SQUATTERS — ~~TRANSVAAL~~ GAUTENG

1995

Matatiele squatters leave area

(310) CT 9/1/95

JOHANNESBURG. — All squatters who had reoccupied municipal land at Matatiele in East Griqualand in defiance of a recent Supreme Court order, backed down and left the area yesterday afternoon, according to Matatiele mayor Mr Libby Sorour.

kwaZulu/Natal police spokesman Major Henry Budhram said 91 squatters were arrested earlier yesterday and charged with trespassing, alternatively contempt of court.

Altogether 52 women, 33 men and six juveniles were arrested.

Mr Sorour said all other squatters left the land, known as Race Course farm, after the arrests.

He claimed about 400 squatters had moved back on to the land yesterday morning after they had been transported to Matatiele by bus, cars and lorries by members of the Eastern Cape ANC branch.

About 100 policemen were brought from Port Shepstone during the day yesterday to support local police.

The Matatiele town council obtained an order in the Maritzburg Supreme Court last week prohibiting occupation of the land by the squatters. — Sapa

Retention of centralised public service 'mistake'

BD 26/1/95

DAVID GREYBE

CAPE TOWN — Constitution-makers were warned yesterday by international experts that SA would be committing a serious mistake if it clung to a centralised public service.

The European and US authorities told the Constitutional Assembly's public service theme committee that the successful implementation of the reconstruction and development programme depended on decentralising the central state bureaucracy of 1,2-million, in line with international trends. Affirmative action on its own would not solve the apartheid legacy.

They also warned of "potential conflict" over the issue between the ANC, which favours strong central government, and the NP, Inkatha Freedom Party and DP, which want more federalism.

The experts, most of whom are familiar with SA conditions, had been invited to address a two-day conference on "public administration and the new constitution" funded by foreign governments.

They cautioned that decentralisation should only be implemented once there were properly trained "non-partisan, career-orientated" public servants — especially at provincial and local government levels. Otherwise SA faced a repeat of the costly administration debacle experienced in the former homelands.

The government of national unity is grappling with the rationalisation of the public service to make it accountable and responsive to new policies. Government's White Paper on the issue is expected by mid-year.

Peter Zimmerman, of Harvard University's JF Kennedy School of Government, suggested only the "core public service values" be retained by central government under the new constitution. The rest should be devolved to provincial and local government level.

Francis Plowden, a consultant at Coopers & Lybrand in London, said "overloading" the public service at central level often led to inefficiency at lower government levels.

According to Robert Behrens, of Britain's Civil Service College — which since 1991 has played a leading role in training a new crop of SA public servants following an ANC request — said properly trained public servants were the "cultural glue" for successful decentralisation.

Behrens said Britain's own decentralisation efforts could seem paradoxical to South Africans struggling to unify its public service after a generation of "balkanisation" under the homeland system. However, Britain's efforts were underpinned "by the unifying glue of collective cabinet responsibility, a career civil service, and the transformation of controlling central departments from command to contract and scrutiny mode".

Regions may get assemblies to help draw up constitution

BD 26/1/95

ADRIAN HADLAND

CAPE TOWN — Regional constitutional assemblies are likely to be created in each of the nine provinces to improve provincial government participation in the drawing up of the new constitution.

Provincial Government Commission chairman Thozamile Botha told a theme committee of the Constitutional Assembly yesterday that few of the provincial legislatures had structures to deal with queries and submissions from national government on constitutional issues.

Some provinces had constitutional committees, but these had focused mainly on transitional matters and did not involve sufficient numbers of provincial MPs.

"There is at present no structured or representative way in which the provinces can deal with constitutional issues."

Addressing theme committee three on relations between levels of government, Botha said that since recent informal discussions provincial Speakers had indicated a willingness to reconvene their legislatures as constitutional assemblies to deal specifically with aspects of the constitution relevant to the second tier.

Unlike central Parliament, where members of the National Assembly and Senate sit together to form the Constitutional Assembly, provincial legislatures would essentially have to change hats for the day.

Letters formally requesting regional governments to adopt the new format had already been sent, Botha said.

The establishment of regional constitutional assemblies would allow both the central constitutional body, its theme committees and the commission to liaise on clauses of the new constitution which had a direct bearing on regional powers, competencies or obligations.

While the central constitutional assembly was aiming to complete a rough first draft of the constitution by July this year, the commission hoped to compile a report on provincial aspects of the document by August, Botha said.

The process would include the staggered distribution of sections of the proposed constitution in "lay persons' language" for discussion and comments from regional governments and interest groups.

□ Sapa reports the Afrikanerbond — formerly known as the Broederbond — had appointed an expert committee to make submissions on SA's new constitution, the organisation said yesterday.

R1,5m for squatters

(310)

BD 26/1/95

BONILE NGQIYAZA

THE Greater Johannesburg transitional metropolitan council recommended yesterday that R1,5m be made available for the provision of emergency services to squatters.

The council said there were an estimated 100 000 people in informal settlements in May last year. Many of these had no access to water and sanitation services.

But studies conducted by several organisations, including the World Bank, indicated at least 400 000 people in the southern part of Johannesburg were without sanitation and water.

Included in this figure were people living in formal areas, in backyard shacks and in "areas where overcrowding had overloaded the current system".

The council recommended that services to these people should be maintained for the remainder of the financial year.

R1,5-m for squatter settlements

Greater Johannesburg's Transitional Metropolitan Council will spend R1,5 million to continue providing emergency water and sanitation services to informal settlements, it said yesterday.

The fund was started by the former Central Witwatersrand Regional Services Council last year after research by the World Bank and other groups indicated that about 400 000 people in the area did not have adequate water and sanitation facilities. — City Reporter.

(310) (illegible)

Star 26/11/95

Squatters wait for decision on fate

310

Star 26/11/95

■ BY ANNA COX

The fate of the squatters evicted from privately owned property in Zandspruit last year will be decided within the next two weeks, says chairman of the North Eastern Municipal Substructure Gary Cooney.

The 240 squatters, who have been living on a farm in Nooitgedacht belonging to the Rhema Church, were given accommodation there until the end of next month.

Cooney said negotiations were in progress and an announcement was pending.

When the squatters were evicted from Zandspruit — located north of Johannesburg — last November, they moved to the Randburg council gardens and remained there for two weeks before Rhema offered them tents on the farm.

But residents in the vicinity objected and barricaded the roads, fearing the area would become a squatter camp.

After extensive negotiations, residents, squatters, council officials and representatives of the Gauteng legislature formed a forum to investigate the squatters' plight.

The forum agreed residents would monitor the situation on a daily basis, the council would pay for 24-hour security and services such as water, toilets and refuse removal and the church would offer humanitarian assistance.

Each squatter was given an identity card and no one else has been allowed on the farm.

Forum chairman Alan McCauley said the move had been a great success. Local ratepayers had complimented the church for the smooth way in which the homeless community had been integrated.

Spokesman for the squatters, Zodwa Mabaso, said her associates had settled well on the farm but were looking forward to permanent accommodation and "getting on with the rest of their lives".

She added: "We are grateful for living here but we are waiting to see where they will move us next."

Squatters to be relocated

Star 9/2/95 (310)

■ CITY REPORTER

About 250 squatters who last year invaded private land adjacent to the former Randburg City Council's Zandspruit camp and are currently living at a Rhema Church farm are to be moved to land in Diepsloot next week.

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) yesterday resolved to buy or expropriate land in Diepsloot in order to temporarily resettle the 50 families.

TMC housing and urbanisation committee chairman Lindsay Bremner said the matter was now urgent as an agreement made the council liable to pay R10 000 a day to the owners if the squatters remained on the land after February 15.

Squatters want R380 000

(310) ST 10/2/95

JOHANNESBURG. — Squatters who were forcibly evicted from Claridge Court last year demanded R380 000 in damages from Safety and Security Minister Mr Sydney Mufamadi yesterday.

The Johannesburg Tenants' Association said Mr Mufamadi had been given 30 days to respond before facing civil action. — Sapa



Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale registers at the Alexandra Community Centre yesterday for the local government elections scheduled for October.
Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

ANC acts to number squatters' shacks

BD 14/2/95 (310)

JOHANNES NGCOBO

THE ANC's Gauteng branch has given 300 Transitional Local Councils two weeks to embark on a campaign to number shacks in informal settlements so that inhabitants have addresses with which to register as voters.

ANC Gauteng deputy secretary-general Obed Bapela said yesterday that for people in informal settlements to qualify as voters in the forthcoming local government elections, they should have residential addresses.

ANC representatives on transitional councils, at a weekend workshop, resolved to start consulting informal settlement leaders about numbering shacks.

They agreed also that when the campaign to number shacks began, ANC transitional council representatives would be expected to man tables at informal settlements so that people could register, thus speeding up the voters' roll campaign.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale warned people failing to register that they would have only themselves to blame if they were unhappy with elected representatives in their areas.

He was speaking in the northern Johannesburg township of Alexandra, where he registered for the voters' roll. Registration for the October election comes to an end on April 26.

"People cannot turn around and toyi-toyi at my door," Sexwale said. They had the opportunity now to govern themselves through local government.

Local government would be the delivery point of the reconstruction and development programme, and elected leaders would tell the premier what was required in their areas, he said. Central government would distribute RDP funds to local governments by way of provincial governments.

People who did not vote because they had not registered should not complain later about elected leaders.

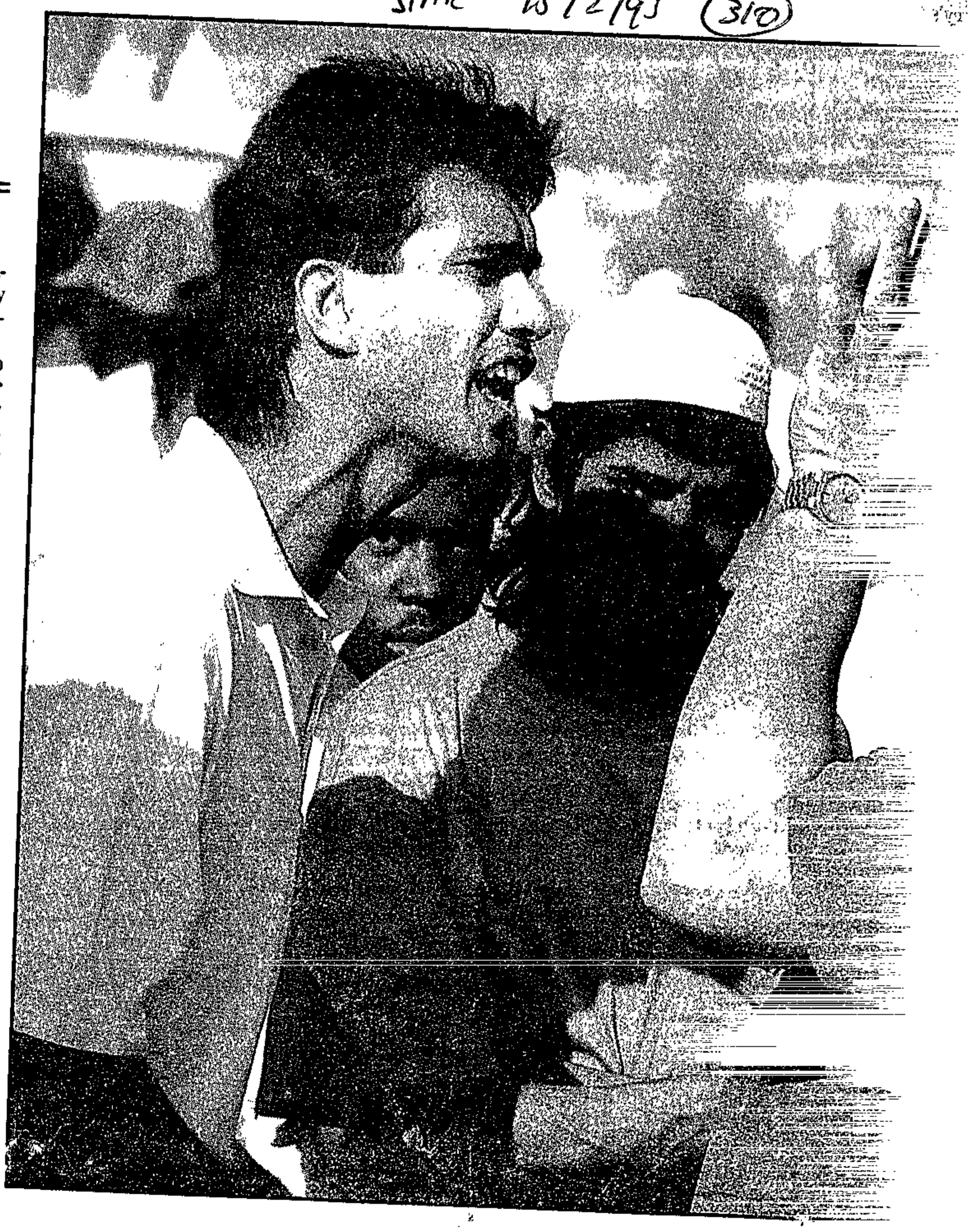
Sexwale was adamant that the election should not be postponed. Extending the registration period, however, was a "fair suggestion".

Homeless move into 380 vacant Lenasia houses

Squatters take

STAR 15/2/95 (310)

ILLEGAL invaders from Eldorado Park vow to defy eviction order until offered alternative housing



■ STAFF REPORTERS

Police are on standby in Lenasia following the occupation by homeless people from Eldorado Park of 380 empty houses.

They have been warned to vacate them this morning, or be forcibly removed. But they have vowed not to leave Lenasia Extension 13, which they have dubbed Valentine Park — having moved in illegally on Valentine's Day.

Three Lenasia ANC members were wounded last night when a shot was fired from one of the occupied houses.

Samed Abdul Saloojee, an executive member of the ANC's Lenasia branch, was knocked unconscious by the bullet and is being treated in the LenMed Clinic. The other two people were only slightly injured from the ricochet.

Racial tension rose after squatters from Eldorado Park were bused into the area yesterday. Police were called to the scene and later residents joined police in patrols to protect their properties.

Captain Morgan Rangasamy said the police welcomed any help from the public and had no objection to residents patrolling the streets.

One of the squatters, Leonard Arnans, said they were quite prepared to pay rent. They want an explanation as to why the houses were standing empty for so long.

The Gauteng MEC for housing, Dan Mofokeng, and the police held negotiations with the squatters but the talks broke down and they were ordered to leave by 10 am today.

The squatters insist they will stay on until offered alternative housing.

Mofokeng later said the invaders would be given time to leave, but no further break-ins or offloading of furniture would be allowed.

A man trying to break into one of the houses was arrested shortly after police were informed that the squatters would have to leave.

Mohamed Jogiat, deputy mayor of the South Western Metropolitan Substructure which includes Lenasia, Eldorado Park and Ennerdale, said the situation is tense because the invasion has been turned into a racial issue.

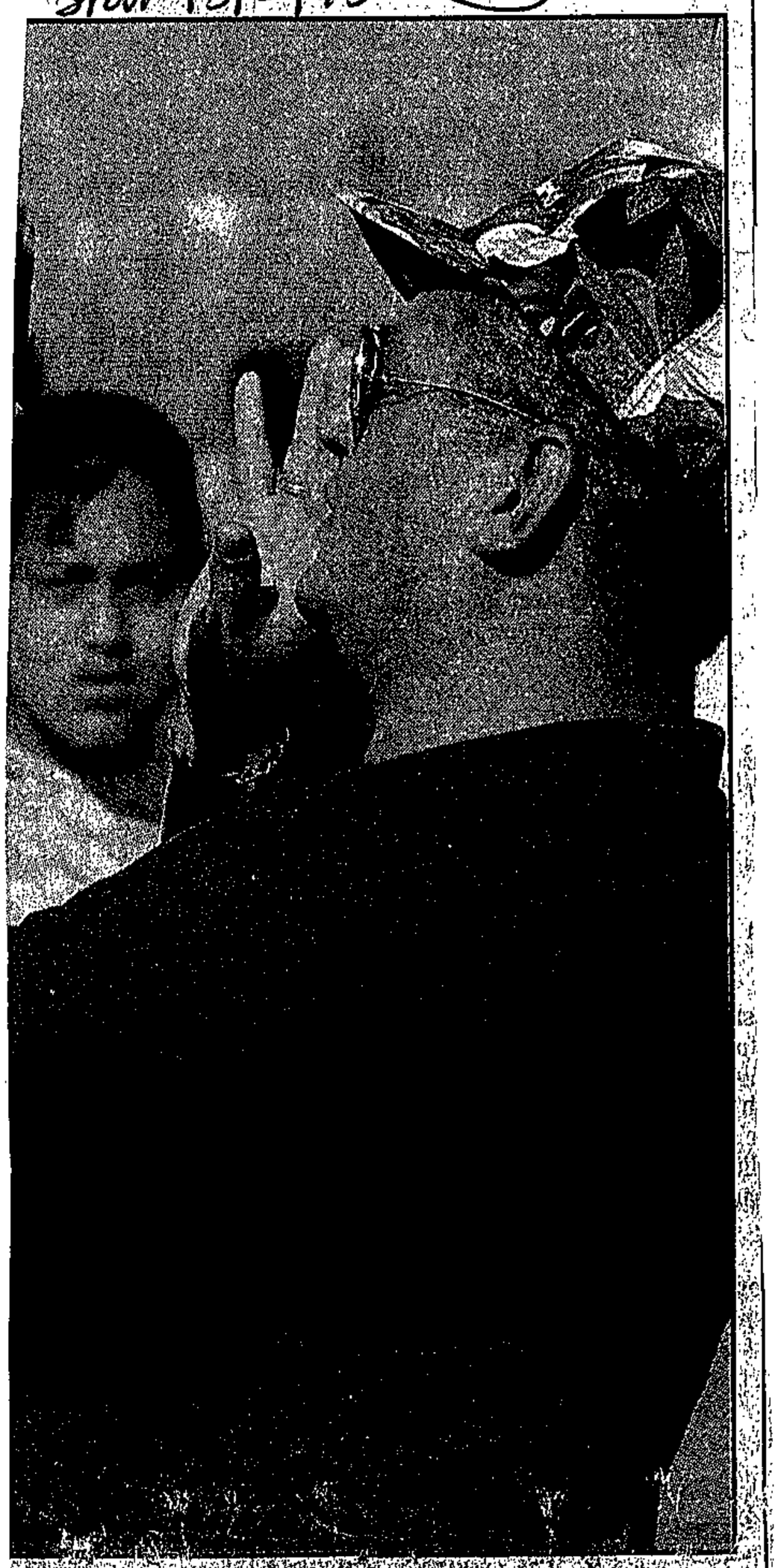
"At this stage, there have been racist remarks. There is a waiting list of 3 000 and only about 400 houses. These must be given to the neediest."

He added: "This is really not a racial issue."

The houses were built by the former House of Delegates and have been unoccupied for more than two years following allegations of corruption regarding their allocation.

over

Star 15/2/95 (310)



Outraged ... an resident of Lenasia Ex-
tension 13 con- squatter from Eldorado
Park yesterday ty homes in the suburb
were invaded.

PICTURE: T J LEMON

Police evict house (310) invaders in Lenasia

POLICE moved in last night to evict people who had broken into and occupied 300 houses in Lenasia, near Johannesburg.

People from the adjacant township of Eldorado Park broke windows and doors yesterday morning to gain access to the houses. Community organiser Jeffrey Ntsombi said many low-income houses in Lenasia South had been empty for at least two years after Indian families declined to take occupancy. The invaders were desperate for houses. The names of some had been on waiting lists for 20 years.

Gauteng housing and local government spokesman Themba Maluleke said orders had been given to the police to evict all those who had illegally occùpied houses. One man was arrested.

The new occupants said low-income Indians had refused to move into the houses because they had no ceilings and floors had not been covered.

Talks between a delegation sent by Gauteng housing minister Dan Mofokeng and the invaders broke down.

Mofokeng said a subcommittee had been set up to screen applications and determine criteria for occupation of the 300 houses in question, including a review of all waiting lists. — Sapa.

30/12/94

Anger over squatter move to Diepsloot

(310) Star 15/2/95

BY ANNA COX

Diepsloot residents have reacted angrily to the announcement that the squatters evicted from private land in Zandspruit last year are to be moved to a property in the area.

They say the site, in Diepsloot West, is inaccessible, far away from transport and smacks of wanting to hide the homeless in a remote area.

