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APARTHEID AND THE REMOVAL OF BLACK SPOTS FROM LAKE BHANGAZI IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

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Clearly, the forced removal of Africans from White-designated areas during apartheid in South Africa is not unique to world history. So, what can be learned from studying a group of rural Africans living in a communal arrangement for 1,000 years or more? By investigating the case of the removal of African people from the Lake Bhangazi area within Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park in South Africa from 1956 through 1974, light can be shed on one aspect of forced migration. This may lead to an understanding of other forced movements of people throughout world history. It may also provide a better understanding of the rural phase of forced removals during apartheid. Most South African studies have focused on urban removals. The following article is the story of the people from Lake Bhangazi in KwaZulu-Natal set within the broad context of South African apartheid and “black spot” removal.

Keywords: *black spot removal; South Africa; apartheid*

The GGs came 8:00 one morning without warning. They forced us onto the trucks. We gathered whatever we could. Men from the [Natal] Parks Board drove us to the other side and dumped us along the road. We had no place to go and had no food. It was terrible.

—Grace Mbuyazi, personal interview, June to July 2001

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Almost everyone who could remember the forced removal of the people from Lake Bhangazi recalled similar memories as these of Grace Mbuyazi. Now in her 80s, Grace broke down into tears as she recalled this fateful day almost as if it were yesterday when it happened. Crying, Grace said that her people now live in poverty and are sick from eating “White man’s” food. She remembered an idyllic life at Lake Bhangazi where there was plenty of food. “People were not sick” (G. Mbuyazi, personal interview, June to July 2001). Although they lived a subsistence-farming lifestyle, everyone, when asked, acknowledged that they were healthy. People ate traditional food, not White food, which kept them healthy, according to G. Mbuyazi. One old man longingly remembered, “[we] could plant anything and it would grow and we would eat.” Domenic Dunn (1948), a descendant of the White Zulu chief John Dunn, described the people from the Lake St. Lucia area as “men attracted by food.” Many longed to return to their homeland where they recalled families living together in paradise along the Indian Ocean within the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park (GSLWP) in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

The idyllic life at Lake Bhangazi was a communal life of farming, grazing cattle, hunting, and gathering. The men speared fish from the freshwater of Lake Bhangazi and harvested the Indian Ocean. Men smoked tobacco or sniffed it as snuff. They also smoked hemp—*insangu* or *dagga*. Men and women gathered fruits and nuts while young boys tended the cattle, which were a measure of wealth and power. Men needed the cattle also for *lobola* or the bride price. Using ox-drawn plows or iron-forged hoes, the women planted sweet potatoes, peanuts, maize, millet, pumpkins, calabashes, *idumbe* (potato-like food), and cabbage. Women harvested materials such as *incema* to weave baskets and mats. Without potter wheels, women made clay pots by hand. Painstakingly, women harvested just the right materials to construct musical instruments. The land provided for their every need (Aitchison, 1917; F. Mhlanga, personal interview, July 2001; Silverston, n.d.; Sparks, n.d.; Stuart & Malcolm, 1950).

The people from Lake Bhangazi understood the need to conserve natural resources and developed complex sustainable conser-



Figure 1: Map of South Africa
 SOURCE: CIA World Factbook, 1999.

vation practices. Generally, the *inkhosi* (chief) or *induna* (headman) was responsible for managing the natural resources within a ward or chiefdom. Fakazi Mhlanga, in an oral history interview, recalled hunting as a young man at Lake Bhangazi. He said that the induna decided when the members of his ward would go off to hunt. There were celebrations signaling this momentous time. They also could hunt only certain game animals. Some game animals, like hippopotamus, were taboo to their diets (F. Mhlanga, personal interview, July 2001).

Lake Bhangazi sustained physical and spiritual needs, which were often the same. *Inyangas* (traditional healers) gathered their

medicines from the forest and the sea, which contained a plentiful supply. *Sangomas* (diviners) diagnosed people's spiritual and physical ailments. With the introduction of Christianity, faith healers preached the gospel. All drank the cleansing salt water of the Indian Ocean for physical and spiritual health. The most prominent physical features are the sand dunes that border the Indian Ocean and serve to filter water into Lake Bhangazi, providing fresh drinking water: These dunes are the tallest in the world and rich in titanium. While at Lake Bhangazi, the people lived a truly self-sufficient life (Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative Plan, 2000; Mama G. Mbuyazi, personal interview, June to July 2001).

