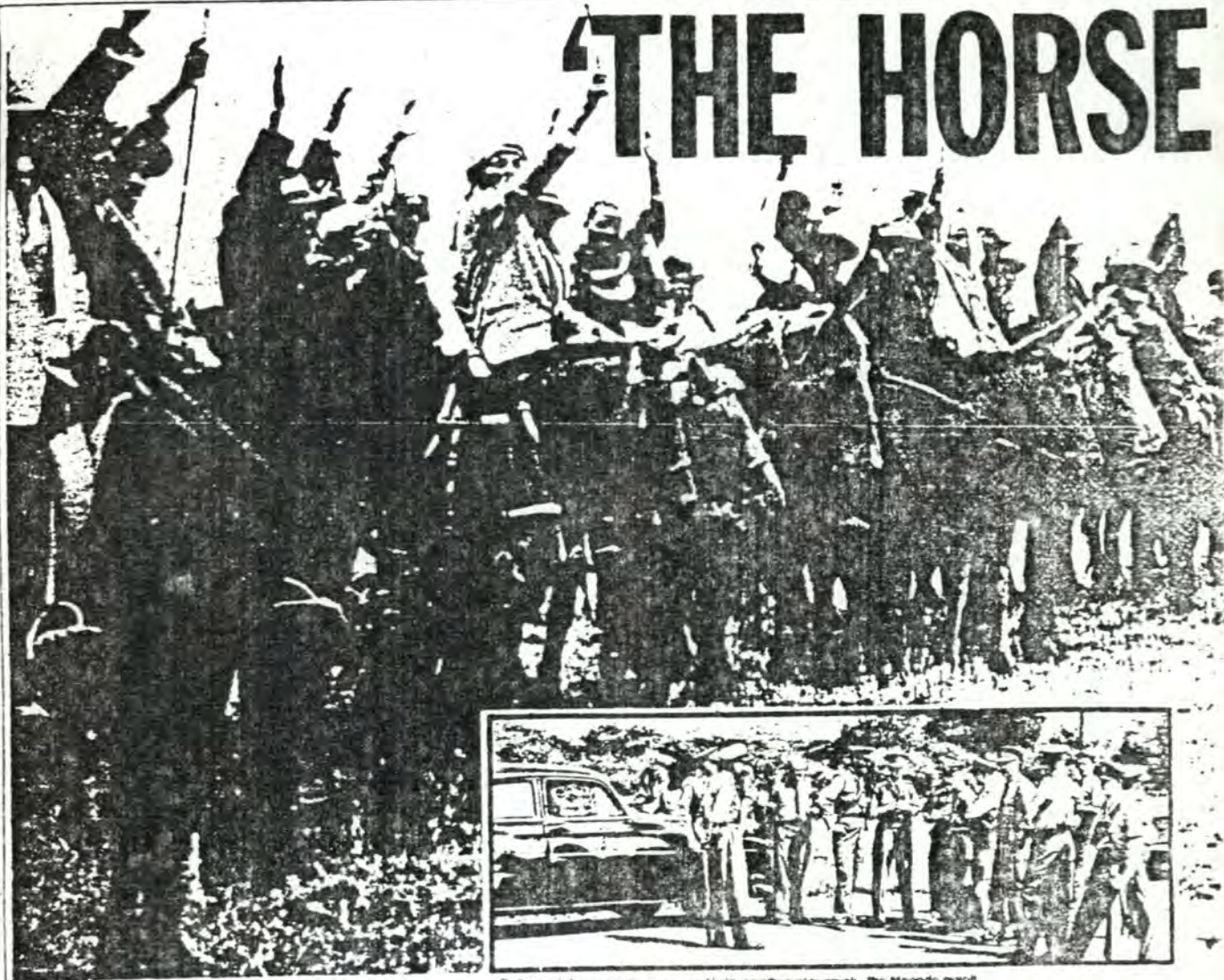
This was a powerful system of control, but it was not perfect. Overcrowding and the loss of the fittest and strongest workers to the factories and mines had damaged the land beyond repair, so that even those in power had to admit that Africans could not survive there.

The cities were filling with people and although there was work in the new factories, the government had not provided enough houses, schools and hospitals. And the rulers were becoming afraid that if African workers stayed in the cities they would not be so easy to control.

In the 1940's there were riots over food shortages, and bus boycotts in Alexandra and elsewhere. There was strong organisation among squatters. There was a strike by mineworkers in 1946 which could only be broken at gunpoint.

The ruling class needed to tighten its hold on the African working class. As a first step, the movement of African workers was controlled.

# THE HORSE



Police reinforcements were sent in an attempt to crush the Mpondo revolt.

**F**OR NINE MONTHS, the people of Eastern Pondoland fought a battle against their rulers, and then began to govern the territory themselves.