Residents who are opposing the move of the squatters, who have been accommodated on Rhema Church property in Nooitgedacht for the past three months, meet with housing committee officials of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) today to discuss the move.

The TMC last week announced that the allocated private property in Diepsloot West would either be purchased or expropriated to accommodate the squatters.

The squatters were evicted from private land in Zandspruit in November last year and Rhema Church offered them accommodation on its farm until an alternative could be found for them.

Said Diepsloot resident Jill Wileman: "Any community that wants to be moved into this area should be given proper housing and not be allowed to squat."

She said she would also be discussing a legal document drawn up between Laezonia residents and the former Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA) in which the TPA undertook not to move any people on to land in the area before a geological survey had been conducted.

Wileman has also slammed the Rhema Church for imposing a R10 000-a-day penalty for each day the squatters remain after February 23 — the deadline for the squatters to be moved.

"This is the reason for this decision — it is not very Christian to threaten to kick people off their property," she said.

Clash over occupied Lenasia homes



Policemen and bodyguards, guns drawn, form a protective ring around Gauteng Minister of Housing Dan Mofokeng's car as a crowd of homeless people threaten to attack him in Lenasia yesterday. The homeless people, from Eldorado Park, had earlier occupied empty houses in the area's Extention 13. See story page 2.

PIC: PAT SEBOKO

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HOME GRO

Action on squatters hots up

Sowetan (310) 16/2/95

By Joshua Raboroko and Themba Sepotokele

TENSIONS mounted in Lenasia Extension 13 last night after police forcibly removed three squatters from houses they had occupied illegally. There was pandemonium as angry squatters resisted further evictions and exchanged words with the police after Mr Joe Kotze was evicted.

The evictions took place after regional secretary of the Pan Africanist Congress Mr Vusi Zwane had appealed to the police and squatters not to take action that might lead to bloodshed.

Police liaison officer Major Thumba Mariemuthoo said the deadline for the squatters to vacate the illegally occupied houses had expired at 5pm yesterday. Police began arresting them at 7.30pm, more than two hours after the deadline.

Mariemuthoo said most of the invaders had left the houses when 150 policemen began the arrests. Police would keep watch in the area overnight and continue evictions on Thursday if necessary.

Earlier, Gauteng MEC for housing Mr Dan Mofokeng was forced to flee from an angry crowd of squatters who threatened to attack him.

He was whisked away in his car after police and his bodyguards — with guns drawn — had formed a protective cordon around the vehicle and kept the squatters at bay.

Mofokeng had yesterday and on Tuesday tried to persuade the squatters to vacate about 300 houses in Lenasia they had occupied illegally.

He was shouted down when he told the squatters they had five hours to vacate the houses. The crowd surged threateningly towards him and he was rushed into the car by bodyguards.

The squatters, from the predominantly coloured township of Eldorado Park, on Tuesday invaded the mainly Indian area and occupied the houses. Amid shouts of "we are not moving", Mofokeng appealed to the squatters to vacate the houses immediately. He said his government would take action if people did not leave by 5pm yesterday. After this appeal the crowd became rowdy and threatened to attack Mofokeng.

Govt gets tough, squatters held

(310)

STAFF REPORTERS

Police continued to maintain a strong presence in Lenasia Extension 13 this morning after arresting five squatters last night, but ignoring scores more who presented themselves at the local police station.

The squatters from nearby Eldorado Park have illegally occupied about 300 empty houses since Tuesday and refuse to move out unless they get alternative accommodation. The houses have stood empty for about three years due to bureaucratic bungling by the past and present governments.

While some squatters left the area yesterday, many have stayed. Police said they did not arrest any more people because the squatters were not inside any of the homes this morning.

The arrests are a signal of the Gauteng government's new tough stance on illegal occupations. Dan Mofokeng, MEC for housing, said in a statement today the arrests were regrettable, but the Gauteng government would not let land invasions or illegal occupations continue.

"This was meant to send a message, not only to these illegal occupants, but to anyone planning the same thing."

Despite attempts by police, squatter leaders, members of the PAC and the Mediation Conciliation Centre to avert a clash, stones were thrown soon after 9 pm last night and tempers flared as Internal Stability Unit policemen began arresting illegal occupants.

Police spokesman Major Govindsammy Mariemuthoo said late last night they were being arrested for housebreaking.

Squatters gathered in groups, some shouting PAC slogans, others calling for the return of F W de Klerk, and some rocking police vans.

Earlier in the day, Mofokeng had given the squatters two deadlines — 10 am, later extended to 5 pm — by which to vacate the houses.

There was confusion as some squatters prepared to vacate the houses, but were ordered to stay by a South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) official. Sowejoca leaders have denied claims they orchestrated the invasions.

Mofokeng addressed the angry mob after a two-hour afternoon meeting, during which residents demanded the keys to his car to ensure he would not leave without addressing them personally.

Mofokeng urged squatters "to co-operate with their leaders within five hours." Later he said those who did not would be arrested by 5.30 pm.

As he tried to leave, the crowds surged forward. With police and bodyguards surrounding him, weapons cocked, Mofokeng was spirited to his car which sped away.

The illegal occupants are from Ennerdale, Eldorado Park, and the Lenasia squatter settlement of Thembilihle.

Allocation of the houses was suspended in August after residents complained that officials from the defunct Houses of Delegates and Representatives took bribes for allocations.

Mofokeng then requested the creation of a community-endorsed advisory board on house allocations in Lenasia.

The ANC's Shan Bolton, who sits on the board, said yesterday the board started functioning last month and some houses had been allocated.

▶ **Picture — Page 3**

Star 16/2/95

Squatters drive Mofokeng out of Lenasia

BD 16/2/95

GAVIN STAFFORD

GAUTENG housing minister Dan Mofokeng had to flee from angry squatters in Lenasia, near Johannesburg, yesterday.

Police and security guards drew their guns and formed a barricade around Mofokeng after he was shouted down when he addressed the squatters. Guards and police pushed him into his car and his driver forced his way through the crowd and sped away. Mofokeng later denied he had fled.

Police last night began arresting the squatters occupying about 200 houses in Lenasia after the expiry of a 5pm deadline to move out. While only a few people had been arrested, police spokesman G Mariemuthoo said police would patrol the area through the night and continue with arrests if they did not leave. (310)

Earlier, evictions were suspended when PAC regional secretary Vusimuzi Kazwane tried to mediate. He called on squatters to move out to avoid bloodshed. But the squatters, mostly from neighbouring Eldorado Park, refused to budge and some said they would rather be shot than move.

Before Mofokeng left, he told the crowd there were government plans for a new housing development in nearby Ennerdale. Applicants who were not allocated houses in Lenasia Extension 13 would have the chance to move to other areas.

He asked the invaders to vacate the houses by 5pm so the allocation process could take place fairly.

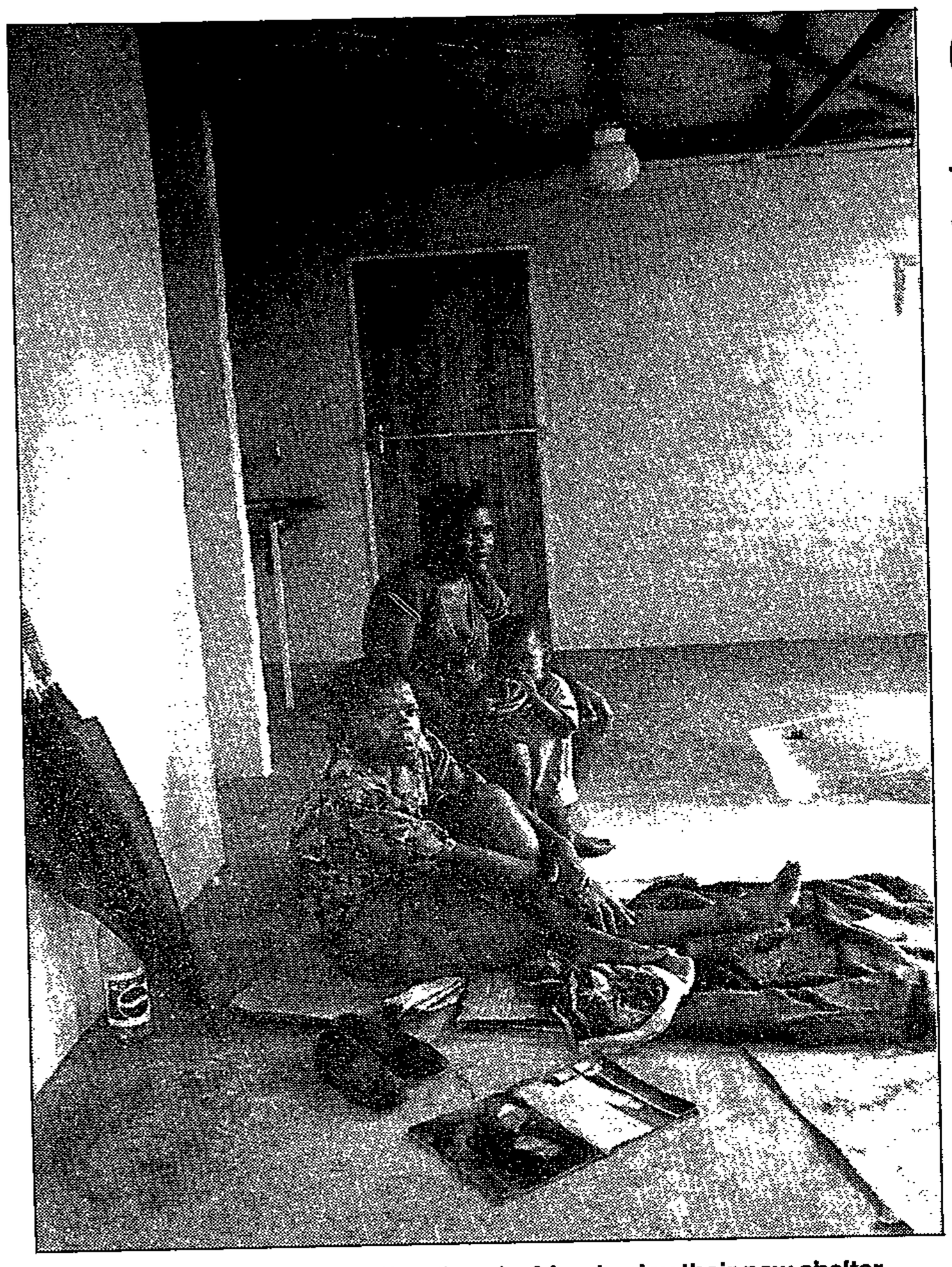
The community would start drawing up a new waiting list for the houses, previously under the control of the House of Delegates. This list would be submitted to his department, which would make decisions on allocations in seven days, and would have the final say.

A representative for the squatters, Jeffrey Ntsomi, later told the crowd that he had asked Mofokeng not to evict the invaders while the new list was being prepared.

The invaders had applied for the houses through the proper channels but some had been waiting for 15 to 20 years. About 400 houses had been empty for three years.

Ntsomi said people were worried that other squatters or illegal aliens would invade the houses so they decided to act first.

WEEKLY MAIL & GUARDIAN
February 17 to 23 1995



Home at last: Seipati Hloele (front) and a friend enjoy their new shelter
PHOTOGRAPH: RUTH MOTAU

Occupied already: No more illegals welcome

(310) WM 17-23/2/95

Illegal occupants defiantly laid claim to vacant homes in a Lenasia suburb this week. **Mapula Sibanda** spoke to them

OVERGROWN shrubs surrounding the houses testified to desertion, but there were newspapers pasted up to serve as curtains and white crosses marked on the windows to show that people were living there.

On Wednesday afternoon, this was a common sight at Lenasia Extension 13, where a week earlier residents from Eldorado Park and Thembelihle — a nearby squatter camp — had broken down the doors of more than 200 of the 1 000 state-owned houses and taken illegal occupation.

The houses have stood empty since last August, while the provincial ministry appoints an allocation committee.

The police tried to stop last week's invasion in response to a charge laid by the housing ministry and wounded three people with a single bullet.

On Wednesday, there were people standing at their front doors with determination on their faces, as if to institute a stronger claim to their new territory.

"When I heard over the radio that people were occupying this site, I rushed out here to claim my share. Now people are flocking here and trying to force us out, so that they can also occupy these houses illegally," said Seipati Hloele, one of the illegal occupants.

Moving from the nearby squatter camp into the house, she said, symbolised that people like her have as much right to own a house as everyone else. "I was born in Senaoane, Soweto, but my mother and us" — including her nine siblings — "have always stayed at various squatter camps."

She was sitting on a make-shift chair: a used paint tin. Two paint tins and a winter army jacket placed on a cardboard box to be used as a sleeping pallet constituted the only furniture in the three-bedroomed house. Dust had accumulated since building ended.

In bold letters outside, the legend "Occupied already" was standing guard against any other potential occupier.

With her pensioned mother the only source of income in the household, supplemented by the salary she gets from voluntary community nursing services, Hloele maintains the family is prepared to pay a fair amount for the house, once they are given the opportunity to register it as their own.

When Hloele realised that it was a quarter to three, she said time was running out for their illegal occupation: "(Gauteng Housing MEC) Dan Mofokeng gave us until 3pm today to vacate these houses. He says people who had applied before can only be given the houses. Everybody is asking the same questions. Why did these applicants wait all those months before claiming that the houses belong to them?"

Lenasia ANC secretary Neesham Balton offered an explanation for the vacant houses: "Allocation of the houses was suspended last year, as we complained to the provincial housing ministry that it had been conducted by previous allocation structures in line with pre-election government structures. As a result, a new allocation committee was finalised early this year, to see to further allocations."

● Police began arresting the illegal occupants at 7.30pm on Wednesday night. Most of the occupants streamed out of the houses to avoid arrest and by 9.30pm the houses were vacant, two people were being held, and police were keeping a watchful eye on the premises. About 150 policemen were used in the operation.

Many squatters 'well-off' — claim

(310)

ACCUSATIONS OF RACISM

Allegations flung back and forth:

AT LEAST 13 people were arrested yesterday amid claims by the African National Congress in Eldorado Park that a "considerable number" of the people illegally occupying houses in Lenasia Extension 13 were "well-off people" with houses in Eldorado Park.

The secretary-general of the ANC in Eldorado Park Jose Coetzee condemned the illegal occupation and bitterly attacked the South Western Johannesburg Joint Civic Association and its leader, Basil Douglas, for its "insane campaign".

The illegal occupation threatened to wreck the allocation process which stood to benefit residents of Lenasia.

Coetzee said Sowejoca had, since its first public appearance, run campaigns "characterised by anarchy, violence and damage to property".

Sowejoca's campaigns were based on "a poisonous mixture of intimidation, fear and racism" and it was not by accident that they enjoyed the support of members of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Through its campaigns, Sowejoca had reintroduced the "poison of racism" in coloured communities.

Racial tensions had already been created between coloureds and blacks and now with its latest moves, Sowejoca was sowing seeds of dissent between coloureds and Indians.

The ANC said it rejected as a "misrepresentation" media reports which gave the impression Mr Douglas was a legitimate leader with popular support.

Police spokesman Captain Morgan Rangasamy said bail for three squatters arrested on Wednesday night had been fixed at R1 000 each.

The controversy surrounding the illegal occupation of the houses developed a new twist yesterday when Lenasia residents called on provincial authorities to review their policy of evicting the squatters.

The squatters, from neighbouring Eldorado Park, have in turn agreed to restrict their occupations to only a section of Lenasia Extension 13. — *Sapa*.

Sowetan 17/2/95

STAR 310
17/2/95

The people who illegally occupied 283 houses in Lenasia's Extension 13 this week had hoped to repeat the past successes of mass action.

However, they did not expect to be confronted by a disapproving minister who would ultimately order arrests.

In a rude shock on Wednesday — just one day after they invaded the houses — Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng told them his administration would not tolerate their behaviour, and he ordered police to take action against those who had refused to co-operate.

The invasions, by residents of Johannesburg's Ennerdale, Eldorado Park and Thembilihle townships, breached a moratorium declared by all parties last year on invasions and evictions.

In terms of the moratorium, the Gauteng government placed a hold on the eviction of squatters, while residents' organisations agreed not to invade land or properties.

Tuesday's invasion of the empty homes elicited a strong response from Mofokeng, who, after unsuccessful negotiations with the squatters' leaders, ordered police to evict and arrest them.

In a hard-hitting statement, Mofokeng said his government would not condone invasions, allow anarchy to reign in the townships, or allow people who had waited for homes for decades to be cheated of them by illegal occupants.

However, this week's drama has raised serious questions about the state of housing.

For example, why are so many houses standing empty in Lenasia when demand for accommodation is at a record high?

Corruption and bureaucratic bungling within the defunct House of Delegates have been assigned most of the blame.

Built about four years ago, the low-cost houses were planned to help absorb Lenasia's growing population.

Community organisations were not happy with the manner in which HoD officials were allocating houses, accusing them of favouritism, accepting bribes, and outright corruption.

Under a new government last year, the community, led by the ANC, called on Mofokeng to investigate irregularities regarding house allocations and to give the community a bigger say in the process.

Mofokeng agreed. He suspended allocations in August and requested the community to create an advisory board to assist with allocations and advise the ministry on housing requirements in the area.

A seven-member board was elected, but began allocating houses in earnest only last month. So far, only a handful of houses have been allocated under the new system.

The six-month delay is seen as a major contributing factor to this week's events.

Others believe the problem was the swollen bureaucracy inherited from the old regime, which was being maintained zealously by the new order.

Those who invaded the homes said the newly established advisory board was itself corrupt and dominated by the ANC.

In fact, DP councillors on the South-Western Metropolitan Substructure had called on Mofokeng to immediately suspend all activities of the board.

The ANC's Shan Bolton, who sits on the board, denied these allegations, saying a wide range of community organisations were represented on it.

The allegations, in any event, would be difficult to prove in a politically homogeneous society like Lenasia, which is historically an ANC stronghold.

Another issue highlighted by this week's invasions is the feasibility of a moratorium on land invasions in a rapidly changing society.

The moratorium in Gauteng has not been successful. Figures show that since implementation of the moratorium, invasions in Greater Johannesburg have leapt.

In South Africa, land and property invasions have been exacerbated by the emergence of new civic bodies like the South Western Joint Civic Association and the Johannesburg Tenants' Association, which are challenging the political status quo of the ANC.

Mofokeng's ambitious promises at the beginning of his reign had not helped to appease an increasingly restless and frustrated population.

As one observer put it: "The Gauteng government is beginning to acknowledge it had unrealistic aspirations, and that the gap between its intentions, desires and ability is very large."

The challenge now, he said, was to try to manage the expectations which had always existed, but which had increased with promises made with the change of government.

This week's invasion of empty houses in Lenasia signalled a end to the Gauteng government's soft line on illegal squatting City Reporter ***Charmeela Bhagowat*** *reports*

The day mass action failed miserably

310 Star 17/2/95

195

(310) STAR 17/2/95



No way . . . a defiant squatter in his "stolen" home tells police he will not move. He is one of hundreds of people who invaded empty homes in Lenasia's Extension 13, where police battled to maintain control of angry crowds.

PICTURE: JODI BIEBER

Empty houses reoccupied

Squatters await talks outcome

(310)

Star 17/2/95

SOWEJOCA and Gauteng govt negotiate on the Extension 13 illegals crisis

■ STAFF REPORTERS

All was quiet in Lenasia Extension 13 this morning with the illegal house invaders from Eldorado Park waiting in silent groups on street corners for the outcome of negotiations between the South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) and the Gauteng government.

Last night the squatters reoccupied the empty houses.

Denzel and Jean Dawson said they would refuse to be kicked out of their Lenasia Extension 13 house, having spent 10 years in a Zozo hut in Eldorado Park with their four children.

The squatters had earlier been evicted from the empty houses they occupied this week.

Police said they had arrested 13 of the estimated 300 Eldorado Park residents who invaded the houses in Lenasia's Extension 13, but Sowejoca claimed 15 had been arrested.

Sowejoca had held talks with Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng about their release. A spokesman said 12 of those arrested had been released.

Three others had been granted R1 000 bail but had not been released, the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, the ANC yesterday accused "a considerable number" of the squatters of being well off and of owning houses in Eldorado Park.

ANC Eldorado Park secretary-general Jose Coetzee condemned the illegal occupation of the houses and attacked Sowejoca, saying: "They are trying to stand the coloureds and Indians off against each other."

