

On February 11 th 1983 in the debate on forced removals in Parliament, the Minister of Co-operation and Development, Mr Koornhof said, "I am on record as stating that the government and I will do everything possible to abolish the forced removals of people as far as is practicable and possible" and later "I therefore want to tell hon members that when they rise to their feet here and try to make everyone believe the falsehoods which they wish to bruit abroad about thousands of people that are going to be moved as was said again this afternoon, when they also implied that these were forced removals, then they do not know what they are talking about."

The shooting of Saul Mkhize by a policeman when police attempted to stop a meeting organised to discuss the threatened removal of the Driefontein Community in the Transvaal is one example of the use of force in the process of removals. This shooting was a culmination of the use of force at Driefontein.

On February 12 th Paris Mkhize, son of Saul Mkhize was allegedly assaulted by 6 men who asked him during the assault, "Why does your father not want to let Driefontein go?" He lost the use of one of his eyes in this incident.

When a trip to Babanango, the area marked for the settlement of the Zulu-speaking people from Driefontein, was organised by the authorities on the 9 th November 1982, police were present. Saul Mkhize described this as "a show of force."

These examples indicate the degree of force used in removals. However the state does not rely entirely on these methods. The following examples indicate other ways the state uses to coerce people to move.

1: Under the Riotous Assemblies Act, permission has to be obtained from the local magistrate before any open air meeting can be held. In Mgwali, a threatened area in the Eastern Cape, permission to hold a meeting to discuss the threat of being moved was refused by the local magistrate. The Mgwali people overcame this obstacle by house to house canvassing to inform people and gauge opinion. When people cannot hold meetings even to discuss the question of removals, talk of the end of the era of forced removals becomes absurd.

At Driefontein permission to hold a meeting on the 26th December 1982 was granted by the local magistrate at Wakkerstroom, but only on condition that (1) only landowners attended the meeting and (2) the representatives elected were to consist only of landowners. These conditions prevented the discussion of removals by the whole community and represent part of the strategy used by the state to create divisions between landowners and tenants, a division which the state attempts to use in the process of removals.

2: The refusal to allow a meeting of the whole community at Driefontein is one example of the attempt by the state to deepen divisions between landowners and tenants. Black freehold land has become a haven for farmworkers evicted off white farms as they have nowhere else to go. A further attraction for these tenants in Natal is that generally these freehold areas are much closer to employment opportunities than Trust land or land in Kwa-Zulu. At Steincoalspruit a meeting of the tenants was called to tell them of their threatened removal. Landowners were specifically excluded. The tenants have now been moved. Only the landowners remain and their small numbers make them more vulnerable to removal. At KwaPitela near Sani Pass, a similar process took place. Only a few landowners now remain, similarly vulnerable to removal.

3: People in threatened areas are told that their removal has been decided by an act of Parliament and no discussion is possible. At Daggakraal, a black freehold area in the Transvaal, people were told "the question is not whether these people are going to move or not but how they are going to move." In Cornfields the Commissioner who addressed the community told them that their removal had been decided by an act of Parliament and no discussion was possible.

4: There are 9 bus services for black commuters in the Ladysmith area. Only one service is

subsidised by the government. This is the bus service to Ezakeni and Ekuvukeni, areas in which people have already been relocated. This bus service is subsidised by 60% of its running costs. Bus services running to black freehold areas like Matiwane's Kop and the Driefontein Complex are not subsidised. This means that those people living in threatened areas are paying considerably more for an equivalent journey.

- 5: By threatening removal the state creates an atmosphere of uncertainty which makes planning for the future extremely difficult. People are scared to risk capital on improvements when the state seems determined to move them. People at KwaPitela and Driefontein in the Tvl did not plant for a season because they had been told that they were to be moved. The state hopes that eventually people will conclude that it is better to move than live in this atmosphere of uncertainty.
- 6: In some areas people are refused permission to extend their houses. In Mbulwane near Ladysmith, rooms were bulldozed by Municipal Officials in conjunction with the Drakensberg Administration Board in 1980. Now people in Mbulwane talk of "stealing inches" when they describe surreptitious extensions to their homes. The pressure on living space aggravates people's discomfort.
- 7: The neglect of facilities and services in the freehold areas is designed to make life uncomfortable for the inhabitants of these areas. The roads into KwaPitela and Cornfield have been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that access by ordinary motor vehicle is almost impossible. Residents in Mbulwane, although ratepayers, have been provided with no services by the Ladysmith Council.
- 8: In some areas the state has closed down existing facilities in areas threatened with removal. At St Chad's, a threatened church-owned property near Ladysmith, the state has closed the existing school in the area and opened an alternative in Imbali outside Pietermaritzburg.
- 9: In Mgwali, the chief who opposed relocation was deposed by the state. A new chief was forced on the people. However the community does not recognise or accept the authority of the new chief.
- 10: On the 6th December the Commissioner addressed meetings at Tembalihle and Cornfields, two adjoining freehold areas between Ladysmith and Estcourt. He told the people that they were to be moved and that for landowners there would be land for land compensation or cash compensation. However, according to people who attended the meeting he failed to inform them that of the 379 landowners in the two areas, only one landowner would be eligible for land for land compensation. The other 378 landowners who presently own less than 17 hectares of land will not be given any agricultural land and will consequently be forced to sell their cattle. The Commissioner also informed the meeting that people would be moved to Wembezi township near Estcourt and to a farm Tempe, adjoining Wembezi township. He failed to mention information that the Minister provided in a response to a Parliamentary question on the 4th February of this year, that some people from Tembalihle and Cornfields would be moved to Qudeni in the Nkandla District, more than 200 km from where they presently live and where the only employment is provided on phormium plantations. Recently a large number of the women presently living at the relocation camp in Qudeni and working at the phormium plantations were retrenched. The Director-General for Co-operation and Development admitted in his most recent report that "it would appear that the phormium tenax industry will disappear leaving the RSA completely dependent on imported jute for the production of grain bags. Apart from that, the disappearance of the industry is regretted because of the large number of jobs it created in remote rural areas." (p2)

When all these pressures on the people living in threatened areas are described, it is all the more remarkable that at Ladysmith on the 26th March, representatives from the threatened communities of Mbulwane, Steincoalspruit, Ndonyane, Driefontein (Tvl), Mgwali, Reserve 4, Matiwane's Kop, St Wendolins and Groutville were able to unanimously approve the following resolution:

- a) The people who are threatened by removals unanimously resolve that they are not moving.
- b) We pray that the government calls off the removals.