Then one day in 1974, without notice, government trucks or GGs (Government Garage), as people called them, from the Natal Conservation Service (NCS) came, ending this idyllic life. The people living around Lake Bhangazi had no time to collect their belongings. One person reported, "When we were removed from Bhangazi at gunpoint, we ran away leaving most of our belongings behind. . . . We want back Bhangazi!" (Minutes of St. Lucia/Eastern Shores Land and Claim Meeting, 1988, n.p.). Few were allowed to transport their cattle or other livestock. Because they lost many of their cattle, it became difficult for young men lacking lobola (bride's price paid in cattle) to marry unless they found employment to help them purchase the required number. In 1981, a speaker in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly compared GGs to "the cattle trucks of Nazi Germany" (Unterhalter, 1987, p. 108).

Dumping them alongside the road on the western shores of nearby Lake St. Lucia, the NCS forced people to wander about in search of family members separated during the removal. People remained separated for months. Some, who were not at their homesteads when the trucks came, were left behind, forcing them to wander by foot in search of their families. The NCS dumped them on overcrowded reserves under the control of different inkosi forcing them to beg for land so they could build new homesteads or kraals. Most lived lives as refugees longing for the day of their return to Lake Bhangazi (D. Mbuyazi, personal interview, July 2001; Mama G. Mbuyazi, personal interview, June to July 2001;

F. Mhlanga, personal interview, July 2001). An old man during a meeting in Mtubatuba Town Hall near Lake St. Lucia said,

Awu! It was long ago. . . . The Parks Board (NCS) accused us of burning the *veld* and killing the government's animals. Then the *Abakwamahlathini* (Department of Forestry) said we were burning their trees . . . finally we were kicked out. We hope that God will give the KwaZulu government power to help us once again suck the breast of the land that nourished us. (as cited in Moloji, 1993/1994, pp. 4-5)

Most longed for the day when they could at least move their ancestral spirits to their new homesteads. This was the most devastating aspect of their removal from Lake Bhangazi. The abrupt removal of the people left them no time to conduct proper rituals for their ancestors' spirits. This involved the family sending a delegation with a thorny branch from an acacia tree to fetch the spirit. The branch would absorb the spirit. When done, they could return to their home. A designated person would carry the branch and talk to the spirit along the way, providing directions to the new homestead. When there, they would place the branch in the cattle enclosure. Cattle would then eat the branch, absorbing the soul. Each homestead has a hut, or an *iQukwane*, for the ancestors called *indlu yangehla*, or ancestors' house, where they could find sustenance like Zulu beer and food (M. Zondi, personal interview, June to July 2001).

This is the story of the forced removal of the people from Lake Bhangazi in present day KZN between 1956 and 1974 during the height of apartheid under the Nationalist Party regime in South Africa. It is also about their struggle to return. The removal of the people from Lake Bhangazi, in many ways, reflected the removal of other "black spots" within White-designated areas throughout rural South Africa. Through oral history interviews, their story unfolded in their own words, providing insight as to the meaning of place. From the trauma, many now wonder whom they are, having lost their connection to their homeland and ancestral spirits for such a long time.

In 1994, the new South African government passed legislation allowing dispossessed people to file land claims for the return of their homelands. The people from Lake Bhangazi responded by filing a suit for the return of their land. Before this, many had little information about the Bhangazi people and their plight. Many government officials did not believe that the people from Lake Bhangazi had ever lived in the area. This forced the Bhangazi people to devise elaborate methods of research to prove their case. Through oral histories and archeological evidence, the people from Lake Bhangazi managed to prove their existence and won their case. This experience led many to ask questions about themselves and their heritage.

The forced removal of people was not new to South Africa. It seems as if the history of European colonization was one of removal, evoking the poetic words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow from *Evangeline*, in which the main character searched for her lover, Gabriel, after their separation following the British removal of Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755 (Longfellow, 1847/1999). The United States has a bleak history of forced removals dating to the "Trail of Tears" and the forced removal of Native Americans from the southeast in 1838. In the 1950s and 1960s, many described urban renewal in the United States as "Negro removal." More recently, Serbs attempted forced removals of people in their ethnic cleansing program. Clearly, apartheid and black spot removal was an unfortunate part of the continuum of forced removals that have occurred throughout world history. This attempt to understand the situation at Lake Bhangazi may shed light on others who suffered from the same apartheid policy of black spot removal in South Africa.

THE PEOPLE OF LAKE BHANGAZI

The natural resources from the land and sea first attracted people to the Lake Bhangazi area. About 1700 years ago, people began settling along the shores of the Indian Ocean around St. Lucia and Lake Bhangazi. About 1500 years ago, a different linguistic group

appeared within the St. Lucia area, extending to the Lubombo Mountains. The Tekela Nguni people were apparently the first Africans to reach the area around St. Lucia when they migrated south along the coast of East Africa. The language group was isiThembe-Thonga in Bantu, which is a subfamily of the Niger-Congo family language (G. Anderson, personal interview, August 2001; Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative Plan, 2000; Ross, 1999; Stuart & Malcolm, 1950).

