IMIJONDOLO

A photographic essay on forced removals in South Africa

OMAR BADSHA

Text by Heather Hughes

Foreword by Bishop Desmond Tutu

IMIJONDOLO

AFRAPIX IS A PHOTOGRAPHERS' COLLECTIVE. FOUNDED IN 1982, THE COLLECTIVE RUNS THE ONLY COMMUNITY-BASED LIBRARY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA. ITS MEMBERS ARE ALSO INVOLVED IN ORGANISING REGULAR WORKSHOPS AND EXHIBITIONS.

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P.O. Box 9942—Johannesburg

Acknowledgments

To Joe Phaahla, Zweli Mkhize, Ela Ramgobin, Theresa Mthembu and especially the late Sthembiso Nzuza, for their comradeship and valuable role in the Inanda struggle. To Paul Weinberg, Jeeva Rajgopaul, Myron Peters and Cedric Nunn for their vision and commitment to the ideas of the Afrapix collective. To Heather, not only for the incredible amount of work put into the text of this book, but for the warmth of her friendship and constant support to me and my family. To Mary Hughes for so kindly doing the map of Inanda for this book.

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Finally to my wife Nasima and daughter Farzanah I owe the strength and faith to undertake this project which only their love could sustain.

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To the people of Amouti and their unshakeable faith in the future: a free, democratic and united South Africa.

Foreword

I believe that when the Germans were asked how they could possibly have permitted Hitler and the Nazis to perpetrate the horrors of the holocaust, they replied that they had not known that those things were happening. It is possible for many South Africans and others to plead a similar ignorance about the evil consequences of apartheid and the policies being applied against black people. After all these things happen out of sight. The authorities are astute. Apartheid has ensured that blacks live at a distance from their white compatriots.

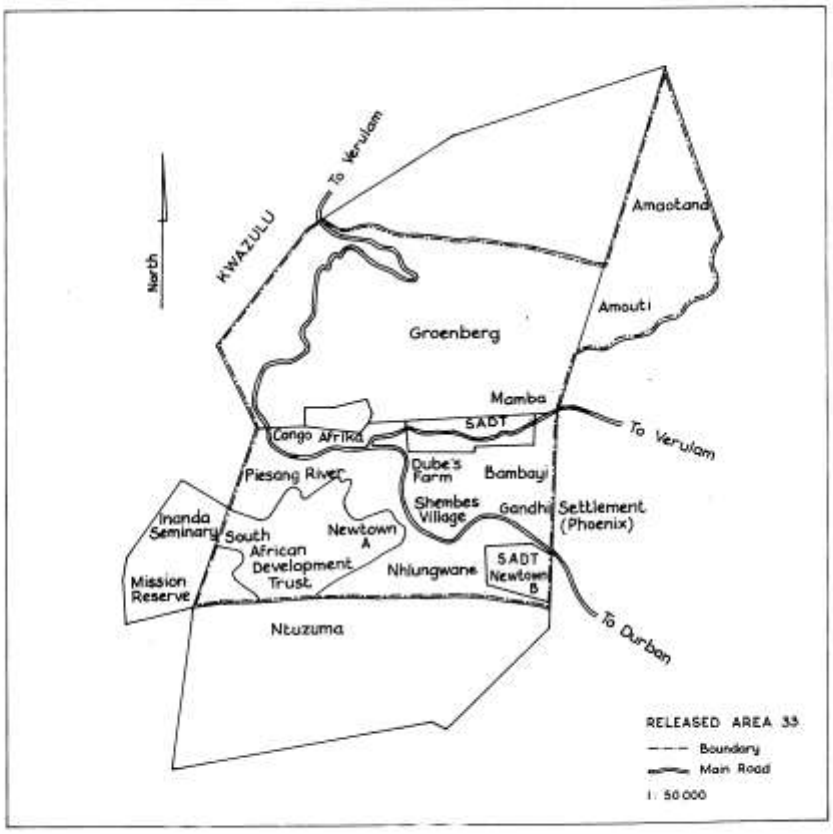
You have to be a truly committed person concerned about justice and equality to be prepared to go out of your way to visit many of the places referred to in accounts of the land policies of the South African government. And so being out of sight these places and their inhabitants are also out of mind.

This outstanding collection of photographs and accompanying text forms a harrowing chronicle of what does happen to many of God's children who are victims of a vicious policy that restricts black land ownership and forces men to go to work in town as migrant labourers living in single sex hostels. Their families are forced to move into so-called informal settlements such as Inanda.

This collection is the story of Inanda and its so-called squatters who have been ravaged by typhoid and cholera because they have lacked a regular supply of clean water. It tells the story of a threatened and insecure community trying to retain vestiges of human dignity against very considerable odds.

The compilers have placed us in their debt. I hope this book will sear our consciences so that we will work to put an end to policies that can produce such human tragedy unnecessarily. I commend this book warmly and yet sadly.

Desmond Tutu


North
KWAZULU
To Verulam
Amaotand
Amouti
Groenberg
Mamba
SADT
Congo Afrika
To Verulam
Piesang River
Dube's Farm
Bambayi
Shembes Village
Gandhi Settlement (Phoenix)
Inanda Seminary
South African Development Trust
Newtown A
Nhlungwane
SADT Newtown B
Mission Reserve
Ntuzuma
To Durban
RELEASED AREA 33
Boundary
Main Road
1: 50 000

Imijondolo *

Inanda: a myriad of shacks pocketed in the dry valleys some 30 kilometers north-west of Durban's city centre and home to upwards of a quarter of a million people. It is one of the many 'informal' settlements to have sprung up around the city in the last three or four decades - settlements whose growth is tied to the simultaneous decline in the carrying capacity of the meagre lands set aside for African use, and to the huge backlog in the provision of housing in urban areas.

There is a carefully maintained fiction in some circles that while men are away working in the industrial centres of South Africa, their wives, children, parents and other kin are surviving adequately on the fruits of the land. (It is only the recent drought which has disturbed this balance.) Earlier in this century, this was possible; some families in fact prospered. Nowadays, most families subsist on the pitiful remittances they receive from town. Often, these arrive with growing infrequency, the wage-earner either finding new orientations or finding himself unemployed. When they cease altogether, there is little option but to trek townwards in search of survival. Sometimes, women close up their country homesteads for good to escape the strictures of rural life, or simply to try to re-establish some form of family life with husbands, who will readily leave the oppressive, overcrowded conditions in the hostels.

Those motivated by such needs will congregate in places like Inanda. They will join others who have given up on the years-long waiting list for formal housing and those who have moved from other 'informal' areas, as well as those who have spent all their lives in Inanda shacks. For here, it is reasonably easy to find cheap

* ***Imijondolo is a newly-coined Zulu word for shack, or shack settlement.***

accommodation and perhaps more importantly, there are few restrictions of a legal kind about being in town. In the regimented townships and hostels, housing is bound up with employment and both are linked to the cumbersome machinery of 'urban rights'. In Inanda, it is possible - though ever more precariously so - to skirt around these restrictions. That is why the state calls the people living there 'squatters', even though they may have entered into perfectly acceptable agreements with their landlords.

The reason that Inanda came to be at all must be traced back to the status of the land it now occupies. The names by which sections of this vast settlement are known to residents - Piesang River, Dube's farm, Nhlungwane, Shembe's village, Rattan's farm and so on - tell something of this story.

Inanda abuts the southern boundary of the old Shepstonian Native Reserve of the same name, one of several demarcated in the 1840s for Africans living in the Colony of Natal. (The Reserve has long been incorporated into KwaZulu.) The original inhabitants of this district were the Ngcobo people. To this day, the chiefly authority is a Ngcobo, as is one of the largest landowners, entrepreneurs and ex-KwaZulu MP for the area, Rogers Ngcobo.

