WAAIHOEK

text:
Patricia Henderson

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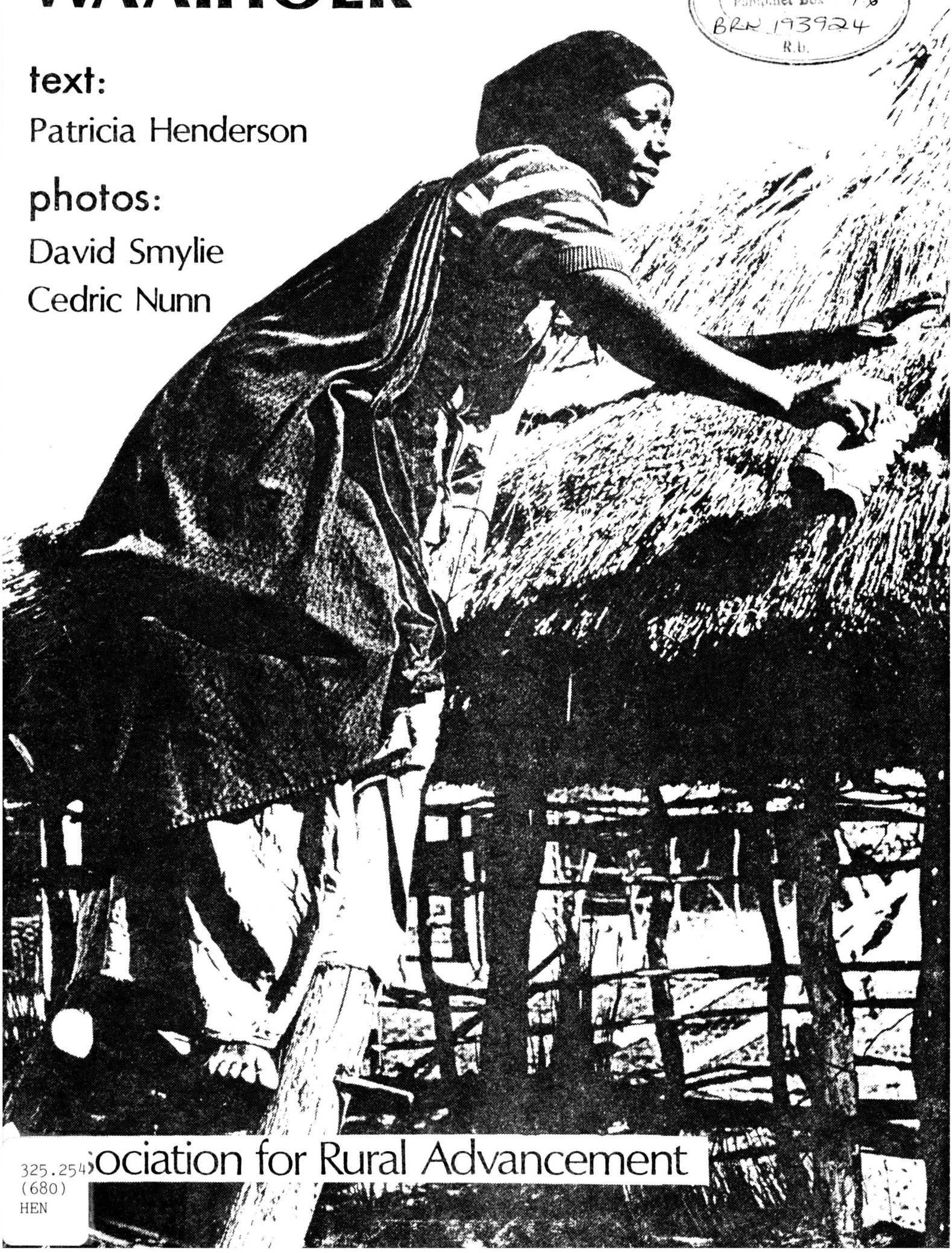

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Waaihoek

Isolated and situated 48 kilometres from Ladysmith in the arid thornveld of Northern Natal, are hundreds of families living at Waaihoek, the government's newest resettlement camp in Natal. When interviews for this booklet were first conducted in June 1985, there were 235 families living at Waaihoek. The first 47 families were moved to Waaihoek in November, 1984, and slowly through a process which the government calls eviction of illegal squatters and which the people call forced removals, the population has increased. Every month new people arrive: off-loaded from government trucks with all the possessions they have in the world to start a "new" life.

The purpose of this booklet is to record in their own words the experience of people living at Waaihoek and then to try and place their experience in a broader context.

Much of what the people say differs from the official account of events - this is reflected in the different use of terminology when referring to Waaihoek. The government calls it a planned closer settlement, the people call it a resettlement camp. The government maps call it Waaihoek, the people call it **Intshela** - Intshela is the name of a nearby mountain. It means: the burnt bit left at the bottom of a pot of mealie-meal.

History

The farm Waaihoek was originally a white owned farm. In the 1960s it was bought by the South African Development Trust (SADT). The state has announced that its intentions for Waaihoek are to build a 3447 site Closer Settlement. At present apart from the resident families already moved there, Waaihoek consists of hundreds of rows of tin bucket toilets. Standing like silent gravestones in the empty veld they await the next victims of the government's policy of forced removals and evictions.

Before a family arrives, the Department of Co-operation and Development erects two one-roomed, two by two metre tin structures known as Fletcraft - this will be the temporary "home" for the new arrivals until the department reclaims it.

Taxi

Waaihoek's only bus at R2-80 return to Ladysmith.

Who lives at Waaihoek?

At the time of writing this booklet there were approximately 235 families at Waaihoek.

The people could then be divided into four major groups:

1 Some 47 rent paying tenant families actually living on the farm where the "resettlement camp" has been built, and who were its first residents. These families had to break down their houses and move into Fletcraft.

2 In November 1984, 37 extended families were evicted from the Stendahl Mission near Weenen and transported to Waaihoek.

3 Many other farm workers from the Sun Valley Estates which surrounded the Stendahl Mission, were also evicted, while some families were arrested, charged with illegally squatting and warned to be off the land. The government trucks arrived the day after many of them were released from prison to transport them to their new "homes".

These three groups make up the majority of the families at Waaihoek but there are also many families from other areas like St. Chad's Mission and farms between Weenen and Colenso. One woman came from Umbulwane, a so-called 'black spot' near Ladysmith where extentions to houses were bulldozed by the authorities in 1980. Waaihoek has grown slowly, virtually family by family, to its present estimated population of 235 families.

"The Community of Widows"

The original inhabitants of Waaihoek were rent paying tenants on South African Development Trust (SADT) land - SADT bought the land from a white farmer in the 1960s. These 47 families were evicted from their homes to make way for the planned resettlement site. One terrible day in 1979 saw a faction fight which left 14 women as widows - hence these few families, the first inhabitants of the government's "planned closer resettlement area" have come to be known as "The Community of Widows".

