

that the government has not yet instituted any proceedings, the coloured farmers could almost certainly ensure, by legal means, that they are still in occupation of their lands by that date. But this would mean that they fall into the hands of the Ciskei 'national State', which could easily decide by Act of Parliament to expropriate them without any remuneration whatsoever.

2.6.7 Removals west of the Ciskei

WALMER TOWNSHIP

A unique situation exists here, where 4 - 5 000 africans live in the midst of white Port Elizabeth. The township existed for many years without question but came under threat of removal in 1961 when the government decided to consolidate all the black suburbs around the city in one single area. For years nothing happened, but the place was not maintained either. Over the past 20 years it has become very degraded.

In 1979, ECAB declared that all the residents were to move to Zwide 4, part of the New Brighton complex. They were to go in June 1980. The township protested. A non-racial Save Walmer Committee formed. As it turned out, ECAB could not meet their own deadline and announced that the removal would be delayed until January 1981. Nothing happened then either. One month later, in February, the government said they would not force Walmer residents to move. 774 houses would be built for them in Zwide and they would just be 'encouraged' to go there.

Zwide has not been an encouraging prospect itself for Walmer people. Rents there would be far higher, for houses which are 'shells without ceilings and floors'. Instead of walking to work, people would have to queue long hours for buses and pay for the 22 km ride into town. Some workers fear they might lose their jobs if they ask for an increase to cover the extra transport costs. People are also loth to leave Walmer, which they consider very safe, for other areas where 'there are many tsotsis and it is dangerous to walk in the streets after dark'.

One resident seemed to express the general view:

We've been told we're to be moved to better pastures but to go to Zwide would be to go from bad to worse. Families have lived here for decades. We have electricity here in Walmer and we are near our labour market and shopping centres.

Residents also particularly resented the overbearing way in which the original removal scheme was declared:

We are more important than airports and roads. We are people. We are not to be shifted about like sacks of potatoes.

The Urban Foundation entered the lists and surveyed the township with the idea of trying to persuade the authorities to upgrade it. In fact there are some improvements being made this year, 1982, but ECAB said firmly that this does not mean fostering the place. It is clear, in fact, that ECAB are just keeping minimal facilities going and that removals are going ahead piecemeal all the time as houses are demolished in the name of slum clearance. Dr Morrison for the Dept of Co-operation and Development put it like this:

What we are demolishing are not houses, they are slum dwellings. Only shacks in slum areas in Walmer are being pulled down. (EPH, 26.01.82)

He added ominously that there were no plans at this stage to demolish sound houses.

The removal is therefore on the go already. It is being kept deliberately low-key, aimed at families one by one instead of wholesale clearance, the idea of which had united residents

so strongly before. Superficially Morrison could claim that only people 'willing and anxious' to move were being provided with housing elsewhere - but where houses are being knocked down families are being forced into this frame of mind. It is the ultimate form of 'encouraging' people to move. Once the numbers in Walmer have been whittled down far enough, it is more than likely that ECAB will rationalise their own promise away, arguing that it is not worth keeping a township for so few. Residents would be justified in holding them to their promise.

The removals have been slow because ECAB ran out of funds for Zwide housing. An extra R7 million, allocated for development in the ECAB area in mid-1982, will ensure that Zwide gets built. Then, if the Walmer community carry on fighting, they will have to dig their toes in. 760 houses in Zwide were under construction in July 1982. (EPH, 13.07.82) The place was also being electrified.

OTHER TOWNSHIP RELOCATION IN PORT ELIZABETH

Less contentious is the project to extend housing for africans with three new sites in the Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage area. Ever since the Linde Commission investigated township conditions in 1980, ECAB have been trying to improve things before the situation exploded. As it is, the density in Soweto in P.E. is 700 persons per hectare (1982) instead of the 200 it should be. The P.E. townships were short of 15 000 houses in May 1982, and the three new townships would offer 21 000 sites. These new areas must be started simultaneously and as soon as possible, ECAB director Louis Koch said. (EPH, 12.05.82) They are for lodger families in the existing townships, the squatters in the brickfields, and then 'we'll still have quite a few sites to play with', Koch added. This comes after years of very little building - only 216 new houses were built for blacks in P.E. in 1980, for instance. (EPH, 20.01.82)

The three sites are KwaMagxaki which lies between P.E. and Uitenhage on the lower end of Veeplaas; KwaDwesi on the outskirts of P.E. at Kleinskool on the right of the road to Uitenhage; and Motherwell on Markman Common between Swartkops and Coega on the Grahamstown side of P.E.