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach the area around St. Lucia. In 1554, the *San Bento*, a Portuguese slave ship, wrecked off the coast of St. Lucia on its way to the trading center at Delagoa Bay in Mozambique. The Thonga people came to their aid. This accidental contact led to a lucrative trade with the Portuguese. They traded glass beads, brass, copper, and dungaree cloth for gold and ivory from sea cow and elephant (Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative Plan, 2000; Silverston, n.d.; Stuart & Malcolm, 1950).

The plentiful wildlife around Lake St. Lucia attracted European hunters and adventurers also. They slaughtered many of the species of wildlife living in the St. Lucia area. William Charles Baldwin (1894) left a written account of his travels in the St. Lucia area in his book titled *African Hunting and Adventure: From Natal to the Zambesi*. He arrived in South Africa in 1854 and traveled to St. Lucia to shoot sea cows. Baldwin and other hunters almost wiped out the animal life in the area, causing the government to begin regulating the game hunts. Hunters did succeed in exterminating the elephants. Eventually, the Natal Parliament declared St. Lucia a game reserve in 1897, enlarging it to include the entire lake system in 1939, and encircling it with a half-mile barrier in 1944. In 1971, South Africa signed the RAMSAR international treaty designating Lake St. Lucia as a protected wetland. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared it a World Heritage Site in the 1990s (World Heritage Convention Act 49, 1999).

In the early 1990s, mining companies discovered titanium in the towering sand dunes along the shores of the Indian Ocean, stretching from Richard's Bay to the border of Mozambique. In the late 19th century, Sigurd Silverston described this vast mineral wealth

around Lake St. Lucia, writing that the minerals included gold, gelina, copper, tin, nickel molydenite, asbestos, mica, and coal (n.d.). This mineral-resource-rich area has attracted mining interests' attention, leading the South African government to declare the area a protected site and making it the GSLWP in hopes of protecting it from mining.

The rich agricultural lands, however, attracted most attention during the days of apartheid under the Nationalist Party regime. During the 1950s, NCS introduced gum tree and pine tree plantations. The government also sold land to private sugar cane growers. Agricultural demands motivated the Natal government to remove by force the people living around Lake St. Lucia under the pretext of natural resources conservation (Pretorius, 1994).

REMOVAL OF BLACK SPOTS IS THE HISTORY OF ZULULAND AND SOUTH AFRICA

Seemingly, the history of Zululand is a history of removals resulting from conquest or dynastic struggles. The losers fled in search of safe sanctuary, which they often found in the St. Lucia area. From the time of Shaka in the early 19th century through the 1970s, the geographical area of Zululand has experienced the forced removal of people. The result has been the creation of a diaspora of various families and tribes still in search of their historical roots.

European penetration into Zululand came after the conclusion of the Anglo-Zulu War in 1879 and the subsequent civil war between the Zulus. These led to the destruction and subsequent reorientation of Zulu traditional settlement patterns. British colonial interest in Zululand initially focused on labor resources needed in the newly discovered gold and diamond regions during the 1850s. To accomplish this, British authorities devised schemes to disrupt the Zulu people's "relationship between the homestead and the natural environment" (MacKinnon, 1990, p. 5). The Zulu homestead required unencumbered access to natural resources. By denying them access to natural resources, the Zulu no longer could sustain themselves thus forcing them into a growing pool of labor for mining and agri-

culture. The British accomplished this by imposing a hut tax and demanded labor from inkhosis (Guy, 1982).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the government in Natal began the process of creating a pool of labor by removing Zulu people from their homesteads to create and to expand game reserves. At the same time, the government granted Whites access to forests and other resources. Natal officials created a pretext for the removal of Zulus. They pointed to Zulu cattle herding as creating large-scale damage to the Crown forests and restricted their access to timber for housing and fencing for their cattle (MacKinnon, 1990). Thereafter, the colonial government passed forest and game regulations. The Natal government restricted Zulus to cutting only certain trees for the wood to use in their houses; the Zulus had to pay for this privilege.

The first of the game preserves was in the Hlabisa District. One of the new preserves was St. Lucia Lake. During the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), forest rangers allowed Zulus to move into forests. Then they complained that the Zulu trampled paths in search of wood for building materials. They also feared that they would denude the forests. Rangers accused them of burning off too much land for their gardens and farm plots. Following the war, regulations tightened on forest conservation (MacKinnon, 1990).

In 1902, the colonial government of Natal established the Joint Imperial-Colonial Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission. It completed its work in 1904, which called for the segregation of African and White lands. Natal threw open coastal lands from St. Lucia to Richard's Bay for White occupation and sugar cane production. Any Africans living within these delimited areas for White occupation were subject to removal. The Commission identified these areas as "black spots" or badly situated areas within White-designated areas. The technical difference between the two is that the latter areas were not African land freeholds, but fragments of communal lands under appointed chiefs located within White-owned land (Unterhalter, 1987). The Commission also established a series of reserves for the Zulus for their relocation after removal from White land. The Commission justified this by

claiming the need to conserve natural resources (Bundy, 1992; MacKinnon, 1990).

