

AFRA



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What are we asking for?

A stay on evictions of labour tenants and farm dwellers!



THE National Land Committee has called for a moratorium on all evictions of labour tenants and farm dwellers. A memorandum, on behalf of labour tenant communities in Natal and Transvaal, the Legal Resources Centre and Lawyers For Human Rights calling for this stay on evictions, was sent in March this year to the state president, the Minister of Regional and Land Affairs and CODESA.

"The current conflict on farms needs to be dealt with now," says the memorandum. "At the centre of the conflict is, on the one hand, lack of secure tenure for labour tenants and their desire to be rural producers. On the other hand, there is the apparent uncertainty and insecurity of present landowners whose ownership of the land has been founded and protected by unjust racial laws and practices."

The memorandum calls for:

- an end to all labour tenant and farm dweller evictions as an interim measure
- a stay on all intended or pending criminal proceedings which will result in eviction of labour tenants and residents of former proclaimed mining land. This can be reviewed when fair and legal process to address their position is in place.
- government protection for these communities from harassment and intimidation by police, uncooperative farmers and the right wing
- the Department of Regional and Land Affairs, other state departments and interested parties to monitor the situation and register breaches of the moratorium on evictions.

Even the Farmer's Weekly has cautioned farmers against evictions. Its editorial of February

14 1992 said: "Whatever the reasons, real or perceived, a growing number of farmers are either evicting tenants or thinking about doing so. Farmer's Weekly urges them to think again. If farmers feel they may be victimised by political change, how much are tenants the victims if they're forced to move? Most have at least a moral right to be allowed to stay and also to be given security of tenure."

At present labour tenants are not acknowledged in land laws. The government's White Paper excluded any mention of land tenure provisions for labour tenants. But they are a reality that cannot simply be wished away. Their land use rights need to be recognised. Along with the issue of restoration of land, the position of labour tenants is another area which must be addressed in a future land policy.

Labour tenancy in Natal

IN Natal labour tenancy evolved over many generations into what was known as the "six month" system. By 1932 when the Report of the Native Economic Commission was tabled, it was already the norm in Natal for labour tenants to spend six months working for the landowner. In some areas of Natal this six months labour involved the whole labour tenant family, in others, the six months labour obligation was spread throughout the year.

The land available to labour tenants for their own use also varied between districts and farms. In general, though, a labour tenant family would have at least one field of about two acres to plough as well as access to common grazing land. Although landowners started to restrict the number of animals labour tenants could keep, by the late 1960s it was common for tenants to have 50 cattle or more.

Labour farms developed alongside labour tenancy in Natal's dry thornveld area, especially around Weenen and Muden. These labour farms were used by their white owners solely to house and provide some agricultural land for their labour tenants. These tenants then spent six months working away from their homes on commercial farms of the landlords. Over time, these labour farms came under increasing attack

from soil conservationists and more progressive farmers for being neglected, overpopulated and overstocked.

By the late 1960s labour tenancy was deeply entrenched in central and northern Natal. Although it was an exploitative system, it was one to which most labour tenants clung. They did so because it allowed them access to land and the possibility of cultivating that land and keeping livestock on it. It also allowed tenants to avoid regular employment on white farms where working conditions were extremely bad.

By 1960, after the government introduced laws to curb the numbers of labour tenants on white farms, there were 42 000 registered labour tenants in Natal. Since this figure did not include the labour tenant's family and since many labour contracts were not registered, the actual labour tenant population would have been much higher.

By 1970, the Natal Agricultural Union estimated that there were about 400 000 labour tenants (including families) on Natal farms.

The government passed laws in the 1960s to abolish labour tenancy. In Natal there was opposition to these from labour tenants and farmers. Many farmers said they couldn't afford to pay wages to a full time labour force.

Because of this opposition, elimination of labour tenancy as a relation on the land in Natal lagged far behind other provinces. In 1970 the government issued Proclamation GN 1224 which froze current labour tenant contracts and said that all contracts would come to an end after August 1970.

By the late 1970s, government planners assumed that labour tenancy in Natal had finally been abolished. By this time, most Natal farmers had moved to full time wage labour. But a significant number did not. These were small scale farmers, traditional farmers and farmers who had calculated that it would cost too much in time and energy to get rid of labour tenant households on their farms.

Two of the areas where labour tenancy persisted in the late 1970s was Weenen and Muden. In these areas, labour farms still existed.