The only man who lives permanently in the community, Mr Nkosinathe Shabangu, also acts as the community's spokesman. He tells the story of the 47 families:

> **I have moved my whole life from farm to farm. I cannot even remember how many times. I moved to the farm Waaihoek over ten years ago because most of my family members had died. At the time we called Waaihoek, 'Nkomo Ibomvu, the red cow. We had given this name to the farmer who owned the farm. The people who moved here at the time were all Duma's. All the people who came here had been evicted from farms. Some worked for local farmers. I myself, was evicted from a farm near Ezakheni before I came to 'Nkomo Ibomvu. I am the only male this side of Waaihoek who is always at home as the other men have jobs in Johannesburg. Although we were living in our homesteads here at Waaihoek, we were told by the Commissioner at Ladysmith that we would have to move into these tin houses packed together.**
>
> **We told the Commissioner that we wanted compensation. He said that he would refer this request to a higher authority. Then we were called to Ladysmith and the Commissioner told us on which day the trucks would come to move us. Since that meeting we have heard nothing about compensation.**
>
> **We were the first people to be packed together at Waaihoek. There are forty seven families here with between eight and ten people in each family. We were given either one or two Fletcraft depending on the number in the family.**

Speaking about the standard of living at Waaihoek, Mr Shabangu said:

> **One person in our family gets a pension of one hundred and twenty rand every two months. Our son has a job in Johannesburg and he sends home what we need each month. For example, we have built this round house. My son sent home money to pay the builder. We spent one hundred and thirty rand on roofing materials. Builders charge by stages to build a house. We paid sixty rand for the foundation and the walls, fifteen rand for the door and thirteen rand fifty for the frame. Before we were moved we had four houses. We have built two houses here but have received no compensation for the four houses which were broken down.**

Mr. Mantukaboni Magasela is a migrant worker working in Johannesburg. He stays in Nancefield Hostel. He comes home once a month using his car. There are 6 people in the family. He is the only bread winner. He told us that his father does not get a pension because he hasn't a dom-pass.

We eat mealie-meal here. We do buy vegetables but only when there is money. This is not even once a week. Water is provided by a Government truck every day. Two women from the family spend the day gathering wood. They leave at about eight and return at about three in the afternoon.

A clinic comes to Waaihoek once a month on the second Tuesday of each month. This is one of our biggest problems. One child of ours has already died since we moved. Mothers do not get enough advice. They catch the bus to Ladysmith.

No post comes to Waaihoek - it only goes to the school at Vikinduku, about an hour's walk away. There was no shop when we first moved here to the tin huts - now there is a shop. It opened in December (1984) - white bread costs sixty five cents and brown forty five cents.

At the present time we have cattle - for the time being the cattle are grazing on plots of land that have not yet been filled with people. We have not been told how much the rent will be, but we used to pay two rand a year. We cannot grow vegetables easily because the soil is no good.

There is no crime at Waaihoek so far, but we fear that soon there will be a lot of crime as more and more people are coming. We have never lived in a resettlement camp before, we do not know what life will be like because we are still confused.

Note: By 1986 Waaihoek did have a postal service in the form of a Private Post Bag.

The people from Stendahl Mission

The people from Stendahl Mission and their ancestors lived at the mission for over 124 years. The mission land was bought in 1860 by a minister of the Berlin Mission, a Mr Gueldenpfennig. The original land holdings of the mission were quite substantial. In 1924 the mission land was subdivided and the major share sold to the white sector - much of this land is today owned by the Sun Valley Estates, an orange growing company.

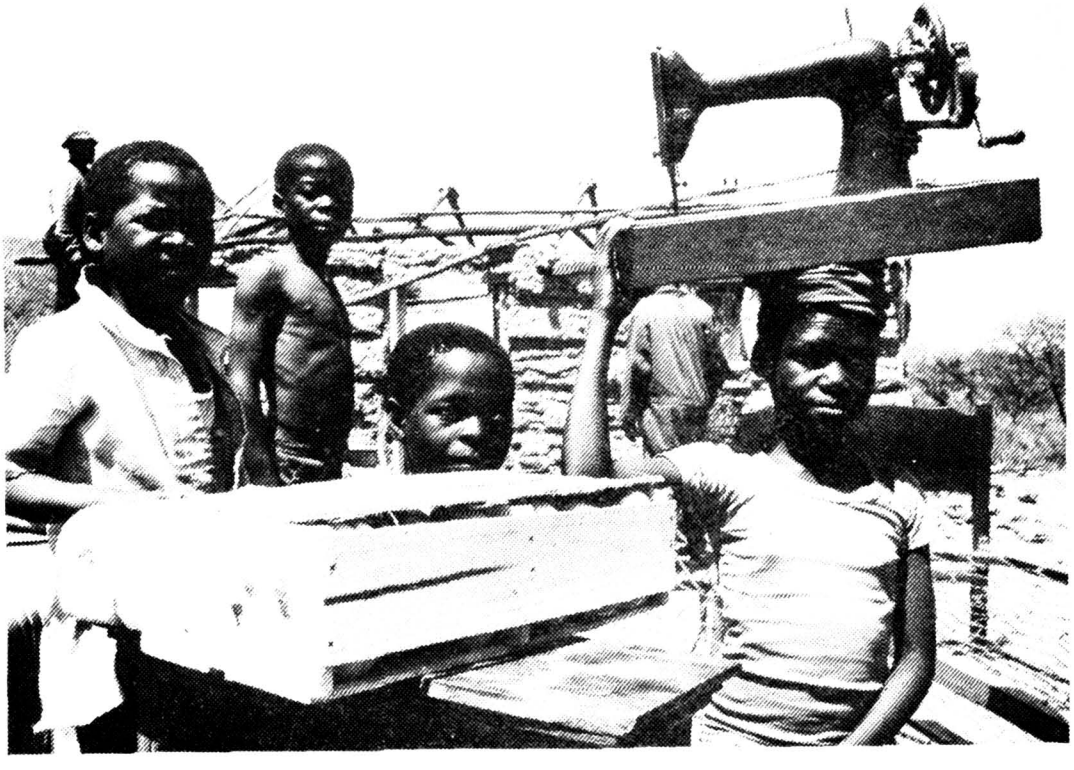
Subdivision 1, consisting of 75 hectares and containing the mission itself plus surrounding buildings was retained by the Berlin Mission Society until 1978 when it was sold to the Sun Valley Estates for twenty thousand rand. The Berlin Mission Society claim that care was taken in the negotiations to ensure that the Stendahl community would not be thrown off the land. However this was a verbal agreement and therefore not binding in law.

In 1984 the land was leased to a Mr J. de Bruin, a neighbouring white farmer, and on the 18th of August of that year he served the following eviction notices on all the families at Stendahl:

> **Ek gee jou kennis om van my plaas af te trek met all jou vrouens, kinders, vee en pluimvee voor 17 November 1984. Jy mag nie hout van die plaas gebruik nie, mag ook nie op die plaas rondloop nie.**

On the 7th of November 1984 the Commissioner met with Mr Basil King, the Magistrate at Weenen. He agreed to apply for an extension of the eviction notices to 31st of December 1984. This application was refused as it was thought that removals at this time would be more difficult because of the return of migrant workers to Stendahl over the Christmas season. So the people of Stendahl were told that they would be moved on the 27th of November.

The Government describes the Stendahl removals as "voluntary", although the Stendahl people would deny they ever wanted to move, saying that they had no alternative.



The removal from Stendahl.

