

UPDATE ON EASTERN CAPE REMOVALS

If anything, MORE families are under threat now than was apparent a year ago.

Policy and action in the White Corridor (between Ciskei & Transkei) and Ciskei area

Clearing the black spots in the Corridor has begun. 200 people from Alsatia near Cathcart were trucked in July 1982 to Frankfort near King William's Town, the first unwilling occupants of this new site which they are due to share with 8 000+ from Mgwali/Wartburg. Government statements in October 82 show SA is still set on these removals. It also seems that plans for a new township at Stutterheim may in effect push 5 000+ others from this area into the Ciskei, to Frankfort/Braunschweig.

Up towards Queenstown the huge new site at Whittlesea North next to Sada is meant to take 60 000 people, among them the Oxton transit camp community and the whole of Lesseyton and Goshen, two other Corridor black spots (19th century mission bases like Mgwali/Wartburg). No removals have been reported yet but the site is being developed fast.

Down south, the three Corridor areas of tribal land Newlands, Kwelerha and Moolplaats are due for clearance to Chalumna west of East London. A strange official move in October 82 gave some Kwelerha people land at Kwelerha to farm on a 5-year trial basis, with the even stranger proviso that the new agricultural extension officer could replace them with others from the tribe if he saw fit. This could be a move to lull the villagers or divide them... but superficially it contradicts the removals policy. The scheme was launched by both SA and Ciskei representatives.

Urban removals within East London and from Duncan Village to Mdantsane (i.e. from East London into the Ciskei) have been carrying on way behind schedule but only because they were slowed down by a shortage of housing.

1 000 people were moved to Peddie commonage in September 82 after being 'in transit' at Kammaskraal nearby since mid-1980. The Kammaskraal site is to be part of the beef fattening ranch of the huge 55 000 ha Peddie South scheme, one of the huge and only nominally democratic agricultural projects in the Ciskei. It looks as though others displaced by this scheme will join people from elsewhere at a new relocation centre, Wesley, down near the coast.

Meanwhile the Peddie commonage site (a 'toolshed' plantation like Frankfort) is also due to take the 4 200 Glenmore people as soon as that farm is handed over to Ciskei, to extend another large farm project at Tyefu.

North of Glenmore, 'coloured' landowners in the Stockenstrom district are under imminent threat as their land is to be ceded to the Ciskei anytime now. The Minister seemed to indicate in Parliament (February 83) that they could buy land elsewhere in the Republic.

Policy and action west of the Ciskei area

The Eastern Cape Administration Board (ECAB) seem to be shrinking their township network in preparation for a huge offensive against squatters in both town and country areas - presumably to tighten influx control. The intake in new/upgraded townships is to be severely limited to 'legals', backyard and indeterminate areas cut away to make the Board area less porous for the vast 'illegal' population which has managed to stay around albeit often in very bad conditions.

ECAB's policy stems partly from the 1981 De Lange report arguing that riot tensions (as of 1980) might be reduced by upgrading the 74 townships in the area (8 of the worst

neglected were called 'flashpoints'). The timing of work on the 3 new township areas in Port Elizabeth and the new one at Addo suggests the bubonic plague and cholera outbreaks of early 1982 scared the government into massive funding after the De Lange ideas had stalled with the slump in gold in 1981. The new shape of the network, ECAB always insists, is to cut administration costs. In fact they've never spent anything on the townships being axed, and the new plans are far more probably related to shrinking labour needs, national influx control, and the local emphasis of that policy since December 1981 when all E Cape Africans turned technically 'alien' at Ciskei's independence. Pressures are mounting as the worsening Ciskei (especially in drought) presumably means more people trying to get or stay outside, while officials roundabout are gearing up to drive an enormous 'surplus' population INTO the Ciskei.

Signs of the policy and the times are: *both communities are distressed. Bathurst people are organising their own protest. Alfred is more desperate* Bathurst township is meant to be closed down, and the 2 000 people moved to Port Alfred; Kenton emergency camp to be closed down, and the people moved to a new township at Klipfontein (exactly where Africans were cleared to Glenmore in 1979) along with all other legals in the area including Boknes and Cannon Rocks; upgrading and threats on backyard housing in Grahamstown; the same, massively, in Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage; illegals due by implication to be forced out in every way, from armed ECAB raids on squatters (PE 1982-3) to weed-outs during the move into new townships (Stutterheim, Walmer-Zwide etc). The scale is immense: in PE the Soweto squatter area alone was put at 100 000 (Louis Rive, 1982).

Some community reactions

The Alsatia people were justifiably appalled to leave their subsistence base since 1904 for houseplots in Frankfort. They got on the trucks because they couldn't think how to resist and were frightened. Their grim reports since have somewhat stiffened resistance in Mgwali Wartburg where people also face removal to Frankfort. All debate is suppressed in the area so migrant members are being encouraged to fight from outside. Over 7 000 of the area are said to oppose removal. Harassment has subdued some forms of opposition but feeling runs very strong: officials counting the population were chased out of a Wartburg village last year. The Presbyterian Church formally joined the cause in late 1982. The community welcomes and really uses all kinds of support, keeps opening up strategies of resistance.

Goshen and Lesseyton are also totally against removal, but no actual lines of resistance have been reported. All these Corridor groups could benefit from more interaction amongst themselves, and from *outside contact too.*

Apparently Goshen people have been told they will get land nearby, so are offering no resistance
The Wooldridge group from Kammaskraal were so desperate for housing they rejoiced at the move to Peddie - actually got off the buses singing - whereas the others from Alexandria resented leaving their shacks and rough gardens. (Glenmore people, also due for Peddie, seem similarly divided, and their responses are thus confused.) Meanwhile the scene at Peddie shows something of the complex aftermath of a removal: the established community furious at the invasion, especially on their own commonage, of still more jobless people, who have a better water supply than the townspeople ever did... NO JOBS is the main fact at Peddie. Building up community life and resources is seen as priority by some very creative local people (who had started a bulk-buying scheme even at Kammaskraal), especially before the Glenmore group arrive and compound the feud.

The 150+ people still at Riebeek East are trying to resist ECAB's plan to move them to Alicedale. They have a committee but feel isolated... In contrast, nobody black or white, in Bathurst or Port Alfred, wants the Bathurst removal. The plan will be fiercely fought on all fronts, and the threatened group themselves are very firm, having experienced removal before from their old site and their losses then.

Outside help with information and publicity is needed, also monitoring. Advice Office self-help could do a lot both before and after removal. Various groups umbrella'd by the new Grahamstown Resettlement Committee, Box 319, Grahamstown, hope to serve in some ways. The SPP report vol 2 gives 400 pages of background and information on the Eastern Cape removals scene, to be published soon.