The allocation of the houses was suspended in August after Lenasia residents complained that the defunct Houses of Delegates and Representatives took bribes enabling people to jump the housing queue.

Police had to split their presence in Lenasia between the squatters and the Lenasia shopping centre, where pupils passing through to attend a Soweto schools sports day at the Lenasia cricket stadium looted clothing and jewellery from hawkers.

Ahmed Ebrahim (39) was unpacking clothing at 9 am when the group of 2 000 youths passed though the centre.

"Some of them passed until one decided to grab a T-shirt and motioned to me with his fist," Ahmed explained. He said he had lost R2 500 in goods.

Meanwhile, Mofokeng has challenged the DP's Ian Davidson and the NP's Jac Rabie to a public debate on the current housing crisis in the province.

Mofokeng said yesterday it was ironic that two of the people most responsible for the current housing crisis were now making so much noise about how to resolve a crisis they had caused.

Mofokeng's statement followed media reports that both the DP and NP had blamed Mofokeng for the Lenasia invasions.

▶ The day mass action failed – Page 13

Mofokeng snubs Lenasia civic

GAVIN STAFFORD

A MEETING to discuss the Lenasia extension 13 squatter crisis did not take place yesterday because Gauteng housing minister Dan Mofokeng failed to attend, Southwestern Joint Civic Association negotiating committee chairman Basil Douglas said yesterday.

Attempts to contact Mofokeng about the meeting proved fruitless last night.

Meanwhile Sapa reports Maluleke said the Gauteng legislature would meet to discuss the invasion.

Douglas said the civic had a mandate to negotiate for the squatters, who would stay in Lenasia.

But the squatters returned to occupy the houses barely an hour after their leaders had had talks with ANC executuve committee member Paul Mashatile. Mashatile would not comment on the talks but said he would update Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale. A statement could be expected from Sexwale's office.

Squatter families in Lenasia extension 13 congregated in the shade of trees yesterday afternoon.

Members of the Internal Stability Unit keeping an eye on the situation were seen talking casually with squatters.

Squatter representative Jeffrey Ntsomi told squatters to evacuate houses they had been occupying since Tuesday and group together and remain in one area until negotiations were completed.

Police spokesperson Capt Morgan Rangasamy said police could not arrest squatters congregated on the streets but would continue to arrest anyone who occupied houses.

However, TV news reported last night police had halted arrests pending further negotiations.

Police arrested 10 squatters yesterday morning, bringing the total to 14. Bail was fixed at R1 000.

Mofokeng yesterday blamed the NP and DP for the housing crisis.

He said the NP's Jac Rabie and DP's Ian Davidson were "two old partners in administering apartheid housing policies".

CT 11/2/95

(310)

Squatters ousted after occupation

Special Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Police have evicted all the squatters who illegally occupied about 200 Lenasia houses this week.

However, last night the squatters vowed to spend the night in a nearby field in protest. "We are not leaving until we are given houses," they shouted.

By yesterday, police had arrested 13 of the estimated 300 Eldorado Park squatters who invaded the houses. Negotiations for their release were still underway yesterday.

Police confirmed the arrests.

Late yesterday talks were continuing between Gauteng Housing Minister Mr Dan Mofokeng and the leader of the South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca), Mr Basil Douglas.

Meanwhile, the ANC yesterday accused "a considerable number" of the squatters of being well-off and of owning houses in Eldorado Park.

ANC Eldorado Park secretary-general Mr Jose Coetzee condemned the illegal occupation of the houses, branded the Sowejoca campaign as "insane" and accused the association of racism and intimidation.

"They are trying to stand the coloureds and Indians off against each other," he said.

The allocation of the affected houses was suspended last August after Lenasia residents complained that officials of the defunct houses of Delegates and Representatives took bribes. This enabled people to jump the housing queue.

Mr Douglas confirmed that squatters had decided to stay and wait for houses: "They might even sleep out in the field. They've got nowhere else to go."

Food was donated to the squatters yesterday by local businesses.

Police evict Lenasia squatters

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — All the squatters who illegally occupied 200 empty Lenasia houses this week have been evicted by police.

But last night the squatters vowed to spend the night in the veld in protest.

By yesterday, police had arrested 13 of the estimated 300 Eldorado Park residents who invaded the houses in Lenasia's Extension 13, and last night negotiations for their release were still underway.Police confirmed the arrests.

Talks between Gauteng MEC for housing, Dan Mofokeng and the leader of the South Western Joint Civics Association (SOWEJOCA), Basil Douglas, are continuing.

Meanwhile, the ANC yesterday accused "a considerable number" of the squatters of being well-off and of owning houses in Eldorado Park.

ANC Eldorado Park secretary-general, Jose Coetzee, condemned the illegal occupation of the houses and launched a bitter attack on SOWEJOCA, citing their campaign as insane and accusing them of racism and intimidation. (310)

"They are trying to stand the Coloureds and Indians off against each other," he said.

Food was donated to the squatters yesterday by Lenasia and Eldorado Park businesses. "For some this is the first meal in two days," a squatter said.

● Mr Mofokeng has challenged the Democratic Party's Ian Davidson and the National Party's Jac Rabie to a public debate on the current housing crisis in the province.

Mr Mofokeng said yesterday it was ironic that two of the people most responsible for the current housing crisis were now making so much noise about how to resolve a crisis they had caused.

ARG 17/2/95



Picture: JODI BIEBER, Weekend Argus Picture Service.

☐ **NO WAY:** A defiant squatter at his "stolen" home tells police he will not move. He is one of hundreds of people who invaded empty homes in Lenasia's Extension 13, where police battled to maintain control of angry crowds.

Rude shock for house invaders

ARG 18/2/95 (310)

CHARMEELA BHAGOWAT
Weekend Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — The people who illegally occupied 283 houses in Lenasia's Extension 13 this week had hoped to repeat the past successes of mass actions.

They did not expect to be confronted by a disapproving minister who ultimately would order arrests.

In a rude shock on Wednesday — just a day after they invaded the houses — Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng told them his administration would not tolerate their behaviour and ordered police to take action against those who had refused to co-operate.

The invasions, by residents of Johannesburg's Ennerdale, Eldorado Park and Thembilihle townships, breached a moratorium declared by all parties last year on invasions and evictions.

In terms of the moratorium, the Gauteng government placed a hold on the eviction of squatters, while residents' organisations agreed not to invade land or properties.

Tuesday's invasion of the empty homes elicited a strong response from Mr Mofokeng, who, after unsuccessful negotiations with the squatters' leaders, ordered police to evict and arrest them.

In a hard-hitting statement, Mr Mofokeng said his government would not condone invasions, allow anarchy to reign in townships, or allow people who had waited for homes for decades to be cheated of them by illegal occupants. Corruption and bureaucratic bungling within the defunct House of Delegates have been assigned most of the blame for the situation.

Land and property invasions have been exacerbated by the emergence of new civic bodies now challenging the government.

R1m fees 'stolen from squatters'

JOHANNESBURG. — More than R1 million in fees is thought to have been stolen from about 10 000 families in the Winnie Mandela informal settlement in Thembisa near Midrand.

According to SABC television news, families have paid for a site and services. (310) (R2)

But, the news report said, the land on which they had built their shacks since last June was believed to be private. ARG 18/2/95

Civic organisation representatives said they would investigate and appealed for help from the Gauteng government. — Sapa.

R1m fees 'stolen from squatters'

JOHANNESBURG. — More than R1 million in fees is thought to have been stolen from about 10 000 families in the Winnie Mandela informal settlement in Thembisa near Midrand.

According to SABC television news, families have paid for a site and services. 310 ~~127~~

But, the news report said, the land on which they had built their shacks since last June was believed to be private. ARG 18/2/95

Civic organisation representatives said they would investigate and appealed for help from the Gauteng government. — Sapa.

Others tell tales of bureaucratic indifference — "they lose your application and when they find it again, they say you now have to go to the bottom of the list" — and many say the only answer to that has been a five-letter word spelt B-R-I-B-E.

There were people who said they had felt the sharp end of invasions themselves. "I had a plot near Eldorado Park, but the land was taken over by squatters," said one man.

When he addressed the squatters at midday on Wednesday, Mofokeng said he understood all this.

"We understand in the past how the old Houses of Delegates and Representatives frustrated people. But you must understand one thing, that if you invade houses you are not solving your problems," he said.

Corruption in previous allocations was being dealt with and a committee would sit to see who was first in line for the houses.

"We don't believe people should overtake others. We don't believe in land invasions and house invasions and flat invasions. We want to appeal to you that you should really consider moving out and allowing the committee to work things out."

They lose your application and when they find it again, they say you now have to go to the bottom of the pile.

That was midday on Wednesday. Since then a number of "move or be moved" ultimatums have come and gone. And it's not clear why: evictions

HARD BARGAINING: Gauteng's Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng (centre) tried hard to appease the sq the angry crowd.



would probably not have met with any resistance.

The invasion of section 13 was not violent. All it took to secure a house, once entry was gained, was for the panes to be covered in newspaper or curtains and for "taken" to be daubed in charcoal on the wall.

There has been some war talk — "if we don't get the houses, nobody gets them", said one young man. But when a dozen people were arrested on Wednesday night, there were chants of "Take us all". But nobody stepped forward to offer themselves for arrest. Those taken away left with faces slowly crumpling in dismay.

The Government may be assuming that a negotiated settlement will make the task of the squatters' leadership more difficult than a straight fight. And by the end of the week Jeffrey Ntsomi, a 33-year-old Eldorado Park man who has emerged as the key figure, was already getting a hint of that.

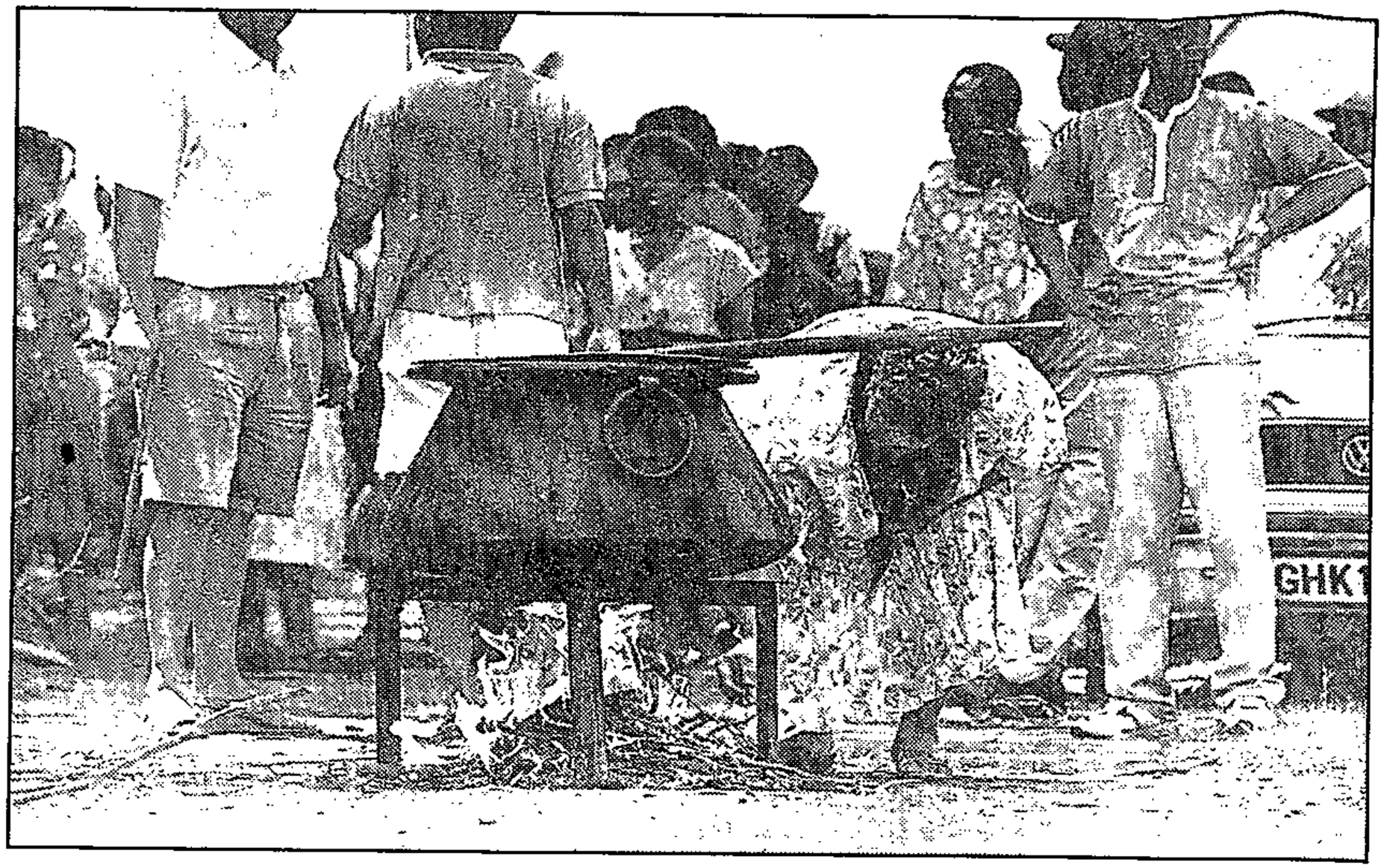
On Thursday afternoon Ntsomi, an organiser for the South Western Joint Civics Association, stood on a plastic crate under a clump of bluegums.

There had been negotiations with local civic bodies, he said. "Democracy is going to prevail. The people who have applied for these units are going to get them. They are going to be given to the people who qualify."

Who qualifies? What are the criteria? Only one man seemed concerned to ask. Most simply assumed that it was anyone who had ever applied for a house. Who does qualify, I asked, as people crowded around afterwards. The criteria haven't been set yet, he said.

But most people had more practical concerns. Ntsomi is never without an increasingly battered-looking folder which lists all the invaders and their house numbers.

DISPLACED PEOPLE: A massive police presence was felt all week as residents and squatters anxiously awaited developments.



STREET FOOD: Some enterprising members of the crowd stoked the fires in preparation for the hungry hordes.

18/2/98 (310)



HEAVY HAND OF THE LAW: Lenasia squatter Joseph Coetzee is hauled away by uniformed policemen amid much uproar.

al tensions emerge in battle for unoccupied houses

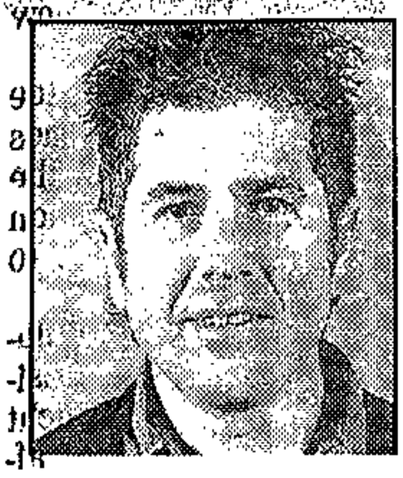
:ine's Day invasion

(310) Star 18/2/95

death



PEACE HOTLINE: PAC leader Musa Zwane negotiates with Dan Mofokeng as police prepare to evict squatters.



SQUATTERS broke into empty houses in Lenasia's section 13 on Valentine's Day, sparking tense stand-offs and an angry war of words, writes JOHN PERLMAN.

THE way the young man in the sharp shirt and tie put it, jabbing with his cellphone for emphasis, the solution to this week's invasion of houses in Lenasia was pretty simple: "What you need to do is get all stakeholders to agree on a process."

Sounds good, but the trouble is a bloke like Farouk Bapoo probably never thought of himself as holding a stake — not at least until he forced open an empty home in section 13 and acquired one.

You name a housing problem, Bapoo can tell you about it: On the waiting list for 23 years, thrown out of Newclare "for being an Indian in a coloured area", currently living here and there with his possessions stowed in the back of his car. The only sign of movement he has seen was in 1986, when the authorities informed him that his application number had been changed.

When Gauteng's Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng announced to a gathering of section 13 invaders — they prefer "new residents of Valentine's Village" — that the Government was going to "build houses in Eldorado Park and Ennerdale", Bapoo would have agreed with the man who shouted from the back: "When?"

There is no doubt that grim and grinding forces have driven people to take over some 380 houses on the north-east fringe of Lenasia on Valentine's Day.

"These houses have been standing empty for three years," said one woman. "In my old place there were 14 people from three families sharing two bedrooms."

18/2/95

(310)

itters but eventually ended up hurrying away from

PHOTOGRAPHS: TJ LEMON

"My name isn't there, can you add it?" asked one man. "No, no more names now," Ntsomi said, looking weary. "Okay, maar jy ken my, Bra Jeff. Okay?"

At dusk, Ntsomi must address the people again. He has just spent an hour in the middle of the road, surrounded by guards and marshals, talking to Paul Mashatile who is visiting on behalf of Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale. Mashatile mainly listens, taking copious notes in a big yellow exam pad.

"He came here on behalf of Tokyo to find out what is going on," Ntsomi says. "I told them you invaded because you heard a rumour that people with no applications would be invading soon. The premier was not informed properly by Dan Mofokeng. The premier thought that you wanted to live for nothing."

Later Ntsomi denies this suggestion that Sexwale, seeing things differently to Mofokeng, will create expectations of intervention by the premier that won't materialise. But nobody around him seems concerned about that.

We understand in the past how the Houses of Delegates and Representatives frustrated the people.

"If we all sleep in the camp here, what if other people come and take our houses in the night?" one man asks.

Some of the invaders may well be able to stay. But resentment is already building up in nearby Thembelihle, Lenasia's seven-year-old homeless camp.

"The Thembelihle Development Forum believes that if anybody is deserving of homes in this area, it is the homeless people of Thembelihle," says chairperson Dan Bovu.

And while people insist they are "ready to pay the rent", many are already calling for a flat rate of R45, which is nowhere near the R350 or R400 that will probably be asked for.

The invasion of section 13 has raised racial tension, however much politicians try to deny this. "What do these people want here," said one Indian resident looking on in dismay.

"We are born here but where do these Indians come from?" snapped a coloured woman in response. "They even have shops in our areas. Even the whites don't complain when we move into their areas."

The invasion has also exposed great resentment of the Government.

"Come and stay in my shack and I will occupy your house," yelled one man as Mofokeng spoke, while others referred to his (black) security guards as "boere".

Of course some might argue that if the new Government is starting to make some enemies of people who break the law, that might be a sign that they are at last getting things right.

But that ignores the most troubling indication of all from the Valentine's Day occupation. Many cling to the hope that as services and resources are provided, tensions will ease. That would be nice. But there isn't going to be enough to go round for years to come. And when food is placed on the table, the resultant conflicts may well prove more bitter and complex than the original problem itself.

18/02/95

(316)



Backlash against Lenasia squatters feared

(310)

JOHN PERLMAN and NICK OLIVARI

ATTEMPTS to evict squatters who occupied houses in Lenasia this week ended in stalemate last night as police held back from using force to carry out arrests.

Police representatives said they could only arrest people who were in the houses, and attempts to act were foiled when a group of some 150 squatters set up camp in a clearing in the middle of the suburb.

There was a standoff when police pulled

See Page 6

armoured cars across the road to bar the way of squatters who were returning to camp after marching through section 13.

Basil Douglas, chairman of the South Western Joint Civics Association, called on squatters to offer themselves up for arrest and a number climbed into police vans. The group then moved through the lines of policemen — who made no attempt to stop them — and returned to their camp.

Douglas criticised the Gauteng government for refusing to meet with a delegation representing the squatters.

Earlier in the day a delegation from Lenasia met with officials and warned that the community could take the law into its own hands if the Government failed to evict peo-

TO PAGE 2

Star 18/2/95

♦ Squatters

ple illegally occupying houses in the area.

ANC spokesman for Gauteng, Ronnie Mamoepa, said the delegation and ANC representatives called on the security forces to apply the law and act on government directives to evict the squatters.

The delegation, which consisted of representatives from the Lenasia Civic Association, the suburb's housing allocation committee, housing advisory committee and the Lenasia ANC branch, met ANC members of the Gauteng standing committee for housing and local government for talks yesterday.

Squatters take to streets, evade arrest

ARG 18/2/95 (310)

■ Foiled in their attempts to arrest illegal squatters in Lenasia yesterday, police are now looking into "other options". A spokesman said it was possible that they could be held under a by-law which prohibits street gatherings.

LENASIA. — — Squatters who have occupied about 350 empty houses here since Tuesday have foiled a police bid to arrest them by moving out of the houses and into the street.

