

BLACK SASH OF PRETORIA

WINTERVELD

(INTERIM FACT PAPER : UP TO DATE 1980-01-31)

BACKGROUND:

Much has been written about Winterveld since 1977 and especially during 1979, but it might be a good thing to shortly review the facts again.

Winterveld is the popular name given to a large squatter settlement about 40 km north of Pretoria covering an area of 225 square kilometers, in the Odi Magisterial district. It is actually the name of one of several adjacent farms bought mainly in the 1930's and 40's by Blacks as agricultural smallholdings of 5-10 morgen. It is private freehold land. The combination of the creation of border industries such as Rosslyn (between Pretoria and Winterveld), the removal of Black farm tenants from "White farms", the declaration of White areas and subsequent endorsement out of urban Blacks from places such as Eastwood and Lady Selbourne in Pretoria caused immigration into Winterveld of workers (either in employment or seeking employment in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand area) for whom there was no other accommodation. Add to this the overflow from Atteridgeville and Mamelodi after the building of more houses in those areas was frozen. People were apparently actually brought there on lorries by the Government and "dumped" on the privately owned plots until further accommodation could be found. Owners of the lands, originally set aside for agricultural purposes, soon found out that "farming with people" was more profitable, tenants being given a small piece of land for the erection of a shack, against a rent, without any amenities being provided except the possibility of buying water where boreholes made it available. In this way the population swelled to between 500,000 and 700,000 (the figures given by L. Mangope, 1979) if one includes Klipgat or Nakanyaneng and other areas, Setakaneng being the most densely populated, carrying 7/8 of the Winterveld population on 1/8 of the surface. It is interesting to note that with the 1970 population census residential permits were issued to thousands of tenants while those who arrived after 1970 were not issued with permits.

INDEPENDENCE:

With the independence of Bophuthatswana, the area fell within the newly-created state, outside South African influx control laws but within Tswana jurisdiction. Already in the beginning of the 1970's non-Tswanas, while being in the majority, felt intimidated and provoked by Tswanas. The majority of plot-owners are Northern Sothos, followed by Tsongas and Ndebeles, while of tenants Ndebeles are in the majority followed by Tsongas, Northern Sothos, and Zulus.

Contrary to an agreement with the South African Government to notify S.A. in advance of eviction of non-Tswanas, eviction orders were given to non-Tswana residents of Klipgat in December 1978 (see Black Sash magazine November 1979 for removals and citizenship question). At a meeting in April last year President Lucas Mangope warned landowners not to let new families settle and urged them to join the Winterveld Community Authority controlled by the Bophuthatswana Government.

THE PROBLEM:

Lucas Mangope obviously wants to get rid of large numbers of non-Tswanas, outnumbering the Tswanas in the independent Homeland either by incorporating and "nationalizing" them or by resettling them in (or simply evicting them to) areas outside the Homeland. The squatters are both reluctant to take out Tswana citizenship, evident by their refusal to have their children educated in Tswana

(making the existence of the private schools possible) and to move without alternate accommodation within commuting distance of Pretoria. Tswanas on the other hand want the area so ideally situated near employment opportunities for themselves. Constant police harassment, raiding of unlicensed hawkers, evictions, arrests, the imposing of heavy fines, combine with crowded unsanitary living conditions to make life difficult - if not impossible - for the squatters. Increased unemployment, general insecurity, crime and deprivation add to their burden.

THE WINTERVELD AD-HOC COMMITTEE:

This committee, which now hopefully will become a permanent committee under the Pretoria Regional Council of Churches, has been in existence some ten months. With representatives of the Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic Churches, the Black Sash is represented. The Committee approaches the problems from four angles: water, legality, health and representations/publicity. The first three were the main problems (in that order), identified at the seminar/workshop for ministers in the area, arranged in July by the Committee. The African Independent Churches were well represented on that occasion.

Right through the year influential people - including Mrs. Helen Suzman - have been taken on tours of the area.

In November a workshop/sensitivity training course was held under the guidance of Barney Simon (see further attached report).

A legal sub-committee has been set up which is initiating legal research into the position of the non-Tswana squatters within Bophuthatswana, aiming at establishing a principle, which might lead to a Test Case. The legal sub-committee will work in cooperation with the Black Sash Advice Office in Pretoria.

THE ADVICE OFFICE:

The Pretoria office has come across many Winterveld problems, ranging from citizenship to housing and evictions. What is particularly disturbing is the fact that persons with a Winterveld stamp in their reference books will not get housing in Soshanguwe, which is a South African prescribed urban area, contrary to the belief that the area was set aside precisely for non-Tswanas having to leave Winterveld.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS:

The South African Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs (!) and the Bophuthatswana Government, announced on January 16 this year that an inter-governmental management committee has been set up to formulate a development strategy for the Winterveld settlement. The committee will consist of representatives of both governments and the National Building Research Institute of the CSIR, and it will aim at the "cleaning up" of the "squatter camp".

Another development is the formation, on the appeal of L. Mangope, of a committee of landowners under the chairmanship of Mr. Sam Motsuenyane of NAFCOG. It is very unlikely that the landowners are going to be concerned with the improvement of the squatters. Baldwin Nqseke writes in Reality (Nov. 1979): "The landowners are an interesting feature indeed. They are part of as ruthless a system of exploitation and dehumanization ever to emerge within a Black society in our country" (p.8). Some of them earn R600 and over in rentals a month.