The Delimitation Commission laid the foundation for the Natives Land Act of 1913, passed following the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. This Act laid the statutory basis of territorial segregation, dividing the whole of South Africa into reserves where Africans could own land and the rest where they could not. Reserves made up 8% of the land with provisions to increase it to 13%. It also abolished cash tenants and sharecroppers, reducing them to labor tenants or wage laborers. The Natives Land Act of 1913 led to the removal of millions of Africans and their relocation to reserves. The law also prohibited Whites and Africans from “entering into any agreement for the hire or other acquisition . . . of any such land [designated for White occupation]” (Debates in the House of Commons, 1913). Reverend Mtimkulu from Zululand criticized the 1913 Act by saying,

Many natives . . . have already been removed from the farms on account of this Act. . . . There are others who have farms, but titles are refused them by the Government. . . . This Act therefore seems to us like a one-edged knife—it cuts a big piece off the native and is very gentle with the European. (Bundy, 1992, p. 7)

The Natives Land Act opened the floodgate for more legislation that solidified the segregation of Black and White South Africans. In 1936, the government passed the Native Trust and Land Act, (later called the Development Trust and Land Act). The Act increased the percentage of land for Africans to 13% as promised in the 1913 Act. It also allowed the South African Development Trust to relocate Africans to scheduled land in reserves. G. H. Nicholls, member of the Senate from Zululand, spoke before the South African Parliament in 1936 on the pending bill: “This Bill has become necessary . . . to create a contented and prosperous native peasantry in our reserves, who will become consumers. . . . Our civilized labour policy . . . depends entirely upon this measure which goes to the very root of our national economy” (Union of South Africa,

1936, pp. 2897-2898). By the 1940s, removed people caused overcrowding in the reserves where few could eke out a living on increasingly less land. The reserves, therefore, became reservoirs of migrant labor.

When the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, the new government continued the policy of segregation first established by the British colonial officials in Natal in the name of apartheid, or separate development. In 1950, the Nationalist Party passed the Group Areas Act, which restricted Black people from owning White land. The Act also did not recognize tribal tenure as a substitute for a recorded deed with the Office of Registrar of Deeds. This presented problems for people, such as the ones from Lake Bhangazi, who had not secured title to their land. Even if they had, however, the government most likely would not have recognized ownership, because the government had designated much of the land for White occupation. This led to alienation of people from their land through stepped-up forced removals (Group Areas Act 41, 1950; Torres, 1994). The Nationalist Party government added more laws attempting to establish independent Black African states to control the movement of people in a better and more systematic fashion. The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 allowed for the administration of Bantustans by placing them within Bantu Tribal, Regional, and Territorial authorities.

In 1954, T. L. Tomlinson, chair of the Tomlinson Commission, provided the ideological framework for apartheid, or separate development, laying out the foundation for forced segregation and removals to follow. Clearly, removals accelerated following the release of his report despite some resistance from local authorities (Verkyul, 1973). Passage of the Native (Prohibition of Interdicts) Act in 1956 prevented local authorities from seeking court action to prevent removals by eliminating judicial authority in such matters. The Surplus People Project reported the subsequent removal of 3.5 million people between 1960 and 1980. This left 15 million Africans owning only 13.7% of the land, in comparison with 3.5 million Whites owning 86.3% of the land (Unterhalter, 1987).

REMOVAL FROM LAKE BHANGAZI

Unfortunately, the removal of people from Lake Bhangazi between 1956 and 1974 was not an aberration. Unterhalter (1987) argued that during the 1950s, increased mechanization of farms with the emergence of capitalist commercial agriculture in South Africa led to the surplus of Black labor and their subsequent removal. She added, "Long-established peasant subsistence communities have been uprooted and forced to move to make way for highly subsidized commercial farmers with ready access to credit, marketing boards and mechanical inputs through [government] development plans" (p. 93). Undoubtedly, this prompted government action to accelerate the removal of black spots, or "surplus people," to make way for commercial farming. Social engineers within the South African government planned the evictions under the pretext of betterment schemes to improve farm production for subsistence African farmers that had actually already begun in the 1940s (Unterhalter, 1987).