10 **Waaihoek**

John Ngubane

John Ngubane is the leader of the Stendahl community. Born in the community in 1914 he schooled at Stendahl Mission to the end of Standard 1 and then began work in 1923. He is bitter about having lost his home - over the course of an evening he related the stories of his life. The following extracts are taken from that evening's conversation.

> **"A man was coming home one evening from a hunt. He was carrying a buck which he had shot." That was the first thing that I learnt to say in English at school at the Stendahl Mission - it is from Standard 1 English," he said, laughing at the memory and repeating the phrase over and over again.**
>
> **I first worked for Germans near Stendahl Mission carrying sacks of mealies - four pence a day for seven years. In 1931 I changed and worked for a woman in Berea Road, Durban.**

He recalls working in Johannesburg in the 1930s, staying in the notorious hostels of Wemmer and Jeppe. He recalls a time when he wore the best suits - "A three piece for seven pounds, tailored, a waistcoat. But now," he grins broadly and we cannot help but laugh, "I cannot afford a jacket - too expensive."

He then worked for some Italians at Tugela Ferry digging trenches, then a bad bicycle accident forced him to retire to Stendahl. In 1984 the people were forced to move to Waaihoek: "Here it is not nice because the people are hungry. It was better at Stendahl as there were temporary jobs - there are no temporary jobs at Waaihoek. The Commissioner told me to write down all the names of people wanting jobs. He said that he would get the people jobs at Pieters. Up till now the Commissioner has supplied no jobs and the cost of getting to Pieters is two rand eighty."

He reminisced about the past:

> **In 1860 the missionaries came but my parents were already there - the Germans wanted to convert the people to Christianity but they didn't force anybody.**
>
> **I don't remember how many families were there but the land was fertile. Even at the time of my birth the land was fertile - I think it changed at about the time of the drought.**

Ngubane describes the removal and the farmer, Mr De Bruin, who evicted them:

> **Already after the eviction notices had been served we still went to meet the Commissioner - Isithebe, Mvelase and Bhengu (all Inkatha officials) were all there. But the Magistrate would not allow us to stay at Stendahl. We had no choice. We were told that the 'GG' (Government Garage trucks) would be coming on November the twenty seventh.**

De Bruin had threatened to shoot us if we did not leave and the Commissioner advised us to go. We asked the Commissioner for compensation, but he said we were being moved by De Bruin - ask him for compensation. The Commissioner and three other people then came to inspect the houses and told us that they would not pay for them. De Bruin beat up some of our children in order to force us to leave. When he went to Sun Valley Estates to give eviction notices to the people he went with police because he was afraid. A manager had been killed on that farm before.

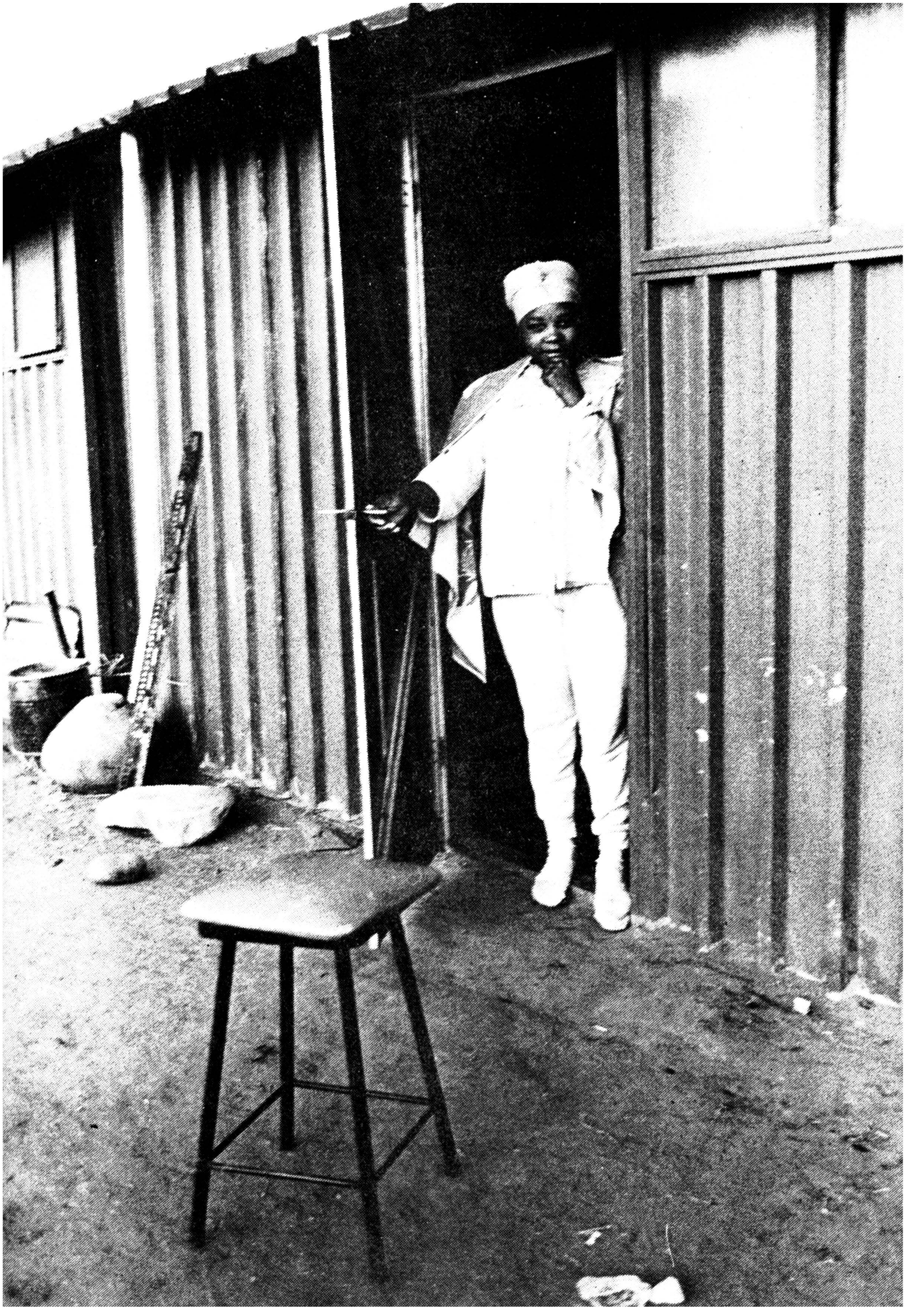
To this day not one family at Waaihoek of the many we spoke to has been paid one cent in compensation for their old houses. The majority of people we spoke to had four houses before they were evicted, driven off their ancestral land, or forced to move.

Ngubane continues:

Koornhof says it is not a forced removal. I would like to see Koornhof to tell him it was a forced removal. This is not development. This is not trust. We know we can be moved again at any time. This land does not belong to us. They should have provided jobs for people if they force them to move. At the moment four are employed building a water tank but this will not last for long.

We discussed ways that the people at Waaihoek could improve their position - we spoke of co-operatives, vegetable gardens, taxis, buying and selling. We also spoke of the importance of sharing the profits amongst the whole community.


116

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An old grandmother from Sun Valley Estates. She was not getting a pension. The breadwinner of the family, her daughter, was working at Sun Valley Estates and she lost her job as a result of the move.