The Mpondo rebellion of 1960 was led by a remarkable organisation which came to be known as Intaba, the Mountain. Intaba grew out of small kraal meetings where Mpondo villagers gathered to discuss government land rehabilitation programmes and the new powers given to chiefs under the Bantu Authorities Act.

The government's plans threatened almost everyone in the territory, and so representatives of each kraal came together regularly on a hill outside Bizana village. The meetings were

public and from them Intaba's influence spread throughout the 180 000 people of Eastern Pondoland.

Intaba developed into an alternative political authority, and took over functions such as settling land disputes from the chiefs. Traditional leaders had completely discredited themselves by taking part in an illegitimate political system. Intaba tried to make the system break down completely by putting pressure on chiefs and headmen to publicly reject the Bantu Authorities.

Chiefs who refused to listen paid for it. They were sent messages saying "The horsemen are coming!", and warned to vacate their kraals, which were then burned. Those

who stayed behind were killed, but care was taken not to harm their dependents.

Seventeen chiefs and headmen died as a result of Intaba-inspired activity. So did five men suspected of being informers. The Bantu Authority system was unable to function and many chiefs took refuge in camps specially set up for them in Bizana and Umzimkulu.

One chief who had not been punished was the eastern Pondoland Paramount, Botha Sigcau. The government made Sigcau Paramount chief in 1938 after a succession dispute, despite his weak claim to the position. This and his reputation made him especially unpopular.

But when 400 tribesmen met at the foot of Ngquza hill, near

Flagstaff to discuss this issue, they were attacked by a specially-assembled police force. Eleven Mpondo were killed, most of them shot in the back. There were swift reprisals for the massacre. The following week, 29 kraals belonging to government supporters were destroyed.

The Bantu Affairs commissioner for the territory then tried a new tactic. He called a mass meeting and asked people to let the chief's return, or to appoint people to replace them. He also called for representatives to help with the census.

The Mpondo refused to discuss the return of the chiefs and would not act as census enumerators. They did this not only because they rejected the

Bantu Authorities, but also because they were careful not to let individuals become isolated and the opposition divided. But Intaba still had some difficult problems to solve.

Many people had been arrested and charged with murder, and bail payments were set very high. Intaba collected a membership levy from those who attended meetings, and put pressure on African and white traders in the area to donate money, as well as lorries for transport and food for the dependents of those on trial.

African traders lived in the community and had small profits to protect. They took out R10 licenses from Intaba. White traders had to be pushed harder. Highly successful boycotts of their shops convinced them to help the people out. In one area, three shops were boycotted at the same time, despite the fact that grain supplies were finished. This demonstrated the community's discipline and the widespread support for Intaba.

In July, the government appointed a commission of enquiry, which temporarily defused tensions while Mpondo came forward to state their grievances. The attacks against the chiefs eased off, but Intaba continued to consolidate its support by organising a tax-strike and a mass refusal to co-operate with the census.

They also sent a memorandum to the United Nations stating their grievances which, together with the testimony of witnesses to the commission showed that the Mpondo were aware of the

## ● From page 23

much more tightly. From 1949, labour bureaux were set up in every part of the country. Workers could only leave the bantustans and take up jobs in the cities if officials at the labour bureau gave permission.

Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act, which denied permanent urban rights to thousands of workers and their families had been used in some towns since 1923. In 1952 it was introduced in all urban areas and many were squeezed back into the bantustans as a result. Passes were extended to women.

In 1954, laws like the Group Areas Act were passed making it difficult for squatters to remain

on white farms and forcing Africans who owned land in so-called "black spots" to move out.

The government was still worried. It was not enough just to get people out of the towns and cities. They still needed to be controlled, and for this to happen, the bantustans would have to be reorganised.

Agriculture needed to be improved so that the labour of workers families could continue to subsidise the low wages paid by employers, and so that people dumped in the bantustans would at least have some reason to stay there.

The new policy was known as "betterment". The land was divided up into residential, farming and grazing areas. Many people by now had no land at all

in the Ciskei, three families out of ten were landless. They, together with thousands of others who found their land taken over for grazing, were packed together in villages that were nothing more than rural ghettos.

Policies like these made conflict inevitable, and so Bantu Authorities were introduced in 1953 to keep rural Africans under control. Chiefs were given greater powers than they had before and became paid officials of the department of Bantu Administration instead of representatives responsible to their people.

Chiefs were able to allocate land and other resources, without having to account to the tribe, and they used this to make themselves and their friends very wealthy.

Chiefs were also given greater powers to fine, jail and punish their opponents. They were encouraged to use them: "Be your own police in your own interest, find out those men who respect authority and tribal institutions and band them together as the chief's and headmen's impi which will turn out when called to help keep your tribes and locations clean and well behaved. Use moderate violence, just like a good chief should do." This advice came from the department of Bantu Affairs.

