

**REPORT ON REGIONAL "RESETTLEMENT" CONSULTATION HELD
AT ST. PETER'S, HAMMANSKRAAL ON FEBRUARY 1-2, 1980**

During the discussion which followed Bishop S.E. Serote's address, delegates laid bare the stark-naked realities of human suffering in the "resettlement" areas. Contributions by the speakers brought to light the following facts :-

1. The enforced removals lead to great loss of property. Canon William Peters described how land was taken by the authorities from Blacks who said they bought it and owned it since the Old Boer Republics. This was taking place in the Kuruman area. They have been moved to the new area after their resistance and fight for their rights were overcome by the authorities.

Mr. F.C. Raulinga, Chairman of the Justice and Reconciliation group in Tzaneen, who is also a Bible translator into the Tsonga language, told of how people in Venda had lost their 99 year leasehold when they were uprooted to a place 10 km West of Louis Trichardt. In 1962 these people were told they would not be moved. He added that not only Venda people were affected, but Northern Sothos and Tsongas also.

Other material assets lost through the removals include cattle. An entire community in the Sikhukhuni area had its number of cattle restricted to 200. Near Burgersfort, people being moved from farms could not take their cattle along - these were confiscated by the local farmers.

There is no clarity about compensation yet. As Mr. Raulinga pointed out, "land bought at R450.00 cannot cost the same amount after ten years - let alone less": Church buildings erected to serve these communities were left idling and no compensation was received.

2. In the wake of the removals Poverty stepped in. In the new areas, delegates said, the people had to build their own houses. Some depended on tin-shacks. The building process dug deep into their pockets.

Another problem leading to their further impoverishment arose. Rev. E. Kubheka of the Methodist Church, in the Eastern Transvaal told of the suffering at Kromkrans near Ermelo. He said the "resettlement" area is located between Ermelo and Carolina.

While in the past the people were next to their places of employment, they now had to travel 111 km to work. On account of the costs involved in commuting, the majority had to leave their homes and become migratory labourers. Rev. Kubheka confirmed what Canon Peters and Rev. I.M. Gaborone had said about their areas in Vryburg, Rooigrond, Ramatlobama and Magokgoane, concerning the problem of commuting. Makgatho, for example is about 100 km from Pieterburg. Return journey increased from R1 to R3.

More women have now been compelled to become workseekers - as domestics and casual workers in order to augment the family income.. In some cases they have become the breadwinners while their husbands are battling with influx control and unemployment in Urban areas.

3. Removals have exposed the people to great health hazards. Almost every delegate to the consultation emphasised the dangers to the health of the "resettled" people. Overcrowding was one of the factors mentioned as a threat to health. Father Peter Brislin, reporting on the Thaba'Nchu area, said about 6000 people described as illegals, arrested several times, were beaten-up and removed to the "resettlement" area. Some were from nearby White farms.

Mr. Lungile Makhapela, an Officer of the Inter-Church Aid Division of the South African Council of Churches told of a shooting incident, when supporting the revelations made by Father Brislin, on Thaba'Nchu.

Rev. Kubheka, speaking of the poor health conditions in those areas said in Kromkrans, there was no water system. People had to dig for water in the hard rocky place. There were no toilet facilities he said, and the pit-system had to be resorted to. There were also no doctors, hospitals and clinics with the resultant high adult and infant mortality.

Another delegate Rev. Masipa said Sikhukhuniland which is in Labowa, was in the same position as Kromkrans. There was no water system nor boreholes. The "resettled" people had to depend on the unpurified river water drawn from Bilharzia-infested river banks. Usually there were long queues at these water-drawing spots.

Father Mitz of the Catholic Church, who gave a brief history of the Mandebele Aka-Ndzura, said the area where this "tribe" is being now "resettled" has very poor water facilities. There is only one shop and the majority of people have no means of living.

Rev Gaborone describing the poor health conditions in the Western Transvaal areas of Deelport, and Atamelang near Lichtenburg, said people were exposed to the elements as they lived in tin-shacks and some make-shift shelter made out of corrugated iron.

Father Louis Vandenbroek, speaking of the health situation in the area covered by Gannalaagte, Bodibe, Mooldorpie (Ituseng) and Sannieshof in Western Transvaal said it was "very bad".

