



Gannan Rediscovered - little New Zealand - this is how people are referring to ^{Fingo} trust lands in the Numanedorp-Tsitsikama area from which the ~~the~~ Fingo tribesfolk were ousted, many of them at gunpoint, over the Christmas period of 1977.

That has commonly become known as the Fingo Land Grab, the first time now up for sale to white farmers.

Of that time nearly five years ago, one man said that he cried all the way to Blokhanyeni, the "place of light" near Tseikane to which families were removed.

As soon as the move had been completed then most of the men requested and received permission to return to the area as migrant workers, many in jobs they had previously held. Their families seldom see them now. A return five-hour bus journey costs R26 and the men say sometimes it is better to send the cost of the bus fare home since the cost of living in Blokhanyeni is high.

After the Fingo ~~tribe~~ had rendered services to the Cape Colony in the Sixth Frontier war of 1834-1835, ^{they were} ~~it was~~ brought out of Ciskeiland by Sir Benjamin D'Urban. One group was settled near Tseikane, the other went to Tsitsikama and never had any connection with Ciskei, as pointed out by Rhodes historian, Mr Jeffreires.

The land, which remained Crown or state land, was set aside for Fingo occupation in two deeds of reservation during the governorship of Sir George Grey ^{under the seal} in the reign of Queen Victoria. Although the land was never owned by the Fingo people, it was intended that it should be occupied by them and their descendants in perpetuity.

Later it was incorporated in the 1913 Black Land Act schedule. In 1936, the Trust and Development Act specified that land could only be removed from the schedule if this was agreed to by both houses of Parliament and ratified by a proclamation of the State President. A further condition was that land of an equivalent agricultural or pastoral nature within the same province should be put into the schedule to replace the land that was excised.

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In 1977, Parliament approved a recommendation by a select committee of parliament that the Tsitsilamma lands, together with a number of other areas, should be taken over. The State President ratified the decision. The Department of Co-operation and Development, however, neglected to excise the land from the schedule.

In December 1977 a meeting was called at Snykkip where people were told by the magistrate and an official of the department that they would have to move in a month's time, that only discussions about the practicalities of the move would be allowed and ^{that} there was to be no questioning of the move. Objections to the move were over-ruled by the magistrate who said they were wasting time. A directive of the State President was issued which authorised the use of force if residents did not comply willingly with the removal.

The Kings fought a court case. They took the point that although Parliament had approved that they should be removed from the reserves, Parliament had failed to approve the place to which they were to be moved. The court case failed, although subsequent legal opinions differed from the decision.

Although the people were anxious to pursue an appeal, the applicant in the case, who by now had retired to Keiskammahoek, declined to take the matter on appeal, saying that he feared arrest.

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Mr Edwin Muzi, as the tribal representative in exile, continued, with the help of Mr Stanley Muzulu ^{MR ISAAC TEMBANI} and others, to try to get the decision reversed and the land returned. They aired the hardships at Keiskammahoek but made the point: "we do not want the Government to amend the above grievances - but we want to go back to our native land." They also made the point that their people were prepared to go back on foot to Humansdorp and to die along the road rather than stay at Keiskammahoek."

When they approached the Urban Representative of the Ciskei Government they received a reply that the action had been taken in their best interests.

An appeal to the Minister of Co-operation and Development, Dr Piet Koornhof, elicited the reply from his administration...

that the removal had been carried out to give effect to the consolidation of black states and that they would not be permitted to return. ^{It was explained} ~~he explained~~ that people who own or occupy property of 20 morgen or less are resettled in closer townships where provision is not made for pasturage for livestock.

The exiles, as they call themselves, never gave up hope. Nor did they give up trying to reverse the situation. They approached various groups for help. At the beginning of this year a public meeting was organised by the Black Bash at which the Progressive Federal Party (P.F.P.), Mr Errol Moorcroft, spoke of the senselessness of the policy of removals. It was a small meeting. But a dozen exiles attended. Their sombre presence caught the imagination of those at ~~who attended~~ the meeting and stirred their sympathies. For some of those who attended, this was their first encounter with people who had suffered the fate of removal. ~~People were moved.~~ The press took up their cause. Errol Moorcroft promised to put their case to Mr Moorhof.

Little did the meeting realise that a week earlier the Fingo lands had been advertised for sale.

