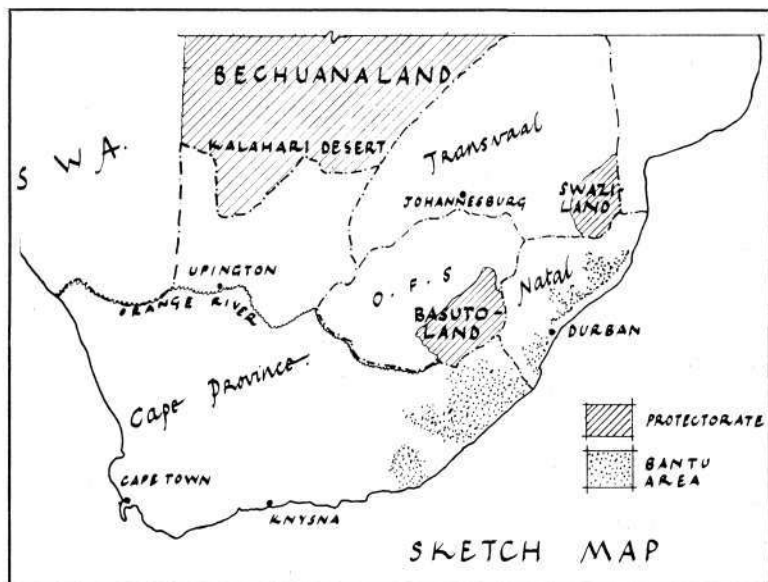


# THE EISELEN SCHEME

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IN accordance with the Government's policy of apartheid along racial lines, even within the non-white groups, the Secretary for Native Affairs, Dr. W. W. Eiselen, announced in January 1955 that it was the Government's policy ultimately to remove all Africans from the Western Province. As defined by Dr. Eiselen, the Western Province is the area south of the Orange River and west of a line stretching from the magisterial district of Gordonia (Upington) to that of Knysna, in all about a quarter of the Cape Province, the largest province of the Union.



It was necessary, Dr. Eiselen said, to remove all the Natives from this vast section of the Union because "the Western Province was the natural home of the Coloured people, and they had the right to be protected against the competition of Natives in the labour market".

After alleging that "miscegenation took place (between Coloured people and Natives)" and that "Coloured women preferred to live with Natives because they offered them better

security”, Dr. Eiselen stated that “the fact that Natives and Coloureds lived and worked together . . . was leading to the disappearance of social and cultural differences between the two groups”.

He then proceeded to enlarge on the threat to the Coloured people in the economic field. “Physically the Native had the advantage over the Coloured man and was rapidly monopolizing the physical labour field. The number of Natives in the Western Province had increased from 30,000 in 1921 to 178,000 in 1955. Industrial development in the area was the main cause of this influx . . . Employers preferred Natives as labourers because they were physically stronger, less addicted to strong drink, and had not yet become ‘city wise’ ”.

In order to protect the Coloured people socially, culturally and economically, it was therefore necessary to remove the Natives and “restore the traditional demographic order in the Western Province”.

Immediately that Dr. Eiselen had announced his scheme, the fundamental ideology of which is enumerated above, there was a storm of criticism. It emanated from many sources—the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Members of Parliament of all the opposition parties, Farmers’ and various other Employers’ Associations, amongst others. They all objected to the scheme on economic grounds, pointing out, quite rightly, that it would be practically impossible to force the Coloured man down the economic scale from his position of skilled or semi-skilled worker to that of unskilled labourer, and that the Western Province faced disaster to its economy if there was any check in the flow of African labour. Dr. Eiselen had envisaged these objections, however, for he had originally announced “Industrial development in the area was the main cause of the enormous influx of Natives, and industrial expansion, which needed additional manpower, *should therefore be carefully controlled.*”

This did nothing to allay the anxiety of the big employers of labour, as can well be imagined, even though the executive committee of the S. A. Bureau of Racial Affairs, an organisation largely responsible for the ideological background to Nationalist policy, assured them, in a statement supporting the Eiselen scheme, that “economic development does not require as of necessity more *Native* labourers. Labour can also be White or Coloured, and better quality of labour and better utilization

thereof can be equivalent to more labour . . . Mechanization, scientific management, white immigration, etc., could compensate them for the loss of Native labour”.

Representations were made by the employers to Dr. Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs. He replied, in a letter to the Cape Chamber of Industries: “Your Chamber will no doubt agree that, provided the labour requirements of employers can be met, it is in the interests of everyone if the socio-economic conditions in the Western Province are not allowed to become too involved . . . There will be differentiation between married and single migratory labour, and an adequate supply of the latter, until such time as other (Coloured) labour is available, will not be endangered.” It would seem that this reassurance has sufficed to dispel any doubts harboured about the merits of the Eiselen scheme by organised employers in industry, commerce and agriculture. At any rate, they have maintained a discreet silence concerning the scheme ever since.

There were few protests made against the scheme on moral, social or ethical grounds. These came from the Cape Town Branch of the National Council of Women, who are concerned about the threat to family life and the human suffering which will inevitably be caused when the scheme is put into operation; various Protestant churches, particularly the Anglican Church, which condemned the whole system of migratory labour; and African organizations such as the African National Congress, which condemned particularly the Government’s attempt to “divide and rule” by forcibly separating Coloureds and Africans. But except for a few letters to the Press from individuals, everyone else kept silent.

Perhaps this was because both Dr. Verwoerd and Dr. Eiselen declared that the policy was “a long-term measure not to be implemented overnight . . .” Many people think, and repeatedly say, that this long-term measure can never be put into effect.