4. Removals have broken down families and lowered people's morals. The absence of men from their homes left their women unprotected.. Children without places where they could be looked after, have gone their own way. Lack of centres for the aged have increased family problems.

Rev. Kubheka also commented on the lowering of morals in these areas. He said the low morals were a direct result of the "resettlement" with menfolk becoming migratory labourers. The distance between Kromkrans and the nearest working place was 111 km.

3/.....

The lack of schools, also mentioned by Father Mitz, Rev. Gaborone and Canon Peters, and the lack of recreation facilities mentioned by Father Vandembroeck, left children of school-going age without anything else to do, but mischief.

5. Removals have a destructive psychological effect on the victims. - Mr. Makhapela, in support of Father Brislin, pointed out that the people were feeling the effect of being uprooted. - Rev. Raulinga described the uprooting as torture.

Bishop D. Rapoo of the Lutheran Church, said the uprootings were destructive spiritually. He said many people thought Blacks were rejoicing whenever they sing. But this was not always the case. No tribe moved happily. It was just customary for Blacks to sing even in times of distress.

"We should not be deceived by the singing - it expresses deep suffering", he said.

Another factor which caused a lot of suffering was that in all these removals, the people were never consulted. In the case of the removals near Louis Irichardt, for almost 20 years the people kept waiting to be moved. As a result, when they were moved suddenly they had not completed some of their projects.

6. Influx Control and Citizenship - another problem raised by the removals.

Mr. T. Vimbela raised the thorny question of Winterveld which brought to the fore the problems of influx control and "Homeland" Citizenship. After emphasizing the importance of land to Blacks and the instability caused to them by being moved from place to place, he then focused on Winterveld.

He said people were living in slums at that place. There is poor housing in the area, particularly the section called "Sidakaneni" (muddy place) and the tenants who are called "squatters" by the authorities, are overcharged by the landowners for the unhealthy tin-shacks erected on their land.

The question of Citizenship arose, among other things, as a result of raids on local landowners who were later charged with harbouring illegals. When Bophutha-Tswana became "independent" it was said all those who wished to stay legally in Winterveld should apply for citizenship.

Thousands of people in Winterveld, including the non-Tswana landowners applied. However, the applicants were not told that in order to qualify for Citizenship they were to have lived legally in the area for at least five years.

Supporting Mr. Vimbela, Ms. Johanna Yawitch, a Research student at the South African Institute of Race Relations, said the granting of the Citizenship was at the discretion of the local Magistrate "who certainly was not sympathetic to the applications from Winterveld people".

She said the Non-Tswanas of Winterveld were wanted neither by BophuthaTswana nor by the South African Government. She revealed that the Mangope Government was shifting the border to the West, resulting in Winterveld being left out of BophuthaTswana. On the other hand when the sons of these people travel to Pretoria in order to seek employment they are told by the Labour Office that they are illegal.

With regard to the raids on landlords, she said Chief Lucas Mangope had been quoted as saying that his aim was "not to throw people out of the country and that went for people in Winterveld no matter what their nationality". All he asked of the landlords was that they should regularise the position of their tenants by getting permits for them.

In respect of other conditions of life, Winterveld resembles the other "resettlement" areas. Water is bought at 2c per 20 litres; pit latrines that do exist there are often very close to the boreholes, rendering high the possibility that water is unsuitable for drinking purposes; there are four doctors in the area, some clinics are available in neighbouring, Mabopane and a hospital in distant Ga-Rankuwa, but all said and done, the availability of these to the 300 000 to 750 000 Wintervelders is minimal.

Diseases such as dysentery, gastro-enteritis, bilharzia, kwashiorkor, brachitis and VD all of which are related to poverty, malnourishment and unhygienic living conditions are common in Winterveld.

Schools are overcrowded with the ratio placed at about one teacher to a hundred pupils.

7. From the discussion it further came to light that it seemed to be Government strategy to keep these areas as far out of sight as possible. Mr. Peter Kerchhoff of the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness and Action said the main roads were being cleared of Black residents.