"We have a problem, we cannot arrest people for being on the streets," said a police spokesman yesterday.

"We're having a problem because the illegal occupants are not in the houses.

"We will continue to make our presence felt in the area and we will make arrests whenever it becomes possible."

The spokesman added that the police were looking at other options, and there was a possibility that they could arrest the squatters under a by-law which prohibited gatherings in the street.

Earlier yesterday, Gauteng housing chief Don Mofokeng said police would arrest the squatters because the government had "no option but to act firmly and decisively against lawlessness".

"The government's view on the occupations is guided by a moratorium adopted by the Gauteng legislature in June last year, that there shall be no further land/housing invasions, so as to give the process of land and housing development a chance," he said.

"The government will not stand idly by as rights of the poor are being trampled upon by elements who have sought to undermine the democratically-elected government," Mr Mofokeng added.

"We wish to reiterate the views of President Mandela in his opening address in parliament today, that the small minority in our midst who wear the mask of anarchy will meet its match in the government we lead."

To add to problems in the area, scuffles between illegal occupants broke out yesterday afternoon after some houses previously occupied by squatters were taken over by others seeking homes.

People who were arrested earlier in the week claimed that "their homes" had been "occupied" while they were in detention.

A committee was later established to deal with the issue.

South-West Joint Civic Association chairman Basil Douglas warned that protests would follow if squatters were evicted. He urged the Gauteng government to resolve the issue as a matter of urgency and to "play the ball, not the people".

In a statement yesterday afternoon, Mr Mofokeng said his ministry had identified new criteria whereby houses would be allocated to people.

These included the length of time that people had been on the waiting list, and priority would be given the disabled, the elderly and single mothers.

Many of the illegally-occupied homes have stood empty for more than two years.

Asked why the houses had been left empty for so long, Mr Mofokeng said corruption had been detected in their allocation and it had consequently been decided to hold on to the houses pending an investigation. — Sapa.



SLEEPING . . . two children rest under a blanket oblivious to the tension over the invasions

Picture: ARISHAD SATTER

ISD criticised for action on squatters

(310)

ST 19/2/95

By BOETI ESHAK

A CLOUDBURST yesterday afternoon sent squatters in Lenasia's Extension 13 scurrying for shelter into the very houses police had been instructed to stop them from entering.

But while the reluctance of the uniformed police to prevent the squatters from entering the houses has drawn praise from community leaders, the controversial Internal Security Division (ISD) has come under attack for trying to evict the squatters shortly afterwards.

Chairman of the South Western Joint Civic Association Basil Douglas condemned the ISD for "wanting to foment violence".

ISD members apparently forced squatters out of the houses shortly after 3pm.

An ISD officer gave the squatters 10 minutes to vacate the houses or face arrest, but he was shouted down when squatters took up their chant: "*Die storie gaan aan*" (The story continues).

The ISD officer moved off and returned later with a small group of reinforcements. He again requested the squatters to move out of the houses they were occupying.

By then the rain had stopped, and the squatters asked if they could be allowed to keep their children and food in the houses.

The ISD left when the squatters moved out, but warned they would return and arrest anyone found to have re-entered the houses.

By late yesterday afternoon, squatters had started fires to prepare food outside the houses.

Mr Douglas said the Lenasia police had been sympathetic and understood the plight of the squatters.

But he condemned the mainly white members of the ISD for "trying to intimidate the people with the hope of starting violence".

Police spokesman Colonel Piet van Deventer denied that police had removed anyone from inside the houses.

The squatters had sought shelter against the walls of two houses but had not gone inside, he said.

Police had not arrested anyone, but did warn the squatters they would be arrested if they entered the houses.

Colonel van Deventer said police patrols were continuing normally in the area.

Gauteng Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte said earlier yesterday that the police had been acting strictly within the law during their actions against the squatters.

About 200 coloured Eldorado Park residents invaded the houses on Tuesday and promptly renamed the area "Valentine Village".

The new occupants, who were transported to Lenasia in trucks and cars, broke down doors and windows to gain entry to houses.

Of the 13 arrested for trespassing on Thursday, 12 were released without bail.



STAYING PUT . . . Squatters camp out in the street after being evicted from the empty Lenasia houses they had occupied. Pic: EVANS MBOWENI

'Illegal birthplace' for squatter baby

By THEMBA KHUMALO (30)

CP 19/2/95

SQUATTERS evicted from the houses they occupied illegally in Lenasia, Johannesburg, spent their fourth night in the open after several street clashes with the police.

And on Friday night a woman known only as Sinnah gave birth to a baby girl in the house she was occupying – while police were raiding the illegal occupants of the houses which have been standing empty for nearly two years at Extension 13.

Black, coloured and Indian squatters were united in their resolve to defy orders by Gauteng MEC for Housing Dan Mofokeng to leave the area.

The police started evicting them on Wednesday following unsuccessful talks between them and Mofokeng.

Yesterday the empty houses were guarded by guards from a private security company to ensure that nobody re-occupied them.

However, the evicted squatters camped outside the houses and traded insults with the police yesterday morning. Charity groups and local Indian merchants brought them bread and soup to stave off hunger.

Meanwhile political organisations have entered the fray – accusing the ANC-led government of failing to keep its pre-election promises to deliver jobs and houses.

PAC regional chairman Vusumuzi Zwane said the houses in Lenasia had been standing empty for a long time and after the ANC came to power it did nothing about the plight of thousands of homeless people.

A Gauteng government spokesman dismissed Zwane's allegations as "hot air", saying the PAC as a member of the government of national unity knew very well the problems faced by the government.

Lenasia police praised for handling of squatter crisis

(310) BD 20/2/95

A COMMUNITY leader this weekend praised Lenasia police for showing understanding and sympathy for the plight of squatters illegally occupying empty houses in the township.

But South Western Joint Civic Association chairman Basil Douglas also condemned the internal stability unit for "wanting to foment violence".

Unit members forced squatters out of the houses in Lenasia's Extension 13 shortly after 3pm. The squatters had moved back into the houses to seek shelter from the rain, which came down about 2pm, and local police made no attempt to stop them.

An officer gave the squatters 10 minutes to vacate the houses or face arrest, but he was shouted down by the squatters as they took up their chant, "die storie gaan aan."

The officer moved off and returned later with a small group of reinforcements. He again called on the squatters to move out of the houses they were illegally occupying.

By then the rain had stopped, and the squatters asked if they could be allowed to keep their children and food in the houses.

The police left when the squatters moved out of the houses, but warned they would return and arrest anyone found to have reentered the houses.

By late Saturday afternoon squatters had started fires outside the houses, laid tables and started preparing supper.

Douglas said reporters the Lenasia police were sympathetic and understood the plight of the squatters.

Earlier the Gauteng ministry of local government and housing said the ministry remained committed to resolving the housing problem in Lenasia in particular and in the province in general.

"In this context, the doors of the government remained open to all those who sought to find an acceptable and everlasting solution to the housing problem."

However, the statement said the current situation in Lenasia had left the government with "no option, but to act firmly and decisively against lawlessness to protect the rights of the majority of the people".

"As far as the government is concerned the houses are state-owned property and any illegal tenants must be prosecuted forthwith," the statement said. — Sapa.

● Comment: Page 4

Demand to stop evictions

(310)

JOHANNESBURG. — About 200 members of the local tenants' association marched to the Transitional Metropolitan Council and Gauteng Legislature on Saturday to hand over a list of demands to mayor Mr Isaac Mogase and Gauteng Premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale CT 20/2/95

They demanded an enforcement of the moratorium on evictions and an end to police interference in the conflicts between tenants and landlords. — Sapa

Protest threat by squatters

(310)
CT 20/2/95

JOHANNESBURG. — Gauteng Housing Minister Mr Dan Mofokeng will not meet the South Western Joint Civic Association to discuss the squatter problem in Lenasia, despite threats of protest action on Thursday.

He was responding to South Western Joint Civic Association leader Mr Basil Douglas' demands that police be withdrawn from the Indian township's extension 13, that charges against house invaders be dropped and that the waiting list for vacant houses be reviewed.

Mr Douglas had warned that supporters, squatters and hostel residents would march on the Gauteng legislature on Thursday and sleep there if the provincial government failed to respond.

"I am not prepared to hold further meetings with people who are trying to use the situation to further their own political ambitions, nor to legitimise illegal actions," Mr Mofokeng said in a statement.

Mr Douglas told squatters at Lenasia: "When the government of the people avoids the people, we will take the people to the government." — Sapa

Lenasia: Mofekeng reacts

310

MEC ignores new demands

Star 20/2/95

■ BY BOBBY BROWN

Dan Mofokeng, housing MEC for Gauteng, is ignoring demands for a meeting over the Lenasia house invasion with Basil Douglas of the South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca) to avoid a stayaway on Thursday.

Douglas has set himself up as spokesman for the squatters who invaded empty Lenasia houses last week. He made the call for a stayaway in Coronationville, western Johannesburg, claiming it would be supported by thousands. Help would be sought from taxi organisations.

In refusing a meeting, Mofokeng said in a statement last night that procedures for the allocation of the Lenasia Extension 13 homes had been accepted by all parties last week.

National Party MP Desmond Padayachee said the NP would do everything in its power to get Mofokeng to negotiate with the squatters so that a peaceful solution could be found.

Said Mofokeng: "I am not prepared to hold further meetings with people who are trying to use the situation in Lenasia to further their own political ambitions or to legitimise illegal actions."

His administration had tried hard to find solutions to the problem of homelessness.

The squatters from Extension 13 — now nicknamed Valentine's Village after it was occupied on Valentine's Day — elected Malebu Mulhlana as their speaker. She said Sowejoca's perseverance would "break our Government into pieces".

IFP Transvaal leader Themba Khoza denied the IFP had joined Sowejoca's campaign for its own political gain.

"Of course we want these people to vote IFP, but it is our duty as politicians to help them and resolve crises such as these," he said at a press conference.

Douglas, who claimed Sowejoca was not politically aligned, said he was prepared to call off the stayaway if Mofokeng met certain conditions.

"He must burn the Government's waiting list for houses and use Sowejoca's list that we will draw up for those people who have been waiting for 10 years and longer. Arrested squatters must be released, the Government must sit down with us, and the police in Lenasia Extension 13 must be out by Monday morning," he said.

Douglas vowed that Sowejoca would continue fighting for the Lenasia houses and would even call on people to present themselves for arrest, if need be.

Mofokeng said it seemed that, as local government elections got closer, the more "organisations like Inkatha, Sowejoca, and the Johannesburg Tenants' Association try to mobilise on racist and tribalist grounds".



Staying put . . . Denzel and Jean Dawson, who previously lived in a garage with their four children, say they have been on a housing waiting list for 10 years and are determined to hang on to the Lenasia Ext 13 house they occupied last week. PICTURE: PETER MOGAKI

Rhema to help in squatters' move

(310) Star 20/2/95

■ BY ANNA COX

The 240 homeless people evicted last year from private property in Zandspruit and taken in by Rhema Church will be moved to the Diepsloot development area on Wednesday.

This was confirmed last week at a meeting of church representatives, officials from the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC), Randburg administration, the squatters, local ratepayers' associations and the police.

A total of 75 sites have been made available. Water tanks and chemical toilets will be provided as well as a 24-hour security service.

Rhema will provide basic food during the move and will continue to assist with a social upliftment programme.

Said pastor Ray McCauley: "If needed we will facilitate another forum which would meet the needs of not only the Diepsloot community but also involve landowners in the adjacent area."

However, Diepsloot residents have slammed the move, saying the 50 squatter families have cost the TMC about R8 000 each.

They have lashed out at the council for paying R418 000 to expropriate a 21 ha property in the area to house the squatters.

MADAM & EVE **By S Francis, H Dugmore & Rico**



ARG 21/2/95

Squatters must quit by Friday

(310)

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — Gauteng Housing Minister Dan Mofokeng has set Friday as the deadline for allocating 300 empty houses in Lenasia Extension 13, occupied by squatters last week, to their new owners.

"We will be able to provide the names of those allocated houses on Friday," Mr Mofokeng said last night.

Guateng communications director Chris Vick reiterated the government stand.

"We're hoping the allocation will end the dispute, but it depends on house-snatchers respecting the decision of the committee set up to develop a new waiting list.

"Our concern is over organisations continuing to use events such as this to polarise society, rather than trying to bring communities together," said Mr Vick.

South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca) chairman Basil Douglas said plans for a Thursday stayaway were on track unless Mr Mofokeng agreed to withdraw charges against arrested squatters, police were pulled out and the government opened negotiations.

"We would like to see the list. We hope we will be part of the new list ... but we will see him on Thursday," said Mr Douglas, adding that Sowejoca had not been in negotiations to draw up a new waiting list.

Nancefield and Motsoaledi Camp near Soweto, stands at 24 500.

According to figures released by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Transitional Council, more than 3 900 shacks have been put up as a result of land invasions during 1994.

A substantial majority of these are on public land, with relatively few existing on private property. according to the report. The invasion of land, flats and homes in the Greater Johannesburg area has remained a headache and the Gauteng Legislature has issued a moratorium on further invasions in the province.

The report says that despite the moratorium, the invasion of land has rapidly increased.

The Lenasia crisis in which about 300 homeless people occupied houses they claimed have been lying empty for about three years, is one example. A squatter in the area, Mr Jeffrey Ntshomi, said: "Our people are homeless and they saw empty homes. They were left with no option but to occupy them.

Waiting for Government

"We have been waiting for the Government to build homes for us, but that did not seem to be forthcoming."he said.

However, the Government contended that it would not allow illegal occupation of homes in terms of the moratorium.

The ministry said the present situation in Lenasia has left the Government with no option but to act firmly and decisively against lawlessness and to protect the rights of the legal owners of the homes. "The people must know that we are not afraid of struggle. We are, after all, a product of confrontation and struggle. In the past we were not defeated by forces more powerful than they," the ministry said.

At least 45 people have been arrested and charged with trespassing, but most avoid being apprehended by sitting outside the houses and singing. Police spokesman Mr Govindsamy Mariemuthoo said police could not arrest more people because they were not breaking any laws, as most had vacated the houses and were sitting in the nearby road.

He said the police could arrest the invaders only if they were found inside the houses.

Most of the invaders are homeless people from Ennerdale, Eldorado Park's coloured and Indian communities and Thembalihle squatter camp.

One group was heard singing from an established camp: "*Jy sal hoor, Mofokeng sê ons moet loop hierso, maar ons pola hierso* (You will hear

crisis proportions, and the expectations of millions have not been fulfilled."

"People are stranded and cannot wait longer — they have decided to occupy the houses that stood empty for almost three years in Lenasia."

Homeless not criminal

Squatters said that the presence of a police contingent in the area was annoying because, as one put it, "we are homeless people and not criminals".

The squatters have persistently requested in vain to meet the Gauteng legislature in an attempt to have the matter resolved.

Mofokeng said the Government could not tolerate people invading property that did not belong to them.

The invasion of homes has angered some legal Indian residents, who have expressed their frustration over the illegal occupation of the homes. They said that their suburbs will be beleaguered by crimes such as robbery, rape, theft and illicit alcohol sale.

Makoe said the squatters were prepared to keep the area clean, pay a flat rate and to maintain a high standard of living. "People should stop being naive,"she said.

However, chairman of the South-West Joint Civic Association Mr Basil Douglas described the attitude of local residents as racist.

He said that although the people occupied the homes illegally, it was vital that blacks, Indians and coloureds should live together.

An alliance of the local civic association, residents, ANC, the Democratic Party and the Housing Advisory Board, has appealed to the provincial housing ministry "to speedily resolve the housing crisis" in the area.

"The inadequacy of housing and basic services in urban and rural settlements has reached crisis proportions, and the expectations of millions have not been fulfilled. People are stranded and cannot wait longer — they have decided to occupy the houses that stood empty for almost three years in Lenasia"

FACT FILE

The housing shortage in the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan areas, including Lenasia, has forced 24 500 people to live in informal settlements.

As a result of land invasions, 3 900 shacks have been erected during 1994; 2 300 shacks have been erected in informal settlements since the 1994 moratorium alone.

SOWETAN
21/2/95
(310)

NEWS FEATURE *House invasions in Lenasia continue in defiance of Mofokeng's order*

More squatters for Lenasia

(310) sowetan 21/2/95

■ CRISIS GROWS *Shack dwellers in the Johannesburg area stands at 24 500:*

By Joshua Raboroko

MORE SQUATTERS ARE invading Lenasia Extension 13, despite an ultimatum by Gauteng MEC for housing Mr Dan Mofokeng to leave the suburb.

The housing crisis in the area remained unresolved at the weekend as police continued to evict and arrest people, who have illegally occupied about 300 empty houses since last Tuesday.

The houses, built by the House of Delegates, stood unoccupied for over three years. Reasons for this included the alleged corruption of authorities, lack of facilities and because they were considered expensive by residents.

Prospective buyers on the waiting list for homes claimed they were asked to pay between R5 000 to R10 000 to the authorities to jump the queue.

Mofokeng said at a meeting that he would stamp out this corruption and he appointed a committee to investigate all the allegations. The committee is to report to him this week.

The minister said he is committed to resolving the problem in Lenasia in particular, and the province in general. The housing shortage has remained unresolved, resulting in the mushrooming of informal settlements.

Informal settlements

... latest number of people living in informal

"Despite the Gauteng Legislature's moratorium, land invasion is increasing rapidly"

Mofokeng saying we must go away here, but we are not going)."

The crowd huddled in groups under trees and volunteers from the neighbouring Lenasia suburbs gave them food and soap because they dared not go into the homes.

A pregnant woman, known only by the name of Sinah, was rushed to Baragwanath Hospital where she later gave birth to a boy.

The local community has named the boy Valentine, apparently because the mother was one of the people arrested on Valentine's Day, after the Minister proclaimed the ultimatum.

Sinah was released on R1 000 bail after she appeared in a magistrate's court.

Chairman of the local squatter committee Ms Malebo Makoe said that more desperate families were coming to stay in the area because "they are homeless and need shelter".

She said: "Since the Government of National Unity took office after the April 1994 elections, housing has remained a huge problem. No homes have been built for people in the area.

"The inadequacy of housing and basic serv-



SQUATTERS IN LENASIA ... the invasion continues.

Bribes for 310 houses claim

A NUMBER of former officials of the House of Delegates allegedly accepted bribes ranging between R5 000 and R10 000 to enable buyers to obtain houses in Lenasia Extension 13.

Most potential buyers claimed they failed to obtain houses because of "corruption and mismanagement" sparked off by delays on the housing waiting list manned by local authorities.

Bowetan 21/2/95

PERISCOPE

(310) Star 21/2/95

A little girl's broken dream

■ BY ZINGISA MKHUMA

When a "kind-hearted Indian lady" from Lenasia's Extension 13 allowed a squatter's little girl to use her bath, she didn't realise it would be the first time that tiny Claudine Makhoba (2) had ever been inside a real bathroom.

Claudine's mom Bernice Makhoba is among scores of squatters who sleep huddled in the veld, opposite more than 300 empty homes that the group had illegally occupied last week. They face arrest if caught inside the homes.

Bernice said that "when the kind Indian lady allowed us to use her bath", her daughter was ecstatic and screamed: "*Kyk mummy, ek bad, ek bad. Dit is lekker, mummy, kom kyk.*"

"She was so excited to find herself in the middle of so much water. She had never been in a real bath before, we use plastic bowls at home."

The tearful mother said this was the second time that Claudine had experienced so much joy and happiness in a short time. The first was when mother, daughter and father moved into house No 10669 in Jules Street, Lenasia.

When Claudine first saw the house, she said: "*Mummy, mummy, dit is ons huis! Ons groot huis, mummy.*"

However, Claudine's joy and her mother's hopes were shortlived. Two days after they had occupied the house, police ordered them out.



Dividing line . . . squatters need accommodation; Lenasia residents want them to leave. PICTURE: ANTON HAMMERL

Peaceful area now 'hell-hole'

■ BY ZINGISA MKHUMA

For the past year she has lived peacefully with her husband and two daughters in Lenasia's Extension 13. But now the Lenasia home-owner, who does not want to be identified, says her area has been turned into a "hell-hole".

Until last Tuesday, she and her husband went to work and her daughters went to school without fear of being molested or assaulted on the streets, she says.

Now, she says, her family live in fear for their safety and are thinking of moving after some of the 300 vacant houses in the suburb were invaded by squatters from Eldorado Park and surrounding informal settlements.

