

SERVICES

The houses in the Tsitsikama, though they varied substantially, were on average permanent and relatively high quality brick, soilbrick or wattle and daub structures. Some families owned spacious five to eight bedroomed dwellings, others had three or four rooms at their disposal. Most people, it would seem, were satisfied with housing conditions.

Educational facilities, however, were rather poor. For instance, there was no secondary school within easy commuting distance of the reserves.

We have no information on the quality of the other services to the community. Nevertheless we may safely assume, in view of the relatively developed state of the Humansdorp district, that these were superior to those currently supplied at Elukhanyweni.

CONCLUSION

One can only reiterate that the land, and the security and income it provided, the permanent homes and the familiarity with the local labour market, enabled the Tsitsikama people to lead a dignified, albeit harsh, existence. They had been in the area for generations. They were culturally and economically rooted, as firmly as can be, in the region.

3.5.3 During the move

The Black Administration Act of 1927 provides for the administration of black affairs. It marked a shift in government policy towards enforced retribalisation of the african reserves. Section 5 of the Act deals with the removal of blacks. It empowers the State President to order, subject to the approval of parliament in some cases, the removal of any black community and the excision of any black land from the scheduled or released areas.

On 21 April 1975 a parliamentary select committee on black affairs dealing with homeland consolidation recommended

in terms of the provisions of section 5 of the Bantu Administration Act, 1927 ... the withdrawal of the Bantu tribes, Bantu communities, and Bantu persons residing in the ... District of Humansdorp ... comprising the following properties: Doriskraal Location, Fingo Location, The Gap, Palmietrivier Location, Snykclip Location, Wittekleibosch Location and Witte Els Bosch. (SC 9-75)

On 14 May 1975 these recommendations were adopted by the House of Assembly. On this occasion the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development said:

... it is an historic day today, since today we have come to the last round of the Parliamentary work in connection with what is called the consolidation of the Bantu areas.... There are actually four aspects in connection with this work: In the first place, the definition of the areas within which released areas for the Bantu peoples may be declared; in the second place, the clearing of Bantu freehold land; in the third place, the excision of poorly situated Bantu reserves or parts thereof, and in the fourth place, the attempt to consolidate the scattered areas of the Bantu homelands, by the aforementioned three actions, into single units ... here we have proof of the will of the Government and the National Party to carry out this task of honour actively and to meet the difficult challenge. (Assembly Debates, 14.05.75, our emphasis)

The consolidation of the bantustans emerged as an aim of the State during the sixties and has since become an important component of the bantustan policy. There are a number of reasons why this trend occurred. Determined attempts have been made by the State to make the reserve areas work administratively, politically and to a lesser extent economically. From the point of view of administration, political control and economic development a unified area is clearly preferable. Furthermore, as part of its divide-and-rule strategy the State has encouraged and stimulated the development of ethnic nationalities located in separate territories. The consolidation of the 'homelands' is important to the stabilisation of such ethnic and ideological identities. However, neither of these explanations show that 'homeland' consolidation is a necessary prerequisite for the bantustan policy. Finally, one should not ignore the incongruity of fragments of independent bantustans and the strains that this placed on the ideology of independent black States. The latter is perhaps even the most important cause of 'homeland' consolidation. The recent rethinking within government circles on the whole question of consolidation, mainly as a consequence of the rocketing costs, seems to indicate that even in the eyes of officialdom, the feasibility of the bantustan policy does not rest on comprehensive consolidation.

Be that as it may, the pace of consolidation accelerated during the seventies and especially the late seventies. It was therefore inevitable that reserve areas as 'badly situated' as the Tsitsikama reserves would be moved sooner rather than later. They are over 200 km from the main body of the Ciskei.

Following the Act of Parliament the communities were informed of the impending move. Promises of agricultural land and decent accommodation were apparently made and a delegation visited Keiskammahok. The Ciskeian authorities were also drawn in to announce the move as enticingly as possible:

Two white guys asked us to move. They said that the Chief Minister had built for us permanent homes.

A South African Government official asked us to leave. He said that the land belonged to whites and Mr S***, then Ciskeian Minister of *****, was encouraging us to move saying that land was available for us in the Ciskei.

Mr S*** and other black agriculturalists told us to move. They said that land was available to us in the Ciskei.

Some Ciskeian Cabinet Ministers told us to leave. They said that we have our own place in the Ciskei, land of plenty.

The whole thing started in the '70s. There used to be meetings where people were asked by Mr S*** to vote for Ciskei. We didn't. They said Ciskeian government was in need of us.

A meeting of those acceding to the move was called and about 50 people turned up. As reward, the inywaki as they are called, were offered agricultural land. Though most of them received dryland fields, 14 fortunate families were incorporated into the Keiskamma irrigation scheme. They all moved before the rest of the community and although some initially resided in the resettlement camp they all now live close to their fields. In a sense these collaborators are no longer part of the Elukhanyweni community and many view them with contempt.