Just before breaking for supper Dr. W. Kistner, Director of Justice and Reconciliation at the South African Council of Churches drew the attention of the consultation to the urgent problem of stopping the removals. He appealed to the consultation to "get strategies of how to combat these uprootings". What was needed was to arm the church with facts, the removals were an open struggle of direct declaration and manifest scandal; a formidable complex and hidden wrong. The Church needs to say "it has surfaced and we can see it".

Delegates had to ask themselves what active steps; what their own response in terms of Christian and human responsibility in relation to the whole question as it appears, was.

8. The stand taken by the Makgatho people, who had refused to be removed was to be commended. Rev. Masipa, who described the resistance of the Makgathos, further said the threat of removal still loomed. But for the time being the people concerned - some 80 000 who were allocated an area 35 km from Ribo - were still staying in the old area.

Their main reasons for refusing to be moved seem to be the distance from Urban centres. Also, there has been the possible rise of busfares threefold. The resistance by the Makgathos has a "strengthening-of-the spirit" effect on others who oppose removals.

9. What The Churches have already done

When the question of what the Churches have done with regard to the grim picture painted by the various speakers about the "resettlements" and "removals" was raised. Bishop Serote was the first to speak. He said that after it had been brought to their notice that the Matshoaki and Ramokgopa people were being moved, his region tried to communicate with the then Minister of Plural Relations - Dr. Piet Koornhof.

He said they were speaking on behalf of the people trying to stop the removals. It was the Churches who made these appeals to the Minister through the Northern Transvaal Regional Council of Churches. The Council had responded in this manner in the "national interest".

Although there has been no response the Northern Transvaal Regional Council continues to make representations. It is pleading with the Government to deal with "more consideration with those people".

The Lutheran Church Council which viewed the whole removals in a serious light has arranged an interview with the Minister of Cooperation and Development in March 1980. The subject of the interview is the relocation effects on the Church. Members of the Lutheran Church are also affected in the removals.

It was unfortunate that only one section of the Church felt these effects while the other (DRC Churches and the White members) did not.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference Justice and Reconciliation Commission took as a theme the Resettlement to the Annual General Meeting of the Conference. 12 Dioceses are currently studying the whole issue of "Resettlements", according to Marylyn Aitken. They also hope to appoint a research worker soon, on this project.

Dr. W. Kistner revealed that two slide programmes on the "resettlements" have been commissioned by the Mission and Evangelism and Justice and Reconciliation Divisions of the SACC. (The former by Mr. John Muggerson and the latter by Mr. Frescura). These will be available for hire.

The purpose of the slides is to show that removals are taking place all over the country and that it is part of the whole strategy and plan. The issue is an educational task for the Churches considering the questions of :

- a) Where is the future of the Church to be?
- b) How the question of land distribution is to be resolved?

- c) that this requires a complete change of policy and seek ways the Church may militantly and actively help bring about this reversal of policy.
- d) To make overseas partner churches aware and share insights with them.

Dr. Margaret Nash announced that she had prepared a book entitled "Black Uprooting from White South Africa". The book is currently being published. It will be sold at R2.50 per copy, available from :

Book Orders
P.O. Box 31190
Braamfontein.
2017

She said the book was the direct result of the SACC's National Conference Resolution of 1979 calling for attention to this issue. The purpose of the book is to reveal the facts of the issue and to point to a better alternative. She then briefly distinguished between the terms "homeland" as used by the Government and its real meaning (as a white word) and the word "Resettlement". Churches needed to be educated and had to discuss the issue as Re-location rather than "Resettlement" and point to the morbidity and casualties of this policy.

Of crucial importance was the continuing role of obtaining first-hand reliable information.

Mention was also made of the vital significance of the role of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Bishop Roy Knifton raised the question of sharing, co-ordination and backing of the Churches. He saw a great need for this and pressed for church backing for the Regional Councils of Churches programmes.

Another point raised by Bishop Knifton concerned the denominations. "What do we mean by denominations?" he asked. It was felt that these questions needed to be examined.

Mr. Jimmy Palos said there was an urgent need for the infusion of Church workers/ministers as "non-economic" i.e. mission-subsidised workers in these areas. They should be preferably, trained for the task. The Churches' energies were "frail and limited" and need this infusion.