It can be shown, however, that this iniquitous scheme is *not* a policy for the far-distant future. It is being implemented here and now. In fact, the preliminary stages have already been put into effect. It is being done exactly as Dr. Eiselen outlined, being executed step by step in the following manner:—

**1. The removal of “foreign natives”**—that contradictory term which in Nationalist terminology means any African born beyond the borders of the Union, in Rhodesia, Nyasaland, etc., but not in the Protectorates. Once such a man loses his job in

the Union, no matter if it be through absolutely no fault of his own, no matter if he has been here for twenty years or more, or has a wife and family here, no matter if he has no ties at all with his homeland, he is not allowed to either seek work or take a new job. He has to leave the Union, immediately, and at his own expense. Employers have to collect money from "foreign natives" in their service to make sure that sufficient is available to pay the fare over the border when such Africans leave their employment. This policy is being applied all over the Union, but is administered with especial strictness in the Western Province, on Governmental orders.

**2. The freezing of the present position of Native families.** This is being done in the following manner. Firstly, in December, 1954, local authorities in the Western Cape began to register African women for permits (passes) under Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act. This was not a haphazard move, occasioned by some official's whim. It was the first step in the compilation of a detailed register of all African women living in the Western Province. All African women living there now have to carry a permit to remain in the area. If they do not do so, or remain here after being refused a permit, they are guilty of a criminal offence and are liable to arrest, a term of imprisonment, and/or a fine, and are then escorted out of the area. Many hundreds have already been found guilty, and sent back to their homes or last place of residence, whether or not they are forced to abandon their husbands and children as a result.

Secondly, if a woman who has lived in the Western Province for many years wishes to visit another part of the country and then return, she is not permitted to do so unless she is employed by someone who guarantees to re-employ her on her return. So African housewives and mothers who do not work, but stay at home to care for their families, can never leave the area even for a short while, for fear that they will not be re-admitted. In terms of a recent Supreme Court judgment (*Regina v. Annie Silinga*), a woman has to be "physically present" for at least 15 years in an area in order to qualify for exemption from the provisions of this section of the Urban Areas Act. If at any time she leaves—even for a few days—she loses the exemption.

Thirdly, "influx control" is very strictly enforced in the Western Province. This means that African women cannot enter the "proclaimed area of the Cape" from other parts of the

country either to seek work, to join their menfolk, or for any other reason. This stricture effectively prevents the entry of women, and keeps the number of women in the Western Cape constant at the early 1955 level.

All these methods "stem the family flood", to quote Dr. Eiselen again.

**3. The limited introduction of single migratory workers to provide for most urgent needs.** This means just what it says. The whole panoply of Labour Bureaux, the pass system, etc., enables the authorities to see that only the required numbers of workers are in any given area. In the Western Province, only so-called "bachelors" are allowed to enter to seek work. This aspect of Governmental policy has been more fully described elsewhere in this issue—but it should be pointed out that since 1952 not a single house for an African family has been built at Langa, and not one at Nyanga, the other African township, since 1954. In the whole of the Cape Peninsula, therefore, no housing at all has been built in recent years to accommodate families, and only hostels for "single men" have been constructed by the authorities.

**4. The removal of all Natives who come from the Protectorates.** This bald statement covers another heart-breaking aspect of the scheme. There have been so many removals of African communities. This will be yet another—despite the fact that many Africans born in the Protectorates have been working and living in the Western Province for many years. To them the Western Cape is home. They have severed their ties with Basutoland (where most of them come from) or Bechuanaland. But they will be moved—just that one word, moved—when the time comes, no matter if they have lost all contact with their birthplace.

**5. Reduction in the number of Native families.** This is being done in several stages. The people living in the so-called "black spots" are being removed from all over the Peninsula to the two emergency transit camps which the authorities are busy setting up. And then, those who do not qualify to remain will be repatriated. This is the ultimate step of the Eiselen scheme, repatriation for all except for the select few who will be permitted to stay. Where, how, by what means is all this to be decided? Nobody knows, outside of the few who have devised the whole inhuman plan.

The final stages of the scheme are outlined in the Cape Town

City Council minute quoted in "The Crime of Langa", for its last paragraph shows that there will be no security for even the few families who remain, no security even for migrant African labourers. Whether there will be security for the Coloured people, who Dr. Eiselen claims will replace the Africans is, of course, yet another question.

Dr. Eiselen has openly laid down the steps which the Government is either taking or will take to remove all Africans from the Western Cape. He does not concern himself with where these people are to go, how they are to earn a living, how they can adjust themselves to tribal conditions after years of urban life. Human values, human suffering, human rights are utterly unimportant. That many thousands of Africans are to be forcibly removed is just another plan among so many plans in which people are treated as units and moral and ethical values are completely ignored.

Even apart from the moral issues involved, nothing perhaps demonstrates better the economic absurdity of apartheid than the Eiselen scheme. Here is a responsible Government official declaring that industrial expansion, the very basis of all modern society, should be controlled—or curtailed—in order to prevent too many workers from settling in a vast area of the country. One wonders whether the Government's own supporters are going to defend a policy which must lead to the economic ruin of the whole region. Already there is evidence that Cape Town and the Western Province generally are developing at a slower pace than the rest of the country. Compared to the other centres of the Union, industrial expansion in the Western Cape is slower, and those industries which have been established are of less economic significance. If this should continue, and it will assuredly if some 100,000 of its inhabitants are removed, then the Western Cape will become a sleepy backwater where all progress has come to a standstill.

This is, of course, an important enough issue in itself. But much more important is the ultimate agony it will cause the African people. They themselves will express their opposition to this brutal and inhuman policy, and it is up to all those, both in the Union and abroad, who object to the scheme, whether it be for moral, economic or other reasons, to raise their voices in protest with them *now*, before it is too late.