The government's response to evidence that labour tenancy still existed was to issue Proclamation no. 2089 on September 21 1979. This reiterated that no new labour tenancy contracts could be entered into and that any existing contracts would automatically expire on August 30 1979. In practice though, labour tenancy has persisted in Natal, particularly on labour farms.

The land is our life . . .

labour tenants' struggle for land rights



Gannahoek labour tenants at a meeting with AFRA think about what to do after being threatened with eviction.

A FRA's work with labour tenant communities has focused on the districts of Weenen, Colenso, Vryheid and Richmond, where we have been assisting these communities to build local and district rural tenant and farmworker associations. We have also helped communities in negotiations around security of tenure - an extremely thorny issue. These case studies show some of the problems labour tenants face in their struggle for security of tenure.

Cromley Bank

NOT too long ago accusations and fear choked the air of life at Cromley Bank, a farm in

Colenso. Six labour tenant families, four of whom had lived on the farm for many generations, alleged that the new legal owner, Mr ADL Mason had assaulted them. Mfana Zungu, one of the labour tenants Mr Mason found on the farm when he moved in, explained his family's long association with the land. "I was born during World War 2 and grew up on the farm," he said in a statement to AFRA. "My parents and grandparents also lived on the same farm. My father told me that his father told him that they were on the land before the white men arrived. When they arrived, my grandparents were asked to work for them for

permission to stay on the farm. They got permission from a certain Mr Bloy, who alleged that he was the owner of the farm at that time.

"I started working on the farm when I was a young boy. My job was to help in the fields during planting, herding cattle, helping during fencing and doing other jobs for farmworkers. When I was working for Mr Bloy, I worked for a period of six months per year on his farm and undertook short term migrant work during the other six months - in Colenso and Johannesburg. At the end of the six months, I would return to work on the farm. At the end of the six month contract I was paid R4. I was

appointed 'induna' of the farm from 1967 to 1990. I have been paid R50 a month and a bag of mielies.

"Mr Bloy left the farm in November 1990. Before he left, he relocated our families onto another piece of land on the same farm which he said was our land where we will live peacefully without being disturbed or evicted. Although we first resisted to be relocated, we agreed to relocate after being given an assurance that we would still get access to the graves of our ancestors and also Bloy begged us saying he needed to sell that land as he was in heavy debt. Fencing was put up to divide our land from that which Mr Bloy wanted to sell. We were responsible for rebuilding our homes without Mr Bloy's assistance. Mason arrived on the farm in November 1990. He asked of us to show cooperation by working for him. He paid in kind (bag of mielies) and R100 at the end of the month. I stopped working on December 16 1991. I stopped because I feared Mason who had assaulted me and continued to make threats of assault."

Mr Mason, in turn, accused the tenant families of threatening the lives of his family and farmworkers and alleged that they had culled an elephant on the farm. In January this year, he issued eviction notices to all six families staying on the farm.

This was the turning point in relations on the farm. Helped by AFRA and a lawyer, the families

and Mr Mason entered into negotiations to try to reach a settlement with which all parties could live. An amicable agreement, granting the families security of tenure, was signed in April 1992 and came into effect from May this year.

The main points in the agreement are that:

- Mr Mason, the legal owner of the farm, agrees to lease the families 60 hectares on the farm for grazing and residential purposes
- the families will pay rent of R30 per family a month with effect from May 1 1992.
- they will be able to keep among themselves 12 head of cattle. A calf younger than 9 months shall not be seen as a head of cattle. They will not be allowed to keep any sheep, goats or pigs, but can bring goats onto the land for ceremonial purposes.
- the parties to the agreement undertake not to assault or threaten to assault one another or their families
- the families agree to work for owner on a full time or part time basis.
- rights which the families have in terms of the agreement will be not be extended to family members who don't live on the farm at present, except for the extension of families through normal births and upon death to the successor in title of the deceased.

Gannahoek

WHEN the land, today known as Gannahoek, was granted to the first white owner in 1854 the new legal owners found a community already living there. The people continued to live on the land after the McFie family bought the farm in 1894. From 1894 to 1990 these families, who had lived on the land for generations, worked on the McFie's commercial farm in another district, while continuing to live on the land, now named Gannahoek.