The people from Sun Valley Estates

Oranges are grown on the Sun Valley Estates. The farms are owned by white farmers. The land also once formed part of the Berlin Mission's land holdings. This part of the land was however sold in 1924. The people who were there before the Berlin Mission even aquired the land still remained on as tenant labourers. They have slowly been forced off the land by a process of 'legal eviction.' Many of these families now live at Waaihoek. They have lost access to jobs that were available to them. They also lost their homes for which they have not been compensated.

One such family are the Sithole's - Mr Dumisane Sithole, aged 67, recounts the story of his removal:

> **We arrived here on the twenty fifth of April - we came as part of seven families. All of us were born at Sun Valley and always lived there. We were given no eviction notices. The farm manager just came and told us that we would have to move. Then he returned with the police and we were arrested on a Friday. We appeared before a magistrate on Tuesday the following week.**
>
> **We were released after being charged with illegally squatting - we were just given a warning for illegally squatting in the house where I was born. We moved on the Wednesday. We have heard nothing about compensation. We had four houses at Sun Valley.**

Mr Sithole showed us a roneoed form that he signed. He said that it was given to him by the Commissioner who told him that it was a letter of removal. People had to sign agreeing that all their possessions were undamaged in the move and that they would not claim for anything. These forms were signed at a meeting called by the Commissioner. Six families signed together and there was no negotiation. They were told to sign.

We spoke to a group of women from Sun Valley Estates. Three of them arrived in November, 1985, the rest in April, 1985. They were born at Sun Valley and some of them had jobs there until they were evicted. Mrs. Zondi spoke:

> **It was better at Sun Valley. We had jobs. I was earning forty five rand a month when I left work in January. We are eight here and my husband lives at a hostel near Sun Valley so he can keep his job.**
>
> **We have nothing to do at Waaihoek - just collect wood and sit.**

The other women spoke of the health problems of their children saying that they have diarrhoea and vomiting. There is a clinic they say but it is useless as it comes only once a month. None of the families they represent have a person working apart from Mrs Zondi's husband. Three of the families are getting pensions.

The biggest problem expressed is the need for work. These women are surviving on their meagre savings built up over the years. They also expressed the desire to be taught some skill which they could sell.

Khunsile Ngubane was evicted from Sun Valley Estates. She together with Mrs Norma Mkhize and her mother, Mrs Alice Mathe describe their despair. Mrs Ngubane speaks:

> **We were living at the Sun Valley Estates. We were informed that we should move to another place on the same farm. There was a new farmer who had come to live on the farm. He said that some people were living on the wrong side of the fence and he said that we should move and build our houses on the other side of the fence. We did this. The farmer came and arrested people while we were still building our earth houses. He came in the morning and arrested myself and my daughter. He came with one black and one white policeman. We were arrested on a Wednesday and were kept for six days. When the women were arrested the children were left by themselves. The case against us was cancelled. We were given a warning to look for a place. We didn't know where to go. We went back the Sun Valley for twenty days after this because we had been given permission by the magistrate. We went back to him to ask him where we could go because we had no place to go. He told us that we should come to Waaihoek. We were brought here by "GG" truck.**
>
> **My husband was a driver but he got sick and died. I have two daughters still working at Sun Valley packing oranges in boxes and working on the irrigation scheme. The daughter packing oranges gets forty rand a month and the one working on the irrigation scheme gets sixty rand a month. Sometimes the one daughter will send ten rand a month to us here and the other fifteen rand. "We do not live well here because there is no money and no work. Two of my children are no longer schooling because there is no money. My husband is dead and we are living on the money which my two daughters send to us. We eat imbantshi (mealie-meal and water).**

Mrs Mkhize and Her mother Alice Mathe live together with five children. Mrs Mkhize's husband is in hospital. He was fired from Sun Valley Estates and his daughter took his place. But she is no longer working because she is pregnant. The family is now living on Alice Mathe's pension.

The women had this to say about their situation:

> **We have just arrived here and do not know what to think to make us survive. We try to think but we cannot come to an answer. We can no longer think what to do. We need to build houses and we need money for this.**


ISUZU

Evicted farm labourers

When these interviews were conducted there were also farm workers from all over Natal at Waaihoek. These people came from St Chad's, Umbulwane, Kwashuze, Weenen and farms between Weenen and Colenso.

Late one evening we heard the sound of trucks arriving and on going to investigate we saw a "GG" truck off loading a family. It was a Mr Mvuseni Mathe and two of his children. The truck contained only bits of straw and wood. We met his wife, Mrs Khambi Mathe, the following morning when she arrived with the few possessions they owned. During the course of their arrest, charging, release and removal they had lost contact.

Mr Mathe tells their story:

> **We were evicted from a farm between Weenen and Colenso. It is an area called Sun Springs near Nyandu. We had three houses on the farm where we lived and our wage ten rand a month and a fifty kilogram bag of mealie-meal divided between the family.**

His wife takes up the story:

> **We were given eviction notices but we did not leave as the trucks did not come to collect us. The farmer threathened to shoot our goats and then six of our cattle disappeared. We also lost six goats in the move. Then the farmer came with the police and we were arrested. We were in jail for two days. It was in Weenen jail. We were taken to the office where we were told by the magistrate why we had been arrested. He told us that we had ignored the eviction notice, that we were not working for the farmer and that we were not paying rent.**
>
> **When they asked us why we refused to move we replied that we had not. It was that the trucks had not come. We were then told that we were coming to Waaihoek, but we were not told how many Fletcraft we would be getting.**

Mrs Mathe is also expecting her fifth child. With the truck behind her and her worldly possessions strewn around her she suddenly sat down telling us:

> **I feel ill today, faint, as if I need a doctor. We spent last night in a Fletcraft and had nothing to eat. We cannot continue putting our goods into the house before we have had something to eat. We have no food with us and we lost four chickens in the move.**

We left the Mathe's and returned to our camp and prepared some food which we took back and gave to them.

That night there was a knock on the door - a child was carrying a plate of goat's meat.

"What is this for?" somebody asked.

"It is for you to say thank you."

"Thank you for what?" we asked.

"To thank you for taking an interest in us. Nobody has ever come to hear our problems before."

Lilian Luthuli comes from uMbulwane. She tells the story of how people's houses were knocked down at Mbulwane and how she came to Waaihoek:

We were chased from our houses by soldiers. We did not want to move. Many houses were knocked down in 1982, about fifty. I lost my marriage certificate when the house was knocked down. The furniture was thrown outside. Perhaps you were at work and when you came back you found the children sitting outside with the furniture and no house. I had a four-roomed house. The Department of Co-operation and Development knocked down three rooms. There was one left for my family of ten. Everything was packed in the one room - the food as well. We lived there for three years. We ate there, cooked there, slept there. I realized that the place was packed. I built another room. They broke this down again because they said I did not have any plans. I was sleeping on a bench and the children were sleeping on the floor. Eventually I went to the uNdabazabantu (Magistrate) to ask for accomodation at any place. He said that my family should come to Waaihoek. After our house was knocked down the thatching rotted so we could not bring any thatch with us. We lived in the one room even though the rest of the house had been knocked down. All the other people left. They were cowards. Everyone was reluctant to move but because soldiers came many decided to leave.

Selina Molefe was evicted from a farm near St Chads.