From approximately the same time as the reserves were laid out, numerous missionary societies came to work among the African people of Natal. Scholars have pointed out that Natal was one of the most heavily 'missionised' colonies on the continent. Areas, called 'mission reserves', where proselytising was confined to one missionary society, were set aside for this purpose. Foremost among the societies was the American Board, whose modest station in Inanda, founded by Daniel Lindley, was to form the basis of one of the most prestigious schools for African girls in the country: Inanda Seminary. Visitors to the school in the 1890s noted in the visitors' book that the gruelling day's journey from Durban to this 'Christian oasis'

had been well worth the discomfort. The establishment had been founded in 1869 by the remarkable Mary Edwards and strove to inculcate in its scholars those values becoming to prospective wives of African pastors: thrift, cleanliness, housecraft, gardening. Over the years, the nature of the curriculum offered at the Seminary changed markedly and in this century, it has produced many of South Africa's black women graduates. This school continues to function (uniquely, as a church school) but it has become something of an island of privilege, separated from the everyday problems of the Inanda community by a high fence and padlocked gate.

In terms of the codification of indigenous law in colonial times, private ownership of land within the reserves was impossible. Thus, prior to the 1913 Land Act (which made it equally impossible for Africans to purchase land outside of them) several prominent families acquired land in what is now Inanda, among them the Dubes, Champions and Mkhizes.

John Langalibalele Dube was born on the Inanda mission station, where his father was a pastor, in 1871. Educationist, politician, theologian and editor, he returned from the southern states of America inspired by Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, where ex-slaves learnt self-sufficiency and self-respect. Along the same lines, Dube founded his Ohlange Christian Industrial Institute in 1901. Ohlange survives as a boarding school run by the KwaZulu Department of Education. It stands on a ridge alongside Dube's fine colonial-style home, which is still occupied by his widow. On the same site, Dube edited his paper, **Ilanga lase Natal,** which has also continued production to the present day, though its premises are now in town. The moderate Dube helped to form the Natal Native Congress in 1901 and until 1945, jealously guarded his position of leadership in Natal Congress politics. And as befitted one of the most influential figures of early twentieth century black South African politics, Dube - 'Mafukuzela', he who acts energetically -was invited to become the first president of the African National Congress at its

launching in 1912.

After 1860, many Indian labourers had been employed on sugar plantations in the district. Some farms in Inanda had been allotted to those who had elected to stay in South Africa, rather than return to India, after their periods of indenture. A community of maize growers, traders and others established itself here, and added another dimension to the cultural life of Inanda. Magistrates' reports of the 1890s, for example, contain detailed descriptions of festivals and processions through Inanda to the nearby town of Verulam.

It is possibly the existence of this community which attracted Mahatma Gandhi to settle at the place he named Phoenix, during his stay in Natal. It was Gandhi's first experiment in combining 'head' work with 'hand' work - producing his **Indian Opinion** and tilling the soil, all on the principle learnt from Ruskin: "the good of the individual is contained in the good of all". The settlement drew sympathisers of all colours and creeds, and played an important part in the development of Gandhi's tradition of peace and self-restraint (**satyagraha** and **bramacharya**). There is still a strong link between Gandhi and this area. His granddaughter, Ela Ramgobin, is a community worker in Inanda and has been instrumental in setting up organisations to fight for the rights of residents.

To the same rural setting (since he regarded the town as the source of evil), Isaiah Shembe led his band of AmaNazaretha to establish their holy place, Ekuphakameni, in 1916. Even though he has been dead for half a century, Shembe remains Natal's most famous prophet. His biographer and neighbour, John Dube, described him as a powerful, charismatic visionary. Although the leadership of the church is still in Shembe hands, there have been fierce disputes between family members, which have divided followers into rival camps.

In 1936, most of Inanda was excised from 'white' South Africa (the government in

its curious way called it 'released') and destined for eventual incorporation into KwaZulu. Since then, its official designation has been Released Area 33. The state began buying up what land it could - not, it seems, with much determination.

Such were the complex layers and forms of landownership upon which Inanda's shackland was built. Shacks fashioned out of cardboard, iron sheeting, plywood, wattle and daub, cloth, or any other material close to hand - or which could be supplied by a budding 'informal sector' - were erected on privately-owned farms. The landowners were beginning to find an income from rents steadier, more convenient and more lucrative than that accruing from sugar, tobacco or cattle. On these agricultural scores, 'small farmers', especially black ones, were being squeezed out of the market by the emergence of Natal coastal belt agribusiness.

By the 1960s, Inanda was no longer a country district. Durban's sprawling townships were reaching out in its direction and it was being drawn more closely into the metropolitan economy. As growing numbers of its tenants travelled daily to work in Durban, so the bus service (virtually the **only** service) extended its network there.

Otherwise, Inanda was ignored. For water, people drew from streams and collected rain in drums. Some of the more established inhabitants had sunk boreholes. The few general dealers among the shacks sold daily commodities, although it was cheaper to buy in town. Those with a bit of space grew maize and kept chickens. Other needs were catered for by shack businesses offering watch, radio and shoe repairs, panel beating, dry cleaning, fruit, vegetables, meat and so on. Some community-sponsored schools were built, though children were considered luckier if they could find places in nearby township schools. The forces of 'law and order' were represented by one police station in upper Inanda, near the Seminary. Apart from the clinic functioning in the Gandhi settlement, there was no health service.

Politically, Inanda was suspended in its 'released' limbo. Save for an **ad hoc** administration from the Verulam Magistrate's office, no local authority existed for Inanda. The settlement was dismissed as a temporary problem: squatters were, after all, by definition impermanent, at least as far as their relation to city life went. Infrastructural developments like sewerage, rubbish removal or lighting were therefore unnecessary. In any case, the people were living on private property, so the state could argue it had no responsibility towards them.

The shack dwellers, of course, viewed their situation in a far more permanent light. There was always a certain insecurity involved in depending on the goodwill of the landlord - such is the nature of the relationship - yet roots were being sunk into Inanda soil, in churches, clubs, eating houses, shebeens, schools, and city jobs. Residents arranged as best they could to make life bearable in an area on the losing end of development.

Then came the drought. There had been harsh years before, notably in 1905 and 1946. But by 1979, Inanda was ill-prepared to cope with 'natural disaster'. Long years of neglect had produced a fragility easily upset by drought, as all the hairline cracks - of rank, race and ecological balance - were forcibly widened.

As streams dried up and extra pressure was exerted on the available supplies, a typhoid epidemic spread through the shacks in early 1980. Fearing the effects on 'white' Durban, numerous bodies (the army, the Urban Foundation, the Departments of Health and Co-operation and Development, the Verulam Commissioner) organised emergency water supplies to some 20 collection points. The long, hot hours of queueing, now part of the daily routine, began. Occasionally, friction flared up at the water points - bound to occur in the battle for this scarce and vital resource. There was friction, too, with some shopkeepers who charged dearly for water while others, larger in goodwill, were giving it away.

The drought also presented an opportunity for business interests, represented by the Urban Foundation, to intervene. The Foundation, together with the Department of Co-operation and Development, staked out, by means of pegs and pit-latrines, a site-and-service scheme on a portion of state land. Tenants living in Amouti, a section of Inanda particularly hard hit by the drought and for reasons unexplained omitted from the emergency water supplies, were the target group for the scheme.

Rumours in Amouti were rife: people were being moved to make way for the expansion of Phoenix, the municipal housing scheme for Indians; they would be moved into proper houses; urban rights would be given; free transport and food would be supplied. The authorities' version of procedure and benefits was somewhat different. And the reality of the scheme was that new arrivals found their new homes to be tents, in which they had to reside until they could erect more watertight shelters and eventually their own breeze-block houses. It was a bleak beginning, particularly when people found tents flooded and latrines awash after heavy summer rains. Within a relatively short space of time, the area was declared a township, with the name Newtown, a description as detached as the place itself. In subsequent years, Newtown has grown enormously, through the 'sweat-equity' of its inhabitants.