Unterhalter (1987) pointed out that government agencies carried out the first removals in the 1950s. GG transport moved the mass of people to dumping grounds on South African Bantu Trust land, later called South African Development Trust. Reduced to one-quarter-acre plots, they could keep no livestock and could barely produce enough food to subsist. Cosmos Desmond visited a settlement at Mpungamhlope in Natal in the 1960s and reported, "The whole place had a general air of shabbiness with a number of overgrown, empty plots . . . [and] very poor, dilapidated houses. Ragged, hungry-looking children surrounded the few [water] taps that were installed in the 'streets'" (1971, pp. 50-51).

The removal of black spots slowed during the late 1950s because of fragmented reserves and scarcity of land on the reserves in KwaZululand. This may have led to the decision not to remove people entirely from the Lake St. Lucia area during the 1950s and 1960s. Still, the demand for natural resources increased. The Natal Parks Board had plans to develop the St. Lucia area for gum tree plantations. Mining operations demanded large numbers of harvested trees for shoring materials. Before this could begin, the gov-

ernment needed to remove people living there. With overcrowded reserves, the government decided to move the people throughout Lake St. Lucia, concentrating them around Lake Bhangazi near the homestead of Lokothwayo Mbuyazi beginning in 1956. Jotham Mfeka recalled,

In 1956 when the Forestry Company wanted to remove us, Njojela Mbuyazi went to Durban to try and negotiate about this. I accompanied him to see Cowen Cow. Cowen . . . told us that the land did belong to the government then. However, . . . because there were people in that land they would not be moved. (Minutes of St. Lucia/Eastern Shores Land and Claim Meeting, 1988, p. 1)

Cowen convinced authorities to divide the land and let the people settle near Lake Bhangazi where there were no trees planted yet (Minutes of St. Lucia/Eastern Shores Land and Claim Meeting, 1988).

The removal of black spots was at its height in 1969 when M. C. Botha was Minister of Bantu Administration and Development (BAD) (Platzky & Walker, 1985). Botha explained that no force was required, "We get their co-operation in all cases voluntarily. . . . Sometimes it is necessary to do quite a lot of persuasion, but we do get them anyway" (Unterhalter, 1987, pp. 110-111). In reality, the government "got them" through intimidation and selective use of violence. In 1968, G. F. van L. Froneman, deputy chairman of the Bantu Affairs Commission, said, "When all these 'Black spots' and isolated scheduled and released areas are once removed, the chess board pattern of Bantu Areas and White Areas in South Africa will also to a great extent be eliminated" (as cited in Desmond, 1971, p. 20). The BAD reported that Natal had the largest number of people removed. Between 1957 and 1959, Natal government removed 40,000 Africans. During the 1960s, it forcibly removed about 400,000 Africans and another 400,000 in the 1970s (Unterhalter, 1987).

To control the African population more efficiently, the Nationalist regime moved to establish independent Bantustans. The idea was to remove Africans from black spots and to relocate them on these Bantustans. Each African would then become a citizen of

these Bantustans and would carry a passbook as identification while traveling through White areas of South Africa. This process accelerated in the 1970s.

In 1970, the South African government established the Zululand Territorial Authority with Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi as chief executive officer. In 1972, it became the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, with Buthelezi serving as the chief minister of the Assembly. In 1977, the South African government declared KwaZulu to be a self-governing Bantustan. Not coincidental, these changes came at a time when there was an upsurge in removals. The Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1973 opened the way for a resurgence of black spot removals with no prior consultation, even if there was opposition (Unterhalter, 1987).

In 1973, Buthelezi publicly complained about the increase in removals. He criticized the government by saying, "We have said before that we are not prepared to co-operate with the removal of people. We don't want to be party to the misery of our people" (as cited in Unterhalter, 1987, p. 109). His chief complaint was that there was not enough reserve land to accommodate the increasing number of people moving into them. He complained: "The first of these [promises], which I consider a priority, is for the Government to give the Zulu nation more territory, for without more territory our scheme will not make sense" (as cited in Desmond, 1971, p. 219). Some have said that the scheme was to cooperate secretly with authorities in the removals to increase Buthelezi's political power through an increased population and treasury for his government.

The final removals from Lake Bhangazi occurred in 1974. The last leader of resistance to removals was Lokothwayo Mbuyazi. Some claimed that he was inkosi for the Lake Bhangazi area. Others identified him as induna whose allegiance was to the inkosi in nearby Mtubatuba (D. Mbuyazi, personal interview, July 2001; F. Mhlanga, personal interview, July 2001). How did he manage to resist removal for more than a decade? Even though there were conflicting memories about Lokothwayo, he nonetheless has reached mythical proportions since his death. One said that Lokothwayo managed to resist removal for so long because of his traditional healing powers. He recalled that Lokothwayo slaughtered a white

cow and prayed to his ancestors. As a result, when the White people came to remove them, they all suddenly fell asleep while approaching his kraal. When they awoke, the people had disappeared (Mama G. Mbuyazi, personal interview, June to July 2001).