And in the government's usual style, the money to run this system was expected to come from increased taxes. In the Transkei, taxes doubled between 1955 and 1959.

# MEN ARE COMING'



The most of the people were clear on their goal - and the "frustration" and all creations of apartheid

wider context of their struggle. In addition to local grievances, they spoke out strongly against Bantu education, lack of African political representation in parliament, unfair taxation and the pass laws.

In October 15 000 Mpondo gathered on the Bizana airfield to hear the commission's findings. The government agreed to make minor concessions on local grievances, but the Bantu Authorities, rehabilitation, influx control and taxation would not be changed.

The commission's findings coincided with the withdrawal of bail for those arrested, a spate of further detentions and an intensification of resistance. On November 1, 3 000 Mpondo marched into Bizana with their

leaders to witness their arrest. They then set up pickets at the entrances to the villages and began a boycott to persuade traders to make representations on their behalf.

The boycott continued into January 1961, by which time the government had declared a state of emergency in the Bizana, Flagstaff and Lusikisiki districts. Nearly 5 000 people were arrested and interned, and reports of great brutality followed. Normal life was completely disrupted. Cultivation stopped and impoverished families were forced to sell livestock to pay tax.

Resistance could not continue, and Paramount chief Sigcau, who later became the first president of the Transkei, humiliated hundreds of

tribesmen in one district by forcing them to apologise to him in public.

In spite of this, Intaba holds a proud place in the history of South African opposition for its disciplined and clear-thinking organisation. Individuals were never singled out as delegates or spokespeople, thus protecting them from harassment and co-optation, and the organisation from division. Potential allies like African traders were forced to define where their loyalties lay.

Violence was used against enemies, but not in an indiscriminate way. Most important, Intaba was able to mobilise disciplined community support that was able to make Eastern Pondoland ungovernable for nine long months.

## THE OPEN REBELLION

# Pass laws, rebellion and skies red with fire

ON AUGUST 15, 1959 a telegram arrived on Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd's desk. 'Unrest among Basus from Durban to Harding and intervening areas developing into open rebellion. Request adequate forces to be sent to protect farmers as well as urban areas.'

Within a few weeks, panic had swept through Natal's white population as African women went on the march, from the Valley of the Sun in Durban's Cato Manor to the sugar-cane fields of the south coast, and inland to the High Flats. Municipal vehicles and buildings were demolished, railway lines were blocked with boulders, farms and fields were set alight and dipping tanks were destroyed.

The newspaper, the Daily News reported that the sky around Harding glowed red from fires. Farmers organised vigilante groups to guard their properties and many evacuated their children.

This uprising of about 10 000 African women in Natal erupted in both the rural areas and the towns. The link between them was not only that they happened at the same time.

Rural families depended on the urban economy for survival. Land shortage had made it impossible to survive in the bantustans without some family members going to work in the towns. Anything which made living and working in the towns more difficult created severe problems for rural people.

But what caused these fierce outbreaks of protest and anger? In the rural areas they were caused by the so-called 'betterment schemes'. The government said these schemes would prevent the destruction of bantustan land by putting a stop to overgrazing and over-stocking, but this ignored the basic cause of the problem: land-shortage.

The government began by trying to slaughter people's extra cattle,

to 'take some of the pressure off the land.' Then they set up tanks where cattle had to be brought and dipped as protection against disease. People were convinced that the tanks would be used to kill their cattle.

Responsibility for maintaining the tanks was handed over to the tribal authorities, who made women do the job without any payment. The tanks became symbols of people's frustration and bitterness, and in the conflict that eventually burst out, 75 per cent of them were destroyed. The destruction of the tanks was a letter to the authorities which they had to read, said one woman afterwards.

