

# THE RESETTLEMENT OF AFRICANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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*This paper was presented to the national conference of the Black Sash in October 1969 to present as many of the new facts culled from the 1969 parliamentary session and to collect together the information on resettlement areas which was gathered during the year.*

**T**HE APPLICATION OF THE POLICY OF APARTHEID in South Africa means that people of different skin colours must occupy separate portions of the country in which they live. We are told they must develop their own cultures and learn to live separately and economically.

In order to achieve this so-called ideal, therefore, people must be moved from the areas in which they may have lived and worked for generations and be settled in the places which the White Government has decided should be set aside for them.

It is significant that this disruption effects a very small number of white people and a very large number of black or coloured people. This paper deals only with the resettlement of African people but it must be borne in mind that many thousands of Coloureds and Indians have been and will be moved in order to implement Apartheid.

**A**frican Homelands have been drawn on the map of South Africa. The best known of these is the Transkei which has some measure of independence. Others sprawl as strangely shaped pieces of land or clusters of small dots scattered over the whole Republic. Some are near white cities, most are far from civilisation. In terms of the Group Areas Act every city has its land divided between the colour groups. Every city has, therefore, an area on its outskirts set aside for occupation by Africans only.

On the map of South Africa are many areas occupied by Africans which are destined for white South Africans. From these areas, known as black spots, the people must be moved to the African Homelands. Most farms have living on them numerous African families, known as labour tenants and squatters, who live by working small areas of land and giving or selling part of their labour to the land owners. By law these families must be reduced to a minimum required for farm labour. The rest must be resettled in African Homelands. In the towns and cities the laws governing Influx Control limit the number of Africans allowed to be in Urban Areas. Thousands of people are endorsed out every year and these people have to be settled in the African Homelands.

Of the land in South Africa 86.3% is set aside for the 3½ million white people. 13

million black people are allowed to occupy the remaining 13.7% of the land.

The Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Development stated in Parliament this year (1969) that approximately 900,000 Bantu have been resettled since 1959.<sup>1</sup>

General figures for Bantu areas to December 1969 are:—

Total area approximately 13,000,000 morgen.

Reserves and black spots still to be eliminated, approximately 300,000 morgen.

Approximately 65,000 houses have been built by B.A.D. "in the last few years". The cost of each house seems to be about R600 (according to Hansard figures on House construction in Hammansdale) and expected occupation is five people per house.<sup>2</sup>

In the Bantu Homelands there is sometimes free title to land. Africans living in Townships attached to white Urban Areas are not entitled to buy land in these areas.

Under the doctrine of Apartheid Africans must learn that they "belong" only in their own areas. Their residence in White areas is temporary and in order to sell their labour. They must, in the main, live and die in the Homelands.

1. Hansard No. 1, Col 137-140, 4 Feb., 1969.

2. Hansard No. 3, Col. 1128, 21 Feb., 1969.

The Homelands are divided into arable land, grazing areas and townships. The Townships are designated "closer settlements". In these closer settlements a family allotment averages 1/8 to 1/4 acres (ref. official figures given for Limehill, Uitval, Asynkraal, Vaalkop and Uitvlucht) but can be as small as 1/16th of an acre (Kwa Mashu). The cost of buying the land at, for example Mondhlo is R2 per 500 square feet.

At most of the abovementioned closer settlements land is rented at R1.00 per annum per plot. People who inhabit these closer settlements are those who have owned less than 20 morgen of land prior to their resettlement. Those who have owned more than 20 morgen of land are compensated with larger areas of arable land and tribes can be resettled on a communal basis on arable or grazing land if it is available.<sup>3</sup>

### Migrant Labour

It is known that African men have for long been migrant labourers, leaving wives and children in the kraals to till the fields and herd the cattle. With the urbanisation of African families migrant labour has ceased to be the way of life for many people. Now it is again on the increase, but with a difference. Families resettled in closer settlements can no longer live off the tiny pieces of land allotted to them.