The drought has played out its effects on landowners in a quite different way. Here, Indian landlords have been worse off than their African counterparts. They have been pressured by the Department of Health - prompted, no doubt, by other departments also interested in using the drought to 'clear' Inanda - to evict tenants on their land, on the grounds that their living conditions are unhygienic. The alternative offered to the landlords by officialdom is for them to take it upon themselves to install they necessary services - water and sewerage. Sandwiched between state and tenants, some have issued eviction notices. Others have stood firm, claiming in court that they would feel uneasy chasing people off their land.

Tenants living on land belonging to the South African Development Trust, in

which state-owned land is vested, are in an even more vulnerable position. Although those charged with illegal occupation in the first two years of the drought mostly won their cases because of bunglings in the state hierarchy and other technicalities, it has become ever more difficult to find loopholes and the future is fraught with uncertainty.

In such conditions, community organisation has been difficult: the air of insecurity is not conducive to unity. Yet some attempts have worked, and clusters of tenants have managed to stand together in pressing their demands. Meetings and vigils have been held, women have staged poster protests outside the Verulam court on days of eviction trials. However, there is a very long way still to go, and it will be a hard journey. The state's new 'structure plan' for Inanda proposes to turn most of the area into an official township of over half a million people, at a cost of about R1000 million. Services will be provided (public taps, for example, have already been installed) but houses will be erected on a do-it-yourself basis. Yet who will be permitted to stay and who squeezed out is unclear. Despite the state's protestations that forced removals are no more, its obvious determination to act against 'illegal' residents in the past does not leave a sense of security in Inanda. This, coupled with the cumulative effects of neglect, renders the creation of a strong, grassroots community organisation both awesomely difficult and urgently necessary.

Heather Hughes.

The Photographs

I was told by an old man from Amouti, "take your pictures, show the world how we black people are forced to live. But don't show too much of our suffering. It makes those in power angry. No one likes to be shown the results of their stupidity and neglect! But if you are brave then you must tell the truth."

I am not sure if one is able to tell the truth with a camera. All I can show is my involvement through the camera. Who I meet, when and where.

My involvement in Inanda began in the early seventies when I attended work camps run by Rick Turner and Mewa Ramgobin at the Gandhi Settlement. In between a great deal of discussion about passive resistance, ujaama and agonising as to how we could bring about change, I learnt something about the community around the settlement.

The death from typhoid in the summer of 1978 of a friend's child took me back to Inanda. I became aware of how fragile life is without water, and without a stamp on one's pass. I witnessed how, hemmed in by the landlords and the police, the people found very little space in which to organise.

In 1981 the rains were late and the government and big business moved in to solve Inanda's problems. Overnight the pit-toilets dotted the hillsides. The threat of removals grew and the people began to organise.

Rick was gunned down by an unknown assassin. Mewa, together with other United Democratic Front leaders, is facing trial for treason, for saying what we all believe in.

OMAR BADSHA.

Children asleep after all-night vigil, Amouti.

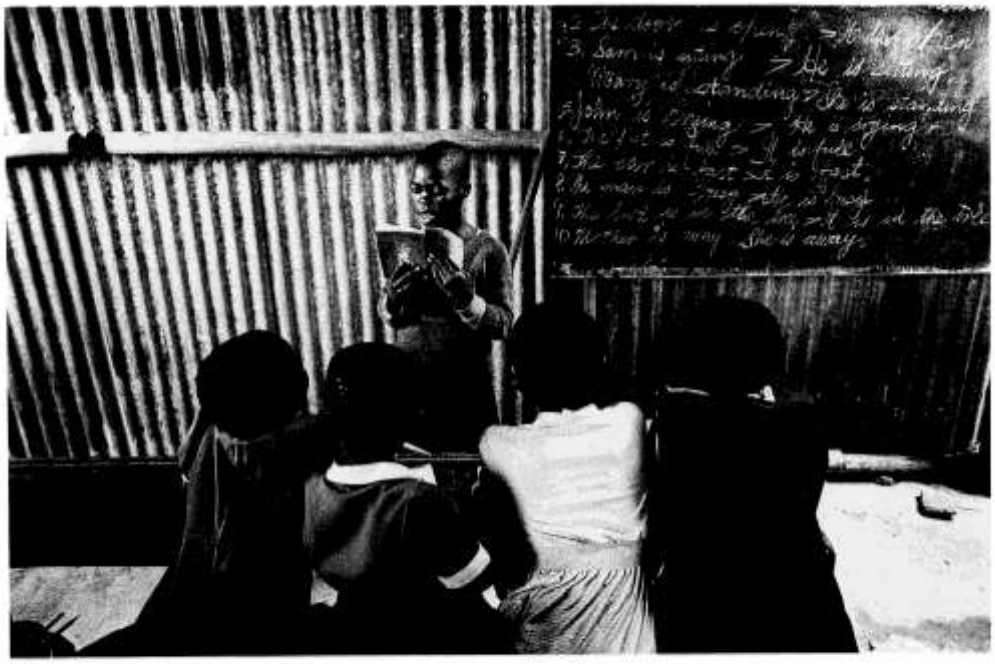
Water point at the end of the tar road leading to Amouti.

Carrying mud to plaster newly built home, Amouti.

Children playing shop, Amouti.

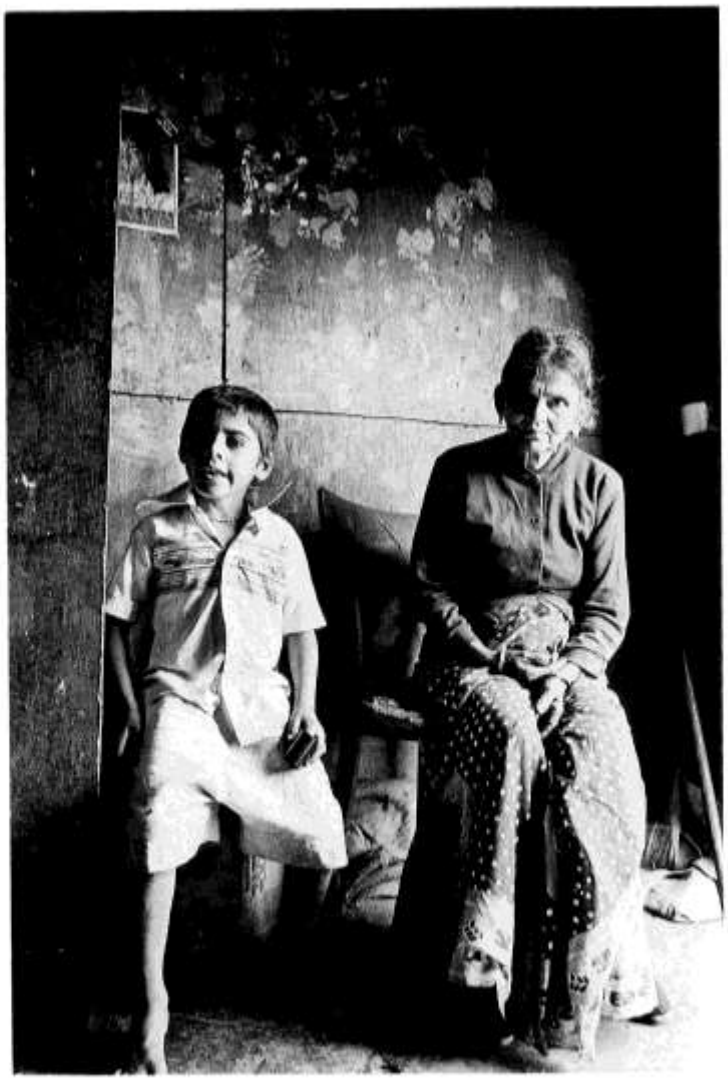
Shack shop, Amouti.