"Extension 13 is now a hell-

▶ To Page 3

A 'hell-hole'

◀ From Page 1

hole. We don't feel like going home anymore and our children cannot go out on to the street.

"Some of (the squatters), especially the young men, are rude and abusive and they also like to steal. At night they start singing and toyi-toying until the early hours of the morning.

"These houses were built for low-income people, not for low-class people. The media only show the plight of the families, but what about the ruffians who occupy the house opposite mine?"

List drawn up for empty homes

■ BY PAULA FRAY

Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng has set Friday as the deadline for allocating about 300 empty houses in Lenasia Extension 13, occupied by squatters last week, to their new owners.

Communications director Chris Vick told The Star: "We're hoping this will end the dispute, but that, of course, depends on whether or not the house-snatchers respect the decision of the committee which was set up to develop a new waiting list."

However, South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca) chairman Basil Douglas said plans for a stayaway on Thursday were on track unless Mofokeng agreed to withdraw charges against arrested squatters, police were pulled out of the area, and the Government began negotiations with the organisation.

In an interview with The Star last night Douglas said Sowejoca had not been part of negotiations to draw up a new waiting list, adding that Mofokeng's only correspondence with the squatters had been through newspapers.

Mofokeng remained firm that the invasion of homes was illegal, saying the process now in motion was the best and fairest way of allocating homes.

"To make things worse, the reports we have got from police are that all those who have been arrested have given permanent addresses. This means they have houses elsewhere — they are not all homeless, as they have tried to make out," he said.

(310) Star 21/2/95

Deadline set for Lenasia

Special Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — Gauteng Housing Minister Mr Dan Mofokeng has set Friday as the deadline for allocating about 300 empty houses in Lenasia Extension 13 — which were occupied by squatters last week — to their new owners.

Gauteng communications director Mr Chris Vick reiterated the government's stand: "We're hoping the allocation of houses on Friday will end the dispute, but that, of course, depends on whether the house-snatchers respect the decision of the committee which was set up to develop a new waiting list."

However, South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca) chairman Mr Basil Douglas said plans for a stayaway on Thursday were on track unless Mr Mofokeng agreed to withdraw charges against arrested squatters and police were withdrawn from the area.

(310) ET 21/2/95

Court told of bombings

FORMER AWB candidate officer Barend Honiball, 28, informed police of the AWB's alleged involvement in last year's pre-election bombings in Gauteng after the Pretoria bomb exploded close to his mother's workplace, the Rand Supreme Court hea[illegible] yesterday.

Honiball told the court although he had been part of the large AWB task force which had assembled at a Magaliesberg farm and later at a Rustenburg shooting range just before the elections, he had been "dis[illegible]ed" when he realised the group had perp[illegible]ated the bombings.

"I thought we had gathered to carry out community protection if there was violence or war. I was not told about killing anybody," he said.

Testifying at the trial of 26 AWB members who have denied complicity in six blasts which killed 20 people and wounded 46 others between April 24 and 27 last year, Honiball said he believed the task force was responsible for the Bree Street, Germiston and Pretoria bombs.

A member of the Ystergaarde, the AWB's elite guard, Honiball said he had heard news of the Bree Street bomb, near the ANC's regional head office Shell House, when some of the group had gathered around a radio at the Magaliesberg game farm, Springfontein.

DEBORAH FINE

He testified that one of the accused, Clint Ellish, 24, had said: "This is just the beginning. There will be many more."

"I asked him if he did it. He and the others just smiled and walked away," Honiball said.

The following day he heard members of the group say the bombings at Germiston, Pretoria and "another place" had been "successful". He also heard AWB members from Natal discussing the possibility of planting a bomb in Benoni.

He had wanted to leave the farm immediately and return to his Pretoria home, but had been informed by Ystergaarde Major Johannes Smit, 26, that anyone who left the farm would be shot.

He said the group was later informed they would be moving to the Waterval shooting range "because police might be looking for us". Smit had also said there would be a "shootout to the death" should police attempt to arrest the task force.

Asked by defence counsel what had motivated him to inform the police, Honiball replied: "I realised I was in big trouble, and the Pretoria bomb was near my mother's work. My brother also works in Pretoria."

Police swooped on the task force on April 27, just as they prepared to leave.

Houses 'to be assigned'

GAVIN STAFFORD

HOUSES in Lenasia extension 13 south of Johannesburg would be allocated to people by Friday and a list of the names would be made available, Gauteng housing minister Dan Mofokeng said yesterday.

Lenasia Residents' Association chairman Gash Rangasamy said residents had called on police to cordon off the area where squatters were camping as the settlement was disrupting their lives. Squatter representative Jeffrey Ntsomi said squatters would not occupy houses but would stay in the camp alongside the houses to make sure no one else moved in.

Rangasamy said residents had given government until Friday to move squatters out of the houses they illegally occupied, otherwise they would throw them out forcibly.

Employment of [illegible]

NEWS

Disputes over routes and rates escalate

Soweto commuters plan taxi boycott

Star 23/2/95

■ STAFF REPORTERS

Angry Soweto commuters have thrown down the gauntlet to the minibus taxi industry servicing Johannesburg and are due to start a boycott on Monday.

Two other flashpoints near the city are teetering on the edge of violence. In Katlehong on the East Rand, commuters and operators are at loggerheads over a 30c rate hike, and in Randburg operators are squaring up over disputed routes.

The Soweto Civic Association (SCA), announcing the boycott yesterday, gave the violence-torn industry in the township 14 days to solve its problems.

Spokesman Pule Buthelezi said the decision to launch the boycott followed a bloody dispute over routes between the Soweto Taxi Services and the Soweto Taxi Association (STA).

Negotiations are under way with bus operators to provide transport during the boycott.

Commenting on the SCA's appeal to the Transportation Board for a suspension of the granting of taxi permits, Buthelezi said: "There is no logic in continuing to issue more permits. Too many taxis are fighting for too few commuters."

Attempts to get comment from the taxi organisations were unsuccessful.

Tension is rising in Randburg following a dispute over routes between the Bryanston Taxi Association (BTA) and the Dietnooit Association.

Robert McBride, head of the ANC's safety and security department, said yesterday the current wave of taxi disputes emphasised an economic crisis in the industry, which could be addressed only through the introduction of a regulatory system. He said the government was researching better ways to regulate the industry.

Taxi violence claimed 127 lives last year and at least five so far this year.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj could not be reached for comment.

FOR THE RECORD

It was reported on Tuesday that the new head of the SA Army, Reg Otto, is a major-general and is 55 years old. Otto is in fact a lieutenant-general and he is 51. The Star apologises for the errors.

Valentine Valley squatters dig in

Star 23/2/95 (310)

A South Western Joint Civic Association mass meeting to discuss the organisation's stayaway and march to the Gauteng Legislature today degenerated into an ANC-bashing party last night.

Malebu Makoe, spokesman for the "Valentine Valley" squatters (Extension 13 in Lenasia was renamed Valentine Valley by squatters after they invaded about 280 homes on Valentine's Day), vowed last night not to move out. — Staff Reporter.

Squatters moved to new site

Star 23/2/95 (310)

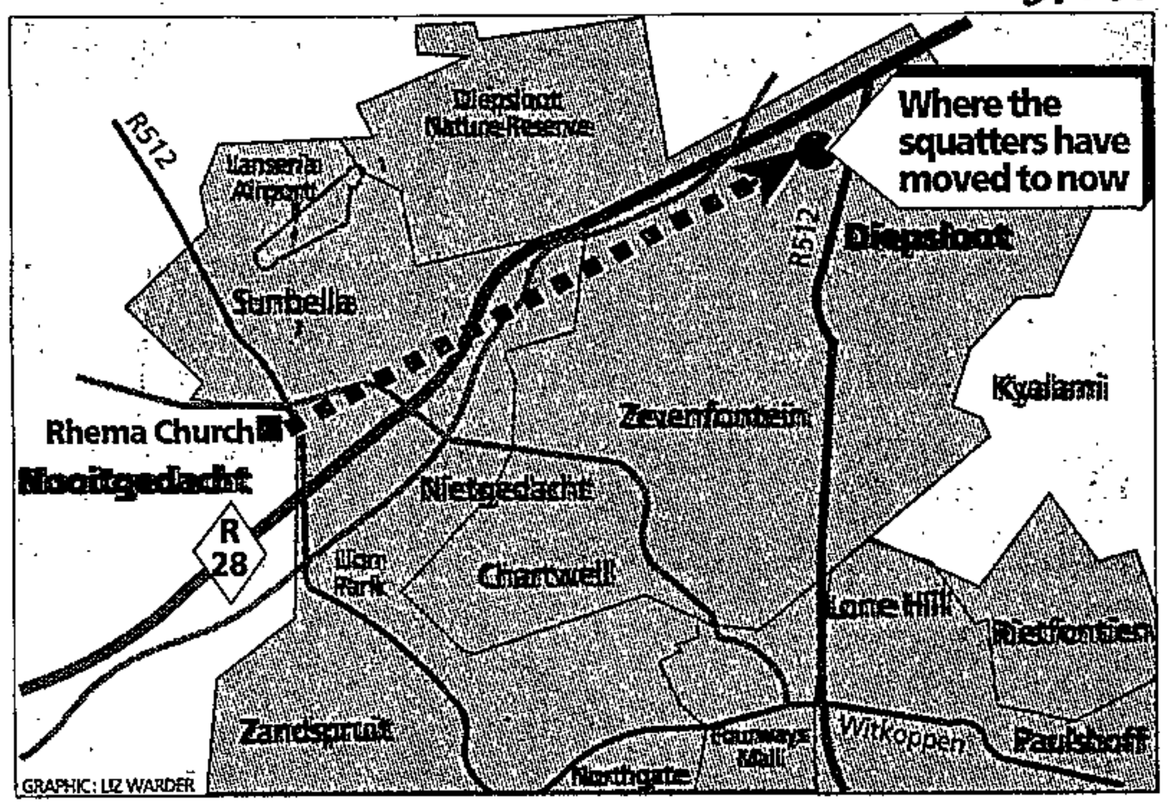
■ BY ANNA COX

An interdict brought against the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) by Laezonia residents to stop the relocation of squatters on a site in Diepsloot West was postponed on a technicality in the Rand Supreme Court yesterday until tomorrow.

Residents brought the interdict on the grounds that the former Transvaal Provincial Administration had given them a legal undertaking that no squatters would be moved into the area without proper services being established.

Meanwhile, about 240 squatters were moved from the Rhema Church farm in Nooitgedacht yesterday.

They were evicted in November from privately owned land in Zandspruit and then camped in the Randburg Town Council gardens for two weeks. Rhema Church then housed them for three months until alternative land could be found.



Only squatters from the church land who had been issued with permits were allowed on to the new site, but by yesterday afternoon hundreds of the original squatters also evicted from Zandspruit were trying to get on to the property.

Lindsay Bremner, chairman of the TMC's housing and urbanisation committee, said only people from the farm would be allowed on the new site.

She was reacting to allegations by the group of squatters who did not have permits that they had been "deceived" by the TMC. Only the most destitute and needy had been placed on the Rhema farm and others would be considered in the plans for permanent settlement once the TMC had a strategy in place.

Land invasion would not be tolerated and action would be taken against people who attempted it. Squatters would be required to pay for rent and services, Bremner stressed.

She would not comment on how long the squatters would be housed in the new camp.

Locals fight squatter move

(310) CT 23/2/95

JOHANNESBURG. – Gauteng's housing crisis deepened yesterday with the relocation of more than 300 squatters originally from Zandspruit in Randburg to Diepsloot north of here.

The squatters are only a section of about 1 000 people who illegally occupied private land in Zandspruit in October last year.

The temporary relocation has angered those who were not moved and who are now also demanding ground for resettlement.

Chair of housing and urbanisation in the greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council Ms Lindsay Bremner said those people were provided for as they were "destitute".

The others, she claimed, had in the interim found temporary accommodation but would definitely be considered once a permanent arrangement had been made.

The local residents' association has apparently applied for a court interdict prohibiting the settlement of squatters in the area.

Ms Bremner said she had met the association several times to address their concerns, "but these have been inconclusive". — Sapa



A new resident of the temporary squatter site at Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg, finds a window frame for his house from a pile of building material dropped off at the site yesterday. The material was confiscated after the eviction of Zandspruit squatters last year.

Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

Temporary site for Zandspruit squatters

(310) GAVIN STAFFORD b023 2/95

EVICTED Zandspruit squatters who were not given temporary accommodation at the Rhema Church's "hands of compassion" farm last year have not been allowed to settle on a new temporary site made available in Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg.

Of the 700 people evicted last year only 250 were given temporary accommodation by Rhema and yesterday they were moved to the new 153-stand site as the church had agreed to let them stay for only 90 days.

Housing and urbanisation committee chairman for the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, Lindsay Bremner, said yesterday that only the group of 250 were eligible to move to the temporary site in Diepsloot.

A group of about 100 of the former squatters congregated around the entrance to the new site yesterday which was guarded by police. They also wanted to gain access to building material for shacks which had been stored at the Randburg municipality.

Bremner said the site would be managed and controlled by the council to ensure there was no further settlement in the area. Residents would be issued with cards and the site would be fenced and guarded.

Diepsloot resident Jill Wileman said the Laezonia resident's association had filed an interdict at the Johannesburg Supreme Court yesterday to prevent people from moving to the Diepsloot site. The interdict had been postponed on a technicality as people had already moved onto the land when the interdict was filed.

Goldenhuys left the SAP in April 1993

less are looking to government to solve their problems

Squatters resettled at Diepsloot farm

(310) Sowetan 24/2/96

By Ruth Bhengu

■ **GIVEN SITES** *It's been a long way for squatters who were evicted from Zandspruit:*



Jane and Lucas Khunwana standing on the site allocated for the erection of a shack.

DAVID NDOU WAS standing under an umbrella arranging loaves of bread in a neat row on his hawker's stand.

The piece of ground, numbered 47, where the stand was pitched was clearly demarcated to show the extent of his "house".

Around Ndou were people busying themselves with pieces of corrugated iron, split poles and all manner of material trying to rebuild shacks for the umpteenth time. The material was lying in piles everywhere and trying to sort it out was proving to be almost impossible.

This was a farm in Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg where about 250 squatter families were being relocated after spending three months at the Rhema Church's "Hands of Compassion".

These families were part of the 1 000 people who were evicted from private land in Zandspruit last October. The squatters then occupied property belonging to the Randburg municipality. After a bitter struggle a third of them were temporarily sheltered by Rhema while the rest sought refuge with friends.

Those who were sheltered by Rhema were issued with cards and allocated sites at Diepsloot. Those who had not been allocated sites or a place to put up their shacks were demanding sites.

The strong presence of armed policemen, some on horseback, managed to keep an uneasy peace. Members of the committee representing the homeless were frantically trying to persuade the City Council officials to resolve the problem. Although it was late in the afternoon not even one shack had been erected.

"I suppose we will sleep in the open tonight," said Ndou continuing to pack his wares.

His wife Elisa was elsewhere on the farm trying to salvage their building material.

Ndou, who had lived in Honeydew, north of Johannesburg, for the five years, had erected and dismantled his shack several times in the past six months.

"We used to rent a room in Honeydew but we were told to leave because black people were squatting on the properties of whites and most of the landlords were getting nervous," said Ndou.

Living with parents

Ndou's three children are living with his parents in Venda. "It would have been very difficult if the children were here," he said.

Asked if he was relieved to have a temporary, home Ndou said: "It would be really nice to have a home. We don't care where it is as long as we would not have to move again."

Next to Ndou on plot 59 were Jane Khunwana and her family. Her husband was trying to put up their shack. The Khunwana's four children were huddled at the centre of the square demarcated for erecting their shack.

"I think it is better than sharing one tent with 10 other people," she said. Two of Khunwana's six children are in Venda with her family.

Like most of the squatters the Khunwanas lived in Honeydew on a plot until their landlord sold the property and the tenants found themselves destitute.

"I have to find a place to stay because if I keep taking time off from work, my employer will get fed up. As it is, I did not even report why I am absent"

"I think the big challenge now is how the children are going to go to school. We don't even know if there is transport out of here. But we will cross that bridge when we get to it," she said.

While these families were faced with the challenge of sorting out their material and erecting their shacks again, they considered themselves fortunate. Outside of the farm were many families who did not know where they were going to sleep that night.

"I don't know where my children and I are going to sleep tonight," said Jeanette Mbatha. Her children, aged between 18 and six years, were schooling in Witkoppen while she worked in Randburg.

Staying with friends

"We have been staying with some friends but when they heard we were going to be resettled, they expected us to leave. I have to find a place to stay because if I keep taking time off from work, my employer will get fed up. As it is, I did not even report why I am absent," she said.

The chairwoman of housing and urbanisation in the greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, Ms Lindsay Bremner, said at a news conference on Wednesday the group of 300 were provided for because they were "destitute".

The others, she claimed, had in the interim found temporary accommodation but would definitely be considered once a permanent arrangement had been made.

She stressed the relocation at Diepsloot was merely a temporary measure after the 90-day period on the Rhema farm, as earlier agreed to by the church and the Randburg Council, had expired.

The move has angered members of the predominantly white Laezonia Residents' Association who were seeking a court interdict on Wednesday afternoon, prohibiting the settlement of squatters in the area.

Inconclusive

Bremner said a series of meetings had been held with the association to address their concerns about the move.

"These have to date been inconclusive, but are continuing," she added.

The councillor said proposals submitted by the former town councils in the area, as well as provincial proposals, had to be considered before permanent sites could be identified.

Bremner said the TMC was in the process of setting up meetings with provincial officials "to develop a framework for the whole area".

The Diepsloot location, covering about 14 acres, will be fenced in and strict security will be maintained to prevent more people from settling there. Security access cards will be allotted to the people to monitor their movements in and out of the site.

By-laws will be introduced in the area in terms of the Prevention of Illegal Squatters' Act, Bremner said.

Meanwhile, squatters who were not relocated have threatened to re-occupy land at Zandspruit.

Ms Bremner warned action would be taken in the event of illegal invasions of land.

Meanwhile the squatters are looking to the government to solve their problems and going through life one day at a time.

March in support of Lenasia squatters

(3D) Star 24/2/95

■ CITY REPORTERS

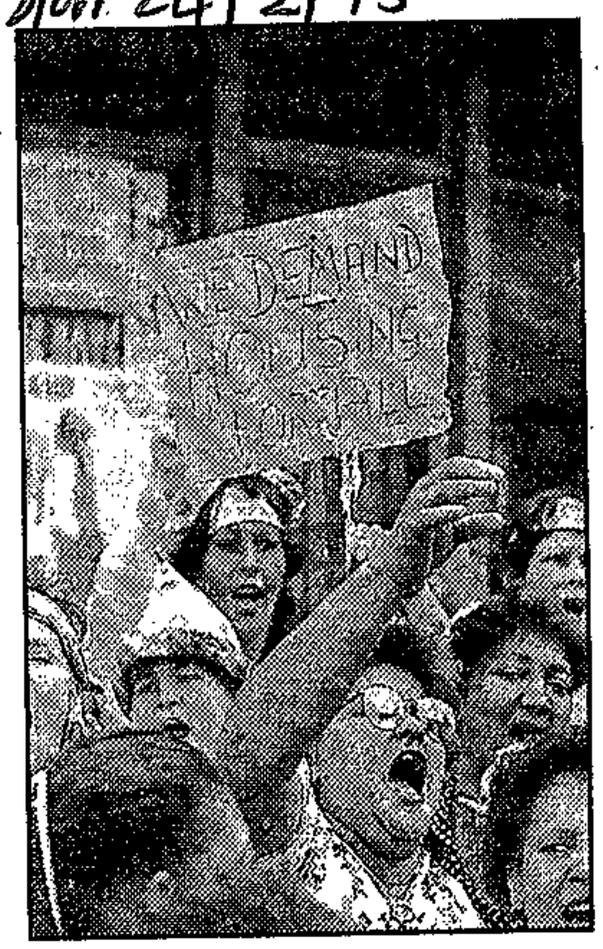
About 300 South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca) supporters marched on the Gauteng legislature yesterday to demand that Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng re-open negotiations over the allocation of houses occupied by squatters in Lenasia last week.

No appointment was made with the MEC, however, and he did not meet the marchers.

Various Sowejoca leaders, including chairman Basil Douglas, addressed the protesters, promising not to give up until the homeless were under shelter.

Meanwhile, suburbs south-west of Johannesburg were quiet yesterday despite Sowejoca's stayaway call.

