

MAKGATO AND BATLOKWA REMOVALS.

Notes to be presented to Dr. Piet Koornhof, Minister of Co-operation and Development, at an interview on Friday 22nd February, 1980.

1 NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED.

- i) Makgato : 614 families - approximately 5000 people.
The Chief and 78 families agreed to the move.
- ii) Batlokwa : Approximately 80,000 people. (some sources give the number at 50,000)

2. SITES.

- i) Makgato : Presently at Dwars River - 50 kms. from Pietersburg.
To be moved to Kromhoek - 128 kms. from Pietersburg.
- ii) Batlokwa : Presently at Dwars River.
To be moved to Bochum - 62 kms from Pietersburg.
- iii) In Kromhoek there are only tents, a tap in each road, a good school with 12 classrooms for approximately 100 children.
Most of the teachers refused to move.
There are few employment opportunities.
The area near Vivo is arid, pebbly, and "not fit for human habitation".
- iv) Bochum : is far from tarred roads. It consists of a police station, a few houses, a provision store, a bottle store and a beerhall.
The land is flat, stony scrubland, the heat is excessive, water is in short supply and rainfall scanty.

3. THE PEOPLE.

Makgato :

- i) The Makgato do not belong to the Batlokwa tribe. They were moved to a spot adjacent to the Batlokwa, and the old Chief did not approve of the amount of land allocated to them.
- ii) The workers are mainly migrants working in Pietersburg or the Johannesburg/Pretoria area.
- iii) The people were moved to Dwars River in 1962. Some people in the area have been moved three times since 1945.
- iv) They were moved a few kilometers in 1945 and again in 1958, with no compensation. In addition to other heavy losses, they lost churches, schools, donkeys.
- v) They were told this was the final resettlement and that they could make improvements. This they did at great expense. There were mud huts in the Makgato Village, but also a reasonable number of brick buildings. Different sized farms were established in the area and there were plenty of cattle.

There were three schools - two/---

There were three schools - two Primary and one Junior Secondary ; a new clinic ; three shops ; boreholes in the yards.

This was an established community.

They had daily buses to Pietersburg where many of them worked.

- vi) The first removals in 1979 of those families who agreed to go to Kromhoek went well, but then the Department of Plural Relations (as it was then) moved in with the police. People fled into the bush, and some were allegedly attacked by the police. Some were forcibly removed or their homes were forcibly entered and their goods taken and dumped in Kromhoek without any protection from the elements.
- vii) People then demolished their own homes, saving what they could, and moved in with the Batlokwa.
- viii) The people were deeply hurt. There is the tragedy of Mr. Sekole, father of six, who dismantled his large house in which he had invested all his savings for years, and then hanged himself in the shell. He had worked in Johannesburg.
- ix) The Makgato Village looks as though a bomb was dropped on it. Only walls are standing. There were some mud houses, but some were solidly built, and windows and doors were removed. There are remnants of larger buildings - schools and churches. The Village is completely deserted.

Batlokwa :

- i) They have lived in the area always - about 200 years or more. They have never known any other place.
- ii) They live in tastefully decorated bungalows. There are a few double-storey houses, traditional rondavels and many beautiful homes.
- iii) There are 21 schools, three clinics, mills, dams, boreholes, shops, stores, garages, post offices, and beautifully cultivated gardens.
- iv) There are flowing rivers. The land is rich and well cultivated, with Afrikander cattle, sheep and goats.
- v) They need only modern farming techniques to develop beyond subsistence farming, for there is enough land to produce food if it is developed properly, and agricultural officers were beginning to help them in this regard.