KwaMagxaki will have about 2 000 housing units, and the infrastructure will include roads, electricity and waterborne sewerage. KwaDwesi will have about the same. Both these sites are being developed now. The other one, Motherwell, is to be far bigger with 16 000 houses, some of them on self-help sites with a lower standard of services than for conventional housing. Work is to start on this township in February 1983. There has been considerable delay, not to say an uproar, over Motherwell. The Coega River Farmers' Association fought bitterly against it, saying it was on good agricultural land, the purchase price was too low, and they did not want a huge new population alongside their farms. Others have tried stopping the plan too. The site could not be properly drained, some said. It would ruin the Swartkops ecology, said others. Prestigious white housing areas at Redhouse, Swartkops and Bluewater Bay also produced objections. The authorities have steamrollered through, however, and notices have been served on the present landowners. Motherwell is definitely going to happen. As a concession to affronted whites nearby, perhaps, Koch assured those at Swartkops River that

The township will be divided into three types of housing with the higher standard of house on the river bank side. Next in line will be scheme housing and furthest from sight will be the serviced sites. (EPH, 12.05.82)

Soweto families will be going to Motherwell. Overall, at least half will be relocated there - subhumanly defined as 'approximately 500 persons a hectare from the Soweto township'. (EPH, 11.05.82) We have no information about what residents think about it, either in Soweto or any of the other congested areas. There is certainly no affection for ECAB, though, after its boorish efforts to oust squatters in Soweto. In early June 1982 about 135 shacks were demolished, and the policy was declared that 'illegal' structures would be broken down as they came up. Many former shack owners put up shelters again as best they could, and the

bitterness mounted. ECAB officials carried rifles on the job. Then on 8 June a group of about 200 people gathered at the ECAB offices after a tense morning of demolition in which a shot had been fired. Suddenly there was a bit of shooting which one of the P.E. community councilors described as 'purely accidental'. A white ECAB official explained the matter, saying he was holding a 12-bore shotgun which he fired by mistake. Four people were hit, apparently with birdshot. (EPH, 9.06.82)

As far as we know, nobody has sued ECAB, but the official tough line against squatters has been toned down. The P.E. City Council's Policy and Resources Committee put out a long statement (EPH, 22.07.82) emphasising that squatters should be moved only when conventional housing was available or if and when the squatters were prepared to be relocated in an authorised area:

The community concerned must indicate that they are prepared to move voluntarily.

The committee warned against 'authoritarian methods which give rise to general discontent and are followed by adverse publicity'.

Thousands are undoubtedly living in total squalor around P.E. They include those at Fitches Corner, a temporary transit camp for Dias Divisional Council employees and their families. About 400 people live here in terrible conditions. The camp was started 16 years ago, and families have to pay R7 a month for pit latrines, insufficient water which is delivered by tanker, and no refuse removal. Belatedly the council have said they will put in mains water, adequate toilet and ablution facilities, garbage bins at every home, on-site refuse disposal, appoint a fulltime caretaker, and fence the camp. They will also give 'top priority' to a plan for permanent resettlement of these families. (EPH, 30.07.82)

There is also Red Location, a 'stinking ghetto' in Elundini township. Some idea can be gained from the EPH account (29.07.82):

Rows of corrugated iron buildings which, according to senior residents, were barracks for British soldiers during the South African War are now home for thousands. The buildings are eight- to 10-door blocks which have been divided into separate dwellings each with a bedroom and a livingroom-cum-kitchen. The partitions, where tenants can afford them, are so thin that there is no pretence at privacy.... For every six barracks, there are two toilets which are now in an appallingly insanitary condition. One is for men and the other for women. Each has three nightsoil buckets.... For every six blocks (60 dwellings) there is one communal tap. The water pressure is so low that the waiting is incessant.