The bulk of the Tsitsikama people, however, refused to move. On 12 September 1976, Pretoria responded. The State President issued an Order for the removal, as provided for in the Bantu Administration Act of 1927. At the same time an order went out to the South African police to arrest and detain any person who refrained or refused to move. (3)

On 5 October a magistrate and a representative of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, Mr K***, convened a meeting of residents from the various reserves. The magistrate read out the contents of the Order issued by the State President. The meeting was also addressed by Mr K*** and he informed them that the date for the move was set for 15 November

1977. He also requested their co-operation and, as Mr K*** told the meeting, in demonstration of his own commitment to co-operation he had on that day deemed it necessary to wear a suit and drive a clean car. However in the same breath he made it clear that anyone who refused to move would be arrested and moved all the same. Some questions from the floor were permitted, but as soon as someone questioned the removal itself the meeting was closed. The following is a transcript of some parts of the meeting, translated from Afrikaans.

Official Listen, are there any of you with any questions about the move? Right, let us just have the names . . . (First question and answer.) Right there is another question. Wait a moment, is this man a resident here, let me have a look at his book, I have never seen his face before.

Fingo 1 I am a teacher here, an old teacher.

Official But I have never seen your face before.

Fingo 1 I am an old teacher, I built this place. I wrote a letter to Mrs Ballinger and a letter came back which said that we would not be moved. I do not know what is happening here today.

Official But the point is, it does not matter to whom you wrote. The point is, this is the final order from the States President and that is what I am conveying to you. Wait a moment, are there any other questions?

Fingo 2 Yes.

Official Right, let us hear.

Fingo 2 Mr G*** and the people who stand with you, we understand now why you are here today. There has already been decided about the people who are seated here, and they know nothing about it.

Official I just want to say to him that that is why we are here today.

Fingo 2 We know nothing about it, Mr K*** has always been around, and on the few occasions he came here, he always said he wanted people who were willing to move. We told him directly that we did not want to go, we will not go anywhere because we have been here for more than 250 years.

Official I just want to interrupt you. I am not going to permit this. We are not going to discuss this question. I am not going to allow anyone to talk about it. I am willing to answer questions about the move, but anything else would be a waste of time, there is nothing we can do about it.

Fingo 2 We are not willing to move on the 15th. You can do what you like, but we are not willing to move on the 15th. We paid for this ground with our blood when we fought with these people.

Official Is he finished, is he now finished?

Fingo 2 Peace, peace, we cannot be moved from here.

Official Now look here, I will not allow any more questions because no-one has asked any questions about the move. Everyone is now asking questions about something about which nothing can be done. So in other words, I am going to close this meeting now. You have been informed about this, and we request your co-operation.

The people still have recollections about this meeting:

We argued with him and when we were defeating him he told us that we would leave under any circumstances. We later even fought court cases.

When we didn't want to leave a white from Pretoria told us that the land is theirs and that we had to move. Following the owner's command we were evicted.

Resistance followed immediately. Some tried to reason:

We formed our committee for asking the reason of our departure, but who can we ask, for there was a confusion.

We tried to stay by asking why we were being moved, because prior to this the government said we would live there up to the seventh generation. All they said is we can't disobey the law.

Groups formed and meetings were held:

We tried to resist by attending some meetings about resistance to our removal.

We attended meetings that were held and we pledged never to go to a place unknown to us.

We organised ourselves as a community and had long talks with the authorities.

Some even tried to ignore the Order:

The magistrate in Humansdorp called a meeting and told us that we must leave in November, but we take no notice.

On 15 November the removal squads arrived.* By then it seems the authorities were no longer willing to talk, no longer willing to co-operate:

We held meetings discussing the issue and unanimously agreed with other households not to move. But the boers got tired of what we were doing and came with guns to evict us. All households were eventually moved to this place. All resistance was in vain.

We held several meetings and agreed not to leave but at gunpoint we were moved to this place. We could not resist them because they had weapons for unarmed people.

Meetings were held and people unanimously agreed not to move but eventually we were moved out at gun point.

We organised some of the households and met to discuss our plight, clearly refusing to move. But in 1977 we were moved at gunpoint. We had no option.

We form some groups and have long talks with the officials, but being tired of our questions they sent police.

Despite the chaos many still tried to find an explanation:

The police said there is land for us and no questions were expected. Those who asked were taken to prison. We tried by all means to find the real reason. But we were pointed with guns and no answer.

The soldiers who pointed us with rifles told us to leave. There was no reason, but we were drove out like animals. We and the others tried to ask why they did so, but the answer was to be taken to prison at once.

