

1982.10.18

VISIT TO PIETERSBURG 16 AND 17 OCTOBER 1982

Subsequent to the consultation with the ministers of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church on 12 October 1982 I visited Pietersburg. The primary aim was to link up with Mrs Joyce Mashamba, The Northern Transvaal Council of Churches Field Worker, and proceed to Shilubane in order to have an interview with Chief Mhlaba. Mrs Mashamba belongs to the Chief's extended family. The planned interview was aimed at acquainting the Chief of the expressed concern of the neighbouring chief, Chief Maake and his people over a disputed land and the grave concern over developments at the Douglas Smit Hospital.

The visit did not proceed as planned. Mrs Mashamba had left Pietersburg for Giyani in order to meet some commitments there. It follows, therefore, that I had to fulfil other plans I had conceived for the visit.

I thus proceeded to meet the following:

- (i) The Rev A N Maja, Secretary, Northern Tvl Council of Churches, P O Box 2039, Pietersburg, 0700.
- (ii) Dean M C Minnele, Mphomo Circuit, Kratzenstein Mission, P O Houtboschdorp 0725.
- (iii) Mrs Joyce Mabudafhasi, Tel 4310 (bus) 4366 (res) Sovenga.

INTERVIEW 1

I visited Rev A N Maja at ELD, Pietersburg on Saturday, 16 October, 1982. We sat for close to an hour and in our discussion the following emerged:

- (i) Shilubane: The Reverend, Mr Maja, a minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, is close to Rev Frank Mayimele, a pastor in charge.

The Church, ie EPC, is in some pastoral difficulties due to land and hospital disputes among the Shangaans and the Sothos. As a consequence to the breakdown in the church's pastoral ministry in the area, a visit to the disputed area is in the offing. A four-man sitting comprising Dean M C Minnele, Rev A N Maja, Rev Frank Mayimele and Rev Mahlangu is planned to help break the stalemate.

In our discussion we regretted the position in which the Evangelical Presbyterian Church finds itself today. We speculated on the fact that the land dispute affecting SEDAN X18 Farm would have been easy to resolve if the farm were equally developed.

- (ii) Makgato: Three churches are doing some work among the people. These are the Roman Catholic Church, Presbyterian and the Lutherans. Rev Maja reported that the people have received a reprieve, but said that it appears as though it was never gazetted.
  
- (iii) Senthumule: This area is a home for both Vendas and Sothos. It has been reported that the Sothos who have been staying in Senthumule are being pressurised to call themselves Vendas in order to be allowed to stay. A sizeable number of Sothos have been moved to Endermark. The Dutch Reformed Church is the main church in the area.

Rev Maja also reported the appointment of Mrs Joyce Mashamba as the Regional Council's field worker. Her appointment places her in a position where she can focus her attention on removals and resettlements, among other things.

A request was made to ask the Dependents' Conference members, Mr T Manthata in particular, to establish the correct address of Ms Makhosazana which was wrongly given as 4161 Dube. Ms Nhlapo and Ms Benedicta Monama are two University of the North students whose clampdown by Security Police on campus has sparked a total boycott of lectures by the entire student body. The boycott of lectures resulted in the closure of the University on 20 October until 1 November 1982. The closure of the campus would mean costly practical and academic problems for students and their parents.

## INTERVIEW 2

I enlightened Dean M C Minnele on the growing concern over developments among the Shangaans and Sothos concerning SEDAN K18 Farm and Douglas Smit Hospital. I went on to report on the findings of Buntu Mfenyane Field Worker, and I during our visit to KaNgwane, KwaZulu and Ingwavuma.

- (i) On Kratzenstein: The dean reported the continued meddling of the Department of the Interior, The Northern Transvaal Administration Board, and the Department of Co-operation and Development at Kratzenstein. There is a quarrel being fermented by the authorities in relation to the Farm Doornhoek 98 L.S.

On the prompting of the authorities the Mankweng Tribal Authority under S Mamabolo, in a letter dated 6 September 1982 and signed by Mr Jonathan Seabela instructed teachers to tell school children to inform their parents of a meeting for 10 September 1982. Parents were expected to furnish household

particulars as well as information on their tribal or ethnic affiliations. The meeting did not materialise because teachers refused to co-operate with the Tribal Authority.

A letter dated 29 September 1982 from the Chief Commissioner, Northern Areas, Private Bag X9322, Pietersburg 0700 has been received by the Dean Minnele. Re: Approval to Erect Buildings on the Farm Doornhoek 98 L.S. The following emerges from the letter:

- (i) During November 1981 an inspection was carried out on the farm by inspectors of the Administration Board, Northern Transvaal.
- (ii) The Director General of Co-operation and Development states in minutes TB/8/2/2P27/367 dated 16 August 1982 that no permission was granted for erection of buildings on the farm.
- (iii) The Dean is requested to stop any further erection of buildings on this farm.