Bible reading, Shembe Village.



English lesson, Amouti Primary School.

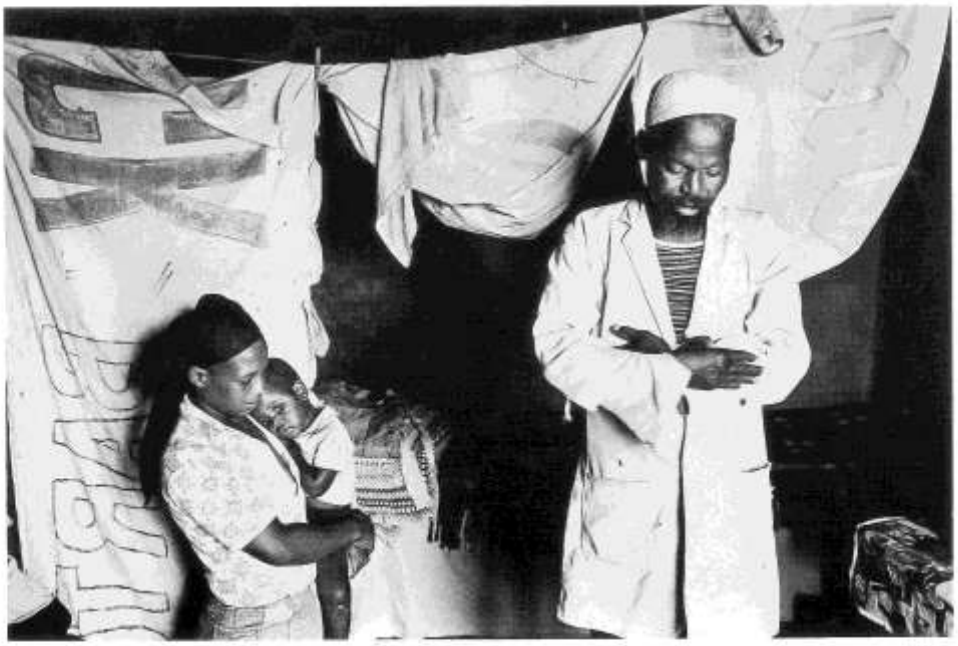
Shack shop owner and son, Amouti.



Old woman and her grandchild, Amouti.

Weaving mats, Shembe Village.

Pensioner and grandchild, Amouti.



Family at prayer, Amouti.

Gandhi Clinic.

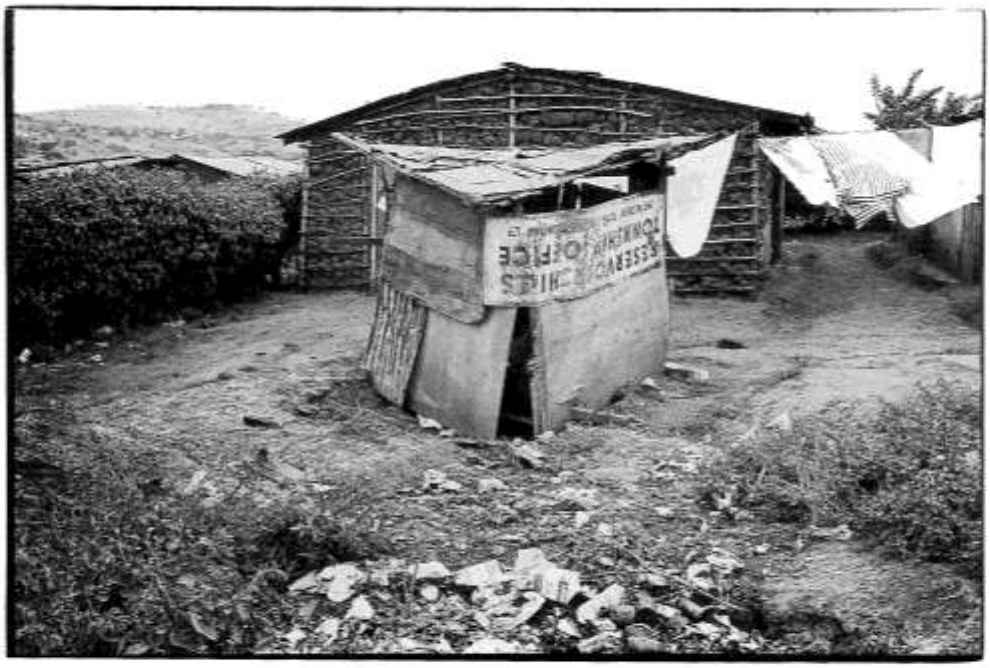
Unemployed youth and friend, Amouti.

Couple with child, Amouti.

Stevedore and wife, Amouti.

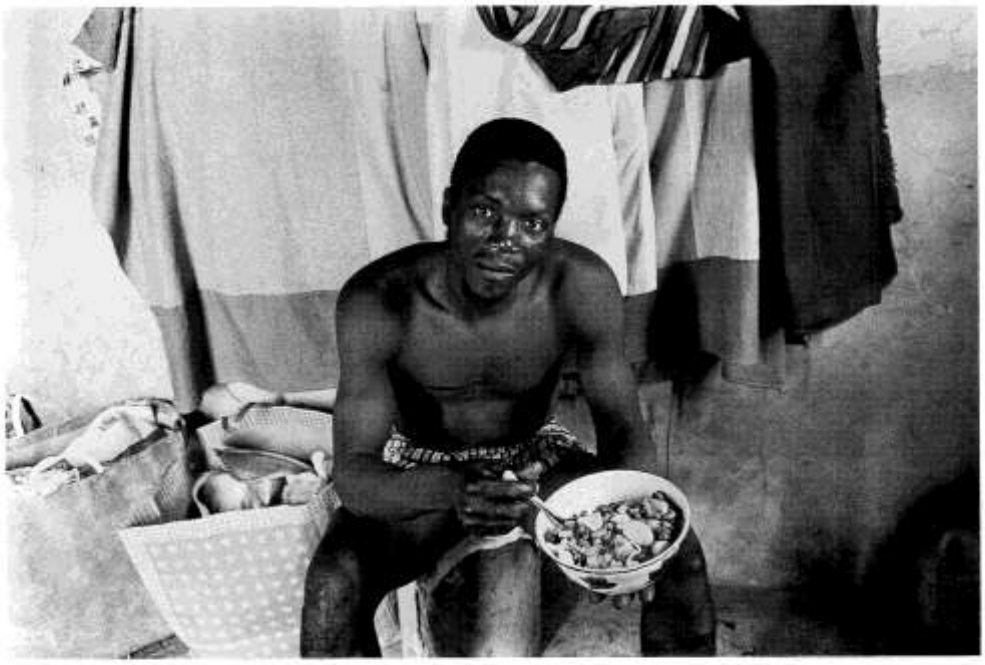
Mr Gideon Mdletshe, chairman of Amouti Residents Association, and his wife.

Recently demolished houses, Amouti.



Toilet in yard, Amouti.

Migrant worker, Amouti.



Brickyard worker, off - shift, Amouti.

Making a dagga pipe, Amouti.