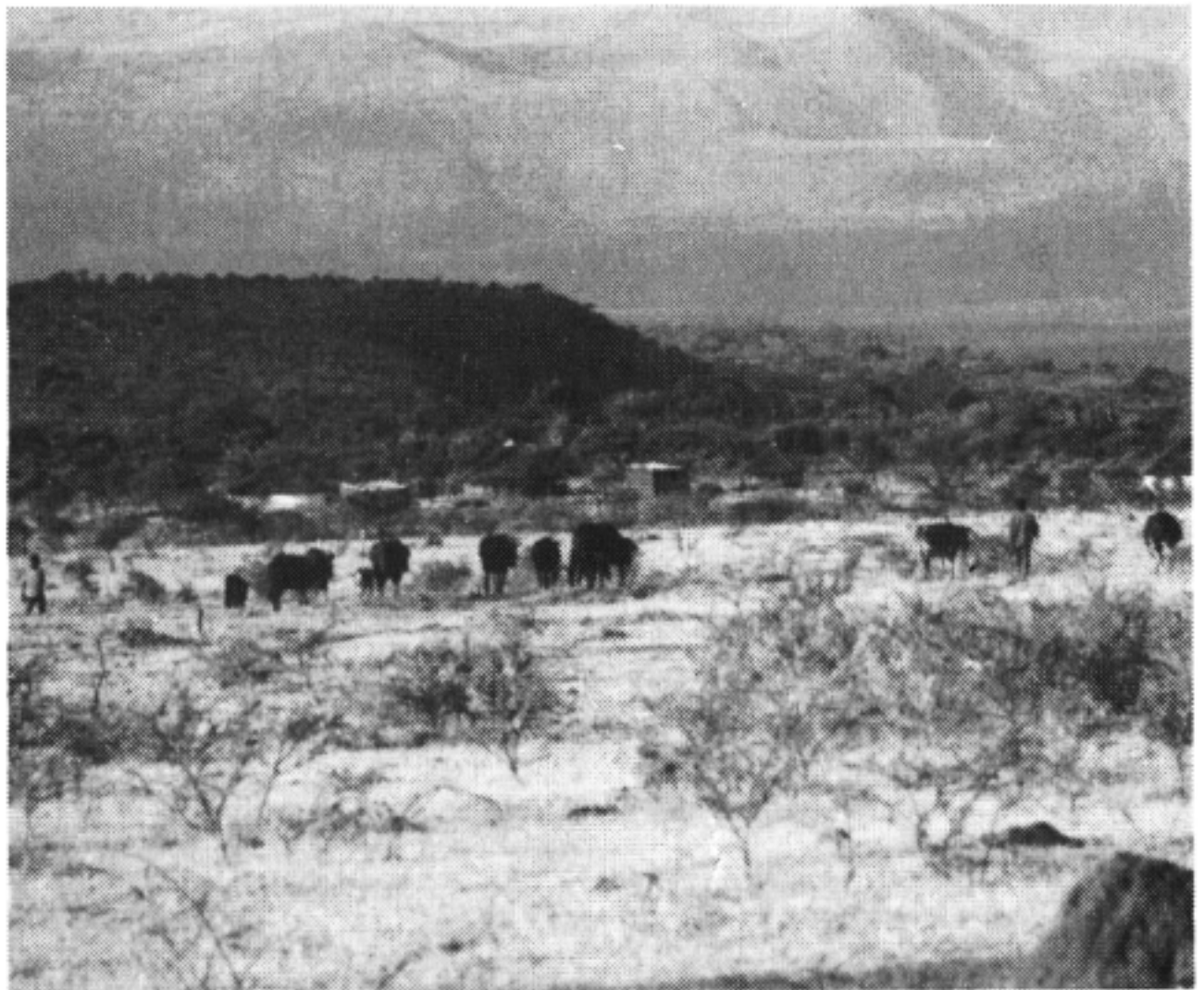
In January 1990, Mr D McFie told the families at Gannahoek that he was selling the farm. The families assumed that their land rights would continue under the new owner. But the new owner, Performance Farming Enterprises (Pty) Ltd (PFE), believing the land was uninhabited, wanted to start a game farm and rejected the families' offer of labour. PFE issued eviction notices, giving the families three months to leave the farm. The families refused, saying they had a right to live on the land since their ancestors had lived there long before any whites appeared.

PFE prosecuted the family heads, but eventually, in August 1991, agreed to negotiate. Essentially, negotiations have resulted in an offer from PFE that the community buy a portion of the farm. These negotiations are still continuing.