Mofokeng said the "failure" of yesterday's action "proves what we have stated all along: that the process of allocating the Extension 13 houses is acceptable to the majority of the people".



Shout it out . . . some of the estimated 300 South Western Joint Civics Association supporters who marched through the streets of Johannesburg to the Gauteng legislature yesterday. PICTURE: ETIENNE ROTHBART

Mofokeng has said the empty houses will be allocated by today when a new list of names will be drawn up.

■ Lenasia Extension 13 squatters last night accused several men of tearing down at least five shacks and tents they put up in the veld in protest at housing allocations in the suburb.

The sqautters said the men "from the Housing Ministry" had packed the corrugated iron and material on to bakkies before driving off with it.

Lenasia: Men ruin shacks

(310) CT 24/2/95

JOHANNESBURG. — About 15 white men arrived in Lenasia, southwest of here, about 5.30pm yesterday and tore down shacks built by squatters.

Local civic association chairman Mr Basil Douglas said the men initially refused to say where they were from, but later said they were sent by the Gauteng housing department.

The men left the area without being confronted by the squatters. — Sapa

Minister laughs off protesters

GAUTENG housing minister Dan Mofokeng laughed off the small crowd that took part in yesterday's march on the provincial legislature and said it showed the South Western Joint Civic Association did not have the support of the people it claimed to represent.

Lenasia Extension 13 squatters and other homeless people from the southwestern areas of Johannesburg marched on the provincial legislature yesterday to hand a memorandum to Mofokeng, who was not present to meet them.

Mofokeng said the association, with its stayaway call in tatters, should rather focus on the 45 people still in jail as a result of its actions in Lenasia.

The memorandum demanded a meeting with Mofokeng to discuss suspending housing allocations in Lenasia until the matter was resolved.

Mofokeng said on Monday the houses would be allocated today and a list of names would be made available.

Association chairman Basil Douglas said squatters had no intention of leaving

GAVIN STAFFORD

extension 13, even though Lenasia residents have threatened to forcibly remove them if government had not done so by today.

INGRID SALGADO reports that when squatters returned to Lenasia yesterday evening, their shacks were being demolished by police. A police spokesman said the directive had come from Mofokeng. A heavy police presence was on hand to ensure no violence broke out.

However, Douglas said the squatters would not move. It was "immoral" for government to be taking down the shacks.

Inkatha Freedom Party MP Themba Khoza pledged his party's support to the marching squatters. BD 24/2/95

The association also demanded that housing waiting lists of all parties be reconciled, charges against evicted squatters be withdrawn, an all-inclusive housing forum be established and that the internal stability unit be withdrawn from Lenasia Extension 13. (310)

Squatters warned as houses allocated

(310) Star 25/2/95

MAX GEBHARDT

GAUTENG MEC for Housing Dan Mofokeng sent a strong message to the squatters at Lenasia Extension 13 during a press conference yesterday.

While announcing the first list of people who have been allocated houses in the trouble-hit suburb, which has seen house occupations and demonstrations over the past few weeks, Mofokeng said the provincial housing ministry would not tolerate queue-jumping.

"We are not going to mince words when it comes to law enforcement," Mofokeng said. "People who obstruct law enforcement officers will be arrested. As soon as we have allocated houses, those people (the squatters) will have to go."

Mofokeng said he had instructed policemen and officials to remove shacks and tents which have been illegally erected in Lenasia. "People who stay in those houses will be those who satisfy the criteria."

According to Mofokeng, 160 houses have already been allocated, and those who applied for houses had to meet a number of criteria, namely: applicants must be South African citizens; have proof of marriage and/or dependence, must not have previously benefited from a State housing scheme, and must not own any property of their own.

Mofokeng said the housing ministry wanted to start integrating communities that had been divided by apartheid.

"Once the list is released, people will realise we have Indians, coloureds as well as Africans earning below R1 500 staying there," Mofokeng said.

The new home-owners will be able to move into their houses shortly, and officials will continue processing applications for the other 140 houses.

"We are happy that the majority of people in the area will accept the process and the new list. Their acceptance is shown by the fact that Thursday's call for a stayaway wasn't successful," the MEC said.

He expressed concern at the "mindless" damage, estimated at R300 000, caused to many of the houses and said the ministry was investigating whether anyone could be held liable.

"It is high time that people realise we cannot tolerate these kinds of activities," he said.

Armed invaders march on the ANC

JOHANNESBURG. — Militant squatters occupying houses and land in Lenasia Ext 13, southwest of Johannesburg, yesterday vowed not to leave.

About 100 invaders, including people from the nearby Thembalihle squatter camp, were armed with guns, sharpened sticks and wooden clubs as they marched to the offices of the ANC's Lenasia branch, where they handed a memorandum to the ANC assistant secretary-general in the township, Mickey Padayachee.

(310)

The memorandum demanded the dissolution and replacement of the Lenasia housing advisory committee.

ARG 25/2/95

Mr Padayachee asked the marchers to disperse peacefully, saying: "We do not want confrontation."

The squatters left, vowing to return to the occupied area.

Southwest Joint Civic Association chairman Basil Douglas, who has been prominent in recent events in Lenasia, conceded the mood was becoming militant.

Yesterday was the deadline set by the Gauteng MEC for Local Government and Housing, Dan Mofokeng, for the allocation of the houses in Extension 13 to legal occupants. — Sapa.

SOWETAN 28/2/95 (310)

Mohlomi.

"We have appealed for help to every government official we can think of. We have spoken to Minister of Police and Security Jesse Duarte, Minister of Housing Dan Mofokeng and Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale, among others.

"We have staged protest marches to all the council offices, including Randburg and Sandton. We have even marched in Pretoria, but all we have ever got were promises.

"We spoke to President Nelson Mandela and Chairman of the Constitutional Assembly Cyril Ramaphosa, when they were touring Alexandra before the elections. They promised to do something. But we suspect they have forgotten about us''.

The 45-year-old Mohlomi owns property in Second Avenue, Number 122. But since the day she was forced to abandon her home in March 1991, it has been occupied by total strangers.

"When we left our homes we were escorted by police" said Mohlomi. "In some cases people were not allowed to take their belongings. The attackers demanded our house keys as we hurriedly bundled our things onto trucks.

"The police were watching all this," she said.

Occupy one room

Mohlomi and her children and grandchild now occupy one room at what used to be Alexandra Council offices. This room is shared with another family. Mohlomi is lucky that she managed to salvage a few pieces of furniture when she escaped.

Most people have nothing. Others are grateful to find a corner where they can put their mat and blankets.

The building is so overcrowded that even corridors are divided into "bedrooms". Some offices have been turned into male quarters while others are female quarters. This means that some couples are forced to live separately because there is no privacy.

The few toilets are shared by hundreds of people and there is not enough water to meet everyone's needs.

There is a permanent stench from the filth that residents battle against daily without any success.



Homeless...many still waiting after promises.

"Sometimes we have electricity and other times we do not," explains Jerry Matona (33), secretary of the Displacees Coordinating Committee.

"The Council has problems supplying us with electricity because we don't pay. But we don't want to live here anyway," he says.

The committee represents the 250 families that are housed in 12 centres around the township. The DCC has at least 4 000 members.

Matona is having problems convincing those displaced not to give up the fight to repossess their homes.

"People are losing hope. They are beginning to think the Government does not care", says Matona.

"During one meeting with Dan Mofokeng, MEC for local education and housing, he told us Government had set aside about R11 million for the reconstruction of Alexandra.

"But it seems that money is being used for other projects and no one is explaining to us what is happening," says Matona. While some properties were occupied by the attackers, most homes had been razed to the ground and replaced with shacks.

"Now some of those shacks are being replaced with brick structures," says Matona.

"This makes us suspect that those people have no intention of vacating our homes," he says.

According to Matona, overcrowding has led to the breakdown of social structures. Respiratory diseases are common and substance abuse is high as people try to numb their emotions.

Teenage pregnancy and juvenile delinquency is very high. At least 60 percent of the displaced people are unemployed.

Quit school

" Most of the youth have quit school and parents are having difficulty trying to maintain discipline. The children just tell them to go and deal with the Zulus who took their homes away.

"Most elderly people are sick and infant mortality is high here. Fights break out all the time because people are irritable.

"We feel let down by the Government and we think it is time to expose it,"says Matona.

The general apathy among the displaced is heartbreaking.

NEWS FEATURE *Four years later some township hom*

Alex residents fast losing faith

Sowetan 28/2/95

By Ruth Bhengu

■ HOPELESS *We have appealed to every govt official we can think of:*

FOUR YEARS AGO, at the height of political violence in the country, hundreds of Alexandra residents fled their homes and sought refuge in "temporary" shelters.

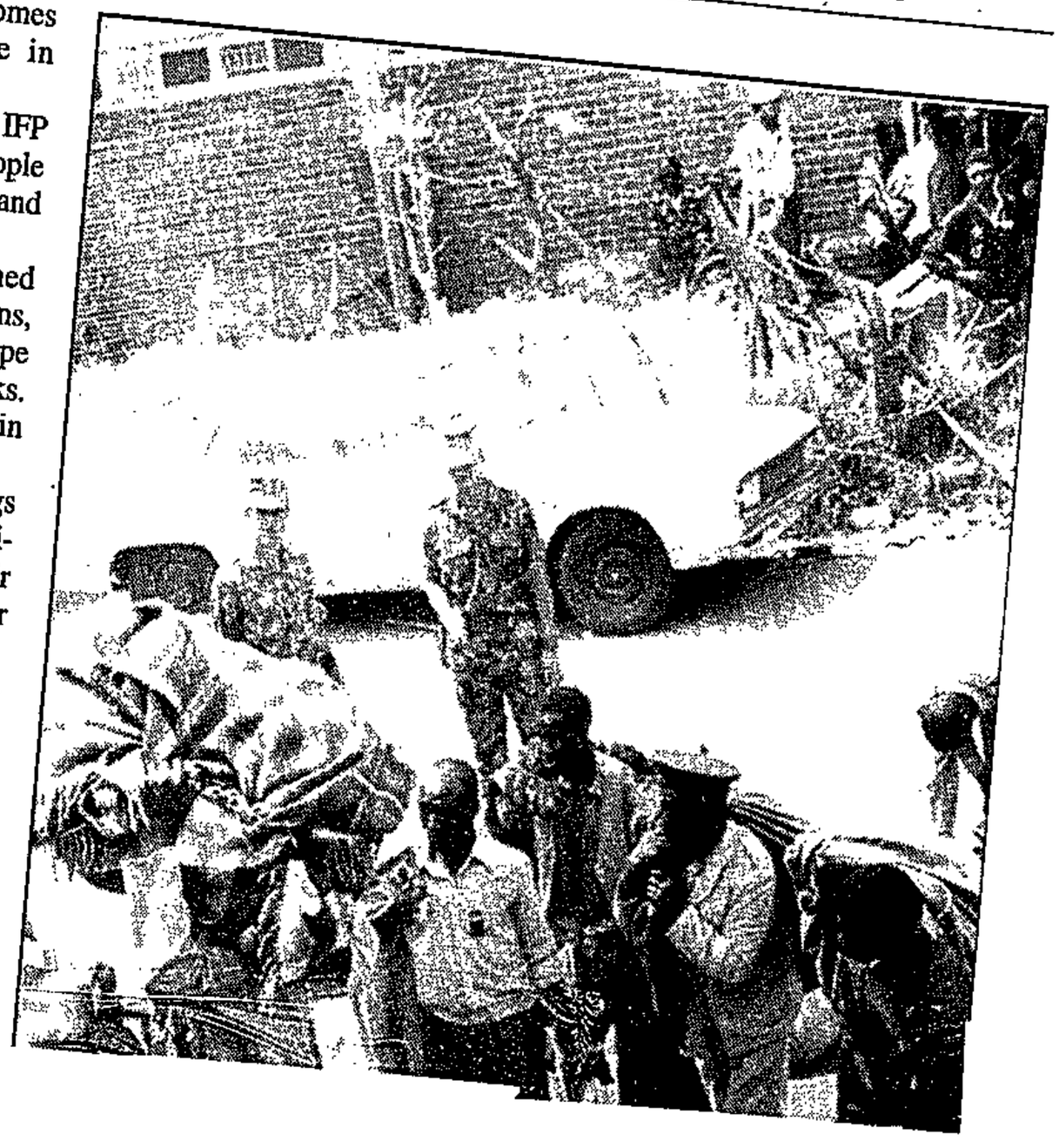
The battle between ANC and IFP supporters engulfed ordinary people leaving in its wake scores dead and maimed.

Most residents, who had owned property in Alexandra for generations, had to abandon their homes and escape with only the clothes on their backs. Overnight they became refugees in their own neighbourhood.

Municipal offices, school buildings and churches were packed with families who dared not even return to their homes to fetch their belongings for fear of IFP spear-wielding warriors.

As far as most people were concerned, this nightmare would soon be over and life would get back to nor.nal. But they are still holed up in the "temporary" shelters and hopes of getting back to their homes are dwindling fast.

"We thought we would be able to go back to our homes as soon as the dust had settled, but we had no idea what was in store for us," said Mrs Hilda



SOWETAN

28/2/95

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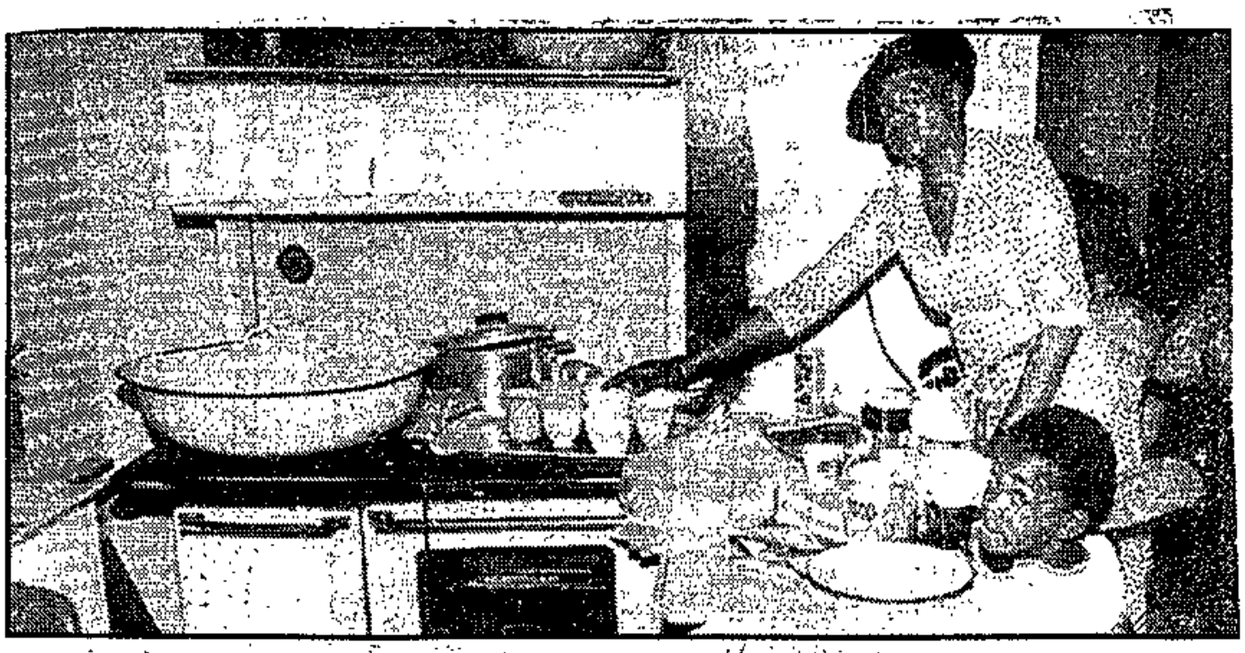

Mamimi Makhubela and daughter Mapule now without a home.

Displaced by violence

By Ruth Bhengu

DAVID Khumalo (39) is a lay priest. He is also a member of the local peace structures and an Inkatha Freedom Party member.

A founder member of the Alexandra Residents Association, Khumalo has a working relationship with all the political and civic organisations in the area. His main aim is to achieve peace in Alexandra, he says.

Like most of his neighbours in what is known as Beirut, Khumalo lives in a house whose owners fled the area four years ago when political rivalry between the ANC and IFP was at its height.

"I moved into this house when the old lady who occupied it left for Zululand," explains Khumalo.

House abandoned

"The house did not belong to her. She had found it abandoned by its owners. At that time people were leaving their homes because they said they were afraid of dying.

"There was a rumour that the ANC was going to place a bomb in one of the pipes that supply gas to half of Alexandra, including the hostels.

"The bomb was supposed to devastate the hostels and the area close to it which was occupied mostly by IFP supporters.

"Many residents from this area packed their things and left," he says.

Khumalo denies that the residents who fled were chased out by IFP members who were occupying their houses even while the police were watching. Those who left claim that IFP members sometimes demanded keys while the terrified residents were loading their belongings on trucks.

comrades had decided to kill me because I had not attended a meeting of the residents.

They said I should not take anything to show I was running away. So I took a bottle of cold drink and pretended I was going to the shop.

"I went up to the Pan Am and telephoned my wife to not come home that evening. I sent messages to my children in their school and asked them to meet me at Pan Am.

"We went to squat at the hostel where there were hundreds of families living like cattle," he says.

Khumalo says he cannot go back to his house because it has been occupied by other people who have renovated it.

"There is no way we can go back to our homes because it would start a war. What we are focusing on now is to get government to build houses for everyone," he says.

Martha Mhlanga (41) who lives on third avenue came to Alexandra in 1990 after she stopped working as a domestic worker. Mhlanga stayed put when her neighbours were fleeing in panic.

"I decided I would wait until someone actually came and asked me to leave," she explains simply. But nobody chased me out of my house so I stayed.

"For those who stayed behind things were difficult because those who left accused them of all kinds of things. But I had not stayed here anyway because I was working.

"So I was not affected by the many of the things that were happening here," she says.

Fled her home

Mary Mthombeni fled her home in 13th Avenue because her husband is Zulu speaking.

"One night we were sleeping when some of the people in the yard said we should leave because there was a group of people coming to kill the Zulus.

"We came to 2nd Avenue and moved into an empty house. We did not know who it belonged to. It is not comfortable to live in someone else's house because you do not know when they will come back. You can't even make it look nice because you might have to leave.

"I wish I had a house of my own."

Mthombeni's wish is shared by thousands of people in Alexandra and the whole country for that matter.

"I tried to persuade people not to leave because I knew what difficulties they would be faced with," says Khumalo.

Khumalo himself fled from another section of Alexandra after kind neighbours had whispered to him that he was to be killed that same day. Khumalo, who was born in Kempton Park and grew up in Alexandra, was staying at Number 113 in 15th Avenue with his wife and two of his 18 children.

"The yard I was staying in was occupied mostly by Xhosa speaking people. This was the time when tensions between the Zulu and Xhosa speaking people was starting.

"I had not involved myself in politics because I was busy with my church affairs. So people started to say I was not involved in community issues.

"Then one day someone told me that the

Lenasia residents fearful over squatter expansion

Star 28/2/95 (310)

■ BY BOBBY BROWN

More shacks have sprung up next to two schools at the Lenasia Extension 9 squatter camp since Wednesday, and residents are complaining about increasing crime and a threat to their children's lives.

About 35 residents attended a meeting at the Lenasia south-east management committee's office yesterday to demand that squatters remain within boundaries agreed on two years ago.

Residents will hold a meeting with the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (GJTMC) today.

A spokesman for the residents said they had always had a good relationship with the squatters, but that a new splinter group, led by a man known only as Sipho, did not want to listen to reason.

One squatter, painter John Khumalo, said they had paid Sipho R20 for the land and had nowhere else to go. Most squatters spoken to yesterday confirmed that they had paid the R20 fee.

"We paid him (Sipho) to come and grade the ground for us," said Nicholas Radebe.

Dirk Vermeulen, chief executive officer of the Lenasia south-east management committee of the GJTMC, said he was aware of residents' grievances, but refused to comment until after today's meeting.

The spokesman for the residents said two six-year-old primary schoolgirls were raped in the squatter camp last year and that the bicycles of several schoolboys had been stolen.

"There is a shebeen very close to the high school fence, and scholars have been known to buy liquor and drugs from there," the spokesman said.

A Lenasia policeman could not confirm the rape allegations, but said he knew about bicycles being stolen.