* The account of the removal given on this and succeeding pages is based entirely on information derived from the questionnaires that were administered to the people concerned. It has not been possible to verify the facts of the removal in any greater detail. Dr Koornhof has denied the allegation that any force was deployed at any stage during the move. In view of these conflicting reviewings of the events, the following account should be read as an attempt to reflect the subjective interpretation of the community, rather than as fact.

The police and the army told us to move . The only reason was the point of a gun , no other reasons were given .

We endeavoured to ask the cause but the answer was to be thrown in prison .

We were not even given one reason , but brutally evicted at gun point .

The police told us to move . They gave no reason , but to point us with guns which terrifies us .

We formed a group and asked the police the cause of our eviction , but the answer was to be pointed with guns .

No reason for the move was given except promise to shoot us or take us to prison .

Some claim that they did receive an explanation:

The police who said that they were sent by the South African Government said that bastards would emerge if blacks kept on staying near whites .

The boers and police answered us that our kings in the homelands were in need of us .

The police said we had to move because we have a special Canaan in the Ciskei .

The boers told us through police to leave . The reason they give is that at this side we could educate our children better .

They said we have our land in Keiskammahoek where we could get anything .

The government sent police to kick us out . The police said the government was in need of the place . We asked various questions and we were told that we would get houses here .

Here and there , resistance turned into acts of desperation:

Some took big stones and put them across the street to prevent the trucks from coming to this side and some were imprisoned .

The community also sought legal means to fight the move , albeit in terms of technicalities . On 21 November the headman gave notice of an application on behalf of the community for a legal injunction against the removal, on the grounds that the Resolution approving the removal as adopted by parliament did not comply with all the conditions for authorising such a removal as set forth in Section 5 of the Bantu Administration Act 1927, because although the resolution specified the places from which the community had to withdraw it failed to specify the place to which the community had to withdraw to . Judgement however went in favour of the State .

An appeal was begun , but was withdrawn . There are conflicting claims as to why the appeal was withdrawn . Other members of the community tried to start their own appeal against the judgement but permission for this was refused on the grounds that only the man in whose name the case was initially fought could appeal .

The community fought to the end . Then when overwhelmed , the people accepted the fact while keeping their bitter antagonism to the move and the way it had been brutally forced:

It was the police who told us to move . They gave us no reasons , but we were driven out like dogs .

We could not do anything because even those who tried to resist were jailed and immediately after their release were sent straight to this place .

The soldiers just said that we were leaving at that moment and pointed us with guns . Other households were still refusing and the soldiers promised to shoot them .

We tried to stay . But an official commanded his messengers to demolish our houses . Then we were evicted at gunpoint .

The day we were moved the people were crying - they had no right to take us like that. (E.P. Herald, 28.08.79)

Some people had the extra indignity of having to pretend they wanted to go, being asked their opinion for the official record at gunpoint:

We were told to move on 5 October. We refused to go. On 16 December there arrived 14 bakkies with soldiers carrying rifles plus 22 trucks. The soldiers asked us in Afrikaans whether each person wanted to be removed or not. Many residents replied positively.

At the time of a court application to have the removals stopped, one man described his experiences in an affidavit.

He had been on his way home after hearing that lorries were near his house and was stopped on the road by police. They had his name on a list and told him he was one of the people influencing others not to move. He denies this allegation in his affidavit. He accompanied the police to his house but refused to hand over the house keys, which would enable them to move him and his effects, because his children were at school and his wife was not at home. He alleges the door to his house was broken down by the police and his belongings damaged in the removal. Thereafter he was taken to the Humansdorp police station and allegedly told to sign a document without being allowed to read it and then paid R740 in compensation. He was asked whether he wished to stay in the bus or in a cell until he was moved to Keiskammahoek at 10 that night. He elected to stay on the bus which was guarded and no one was allowed to leave it. (E.P. Herald, 24.03.82)

The removals took place over a period of two months:

We stayed when others were moving. The boers came back after some weeks and forced us to move at gunpoint as well. Other households also tried to resist likewise but were also evicted and brought here later.

Other households were left behind when we moved because of the shortage of transport. But they eventually joined us for nobody could resist the barrels of the guns.

During this period the police often arrived while the people were still asleep, surrounded their houses, forced them from their homes and shunted them onto buses and trucks early in the morning (E.P. Herald, 24.03.82). Then finally by the end of January 1978 the Tsitsikama reserves were empty.

Once evicted they made their way in convoys of overcrowded buses, for the women and children, and open trucks, for the men and furniture, towards Keiskammahoek. The people say:

We were like animals on GG trucks.

We were brought by trucks some with our properties, but much were damaged.

We were taken by the trucks with our damaged property.

We were brought on GG trucks like cattle.

We were brought on overloaded buses with children and men were on GG trucks with furniture.