How can you employ a person for a long time and then throw them away? We were working on a six months system on a farm next to St.Chads. Co-operation and Development then planned to construct a road through the farm. The farmer said since the farm was no longer big enough for farming we would have to build our houses on the one side of the road. Fourteen families built there. We had to pay a rent of five rand a month. We were only allowed to keep fowls because the farmer didn't want us to have any cattle.

After a year of living in these new houses a police van came from Mnambithi (Ladysmith). A white policeman asked us how much money we were paying to the farmer each month. We told him that it was five rand. The police phoned the farmer. The farmer then asked us who had told the police about the rent.

Eventually the farmer said. "I allowed you to build houses although its unlawful. You'd better go. If you don't want to go you can volunteer young women to come and work on the farms in the Orange Free State near Harrismith." We said no. The farmer also said, "If you don't have a daughter bring your grand-daughter. If you don't have a grand-daughter you'd better go."

He wanted only beautiful women. He got all the women together and said, "I want you and you", pointing at the most beautiful women. The induna (headman) used to go and point at the women as well.

We reported this to the Commissioner. The Commissioner said that we did not have to move because the land belonged to the Government. He said that if we wanted to move we should go to St. Chad's Mission.

When the farmer realized that the people were resisting he brought the police to arrest people. We showed the police the Commissioner's permission to stay. The police decided to leave us. The farmer then went to the Commissioner and convinced the Commissioner. The farmer told the Commissioner, "These are black people and they should be moved."

On the eighteenth of January we were given notices by the Commissioner to move to this area. There was division among the people because some agreed to send their daughters to the Free-state. Those who refused were evicted.

Community problems at Waaihoek

On a Saturday morning in June, residents from all the various groups met under the chairmanship of John Ngubane - they met to voice the problems they experienced as a community.

Five major issues were raised repeatedly.

(1) Housing and Compensation

Everybody who spoke on this issue felt that they should have been compensated for the homes they had been forced out of. They reasoned that the Fletcraft provided for them by the Department of Co-operation and Development were temporary. Even as such, they were wholly inadequate because they were so few. They were also too small, too cold in winter and too hot in summer.

Mr Buthelezi, the community's treasurer said, "Our complaint is the accomodation. The Fletcraft are not ours as they are temporary. We have not been given any compensation and there are no good building materials here at Waaihoek. Secondly the land needs a lot of preparation. We need gardens and fences to protect them."

Mr Manami Mabaso said, "The government should realize that we are failing to build houses as we have no money. We have been forced to move from Stendahl and have no provision for housing."

(2) The School

At present in Waaihoek there is a junior school catering for pupils up to the end of Standard 6. Thereafter the pupils must find a place at some other school. They have been promised a high school but this has not yet materialised.

Mrs Mngadi spoke,

> **Thank you for coming. Our complaint is that the school is not sufficient. It is not good enough for our children. We appreciate the accomodation for the school but the government must realise that we want progress. I believe that everybody needs progress but in a place like this what progress can there be?**

We spoke to the headmaster of the only school, Mr Steven Sibisi. He was previously the headmaster at Stendahl where they had a brick school with a water tank outside the buildings. The community paid for and built the water tank on Mr Sibisi's motivation.

Mr Sibisi spoke of the enormous difficulties of teaching at Waaihoek:

> **The tin rooms for classrooms are no good as they are too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. Often I have taken the children outside under the trees but that is not good for their concentration.**
>
> **We have a problem with materials - we are always short of paper, pens, textbooks and teaching aids. Children had a feeding scheme at Stendahl and here we have none.**

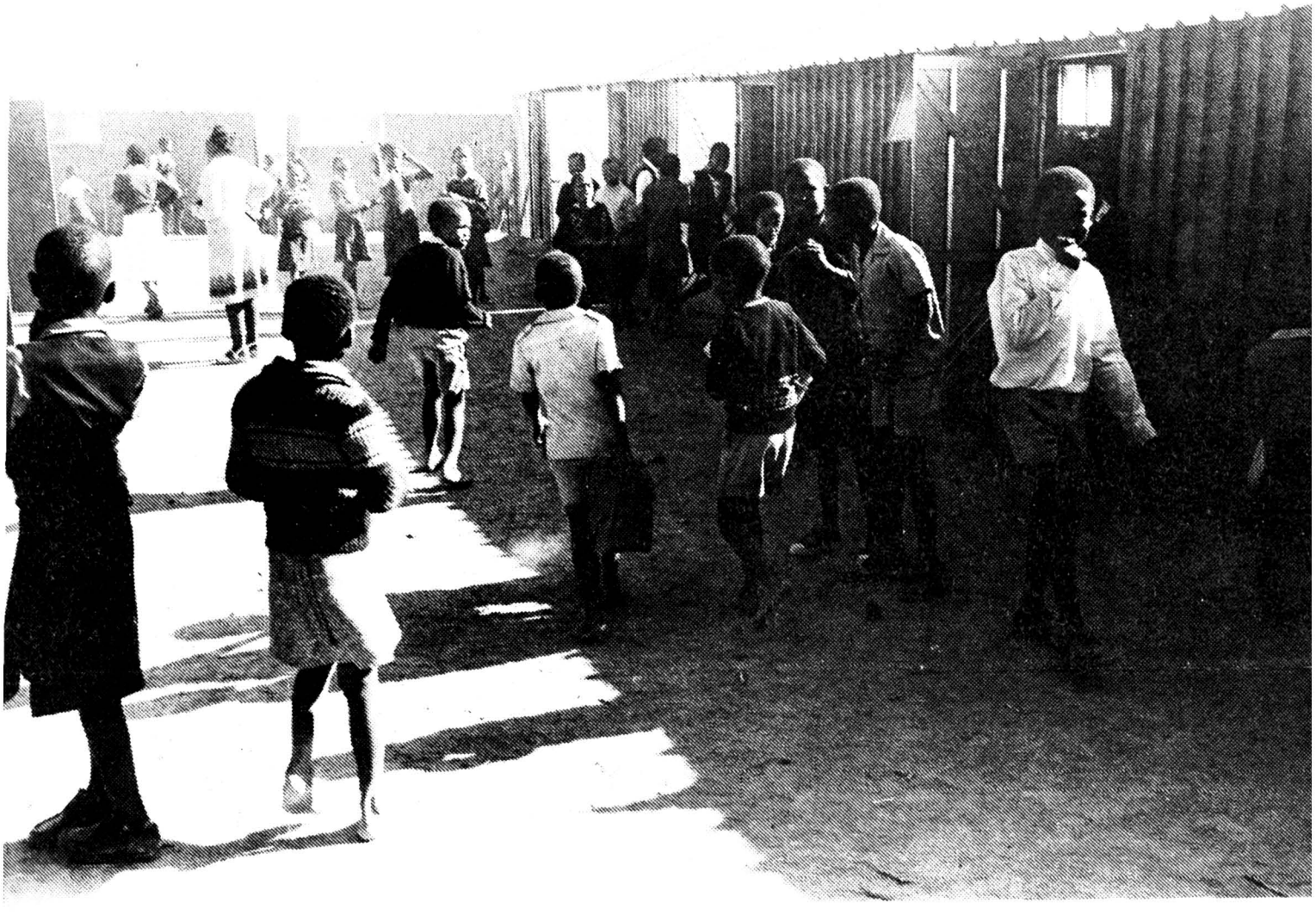
The school has 389 pupils and 8 teachers. Only Mr Sibisi has a teaching qualification. We spoke to a group of about 60 children on their way home from school. A prefect, Albert Sibisi, spoke about the school. He said the subjects were English, Afrikaans, Zulu, History, Geography, Maths, Science, Agriculture and Vocational Guidance.

