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# INQUIRY

no. 2 October 1979



**Eastern Cape Resettlement:  
BLACK PAWNS IN A WHITE GAME**



Children of the Eastern  
Cape — how permanent  
the happiness?

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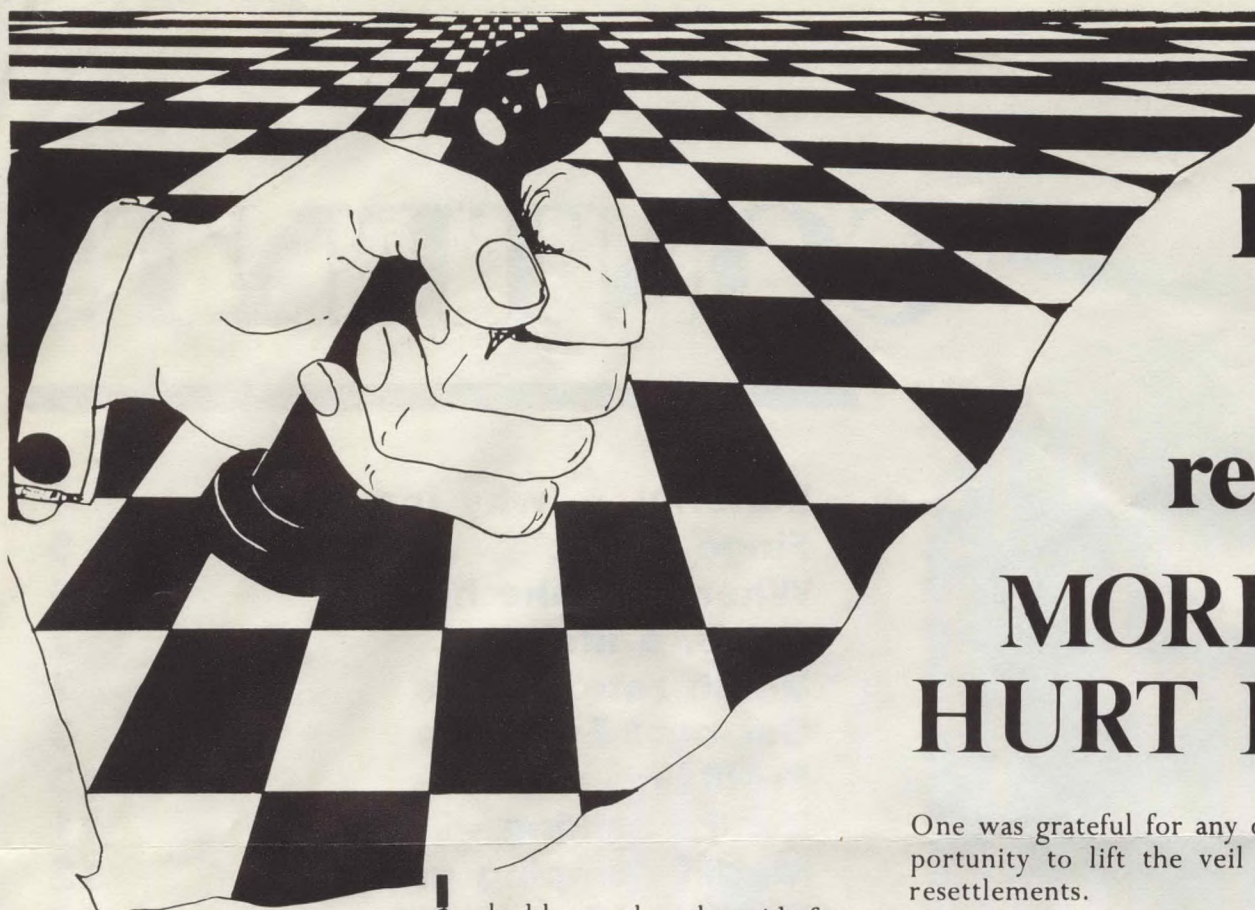
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Inquiry no. 2  
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# INQUIRY into resettlement.