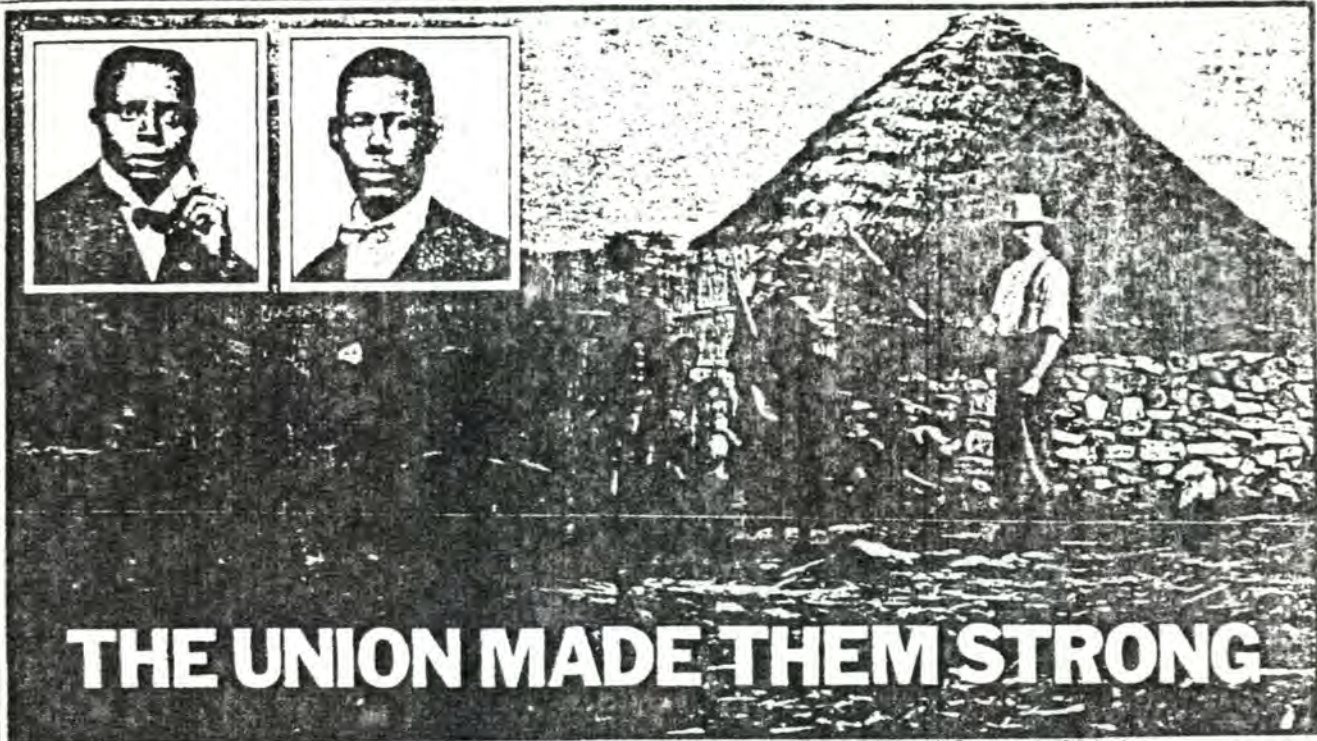
At the same time women in Durban began confronting the laws which oppressed them. The pass laws were getting harsher and tighter by the day. Shacks belonging to 'illegal' workers were being pulled down. Poll tax for men had gone up and a further tax had been added on for each wife.

On top of this, women were told that they would have to carry passes and pay for the reference books!

Women in Cato Manor began a series of protests which turned into violent confrontation. Five people were killed and many more were injured.

Rural women identified with the battle being fought by their sisters in Durban and expressed their solidarity in direct action. Tanks and buses were stopped and telephone lines were cut down.

Police moved in and arrested hundreds. Over 1 000 women were convicted on charges of destruction to property. With the help of eager farmer vigilantes, the police eventually suppressed the revolt and Natal began to simmer down. But the grievances and bitterness of rural people remained, and the anger and strength of the women was not easily forgotten.



## THE UNION MADE THEM STRONG

Labour tenants in the 20's were fighting a struggle for survival with the ICU. Inset: Clements Kadalie (left) and A W Champion, the ICU's leaders

**T**HE FARMS HAVE always been difficult to organize. Farmworkers who lose their jobs lose their homes as well.

But there was once a time when farm workers joined together under one banner and became part of the largest organisation the African continent had ever seen. At the peak of its popularity, the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) claimed 160 000 members, and most of them came from South Africa's rural areas.

But the ICU did not begin as a rural organisation. Its roots lay in a strike by black and white workers at the Cape Town docks in 1919. World War I had just ended and the South African economy, like many others, entered a period of depression. Jobs were scarce and wages were low. Drought made the shortage of food even worse.

In spite of this, the government was exporting food to Europe. White dockworkers met with representatives of a tiny union that had been formed barely weeks before—the ICU—and together they called a strike, demanding that the government reduce its food exports and raise their wages. The strike crippled the docks and the authorities agreed to higher pay.

With this important victory under its belt, membership of the ICU began to expand dramatically, starting in the western Cape. At first the government wasn't sure how to react to the ICU, with its broad base of members, its militant attitude and particularly its call for the abolition of the pass laws.

Meanwhile Barry Hertzog, leader of the newly formed National Party (NP), met with the ICU's shrewd leader Clements Kadalie. He promised a fair deal for black workers if the NP came to power, and persuaded Kadalie to influence the ICU's coloured members, who had the vote, to support the Nazis. Kadalie played along, careful not to make enemies before the union had consolidated its strength.

He was not rewarded. The National Party came to power in 1924, and within weeks passed the Industrial Conciliation Act which excluded black unions from recognition and bargaining procedures. The 1922 white mineworkers strike had demonstrated the power of the working class. The 1924 Act was designed to isolate black and white workers from each other, and make united action impossible.

