

more than there were at the end of the war. They are coming to accept that unemployment is there to stay and is now structural. Many people in the future will never have a job and this means that a whole rethink of the Protestant work ethic is a matter of urgency. No one starves in Holland because he does not have a job, but we have made joblessness somehow blameworthy and this means that the unemployed suffer real depression, boredom and feelings of total inadequacy. The young do not plan for the future. They do not believe that they have a future because they are convinced that America and

Russia will eventually fight a 'limited' nuclear war in Europe. The manufacture of smaller nuclear weapons and missiles seems much more threatening to them than the concept of the Hiroshima-type bomb because they believe that it makes it possible for the powers that be to contemplate the use of nuclear weapons which would not inevitably lead to the destruction of the United States. America is not universally popular at the moment.

I was astonished by the level of interest in South Africa and the sound factual information which so many groups circulate, and by the way in which so many people

work with commitment on South African issues. I think I probably gained a distorted impression because I was not meeting the big business interests and the more conservative politicians (although some were present at some of the meetings). Our Government's information service does a most efficient job.

However, the re-imposition of the ban on Beyers Naude undid all their efforts. He is very well known in Holland and greatly admired and respected.

I was overwhelmed with kindness the whole time I was there and came back laden with messages of love and support to all of you.



A welcoming sign greets two combi loads of Sash members and the Press at the Driefontein turnoff — and a little further on, other signs read, 'Welcome Black Sash. Keep on Helping' and 'Welcome to Driefontein, the land of our forefathers — 1912 - 1983'.

WITH a black housing backlog of 680 000, and against a background of overcrowding, cholera and starvation in the 'homeland' areas, those remaining rural communities in 'black spots' that are well housed and economically viable are being systematically destroyed.

BLACK SPOTS

Apartheid cannot tolerate these 'poorly situated' islands of black settlement. All those that remain* are due for destruction. Most have already been moved, involving half a million people.

Driefontein

One such area is Driefontein, where successful farmers sell their surplus on the local market, where there are long-established homes, fields of maize, sugar beans, potatoes and pumpkins, and where sleek cattle graze on uneroded pastures. All this is to be obliterated, together with the school, shops, churches, windmills and all the assets built up during 70 years of orderly community life.

BUGHT in 1912 by the Native Farmers Association of Africa Ltd, this farm area, near Wakkerstroom, covering 3 000 morgan, is divided among some 300 landowners. Roughly 7 000 people live there.

In the early days, by planting trees and selling timber, the people of Driefontein had been self sufficient. Because surrounding white farmers needed labour, the timber merchants stopped buying their wood. This was a cruel blow to the black farmers, who increasingly were forced to work on nearby farms and in the white-owned sawmills. And today, the local farmers and factory owners fear labour shortages once the community has been moved.

Their economy has been further eroded by the increasing strictness of influx control, which has resulted in the community taking in more and more people as tenants. Despite increased poverty in recent years, however, this is a typical black spot — a place where rural life is steady, where many people are relatively prosperous, and which has the blessing of continuity.

*Some 75 Black Spots remain

Not only is it to be moved to far away mountainous areas, but also divided into ethnic groups, with all the accompanying disruption of extended family ties and old friendships. The 'Swazis' will be settled in Lochiel, Kangwane, and the 'Zulus' in Babanango, KwaZulu.

The land in these two areas is at present controlled by the South African Development Trust. It will be consolidated into the two 'homelands' after (and if) the removal takes place.

Transvaal members of the Black Sash have made three visits to Driefontein. Two of them were made on days when it was known that members of the community were being taken in busloads to show them their proposed places of resettlement in Lochiel and Babanango. On each occasion the buses had left before we arrived on the scene.

'Those who went to Kangwane cannot speak because they saw a horrible surprise. They are saying there is no town, no water.'



Must he move?

On both days there was a posse of riot vans and carloads of officials and policemen. On the second visit, Marion Lacey's film was confiscated and our names and addresses were taken. The officer-in-charge told us we had no right to be in this area but gave no grounds for this assertion. (It is known that the villagers at nearby Daggakraal refuse to allow government officials on their property.)

During our first visit, Black Sash members were struck by the bewilderment of the people who did not want to move but who do not fully comprehend the nightmare that awaits them, when, hopelessly undercompensated as always, with their livestock, homes and institutions gone, far from places of employment, they will have to live in tents or those notorious resettlement shacks which are ovens in summer and ice-boxes in winter. At Kangwane lack of water and proper sewerage will bring them into contact with cholera.

To their disadvantage, like all socially secure freehold rural communities, their respect for the law is so strong that they cannot believe and do not fully realise that those very people who represent law and order to

them have cynical disregard for the just safeguards enshrined in the idea of the rule of law. In common with so many other now destroyed communities, these are decent people who are trapped in their own decency: and they simply cannot credit that the government can be so evil as to seize their freehold title — and moreover, without even remotely adequate compensation.

The government has been able, as always, to persuade some 100 residents (mostly tenants) to sign forms agreeing to move.