## MORE THAN HURT FEELINGS



It had been a long hot ride from Grahamstown to Glenmore, 46 km with all the windows closed against the dust. The vehicle stopped beside what had once been the farmhouse and was now the administrative centre of the resettlement project.

"Gentlemen," said Mr Louis Koch, chief director of the Eastern Cape Administration Board, "I hope we can rely on you to be discreet in your questioning." He explained that the press must understand that the black people had been moved to a totally new environment. They were trying to find their feet again. The press must respect their privacy.

No one said anything, but all were conscious of the great privilege of being permitted to enter Glenmore at last. It was weeks since the resettlement had become national news with the first removals of families from Kenton-on-Sea to this remote spot on the Great Fish River.

The press had been kept out of Glenmore until — out of the blue — came the invitation for a conducted tour. Naturally, the SABC's television cameras had preceded the press by a few days, but one got used to that sort of thing.

One was grateful for any opportunity to lift the veil on resettlements.

So the English and Afrikaans newspapers had sent their people. Strangely, no black reporters were included, and when the Rhodes Department of Journalism attempted to include a black in the party he was politely turned away on the grounds that his name was not on the invitation list.

The party was ushered into the administration office for a brief press conference explaining the objectives of the Glenmore scheme with the short- and long-term goals.

The present township was merely a temporary one for 500 families who had been in desperate need of accommodation. Mr Koch described how the Ciskei Government had beseeched South Africa to move families from unsanitary slums in the Eastern Cape into a decent place fit for human habitation.

The answers to journalists' questions were uniformly reassuring. More than enough water was available to meet the immediate needs of the township: it was being pumped from the nearby Fish River and purified in a chlorination dam. There was now a shop doing good business in what had once been the farm garage — unfortunately only one shop, whose prices were not controlled.

With these comforting facts in mind, the tour party climbed back into the bus and like visitors to a game reserve they passed slowly along a street, peering down at the inhabitants.

Mr Koch acted as interpreter, speaking fluent Xhosa in a fatherly tone to a young girl who had been filling a bucket at a tap and found herself suddenly surrounded by pressmen. Was she happy here? (Translated) Oh yes. (Translated) No complaints? The girl looked at the officials and other strangers with large eyes. No complaints.

It was the same story everywhere. Glenmore was a good place to be, much better than the overcrowded slum areas at Klipfontein and Kenton.

Meanwhile the reporter from the **Eastern Province Herald** had gone missing. Major Dennis Bush, the Grahamstown representative of ECAB, was dispatched to search for the errant journalist.

When the EPH man emerged from among the huts he was greeted with some sharp remarks by Mr Koch. Clearly, here was one journalist who was no respecter of the privacy of the Glenmore people.

Because you see there is more to resettlement than privacy.

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# FINGO PLIGHT

FINGO VILLAGE has had freehold tenure since 1855 when the Fingos were granted land "in the name of Her Majesty Victoria with full power to possess the same in perpetuity", for services rendered to the British by the Fingos against the Xhosas.

In 1956 a Group Areas Board investigated a proposed re-allocation of Fingo Village to Coloureds, Indians, Chinese and part to a 'buffer zone'. After widespread public opposition the plans were shelved.

However in 1965 an amended plan to incorporate Fingo Village as part of a larger Coloured Group Area resulted in the proclamation of Fingo Village as a Coloured Group Area being gazetted in 1970.

The twenty year uncertainty hanging over Fingo Village has resulted in the deterioration in physical and environmental conditions of the area. The position was further aggravated by the government proscription on the building of additional houses. Severe overcrowding has resulted.

The 36 000 Fingo residents would be removed to Committee's Drift — a settlement planned for up to 200 000 people — opposite Glenmore which in 1976 was chosen as a replacement after the Bantu Affairs Administration Board became dissatisfied with Committee's Drift.

A *Rand Daily Mail* report dated September 20 1971 quoted Black Sash chairperson Ms Anne Oosthuizen as saying "the money spent on a resettlement township could far better be spent in Grahamstown."

According to the villagers, government agents collected their title deeds — ostensibly to investigate whether the present holders were the rightful heirs. In order to enforce their removal, the government informed the owners that it had itself awarded them their land — but only for a year and on condition they sold it to Coloureds or faced expropriation.

