

This fact paper introduces three different Indian communities affected by the Group Areas Board. It highlights the distress that is unnecessarily given to the victims of these unjust laws.

- 1 WYEBANK - residential
- 2 STOCKVILLE - agricultural
- 3 GREY STREET - commercial.

1. ZONING OF WYEBANK

Since the first hearing before the Group Areas Board in 1957, over the zoning of Wyobank, the 3 000 or more Indians living in the area have existed in a state of constant uncertainty and anxiety over their future.

During the years since 1957 several "enquiries" have been made, and letters written by, the Department of Planning but no decision has been made. In 1966 the Bantu Commission decided to amputate a part of Wyobank for extra Bantu housing. Many objections were raised by local commerce and industry and, due to this strong support (to the Indians) the Bantu Commission withdrew their decision.

The Natal Committee of Group Areas Board held two separate sittings in 1957 and 1959 to consider proposals in connection with the zoning of Wyobank. Representations were made calling for zoning of the area for Indian occupation and ownership. At a further meeting of the Group Areas Natal Committee and Kloof Municipality it was agreed that certain European-owned land, not previously considered for Indian ownership, be included in the proposed Indian Area to provide suitable boundaries for zoning purposes.

Prolonged delay in issue of a Proclamation and growing fears amongst the Indians about the future prompted the Indian Ratepayers' Association to write to the Department of Community Development in Pretoria. A letter received from the Secretary for Community Development stated that proposals for Group Areas would be advertised in the press, when Indian ratepayers could make further representations.

This is the sort of correspondence that has been carried on over a long period.

In consultation with people in the Wyobank area it appeared that there is no apparent justification for moving the Indians away as Wyobank fulfills the requirements of the Group Areas Act if it should be zoned 'Indian'.

Wyobank is very conveniently placed in relationship to Pinetown and New Germany industries.

Including the "Kraanskloof Estate" (several thousand acres lying between the Borough of Kloof and the Bantu township of Clormont which does not fall under the jurisdiction of any municipality or Local Health Committee--presently occupied by Indians) there are over three thousand Indians in the Wyobank area. Most of the men and the young women are employed in Pinetown and New Germany in commerce, industry and shops, etc. In April 1970 a letter was written by the Natal Chamber of Industries to the Secretary for Planning, Pretoria, re the zoning of Wyobank. The Chamber of Industries has a very direct interest in this matter as its member firms employ a large number of Indian workers. The letter quotes the following figures:-

Total no. of Indians employed in 1967 was	4 186
Total no. in 1969 was	5 216.

As there are numerous firms not included in this count (companies who are not members of the Chamber of Industries) the Chamber considers that a conservative estimate of the number of Indians employed in the Boroughs of Pinetown and New Germany would be 8 000 or more. By now this number is probably increased by 25%.

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There appears to be no 'Group Area' for Indians in Pinetown or New Germany, with the exception of an existing Municipal Bantu location at Klaarwater which is zoned for future Indian occupation, but which obviously cannot be used until the Bantu living there now are housed elsewhere. Due to the absence of Indian residential areas in close proximity to Pinetown Indian workers are often compelled to find accommodation in places such as Shallcross, Chatsworth and even, in a few cases, as far away as Verulam. A survey conducted by the Chamber of Industries reveals that workers from these areas are obliged to catch buses taking them an hour or more to reach their work. This is very expensive for them in relation to their fairly low wages.

Wyobank appears to have great potential as an Indian residential area. The Kloof Town Board has indicated that 1/4 acre plots would be allowed if Wyobank is zoned Indian. This means that some twenty to twenty-five thousand Indians could be settled there and Wyobank would serve as a very convenient "dormitory" to Pinetown and New Germany. The 1/4 acre plot ruling would be a popular move with the Indians in Wyobank and would allow for a good class residential area.

While Wyobank remains "unzoned" development is at a standstill. There are 356 children attending the one school in the area and classes have to take place in "shifts" due to lack of space. The school toilets have been condemned, roads are appalling, and pleas for further school accommodation have been turned down as there is obvious reluctance on all sides to spend money or invest in an area with so uncertain a future.

While there is little farming or even fruit or flower growing in Wyobank at present, land too steep for housing development could be used profitably for banana-growing, etc.

Land values in Wyobank are comparable to residential land values in Kloof.

Three to six months notice to move is usually given in re-zoning proclamations. No alternative accommodation has been suggested to the Indians but the most likely possibilities appear to be Klaarwater or Chatsworth. Both would mean increased cost of transport for Indians working in Pinetown.