Electricity would attract industry.

vi) There are small towns, and

- vi) There are small towns, and villages which are like suburbs, with good sand roads and clearly demarcated properties. The homes are solid and the people are not afraid of storms.
- vii) These are planned areas for planned, settled communities, which are urbanised. This is not a rural community. It takes great pride in its community, it is not simply a group of farmers.
- viii) There is very little crime, and the nearest police station is 15 miles away.
- ix) Most cash is earned by migrants and daily workers.
- x) The neighbouring white farms provide seasonal employment.
- xi) There is great emphasis on orderly and reliable procedure among the Batlokwa. Their trust has been undermined. The authorities have not responded with decency, respect for dignity and orderly procedure.
- xii) They were not consulted about the proposed move. It was simply proclaimed. They do not want to move.
"There was no dialogue - simply proclamation after proclamation".
- xiii) Dr. Koornhof told them he is against forceful removal, and promised to give "deep thought" to their requests and to let Dr. Phatudi know his decision. They have been waiting on this which was promised on 4th July, 1979.

4. REMOVALS.

Makgato :

- i) The Makgato children have been absorbed into the Batlokwa schools, following a protest march by Batlokwa students.
People are sheltering in the homes and yards of the Batlokwa.
- ii) The Batlokwa Chiefs maintain they have a right to grant shelter to Makgato "refugees", on whom the South African Government has "made war".
- iii) Kromhoek is almost double the distance from Pietersburg, costing more in time and money for transport and making daily commuting almost impossible.
Bus fares will increase for a one way trip from 75 cents to R3.09.
There are no tarred roads.
Migrants have limited time for home visits, which will become more difficult and less frequent.
- iv) The Makgato Chief accepted the move against the wishes of the majority of his tribe, who believe he stood to benefit materially himself.
- v) Compensation is only payable'

- v) Compensation is only payable in Kromhoek once people have moved there. It is totally inadequate.
- A good rondavel costs R700 to R800 to build. (One completed recently for catechism cost R800).
- One family received R50 for an old rondavel.
- Another family received R175 for three new rondavels.
- Another family received R920 for two zinc rooms and four rondavels.

Batlokwa :

- i) The Batlokwa negotiated with the authorities to remain where they are and presented a memorandum to Dr. Koornhof.
- They are still in suspense.

Both Tribes :

- i) Dr. Koornhof's promises were not observed in removals. No adequate infra-structure or employment opportunities have been provided.
- ii) As a result of removals the standard of living would decline and the cost of living would rise because of the remoteness of the areas.
- iii) Adequate compensation would cost South Africa millions of rands.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

- i) Permit those members of the Makgato tribe who wish it to remain where they are permanently as part of the Batlokwa.
- This should be legalised.
- Allow the Makgato to decide where they want to be and do not force them to Vivo.
- ii) Save the Batlokwa towns and villages.
- The Batlokwa wish to remain where they are, and should not be resettled.
- iii) Re-proclaim Batlokwa as part of Lebowa, as requested by the Batlokwa.
- iv) Dr. Koornhof should visit the area to see the developments there.
- v) Stop all forced removals. They are cruel, destructive and totally uneconomic.

6. COMMENTS.

- i) The Black Sash affirms that it is totally opposed to the Government's 'Homelands' policy and to all forced removals.

ii) The problems of the/---

- ii) The problems of the Makgato and the Batlokwa are indivisible.
- iii) The harm done to the Makgato cannot be undone. This should not be repeated with the Batlokwa or with any more people.
- iv) If it is undesirable in terms of Government policy to leave the Batlokwa as a 'Black Spot' in a white area, the Government should consider buying white farms in the area between Batlokwa and Lebowa, rather than those in the Bochum area. This would involve only four or five white farms and a distance of about 15 kilometers.
- v) The Batlokwa would prefer the white farmers to remain where they are. Relationships are warm and friendly and the farms provide seasonal employment opportunities.
- vi) Many of the Makgato wish to remain with the Batlokwa, and should be permitted to do so.
- vii) The Batlokwa ask to be left alone, and that Dr. Koornhof should decide in their favour and that he should do so soon. They have been waiting long and their progress has been retarded. The strain is telling on them.

They beg him to re-proclaim Batlokwa into Lebowa.

They would be very thankful.

JOYCE HARRIS
NATIONAL PRESIDENT.

Sources. Press cuttings. The Batlokwa people. a Visitor to the area.
The S.A.C.C.