A 1974 *Financial Mail* said Grahamstown had recently obtained Border Area status "at industry's behest", only to be confronted with "the ideological necessity" that its workers move to a homeland.

"The nearest bit of homeland is Committee's Drift, 45 km away from Grahamstown on the Ciskei side of the Great Fish River — the most grandiose resettlement scheme yet dreamt up.

Deadline for Fingo Village removal to Glenmore was set for 1981. At this stage the Grahamstown Ratepayers' Association stated in a memorandum to the Minister of Planning, Mr J. J. Loots, that "the conditions under which land was originally granted in Fingo Village should not merely be swept aside as being now irrelevant."

Recent years have seen a modification of government stance towards the Fingo villagers and the plan is now to build 200 new houses in the Mankanaskop Location (ending a very long freeze on housing in the townships) for property owners displaced from Fingo Village. In 1977, however, the township was estimated to house 60 000 people — mostly lodgers in shacks locating themselves in Fingo Village.

A corrugated iron shack town "Silvertown" developed in 1976 as a Fingo — Glenmore transit camp was shelved the same year. Instead of Fingo villagers, rent defaulters from other townships and some local squatters moved into Silvertown. It was from here that the first group of families from Grahamstown were "voluntarily" moved to Glenmore.

The present government stance is to say that Glenmore is not designed for Grahamstown's black population. In May 1978, Dr Connie Mulder said it was not intended as a dormitory suburb for Grahamstown, but "would be a normal town incorporated into the Ciskei."

Recent developments suggest that Dr Piet Koornhof, Minister of Co-operation and Development may reverse the 15-year-old policy on Fingo Village — that its residents must move out to make way for a Coloured and Indian group area.

In a report dated August 16, 1979, the *Daily Dispatch* quotes "well-placed sources in black administration" who point out that since Dr Koornhof has frozen further resettlement at Glenmore there is nowhere for the evicted Fingo property owners to go.

# Over 4 000 await houses

The waiting list for houses in Grahamstown is so long that more and more families are despairing of ever gaining a house of their own.

According to official ECAB figures, there is a shortage of 4 000 houses, but this is calculated according to the number of families on the housing waiting list — and growing numbers don't even bother to sign up.

ECAB figures show that the total black population in Grahamstown is 35 477, but that there are only 5 643 houses — 3 099 (54%) of which are classified as "pandokke" (shacks). In the next five years provision has been made for only 232 more houses to be built.

These shanties provide little shelter from the elements. Erected over bare ground, and built of plain zinc, they become furnaces in summer and deep-freezers in winter.

In Silvertown the one-roomed zinc shanties have no internal water supply. There are two street taps for all 60 houses, and water supply is irregular. Water flows briefly at a few set times, and people have to store it in whatever containers are available. There is no electricity, and the streets are unlit at night.

People pay R6,50 per month for a two-roomed house and R5,50 for a one-roomed house. In other areas of Fingo Village, conditions are much the same.

An old-age pensioner in Joza pays R20 rent a month from a pension of R47. In Tanti location, a woman has been unemployed since 1974. At present she is nursing another couple's children for R10 a month.

Rents and rates have recently been raised by ECAB. A resident of Joza claimed she was paying rent on a house which she built with her own materials years ago, and also that she owned the plot.

**"I don't want to know what Glenmore is about, my home is here." This is the cry of one of the 8 000 of Grahamstown's Fingo Village.**

They live in fear of removal from the land given to them in the name of Queen Victoria. Black ownership of land has since been prohibited in terms of the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act.

"Staying in Glenmore would mean I would become a Ciskeian and that I would hate," said a

**Why  
don't  
they  
build  
houses?**

Fingo Village resident who has no wish to move, as he was born and bred in Grahamstown, which he regards as his home. "I do not want to become a migrant labourer," he said.

Anthropologist Mercia Wilsworth in her thesis, "Transcending the Culture of Poverty in a Black South African Township," said the fact that many residents still maintained and improved their housing while under the threat of removal, was indicative of their will to say.