Mooibank (Mondi Forestry Division)

The farm Mooibank is near Louwsberg in Vryheid. The 16 remaining families on the farm have lived there all their lives. Before the farm was sold to Mondi Forests, a division of Mondi Paper, it was owned by a Mr Reginald Niebuhr, who now lives in Paulpietersburg. The families living on the farm worked for the owner on a contract basis of one year per family member. If a family did not have many members, then the member who worked for one year would have the next year off. All the families have livestock and each family has between seven to 37 cattle. The previous owner allowed them to plough and keep cattle.

In August 1990, all the families were given notice to remove their livestock from the farm before the end of October 1990. They were also told that their homesteads would be moved to another part of the farm and they were told not to plough. The families looked for help from a local chief who sent them to the Inkatha office in Vryheid. After this, several meetings took place between Mondi, the families, KwaZulu representatives and the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA). The families now claim that UWUSA unilaterally entered into agreements with Mondi on their behalf. These agreements involved the families moving to another farm some distance away from Mooibank. Some families did move to this area, but



A typical Weenen farm scene.

others refused. They said they would not move to a place there they could not keep livestock or plough their crops.

In 1992 Mondi Forests impounded the remaining families' cattle and gave them notice to leave the farm by May 5 1992. The families had cut ties with UWUSA and approached a local Vryheid lawyer for assistance. This lawyer approached AFRA to help reopen negotiations with Mondi. Mondi have now reopened negotiations and have undertaken not to proceed with further action pending the outcome of the negotiations.

At a meeting between Mondi, the families, AFRA and its lawyer on June 9, the parties agreed to explore options which would satisfy the needs of all those directly affected. A further meeting has been set to begin seriously addressing some of these options.

Ncunjane (Weenen)

AN agreement between a Weenen landowner and labour tenant families has hit trouble, less than a year after it was signed. Talks to get the agreement back on track are continuing and it is hoped that matters will be settled. Weenen has been a site of ongoing struggles for land and resources. The agreement reached between the people of Ncunjane and Mr Channing could serve as a beacon of hope in the troubled area. But the agreement itself, teetering on the brink of collapse, came at the end of a bitter and vicious struggle...

Ncunjane is made up of two farms called Ashton Lodge and Vernier. These were two labour farms. Ashton Lodge was registered in the name of Mr Gebers and Vernier was registered in the names of Gebers and his brother-in-law, Seele. The farms had been in

the family's names for years and it was said that Seele's grandparents were given the farm as a wedding gift.

Both owners got their labour from the labour farms until 1987. At this time, they tried to sell the land but seemed unable to do so because of the labour tenants living there and using the land. There were about 22 or more families living at Ncunjane at that time, under labour tenancy contracts.

When the families returned to the farm after Christmas in 1986, Gebers and Seele told them that their services were no longer needed and that they should "go home". The families went back to the farm and continued to use the land. Gebers and Seele were aware of this but it was not until 1989 that any action was taken.

In mid-winter in 1989 the police and clerk of the court visited the farm and forcibly loaded seven families into trucks. They took them to Waaihoek, a resettlement camp. Then they went back to the farm and burnt the homesteads so that if families returned they would have nowhere to stay. Only one family ever did return to rebuild their homestead.

Although the other families were threatened with the same treatment, nothing further happened. But after a while, some of them received summonses indirectly. They approached the KwaZulu MP in the area for help. He sent them to a lawyer in Pietermaritzburg.

When representatives of the families met with him, he allegedly suggested to them that they move to KwaZulu. The families told the lawyer that this was unacceptable to them. He then said he would speak to Gebers' lawyer. The families never heard from the lawyer again. But, since nothing further happened to disturb them, they believed some agreement was reached around their tenancy. However, this was not the case.

About a year later, a Mr Channing approached the families. At a meeting with them on June 19 1991, he told them that he was the new lessee of the land and that he was enforcing the ejection orders obtained by Gebers and Seele. Eight families were told to leave the land immediately. The remaining seven were allowed to stay, at Channing's discretion.

When conditions around the notice given to the eight families were questioned, Channing took this to mean that the notices were being rejected and he impounded 134 head of cattle and 100 goats belonging to the eight families. He also removed the wheel of the water pump, leaving families without enough drinking water and barred the entry gate to the farm used by the families. Three members of the families were arrested and charged with trespassing. They were fined R100 each. The impounded stock was released at a cost of about R25 000. An interim interdict was

granted to the families, for them to remain on the land with their cattle, undisturbed, until the court made a final decision. The matter was set to go to trial in December 1991.