Father Brislin suggested that the task of the Church in these areas was to create a community. The Government was more motivated than the churches, which could be made to feel ineffective. A further point raised on this matter came from Father Mitz, who said people in the "resettlement" should be helped to recover from their trauma and "apathy" which were caused by the removals. They should be reassured of their worth and be helped to recover a sense of power over their own lives.

7/.....

The Church in the Kuruman area supplied sand and cement for brick-making as no building materials are available. In this area a field-worker was first sent in to trace the history and discover the cultural attitudes of the people concerned. Then he invited them to share their problems. It was their decision to respond to their hardships by building brick houses. This community effort now functions on a regular and local basis.

It was also found that provision for spiritual help was essential in order to help those people live with the situation. It was part of the ministry to help them to be aware of why they should not be suffering. They should know what is not to be accepted.

Speaking on the present and future developments, Dr. M. Nash said according to the Government's present plans, all Black families in White rural areas are to be re-located. BENBO maps reveal proposed areas which are to be consolidated into Homelands by the South African Bantu Development Trust. People would be re-located here, labour tenants will be illegal on White farms after August 30, 1980.

There was a need to plan beyond the relocations. The consultation had to think of the kind of tool document it wanted.

Then followed an analogy of Christ in "enemy occupied country" training and sending evangelists to sell the concept of the Kingdom. "Love and weakness should not push us to despair".

Before Mr. Palos conducted the closing worship on the first day of the consultation, a young Priest from Soweto, Father Buti Thlagale stressed the need for delegates to realise that the "resettlement" issue was essentially a political problem. There was a need to face the Government on that issue.

SATURDAY 2ND FEBRUARY 1980

1. Address by Theti Matsitela on "Migration and Resettlement in South Africa".

After Mr. Matsitela's address questions and comments from delegates followed. The first question concerned the poverty datumline. Johanna Yawitch put it at R196 to R200 per month in Soweto, while it was about R140 per month in rural areas. She said this was set in October 1979.

Dr. Nash advised against relying on these datumlines as methods for arriving at them differed.

Another question asked was "How much are the Villages protected?"

In answer Mr. Matsitela said the people are trapped there. In cases of disaster for example, things such as fire extinguishers were not available. He compared the lives of the people in the "resettlements" with those in Rhodesia's trust land. Like those caught in the cross-fire they had no protection.

B/.....

After a brief discussion of these areas as a possible buffer-zone for the South African state during which Dr. Kistner pointed out that the "resettlement" people may be regarded by the system as possible enemy allies, the consultation broke into four groups.

Group 1 was to discuss "DATA COLLECTION"

Group 2 was to discuss "Information re: Ideological, Political
Economic Context of resettlement"

Group 3 was to discuss "Response from S.A. Churches"

Group 4 was to discuss "Self-help stimulus"

Group 1 Report

The group studied the subject of documentation related to "Resettlements" - how to collect data, put it together, make it available in useful form and to promote its use. The following recommendations, which relate mainly to the collection of data, were then made.

- a) The appointment of a follow-up committee representing the Churches present at the consultation, to be responsible for the collection of data as stated above.
- b) That representatives of the CPSA, Lutheran, Methodists and Roman Catholics request their church leaders to distribute the Grahamstown Questionnaire or its modified form or version, personally to all clergy or leaders of congregations in the following areas.

Transvaal, Northern Cape and Orange Free State to receive these before May 1st, 1980, to process the findings and share them with the follow-up committee.

Group 2

The group decided that it was necessary to situate resettlement in the context of South Africa as a whole and to see how it was being ideologically rationalised.

The economic element was also particularly important as the whole movement had its origins in economic factors. A correlation made by Theti Matsitela, between land and industry was referred to.

It was found necessary to understand the relationship of the "resettlement" to "homeland independence". In a sense there was a neo-colonial situation in South Africa, that in reserves the local elites were co-opted and controlled areas. Furthermore, that these local elites could not breakaway because of the economic power that the South African Government had over them.

Because of mechanisation and industrialisation the labour needs of industry and of farming had been reduced. People were moving into homelands and unemployment was being pushed into what are now, in fact, dumping grounds. The economy has been in a recession for a number of years. Should it go into a boom there will now be a vast reservoir of labour.