This attitude is echoed in the words of residents: "I don't know what's happening. Why doesn't the municipality build houses here and not at Glenmore, where there is nothing for us to do?"

Tswibe and her husband share a house with 11 families. The possibility of being moved to Glenmore is never far from their minds as they are "illegal inhabitants," meaning that they are not registered in the Grahamstown area, nor have official permission to live in Fingo

Village.

Tswibe's reasons for not wanting to move to Glenmore typify those of other residents. They say it "won't work" as there is no water, and they can't find employment there.

Mr Nduna, chairman of the Community Council refused to recognise the existence of Glenmore and wished to have no association with it. He said he and his nine committee councillors were trying to get the village de-proclaimed a Coloured area.



**No houses  
and no  
pandokkes**

**—  
where to go?  
To the  
landlords?**

## Landlords exploit tenants

The enormous black housing backlog in Grahamstown has opened the way for the "haves" with homes, to set themselves up as landlords and extort as much as possible from people desperate for shelters.

These landlords set up makeshift zinc shanties in their backyards, knowing that they will have little difficulty in finding families desperate enough to pay rent.

At number 20 "1" street in Fingo Village, a landlady by the name of Nobambo has about 15

little rooms at the back of her yard. The wall and roofs consist of rusted pieces of zinc nailed together. Bare earth serves as the floor, and the only opening is the door. A family has to pay R10 for the "privilege" of using one of these.

At least 45% of Grahamstown's 17 000 potential black workers are unemployed.

# A JOB- A LIFE!

By PHILLIPA COOK

According to Eastern Cape Administration Board figures, 7 654 are "inactive work seekers" — and there seems little prospect of them getting work in the future.

Industrial development would revitalize Grahamstown's economic life and would provide the many with the needed employment but there are no major industries, and there has been no success in attracting them.

Although already staggeringly high, these estimates of the number of workless could still be conservative as they do not include the many non-registered black workers in the area.

Black men have to register at the local Labour Office at sixteen years old, if qualified to do so under section 10 of the Urban Areas Act. His work seeker's permit enables him to live within the prescribed area and look for work. If he doesn't find work, he has to report back to the Labour Office regularly, so that his permit might be extended. He is effectively inhibited from seeking work elsewhere because he "belongs" to his prescribed area. He cannot remain in any area outside it for more than 72 hours at a time.

Many men are forced to leave their families to go and work on the mines — but the pay is low.

Because of the large army of unemployed, job security is minimal. Employers often dismiss their workers for trivial reasons knowing there is a practically unlimited supply of labour on their doorstep.

Mrs Monkeke Dana, a mother of seven, was sacked from her job at Rhodes because a set of sheets was missing. She now lives in one small room with her children, her sister and her five children.

People are so desperate for work that they will accept pathetically low wages. Although the women are often the family breadwinners, their wages are frequently appalling. The average wage for a domestic servant in Grahamstown is R22 a month. Some are paid as little as R15 a month.

Unemployment leads to desperation — and desperation leads to crime. Wandering bands roam the townships demanding money. According to residents, the areas worst affected are Fingo Village, the King's Flats area and the Tantiy location.

Unemployment leads to many evils and much suffering, and Grahamstown boasts all in abundance.



## Shocking death rate

**ONE out of every four black babies born in Grahamstown last year died before the age of twelve months, according to statistics released here recently.**

Over half of these deaths were due directly or indirectly to malnutrition, which medical experts associate with the town's appalling state of poverty and unemployment.

The 1977 infant mortality rate was even higher, with more than a third of all black babies dying in their first year. This was four times higher than the average for the entire country and nine times as high as the Johannesburg rate.

Investigations show that the infant mortality rate in this "cultural centre" is more than

double, and sometimes triple, that of other East Cape centres. It is rivaled only by the most underdeveloped parts of the Ciskei and Transkei.

Grahamstown's Medical Officer of Health, Dr C. Dreyer, said in his 1978 report that the rate of infant deaths was not "quite a true reflection" of the situation, as a large percentage of the black deaths were not registered. He added however that these figures gave a good indication of general living conditions.