But soon after the interim interdict was granted, a messenger of the court and the police removed one of the families from the farm. The family was loaded onto a truck with their possessions and taken to Waaihoek. Gebers and Seele claimed they were carrying out the summary judgment they got in early 1990 in the civil ejection order against the family.

In August, Mr Majozi, a member of the family who was removed to Waaihoek, was shot in the leg by Mr Channing. In an affidavit Mr Majozi explained that he was told that some of his goats had crossed the river into Channing's farm and that Channing was busy loading them onto his truck. Majozi went to see what was happening. "... I proceeded to the river and approached Mr Channing. I was instructed by him to assist in putting my goats on his vehicle. When I stood by, Mr Channing took out his firearm and fired a number of shots at and around my feet. I thus began to assist him, but the gunshots had frightened the animals and they ran away. Mr Channing became very angry and started shooting at and around me again. One of the bullets hit me in the leg. I was very afraid that he

was going to kill me. Mr Channing and his induna then took me to Greytown hospital where I spent a number of days being treated for the gunshot wound." Mr Majozi was later charged with trespassing.

Early the next morning members of two other families went to Channing's house to find out what had happened to Mr Majozi. This is what they said in their affidavit: "On Friday some time in the early evening, we heard that Mr Majozi had been shot by Mr Channing. Early the next morning, we proceeded to Mr Channing's house on the farm Lilyfontein. We took the footpaths, as the dirt road was almost double the distance. As we were nearing Mr Channing's house, we met Mr Channing on the road. He asked us where we were going and we said we had come to speak to him. He instructed us to jump onto the back of his vehicle. We assumed that he was taking us to where Mr Majozi was. When we got to Mr Channing's house, he stopped the vehicle. While we were still sitting on the back of the vehicle he asked us why we were on his land. We explained that we were looking for Mr Majozi, who had not come home the previous evening. Mr Channing then told us that we should have used the road and not the footpath and for this we were trespassing. We said that we were not trespassing, we had come to ask him what had happened to Mr Majozi. Mr Channing then pointed his firearm at us and said he was

taking us to Weenen police station. He said that if we did not stay on the vehicle and go with him, that he would shoot us. The induna then informed us that Mr Channing had already shot Mr Majozi and that he was in Greytown hospital. We went along for we were scared that if we jumped off, that he would kill us." The two family members later laid a charge against Mr Channing.

Just before a court inspection of the property, the attorney representing Mr Channing approached AFRA with a proposed settlement. This was in November 1991. The settlement proposed that the families lease the land for a year. When the settlement proposal was taken to the families, they said they were prepared to enter into discussions around such a lease agreement if it applied to all 15 families, not only the eight whom Channing had tried to evict.

While this information was being passed on to Channing's lawyer, Channing acted against the remaining seven families. On November 25 1991, he gave them backdated 24 hours notice, saying they were occupying his land illegally. As a result, four adults and two children (aged 6 and 10) were arrested for trespassing and spent a night in jail. The four adults appeared in court the next day and were released on R100 bail each.

Eventually Mr Channing and eight families entered into a lease

agreement. The lease was to start on January 1 1992 and end on December 31 1993. The main points in the agreement are that:

- families may opt to buy the farm
- families will pay rental in advance of R5 per head of cattle, R2 per head of goat, R20 per family unit.
- Ncunjane (farms of Vernier and Ashton Lodge) to be used for residential, ploughing and grazing purposes only. Each family to plough no more than one acre per kraal.
- families may keep collectively among themselves no more than 240 livestock units (one head of cattle = one livestock unit, five head of goats = one livestock unit)

Apology and correction

The AFRA Newsletter No. 15 of May 1992 incorrectly stated that Professor Nic Olivier, vice chair of the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA), was an NP MP. Professor Olivier was actually a member of the PFP.

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How forced removals and evictions affected rural communities.

Can We Forget?



Trucks removing families' belongings to a resettlement area. A once all too familiar sight in rural areas whose legacy lives on.

ERASING certain apartheid laws from the statute books has not removed its imprint. Apartheid's hand still smudges the lives of people who were removed or evicted from their homes and dumped in strange and often frightening new surroundings.

Few people would today deny the hardships inflicted on victims of the forced removals policy of the apartheid era. But it is all too easy to dismiss these victims' burning desire to have past injustices redressed, their inability to simply let 'bygones be bygones'.