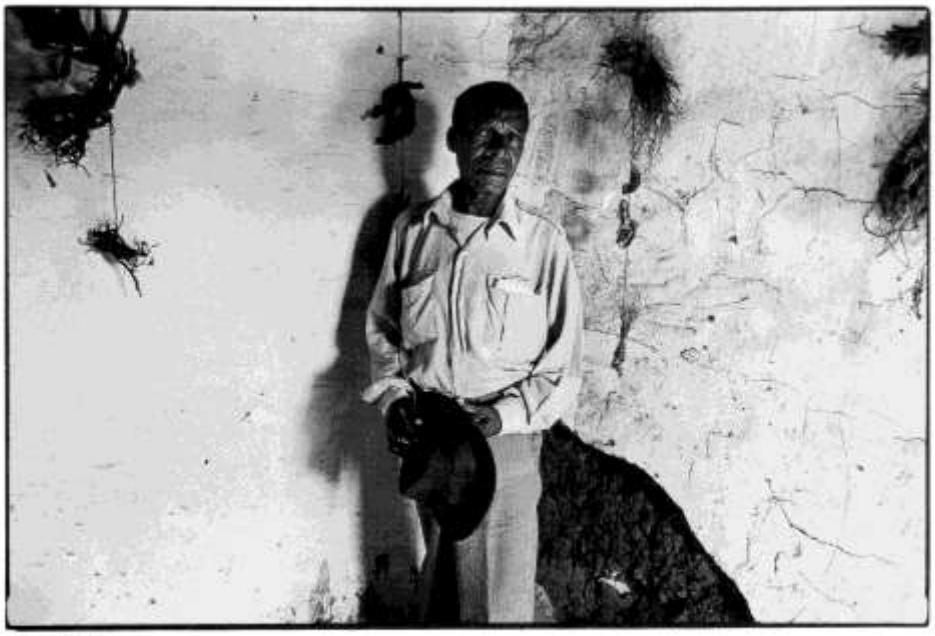
Members of Amouti soccer team.

Inanda Newtown.

Amouti

Shembe Village.

Amouti.

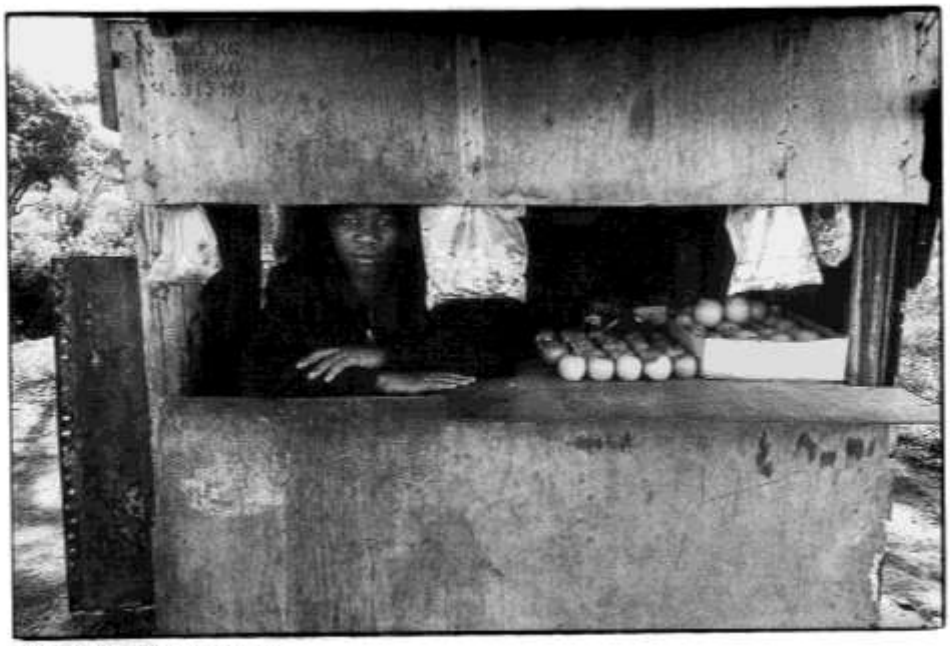


Herbalist, Amouti.

Sangoma, meat seller, Amouti.

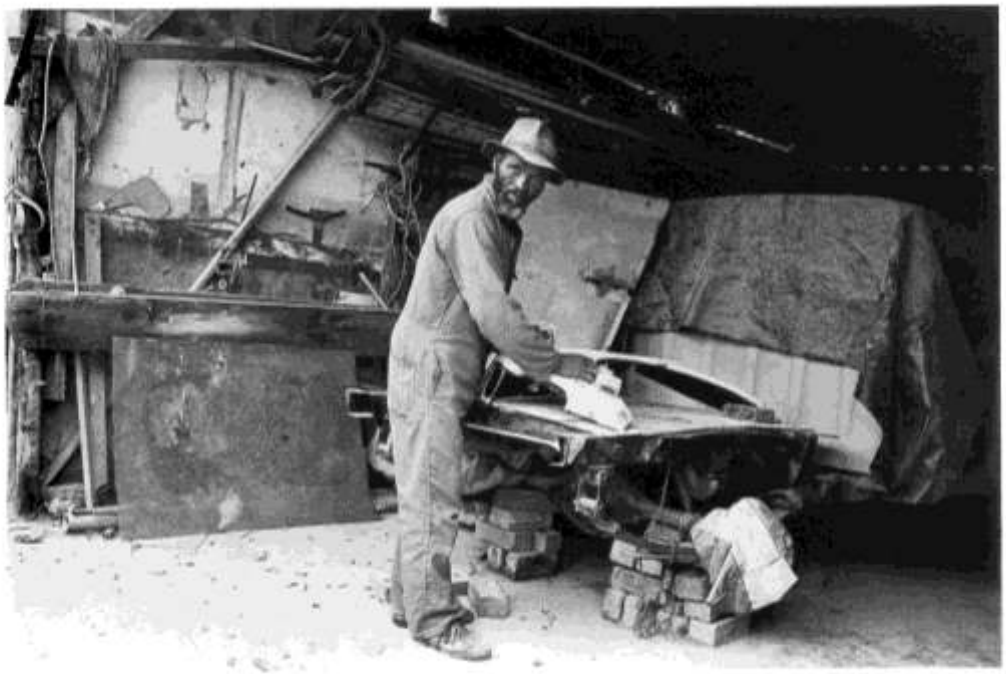
Teacher with her class of eighty children, Amouti.

Neighbours, Shembe Village.



Shack shop, Gandhi Settlement.

Shebeen owner and child, Amouti.



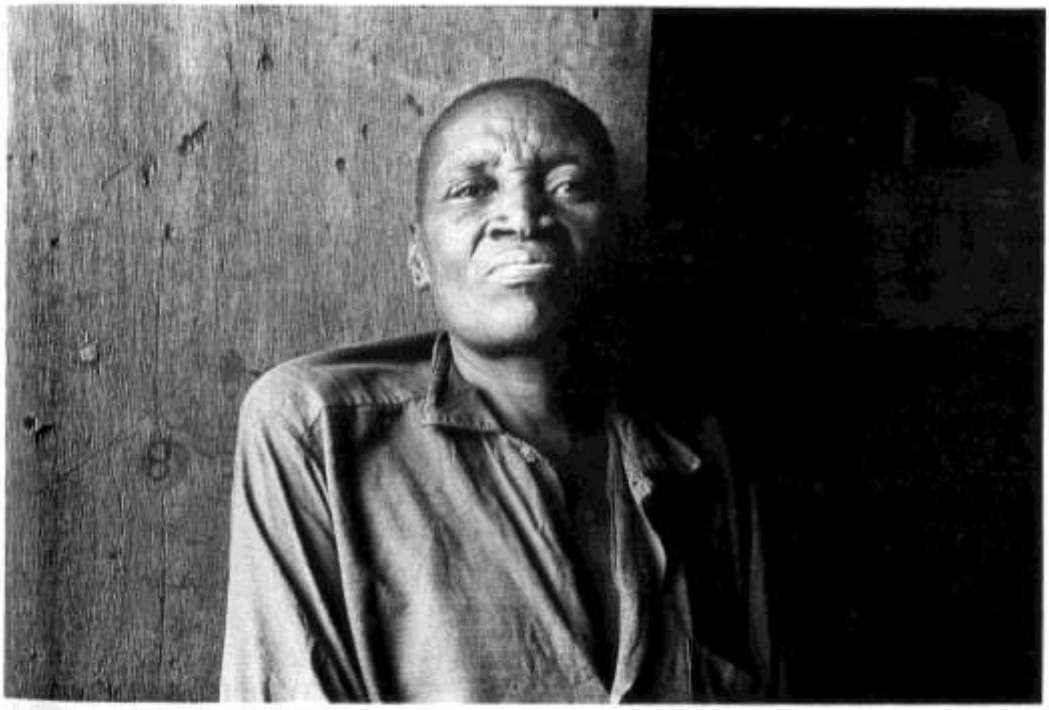
Panel beater's assistant, Amouti.