By this stage, the ICU had spread

**In the 1920's the ICU organised 200 000 workers and peasants into a movement which had a lasting impact on rural organization**



Above: farmworkers in the 20's - the worst off workers. Right: It was only in the evening that farmworkers returned to their families.



far beyond the Western Cape. Membership was strong elsewhere in the Cape, particularly in Port Elizabeth, and inroads were being made in Johannesburg. But Natal was where pressures for militant action were greatest.

In 1925 a typhus epidemic broke out. Alarmed at the prospect of the disease spreading to the white areas, the city health authorities built huge dipping tanks. It became illegal for Africans to work, to look for work, in Durban without a certificate proving that they had been dipped. People refused to be treated like animals, and by 1925 the ICU had arrived to back them up.

Durban ICU leader, AGW Champion, launched a massive campaign against this humiliating legislation and, backed by the people, he took the issue to court. And won. The ICU's fame spread to the rural areas of Natal as migrant workers took home the story of this victory over the dipping tanks.

ICU organisers began to move into the rural areas. Wages and working conditions were major problems there, but the burning issue was the struggle to remain on the land.

Organising in rural areas was much more difficult than in towns. Reaching workers on isolated farms was difficult, especially as landowners could chase organisers away at any moment. And because most rural workers were illiterate this direct contact with organisers was vital. One of the ICU's largest support

bases was the Umvoti/Greytown district, where Bambatha had led an armed uprising against increased taxes in 1906. By the mid 1920's white farmers in the district had turned tenants' land into large white plantations in order to cash in on booming world prices. Entire homesteads were evicted, and labourers had to work on the plantations for pitiful wages.

The ICU began to organise there in 1927. Branch secretary Zaboloni Gwaza drew 5000 people to the first meeting, held at the Greytown race track. Thereafter, organisers cycled through the countryside, spreading the ICU's message and calling people to secret weekend meetings. Concerts were held where local musicians performed under the ICU banner.

In May, farmworkers throughout the district went on strike demanding 8 shillings a day, 2 000 per cent more than what they were getting, and the same amount the white Labour Party was demanding as a minimum wage for whites.

Inspired by the ICU, tenants mounted a campaign of passive resistance and ignored eviction notices. In some cases, lawyers hired by the ICU successfully

defended tenants rights to remain on the land. All over the district farmers began to complain of widespread 'insolence' and 'insubordination'. "This is not trade unionism — it is a general upheaval!" said one.

"The situation exploded when Gwaza showed his contempt for white authority by desecrating the graves of policemen. Imprisoned for three months, he spent his first night of freedom smashing gravestones in Greytown's white cemetery. Before he was flung into jail the following morning, Gwaza left a traditional symbol of war in the graveyard: two cow tails, one black, one white.

Over the next few days, gangs of armed whites did their best to crush the ICU. They tried to lynch Gwaza, and offices in Umvoti, Weenen and Kranskop were destroyed. Their most savage weapon was still eviction ICU members, marked by their distinctive red membership cards, were hounded out, and their families with them.

As repression intensified, many people became disillusioned with the ICU. It could not protect them, and could not stop evictions. Pro-

blems of rural organisation were made starkly clear. White farmers saw their workers as unskilled and easily replaceable. Legislation excused them from giving workers basic rights. And when the crunch came, the ICU could not meet its promises.

And so thousands of rural people were pushed off the farms, into the towns or the already overcrowded reserves. But the reserves had not been left untouched by the ICU.

ICU leaders in Pondoland promised a new age, where land would be plentiful. American aeroplanes would fly over the countryside, dropping flaming coals on white settlements and ending white domination forever. When the aeroplanes failed to arrive, ICU members — who numbered tens of thousands — began to question the organisation they had believed in.

Rural people in the Transvaal also rallied behind the ICU. The government had grown alarmed at the number of poverty stricken rural whites who were moving to the towns in search of work. It decided to settle them on government-owned land in the Barberton and Nelspruit districts.

But that land had been settled for decades by black communities. Their chiefs led resistance and would lead their followers in thousands to sign up as soon as ICU organisers appeared in the district. As in Pondoland, they believed the ICU would set them free by Christmas 1927. By mid 1928 when it was clear that nothing had changed for the better, they lost faith.

Nationally the ICU had lost its impetus by late 1925. Repression played a part — in Durban, in June 1925, police used teargas for the first time to disperse a crowd at an ICU meeting. Leaders were banished and imprisoned.

But the organisation had also lost credibility. It was painfully clear that fiery speeches, unconsolidated organisation, dispersed membership, and an increasingly reactionary leadership would not transform the face of South Africa. Some branches survived into the early 1930's, but the ICU's heyday was over.

That does not mean it was not important. It was one of the few organisations in South Africa's history to respond to the needs of rural people. As one old man, a former ICU member put it: "They fought for us. Under the ICU we had a taste of freedom."