Chatsworth is already over-populated 8-fold, which means that facilities such as hospitals, schools, buses, etc are inadequate. Houses and land, if taken by the Government as the result of removals, are valued by Group Areas valuers. If a private buyer is found a percentage of the price, over the Government valuation, must go to Community Development. It is a well-known fact that a large profit was made over removal of Indians in Westville.

Indians have been living in Wyobank for 80-90 years and are a well-established community with many large family groups. This story illustrates once again the disruption of the traditional Indian way of life.

Wyobank people with whom I have spoken wished to make it clear that the Kloof Town Board have loyally supported the Indians all along and have made constant representations on their behalf but with no result.

This information was given to the writer by Mr. Naranjee, the Secretary of the Indian Ratepayers' Association who does not wish his name to be published.

2. STOCKVILLE VALLEY

Very soon after the first world war Indians were offered the area of Stockville for development for agricultural purposes. It was then a barren valley but over the years it has been made into a most productive area cut up into many small holdings. Bananas, flowers and vegetables are sent in to the Durban market and in to Pinetown. It is said that over 80% of the flowers sold in the Indian market in Durban are grown in this valley, and 20% of vegetables and 20% of the bananas.

The land is now owned by the Indians, of whom there are over 2 000 settled in the valley. A school for 400 pupils has been built and to this school children come from Kloof, Hillcrest and Bothas Hill.

In 1963 the calm of these people was shattered when it became known that they were to be moved to make way for a coloured housing scheme, and in 1964 this threat took shape when the Department of Community Development confirmed that they were to be moved. The uncertainty dragged on until May 1970 when a notice appeared in the Natal Mercury, this time issued by the Department of Planning, which stated that an enquiry was to be held into the desirability of deproclaiming certain areas (of which Stockville was one) for Indians and of proclaiming these areas for the occupation of Coloureds, for ownership and occupation.

The situation is being examined by certain European bodies, including Churches, who feel that the Indians are indeed an asset to the district, forming as they do a compact, industrious and viable community, and it will be interesting to see what these bodies can achieve to help these farmers who are threatened with the loss of their livelihood.

The removal of Indians from the Stockville Valley has been threatened for a long time.

AUGUST 4, 1964 - The Gillitts Indian Landowners Association wrote to the Gillitts-Emberton Health Committee pointing out that they were in danger of being moved and saying: "We are a farming community; we cannot make a living if we are driven from our land, and if we are forced into organised townships."

AUGUST 17 1964 - A memorandum was submitted to the Department of Community Development on behalf of the Gillitts Indian Landowners Association by Mr. Lester Hall.

Although no reply was received to this memorandum by Mr. Lester Hall, no further action was taken for sometime.

MAY 15, 1970 - A notice appeared in the Natal Mercury to the effect that an enquiry was to be held into the desirability of de-proclaiming as a group area for Indians certain areas of which Stockville was one, and of proclaiming these areas for Coloured ownership and occupation. On this action the notice was issued by the Department of Planning and not by the Department of Community Development.

JUNE 12, 1970 - A memorandum was submitted to the Department of Planning by the Gillitts Indian Landowners Association objecting to this de-proclamation.

OCTOBER 2, 1970 - A report was published of questions by Mr. W.T. Webber in the House of Assembly.

Visits were paid to the Stockville Valley and discussions were held with Mr. Govender, Chairman of the Gillitts Indian Landowners Association. What emerged was a picture of a thriving and industrious community which had taken over a barren valley some fifty years ago

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and had turned it into a productive area, sending fruit, vegetables and flowers to the surrounding European areas and to Pinetown. In addition, particularly from the younger men and women, labour is supplied to the Industries of Pinetown. A school for 400 children has been built, good houses erected, and there are over 2 000 people living in the valley as a viable community.

What strikes one is the utter inhumanity of such a move. These are country people who work their plots skilfully and productively, and it is proposed to move them to Chatsworth where there is hardly land for the smallest of gardens. How will these people live? No immediate move is contemplated and there is still time for further representations to be made.

It is emphasised that the present state of uncertainty should not continue. As far back as 1963 the Principal of the school pointed out that necessary enlargements of the school could not be carried out because of uncertainty as to the future. In this connection it is interesting to note that over fifty of the scholars come from areas outside Gillitts, such as Hillcrest, Bothas Hill, Kloof etc.