When "black spot" removals take place, compensation is paid, the assessment being made by Government officials. The people being resettled are moved by government vehicles, can take what they can salvage from their own homes with them, and their livestock *unless* they are being moved to closer settlements, where there is no room for such animals. On arrival at their destination they are provided with tents until such time as they have rebuilt their houses. For this purpose they may be provided with some construction materials.

At Limehill the average compensation paid to 969 families was R143.00 per family. Poles for building were provided free of charge, but no door frames or windows. Thatch — the usual roofing material in this area — was not available at the time of resettlement. It would be six months before the grass was grown and dry for this purpose.

According to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, rations were

3. Hansard No. 1, Col. 323, 7 Feb., 1969.

issued to the resettled people for the first few days after removal. At Limehill and Uitval these consisted of:—

3 lbs. of mealie meal per person per day for 6 days.

1 lb. of skim milk powder and 1 lb. of soup powder per person.

In deserving cases, children are given milk powder and soup powder for a longer period.<sup>4</sup>

The Bantu Affairs department undertakes to provide water and sanitation for people removed and resettled. When the first settlers arrived at Stinkwater and Klipgat drinking water had to be fetched from a borehole some miles away. Water for building and washing was available nearer, but was muddy. There were, at first, no latrines.

When people were moved to Limehill some water was available and latrines were being dug, but were insufficient in number.

When Mondhlo was established in 1963 2,000 persons were placed, in tents, on half acre sites at the beginning of winter with no water available and no sanitation provided.

In the early days of all these villages there were no shops. There were no clinics. There were no schools. There was no transport. There was little or no firewood.

4. Hansard No. 4, Col. 1307, 25 Feb., 1969.

In January the press reported that a white man was attacked by a swarm of bees in Johannesburg and stung until he was black. He was put in a non-European ambulance and rushed to a non-European hospital —



In nearly all cases the families have been moved twenty miles or more from where they had previously been living. This means that those men and women who had been employed in nearby towns could no longer keep their employment unless they left their families or paid the greater part of their wages in transport. Now that buses are available the return fare from Limehill to Washbank is 40 cents. There is no nearer employment centre. The fare from Mondhlo to Vryheid, return, is 35 cents. From Stinkwater to Pretoria R1 for a five day week. Workers there must leave home at 4 a.m. and return at 9 p.m.

And so we have a picture of a newly established resettlement village. Usually miles from a centre where employment is available, a small plot of land for each family, no grazing for livestock, accommodation in tents, no shops, no schools, no medical services, no fuel, very little water, pit latrines. Some services do improve with time. Schools and clinics are eventually built and staffed, more boreholes are sunk, shops appear in the district, transport is laid on. Men go away to find work in order to keep their families.

But until these things happen tragedies occur.

At Mondhlo, in the first year, there were 77 reported cases of typhoid.

At Limehill a form of gastro-enteritis caused many deaths, but it was impossible to ascertain from the authorities how many people suffered from this disease.

### Hunger

When one examines the rations available to villagers and remembers that a whole season's crop is often lost in the move, one realises that hunger must be common. Children lose months of schooling and family incomes are reduced. Families are split up because the breadwinner must go away to seek work. These are a few of the immediate hardships.

The people moved to closer settlements are more badly affected than those moved from one agricultural area to another, but in all cases the move is accomplished only with hardship to those concerned.

It appears that organised resettlement has been going on for at least ten years. Let us now examine conditions in villages which have been in existence for some time.

### The Closer Settlement of Mnxesha

Established in 1967, ten miles from Kingwilliamstown. The inhabitants come mainly from Middelburg, a Northern Cape farming

area, and some families endorsed out from Urban Areas in the Western Cape.