**S**OUTH AFRICA is compelled to choose between sacrificing apartheid completely or making concessions by allowing the different bantu nations within South Africa to develop into separate bantu states ... by giving the white man his freedom and his right to retain domination in what is his country' - Dr HF Verwoed.

Thirty-six years ago Dr Verwoed spelt out the policy of divide and rule. And since then the Nationalist government has channelled all its efforts into creating separate bantustan states, drawing up boundaries where some existed, making commoners chiefs, resettling vast numbers of people in their 'homelands' and setting up cumbersome bureaucracies to control them.

A cornerstone of this control has been the concept of ethnicity.

Pretoria knew, and the bantustan governments soon found out, that one cannot rule by coercion alone.

The Matanzimas and the Sebes needed to win popular support to gain credibility among the people they were trying to rule.

As a result, attempts have been made in all bantustans to win support beyond that of the people who benefit directly from the system: the clerks, headmen, teachers, civil servants, army and police. These are the people charged with the responsibility of propping up the regimes of the Mphahlele and Matanzimas.

Their allegiance to the Venda, Ciskei and other national independence parties was won by fringe benefits, pay-offs and promotions.

But the life of ordinary residents in the bantustans is not as easy, and it is here that the problem of popular support became an issue.

Their daily lives are a myriad of rules and regulations. Not only do they have to contend with the state police force but in many of these areas there are also regional and tribal police.

Cutting green wood is a crime. So is failing to pay the many taxes required of people, failing to produce cattle and other stock for counting and dipping, or neglecting to plough land allocated to one.

In addition there are the hardships of pay-offs before pension applications are accepted and before labour contracts are signed. For these people who have nothing, control over resources is a powerful weapon to hold over their heads. And for those who resist, bantustan justice is harsh.

In most of these areas, there are laws that prevent insulting or mocking government officials, ministers, chiefs and headmen. And in most, South Africa's many security laws are intact. Even in Bophuthatswana, the so-called liberal bantustan, with a Bill of Rights, detentions without trial occur.

These laws hardly sanctioned in winning the bantustan governments the popular support they need to gain

# DIVIDE



The warrior of past centuries... turned into a servant of apartheid

# AND RULE

**Africa's rich cultural heritage has been harnessed and perverted by Pretoria. Its ethnic policies have created deep divisions, fundamental to maintaining apartheid**

international credibility. And so, a more subtle form of control is called for.

It is here that ethnicity becomes crucially important, and tremendous effort has gone into instilling a sense of national pride — a sense of being a Tswana member of a Tswana nation, an Ndebele member of a Ndebele nation.

The bantustan governments have set up youth, women's and cultural organisations to this end. Inkatha is one such example, the Ciskei's Sword of the Nation another, as is the recently formed 'Whip of the Nation', the Gazankulu equivalent. All these movements play on tradition and on conservatism, often drawing on the most conservative

elements within society.

But ethnicity has to do with more than just emotional rhetoric. The alarming growth of ethnic chauvinism in so many of these areas is directly linked to access to and scarcity of resources.

There are very few areas in South Africa where there are not people of different languages and cultures.

Until recently these people managed for the most part, to live together in peace. Not so anymore.

The process of sorting out the bantustans often involves the division of population and with it the division of resources.

People who have never distinguished between each other are now separated. The Shangaans are told to go to Gazankulu, the Sothos to Lebowa, and the Vendas to their homeland. In many areas this is accompanied by physical division of land and resources held in common for many years.

One example is that of the fate of the Douglas Smith Hospital near Tzaneen. This Swas mission hospital was built on land that had traditionally belonged to a Sotho chief. The tribe had at one stage allowed a group of Shangaans to settle there and live with them. The hospital facilities were amicably shared by people from both language groups. There was no hostility and friction until bantustan politics created it.

The boundaries between Gazankulu and Lebowa were drawn in such a way as to locate the hospital inside Gazankulu. This resulted in the Lebowa administration withdrawing all the patients, nurses, doctors, medicine and equipment from the hospital. A shared and scarce resource thus became a Shangaan ethnic preserve resulting in considerable hostility and bitterness on the part of the Sotho people who now had to do without a hospital.

Ceding land from one homeland to another has a similar effect. When the Nationalist government decided to cede Moutse, an area of Lebowa with more than 100 000 Sotho speakers, to kwaNdebele in 1980, it sparked off a battle that has lasted for more than four years. The local population are adamant they do not

These struggles are often conducted in highly emotive terms. As a result people are alienated by a system that has caused the initial ethnic conflict. Instead they turn on each other. This divides people even further and fragments the unity that has been built up after many years of living together.

This development of an ethnic consciousness among people is an insidious process and often people internalise an ethnic perception of the world without even realising it.