■ About 160 of the 280 empty houses in Lenasia Extension 13 — illegally occupied by squatters earlier this month — have been allocated, said a spokesman for Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng.

Thabang Mamonyane said the verification process of applications for the remaining houses would take time as details had to be checked, but the department was hoping it would be completed by the beginning of next week.

Squatters in Lenasia held

(310)

JOHANNESBURG. — Altogether 33 squatters were arrested in a predawn swoop in Lenasia, south-west of here, at the weekend, police said.

Members of Lenasia's crime prevention unit saw the detainees breaking into several unoccupied houses and arrested them. CT 6/3/95

One person escaped while the others were being fingerprinted, a police spokesman said.

The detainees were charged with housebreaking. — Sapa

Lenasia 'invasion' costs Gauteng R750 000

(310) BD 8/3/95

GAVIN STAFFORD

DAMAGE to houses in Lenasia Extension 13 illegally occupied by Eldorado Park residents last month would cost the Gauteng housing ministry R750 000, Lenasia housing advisory committee member N Rathinsamy said yesterday.

Rathinsamy said locks and doors had been broken when squatters illegally occupied the 300 houses, and in some instances geysers had been removed.

He said the money to repair the houses was enough to build 40 to 50 houses.

Rathinsamy said the committee had allocated about 230 of the 296 available houses.

Rathinsamy said the successful applicants had been informed and could collect the keys.

However, physical occupation of the houses had been slow because repairs to the houses had not yet been completed.

Squatters allege IFP intimidation

(310) Star 8/3/95

■ BY ABDUL MILAZI

Zonk'iZizwe squatters are fleeing the squatter camp in their hundreds after alleging that they were being forced at gunpoint to join the Inkatha Freedom Party for the October municipal elections.

Scores of refugees from the Vosloorus, East Rand, camp were yesterday erecting shacks across the road from the Zama-Zama squatter site.

Last night, Gauteng acting premier Jessie Duarte said the provincial government had "noted the developments in the Zonk'iZizwe informal settlement area where tensions have been growing over the past few days.

"Gauteng will continue monitoring the situation to ensure peace reigns supreme. In this regard, the provincial government welcomes efforts to resolve the current impasse through dialogue between senior leaders of political areas in the area and at provincial level," Duarte added.

One refugee, Manas Makhubela (69), said he had abandoned his four-roomed house and all his belongings, fearing for his life.

"Eight men in overcoats and balaclavas came to my house on Monday night and told me I had to join the IFP or move to an ANC area. They told me that they would kill me if I refused to leave," said Makhubela.

Tina Rankuwa (45), another squatter, said the threats had been made at several public meetings in the camp since local government elections were announced in January.

Ntombizodwa Khuse said she was politically non-aligned, but IFP supporters had still forced her out.

A group of residents in Zonk'iZizwe who claimed to be IFP supporters refused to speak to The Star team, but denied the allegations.

"People who are leaving are doing so on their own free will. We don't know anything about their problems. If you believe what they tell you, you will be in a lot of trouble as well," said one member of the group.

The local IFP leadership was not available for comment. A spokesman at the Johannesburg office said the matter was under investigation.

Lenasia occupiers warned, released

310 Sowetan 3/3/95

By Mongadi Mafata

THIRTY-TWO South Western Joint Civic Associations members, who illegally occupied vacant houses in Lenasia Extension 13 last month, were released on condition they did not set foot in the area again.

They made a brief appearance in the Soweto Magistrate's Court on Monday and were not asked to plead.

The case was postponed to March 30 for further investigations.

The group, who named the area Valentine Park because they occupied the houses on February 14, appeared before magistrate Mr PJ Johnson dishevelled and carrying blankets and duvets.

All gave a clenched fist salutes to members of Sowejoca, including chairman Mr Basil Douglas, in the gallery.

The accused are Collin Smith (30), Eugene Buckland (26), John Griffith (22), Mark Arends (19), Dean Appa (21), Jafta Joseph (22), James Lund (26), Desmond Bazil Thomas (37), Jeanette Eriss (44), Brenda Louw (28), Antoinette Palm (49), Patricia Duiker (34), Malebo Makom (37), Sonto Mponxa (26), Mark Locke (22), Poppy Mokone (35), Rose Engelbrecht (42), Betty Manuel (29), Joyce Saal (30), Mary Dummonds (25), Elizabeth Hloele (22), Sonia Jacobs (31), Maureen Ferris (43), Noxolo Ndletswa (26), Deidri De Jager (20), Sonia Harris (34), Koos Frans (29), Gert van Staden (41), Zandile Dlamini (22), Eduard Meters (44), James Ngubane (23) and Eben Jacobs (29). They all gave Lenasia Extension 13 addresses.

300 leave Lenasia

(310)
Sowetan 10/3/95

THE occupation of houses and land in Lenasia's Extension 13, southwest of Johannesburg, ended yesterday when about 300 people started moving out of the area towards neighbouring Eldorado Park.

The occupation of empty houses and land began three weeks ago despite opposition from the Gauteng government, whose MEC for housing, Mr Dan Mofokeng, threatened to forcibly remove the invaders.

Yesterday afternoon the squatters said a prayer before setting their makeshift homes alight.

They then moved towards the entrance of the township led by South-Western Joint Civics Association chairman Mr Basil Douglas.

Douglas said the homeless would occupy empty land in the predominantly coloured area of Eldorado Park where they would erect temporary shelters and later build their own homes. — *Sapa*.

Squatters on move again

(310) Star 14/3/95

■ CITY REPORTER

Squatters who settled on land in Eldorado Park on Thursday after leaving the homes they invaded in Lenasia Extension 13 moved again at the weekend to existing squatter camps in the area.

Shacks which were erected after people measured out and pegged plots on the Eldorado Park land were dismantled on Friday, police spokesman Govindsamy Mariemuthoo said.

After negotiations with provincial officials, the 300 people who had occupied the land moved to existing camps on the border of Eldorado Park.

South Western Joint Civic Association (Sowejoca) leader Basil Douglas — who was instrumental in the invasions — yesterday said the squatters had moved from Lenasia because children were getting sick as a result of living outdoors.

He said a government official had agreed to allow the squatters to move to the land in Eldorado Park, but later denied this and had the shacks demolished.

He said the squatters moved to Freedom Park and Chicken Farm after negotiations with the Government and the police failed. Sowejoca was planning meetings with business people to develop the camps.

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Generous offers pour in

Squatters thrown a lifeline

(310) Star 17/3/95

■ BY ANNA COX

Readers of The Star have opened their hearts to the plight of a group of squatters living in abject poverty on the outskirts of Katlehong.

Many people have telephoned offering cash, clothing, seeds and gardening tools for the squatters to start a food garden.

The group was forced out of the townships because of political violence and has been living in thick bush with no services — not even toilets.

They have been subjected to many criminal and political attacks.

The O'Connor Foundation, a private welfare organisation which has been delivering food parcels once every two months, said the response from The Star had been "overwhelming".

Chairman Craig Anderson commented: "Truly the people of Gauteng are golden-hearted. On behalf of the affected communities we would like to thank all the readers who responded so generously. They have really made a difference in the hard lives of these people.

"The donations will be used to start a food garden so the squatters will be able to grow their own vegetables. For many it is their only source of food as most don't have an income at all. It will also give them back their dignity."

FM 17/3/95 (30t) (310)

SQUATTING

Tough on Turbine

Since a moratorium was imposed on land invasions and eviction of squatters after the April election, property owners have not been sure if they could remove invaders.

The issue was raised recently as a result of squatters having moved in to the Turbine Square site in Newtown, Johannesburg.

Clarification has come from Gauteng Housing and Local Government Minister Dan Mofokeng. He says the moratorium applies only to squatters who took over land before the end of May last year. Anyone who invaded after that date can be prosecuted. Property owners are therefore entitled to call police to remove squatters.

Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council executive committee member Lindsay Bremner says the council needs a court interdict to empower police to act. It has no such plans on this site or any other in the CBD. The Gauteng government is trying to release land recently identified for housing to provide other sites.

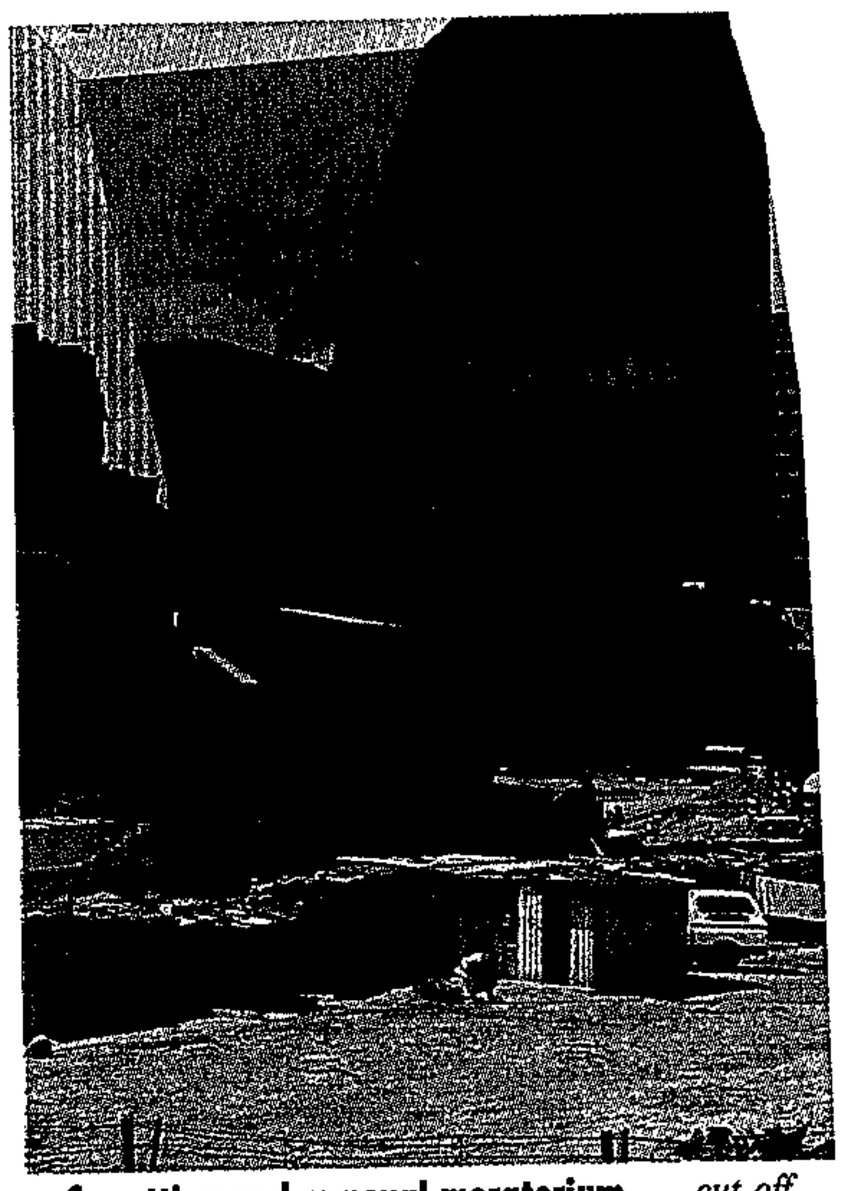
An option on the site was acquired by developer Turbine Square last year after a number of others failed to raise finance for projects there. The company, which is co-owned by Nedcor and Tiber Bonvec, plans to build shops and offices. But transfer from the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council will take place only when the finance is in place.

The adjacent ground in Newtown, bounded by Bezuidenhout, Jeppe, President and Gough streets, is being developed by the council, unhindered by squatters. It was the site of the city's electricity department.

The development is to be the nucleus of the Newtown Cultural Precinct. Construction of infrastructure and the renovation of six historical buildings started two-and-a-half years ago. Buildings are at various stages of work. Landscaping and paving is under way. The precinct will take five more years to complete.

Council culture director Chris Till says the first phase of the Electric Workshop is complete. The Johannesburg Biennale Exhibition will be held in the building for the next two months. Then the SA Music Industries' Exhibition will take place there.

The Workers' Library and Museum is complete and occupied. This was the old municipal hostel building. The Megamusic building, housed in the old mechanical workshop, is also finished. So is the Print Workshop and the first phase of the Dance Factory. SA Breweries will open its visitors' centre and museum on the site in May, along with a brew pub. ■



Squatting and removal moratorium . . . *cut-off date May last year*



Tension gripped a squatter camp near Riverlea Extension 2 in Johannesburg yesterday after an invasion by residents who were demanding that the squatters vacate the area. The squatters' toilets were destroyed. The squatters have vowed not to move from the area.

PIC: VUSI ZWANE

Residents, squatters in conflict

(310) Sowetan 22/3/95

By Russel Molefe

TENSIONS ran high at a squatter camp near Industria, Johannesburg, yesterday after a group of residents from Riverlea Extension 2 invaded the camp demanding that squatters vacate the area. The timely arrival of the police quelled what could have turned into a bloody confrontation as both sides were armed and exchanged heated words and verbal insults. This followed the invasion of the camp by Riverlea residents who broke down the squatters' toilets and ordered them to vacate the area as they were not wanted near the township.

The squatters said antagonism started last Thursday when their representatives were thrown out of a meeting by representatives of the Riverlea residents. The meeting was to discuss the development of the squatter camp which has no running water and other basic necessities.

After being thrown out, *Sowetan* was told, the squatters' representatives were later attacked by representatives of the Riverlea residents.

Viennese boost for Orange Farm

Star 29/3/95

Orange Farm, one of the fastest growing informal housing settlements in the country, received a grant yesterday of R5,5-million from the city of Vienna for education.

Construction of a new school will start within the next two months. Many of the estimated 1-million people of Orange Farm will be involved in the building of the centre.

It is to be used as a school during working hours and a community centre with adult education programmes at night.

The school will be twinned with St John's College in Johannesburg, whose teachers are involved in teacher upgrading. Pupil exchanges will take place on academic and sports projects.

The Vienna Centre is expected to be completed by the beginning of 1996. — Staff Reporter.

~~30~~ (310) (80)

Rains bring devastation to squatters

Sowetan 31/3/95 (310)

■ **DESPAIR GROWS** *'Government promised us homes but they can't deliver':*



Mrs Lucky Komaphe, whose shack was washed away by floods in Alexandra.

By Joshua Raboroko

property is gone and there is nobody to help me," she said.

SOWETAN

5/13/95

A Bogopa was searching through the mud and rubble with his bare hands when *Sowetan* came across him this week.

He was looking for his money, clothes, food, shoes and other goods that disappeared when devastating floods swept away his tin shack in Alexandra on Saturday night.

"It had been raining for four days. I was sleeping when I heard a thunderous noise and a flood forced open the door.

"I thought the end of the world was here. I went outside where I joined my neighbours. My R150, clothes, food and corrugated iron sheets were washed away.

For some time they stood outside their muddy shacks in confusion as rising water swept away their furniture, clothes, money and an assortment of goods valued at thousands of rands.

He is staying with relatives while waiting for the local authorities to find alternative accommodation for them.

With her baby on her back, a destitute Mrs Selina Marenga said: "Here we have no proper homes. We live with our hearts virtually in our mouths every time the atmosphere becomes cloudy."

The damage caused to her property was estimated at over R5 000. "I am stranded and my children are starving. We have nowhere to stay.

"We asked for temporary accommodation from a neighbour while we try to make ends meet," she said.

A mother of two children, Mrs Lucky Komaphe, came to Alexandra last August and lived in a shack with her family. "My tin shacks in the area, rain means disaster in their lives.

Most of them were left homeless when water swept away their shacks after torrential rain and floods.

One of the oldest residents of Alexandra, Mr Thomas Senoko, said that these were probably the worst floods to hit the area in many years.

The situation is compounded by the fact that there is no proper system of sanitation or sewerage and refuse removal and shacks are crowded.

The squalid conditions under which the squatters live is a sufficient indication of the pressure the Gauteng Legislature faces.

The question many residents are asking themselves, is whether the government will deliver the homes they promised voters after the last April elections.

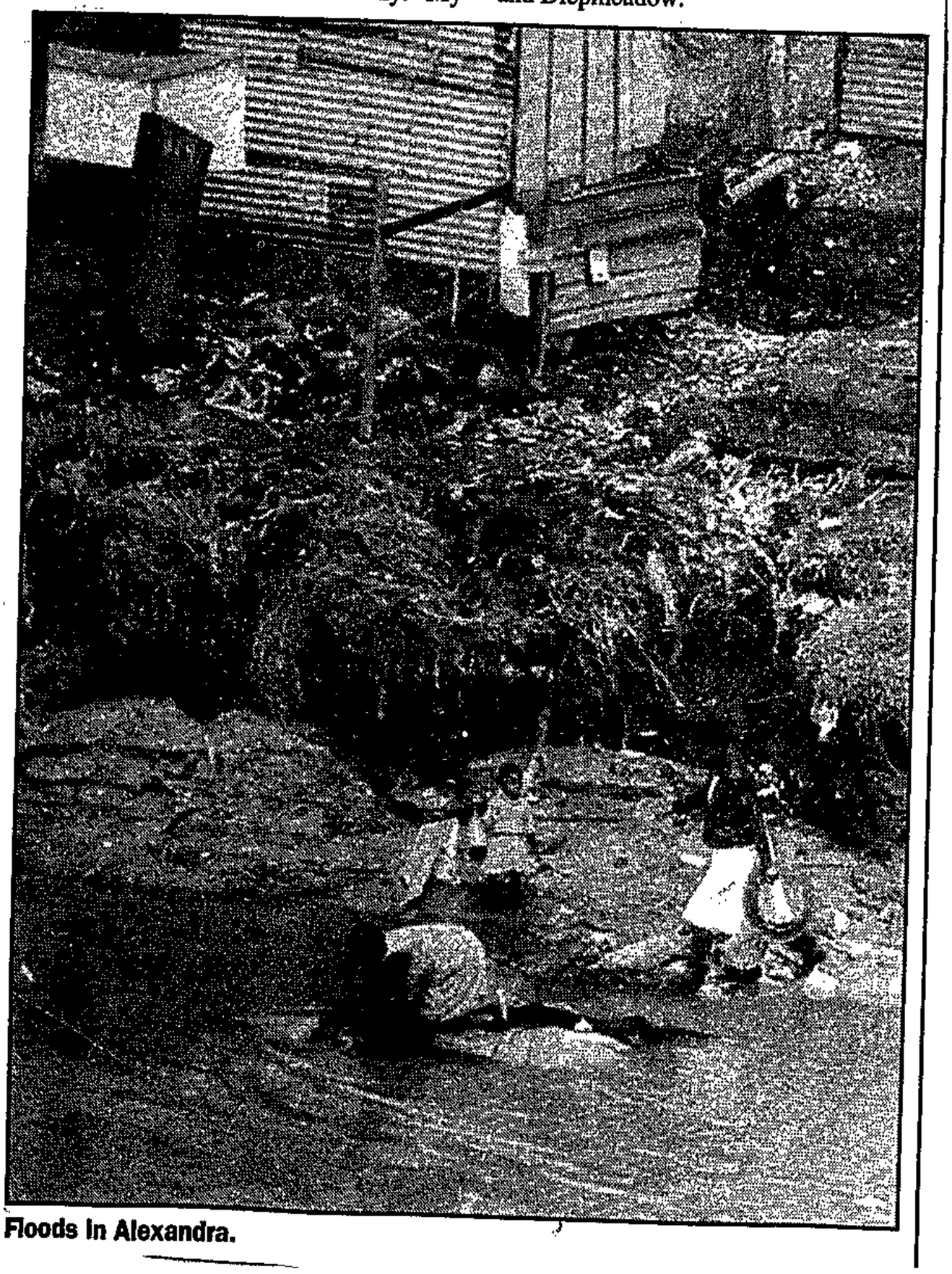
Chief of Sandton emergency services Mr Pine Pienaar said arrangements for shelter would be made this week.

A jobless Mrs Lydia Mogamo said: "The Government promised us homes when we voted for them. But they cannot deliver."

Chairman of the executive committee of the northern local authority Nkele Mtingane said the crisis had reached a climax and it was time that steps be taken to address it.

Chairman of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council Mr Isaac Mogase has said that "something dramatic" needed to be done to solve the problem.

The council has approved a total of R103 million for the improvement of services in Alexandra, Dobsonville, Soweto and Diepmeadow.



Floods in Alexandra.

