

Still contrasting South Africa and Europe to the latter's disadvantage, he went on to say:

"Minorities are trampled down. Dissident views are not tolerated and are forcefully suppressed . . . intellectual freedom is disappearing with political freedom, freedom of conscience, of speech and of the Press, and that of teaching, is in extreme danger . . ."

He closed his address with an observation and two questions:

"The fight for human freedom is the supreme issue of the future . . . Are we going to leave the field free to those who threaten our fundamental human ideals and our heritage of the past? Or are we going to join in battle for the breaking of our bonds and the enlargement of our range of free choice and free action?"

Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentleman: some students and staff members at UCT have answered these two questions. So must we.

STINKWATER

A JOURNALIST

THE CASE OF STINKWATER AND KLIP-

GAT, those appropriately named shanty towns north of Pretoria, where more than 400 African families were dumped in the heart of the coldest winter, shows once again the cold, inhuman attitude of the Government towards the African people.

For whatever reason they were uprooted, whether valid or not, the fact that they were forced to shiver in tents and lean-to shacks during the weeks of sub-zero temperatures was deplorable.

The *Bantu Administration Department* claims that the families are happier in the "closer settlement areas". Closer to what? One may well ask. Certainly not closer to the homes they loved and lived in for up to forty years, and in some cases longer.

Stinkwater was quite rightly branded as the "Linchill of the Transvaal", as living conditions in the dense bushveld are shocking. The B.A.D. made no effort to improve them — until press publicity on the affair had caused such acute embarrassment that they were forced to sink several boreholes. Otherwise they maintained contemptuous departmental silence.

Again the department had thought they could get away with uprooting the families without a word being said to the Press. Again they were wrong. When first mention was made of the removals, officials flew into a flurry. Pressmen were refused entry and no special permits were allowed. Then, when this was shown up, to their great embarrassment, the authorities laid on a visit to the "show-piece areas".

I spoke to families in the Stinkwater area, and almost without exception they said they would have preferred to have stayed where they were, near Eersterus. It was close to their work, close to the railway station, close to their friends, and most of all close to their hearts.

Officials of the B.A.D. claimed that the families were, without exception willing to move from the "absolute squalor". Proof of this was an African man who was handed a form giving him six days to leave home.

He was told that if he was not off the land within that time, his house would be bulldozed down with all his possessions inside.

What could the families do? Who could they turn to for protection? As one man said: "If I complained too much, they would have told me I was an illegal squatter. They would have forced me to go to a 'homeland' far from Pretoria, where I have never been."

The families were taken to Klipgat and Stinkwater in lorries. They were left in the veld with one tent per family, and told to build their own houses. They were told that the tents would be removed in three months.

Many said they could not afford to build their houses. They were forced to put together lean-to shacks from rusty corrugated iron sheets, cardboard and scraps of wood. Anything to keep the cold out.

Bus fares

One man said he spent nearly R12 a month on bus fares to and from work, nearly a third of his monthly wage. Most of the men were employed at Silverton, which is close to Eersterus. They now have to travel 35 to 40

miles to work by bus and then train.

These men rise at 3 a.m. to catch the early bus, and return from work at 9 p.m. A Coloured woman said that since their move to Klipgat, she hardly ever sees her husband. "He gets up too early in the morning. When he gets home he sleeps immediately," she said.

Very generously the department said that if the men found the travelling expenses too high, "They will be at liberty to stay in a hostel, either in Atteridgeville or Mamelodi". Home life and the need for a father for the children at home, was of no concern to the department.

Amenities

Let us consider what amenities were available in the area when the families were moved. No medical facilities in the area at all. The nearest clinic is at Boekenhoutfontein, about eight miles from Klipgat, and considerably further from Stinkwater.

No schools exist in the two areas, and the parents and children alike agree that it is too far to walk to Boekenhoutfontein. Shops — there is one general dealer who runs a roaring business in the old section of Klipgat. But, according to the residents, he charges what he likes because of the lack of competition. There is no shop near Stinkwater.

The people say it is cheaper to shop in Pretoria, and rather pay for the bus fares, than to shop at the store at Klipgat.

Problems arise there too, as the bus companies exploit the situation by charging 5c extra for each parcel carried on the bus. They cannot win. No wonder they shrug their shoulders and sit in the sun dispiritedly.

Worst of all are the lack of toilet facilities, water and lighting. At Klipgat alone, more than 2,000 people drew water from one hole — the only water in the area. When it rained, the run-off water rushed down the slopes into the water hole causing the area to be one large mud bath.

