

THE REALITY OF CROSSROADS

1. WE BELIEVE THAT WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD AND READ ABOUT THE CROSSROADS CRISIS IS A DISTORTION OF THE TRUTH.

The picture which has been presented to the public, through the media of the press and SABC television and radio, has been one in which the conflict within the Crossroads community is portrayed as little more than a faction fight. The situation is far more complex than this, however, as there are divisions within the community along lines of power structures, all imposed from above by state policies. The state, in the form of the security forces, have been presented as an impartial peace-keeping force. However, an on-the-spot examination of the situation by the undersigned group of church people indicates clearly that this is not in fact the case.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS IS NOT A FACTION FIGHT.

- 2.1 No tribal differences of any consequence exist within the Crossroads community.
- 2.2 Outside intervention in the structures and running of the community have sparked off the current unrest.
- 2.3 The current unrest has been presented as a straight forward fight between 'conservatives' (so-called 'witdoeke') and 'radicals' (so-called 'comrades').
- 2.4 **Who really are the 'witdoeke'?** They are a minority group within the Old Crossroads community and a great number of them actually come from outside Crossroads.
- 2.5 **Who are the 'radicals'?** These are the residents of the three satellite camps at Nyanga Bush, Nyanga Extension and Portland Cement sections of Crossroads, who were permitted by the original Crossroads community to settle on those specific pieces of land in 1981. Leadership of these groups was established by popular election. These groups are often incorrectly referred to as the 'comrades'.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE STATE IS INVOLVED.

- 3.1 **The leader of the 'witdoeke' indicated his willingness for a community council to be established in Crossroads.**
- 3.2 **This envisaged council would have power in the area of Crossroads which includes those areas referred to as Nyanga Bush, Nyanga Extension and Portland Cement.** The people living in these areas have popularly elected leaders and do not support the 'witdoeke' who have minority support even in the area of Old Crossroads itself. That only 4 000 out of 47 000 residents in that area took part in the February 1986 elections bears testimony to this fact.
- 3.3 **The chairman of the executive committee which resulted from this election announced his intention to become a community councillor.** This resulted in the resignation of three of his committee members who, along with others opposed to this decision, were forced out of the old Crossroads community.
- 3.4 **At this time intense harassment by state forces started in the three satellite camps.** Their leaders were detained and tortured during interrogation and an entire busload of women from

these communities was detained. Doors were broken down and houses searched. During a prayer service at the house of one of the satellite camp leaders, shots were fired at the worshippers and a wounded man dragged away by police wearing balaclavas.

3.5 Meanwhile in Old Crossroads all progressive organizations were banned. The leadership of the 'witdoeke' went as far as attempting to close down the SACLA clinic which they considered to be a disruptive political influence undermining their authority.

3.6 The three satellite camps decided to accept most of those who had been evicted from Old Crossroads by the 'witdoeke' into their own communities. The meeting at which this incorporation would have been finalized was planned for Sunday 19 May, the day on which the 'witdoeke' first attacked the three satellite camps.

3.7 A group of concerned church people went to Crossroads to investigate. At any one time at least three people witnessed and experienced the following:-

- ★ The group was twice tear-gassed by the security forces.
- ★ All teargas attacks were aimed at the victims in the satellite camps, but never at the approaching 'witdoeke'.
- ★ Security forces made no attempt to disperse groups of heavily armed 'witdoeke' but constantly dispersed small groups of victims who tried to retrieve their belongings.
- ★ Security forces stood by while 'witdoeke' gangs burned down shacks and looted the possessions and building materials. At the same time the 'witdoeke' were permitted to drive off satellite camp people who attempted to save their possessions.
- ★ The security forces openly allowed the 'witdoeke' to set up and man road-blocks, with military vehicles parked alongside these illegal actions.
- ★ The church group witnessed people being chased and assaulted by 'witdoeke' in the direct presence of the security forces without their intervention.
- ★ There was absolutely no evidence of the officially claimed buffer of the security force members between the two opposing sides. Contrary to the claims made by the security forces that the Mahobe Drive is the borderline between the victims and the 'witdoek' gangs, the actual 'frontline' is located at least a kilometer deeper into the area. Therefore the heavy security force presence on Mahobe Drive cannot be seen as the acclaimed 'peace-keeping buffer zone'.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS IS ACTUALLY A FORCED REMOVAL.