Gradually, however, the people have begun to realise the seriousness of their position. Some tenants who 'signed' have since regretted having done so, especially when they realized their present rentals which average R25 per annum will rise to anything between R6 and R33 per month for tiny plots of a quarter to half an acre. Subsequently 80 plot-owners also signed their consent to be moved. They say they were threatened with no compensation if they did not sign.

On the other hand, 307 signatures from plot owners protesting against the proposed move were handed in to Geoff Budlender of the Legal Resources Centre, who is acting for the community.

Dissatisfied with what they felt was only feeble protest by their Community Board and its chairman Mr Msibi, the people of Driefontein obtained permission from the magistrate for landowners to elect representatives to negotiate with Dr Koornhof's department. Accordingly, on December 26, some 3 000 people met and the landowners among them formed the Board of Directors of Driefontein, with a mandate to prevent the removal taking place. They elected as chairman the dynamic Saul Mkhize, a landowner in the area who works in an accountancy firm in Johannesburg.

On the instructions of this new Board, their lawyer Geoff Budlender wrote to the commissioner, 'We are instructed that the Driefontein Community Board has previously exercised certain

administrative functions in relation to matters such as reference books, birth certificates, pension, seeking of employment, etc., and that it was recognised by you for this purpose. The Community Board clearly no longer represent

or enjoys the confidence of the residents, who wish the new committee to take over these functions. Would you kindly confirm this will be in order.' The magistrate replied that the new board is not recognized.



Paul Mkhize talks to the residents at a protest meeting. Photo: Ingrid Hudson



Ethel Walt with Driefontein residents. Hilda Gamede (left) widow of the School Principal, has frequently applied for her pension at Wakkerstroom, but the officials job her off, telling her to get married so that a husband can support her. Photo: Ann Bernstein

'Here we have widows, old men and women, who have spent all their lives raising their families, educating them, building their houses, looking after them, while they still had the strength and the vigour to do so. What can they do now — the old, the weak, the infirm, and the crippled? Must they just curl up and die? How can they live in tents for six months and then build again? Without money and without the vigour of youth, which they no longer have, how can they start all over again?'

Statement from the 'Voice of the Driefontein People' from a Rand Daily Mail article by John Kane Berman

Why they must move

Alerted by their knowledge of government tactics towards resistant communities, the people of Driefontein and the surrounding, also-threatened villages of Kwangema and Daggakraal (where some 50 000 people live) have formed a united front.

Dissatisfied with what they believe to be the unfair withholding of pensions and work recruitment opportunities, the community are collecting affidavits and will challenge the actions of local officials.

During the last fortnight they handed in 60 pension application forms on which they had written, 'if application not granted, please comment below'; the Wakkerstroom magistrate, Mr Prinsloo, returned all of them without comment.

Early in March, Black Sash members will spend a day at Driefontein assisting with the large volume of work involved in the collection and collation of affidavits.

Local residents believe that recent pass raids, arrests and searches are part of a campaign of harassment designed to punish them for resisting the proposed removal.

Harassment has stiffened the community spirit. Although outside support can be valuable, this community will stand or fall by the measure of their own solidarity and determination.

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Compiled by J Wentzel from reports supplied by Jill de Vlieg and members of the Black Sash resettlement committee in the Transvaal.

The Deputy Minister to the people of Driefontein:

'Everyone of us has to make sacrifices in some way or other to further peace and prosperity in this beautiful country of ours.'

*The Chairman
Driefontein Community Board
18-12-1981
Dear Mr Msibi,*

**RESETTLEMENT: DRIEFONTEIN 388 I.T. :
WAKKERSTROOM**

Further to your letter dated 10 August 1981, I would, in the first instance, like to point out that the removal and relocation of so-called "Black Spots", or poorly situated areas, is carried out in accordance with a policy which has as its goal the improvement of the standard of life of all people of South Africa. You will therefore appreciate that it sometimes becomes necessary for people to be encouraged to move for their own ultimate good.

In regard to your reference to forced resettlements I must emphasize that it is certainly not part of declared policy that people should be forced to move and be resettled elsewhere without due consideration of their residential and other rights, nor that they should be exposed to hardship. In your particular case the reason for your resettlement has been discussed with you and your Board on various occasions. It was pointed out to you that the Department of Water Affairs is building a dam which is of national importance, on the Assegai River and which will on completion towards the end of 1982, inundate some of your properties.

In conclusion I must stress that, like you, there are many Whites who also had to leave land which they have owned and occupied for generations and on which members of their families were born, raised and were subsequently buried. Everyone of us has to make sacrifices in some way or other to further peace and prosperity in this beautiful country of ours. Although the Government therefore appreciates and respects your feelings the relocation and resettlement of your people will have to be carried out in the interest of all concerned.

J J G WENTZEL MP

Deputy Minister of Development and Land Affairs

- The dam site is quite a distance from the village, possibly as much as 10 kilometres, and flooding could only affect a tiny percentage of their land.



*Part of Saul Mkhize's home. The stones for the whole complex of rondavels were hand-cut by his grandfather.
Photo: Ingrid Hudson*