

P.O. Box 94
Grahamstown 6140
12th March 1981.

The Secretary
Van der Walt Commission of Inquiry into the Consolidation
of the Ciskei,
P.O. Box 384
PRETORIA

Dear Sir

re: CISKEI CONSOLIDATION

On 29th and 30th August 1980 the representatives of six churches in the Ciskei came together to discuss the problems posed for them at the pastoral level by the vast population movements which have occurred in the Ciskei during the past decade. They were the Anglican, Catholic, Congregational, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. At that Consultation they passed the following resolutions, among many others designed to succour those people disadvantaged by removals:

3.1. Conference CALLS UPON churches to make further representations to the authorities at regional and national level, liaising with the South African Council of Churches, to halt removals.

3.2. Conference CALLS UPON people to make personal contact with Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, and officials at all levels of government to ensure that the implications of resettlement policies are fully understood.

A further meeting of the regional heads of the participating churches or their appointed representatives was called on 10th March, 1981 to discuss the precise form which the representations should take.

It was resolved that as a first step we submit to your Commission an urgent request that, whatever plans are made to consolidate the Ciskei, the wholesale removal of blacks from long-standing places of residence be avoided at all costs.

We should like to point out that a comparison of the provisional population figures for the 1980 census with that of 1970 reflects an increase of 54.4% in the de facto population of the Ciskei. It has increased from 343 305 in 1970 (the magisterial districts of Glen Grey and Herschel have been excluded) to 630 353. The overall density of population will have increased from 52,3 per square kilometre in 1970 (calculated from 1970 census figures, including Herschel and Glen Grey, and Quail Commission area figures) to 75 per square kilometre (calculated from provisional 1980 census returns and Quail Commission area estimates) This latter figure does not reflect the actual present position, for much land remains to be purchased in terms of the 1975 agreement and your own tentative proposals as reflected in the press.

We would submit that the resettlement programme is seriously jeopardising the Ciskei's bid to become economically viable, and more particularly that it is jeopardising the avowed intention of the Ciskei Government to rehabilitate the rural areas. We attach a chapter of the Report on the Consultation which

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deals with the problems which the Ciskei has encountered, and we should like to draw your attention particularly to the section on 'The Problems of Re-settled People' which will be found on page 34ff. The cost in human and economic terms, of programmes such as have been put into effect during the past two decades is incalculable. From a moral point of view we would argue that no government has the right to inflict such cost on its people.

We should also like to draw your attention to the section on 'The Ciskei Population Today' which will be found on page 7ff, and to the very large numbers of Ciskeians who are liable to be resettled. Of particular importance is the number of potential settlers to result from redundancy on white farms in the Eastern Cape. Many of the more recent settlements, for instance Kamaskraal, draw their inhabitants from this particular source. We do not feel that these people who have been born, and who have worked all their lives in white rural areas should be made the responsibility of an already impoverished and over-crowded Ciskei.

The concern of our churches in this matter is by no means political. The social and economic life of the people is disrupted by re-settlement, and so is the life of the church. A Christian is nourished by the common life of Christ in the church, as man is by the life of his local community. Re-settlement breaks up and destroys long standing congregations. It creates the need for new ones where no sense of community exists at all, and where there are few if any resources to build up congregations.

Nor does the responsibility of the church stop at helping to form new congregations. The love of Christ extends to the whole man - and it is to the whole man that we are called to minister. When removals take place the church needs to be there to comfort and support her people in prayer, and in material ways. Removals during the past two decades have already stretched our resources beyond the point where we can minister effectively to our scattered flocks. We think in particular of the extension required of us at ~~MOANTSCANE~~ AND Thornhill.

At the Consultation it was felt that the churches should not continue to re-act in an ad hoc fashion, as in the past, but that they should review the whole policy of re-settlement, bringing to bear on it their knowledge of actual conditions in the rural and urban areas of the Ciskei; they are not only singularly well placed in being able to watch over and participate in the agony of those re-settled, but they are also equipped to bring the mind of Christ to bear on the whole problem in its national and its local setting.

It is in this spirit that we now write to your Commission, praying that you will admit our recommendations as evidence. We request that your consolidations plans minimise, and perhaps eliminate altogether, the need for wholesale re-settlement as experienced in the past.

On behalf of the church leaders or representatives whose names appear below,
Yours faithfully

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The Rev. G. Hawkes (Chairman)

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Murphy (Roman Catholic Bishop of Port Elizabeth)

The Rt. Rev. Bishop K. Oram (Anglican Bishop of Grahamstown)

The Rt. Rev. Bishop B. Evans (Anglican Bishop of Port Elizabeth)

The Rev. Kingsley Dale (Moderator of the King Williamstown Presbytery, P.C.S.A.)

The Rev. Dr. Donald Cragg, appointed to represent the Rev. Howard Kirkby,
Chairman of the Grahamstown District & President of
Conference, Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

Mr L.K. Nhabati⁶¹

Mrs Rosemary Mullins

Vice-Chairman of the Kei Region of the
United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
Cape Eastern Districts Regional Committee,
Society of Friends.