(When it learnt of this)
 the Black Bash ^{it} drew this to the public's attention and claimed that the sale would be illegal since these were still technically black lands because ~~they were~~ still contained in the Schedule to the 1913 Black Land Act. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries branded the Black Bash as liars, said the evening post was malicious and accused Mr Andrew Savage M.P. of not having checked his facts when he claimed that the advertised prices of the farms were well below the current market value. ~~Mr Moorcroft and Mr Hayward~~ ^{was} ~~were~~ later to ^{his} retract ~~their~~ statements.

Mr Masizi instructed an attorney to demand the cancellation of the sale of the former Fingo lands.

The government found it would have to rectify its ~~omission~~ before it could sell the land and a Select Committee of the House of Parliament recommended that the House should adopt its resolution that the land be excised from the Schedule. ~~The~~ P.F.P. moved an amendment that the House should decline to adopt the report.

A delegation of Fingos led by Mr Isaac Tembani, then went to Town for the hearing in Parliament.

They knew they would have to sit silently in the gallery and they knew that the legislation would be passed regardless.

From the point of view of preventing the final legalisation of the taking of their land, it would be a pointless trip - they knew that. But judged by the impact it would have on the entire country - and elsewhere - it was a magnificent gesture. Newsmen clamoured to see them. Parliamentarians and public alike were aghast at the personal implications of the take-over of Fingo lands. Headlines proclaimed it to be a fateful trip by forlorn Fingos. The story of the forced eviction of Fingos from trust land became known nationally for the first time.

The British Broadcasting Corporation carried a report on the issue. A photograph of a black Sash member appeared in the International Guardian weekly holding a placard saying: "Give back Fingo lands" and standing appropriately next to ^{the statue of} ~~Queen Victoria's statue~~, donor of the land.

At the time of the eviction there had been few reports. Now public imagination was seized by the drama of the delegation sitting in Parliament to hear the fate of their historic lands sealed.

One M.P. remarked that the time he looked up and saw the Fingos sitting in the gallery marked the lowest point in his parliamentary career.

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Then Dr Koornhof refused to see the Fingoes on the grounds that they would have to go through the Foreign Affairs Department of the Oiskel...

The Nationalist speakers blamed the M.P. for Albany for allowing the Fingoes to come to parliament. ^{from making the trip} / Carol Moorcroft had meanwhile tried to discourage them but they had remained adamant. On the night long night when the Fingoes waited to hear the debate on their excision of their land from the Schedule, Mr Thembani, collapsed and ~~had to be~~ ^{was} taken home by Mr Andrew Savage, M.P. for salver. The rest of the delegation slept in Mr Moorcroft's office at parliament, where he arranged for food to be brought to them. Early in the morning he sent for the delegation. They filed into the gallery. Soon, in the final ~~day~~ ^{debate} of the session, they would hear Mr Moorcroft say:

"The Fingoes are simple people, they are country folk; they are neither very wealthy nor very learned, but they do understand the meaning of justice. They do understand the difference between right and wrong, and so do we. They know that what is being done to them is wrong.

The final indignity that was to be served on the Fingo people had yet to come. In terms of a resolution in the report before this House, the compensatory land that is now being made available, is going not to the Fingoes, not to those who lost their land, not to the country that now has to feed them, but to Transkei, a foreign country that has nothing whatsoever to do with the Fingoes.

If ever there was a case of a sting insult to injury, this is it."

asked a hushed House
Mr Savage told government members that he believed nothing could highlight the brutality of the government's ~~policy~~
how the Government could be "so insensitive, so cruel, so foolish? They of all people should be aware of the bitter seeds which are planted by actions like these. Some of their grandmothers probably watched when the British soldiers burnt farm houses down. Are we so callous, so isolated from the heritage of our own spiritual heritage that we cannot see what we are doing? The Fingo people have been cheated out of their heritage... Actions like this will inevitably seal the fate of the white man in this country, without a doubt. The hon. the Minister told us how worried he was for his children's future, how hard he

was working for better race relations. I am tired of crocodile tears and I am tired of seeing the ruthless implementation of apartheid wrapped in sentimental claptrap."

The bill was nevertheless passed.

Mr Leskiel Msizi, in his capacity as tribal representative, instructed his attorney to investigate whether the Government was acting legally by replacing Fingo land in the schedule with land already due for incorporation in Transkei. Mr Isaac Tembani approached various bodies.

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Hopes/ of a legal solution are slender and there is little ^{of} ~~of~~ ~~nothing~~ that organisations can do to alter the position.

Can anything now compensate the Fingos for the loss of their ancestral lands?

None of the farms have as yet been sold.
But they will be - soon.

P. M. M. M.