It is easy to forget what the policy of forced removals did to its victims. For rural communities, firmly tied to their land for generations, forced

removal and eviction was more than just an involuntary change from one area to another.

Often it meant a traumatic change in lifestyle, an abrupt break with the past and an inability to accept or adapt to this change.

Studies show people are worse off

Authorities on the subject stress this point: "Educated, highly mobile people are largely unaware of the extreme multidimensional stress that is associated with forced relocation of rural communities with strong economic, social, religious and emotional ties to their land and homes," says Thayer Scudder of Clarke University's Institute for Development Anthropology, in a 1982 Working Paper entitled

Regional Planning For People, Parks And Wildlife In The Northern Portion Of The Sebungwe Region, Zimbabwe.

"To date," continues Scudder, "well over 50 studies have been carried out on low-income rural communities who have been forcibly resettled in connection with development projects around the world. Without exception these studies ... show the majority of people to be worse off during a transition period following removal which rarely is less than two years in duration and may last for an entire generation. During this transition period rates of illness and death frequently increase, especially among children and the elderly. Elderly men and women of all ages are apt to

suffer profound psychological stress while economic and social life suffers through loss of a range of productive and socially important activities".

Scudder's findings are repeatedly borne out in AFRA's work with victims of forced removal. And, in the case of South African forced removals, which were aimed at political rather than developmental ends, the effects were even worse.

Mr Zungu's case

Take the case of Mr Ndala Zungu. In 1989 Afra interviewed Mr Zungu for a booklet on evictions in the Weenen District. He told AFRA that he was born on a farm in Mngwenya Valley in Weenen. His father and grandfather were also born and buried there. He, himself, had worked for absentee landlords in Mngwenya Valley for 47 years.

No doubt Mr Zungu's life was not easy, but at least it had a certain stability to it. He was living in the place of his birth, the place his family had occupied for as long as he could remember.

All this changed in 1986. Mr Zungu was given three months' notice to leave the farm. When, at the end of the three months, he refused to move, he was arrested and charged with illegal squatting. He was sentenced to three months' jail or a fine of R150.

After a month's imprisonment, Mr Zungu's family managed to scrape together the R150 for the fine and he

was released from jail. But, after this, still refusing to move away from the land he knew and loved, Mr Zungu was arrested again and charged with illegal squatting. In July 1987, after his conviction, he spent another 11 days in jail. At the end of it, he was given until August 3 to leave the farm. Fearing another spell in jail, Mr Zungu went into hiding on a hill near his home. Because of the eviction threat, he sold his cattle and did not plant seasonal crops.

Forced to live in Emergency Camp

In November 1987 he again appeared in court on charges of illegal squatting. After several postponements, his case was withdrawn in May 1989. After that he was finally evicted from his home and was forced to live at the Weenen Emergency Camp. He was 63 years old.

Wrenched away from his life as he had known it for 63 years, how was Mr Zungu expected to survive? The fabric of his own life had been ripped apart. He was waiting, hoping that death would not come in a strange place. He was clinging to the hope that he would one day be able to return to the land was part of him.

The case of Mr Zungu and so many others illustrates that for rural people the land which they occupy and work is more than a commodity to be exchanged. The land provides them with dignity, security and a sense of belonging. It also provides contact with

ancestors, for it is on the land which people have occupied that the graves of their ancestors are located. Land provides a secure social base from which people are able to deal with the wider world. Without the land, around which the tapestry of their lives has been woven, they are lost.

"I would rather die here.."

At a meeting between a Natal community of labour tenants and a large forestry company in June 1992, older members of the community made their sentiments about impending relocation clear. The community had lived on the farm for many generations. They had come to see the farm as their own, since they believed that their generations of labour for white farmers had earned them a right to the land. Before its sale to the forestry company, the farm was used as a labour farm, solely to house the farmer's labour. Then the company came and tried to evict the inhabitants.

"Two old people were sick at the time when you arrived," an old man told the company. "When they heard about your plans to move us, they prayed every night that they would die so that they could be buried on the farm and not be removed. Even I, I would prefer to die at the farm rather than be killed elsewhere. Maybe the company should rather take our lives and bury us there than kick us out to die somewhere else."

"We have been living a quiet life, grazing our cattle and ploughing. We like it just like that - nothing else. And we have survived. The company must bear in mind that our social life, our way of living is centred around these things...I don't know where I would go if I had to leave this land."