Amouti

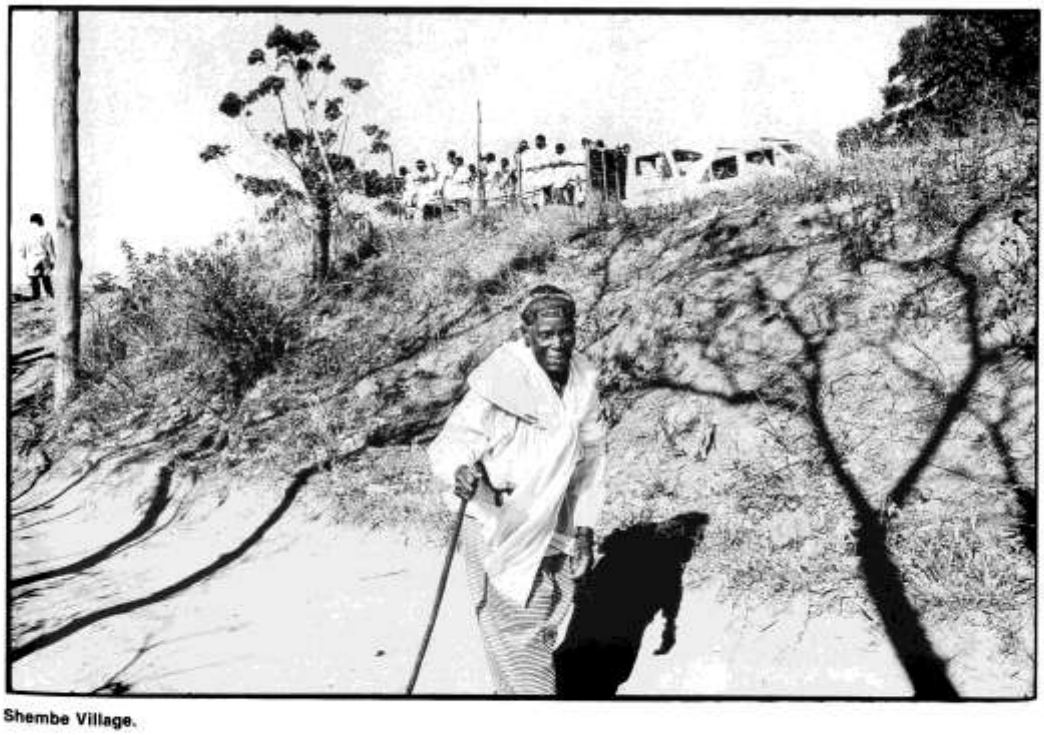
Inanda Newtown.

Interior of pensioner's home, Amouti.

Mr Rattan, storekeeper and landlord, Amouti.



Mr Thami Jali, pensioner, Amouti.



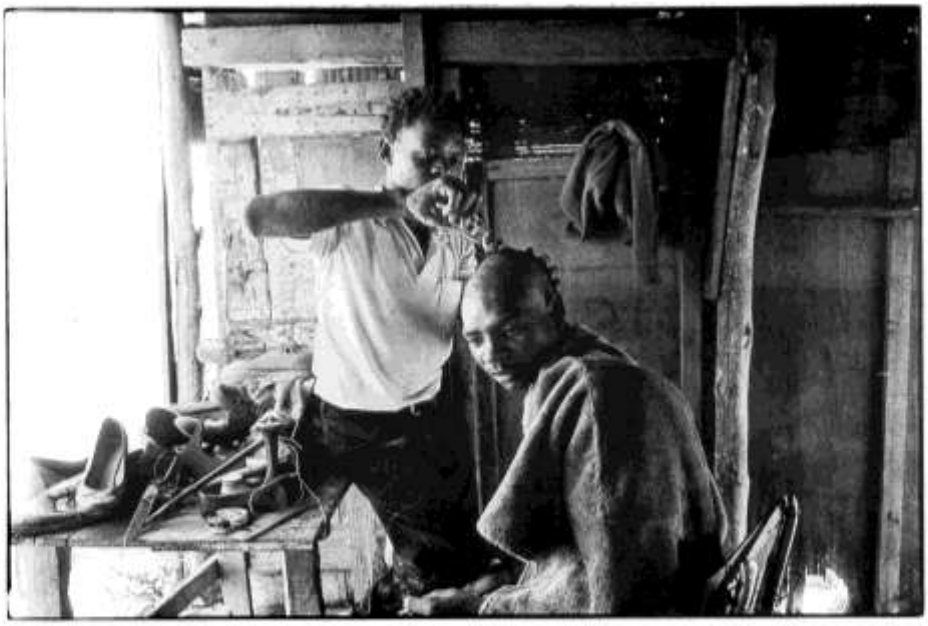
Shembe Village.

Pensioners, Mamba Store, Amouti.

Pensioners, Mamba Store, Amouti.

Pensioner being carried in to collect her money. She died a few weeks later.

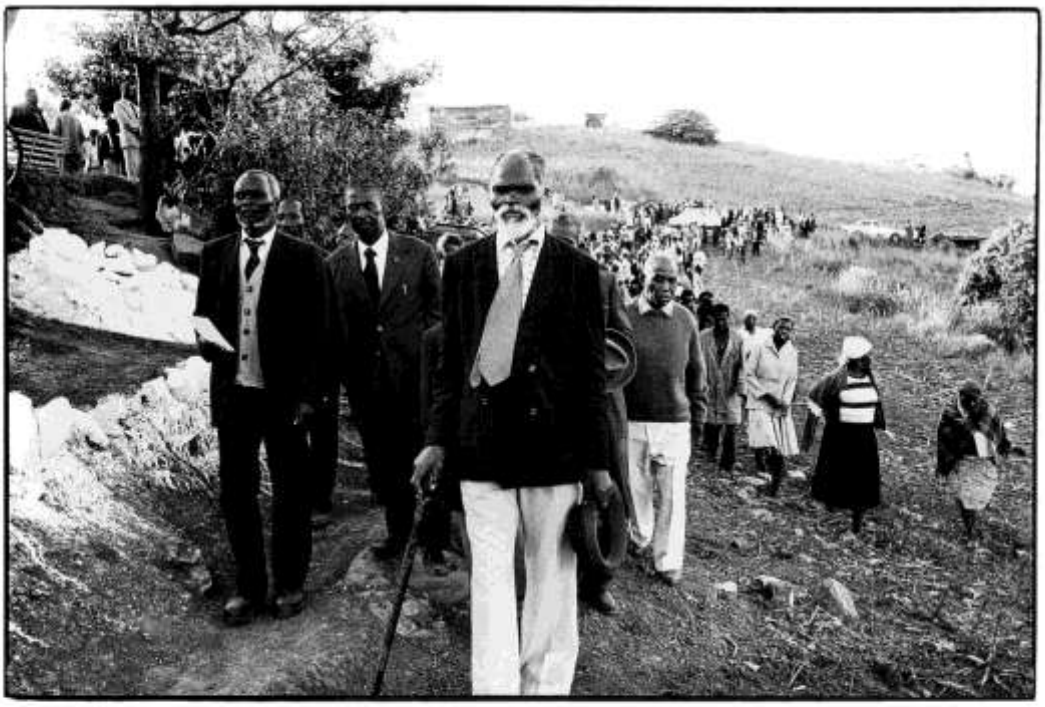
Induna and clerk, pension payout point, Mamba Store.