The children remembered with excitement the only occassion when they have played sport against another school. It was at a basket ball and soccer tournament held in Ladysmith. They complained that there was no field for them to play on. They told us that the nearest high school was at Ekuvukeni, fourteen kilometres away. Some of the children at Waaihoek attend this school. But for the majority they have missed one year of school and will possibly miss another next year.

Mr G. Buthelezi had this to say about schooling and other problems:

> **I did not want to send my son to technical school in Ezakheni but I had no choice because there is no high school here. We paid fifteen rand for a three month course for my son. My other son who is twenty years old is not schooling here because we cannot afford it after the removal from Stendahl. We have no idea for his future. Another daughter of mine has completed a typing course but is without work, so even schooling does not seem to help. There are other problems here. Before we were moved we asked for a place to plough and we were told that we would not get any. We are dying in the tin houses. They are very hot in summer and they are very cold in winter. Water drops down the walls. The houses are very small. The people are not satisfied with living so close together because people are used to living further apart. Mosquitos were a huge problem in summer. They were breeding in the tin toilets which you see everywhere. These were filled with water after the rains. When we asked the Commissioner to help us with the mosquitos he told us to go and buy Doom. We have eventually received poison to clean the toilets. We need fencing so that everyone who has the possibility can plant trees to develop the place. Unemployment is very painful. The only thing to do is to join together and work together to help one another.**

(Note: A brick school has subsequently been built by the Government.)



(3) Land

Some people at Waaihoek have cattle and they are concerned about where they will be allowed to graze them - others feel that the plots of land they have been allocated are too small.

Mr Simon Sibisi said, "We have no plots here. I have a plough and other tools which I can no longer use as I do not have any land."

(4) Crime

At present there is virtually no crime at Waaihoek. however the people fear that with the influx of many more people the crime rate will rocket. (If the planned sites are filled over 15 thousand people will live in Waaihoek). This has been the experience in other resettlement areas, for example, Ezakheni.

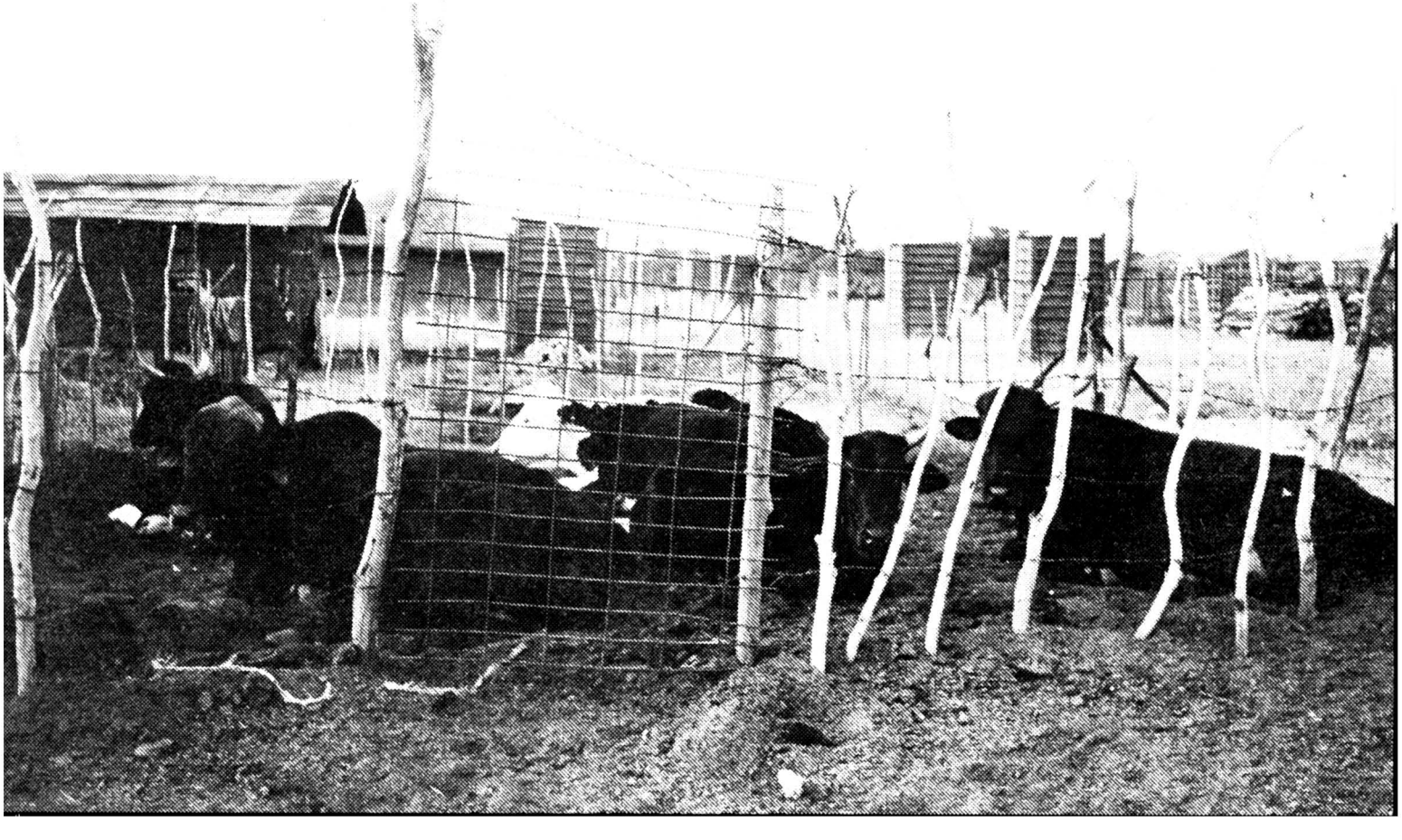
One old woman had been robbed. Her name was Mrs Norah Maseko. She tells the story:

> **As you can see I am blind We arrived here last Tuesday from Kwashuze. The other night a man knocked on the door and pretended to be a policeman. He took most of my things including my radio.**
>
> **I have five sons and two daughters and we were given two Fletcraft. None of my children are working and my husband died many years ago. We live off my pension. My son-in-law who works in Johannesburg sends money home to his wife and this helps.**

(5) Unemployment

A young man working at Springs speaks about unemployment and working conditions at the industrial decentralisation point, Pieters:

> **I work as a machine operator in Springs. I have come back to Waaihoek for a few days to bury a friend who was stabbed in Bongweni (Randfontein). I am here for the funeral.**
>
> **There is no work. I know some people who are working at Farm Fare at Pieters. The women are paid eighteen rand a week. What can you do with eighteen rand a week? Absolutely nothing - and consider the bus fare, two rand eighty a day. This would mean that you would spend fourteen rand week on transport alone. The people working at Pieters have to stay at Ezakheni renting rooms because of this transport and the bad pay.**
>
> **I am getting one hundred and thirty five rand a week at the factory in Springs and I am not satisfied. Imagine the people working at Pieters. Things are worse for them.**



The bosses charge people hiring machines at the factory in Springs thirty five rand an hour. They make a lot of money while we get small wages. We never know exactly how much they make because if we did we would see how unfair it is. We work all our lives and have nothing to show for it. The government moved us here into these tin houses and they will take them away again and where are we to get money to build houses when we have nothing? The government calls this development. There is no development here. You might say that oppression applies even to a child in the womb. It does not surprise me that people are fighting all over the country.