A staggering 28 per cent of all registered black babies died in Grahamstown this year, compared with 11 per cent in East London nine per cent in King William's Town and eight per cent in Port Elizabeth.

More than ten per cent of the deaths were listed as due to "malnutrition" and "kwashiorkor", while 40 per cent died of gastroenteritis, a disease limited mainly to undernourished children.

Dr Trudi Thomas, an East London expert on malnutrition, said deaths attributed to measles and pneumonia also probably due to malnutrition. She said the infant mortality rate in Grahamstown was "quite terrifying", and was comparable to situations in parts of the world where no health services existed at all.

What is shocking health authorities is that Grahamstown has shown a consistently high rate of black infant deaths over the last ten years, and from 1975 this has increased considerably.

**EVICTIONS** have continually plagued inhabitants of black townships in Grahamstown — ironically named the "Settler City". *INQUIRY* investigates.

# GET OUT!

*FAMILIES EVICTED IN POURING RAIN*



By DAVE FORBES

**WHEN TORRENTIAL RAINS** and gale force winds hit Grahamstown in July, uprooting 40 foot trees and damaging houses and roads, many evicted residents from Joza location were forced to sleep outside.

Mr Vuyisile Ntshakaze, his mother and brother were evicted from their Joza location home at 5 a.m. in pouring rain. Eastern Cape Administration Board (ECAB) officials removed all the furniture and locked the door. They refused to open it unless R84 back rent was paid.

Mr Ntshakaze has been unemployed for the last two years, and his brother — the only breadwinner — earns R16 a week. That night both had to sleep outside in the rain.

Miss Angelina Nono was evicted the same morning with no prior warning. That night she slept in the rain with her sick baby. Her husband earns R10 a week, and their monthly rental of R13 has been in arrears for some time.

Mr Jonas Nono, a man in his mid 70s, and his family of five had a close shave with the authorities. Several "blackjacks" (municipal policemen) came for him one morning while he was preparing to leave for work.

"They said I owed R111,80 in rent arrears, and then took my furniture outside," said Mr Nono.

"I begged them not to, saying I was going to ask my employer for help, but the 'blackjacks' were ordered to continue. As they did so, I ran into town, and got help," he said.

When he returned, he found his furniture and family already outside. He handed over the money to the officials, and his house was reopened. Some of the furniture had been damaged.

Joza location is known as one of the "better" locations in Grahamstown. Residents pay R13,75 a month for their small two-bedroomed houses. Each house has a kitchenette and outside toilet. They have no electricity, and residents obtain water from one outside tap at the end of each street.

"We must pay all this money for a house where the wind comes under the door and the water seeps through the walls, making our children sick, sick, sick," said a resident.

Evictions in the black townships of Grahamstown are sporadic and sudden. Mrs Margeret Mqobo, 29, tells how she came home one Wednesday afternoon to find a **BAAB** paper demanding R33 rent.

"Early on Thursday morning, I went to the **BAAB** offices and asked Sergeant Makawu Shoba why I owed the money," she says.

"He said it was rent arrears, so I asked him to check the files to see what the situation was. After he had taken the file and read it, he told me to go home.

"While I was there, one of my friends came and told me that my furniture had been thrown out by the blackjacks.

"I told my employer. Miss Alison, and we went to see Mr Purdon, the local superintendent. Miss Alison explained my case and asked why I owed R33. He said he was unaware of the action of the blackjacks. His attitude seemed markedly different when confronted by a white employer.

"Mr Purdon told me I still owed R6,50, but after I produced the receipt, proving I owed nothing, he phoned the blackjacks and told them to open the house so that I could move my furniture back in," said Mrs Mgobo.

"They opened it at about six o'clock and I had to move the furniture in myself while they stood around. "They are very disrespectful people. It's not my work to bring my furniture back inside again after they had thrown it outside," she said.

Another Joza eviction victim, Mr Joseph Mugabe, was forced to sleep outside. "What must I do?" He asked, "I can find no job, so how can I pay my rent?"

Yet another time deaf, dumb and disabled Mr Zantsoyi Skeyi and his family stood by helplessly while a team of municipal policemen removed their furniture.



All they used was persuasion. Blackjack threatens child.



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