*The taking of particulars of a threatened people is being increasingly abused by the authorities in order to confuse the issues at stake. We hope that people should be advised to shun filling in any questionnaires before adequate consultation and legal advice where possible. Signing of documents should be done with extreme circumspection.*

Dean Minnele was considering writing back to the Chief Commissioner. In his letter our hope that the voice and concern of the church over issues linked with removals and resettlements shall never be heard. It is a pity, however, that the Dean will be addressing himself to men and women who are enslaved by their racial policies and beliefs.

(ii) On the proposed church meeting - Land Deals

The Dean was pleased to learn of efforts made to confront such sensitive matters as the disrupted land deals. I was delighted by the Dean's willingness to avail himself for the proposed meeting of church leaders and laymen at Lokazi, Nelspruit on 11 November 1982. I assured him that an invitation shall be sent to him in due course.

The Dean further pointed out to me that the Lutheran Dean of Eastern Transvaal, Rev Tshongwe, stationed at

Kabokweni, in Insikazi, KaNgwane should not be left out. A fact sheet on issues surrounding the land deals has already been drafted by the acting Dean (of Swaziland or Eastern Transvaal?)

The following were recommended for the meeting:

- (i) Rev Tshongwe, P O Box 92, Plaston, 1244  
Tel: Kabokweni 35.
- (ii) Rev Schiele, Dean of Swaziland, P O Box 279,  
Manzini, Swaziland. Tel: Manzini 53028.
- (iii) Bishop S E Serote, P O Box 1186,  
Pietersburg 0700.

### INTERVIEW 3

On Sunday, 17 October, I had an interview with two of a three-man Committee which involves itself in providing services among blacks in distress. Among these are victims of uprootals and resettlements. Those I met were Ms Joyce Mabudafhasi, a librarian, and Rev S M Seloana of the Dutch Reformed Church and working among students. It was not possible to meet Rev Lesiba E Matsaung, the writer of a letter to the Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, appealing for financial assistance as well as expressing concern on developments at the northern borders of South Africa with Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana. It was imperative that I get in touch with this group in order to gain insight into their activities.

From the interview it was felt important and crucial to visit the northern border areas together with the team. The plight of the people should be brought to bear with the conscience of humanity. An agreement was reached that the team should make arrangements to facilitate a visit to the area. I did therefore also explain to them that a car may be hired by my project for travel to the area.

The main reason given for the mass removals is, according to a report in the "Northern Transvaal Review" (16 October 1982), for the creation of a 11km white farming area next to the border. Another report in the Sunday Times (17 October 1982) gives another hint on its focus on Alldays, "... a forsaken stretch of farming community in the north-western Transvaal" which has been declared a Government growth point.

However, the unstated reason carries much weight. One may take an informed guess that the primary objective of the Venda and South African Government is military. The Venda pseudo Government is said to be working towards establishing a military base on the site of the removed or threatened areas. This is not the first time that the South African Government has tampered with black border communities. In northern Natal, in the border between the country and Botswana, something resembling this is considered or has been implemented.

According to a letter written by Rev Lesiba E Matsaung, the new resettlement is in Venda "homeland" next to the Nwanedzi area, 92 km from Messina and 44 km from their former land.

Madimbo (Masisi?) village (72 families) were moved in September 1982. The following are threatened: Sigonde, Gumbu, Tshengelani, Tshikuya, Mutele Bend, etc.

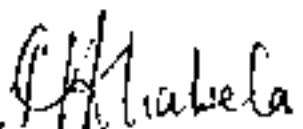
It is clear, therefore, that we are about to witness a mass SADF inspired exodus of blacks from areas adjoining the borders of the neighbouring countries which are considered to pose a threat to White rule and privilege in South Africa.

The following is provided for those who would like to get in touch with the team:

- (i) Rev Lesiba E Matsaung, N G Kerk, P O Box 83,  
Messina  
Tel: Messina 61.
- (ii) Rev M S Setoana, Tel: (01522) 4590.
- (iii) Ms Joyce Mabudafhasi, Tel: (01522) 4310 (bus)  
Tel: (01522) 4366 (res)

The people's struggle is essentially the struggle for land. 87 percent of land is in the hands of the dominant white minority, and 13 percent of fragmented and mainly exhausted portions is inhabited by the overwhelming majority of black people.

We mourn for our country.

  
ISMAEL MKHABELA  
RELOCATION ACTION OFFICER  
WITWATERSRAND COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
20 OCTOBER 1982