Their passage was supervised by the police, Eastern Cape Administration Board officials, and troops. Zulu truck drivers from Natal were specially employed for the job. South African brute force and Ciskeian collusion were grimly recognised:

We were brought by the police of South Africa... by the boers... by the boers of the Republic...

GG trucks were driven by Zulus and some few clerks sent by South African Govt.

The South African Government reached an agreement with Ciskei.

The South African and the Ciskeian government brought us here.

On arrival, after the slow 300 km journey, they were given a tomato-box house or a tent:

The government labourers took us to these clustered houses.

They pushed us each to his own house.

The boers gave us tents. Later we got houses.

The police allocated us this land and order us to erect tents.

We were brought by the trucks and ordered to erect your tent.

Thus the reality of life at Elukhanyweni dawned on them. The first of a number of promises was shattered - there were no good houses. They were bitterly disappointed in what they saw.

But the greatest shock was land. Before the move, it seems, they were promised equivalent land, but the great majority ended up with just a house plot. Although everyone without exception had land at Humansdorp, no-one had freehold title and as a result no compensation for the land was paid. Nor was anyone compensated for the unreaped crops they left behind. Another outrage was being stripped of their livestock. They were told to sell some of their animals before the move. It was a cavalier demand to make of a community where virtually everyone had cattle and most had both pigs and poultry, not to mention the householders who had not only goats but sheep and even horses. Not being free to decide about selling, they could not even set their price. They just had to let their animals go cheap, accepting any offer. Not one person felt satisfied with the price. Where the removal squads arrived unexpectedly, some people did not even manage to sell because their animals disappeared into the bush and were lost in the confusion:

People who sold their stock had to give them away to the white farmers who bought them for R16 or R20 a cow. If you didn't sell, they said, well then we'll fetch them up off the road after you have gone.

Stock were sold at low prices.

We sold the stock with less money because we were in a hurry.

Stock were lost because we sold them cheap caused by our eviction.

Stock went out of sight when GG trucks arrived here.

Land were lost and stock disappeared into the bushes.

Many however took their stock through to the Ciskei, only to lose them there. Some died in the drought. Some were sold. The rest were simply stolen:

When we arrived with our stock there was a drought here and so some died.

We had 27 goats and 20 cattle which we brought here. They all died.

We sold our stock when we found there is a shortage of grazing land here.

Because of problems with grazing we sold our stock - cheaply.

Our stock was stolen the second day we live here.

Many people brought stock, and have not even got one head now.

Compensation for the loss of their homes was paid to a third of the households. One person who had an eight bedroomed wattle and daub house received R300. Another who owned three houses - one stone, one brick and one soilbrick - was paid R500 for the lot. But most compensation ranged between R80 and R180. One man received only R70 for his soilbrick house.

Everyone though the amount was insufficient:

What can you do with that amount? (E.P. Herald , 24.03.82)

There was no compensation for losses , and apparently there were many suffered during the move . An old man said:

When I came back to my house I was told I had to move . We couldn't get everything packed and people just threw our stuff together and onto the truck . All the cups and plates were broken , and the furniture . We never got paid for all that was broken . We also lost materials from our old house which were outside in the night . In the morning the zinc sheets were gone .

At one stage the Ciskeian government attempted to deal with the question of compensation and other complaints . Officials came , wrote everything down , but that was the last of it . They never returned .

To summarise:

They just came and dumped us here and never looked back again .

Dr Koornhof , as was said earlier , claimed in parliament that no-one was removed by force , and that no officials were authorised to carry guns , and that the people signed documents to the effect that the move was voluntary . He also stated that compensatory land was allocated .

It may well be that no force , or at least no unreasonable force , was actually used , but it is clear that the people felt threatened at various stages , perhaps merely as a result of the threat of arrest during the October meeting , and that they acted accordingly . The removal was not voluntary in the sense that a free choice was made between the two places . Compensatory land was received by some people , but that includes very few of the people who are at present living in Elukhanyweni itself .

3.5.4 After the move

INTRODUCTION

During the mid-sixties the current resettlement programme began to receive high priority . As the tempo accelerated and the numbers involved increased it became imperative to have some form of cheap and basic accommodation for the mass of resettled people , the families of landless migrant workers , the surplus people from white urban and rural areas . Hence closer settlements .

Closer settlements are normally situated in rural areas , often isolated backwaters . They are not rural villages - agricultural land is never available . At best the inhabitants have small urban sized plots on which their houses stand . But they are not urban townships either . Only rudimentary services are provided . Houses , where they are provided by the State , are of an inferior type . Local employment opportunities are generally severely limited . In short , closer settlements are deliberately designed so as to accommodate large numbers at minimum cost . They are the new breeding grounds for the South African migrant labour force .