Other resettlement areas

To the south-east of Ladysmith lie a long line of resettlement camps or 'closer settlements' as these areas are euphemistically known. The South African Development Trust bought up large tracts of land in the 1960's in this area which were specifically for the resettlement of people from many of the black free-hold areas in the Klipriver and Newcastle districts. Pressure from local white farmers for the forced removal of people living on freehold land was particulary strong. The removal of people from black freehold areas also fitted in with the government's homeland consolidation plans.

Many thousands of labour tenants were evicted from white farms in the 1970's due to the outlawing of labour tenancy in 1969. This was also due to the increasing mechanisation on these farms. Some of these people now live in these resettlement villages.

Removals to closer settlements have resulted in the following:

1 The increasing impoverishment of people due to loss of arable land and cattle.

2 A distancing from the centres of employment and dramatic increases in unemployment because job preference is given to people living closer to the industrial centres. People who had jobs in nearby towns have lost them. Those who were previously migrants remain migrants in the major industrial centres.

3 Transport costs are very high.

4 Those lucky enough to obtain jobs in the border industries are grossly underpaid and consequently most of their salary is spent on transport or they have to hire accommodation in Ezakheni during the week. There are no minimum wage level stipulations in border industries and no protective legislation for workers in these industries.

The resettlement areas near Waaihoek include Limehill, Vergelegen, Ekuvukeni, Qinisa and the large resettlement township of Ezakheni.

Ezakheni lies 25 kilometres from Ladysmith. It was established in 1972 and approxmimately 50 thousand people were moved there from a number of Klipriver 'black-spots'. One of the most famous was Roosboom situated on the main Durban-Ladysmith road. A number of the original inhabitants of Ezakheni came from white farms. Ezakheni was developed as part of the government's decentralisation plans. In terms of these it was earmarked as an 'industrial development point'. It is situated within the borders of KwaZulu and is known as a dormitary township. Ezakheni, together with all the other " resettled " areas which have been mentioned, is situated a long way from Ladysmith. Transport costs are therefore very high. In 1979 over 9500 commuters from Ezakheni staged a successful bus boycott.

Limehill was established in 1978. The people were moved to Limehill from black free-hold areas around Wasbank. These included the farms Lyell, Meran and the Maria Ratschitz Mission. Limehill was particularly notorious when it was first established.

Tents were the only accomodation provided. Within a short space of time, typhoid had broken out in the area. Limehill is situated 55km from Ladysmith. The number of people moved to Limehill at the time was approximately 2450.

In 1968 more people were moved to the vicinity of Limehill from the 'black spots', Boschoek, Hlatikulu, Alwas and the Amakhasi Mission. The Amakhasi Mission was only 2 miles from the resettlement area.

Ekuvukeni, 'the place of waking up' and also known as 'tin town', was established in 1972. It had an initial population of 20 thousand people. They were moved to Ekuvukeni from black spots around Ladysmith and Wasbank. These were Ruigtefontein ,Vergelegen and Steincoalspruit. (Only the tenants were moved from Steincoalspruit.) Today, over 10 years later, there still exists two lines of Fletcraft which house disabled people and old-age pensioners who have been unable to build houses for themselves.

Qinisa is situated 25km from Ladysmith and 5km from the industrial complex of Pieters. Approximately 40 families were moved to Qinisa in June 1984. They came from the farm KwaMthanthi or, Hermanus Kraal. This is only 12 kilometres from the place where they are now living. The farm was at the time owned by the SADT and therefore the people should not have been moved at all. A local white farmer rented the farm from the SADT and managed to get the people removed. They were therefore moved from one trust farm to another.

Pieters : an industrial growth point

The area around Ezakheni has been demarkated as an industrial decentralisation point by the government. The industrial complex of Pieters, 10 kilometres from Ladysmith, is currently the fastest growing development point in the country. There are at present two hundred industrial sites planned at Pieters. In March this year twenty six sites were operating and a new industry was opening up every five weeks. This growth rate would under normal circumstances be welcomed. However, it is important to examine what makes this growth rate possible even during a severe economic recession.

Between April 1982 (when the present decentralization plan was introduced) and March 1985, the decentralization board paid out R600 million in incentive payments to industrialists. At Pieters they pay 50% of rail expenses on all outgoing goods, 95% of the total wage bill up to R105 per worker per month for seven years, 70% rent for ten years, and 50% housing subsidy. Grants are also given for training programmes.

Any minimum wage rates laid down by the industrial councils do not apply in the so-called 'self-governing' states and in areas which are to be incorporated in the homelands. Although Pieters is not officially part of KwaZulu as yet, a special proclamation suspends all minimum wage legislation for the area.

Because there is no legislation protecting workers at Pieters, workers are paid very low wages. This is despite the fact that the government subsidizes wages and most companies therefore have a very small wage bill to pay. At Tidwell Housing, an American Company, for example, people were being paid R18 a week starting wage. This amounts to R72 a month. In contrast, the Industrial Council for the metal industry sets a minimum wage of R78 a week in areas outside of the decentralized areas. Welders in the metal industry are paid a minimum wage of R150 outside of the decentralized areas. At Tidwell Housing, welders were being paid R50 a week in May this year. In many factories at Pieters there is no over-time pay.

Consider a woman living at Waaihoek and earning R18 a week at a textile factory or at Farm Fare, the chicken factory at Pieters. She would spend R14 a week on transport alone and would be left with R4 a week to feed and clothe herself and her family.

A few companies in the area pay better wages. Dunlop (S.A.) pays workers at the same rate as those working in Durban. Lasher Tools which is a signatory of the Sullivan Code pays wages stipulated by the minimum wage levels of the code plus one third.

The industrial explosion at Pieters not does substantially benefit the people living at Waaihoek and in the other resettled areas we have mentioned. Rather, huge profits are made by the industries at Pieters and these profits are removed, often to other countries. Neither does the complex satisfy the employment needs of all the people living in the vicinity. Many thousands of people are unemployed. The prospect for both employed and unemployed is indeed bleak for those people 'thrown away' in the remote resettlement areas.

Compensation

The original rent paying tenants on Waaihoek, 'The Community of Widows', were forced to demolish their houses and to move into the closer settlement. They wrote a letter to the Commissioner in Ladysmith asking to be paid their compensation. The Commissioner replied and told them that the matter would be considered. Since then they have not heard from the Commissioner. Rent paying tenants on government land are regarded as squatters and are not entitled to any form of compensation.