One example of this was quoted by a rural fieldworker who was researching removals in the northern Transvaal. The people in the Louis Trichardt township of Tshikona were asked if there was any ethnic conflict in the area. Their answer was unwittingly revealing. 'No there are no problems with the different groups, the only problem is with those damn Sothos who agreed to move.'

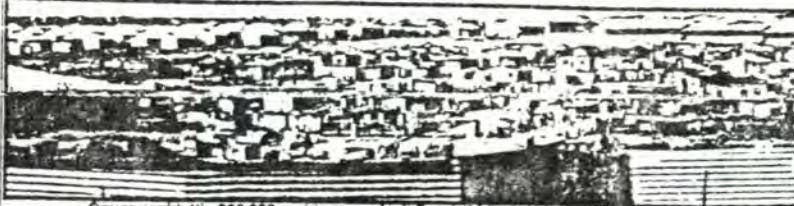
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## No safety in the 'Place of Refuge'

In 1977 Bophuthatswana became independent. President Lucas Mangope claimed it was 'A place for all'. This bantustan is divided into seven pieces. Thaba Nchu in the Orange Free State is one part, hundreds of miles away from the others.

The African population of the Orange Free State is predominantly southern Sotho. In the Thaba Nchu area, the 70 000 Basotho were probably in the majority but were politically subordinate to the Barolong Tribal Authority. But many Sotho and Tswana people had intermarried and the area had a history of harmony between these two groups.

More and more people (mainly Sotho) were retrenched from Free State farms and small holdings. They drifted into villages known as Bultfontein I, II, and III, and to the



Onverwacht. It's 300 000 residents make it South Africa's largest relocation centre

Barolong freehold farms and trust villages, since the Bloemfontein area offered more job prospects than the small Free State dorps. A large concentration of illegal squatters developed to the north of Thaba Nchu railway station, in an area which became known as Kromdraai.

The official bantustan for the

South Sotho is OwaOwa, a tiny, barren area of 4800 hectares in the north-eastern Orange Free State. Between 1978 and 1980 hundreds of thousands of people in the Orange Free State were 'relocated', mainly from rural and urban white areas, to OwaOwa and Thaba Nchu reserves.

The estimated de facto population

of OwaOwa in 1980 was 300 000 people, changing the average population density to 622 people per square kilometre, from 54 people per square kilometre in 1970. South Sotho drifted into Kromdraai which was more convenient in terms of work opportunities.

The people of Kromdraai were regularly harassed by the

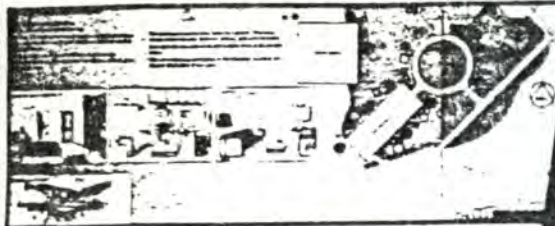
Bophuthatswana police as 'illegal foreigners'. This pressure was intensified shortly after independence. Several massive raids took place in 1978. On April 24-30, people were arrested, animals intimidated, livestock dispersed and impounded, some people shot, and others raped.

Those charged and convicted for squatting were fined R40 or imprisoned for 40 days in Bloemfontein jail by arrangement with South Africa. Basotho tenants in the Thaba Nchu location complained of exploitation and harassment by Barolong landlords.

During 1977 and 1978, negotiations took place between the Bophuthatswana, OwaOwa and South African governments over

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# RESERVING THE RESERVES



For tourists watching game in the luxurious Pilansberg game reserve, it is easy to forget that a village's heritage was destroyed to satisfy their pleasures. And difficult to consider the fate of the people moved from their traditional homes.

**M**AYBE it was the quality of the cuisine or the splendour of the view or the comfort of the rooms that caused President Lucas Mangope his lapse of memory.

When he opened the luxurious Pilansberg holiday resort and game park in May last year, he spoke proudly of the heritage of his people.

But he seemed to have forgotten the heritage of the people of Morueng who had been resettled against their will to make way for the resort.

'We cannot deny our heritage,' said the president. 'We cannot deny our history. The soil is in the bones of our people. The character of our people has been and will continue to be moulded from this soil. Our roots are firmly implanted here. We are here to stay as is our heritage.'

But what of the heritage of the community of Morueng?

The establishment of Pilansberg in 1979 did not affect the Morueng community equally.

A small group of 300 was physically removed from the park area, and the majority was forbidden the use of resources within the park area, seriously affecting its livestock.

The former group's case is presently in the hands of lawyers and the people are very bitter.

Their village is on the outskirts of the reserve, fenced off from the rainfall basin and grazing land within the reserve.

The people retreated into the reserve with their cattle during times of drought. Now they have been cut off.

Research in December 1983 in the Morueng district revealed much



Top: Aerial view of Pilansberg luxury

Bottom: Fun in the sun, but misery lies a few miles away.

anger and frustration over the game park's appropriation of the land and the hardships that followed.