Web of significance

It is this deep attachment to the land and the web of significance it holds which has kept alive people's desire to return to land from which they were removed. Mr Andries Radebe is one of those. In 1977 the government removed him from his land at Crimen, to which he had freehold title. Today, 87 years old, he is still struggling to get back the land he lost. He explained why to AFRA: "The graves of my ancestors are at Crimen Farm. Our tradition depends on ancestors and it is very important for us to be near and to have unconditional access to their graves. We need to visit the graves for our ceremonies and to make important decisions. After the removal it was very difficult to do this. Even today, I desperately want to go back to my land at Crimen."

"I do not understand why we were taken away from Crimen. For many years after the removal nothing happened on the farm. In 1988, it was sold to a white farmer. But even now there is very little happening there. Our houses, our schools and our church have been destroyed. I have never seen the grass so tall..."

Brutal process

The process of removal was often brutal and blatantly unjust. Mr Radebe remembered his eviction from Crimen in 1977 like this: "My removal from Crimen Farm happened in 1977. It is painful for me to think back to this event. I was never officially approached and told about the reasons why I had to leave my land. I was never asked whether or not I agreed with this, how much my land was worth, or any other such questions. I never received or saw any document relating to my removal, and I never signed any agreement or contract in this connection. I was simply told to pack my things and move."

"I recall that there was a meeting in July 1977, I think on the 20th, at which a group of eight white government officials and a black policeman told the community that they had to leave their homes and would be taken to Ezakheni Township in KwaZulu. The removals were to start on the following day. I was late in arriving to this meeting, as I had been at work during that day. I arrived towards the end of the meeting and heard some people asking questions about conditions in Ezakheni. I heard from other people that many people had raised objections to the removal during the meeting."

"After the meeting people rushed to their homes to pack and make arrangements for their cattle. I loved my land at

Crimen. I did not want to go, but we had no option. During the days of the removals, there were soldiers on the road on Crimen Farm. There were six or seven trucks full of soldiers. We knew there would be trouble and we could even get killed if we resisted. So we had to go to Ezakheni."

Mr Hadebe, another Crimen landowner, remembers how he was 'compensated' for the land he was forced to leave: "They gave me R500 for my land. They asked me if I was the one who had a large piece of land and they gave me the money."

Poverty and hardship result

And what awaited the victims of forced removal when they were torn away from their land? The Pickard Commission of Inquiry, set up to investigate irregularities in the Department of Development Aid, acknowledged that poverty and hardship was often the result of forced removal. In a summary, setting out his general observations and recommendations, Judge Pickard spoke of the work of the Department: "Removals of black people from certain areas designated to be white, to areas identified to be black, became almost its primary function. This entailed, inter alia, the creation of infrastructures to receive persons so moved and to provide the necessary basic facilities required to make such removals possible. True enough, the policy was sold on the basis that all such removals (forced or



A new arrival at Waaihoek resettlement area. Can she forget?

voluntary) would be for the benefit and general betterment of the persons so moved. History has, however, shown that this was not always achieved. Unhappiness, hardship, economic deterioration, unemployment and the like were frequently the result of such removals."

This is what Mr Andries Radebe found in Ezakheni. He and his family, like many others, had to abandon security and relative comfort for a new life with meagre options: "When we arrived there we were put in small houses. We were told to get rid of our things from home, as we would not be needing them at Ezakheni.

"Our lives changed drastically at Ezakheni. Everything was money. There was not even a small garden for us to plant food. If you wanted to eat, you had to pay a lot of money. You had to pay for a house in which to stay. You had to pay for transport.

"At Ezakheni there was no place to keep your cattle. In 1977 I had 10 livestock. I had to take them to Matiwane's Kop. At Matiwane's Kop a number of them died. Others I had to sell to get money. By 1987 I had no cattle left."

In a report on forced removals in Natal, published in 1983, the Surplus People's Project (SPP) described Ezakheni as being in no way a self-sufficient urban centre, nor a model township.

"A proper hell"

"There are very few openings for local employment and unemployment is high. The township is a displaced suburb of Ladysmith which is where most of its workers are employed and where most of the income they earn is spent. Facilities, though superior to those found in many more rural relocation areas, are inadequate to service the needs of 50 000 people. Water shortages

have recurred periodically. In 1977, 4 000 people were without water for three weeks because their reservoir had dried up. Work only started on a new reservoir to ease the problem in 1980. There is no electricity in the site and service section and residents are disturbed about the lack of street lighting which they feel encourages crime and violence.