Disabled shoemaker whose shop was demolished a few weeks later, Amouti.

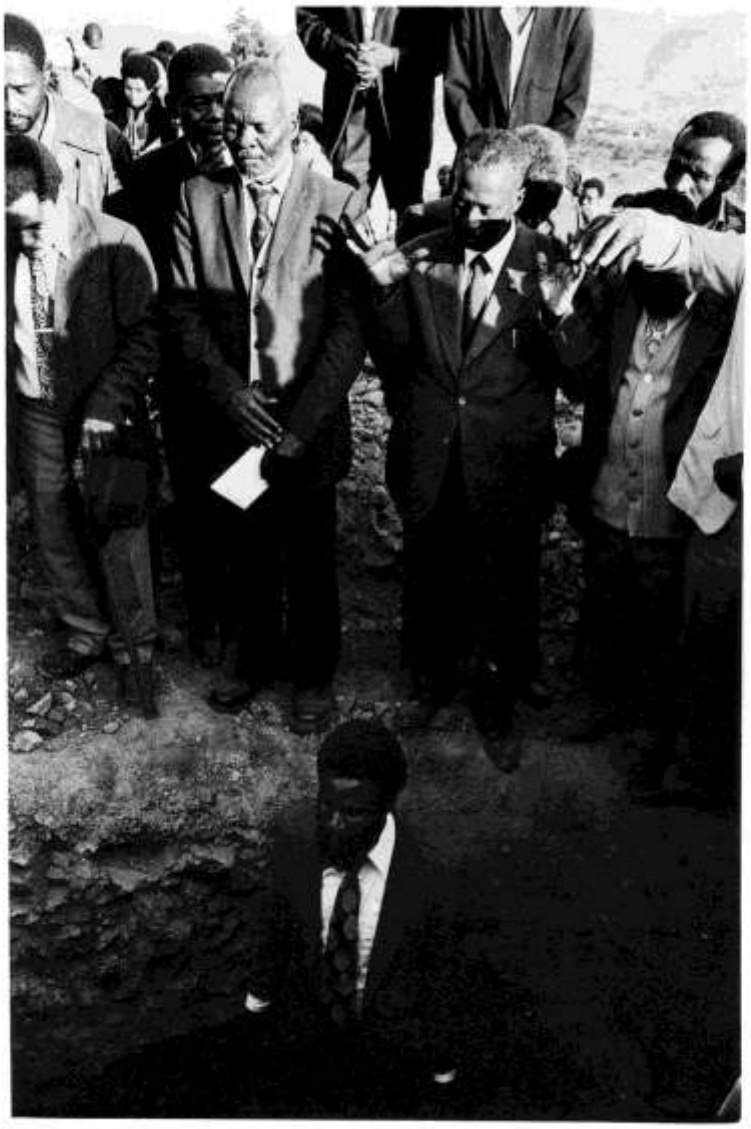
Induna Nkonyane, Amouti.

Inkatha pall bearers at funeral of Induna Nkonyane, Amouti.

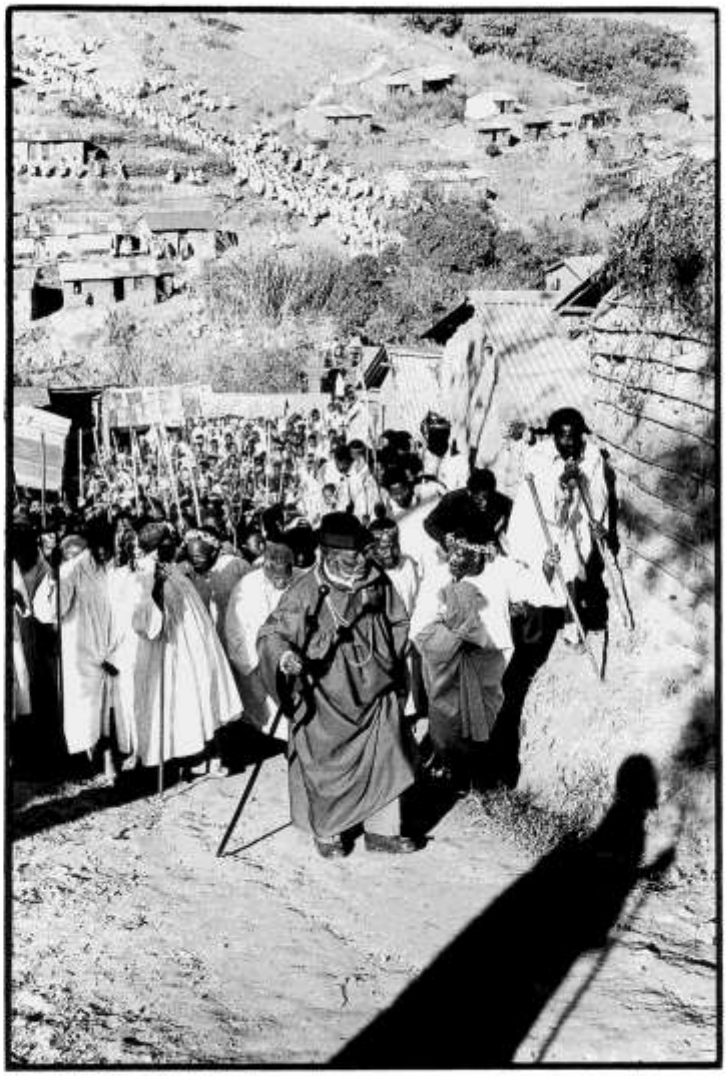


Funeral of the Induna, Amouti.

Widow of the Induna at graveside, Amouti.



At the graveside, Amouti.



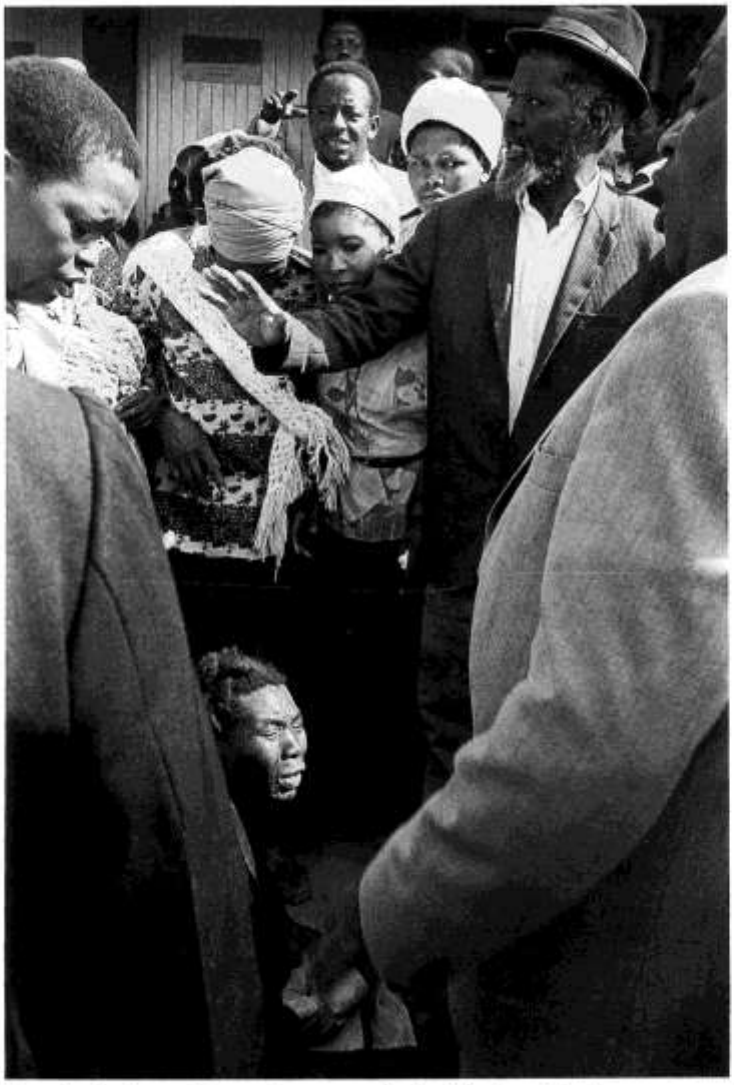
A.K. Shembe leads his followers on the anniversary of the founder's death.

