

Resettlement of people is part of the South African way of life: Since 1948 the government has enforced a policy of massive and systematic uprootal and relocation of people, the scale of which is difficult to grasp. In 1978 the Black Sash ('South Africa - a land divided against itself') estimated that during the 30 years of apartheid rule, the government had resettled approximately 2 115 000 people under the following categories:

- Between 1960 and 1970 almost one million labour tenants and squatters were moved off white-owned farms and resettled on government-controlled Trust land (eventually to be incorporated into the 'Homelands'). In Natal labour tenancy was only systematically tackled from the late 1960's; thousands of people have been affected by this process during the 1970's. (See AFRA report no.3).
- By 1976, 258 632 people had been moved off black freehold farms ('black spots'). The land was expropriated by the state and the people resettled in 'closer settlements' on Trust land. In Natal a total of 40 'black spots' (64 425 people) were cleared between 1970 and the end of 1979. (House of Assembly Debates, Question no. 537, 22 April 1980).
- By 1970, 327 000 people had been moved because black townships adjoining certain towns had been deproclaimed. Their entire populations were resettled in new dormitory townships in 'Homeland' areas. This process has continued during the 1970's. One indication of its scale is that between 1970 and 1976 the number of "commuters" - people living in the 'Homelands' but travelling daily to work in the 'white' urban industrial centres - increased from 290 000 to 638 000. (G.Mare: African Population Relocation in South Africa.p.26) (This figure does not include the Durban township of Kwa Mashu - incorporated into Kwa Zulu in 1977). Utrecht Township, moved to Osizweni in Zululand in June 1977, is an example of this category in Natal.
- By 1976, 530 000 people had been resettled within urban boundaries in terms of the Group Areas Act. 99,4% of the people affected were black. Communities resettled this year in Natal because of Group Areas include 13 Indian families in New Hanover and the large Indian business community at Ladysmith.

The Black Sash total, large as it is, does not cover all categories of resettlement:

- By the end of 1979 a further half a million people had been endorsed out of urban areas in terms of influx control and forced back to whatever 'Homeland' officials deemed they belonged. (Financial Mail, 7/12/79). In Durban alone, a total of 11 297 people were endorsed out between April 1978 and the end of 1979. (South African Institute of Race Relations: Survey of Race Relations, 1978,1979)
- The Black Sash figure also does not include the thousands of people who have resettled themselves "voluntarily" because of the apartheid policy - rural families driven nearer urban areas because they cannot make a living in the impoverished, overcrowded 'Homelands' or women who have moved to town illegally to join migrant husbands etc.

- Nor does it include the thousands of people moved within 'Homeland' boundaries because of the introduction of Betterment schemes. Betterment was introduced to control land-use by zoning areas for residential and agricultural use. Although intended to boost agricultural production in the 'Homelands', it has met with considerable popular opposition because it disrupts existing social organisation and because it has been implemented with minimal consultation with local people and has rendered many families landless. Extensive areas of KwaZulu have been "bettered", including the Impendhle, Nkandla and Mahlabathini districts.

- Nor does the Black Sash figure include those resettled for strategic reasons, eg. the people moved away from the Natal/Mocambique border area by the military. (Unfortunately, statistics are hard to come by for this category).

#### Resettlement is continuing in Natal:

Labour tenancy: Over the past 12 months several newspaper reports have focused attention on the plight of tenants evicted off farms (Natal Witness 27/12/79; Rand Daily Mail 20/2/80) The process of eviction is not slackening off; it is possible that because labour tenancy has finally been completely abolished by the state (Procl.2089, Govt Gazette 6663, 21/9/79), it is escalating.

Not only labour tenants are involved. Many fulltime farm workers and their families who are no longer wanted or needed by farmers have also been evicted. Once evicted, they are, like the tenants, not only jobless but homeless and landless too.

'Black spots': There are still about 150 'black spots' to be cleared in Natal. At a very conservative estimate of 500 people per farm, that means at least 75 000 people are still to be moved by the state. Many of these have already had their houses numbered, the first stage in the the resettlement process, eg. Matiwane's Kop, near Ladysmith (numbered in late 1978), Tembalihle, near Estcourt (July 1979), Kwapitela, near Himeville (see AFRA report no. 5).

Urban relocation: While Steadville Township, Ladysmith, has been reprieved and granted 99 year leasehold, Sibongile Township, Dundee, and Glencoe Township are still waiting to hear if they will be moved to Nqutu, some 50kms away. Bhekuzulu Township, Vryheid, is also likely to be moved to Mondlo, some 28kms away. In addition, thousands of squatters in the Durban area are threatened with resettlement, eg. at St Wendolen's, Malukazi, Richmond Farm.

Group Areas: As of 31/12/78, 132 041 people were still to be moved. 389 of them were white, the remainder 'Coloured' and Indian. (South African Institute of Race Relations: Survey of Race Relations, 1979) Right now in Durban 2 500 Indian families are fighting to remain in their long-established community of Clairwood.

'Homeland' Consolidation: According to the 1975 consolidation plans, approximately 175 000 families - over a million people - would have to be resettled to fit into the redrawn boundaries of the 'Homelands'. The government is currently reviewing its plans. The Chairman of the Consolidation Commission, Mr H. van der Walt, has indicated, however, that he favours a radical solution which, if adopted, will inevitably mean large-scale  
resettlement.

The above is not comprehensive: The more research one does, the more soberingly apparent the gaps in our knowledge become. Newspapers have reported on the grim conditions at resettlement sites at Nondweni, Natal, and Onverwacht, in the OFS, but how many people have ever heard of Bilanyoni (Paulpietersburg), Nkonisa, Ntingwe, Ngwegweni (Nkandla), Sahlumbe, Nomoya, Msusamphi, Mashunka (Msinga), Ekuvukeni (Ladysmith), Compensation (Impendhle) ... all resettlement sites, all in Natal, all populated in the last ten years or so with many of the displaced and dispossessed listed so crudely above?

Further reports will look at this process in greater detail as well as probe the important issue of why it is taking place.