The question was then posed as to whether this kind of abstract analysis was relevant to our concern with "resettlement". The answer was in the affirmative, since it was felt that we needed to have expert knowledge to understand the modern concepts the Government used to rationalise its policies. The ideological justification for these kept on changing and the Church had to be aware of what was behind it so that they could understand it.

There was then a discussion of the overall strategy of "resettlement" and how it fitted into evaluation of the "homeland" policy as it moved away from Verwoed's concept of independent but dependent states, to that of Vorster's independent and interdependent states, to that of today's constellation of states.

Here the group was attempting to highlight that things happen for a reason and that whatever was done, was done consciously. No privileged group in history had ever given up its privileges voluntarily. There was no real change; the Government had itself realised that its apartheid policy had failed and it was therefore searching for a way out and a way to control people. Its independence policy was a failure and all that had been done was to move to the next logical step which was the constellation of states.

In more recent times there had been an alliance between Government and business. The Government was now speaking in terms similar to those of the Progressive Federal Party. These were concepts that were often accepted by Christians, but which concealed economic domination. As part of Christian education there was a need to educate people about the precise nature of issues.

It was true that the Church had not done a great deal in this area, but it was also because it was out of its depth. It was here that the value of the South African Council of Churches was to be found. It had people who could see to the heart of such issues. It was people's fear, their ignorance, tribalism and self-interest which caused division and obscured the main issue which was the gap between the haves and have-nots.

Recommendations

That in view of the overall context of "resettlements" as part of the economic, political and ideological structure of South Africa, and in view of the fact that it is necessary to fully understand this context to be able to take responsible action it is recommended that :-

- a) The Church introduce instruction and equip its members to teach what is happening in broad terms. There was a need for the Church to conscientise people as to what was happening in their country.
- b) The Clergy was untrained. It was here that the SACC could produce materials, hold courses, seminars, workshops etc on the issue of conscientisation. It was an important lesson that the only successful opposition to relocation was where to an extent people knew and understood what was happening to them.

- c) There was a need to make people aware of what they could do to help themselves and open them to thinking. People should know that they should not have to suffer.
- d) There should be regional workshops for clergymen so that ideologies, politics, economics could be worked through by people who had access to the "grassroots". There should also be workshops for youth leaders as many of the Churches' members were young. The emphasis had fallen on the SACC because it was a National organisation. Something should be done so that the regional centres should find resource people to work in each area.
- e) There should also be co-operation between the Churches.

Group 3

Here membership of the D.R. Churches to the SACC was asked. It was found that none of the three D.R.C Churches was a member. Only the N.G.K.A (the Black Church) was a member. The other question raised in this group concerned the eliciting of response from the Churches. Two aspects of this question were considered:

- a) How to educate and bring awareness among Church people.
- b) How to get them more involved in the problem of resettlement.

It was suggested that the Church should explore these problems more in order to discover its role.

Local regional workshops at specific places, for example, Pietersburg, Sikhukhuland, should be conducted. At such consultations local people should be invited in order to bring about more involvement and concern.

Those holding or conducting the consultation will owe their status to the SACC division of Justice and Reconciliation.

Practical suggestions

- a) Need for field workers in these areas.
- b) Churches should have workers in these places.
- c) Underlining of the tremendous importance of the use of media for the rank and file of Church.
- d) Possible approach to the "powers that be". All Churches should be involved in this approach. A well-produced MEMO trying to bring home to the Authorities that the "resettlements" policy is self-defeating, should be presented.

Group 4

The group noted that self-help stimulus is relevant. People in these areas are devastated and paralysed.

Clergymen in these places are the men on the spot and should be relied on. The Ministers, too who represent the Community because the Church is involved in community work, are also relevant persons. The same goes for teachers and the local indunas.

People must be asked what they want in order to stimulate their pride. That would act as a motivation.

After the problem of housing in the "resettlement" areas comes the health hazards. Infant mortality is very high and it is sometimes the direct result of the makeshift shelter structures. Infants are exposed to the elements.

In such cases the Church takes part in health teaching to fight such diseases as diarrhoea. Basic health knowledge and first aid majors should be taught.