For days after the storm the people were without water. There is now a borehole, sunk after the hew and cry. But the Africans still prefer the fountain water and say the water in the tanks has a peculiar taste.

The water situation at Stinkwater is equally bad. Until recently the families were drawing their drinking water from a river where cattle drink. Little wonder some of the children suffer from chronic diarrhoea and other sicknesses.

The removal from Eersterus

Let us now consider the validity of the removal from Eersterus. Most of the families owned the land they lived on, but admittedly there were several "squatters" — come to the cities looking for work, chased off the farms where they were born — in fact refugees in their own country.

Where could they go? The B.A.D. had the answer — to Stinkwater, obviously.

The homes at Eersterus were bought out by a private concern. Quite rightly, the families were paid out for the land, but they too had nowhere to go. They were refused permission to enter the townships, and all applications to find housing was refused.

The business man who bought the land said he felt terribly responsible for the welfare of the Africans. He appealed to the non-European Affairs Department of the Pretoria City Council to find them homes in the township, but this too was met with contemptuous silence.

He began to put pressure on the City Council to have the families moved off the land, as he had building schemes planned for the area. The shortage of housing in the townships, the council said, made it impossible to find them homes.

The fact of the matter is that the City Council has not built a new house in the townships for two and a half years. The B.A.D. had issued their instructions that they would be removing "illegal Africans" from the townships and dumping them at Boekenhoutfontein.

The eviction notices were issued to the families, the lorries moved in and loaded up all their possessions. They were taken to the bushveld. They were given a choice — either Stinkwater or Klipgat. Tents were issued, one per family, and the instructions were given to "build your own houses".

The aim of the project was to clear the slum area at Eersterus, but the physical fact is that a slum grew up out of the veld at Stinkwater. Only a few houses are fenced in by hacked down thornbushes. But, for the most part, it is everyone's backyard. People live in each other's pockets.

Life is raw and very primitive in the dense thornbush. They are cut off from civilisation, and in many cases the menfolk only return at weekends.

Aid by the Churches

The churches hastened to aid soon after the news broke out of the removals. Funds were started, and blankets and warm clothing collected. Donations came in from generous people who felt compassion for the unfortunate families. Even lorry loads of building material were donated.

The B.A.D. stepped in, and refused to allow the churchmen into the area to distribute the donations. They announced that all the donations could be sent to the department who would themselves distribute the gifts.

Did they want to ease their troubled consciences by taking the credit from the Africans? Or did they have something to hide from the churchmen? Probably both.

As it turned out, the donations were delivered by the church — by their own methods. One priest was arrested in the area and questioned by the Security Police, before being released.

The Dean of Pretoria, the Very Rev. Mark Nye, said the spirit in which several people donated clothing and money was very gratifying. He said one woman, not particularly well dressed herself, had donated a winter coat saying: "I have two. I hope someone will enjoy this one's warmth".

Ethnic grouping

But, the removals from Eersterus is only part of the story. As if the misery caused by the upheaval, the cold suffered during the sub-zero temperatures, the return to a primitive life and the isolation was not enough, it is now learned that hundreds of families living in the Bantu Trust area surrounding Stinkwater and Klipgat, are to be removed to their "respective homelands."

The ethnic grouping bug has bitten the department, and the implementation of separating the tribal groups is starting. The families belonging to non-Tswana tribes are being hounded out as "squatters and illegal residents".

How, we may well ask, is the department going to distinguish which are Tswanas and which are not, when they have been intermarrying for several generations? The system is far too complex for the department to handle, and they know it. But they insist on giving weak replies claiming that the tribes themselves want to be separated.

Already the officials are making house-to-house visits to find out what tribes the fami-

lies belong to. Some tribes may have to move to a 'homeland' beyond Pietersburg, although they are employed in Pretoria.

As if to show that they are not completely inhuman, the department announced that the non-Tswana families moved to Stinkwater from Eersterus will not be moved again — "at this stage".

Pretoria is not the only city affected by the removals. Throughout the country Africans are being shunted around like pins in a map. Nearly every day brings a fresh example of some administrative affront to the African people's susceptibility.

Surely with the threat of terrorist infiltration, the Government should try to foster the loyalties of the African people.

The removal of the families from the slum areas may have been justified, but the method is certainly not. And this may be the very thing that is harmful to their loyalty to the South African cause.

And yet, an official of the B.A.D. can say: "We are all dedicated men, working for the welfare of the Bantu people. We have never, and will never, do anything to their detriment".

Most South Africans would disagree with him. The vast majority would be the Africans themselves. They should know.

FLAG RAISING

by Bob Connolly