Clearly, Lokothwayo was able to use the legal system to delay what now appears to have been the inevitable. Daniel Mbuyazi, his son, recalled that he had filed for an injunction against the removal plans in 1973 with the magistrate in nearby Mtubatuba. The magistrate delayed government action for a year despite the 1973 amendment to the Bantu laws. Lokothwayo died in 1974, and removals followed shortly thereafter (J. Mbuyazi, personal interview, July 2001). The circumstances surrounding his death remain clouded. Fakazi Mhlanga remembered him as the hero of the resistance. Despite this, he reported that many enemies had cast evil spells and poisoned him, making him sick. He reportedly recovered using his traditional healing powers (F. Mhlanga, personal interview, July 2001). Still, others reported that he may have died from this poisoning in 1974. Thus without a leader, the people were vulnerable to removal.

Still, the question remained, why did the government suddenly decide to focus attention on the people from Lake Bhangazi? The government had not designated area surrounding Lokothwayo Mbuyazi for commercial agriculture. Jiakonia Mhlanga, a former resident of Lake Bhangazi, offered a plausible explanation. He said that the government removed them because of a terrorist threat. The government feared that terrorists might land on the nearby shores of the Indian Ocean and use the Lake Bhangazi area as a base for their operations. They feared that guerillas would blend into the African villages along the Indian Ocean (J. Mhlanga, personal interview, June to August 2001).

Mozambique gained independence in 1975, following a successful leftist military coup in Portugal in 1974. Following the coup, the new government withdrew from the colony. Subsequently, a struggle followed between the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) (FRELIMO), the national liberation movement, and the South African and Rhodesian-backed opposition named Mozambican National Resistance (Resistência

Nacional Moçambicana) (RENAMO). Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military arm of the African National Congress (ANC), backed FRELIMO and used Mozambique to launch guerrilla attacks into South Africa. Umkhonto we Sizwe also supported Zimbabwe People's Revolution Army (ZIPRA) and their efforts to liberate Rhodesia. To stem the spread of revolution in southern Africa, military forces from South Africa invaded Namibia following the outbreak of fighting in Angola. Surrounded by revolution, the South African government's fear of terrorist or guerrilla attacks intensified, leading to heightened security along its vulnerable borders. In 1974, Premier Balthazar Johannes Vorster believed that if African states support the liberation movements sweeping throughout the region, South Africa would then face a "catastrophe too ghastly to contemplate" (Ross, 1999; Unterhalter, 1987).

To be sure, the government removed people throughout the Lake St. Lucia area in an effort to increase security. Platzky and Walker (1985) pointed out, "At Lake St. Lucia, more than 3400 Africans were moved off reserve land occupied by them for hundreds of years . . . from 1974 to 1979 . . . barely recorded in the press" (p. 47). The GGs also removed 1,500 people from an area demarcated for a missile testing range at Fenias Island on the western shores of Lake St. Lucia in Sodwana State Forest. The government conducted the removal and dumping of 700 people as "full-scale army maneuvers, complete with code names" (Platzky & Walker, 1985, p. 147). Cheryl Walker, KZN commissioner, commented, "The history of the removal is not very well documented. What we know is that it was handled as a military operation" (as cited in Salgado, 1999b, par. 7). Like others, they had to leave crops and livestock behind as they watched the government burn their homes. After the completion of Nhlozi Military Base, soldiers shelled their school to test artillery ordinance. Following their removal, the people suffered from malnutrition and had to travel long distances to fetch water from "bilharzias-infected streams" (Platzky & Walker, 1985, p. 349).

During the 1970s, some estimates showed about 400,000 people removed from black spots in KwaZulu with a planned removal of an additional 1 million in the following decade. Oscar Dhlomo,

secretary-general of the Inkatha Freedom Party, in 1981 said, “The population removals in Natal involve persons displaced or removed from so-called ‘black spots’ . . . Kwazulu government is . . . [not] . . . consulted . . . about such removals . . . and we have no option but to countenance the resettlement . . . on humanitarian grounds” (as cited in Unterhalter, 1987, p. 109). He went on to say, “We could not turn people away who would otherwise be homeless” (as cited in Unterhalter, 1987, p. 109).

In 1984, the threat of removal in KwaNgema and Mogopa led the people to resist through the courts. They also used the international press to tell the story of their pending plight. Their success may have stopped the removal of about 1 million people living in black spots. Increasingly, the international community stepped up pressure against South Africa to end apartheid, culminating with the U.S. sanctions in 1986. Slowly, apartheid began to crumble.