It was decided that :-

- a) Priests must co-operate with each other.
- b) Ministers must work together with those of other denominations.
- c) Ministers must be conscious of what resources there are at the SACC.

Reactions to the Reports

In a brief discussion of the final reports it was decided that the areas concerned in the "resettlement" be identified. Again, it was decided that convener of regional meetings for this purpose be appointed at the consultations.

Dr. W. Kistner discouraged delegates leaning too much on the SACC, suggesting initiative in the regions themselves. However, the SACC was not to be overlooked.

"Resettlement" areas Identified and Discussed

Eastern boundary of Bophuthatswana near Lichtenburg

- i) Deurpan, Atamelang, Bodibe. These are inside Bophuthatswana and the people "resettled" here were moved from Western Transvaal towns such as Potchefstroom, Delareyville and Ventersdorp. The distances involved in these removals range between 27 and 150 kms. About 2000 homes were proposed for these people.
- ii) Ganelaagte consisting of about 1000 plots, Mooidorpie (Itsosong) - which started in 1966 as resettlement for the aged. 5000 homes have been proposed for the area. When the Bophuthatswana Government stated that it did not want a third location in the area, the scheduled removal of Sannieshof was suspended.

Makgatho/Batlokwa near Pietersburg

Only 200 of 600 Makgatho families were said to have accepted the removals. The 400 families fled to the Batlokwa where they found refuge.

Moshaneng North of Kuruman

Five townships in this area are located in BophuthaTswana. About 12000 families were moved to distances of between 65 km and 130km from the nearest town.

Kromkrans (KaNgwane) in the Ermele area

2/3 of the labour at Sasol comes from this area. People were moved into this place which was most unprepared. There is no water, no health centres such as hospitals and clinics and is located some 111 kms from the nearest town. Labourers return to their homes fortnightly.

Louis Trichardt Area

This area was declared White. The people who settled here before removals were moved from Mission Stations in 1963. They were located here on a 99 year leasehold. They consisted of three tribal groups - Venda, Sotho and Tswana. They are now to be relocated.

Kimberley Area

About 50 families at Rooigrond who first resisted removals. They are to be removed to Ramatlabama. But they are disobedient and are still not removed.

Vryburg (Kwane)

Sikhukhuniland

There are five new villages on one road. These consist of people removed from Middelburg.

Wintêrveld

Nearly 500 000 non-Tswanas face eviction from BophuthaTswana.

Dennilton

In this area, Ndebeles are moving in to form a new "homeland". Non-Ndebele are fleeing to Wintêrveld.

It was resolved that a specific person, who would be a convener of the regional committee should be appointed. The committee's priorities should be set out and an agenda whose aim was to sell the committee, had to be prepared. For the Pietesburg area which would include the far North, Gazankulu, Venda and Sikhukhuniland, Rev. Clifford Molefe of the Northern Transvaal Council was appointed.

Wintêrveld - Dennilton

There should be an ad hoc committee of Church representatives to join forces with the Pretoria group already working in this area.

Western Transvaal and Northern Cape

Rev. Kgalebi was appointed.

Eastern Transvaal

Rev. Edward Kubheka was appointed as contact man. He is to work with the SACC Divisional Committee.

Orange Free State

Rev. Peter Brislin was appointed. SACC man, Mr. Lungile Makhapela was to assist in this region.

Churches had to see to the financing of the consultations. They should see this as part of their priorities.

It was further decided that the South African Council of Churches would undertake the task of writing to Church heads and provide them with details.

The consultation also decided to appoint a follow-up Committee whose convener was to be Mr. Jimmy Palos. This committee was to see to it that the work of the meeting was carried out to its end. Questionnaires fashioned along the lines of the Grahamstown ones, were to be set out. This committee had to send them and later re-read the recommendations made.

May 1st 1980 was decided as the date on which the questionnaires would be received back from Church heads. This amounted to enough time for the carrying out of this aspect of the consultation.

The other members of the follow-up committee are :-

Rev. B. Moseki
Mrs. M. Aitken
Rev. I.G. Khutsosane

JOHANNESBURG was decided as the Centre of the Committee's activities.