Not surprisingly, some residents felt they should not be paying at all for such conditions, let alone the present rental of R18,27. This area is due for demolition, the plan being to make about 800 new sites out of it, and provide accommodation for the extra people in some other place.

For settlements like these, anything would be better than life as it is now. That is the gist of the residents' opinions as reported in the press.

One very enterprising group of people have built up a settlement of their own and have done everything to stave off being moved. In the brickfields area, they erected solid houses for themselves of brick, and a school building too. The families here would certainly not want to move without a lot of discussion first. The authorities had tried to stop their unusually independent community, for example by requiring the people to dismantle the school they had put up. But the group were so patently admirable, the publicity this caused resulted in them getting the right to stay for at least five years. It now seems they might stay permanently. The KwaDwesi site, judging by the EPH report of 22.07.82, will not actually encroach on the brickfielders, and the community council might accept the idea of spending just over R13 000 to extend the basic services to them.

We have no overall figures for those likely to be moved. Some rough estimates are very large

- for instance, for Soweto's population which Mr Savage, MP for Walmer, puts at 60 000+. Obviously the housing bill on the new sites would be vast. ECAB seem to be trying to shed the load in two directions: by appealing to the interests of management in the private sector, so that Volkswagen, for example, invests over R1 million in 99-year leasehold sites in KwaNobuhle in Uitenhage; and by concentrating on site-and-service schemes. (At least 3 000 of the Motherwell sites will be for people to build on themselves - perhaps along the Zenzele lines started in Grahamstown where traditional wattle and daub are used. KwaDwesi may also be a site-and-service area.)

The chairman of the community council, Mr W M Maku, said of the Motherwell programme:

the people will realise they have a future in this area and are to be catered for - another proof that urban blacks are here to stay. (DD, 6.05.82)

There is no doubt that relocation will relieve some of the worst degradation. But the reasons for expanding the townships are not so much to cater for a population as to ensure that that population caters for local labour requirements. Certain minimum standards are needed for it, on the lines of health and control, child-rearing, and also of course to promote calm. It is true that some africans will be settled here. But these technical aliens will be harboured only in limited numbers. Those without jobs may not get sites, especially if the recession deepens and workers are being laid off. Then the squatter removals may turn into deportations instead for many families.

ADDO

Local removals are planned for this area 30 km north-east of Port Elizabeth. About 2 000 coloureds will be moved to a new coloured group area totalling 115,8 ha, the rest of the local area having been proclaimed white. (Government Gazette, 7.05.82) The coloured area lies east of the railway line and north of divisional road number 51. At present there are just 14 houses there, inhabited by about 100 people.

The Winterhoek Divisional Council plans to develop the area:

We hope to improve the living conditions of the people by providing housing and services, including refuse removal, sanitation and water. In our planning we also provide for a school and recreational facilities. (EPH, 15.05.82)

Negotiations over the site started in 1974. The timing of the scheme now suggests that local authorities will be funded for projects to improve living conditions at least to a level where they do not court epidemics. Only two months earlier, in March 1982, plague broke out at Coega nearby. A man died, and after two weeks the community of about 80 people were let out of quarantine. The army had set up camp on the outskirts to enforce their isolation. It was clear to everyone that plague could have gone like a bushfire through the whole region.

Here, as in the townships and squatter areas of Port Elizabeth itself, people are living in the most degraded way. Basic services are either inadequate or do not exist at all. New Brighton boycotted ECAB liquor outlets in mid-1982 in protest against high rentals when services were so appalling. Shanty dwellers roundabout live in rubbish-dump conditions. The enormous financial boost to ECAB in June 1982, which is speeding the removals programme outlined above, is probably the larger version of what Addo is doing. In January 1982 the ECAB plans had been frozen for lack of funds - this was reversed in June, just three months after Coega. There has been bubonic plague before in the Port Elizabeth area: it broke out in New Brighton in 1966. Coega has certainly been taken as a warning. The cholera epidemic which moved into the Eastern Cape in early 1982 will also have shown the hazards of debased communities. Limiting the underdevelopment of the Eastern Cape, whether on the grand scale of Port Elizabeth or in smaller terms as at Addo, is likely to entail a lot of removal to relieve density or bring people to serviced sites. We can only hope it will not also send another wave of families into the Ciskei. It is quite capable of doing so.