During the final days of apartheid, Africans—who the government had removed from black spots—began to speak out demanding the return of their land. On February 2, 1990, President F. W. DeKlerk responded to these claims trying to soften the outward appearance of apartheid. He admitted that the government had forcibly removed Africans from their homesteads. Without any recourse, they had to comply. Representatives from six communities in Natal asked the government for their land back after hearing his speech. They asked for compensation in the form of land restitution, loss of earnings, and other losses associated with the removals such as destroyed houses and loss of livestock. They also wanted their title deeds restored, complete with mineral rights and compensation for what had been mined (Minnaar, 1994).

By March 1991, throughout South Africa, dispossessed people demanded their land back. Some even went as far as to reoccupy their dispossessed land. This characterized the situation in Natal. In Roosboom, people began negotiating for the return of their land. While awaiting the results of their negotiations, they reoccupied the land they had claimed. Problems did arise over titles to the land. The government claimed the people had no title. Thus, they had no ownership rights. ANC party leaders responded to the Nationalist’s position by demanding them to “listen to people’s history about

their claim for land” (Torres, 1994, p. 35). They argued that the government should not only look at title but also should look at the inheritance, forced relocations, historical claims, and ancestral gravesites. During their reoccupation campaign—which led to trespassing charges in Machaviestad (Matlaong)—people cried, “Our forefathers’ graves are our title deeds” (Minnaar, 1994, p. 38).

In 1993, Richard’s Bay Mineral Company sought permission to begin mining operations on the sand dunes at Lake St. Lucia. This prompted a public hearing in nearby Mtubatuba. Many families from Lake Bhangazi had already begun to organize to reclaim their lost land. The proposed mining operations made it critical to accelerate their efforts to reclaim their land and to protect their ancestors’ burial sites in the sand dunes (Moloi, 1993/1994).

This mining proposal set off a struggle between two rival groups. Fineas Mbuyazi, son of Lokothwayo, led the group that opposed the mining operation. Mbuyazi said, “I don’t want them to dig the earth and scatter the bones of our fathers around!” (Moloi, 1993/1994, p. 5). Alpheus Mnguni from the National Union of Mine-workers agreed. He outlined the union opposition to the proposal from Richard’s Bay Mineral Company. He said that they had not kept promises to provide a living wage for the workers. Therefore, the people should not believe them when they promise not to disrupt burial sites (Moloi, 1993/1994).

Chief Mineus Mkhwanazi represented the faction in favor of mining. As king, Mkhwanazi claimed the eastern shores of Lake St. Lucia as a part of his historic jurisdiction. Mkhwanazi argued,

It will be a mistake if I, as the king, say that I am against conservation. But, the conservation of nature must not deny my people an opportunity for development. Wealth creation will only affect a small part of St. Lucia. (as cited in Moloi, 1993/1994, p. 5)

Mbuyazi refused to meet with Mkhwanazi. He accused Mkhwanazi of not struggling for the land like the Mbuyazi people. He said, “I dislike the mixing of people with different kings” (Moloi, 1993/1994, p. 5). Essentially, Mbuyazi questioned the validity of his power over the area surrounding Lake Bhangazi and the right to negotiate with the mining company. He said, “He (Mkhwanazi)

claims to be king because King Shaka was *Inkosi Ymakhosi* (King of Kings). King Goodwill Zwelithini [of the Zulus] now occupies this position [not Mkhwanazi]” (as cited in Molo, 1993/1994, p. 5). This dispute spilled over to their official land claim that they filed the following year and continues to simmer through the present.

Under the new South African Constitution of 1994, the government passed the Restitution of Land Rights Act. This Act allowed people to file claims for the recovery of lost land resulting from the removals of black spots going back to 1913. On September 27, 1995, Phineas Mbuyazi initiated a land restoration claim on behalf of the Mbuyazi clan and the people from Lake Bhangazi. Mineus Mkhwanazi followed on October 11, 1995 with a similar claim on behalf of the Mpukunyoni Tribal Authority (Restitution Claim, 1995).

There were, however, questions as to the validity of their claims. Many questioned whether they had actually lived on the land that they claimed. Andrew Spiegel, an anthropologist at University of Cape Town, led the way in proving that people actually lived at Lake Bhangazi. Essentially, he re-created the community based on interviews. From the interviews, he began searching for material evidence. The most convincing evidence was the existence of a cattle dip tank built in the late 1930s by the government in an effort to eradicate an infestation of ticks. Mama Grace Mbuyazi recalled the White man who was in charge of the cattle dip. He had lived with her family while staying at Lake Bhangazi. She even remembered that he liked to eat. This, along with other evidence, convinced the Land Claims Commission that people actually lived at Lake Bhangazi until NCS evicted them. Still more challenges faced people in their quest for the return of their land (Mama G. Mbuyazi, personal interview, June to July 2001; J. Mhlanga, personal interview, June to August 2001).