Official figures given by the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development for this closer settlement are:—

387 families occupy the area. Of these 348 people are men, 508 women, and 2,041 are children.<sup>5</sup>

Only 30 adults have kept their previous employment. Six adults work in Kingwilliamstown. 55 men and 111 women are old age pensioners, 80 women get state aided work, which is grass planting in the area. 21 men, 53 women and 264 children get state aid for no work. 162 men and 27 women work elsewhere as migrant labourers. The nearest Industrial area is East London and the Minister says no industries are planned near Mnxesha. It is planned to settle 1,800 families at Mnxesha.

The houses are basic in structure and vary from one to four rooms. Rental is fairly low and, where there is no breadwinner, is free. So far there is one school to Std. II, pit latrines, water in taps in the street, and, after agitation, a clinic with a resident nurse and visiting doctor. The death rate in the early days was very high. There is no available fuel.

Picture these people. The majority lived in a farming area with work available nearby. Now they are in an alien land either existing on charity or leaving their homes to become migrant labourers. The greater proportion of villagers are children and old age pensioners. It is an established fact that people suffering malnutrition in their early years can suffer permanent brain damage.

Those who were endorsed out from towns or cities must find the change even more difficult. There is no hope of work in the area.

The cost of this pathetic settlement up to March 1969 was R193,000.

### The Closer Settlement of Illingi

Thirteen miles from Queenstown, Illingi was established before 1967 and houses about 4,500 people. There is a small clinic and two schools. It began as a settlement for pensioners, but now has many families endorsed out from the Western Cape. There is no work for these people in Queenstown; some men can get work in the area building new settlement houses at R16.50 per month, and women and children are employed in land

<sup>5</sup> Hansard No. 5, Col. 1776, 4 March, 1969.

clearing at R5 or R6 per month. Again, breadwinners must be migrant labourers. This closer settlement is occupied by the old, the women and the young who exist on next to nothing.

If the inhabitants have money they can buy land and own houses here. But to earn money means to have work. Most resettlement villages are in areas where there is no available work in the immediate vicinity.

#### The Closer Settlement of Sada

Has about 7,000 inhabitants and was established in 1963. It is comparable to Illingi. Men build houses for future inhabitants. This work can only be temporary. A nearby Government Forestry department offers part time labour and there is seasonal work in East London jam factories. There is a brick factory in the area. On the face of it, Sada offers more possibility of employment than many other resettlement areas. However, nearly half the inhabitants have to receive government rations in order to keep alive, calculated on a scale of R1.70 per month per adult and R1.40 per child. Old age pensioners get varying amounts but never more than R54 per year.

Water is piped along the streets and there are pit latrines. The main disease seems to be a form of gastro-enteritis. Last year there was a break down in communication between the Divisional Council Health Authorities and the Provincial Administration and dead bodies were being kept in houses with no authority for their removal. Following on newspaper publicity this dilemma was resolved.

#### The Closer Settlement of Mondhlo

In Northern Natal. There are (official figures given in February 1969 by the Minister B.A.D.) 862 families inhabiting it. The total cost of this settlement to date is R343,660. The annual cost is R8,760.<sup>6</sup>

The clinic is run free by a local Anglican Mission.

Mondhlo has been comparatively "lucky". In May 1963 2,000 people were dumped in tents in the veld. No water and no sanitation. 77 people, at least, contracted typhoid. They were cared for by the Anglican Mission and the whole affair was widely publicised in the press. Within a year piped water was laid on, and over two years water privies were built on every site. The excellent clinic is still run by the Anglican Mission, and schools and churches have been built. In spite of these

amenities it is interesting to read the report of a man who knows the area — "the people have behaved in a most orderly, mature and co-operative way . . . But there is no work and people must travel to Vryheid (35 cents return) which leads to hardship. If they lose employment they are told to get work in Nqutu, where there is none."

#### The Closer Settlement of Limehill

Established in February 1968. Without any doubt conditions have improved here in the last eighteen months. The removal of people from black spots to this area was given wide publicity in the Press. Two schools have been built (this is inadequate for the number of children.) A clinic has been established with a permanent African sister and is visited by a doctor. The Minister of Bantu Administration and Development stated that all families would be permanently housed by April 1969. Adequate pit latrines have been built and water is being piped.

