

# Blow for ER shack people

Star  
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By Sol Makgabutlane

The hopes of people living in Silvertown, near Brakpan, of getting proper houses were shattered this week by announcements that the area will be cleared and dwellers sent to new sites to erect "temporary tin structures".

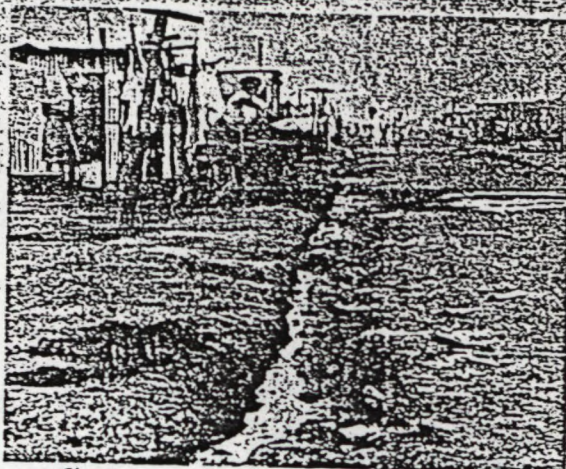
This means that they will not get the four-roomed houses that they had hoped for.

In the next few weeks the residents of the shantytown, just outside Tsakane Township on the East Rand, will be packing in preparation for another trek. They will be moving to new sites to be allocated to them by the East Rand Administration Board (Erab).

It was less than two years ago when the people, then living in comparable ease at Brakpan Old Location, were informed that they would be moved to Tsakane, about 30 km further south.

The residents took it in their stride, but were amazed when they were informed that some would be forced to erect temporary tin structures because Erab was unable to give every family a house.

When the people arrived at their new



Shantytown... things are not getting better.

"homes", they were met only by glistening zinc toilets, a row of taps and untarred roads. There was nothing else. The huge task of erecting shacks began.

The then community council chairman, Mr W Moloto, said the people would be settled on the land - christened Silvertown by its almost 8 000 residents because of the shining zinc toilets - while new houses were being built for them. Everybody would be resettled by June 1983, he assured the people.

But this week the director of the East Rand Administration Board, Mr L Rossouw, said that only 250 families, mostly those who cannot afford to build their own homes, would be given houses.

The rest, at least 1 231 families, would be sent into new "permanent sites" where they would be expected to build

houses of their own. (Last year less than 400 families from Silvertown were given homes.)

Mr Rossouw said the new sites were larger - those occupied now are 10 m x 10 m shared by two families, while the new ones measure 250 square metres and are fully serviced. Dwellers would be allowed to put a shack at the corner of the yard and then build a brick house.

"At the moment we are busy laying water and sewerage pipes in the area," he said.

Erab's chief director, Mr FE Marx, quashed reports that the people at Silvertown were being moved because of pressure from a farmer who had leased the land to Erab for 18 months and now wanted it back.

"That's not true. That is the board's land. The area has always been re-

garded as a temporary measure. It was agreed that a move would take place at some stage. It has been so decided now," he emphasised.

The resettlement announcement took the Silvertown residents by surprise. They were hopeful that by the end of next month they would be living in proper houses, particularly with winter venting at the doorstep. Tsakane residents, telephoned at random, expressed anger at the move, describing it as "too harsh".

A woman, declining to be named, said she was amazed that "at this time they can still be talking of moving the people from one slummy shack area to another".

"These people were promised they would be allocated houses by June this year, so why is the promise not being adhered to?" she asked.

Mr John Nhlapho, who said he was a student genuinely concerned about the future of the township, echoed these sentiments, suggesting that the Silvertown residents should get together and form a committee to talk to the authorities.

"It is unfair to expect the poor people to live so uncomfortably. Although we take note of the fact that they are not being raided by the police for being in that area, we spare a thought for the small children in this cold winter," he said.

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