The greatest loss for the community was of livestock.

The open grazing field and water streams that had supported the Bakgata's cattle and goats for years are no longer there.

Camps promised for their livestock were inadequate. They had no choice but to kill or sell their animals.

Women formerly made clay pots and cut thatching from within the Pilansberg, which they sold at a profit. They also had access to plentiful supplies of wood and wild fruits for

their own consumption.

Those removed from the Pilansberg area were promised employment in an industrial area. They were promised reimbursement for damaged property as a result of the move.

Most found no employment and few received any compensation for their lost possessions.

Their graveyard in the Pilansberg was enclosed and most were unsure whether they could visit their dead ever again.

The authorities suggested some ways of making the game park more beneficial to the local community. One suggestion was a levy on cars

that enter the park to be used to develop services within the village.

Another was a contribution of money to the community from the selling of wild animal meat, culled in the reserve.

The general reaction of such pitiful charity was unenthusiastic.

To the Bakgata people, the Pilansberg is not a mere extinct volcanic crater to be bartered for a bit of cash and game meat.

To them the Pilansberg is a sacred heritage of their forefathers.

At one end of the Pilansberg R2

million was spent on a hide to allow tourists to contemplate 'Africa' upon plastic seats with a nearby gin and tonic.

Guests at the latest time-sharing scheme of Kwa Mantane fork out R8 000 for one week in a five-bed cabins with hot and cold running water.

Some of the Bakgata can hardly afford to drink water. As one woman said: 'A 1 000 litre drum of water costs R5 and washing water cannot be poured away until at least three people have used it.'

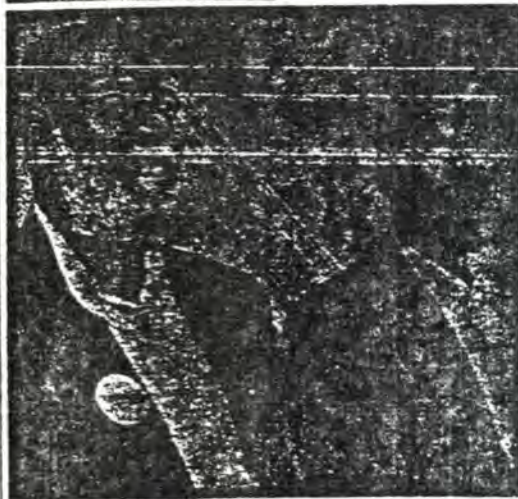
Advert for Pilansberg - a heaven which forgets the hell it created

Gary Player and former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith - all smiles at the opening of the Pilansberg game reserve.

Top: Traditional dancing at Pilansberg - preserving a heritage?

Bottom: Women dance for guests at the opening of the reserve

## RURAL SQUATTERS



Mr Mdlletsha (right), leader of the Bhekumthetho community

**B**HEKUMTHETHO means 'waiting for the law'. It is the name of an informal settlement 30km from Vryheid and the name reflects the insecurity of its people.

6 000 families have found some refuge here. Almost all come from the white farms of the Vryheid/Louwsburg area. They have been evicted because they are no longer necessary for labour, have quarrelled with the farmer or because their children will no longer work on the farm.

Blacks had been living on these farms before whites arrived in the area. With the white occupation they became labourers but retained some access to land and grazing through the labour tenancy system.

In 1964 the 1936 Land Act was changed so that the Minister could abolish labour tenancy in any district. In 1969 labour tenancy was abolished in the first three districts of Natal. Thousands of labour tenants began to be evicted. By 1980 all

## BHEKUMTHETHO

labour tenancy was supposed to have ended but in large areas of Northern Natal it continued.

The people of Bhekumthetho are part of this eviction process. 20 new families are moving into the area each month. Mr Mdlletsha, community leader, has a pile of trespasses to prove it. They read, 'Mr P P Dlamini is given thirty days to leave the farm 'Trekboer' with all his stock'.

Thirty days indicate a generous farmer; sometimes people are given 24 hours.

Mr Mdlletsha is a charismatic figure. He commands respect in an easy way. He arrived in Bhekumthetho in 1974. He too was evicted from a labour farm.

After a lifetime of service he was given 14 days to leave. When he arrived there were only ten families on this trust farm which adjoins the

Retrenchment of farm workers is the step before eviction. Then comes the struggle to find a new place to stay.

formal township of Mondlo. Mondlo was established in 1962. Its 25 000 residents consist mainly of people moved from Vryheid and Paulpietersburg black freehold areas. Initially there were no services but houses are now provided with water.

Mondlo residents are the lucky ones. The people of Bhekumthetho have no services at all. Bhekumthetho looks like any other informal settlement with close mud houses in irregular patterns.

The 20 000 people at Bhekumthetho get their water from a single

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