

Now —

IN JUNE THIS YEAR a group of our members and interested outsiders visited Daggakraal and Driefontein to attend the Commissioner's report-back on Koornhof's meeting with the community representatives in Johannesburg on May 30 (a meeting at which he had, as usual, refused to discuss abandoning the proposed forced removal and had only been prepared to discuss a mechanism by which all parties could co-operate in planning the move).

They returned, shattered and shaking from this seemingly ordinary and uneventful meeting. They said 'The violence isn't in the breaking up of houses — that is only the mopping up afterwards. Even the shooting of Saul Mkhize was less violent than the situation we found ourselves in that day. The violence was there where nothing seemed to be happening. The TV cameras were there but there was nothing for them to film. We were all shaking in the presence of Mr van Niekerk (the Commissioner from Pietersburg). I suppose it was because these quietly spoken words of his when he told the residents that 'the decision that the people must be removed is a decision of Parliament taken already in 1973', contained all the deep and chilling violence at the core of South African life'.

'What we saw on Saturday is a situation that has happened countless thousands of times over the last 30 years unwatched, when the white commissioner delivers his message to the community that they are not only unwanted, they are being rejected. Everything they have



Commissioner van Niekerk reports on his meeting with Dr Koornhof

built up to master their circumstances is not only irrelevant to the situation but is not valued. They are told "Vat jou goed en trek and we will give you free transport". The effect is devastating. And it is done only on grounds of racism and greed.

The final wickedness is that whites then say to blacks 'You must not expect "handouts" from whites, you must learn "self-help" and to fend for yourselves'. The letters columns in the press are always full of letters from indignant and self-righteous whites along the lines of "Why should we pay for black schools, clinics and roads, when will they learn to look after themselves?"

'And we stood there at Driefontein, looking at the schools and houses and streets that blacks have built for themselves and witnessing the orderly way they run their affairs and the commissioner telling them all this is to be bulldozed. If white survival depended on this destruction, perhaps we could understand its attractiveness: but that survival is not remotely possible along these lines. All this cruelty is not even in self defence'.

The Commissioner speaks — honeyed words to make the unwanted removal to Skaapkraal like a favour from a benevolent government — recording taped by our members

THE DECISION that the people must be removed from Driefontein is a decision of Parliament taken already in 1973. In other words that was stated as a fact by the Minister. The reasons further to make haste in implementing that decision was the fact that this dam is being built here (which was emphasized at that meeting), secondly the Minister emphasized it that the Community Council of Driefontein, being the Council who have all along had discussions with the Minister, not with the Minister but with the Department on this issue, that they hold them in high esteem and that they regard them as the representative body of the people of Driefontein.

The third point that the Minister emphasized was that after the lengthy discussions in his office the two parties have agreed to co-operate with us and work together. The two parties referred to are the Driefontein Community Board who are in favour of the move, and The Council Board of Directors, who oppose the move. (*Background: the Council Board of Directors, headed by the late Saul Mkhize, was asked by the Driefontein people to replace Msibi's Driefontein Community Board but the Board of Directors is not recognised by the authorities.*)

I must just in connection with the last point say that the, what do they call them, the Council Board of Direc-

tors, has said that although they agreed to co-operate and to work together in this regard this does not automatically mean that they agree to the move. (Cheers on translation).

The possibility of one area where all the people can re-settle was discussed and the Skaapkraal area was mentioned as one possibility.

The Board of Directors had amongst others certain alternatives to solve the problem. While the Minister was not prepared to consider the possibility of the people who have got to be removed in view of the dam, to other adjacent land he was prepared to consider one request from them that the people be placed not too far, as near as possible to Driefontein. And the nearest place that the Minister could think of was this place called Skaapkraal. The Minister also emphasized that obviously does not mean the people want to go.

Now I've spoken about this place Skaapkraal. Now only portion of that farm at this stage belongs to the South African development trust. So the Minister now has this job in that he has got to approach the cabinet for authority to also acquire the rest of that land or shall we say sufficient land to accommodate all the people of Driefontein. Now for that the Minister promised that he

will immediately try and approach the cabinet and that if at all possible he will try and get a decision on the farm Skaapkraal within a week or ten days. You will appreciate that its not easy for the Minister just to go and er to, to raise an important issue like this in the cabinet and get a decision forthwith but the Minister promised to do his utmost to get the decision very soon. Now as soon as he has got that decision the intention of the Minister is that it will again be conveyed to the people of Driefontein and that will be done as soon as possible.

It was also decided that if the two parties cannot find each other in this regard he will again talk to the representative groups. Now that in short is my message here this afternoon. Now there is a request here from the two parties.... The Chairmen of the two groups have decided that they would also like to address the group of people while we are here. So I would like you to afford them the

opportunity also to listen to their side of it so that they can also negotiate with each other.

Because the Minister tried very hard to get the two groups to reach a joint view upon this matter. Now I'm going to ask Mr Msibi first to give his view on the subject (Hisses). I want quiet at this meeting please. There are people (noise) not all people share the same views. I've given you what the Minister has said in this regard. I'm asking you now (noise) I'm asking this young man (noise) he's a young man he doesn't know (noise).

The recording continues with speeches rejecting the move. When van Niekerk is challenged to call for a vote to establish how much support Msibi's group (pro move) has, he goes into a huddle with Msibi and ducks this. Transcript can be made if anyone is interested. Beauty Mkhize speaks powerfully.

Awaiting destruction

Rural leaders address Sash vigil

Johannes Mathopi, a leader of the Mathopistad community

I was born in Mathopistad, I grew up in Mathopistad. I attended school there and I heard the story of the removals during 1962. I was still a young boy during that time but I heard about the removals.

The first place where these removals started was called Slaggaat in the district of Ventersdorp. People who stayed there were people with the name Nakane. They were first told that they mustn't have any more cattle in the new place, they must just have about five to ten cattle in their place because the grazing of that place was no good for them. So it happened that during 1962 there was a place called Molutistad, which is the place next to Mathopistad, which is the place, Elandsfontein, that was also bought by the grandfathers. Those people of Molutistad were moved out from that place and some of the men refused to leave because they said they had the right to stay because the government did not negotiate with them, and they didn't understand why must the government move them to send them to go and resettle in a dry place like Leedag, which is just next to Onderstepoort where the Mathopistad people should now be moved, resettled.

You know we are progressive people but our progress has been halted by our so-called seniors, the commissioners who for many years have prevented us from developing our businesses, bus service and schools and who refused our application to build a clinic because they say we are to be moved.

Now our people at Mathopistad are being threatened with removal, but I have seen what's happening in Leedag — people are starving, and most of the old people die because that place is very

hot and has no water. I was introduced by somebody with the name of Mrs Maphike to the Black Sash.

Mathopistad is a very nice place. We plough, we do a lot of farming, we grow mealies, we grow sorghum, we have plenty water. We have our livestock. Our old people can maintain themselves by planting mealies and vegetables. So I'm afraid that the government is prepared to move Mathopistad people out of that place.

Sam Mathopi

I am Sam Mathopi from Mathopistad. I am working in Johannesburg. We supply the co-operative in Brits and most of our farmers' maize is rated number 1. We rarely get second grade. So that's



After the daily prayers at the Sash vigil people stayed behind to talk — here Beauty Mkhize (widow of Saul), talks with Hendrik Aaron Mogoerane (brother of Thello Mogoerane, recently executed), Molly Sklaar and Simon Montsisi (brother of Daniel Montsisi, one of the 'Soweto II', recently released from Robben Island)