4.1 In October 1984 the state announced that all squatter groups would be moved to Khayelitsha.

4.2 In February 1985 Crossroads erupted in violence when the presence of a removal squad made it obvious that the state's continued intention was to forcefully move the squatter people to Khayelitsha.

4.3 The violence subsided once the state began negotiations with the people, but the Crossroads residents firmly rejected the offer to be moved to Khayelitsha. The authorities promised that Crossroads would be upgraded but indicated that some people would have to be removed to a controlled squatting area next to Khayelitsha. Residents of Nyanga Bush, Nyanga Extension and Portland Cement who were to be moved to this controlled site refused to move.

4.4 A series of coercive attempts to move these people were made by the authorities. These attempts met with little success. The leaders of these communities called for the recognition by the government for their right to live lawfully in Cape Town. Having fought for their promised permanent status and having shed their blood on that land, they now claimed the right to remain there.

4.5 The current systematic destruction of shacks in the satellite camps can therefore only be interpreted as form of forceful eviction. Thus far their intentions of rebuilding or even of recovering what is left of their possessions have been thwarted by 'witdoeke' and security forces. A delegation of women from the area to parliament was told that they have to move to Khayelitsha.

The above leaves this group of church people with the following questions:

IS THIS THE PATTERN OF 'ORDERLY URBANIZATION'?

IS THIS THE DEMOCRATIC WAY IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO TREAT OPPOSITION TO THEIR POLICIES?

IS THIS THE 'EXTENSION OF DEMOCRACY' ON WHICH THE FUTURE REGIONAL SERVICE COUNCILS WILL BE BASED?

Signed by:

Rev. A. Simons (Methodist Church); Rev. P. Grassow (Methodist Church); The Rt. Rev. P. Matolengwe (Anglican Church); Rev. C. Davids (Anglican Church); Rev. S. Jacobs (Anglican Church); Rev. N. Brandt (Lutheran Church); Rev. J. Isaacs (Lutheran Church); Rev. D. Kapa (Presbyterian Church); Rev. B.N. Mgujulwa (Presbyterian Church); Rev. W.M. Mabuza (World Vision - Methodist Church); Rev. P. Oberholzer (World Vision - N.G. Sendingkerk); Rev. N. Bixa (Methodist Church); Rev. R.M. Vithi (Methodist Church); Rev. Z. Mfengu (Apostolic Faith Mission); Rev. M. Mfenyana (Anglican Church); Rev. T. Lester (Anglican Church); Rev. S. Birchfield (Lutheran Church); Rev. B. Birchfield (Lutheran Church); Rev. A. Smith (Anglican Church); Rev. P. van den Heever (Methodist Church); Rev. J. Seremane (SACC - Anglican Church); Rev. G. Quinlan (Anglican Church); Ms R. Quinlan (Anglican Church); Mr J. Liddell (Methodist Church); Ms L. Liddell (WPCC - Methodist Church); Ms E. Huismans (WPCC - N.G. Kerk); Mr W. van der Westhuizen (N.G. Sending-kerk); Ms V. West (Lutheran Church); Mr V. Petersen (Anglican Church); Rev. J. Ashe (Anglican Church); Rev. T. Steyn (Anglican Church); Rev. T. Pearce (Anglican Church); Rev. C. Jones (Anglican Church); Rev. J. Davies (Baptist Church); Rev. P. Mentoor (A.M.E. Church); Dr H.T. Pearce (Methodist Church); Mr R.B. Crowder (Methodist Church); Ms J. Joubert (Methodist Church); Rev. H.S. Marawu (African Reformed Church S.A.).

The current systematic destruction of shacks in the satellite camps can therefore only be interpreted as form of forcible eviction. Thus far their intentions of rebuilding or even of recovering what is left of their possessions have been thwarted by 'witboeke' and security forces. A delegation of women from the area to parliament was to move to (Kralings)



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