Of the 1,500 inhabitants most are women and children. The men have been forced to become migrant labourers, since Limehill is 24 miles from civilisation. There is no local work for the inhabitants. There is hunger and poverty. The inhabitants prior to being moved lived on farms a few miles from Waschbank, where many were employed, and on a mission station where they farmed and worked.

#### The Closer Settlements of Stinkwater and Klipgat

Lie 34 miles from Pretoria. The inhabitants moved there from African townships near Pretoria, from the previously African owned farm of Eerste Rust near Pretoria and other places. Again, following on newspaper publicity, conditions in these areas have improved since June 1968. There are three boreholes feeding two reservoirs though the people must walk 800 yards to three-quarters of a mile to this supply. There is a clinic within three miles, four shops, one school built and one being built, and a daily bus service to Pretoria at R1 per week.

The Minister, in answer to Mrs. Suzman in March 1969, stated that there was no employment in the area, but an employment bureau had been set up.

The inhabitants, of course, are mainly women, children and old age pensioners. The men become migrant labourers. They used to live, as family units, a few miles from where they worked.

6. Hansard No. 2, Col. 739, 14 Feb., 1969.

## The Agricultural Settlement of Vergelegen

People resettled in this area owned land in excess of 20 morgen before removal. The tribe, some 4,500 people, owned an 8,000 acre farm in a "white" area. Vergelegen is a 14,000 acre farm. Water has been laid on to residential areas and three dams have been built. Tractors are available on hire from the government. Compensation was paid for the previous farm.

People moved to Agricultural settlements are undoubtedly better off than those moved to closer settlements. They are living much the same as they have always lived, they can move their livestock from one farm to another. They lose a season's crops but if they can weather this, they can live.

They are, however, usually much further from civilisation than before. The men, to supplement a farmer's income, must become migrant labourers. They have moved far from schools and shops.

The tribe moved from Boschhoek to Vergelegen did not wish to move. They had owned Boschhoek since 1870. The area of Vergelegen is not as good as Boschhoek.

Many other closer settlements and agricultural settlements exist. Some, in Natal and the Eastern Province, have been visited by Black Sash women. In the Transvaal permits to visit closer settlements have been refused and even Clergy and the Press have had their visits stopped. Is there something that must be hidden?

We are told by the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development that people move gladly to resettlement areas. The imagination boggles at the thought of a family employed in an urban area and found by government officials to be living there illegally under laws governing Influx Control, moving with pleasure to, let us say Illingi. The houses may be better, but people need work in order to live. One cannot conceive of a poor family, living primitively near Waschbank, being overjoyed at being resettled 22 miles away in the open veld and subjected to worse poverty and no available work.

Resettlement is, in the main, away from urban areas and consequent employment. Border industries are not being established to any extent near Bantu Homelands. There is no hope now, and no visible hope in the future. A man must leave his family to get work, women and children must suffer terrible conditions in the homelands.

There are times when people should be moved — slums should be cleared and their inmates should be better housed and given better employment facilities and education. This is clearly not the case with African Resettlement in the Homelands. There are some people who have been glad to be given a house in a homeland area where they are no longer hounded to produce a reference book and permits all the time. This is a dreadful reflection on the conditions in which they had been living in "white" areas before. But they nearly all complain of the fact that there is no work and no money.

Conditions do improve with the years. It seems possible that conditions improve faster where the press has publicised the plight of the people moved. But whether conditions improve to the stage where people can live an economic, healthy family life has not yet been demonstrated. The deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Development said in Parliament this year, "do you know why the United Party is casting so much suspicion on Limehill, Stinkwater and Klipgat? It is because each of these places is a manifestation of the successful implementation of the policy of separate development."<sup>7</sup>

If these pathetic settlements of deprived women, children and old age pensioners are the successful result of Apartheid, then God help this country.

7. *Hansard* No. 1, Col. 137-140, 4 Feb., 1969.