Developments in other directions have also been held up during this period but despite this fact this area supplied to the Indian market in Durban 80% of all locally grown flowers sold in that market, 20% of the vegetables sold, 20% of the bananas sold.

The present population is estimated at approximately 2 000, some 450 men work in Pinetown and adjacent areas in Industries and 95 women in Clothing Industries in Pinetown.

3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GREY STREET COMPLEX BEING PROCLAIMED WHITE

The area known as the Grey Street Complex has been "frozen" since 1960 and development has been held back because of the fear of the Indian people that it would be zoned for Whites. All building and alteration has required a permit from the Department of Community Development, and no residential building at all has been allowed. Despite this, some very well-designed and well equipped office blocks have been constructed.

The area was first settled by Indian traders in 1870. There are 418 properties, 95% being Indian-owned and 99% wholly occupied by Indians. The Municipal valuation of Indian-owned buildings is R16,800,000, only R1,300,000 additional to this being owned publicly or by Whites.

In 1963, 700 traders, or roughly half of all Indian traders in the Durban area operated in the Grey Street complex. Their trades comprise wholesalers, tailors, repair workshops, light industrial establishments, offices and professional firms. If Grey Street were lost to the Indian community, the loss of growth potential would be enormous, both for Indians and Natal.

In 1966, a very conservative estimate of employment of Indians in Durban was made, and it was discovered that over 12% of all those employed in Greater Durban were employed in the Grey Street complex. More recently, it was estimated that nearly 21,000 Indians are employed in the area, and that nearly 58,000 people are dependant on these. The present residential population of this area is between 12,000 and 14,000 people, and there is considerable over-crowding, but, according to Mr. L. Schlemmer, "the majority of dwelling units conform to standards of adequacy." If this area were to be proclaimed White, the lack of housing for Indians would be even more chronic. At the end of 1969 it was estimated that 112,000 Indians needed housing, largely as a result of the Group Areas Act which has disqualified roughly one third of South Africa's Indian population.

Amongst social and cultural amenities in the area are luxurious cinemas, a first-class restaurant, a very good Indian hotel, a very large Mosque which is attended by up to 8 000 people on Holy Days, the M L Sultan Technical College, 17 Community Halls, 16 schools, 3 Churches for Non-Whites, 3 Temples, 4 Welfare Agencies, 1 Hospital and 21 Restaurants and Tea Rooms. These amenities are used by Indian people in all surrounding areas of Durban, and could never be rebuilt in smaller, less central parts.

If Grey Street remains as an Indian area, Mr L. Schlemmer expects capital to flow in from other parts of Natal, and even from the Transvaal where Group Areas Proclamations have made development difficult. According to Lord Holford and Professor Kantorowich in their Report of 1968, it is unlikely that Grey Street will be needed for business or residential purposes by the Whites as they are more likely to develop towards the Bay and the Beach. Further, the Report stated that they expected Grey Street to continue to develop even under adverse conditions, and that the number of residents in this area was likely to decrease.

In 1952 the Durban City Council decided that the central city areas, commercial and industrial, should not be the subject of territorial race group planning, and that these areas should be left as "working areas unzoned". In 1961, the Durban Chamber of Commerce backed this with a similar resolution. In 1962, Mr. J. J. Marais, then Secretary of the Department of Community Development, agreed that major cities such as Durban, would have inter-racial business centres, and that Indians buying property in these areas would not be regarded as undertaking temporary arrangements. In 1964, Mr. W. Maroo, then Minister of Indian Affairs, said that

Indians/...

The implications of the Grey St. Complex being proclaimed white.

Indians would not be forced to leave areas proclaimed as controlled industrial areas under the Group Areas Act. Mr. Maree made it clear that Grey Street was such an area.

On 29th September 1970, the Minister of Planning agreed to speed up a decision, and he has since visited Grey Street. Now, everyone waits anxiously to hear whether the Indians will be allowed to continue with the businesses they have built up, or whether they must begin all over again in a new place with a much smaller market, or even be quite unable to afford the astronomical prices asked for land in Indian areas. Apart from the terrible loss that the Indian people would suffer, for once the White group would also suffer - from the loss of a tourist attraction, and a fascinating shopping area and perhaps even from their consciences when they see what is being done to a settled, industrious community just to keep Durban "White"

Information found in report by Mr. Laurence Schlemmer,
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Report on Department of Community Development by
Mr. E. Winchester, M.P.