In 1995, the Regional Land Claims Commission along with T. Swanepoel, Department of Land Affairs (DLA), met with Mbuyazi and representatives of Mkhwanazi in Empangeni. The government officials outlined possible options for the people reclaiming their land at Lake Bhangazi. Swanepoel said that they would have problems relocating to Lake Bhangazi because it lay

within the GSLWP. Instead, he said they could choose sites in nearby Mtubatuba to build houses or could choose sites north of St. Lucia town. The DLA could also identify farms and assist claimants interested in buying these farms. The people could also harvest medicinal plants, natural resources, and vegetables in controlled access areas at Lake Bhangazi. The agreement additionally gave them access to ancestor gravesites. They could also share in the profits from culled animals within the park. In addition, the DLA could financially assist those claimants who wanted to buy urban stands in Durban, Richard's Bay, and elsewhere. They could also receive cash compensation based on the valuation of the land. Finally, they could share in the revenues generated from GSLWP. Both factions agreed (Restitution Claim, 1995)

It took 4 years to complete the land claim. In 1997, the Land Claims Commission determined that they would validate only one claim from the former residents of the Lake St. Lucia area. The Mbuyazi family and the Mpukunyoni Tribal Authority agreed to form one committee naming it the Bhangazi Land Claims Committee (BLCC). With this, DLA finalized an agreement with the newly constituted body in December 1997. The final settlement between NCS and BLCC came in 1999. The government agreed that the dispossessed people from Lake Bhangazi could claim portions of the land around Lake St. Lucia, totaling 26,360 hectares of land. It verified that they had lost these rights because of racially discriminatory laws and practices leading to their dispossession between 1956 to 1974 (Salgado, 1999a).

The government, however, renegotiated the terms of the settlement refusing to allow their return to their former homeland at Lake Bhangazi citing that it had been recently designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Instead, they received a restitution award of R\$17 million, or about \$2 million. Each of the 556 beneficiary families received R\$30,000, or about \$5,000. The total amount was placed in a trust account under the control of BLCC attorney John Wills. The trust was to manage the fund for the education and benefit of the community. Through the 1999 agreement, they also received 80% of the revenue generated by the GSLWP. They also received 5 hectares of land at Lake Bhangazi for a heritage center.

On the surface, it appeared that the story of the people from Lake Bhangazi ended with their successful land claim. Still seething, however, the two groups remained divided over the agreement. In 2001, the direct descendants of Lokothwayo sued for representation on BLCC. They argued that the deal negotiated with the government was a corrupt one benefiting only a few committee members and their attorney, John Wills. They filed suit with DLA for title to their lost land and its return for settlement. Fineas Mbuyazi supported them, which resulted in his forced exile into Swaziland because he was fearing for his life. He claimed that assassins attempted to murder him (J. Mbuyazi, personal interview, June to August 2001).

In 2000, the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) was created to provide economic development in KZN, Swaziland, and Mozambique. The aim was to use ecotourism for economic development of the region. Lake St. Lucia fell within the SDI along with Lake Bhangazi. Andrew Zaloumis, SDI project manager, summed up the SDI stating, "Without economic benefits [of ecotourism] to the people of the region, the whole area is at risk" (as cited in Salgado, 1999c, n.p.). Zaloumis opposed reoccupation claiming that it would destroy the delicate environment. Gordon Forrest of the NCS agreed. He even said that it would be better to allow mining of the sand dunes, because at least they could rehabilitate the land. Because of this, the government has denied them access to Lake Bhangazi without first securing permits. This was just one of many failed promises (Moloi, 1993/1994).

Seemingly, government authorities have resorted to age-old arguments used against the Zulu people claiming that they cannot conserve the environment. In reality, many argued that this policy is a continuation of apartheid, preserving the environment for the benefit of White tourists at the cost of the people who had inhabited Lake Bhangazi for centuries. Ian Porter, warden of St. Lucia, found the government's position absurd. He said,

It would be stupid not to accept people as part of the ecology. People in this area have been harvesting *incema*, tapping *ilala* palms and using the other natural resources for thousands of years. Their pres-

ence has shaped the ecological balance.” (as cited in Munnik, 1991/1992, p. 12)

The people from Lake Bhangazi continue to struggle for the return of their land. This struggle continues under the new African regime that in some respects resembles the old regime. In July 2001, NCS released elephants at GSLWP, which served as a symbolic reclaiming of the land by the Zulu people. The irony of this event was revealed in the numerous speeches delivered. In his speech at the ceremonies, King Zwelethini told the Zulu people that they could not return to their homelands, because the site is a World Heritage Site. Many saw the irony. Makondo KaDhlovu summed up the people’s concerns when he said almost a century ago, “Let that land which is government land appear and let us black people build and dwell thereon and enjoy some rest” (as cited in MacKinnon, 1990, p. 178).

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