Sufficient to say that both these developments should be viewed with caution. The legal sub-committee will investigate whether the inter-governmental committee's work will result in legislation.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

1. The legality and permanency of stay of residents should be established.
2. Suspension of the necessity of applying for citizenship of non-Tswanas;
Halt to evictions, imposing of fines, etc.
3. Alternate accommodation provided for squatters by expansion of Soshanguwe.
4. The introduction of site and service for tenants who could build their own homes.

ADDENDUM:

It was announced on SABC on Friday, February 1, that all non-Tswanas living within Bophuthatswana are authorized to remain in the employment they have in South Africa, provided they were registered before January 31, 1980.

WINTERVELD AD-HOC COMMITTEE

REPORT ON A WORKSHOP HELD AT DE WILDT, STIGMATIN FATHERS, 26 NOV. TO 1 DEC. 1979

Following on two meetings between the Winterveld Ad-hoc committee and Barney Simon in September, 1979, a group training or course (the word course will here be used) was held the last week in November ending with a public performance under the guidance and direction of Barney Simon.

WHERE The course was held at the Stigmatin Fathers in De Wildt (adjoining the Winterveld area). The public performance was held at the Catholic church in Klipgat.

WHEN The course lasted one week, starting the 26th November, ending with the performance on Sunday the 2nd December.

FOR THE PARTICIPANTS The participants were varied in age, sex and background. There were 5 members of MEDUNSA (the medical school at Ga-ran-kuwa hospital) involved in community development and research, 4 Highschool students from the Catholic school at De Wildt, 4 Methodist Bible-women, 3 District/Clinic nurses, 1 member of the Tumelong mission and 1 community development worker of the Pretoria Regional Council of Churches.

COST Costs amounted to nearly R1000-00, made up as follows: R500-00 for board and lodging (2 meals a day for the whole group and accommodation for some of them), R240-00 for Barney Simon (who donated R50-00 to the Committee), travelling costs and other sundry costs such as a gardening demonstration and lay-out held at two places (at De Wildt and at the Mafanele school in Klipgat). The plants were donated by GROW.

PURPOSE The purpose of the course was threefold. One: to train people to become caring and to develop a true understanding of others' problems and situations. Two: to communicate and to teach people who are deprived and underprivileged to see their own problems in a true perspective. Three: to help them to devise ways of overcoming their problems, to handle their own affairs in different way and to rise above their situation.

HOW IT WAS DONE Difficulties were encountered in the beginning because of the very varied composition of the group and the fact that some people came and went instead of staying on all the time. Others had apparently expected something different and had to be reorientated. Members of the Committee went out to the site to follow the progress of the course. In the middle of the week things "loosened up" and the participants themselves constructed the plan on which the performance ending the course would be built.

STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY The participants focussed their attention on and defined the main problems of the Winterveld area. Around each of these main fields a playlet was built up. Eg. on problems like Tenant - Landlord relationships, lack of water, private schools versus Education Department, health, crime (specially problem of school drop-outs becoming delinquents), etc. These playlets were then centred around the person of the Traveller. He was supposed to originally be from Winterveld and returned now after a long absence. Each playlet consists of his encounter with the various aspects of life at Winterveld - so changed

since he last lived there. Through the Traveller's astonishment at the new ways and conditions the audience comes to understand both how wrong and evil the present set-up really is (because one becomes used to a wrong kind of life, even as a victim) and also how it really ought to be. The Traveller often comes with a solution (which to him is so obvious, being the right and moral one) when he has come over his initial disbelief. The advantage of this method is that a negative as well as a positive side of life is exposed.

END PER- FORMANCE

The actual end-performance of the group Sunday the 2 December in the Catholic Church in Klipgat was not as well attended as had been hoped for. Posters had been put up in various centers but had been pulled down. Another factor might be that centers are far apart and transport scarce. The result was that - apart from hordes of children - only about 120 adults attended. But reactions were good. Many left like the old woman who said: "It was nice to look at but it taught us something".

The group met after the Sunday performance and exchanged ideas. They felt generally that they had changed their outlook and the one Bible-woman's comment was typical: "Before we thought that we only could pray for a solution - now we know we can do something".

FUTURE POS- SIBILITIES

The advantage with such a loosely knit play is that new problems and aspects easily can be incorporated. New playlets can be created, replacing others, so that performances can remain up-to-date, lively and ever-changing.

It is possible that the various different groups, eg. the Bible-women, the MEDUNSA people and the High-school students within the group of participants in the course could go on on their own as it will be difficult to keep the group together as it was during the group training itself.

PLANS

A plan to hold a performance at the Data Umpumulu school in Winterveld (which is one of the private community schools) on the 20th January 1980 had to be postponed because of school and university holidays. The school and the group will be contacted as soon as schools open.

The idea of smaller groups to continue on their own will be put to the assembled participants of the course. These will be encouraged and contact kept with the Winterveld ad-hoc committee.

What good came out of the course? It is too early to say, but the Committee would like to look at it as an ongoing programme which might be linked with for instance health preventative care - eg. in a TB "Big game hunting" programme for the schools.