



# BLACK SPOTS ON A WHITE MAP

PACSA FACTSHEET



### WHAT IS A 'BLACKSPOT'?

It is a place where black South Africans live in freehold in what the Nationalist Party calls White South Africa. In Natal, according to Mr. de Wet Nel, in 1963, there were 250 "black spots".

Most of these have been in existence prior to Union in 1910. "Some are farms owned by individuals; some are 'mixed' suburbs of rural towns; some are country areas bought initially by a tribe or a group of individuals, where families live on small freehold plots". (The Black Sash, July 1963).

They are distinguished by the fact that the people who live on them bought their land legally believing that they would have security of tenure. Take for example Grant 5741 concerning the farm "The Swamp" in the Pevensy area. The late Charles Mndaweni purchased and had completely paid for his land by June 17, 1898. Contained in his title deed was the following: ". . . To hold the same unto the said Charles Mndaweni, his heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns with full power, to possess the same in perpetuity. . .". On April 3, 1970 The Swamp was expropriated in terms of Section 13 of the Development Trust and Land Act (1936) and the Expropriation Act (1965) because it was a "Black Spot".



KWAPITELA – A SO CALLED 'BLACKSPOT'

Estimates made in 1958 indicated that the clearance of 250 "Black Spots" would involve the uprooting of 375,000 landowners and tenants, the destruction of 85,000 homes, 680 churches, 350 shops and 350 schools.

By 1963 the people in 40 "Black Spots" had been removed, amongst which were the residents of Charlestown who were moved to Duckponds (Madadeni) and Buffalo Flats (Osizweni). People from Besterspruit were removed to Mondlo in the Nqutu area. The accommodation at Mondlo consisted of a hut on a 15 metre square site. By the end of 1967 about 77 000 people from 100 Black-spots had been removed.

### THE 1968 REMOVALS : MERAN TO LIMEHILL

In Natal in 1968 a number of removals involving almost 13 000 people was started in the Klip River/Dundee area and received much publicity in the press.

The first of the series started on January 29, 1968. On the farm Meran, near Wasbank, people had been under threat of removal for more than two years but no definite notification was given until 26 January 1968. On that day children at the school on the land were told to inform their parents that they would be removed on 29 January to Limehill – an area adjoining the Msinga reserve.

The people who were dumped there found a water tank and a pile of folded tents. The Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration & Development, speaking in the House of Assembly on 13.2.68 described the facilities at Limehill as follows:

- \* Africans were to construct their own homes and latrines.
- \* No sanitary provision was made before the first people were moved in.
- \* The Department had made no arrangement for the provisions of foodstuffs to be bought at Limehill at the time the first people were moved in.
- \* No clinic was, or is yet, available.

In a 1978 publication, "Limehill Revisited: A Case Study in the Longer Term Effects of African Resettlement" by C. Desmond, it is claimed after a survey of 101 households that "long term effects of the government's resettlement policy are no less dehumanising and demoralising than the initial suffering and hardship inflicted when people are uprooted from their established homes and dumped in the barren veld. The position does not improve with time".

## RECENT REMOVALS

In Natal, between 1970 and July 1981 at least 65 000 people from 41 "Black Spots" were removed. Amongst these were the following:

- \* Roosboom to Ezakheni – 1975-77. This involved over 7 000 people who were moved from a stable settled community near Ladysmith into an unstable 'township' situation at Ezakheni.
- \* The Swamp to Compensation Farm – Dec. 1978. About 100 families were taken from their home in the Pevensey area and dumped at Compensation having been given a plot with a toilet and tent on it.
- \* Kwa Pitela to Compensation Farm – July 1981. On 2nd and 3rd July 1981 60 families were taken from their homes on the farm Kwa Pitela in the Sani Pass area, to Compensation. See PACSA Newsletter No. 9.

## THREATENED "BLACK SPOTS"

The Minister of Co-Operation & Development said on 26.2.81 "Yes it is the intention of the Government to resettle the communities of the areas concerned. Mawane's Kop (12 502 people); Jononoskop (1 701 people); Lusitania (1 827 people); Driefontein complex (70 980 people); Tembahlile (5 000 people).

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSES:

Over the last 30 years there have been many and varied comments; the following are just a few:

- "The Bantu people like being moved. . . . The Bantu people like the places where they are being resettled" – Mr. M.C. Botha, The Star 21.11.69.
- The Deputy Minister of Bantu Development, Mr. A.H. Vosloo blamed members of the Black Sash, a couple of clergymen, certain English language newspapers and members of the Opposition for the so-called "Limehill Scandal". See Natal Witness 5.2.69.
- "Equity and reasonableness are the very touchstones of the white operation of the removal of 'black spots' . . . No one is forcibly removed". – G.F. van L. Froneman, M.P. in an address to the Institute of Citizenship (C.T.) 30.5.68.
- In response to a request from a Black landowner who did not want to move from his land, the Secretary for the Interior replied as follows:  

"The farm X constitutes a Black Spot – i.e. an isolated portion of farmland owned by blacks in the white area of . . . . In accordance with government policy . . . A and other landowners cannot remain at X" — Letter to landowner dated 27.4.80.
- "The compensatory lands for the isolated areas ("Black Spots") around Ladysmith, Driefontein, Reserve No. 4, Sordwana and Paulpietersburg have already been bought and planned and resettlement should immediately start" – Dr. P. Koomhof, Natal Witness 14.5.81.
- Mr. P.W. Botha wanted to know why a more positive attitude was not presented to the world about the land which was being handed over to the homelands. Why did people leave the impression that there was an unfair division of land to the detriment of the blacks? – Natal Mercury 27.8.81.

## CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

- \* Do Not Move Your Neighbour's Land Mark!
- \* In black areas threatened with removal, make contact with landowners and tenants. Learn to understand some of their problems.
- \* Question and challenge the moral (and socio-economic and political) right of the authorities to uproot people who in many cases have been living in these areas for 2 or 3 generations.
- \* Encourage your church or Christian action group to become involved where possible and where requested.
- \* Monitor the work of the authorities – they state that they provide water, sanitation, schools and clinics in these relocation camps. At Nondweni it took 3 years before the clinic was in operation; at Compensation Farm there is still no clinic on site after almost 3 years since the first group of people was moved there.
- \* See also PACSA Factsheet No. 10 – God, Land and Removals.

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