"Most of the people relocated into (Ezakheni) have come from rural backgrounds and have had no previous experience of township life. Adapting to their alien surroundings has been a struggle and the strain of that adaptation is evident in the social fragmentation, the violence and the high crime rate in the township. Eliot Mngadi, currently mayor of Ezakheni, describes the place as 'proper hell'."

What is to be done?

Ezakheni and other townships born out of forced removal still scar the landscape of the present. The Mr Zungus, Mr Radebes and others cannot forget, cannot let bygones be bygones. And it is unreasonable to expect them to do so.

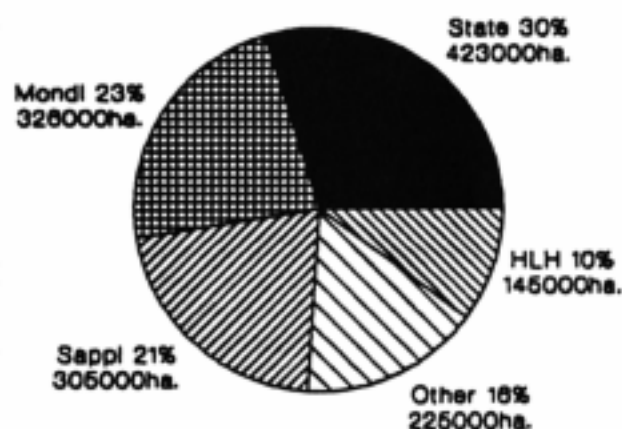
Resolution of the land question in South Africa must take into account the economic, social and psychological harm that has been inflicted on the victims of forced removal. Steps must be taken to repair the damage of the past so that shattered lives can be made whole again. Only then can we begin to talk of building a new South Africa.

Land Briefs

The big three in forestry

THREE companies own 54% of South Africa's forests. Mondi owns the most forest land (23% or 326 000 ha, only 7% less than the state). Sappi follows, with 21% (305 000 ha) then HLH with 10% (145 000 ha). Together Mondi, Sappi and HLH control at least 77% of forest land in private hands.

Forest ownership 1991
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Their control of other areas of the wood based industry is also significant. Mondi and Sappi own all the pulp and paper plants in South Africa. Mondi, Sappi and HLH own almost all the board mills and are dominant in the sawmilling and mining timber sectors.

In turn, Mondi, Sappi and HLH are part of bigger conglomerates that dominate the South African economy. Mondi is owned by Anglo American, HLH is owned by Anglo/Rembrandt (50%/50%) and Sappi is owned by Gencor. These conglomerates in turn own nearly all South Africa's major mines, construction companies, printers and also have

extensive interests in a range of farming and related enterprises.

Anglo American owns Amfarms (farming enterprises ranging from piggeries to vineyards), Premier Milling, Times Media, The Argus and LTA construction company.

Gencor owns Murray & Roberts

Rembrandt owns Rainbow Chickens (the largest chicken producer in South Africa), citrus and tea estates.

Despite the recession, Mondi profits rose from R36million in 1979 to R363million in 1989. Sappi's profits rose from R51million in 1980 to R639million in 1990.

What does the ANC say about labour tenants?

AN ANC government will protect land occupation and use rights of former labour tenants and share croppers, and their families, who have had a long association with particular pieces of land. And no one will be evicted from land or have his or her home destroyed, unless a tribunal or another court has considered the availability of alternative accommodation. This is one of the undertakings the ANC makes in its Land Policy.

The Land Policy was one of several adopted by the ANC at its National Policy Conference in May 1992.

In the document, the ANC also says it will set up an independent, non-racial, non-sexist and representative land claims court to focus on land rights and that the law will lay down clear criteria for land claims.

Support services will be set up to inform communities of their constitutional rights and to act as channels of access to the legal system and legal counsel.

The ANC also undertakes to recognise and protect diversity of tenure forms and to strengthen tenancy rights, including public ownership (held by community land trusts). Diverse forms of tenure should not prejudice people's access to credit, says the ANC.

Natal communities plan programme of action

ABOUT 80 delegates from 10 land claiming communities in Natal met in May to plan action around land restoration for the next six months. One of the main points to emerge from the workshop was that communities would conditionally cooperate with the government appointed Advisory Commission on Land Allocation as one part of a broader strategy to get back their land. Communities also agreed to work together although their claims are different.