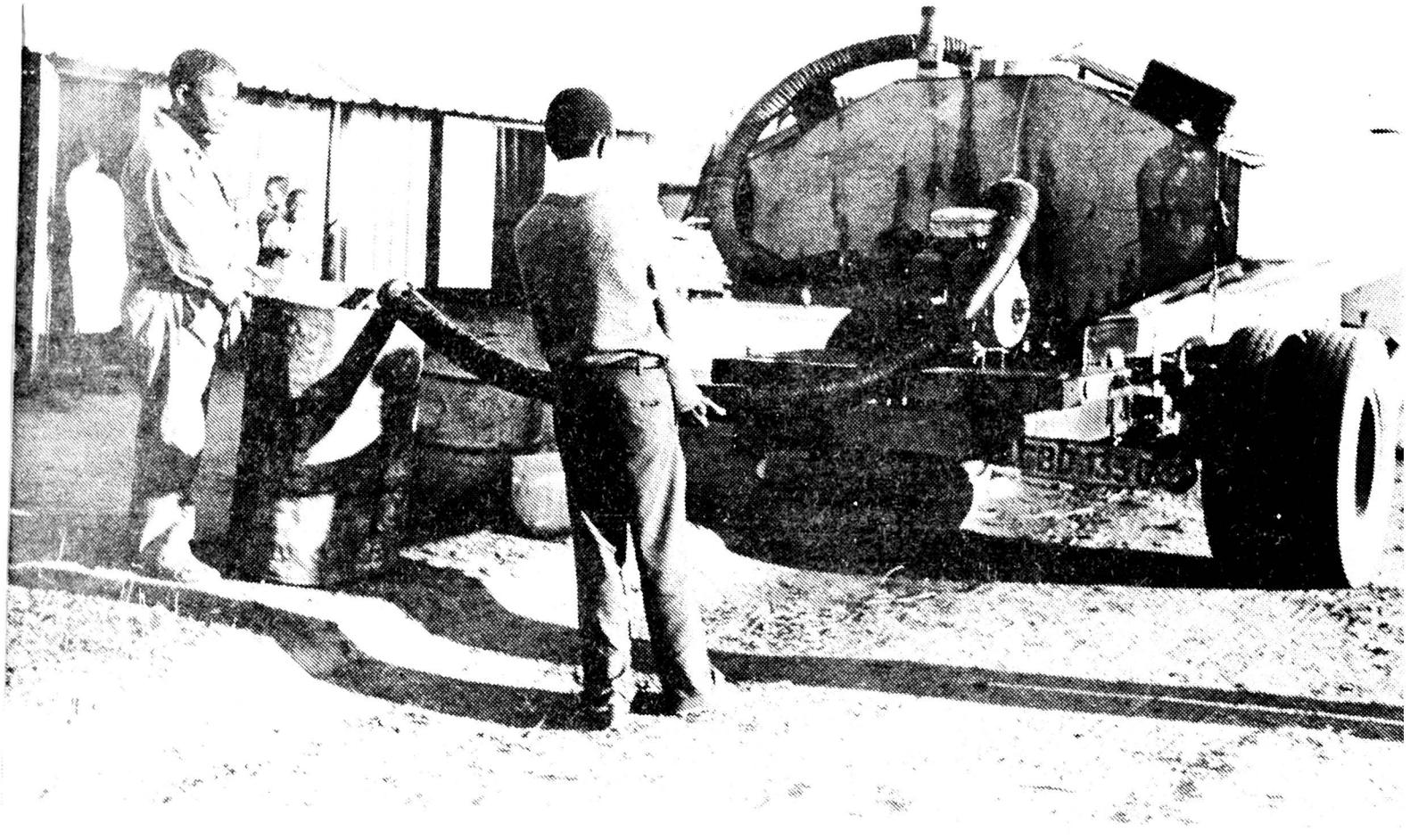
The people who were moved from Stendahl have been trying to get compensation from the Berlin Missionary Society on whose land they had lived on for more than 124 years. The Berlin Missionary Society has up till now refused to pay out any form of compensation. When Stendahl was bought by the Sun Valley Estates, the people living on the mission technically became illegal squatters.

People from the Sun Valley Estates and other farms have like-wise not been paid any compensation. As will be seen, farm workers are not entitled to any form of compensation for their houses.

The laws governing compensation

Compensation is paid to people whose land has been expropriated. If the land is privately owned, theoretically it can be expropriated only if it is outside a scheduled or released area. Before land is expropriated the Minister must serve notice on the owner. The ownership of the property passes to the State on the date of expropriation. Unless the people removed can show some real right to the land (i.e. free-hold title) they cannot be said to have been expropriated. Accordingly they are not entitled to monetary compensation for the land itself, neither are they entitled to compensatory land in exchange for the land as they would be if they held the land by virtue of free-hold title. However section 18 of the Act does provide that where the Trust (SADT) is the owner of the land and the land is resumed to the state, then compensation should cover houses, fruit trees, plantations, etc.

A farm worker or someone living on a white farm cannot insist on compensation for his house when he is forced to move, but he can insist on a reasonable time to remove his possessions. Where a farm worker has been evicted from a farm but still has his own crops on the land, he his entitled to return to reap these crops. If he is prevented from doing this by the farmer, he can ask the farmer for the value of these crops and can take him to court if he refuses to pay. In terms of the legislation, the government has an obligation to provide alternative accomodation for bona fide labour tenants who are being moved off white farms. This has taken the form of a site, generally with some temporary accomodation such as a tent or Fletcraft hut in a closer settlement such as Waaihoek. People who move into them are largely not allowed to own any stock, nor is there land available to cultivate. This is probably the most devasting change that ex-labour tenants have to adjust to.



Labour tenancy

People who pay rent to White or Indian farmers for the use of their land are still regarded by the government as squatters and can be evicted if the correct steps are followed by the Government. This can happen even if the people have lived there for a considerable time.

The 1913 Land Act allocated 7% of land to black people in South Africa who were numerically by far in the majority. (The 1913 Land Act increased this to 13%). The Act was passed predominantly to force black people into wage labour on the mines and on white farms. Originally many black people were share-croppers on white farms. This was in turn outlawed forcing the many thousands of people living on the white farms to become labour tenants or migrant workers.

In 1969 labour tenancy was outlawed in the Weenen district. Labour tenancy was a system whereby black families would work for 6 months of the year for a white farmer in return for access to land and a place to stay. In the second half of 1969 and in 1970 and 1971 large scale evictions took place in the Weenen district where the Stendahl Mission was situated. People living at Stendahl were not evicted at the time because the land was owned by the Berlin Mission Society. More than 20 thousand people were evicted at the time. Many resisted and were prosecuted. Many people were crowded together in 'closer settlements' which the government said would be temporary but which still exist today. Many hundreds crowded into the adjoining districts at Keates Drift, Tugela Ferry, and Mashunka. Because of the ban on any stock entering KwaZulu from outside, tenants destined for KwaZulu had to get rid of all their stock, often selling cattle and goats for a third or a quarter of their actual value. Since the mid 70's faction fights between people in these areas have increased due to competition over inadequate resources. Whereas in 1969 and 1970 many evicted farm workers were able to find work in the industrial centres of Johannesburg and Durban, since then increasing unemployment and control of rural people has made it very difficult for people to find jobs in the big towns.

Despite the fact that labour tenancy was outlawed in 1969 it survived in many areas of Natal and is still found in some places. Some of the families living at Waaihoek were until recently, labour tenants.