A.K. Shembe leaving Shembe Village.

Awaiting dignitaries at the unveiling of a statue of the founder of the church.

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, head of the Kwa Zulu government, at unveiling.

Domestic worker extending her home, which was later destroyed by state officials.



Widow pleads for assistance at mass meeting held in Amouti to discuss removals.

Mrs Ngubane outside her home, which was demolished by state officails.

Ela Ramgobin and residents talk to pressmen after the demolition of shacks at Phoenix Store.

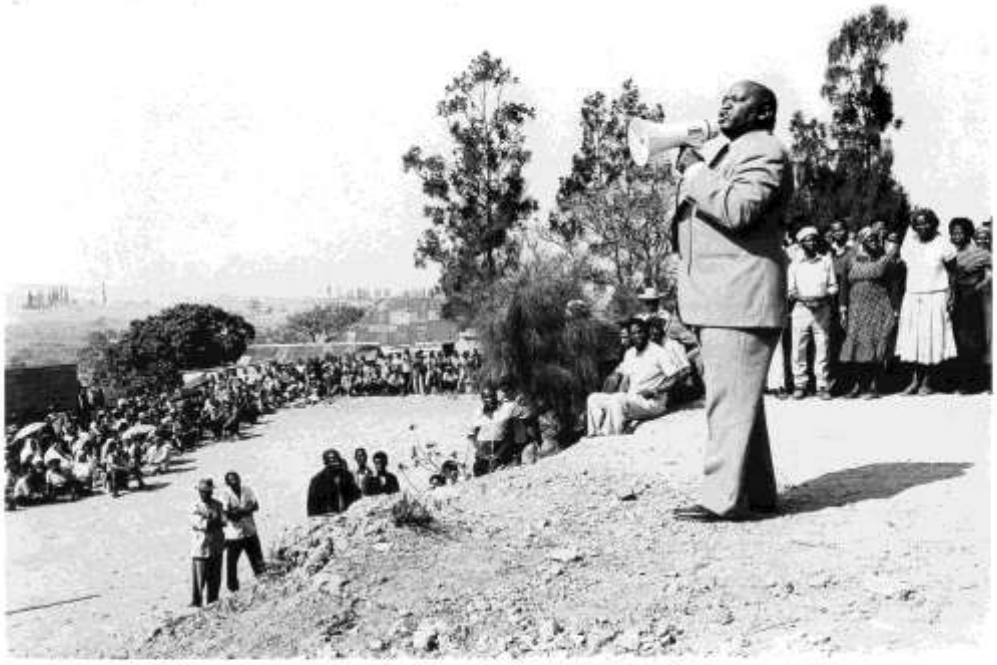
Mr R. Bhagwandeen, attorney for residents, addressing a meeting of squatters after court appearance, Verulam.

Members of Amouti Residents Association.

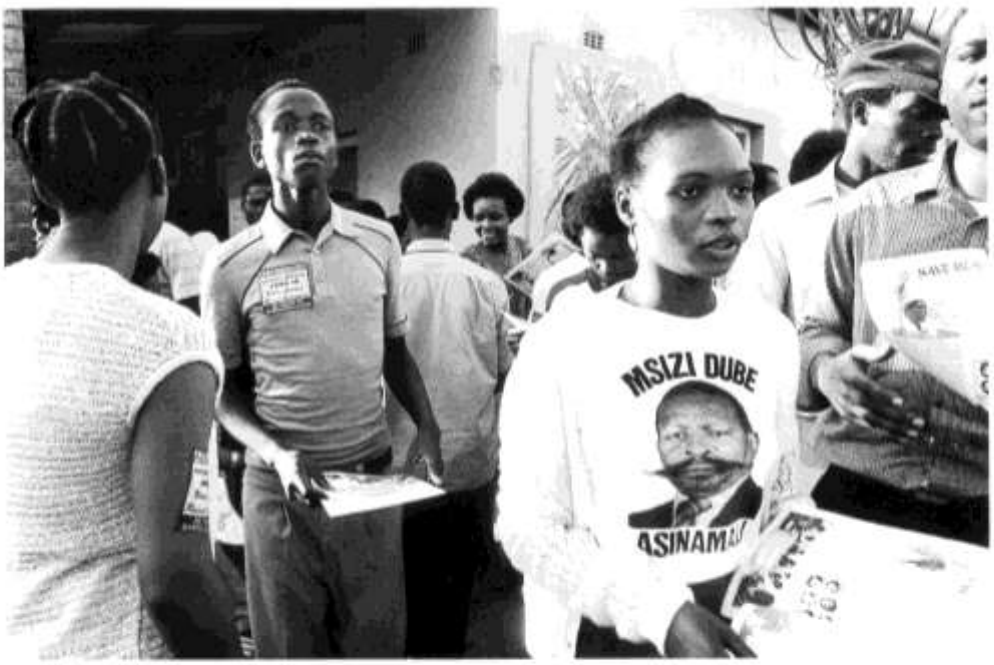
A prayer to open a meeting of the Amouti Residents Association.

Rev. Mabuza at June 16th meeting to commemorate the Soweto 1976 uprisings, Gandhi Settlement.

Women at protest meeting against removals.



Mr Rogers Ngcobo, chairman of the Inanda liaison committee and major landowner, addressing residents of Amouti about the new development plan for Inanda.



June 16th commemoration meeting, Gandhi Settlement.

IMIJONDOLO

Nobel peace prize recipient, Bishop Desmond Tutu, in his foreword to this book states:

"This outstanding collection of photographs and accompanying text forms a harrowing chronicle of what does happen to God's children who are victims of a vicious policy that restricts black land ownership and forces men to go to work in towns as migrant labourers living in single sex hostels. Their families are forced to move into so-called informal settlements such as Inanda.

The compilers have placed us in their debt. I hope this book will sear our consciences so that we will work to put an end to policies that can produce such human tragedy unneccessarily .....I commend this book warmly and yet sadly."

Imijondolo is the Zulu word for the makeshift houses built from industrial waste, wattle and daub, so characteristic of third world slums which have mushroomed in and around our segregated cities. This book by Omar Badsha, acknowledged as one of the most active social documentary photographers in the country, takes us into one of apartheid's sprawling ghettos.
The pictures, taken over a period of three years in Inanda-which is the home and battle-ground for more than a quarter of a million black people-are held out as the mirror of what is happening in hundreds of similar communities under the threat of removals.

The photographer, himself a victim of removals under the Group Areas Act, sees the people of Inanda not as victims, to be pitied, but as people involved in a struggle to assert their human dignity and the attainment of a free and democratic society.

OMAR BADSHA, born in Durban in 1945, is an award winning artist who was active in the formation of the independent trade union movement in the early seventies. In 1978 he began working as a freelance photographer and was a founder member of Afrapix, a photographers' collective. He is editor of the Exhibition "South Africa: The Cordoned Heart" which is part of the Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty in Southern Africa.

His book "Letter to Farzanah", published in 1979, is banned and for the past 17 years he has been refused a passport to travel abroad.

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