Squatter dilemma returns

(310 Star 31/3/95

■ BY ANNA COX

An appeal for calm has been made by Gauteng legislature member Mohammed Dangor following the application for an order to evict 9 000 squatters from privately owned land in Zevenfontein north of Johannesburg.

Stan Klaf, the owner of the property, which adjoins the upmarket Dainfern development, this week applied for an eviction order in the Rand Supreme Court. A return date has been set for May 17.

Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale, the chairman of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Chamber (TMC) and Pinky Maloi of the squatter settlement have been cited as respondents.

Dangor said both the squatters and neighbouring residents should not panic as negotiations were under way with Klaf to reach a compromise and to find alternative accommodation for the squatters.

The TMC would be considering a report on Wednesday on low cost housing, prepared by the former Randburg town council, and squatters would be given an option of various sites before the May 17 deadline.

The squatters were to have been moved to a serviced site in Diepsloot which was purchased by the former TPA and which will be ready for occupation by the end of April. The site, however, is too small for all 1 800 families.

"All the squatters cannot move to Diepsloot, and there will be war if we try to move some there," said Dangor.

The squatter settlement which started with 40 people five years ago has grown to 9 000 people living in 1 800 shacks.

ANC rejects shack people's claim of being made to pay for land

Squatters tell of rent scam

(310) Star 4/4/95

■ BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
CITY REPORTER

Scores of homeless people building shacks on a piece of land earmarked for low-income housing in Fordsburg, Johannesburg, claim they were told to join the ANC and pay R300 a month to be able to build there.

The ANC denied the claims yesterday and said the squatters were illegally occupying the land.

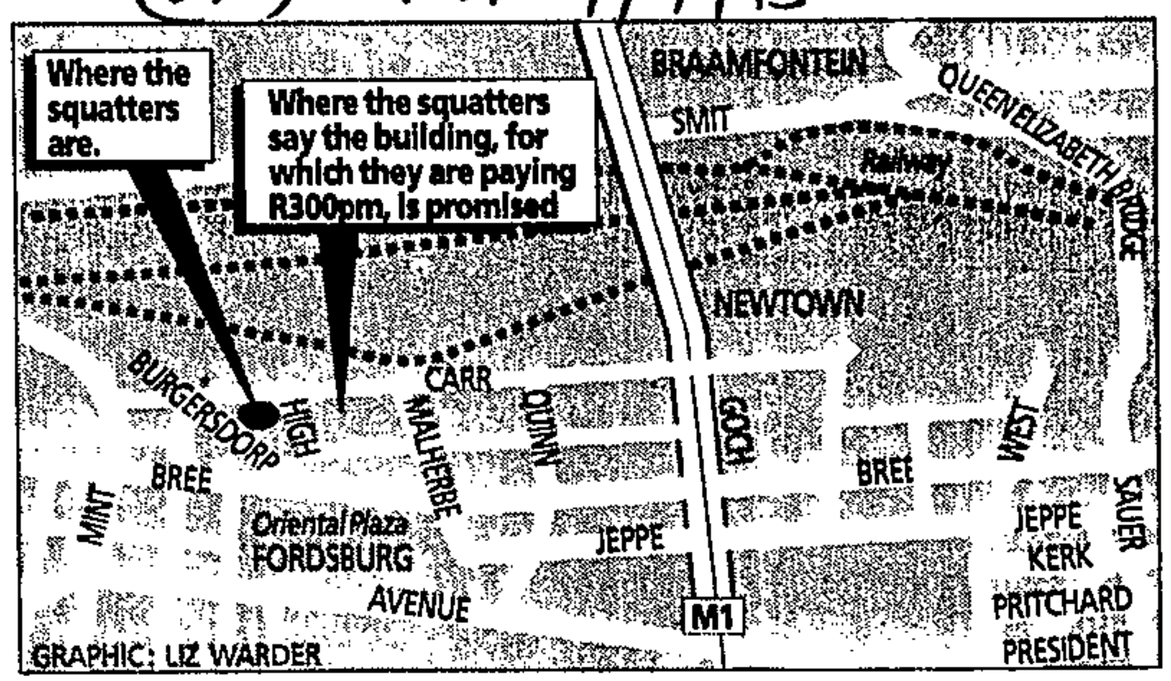
The squatters said they were allowed to build shacks on a triangular piece of land between Carr, High and Burghersdorp streets only if they produced their ANC membership cards.

Squatter representative Tobias Zwane said a mortuary owner who has a building on the land had told them to move when they first occupied the spot in December.

The issue was then discussed with the ANC and they were given permission to stay on condition they joined the organisation, Zwane said.

"We are unemployed and have been sleeping in pipes for years. Some of us come from Park Station.

"We then asked for help from the ANC and they have now promised to bring us toilets and more water," he said.



Zwane said they were also told to pay R300 a month so that flats could be built for them on vacant land opposite the shack settlement.

ANC spokesman Paul Seretsane was shocked when told about the allegations: "We do not know anything about the people living on that land."

Seretsane said the squatters could be evicted anytime as the land they were occupying had been earmarked for low-income housing.

"As far as we know they are illegally staying in that area." He said the ANC had spent about R40 000 to clean the triangle of land and the one opposite so that they could start building 110 low-income homes.

"We completely disagree with what these people are doing. Whoever is telling them to join the ANC so that they can have homes is deceiving them. Today we turned someone away who wanted to join so that he could live in the squatter camp,"

Seretsane added that they had no plans to arrange toilets and water for the squatters.

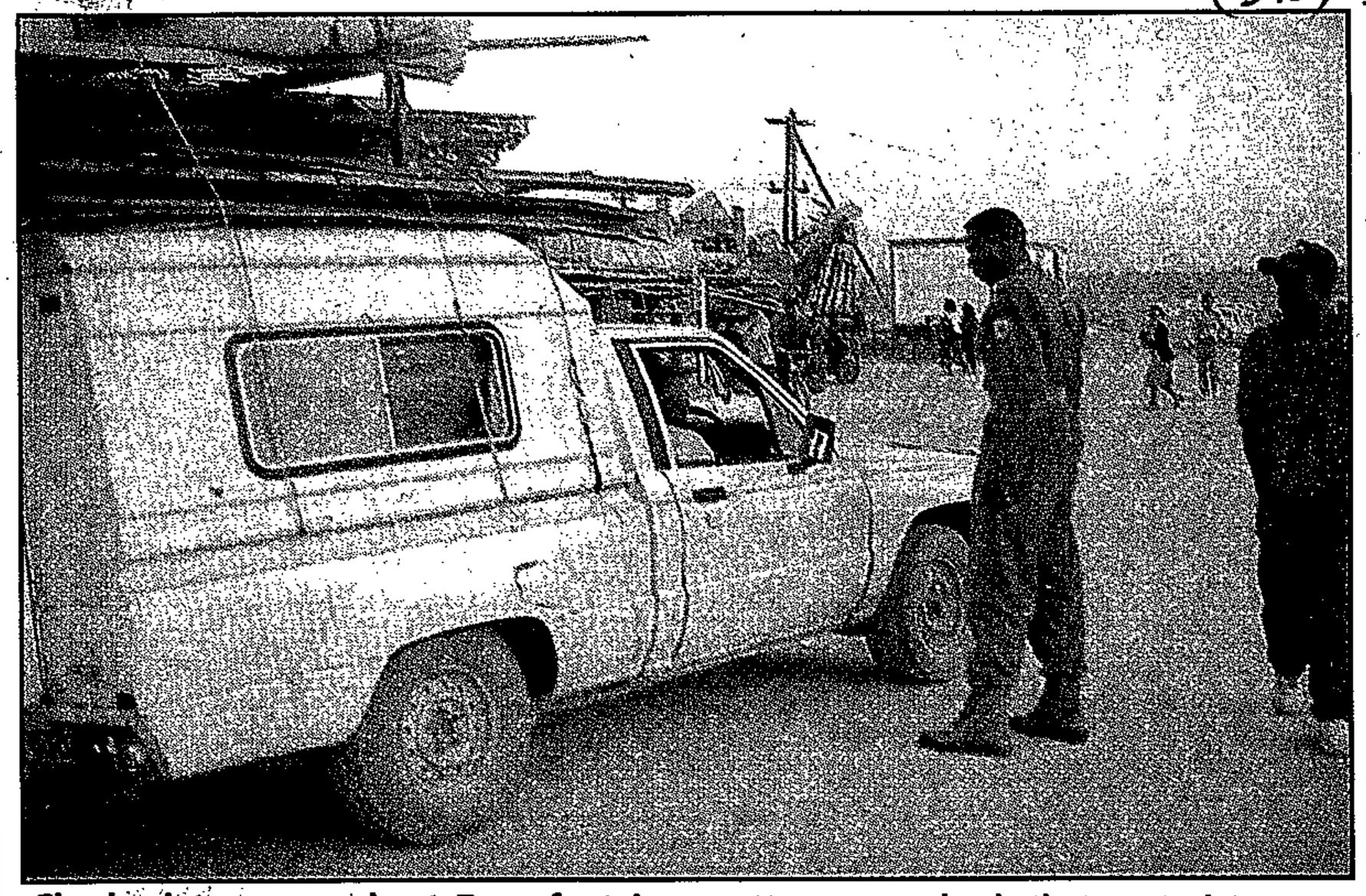
The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council said it had no knowledge of the squatter camp, but added it would send officials to investigate the issue.



Controversial homes . . . squatters occupying this land say they used to sleep in pipes. But now that they've built shacks, they feel they're being ripped off for political purposes. PICTURE: DEBBIE YAZBEK

Fears of stampede as squatters jump the gun

(310) Star 5/4/95



Checkpoint ... guards at Zevenfontein squatter camp check that motorists are residents before admitting them. PICTURE: THYS DULLAART

■ BY ANNA COX

About 300 squatters, the advance guard of an estimated 9 000 from Zevenfontein, arrived at a site owned by the province in Diepsloot West yesterday.

The move follows the disclosure that the owner of Zevenfontein has applied for an eviction order.

A thousand squatter families were to have been moved to the Diepkloof West site — bought by the former Transvaal Provincial Administration — at the end of April. It is not ready for occupation as water has not been connected.

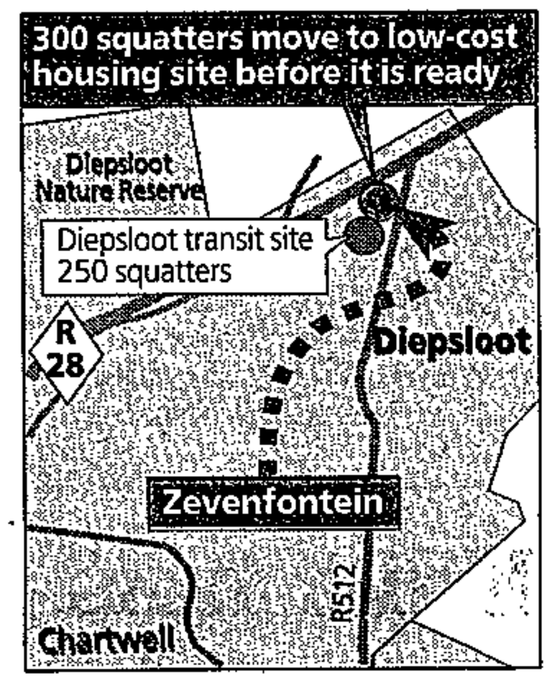
Alternative sites were to have been found for the remaining 800 families, but Diepsloot residents now fear that all 1 800 families will panic and move to Diepsloot.

Zevenfontein owner Stan Klaff applied for an eviction order in the Rand Supreme Court last week, and a return date was set for May 17.

Diepsloot resident Jill Wilman yesterday slammed the TMC.

"We were promised that low-cost housing would be built on the site before the squatters moved in. We were co-operating with the community with a view to starting a farming settlement. Now we will have shacks and squatters."

Lindsay Bremner, chairman of the TMC's housing and urbanisation committee, said officials were planning a strategy to ensure an orderly move and to accommodate those people who could not be accommodated at Diepsloot.



Squatters: 'Council is in control'

AUTHORITIES had not lost control at Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg, where squatters from Zevenfontein hoped to settle, Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council member Ms Lindsay Bremner said yesterday (3/0)

She was reacting to a claim earlier in the day by Laezonia Residents' Association chairman Mr Steve Shorney, who said unregistered squatters were entering the Diepsloot site under the authorities' noses in spite of an agreement with the squatters that there would be no further illegal occupation.

Squatter 6/4/95

Over fences

He said people were climbing over fences around the site to avoid a strong security guard presence at the main entrances.

Bremner said squatters had tried to enter the Diepsloot site without first registering at Zevenfontein.

However, they had been sent back to Zevenfontein to register.

About 300 squatters on Tuesday invaded the Diepsloot West site, owned by Gauteng province. — *Sapa.*

Hundreds move on besieged Diepsloot

(310) Star 7/14/95

■ BY ADAM COOKE AND ANNA COX

After a brief standoff at Diepsloot West, north of Randburg, yesterday, members of the Transitional Metropolitan Council, police, and squatter leaders reached an agreement to accommodate a large group of squatters who had converged on the site.

Police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Lesch said that after calming a "potentially volatile" standoff, during which security guards and police barred squatters from entering Diepsloot, it was decided not to allow any further squatters into the area.

Members of the TMC agreed to accommodate and guard on a nearby field those barred from entering, after hundreds more squatters converged on the site yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, on the site, authorities began checking the credentials of 300 squatters from Zevenfontein who moved prematurely to Diepsloot West.

At least 300 people began building shacks on the site on Wednesday.

LAND SWAPS (3) (310) (FM)

New deal

FM 7/4/95

A developer in the low-cost housing market is looking for a way out of the impasse created by more than 10 000 squatters occupying its low-cost housing land in the East Rand.

The company is negotiating with the Gauteng Provincial Housing Board to exchange the land invaded more than a year ago for State-owned industrial land nearby. The matter is being considered by the Gauteng Cabinet.

But the provinces don't yet have the authority to buy or sell State land, a situation which precludes land swaps.

The Land Administraton Act, expected to be passed by parliament within the next few weeks, will make it possible for Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom to devolve national powers to provincial level.

Hanekom is not in favour of land swapping. A Land Ministry spokesman says pilot projects launched in each province last month to "put housing in the hands of the communities" could resolve the land invasion issue without having to resort to swaps.

But Hanekom says: "In certain circumstances it might be the best solution after negotiation. This is not a matter on which to have one specific policy."

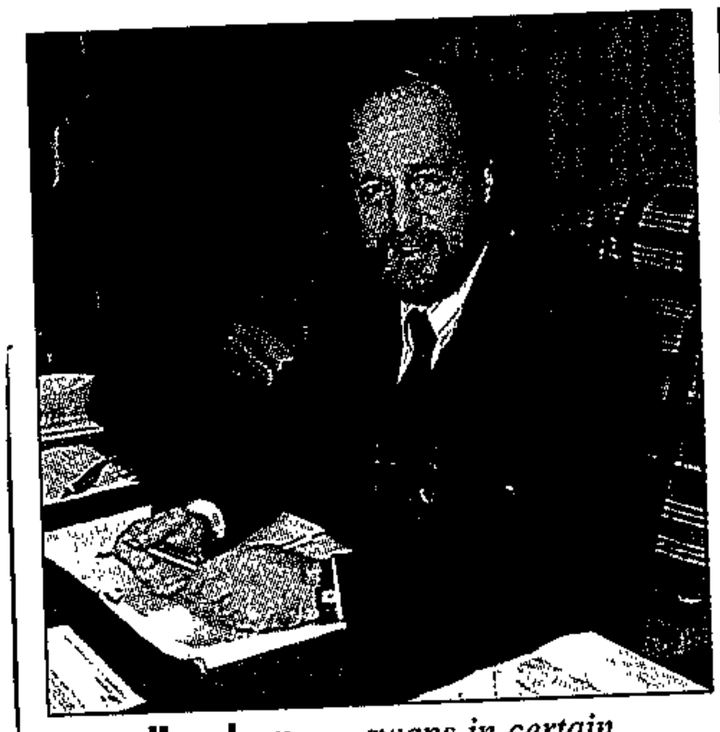
He points out that the restitution process allows for the granting of other land — in circumstances stipulated in the Restitution of Land Rights Act.

Gauteng Provincial Housing Board chairman Martin Van Zyl, who is negotiating the deal, sees the arrangement as the best solution in this case.

The developer, who does not want to be identified for fear of derailing negotiations, says the arrangement must be a voluntary agreement between the parties — usually the developer and the provincial authorities — rather than prescribed by policy or legislation.

The Development Facilitation Bill, scheduled to be tabled in parliament after the coming recess, will probably regulate aspects of the issue. This legislation should pave the way for fast delivery and development of urban and rural land by cutting bureaucratic red tape. The Bill will touch on all aspects of land development, including the reallocation of land now zoned as mining or agricultural for residential developments.

If accepted, land swaps will still be a lengthy process. Hanekom's adviser, Bahle Sibisi, says: "The rezoning procedure involves land subdivision, layout plans, opening up of a new registry and application of rezoning rules." ■



Hanekom . . . *swaps in certain circumstances but not encouraged*

s find home thanks to Gauteng legislature

Squatters move on to Diepsloot

(310)

Sowetan 7/4/95

■ REGISTRATION REQUIRED

A la dompas to prevent illegal invasion:

By Joshua Raboroko and *Sapa*

MORE THAN 1 000 FORMER Zevenfontein squatters have moved to the Gauteng legislature's Diepsloot West site, north of Johannesburg.

Police and local authorities enforced strict security measures at the site yesterday with the arrival of the squatters.

Roadblocks were set up and police checked for "illegals" amid reports that people from other areas were cashing in on what was seen as "a free land deal".

Documentation, proving Zevenfontein origin, was checked by police.

The day comprised of the arrival of trucks and bakkies loaded with goods, makeshift building material, personal goods and furniture. A representative of the Zevenfontein Residents' Committee, Mr Lucky Mosimane, said strict security measures had to be enforced to stop "illegals from invading the land".

The move follows an agreement between the Gauteng administration and the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council earlier this week.

The agreement came after the owner of the Zevenfontein property, on which the squatters had been living illegally for about five years, applied for an eviction order.

The owner, Mr Stan Klaff, applied for the order in the Rand Supreme Court last week and a return date has been set for May 17.

Both the authorities and the squatters' representatives have agreed that the people moving from Zevenfontein to Diepsloot would "be registered" and that other people from other areas would be declared "illegals".

squatters

Misery for

Hundreds huddle shivering outside site at Diepsloot West

Star 11/4/95 (310)

■ BY ANNA COX

Hundreds of squatters from Zevenfontein north of Randburg spent last night in freezing conditions in the open veld outside a site in Diepsloot West which they are trying to occupy.

Newborn babies and pregnant women were among the group which took shelter under zinc sheeting to try to keep out the cold wind which continually blew out their fires.

It was the third night in the open for the squatters who are trying to join about 300 people who left Zevenfontein and settled on sites at Diesploot West last week. Municipal guards are not allowing any of the new group in, and they cannot go back to Zevenfontein as others have already occupied their old sites.

Some in the new group were fortunate enough to find shelter with friends in the area, but many others spent the night in the open on the coldest autumn night so far.

Some 1 000 squatters from Zevenfontein were due to be moved to the Diepsloot West site at the end of the month, but last week 300 squatters from Zevenfontein, fearing eviction from the area they have occupied for five years, jumped the gun and began erecting shacks on the Diepsloot West sites.

NEWBORN babies and pregnant women were among those sheltering under zinc sheeting

A registration process of all those at Diepsloot West, as well as those still at Zevenfontein was then undertaken, to ensure that only Zevenfontein squatters are eventually allocated sites at Diepsloot West.

Officials from the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council say they will not allow the new group on to the Diepsloot West site because of "technicalities". They would not elaborate on the reasons.

When The Star visited Diepsloot West last night, several squatters said they had spent hundreds of rands transporting their belongings from Zevenfontein. The pathetic group, several with crying babies, huddled together to try to keep warm among their forlorn possessions.

IFP member Tony Wasserman has slammed the Greater Transitional Metropolitan Council for not allowing legitimate families from Zevenfon-

▶ To Page 3

Diepsloot squatters spe

◀ From Page 1

tein on to the sites to erect their shacks. He said they had gone to Diepsloot West after being told that they would be allowed in after registering.

"We have babies and women sleeping in the veld and it was freezing cold last night. This cannot be allowed to continue. Officials have been slow at registering people — it is not right — these people have the right to shelter."

Zevenfontein community leader Joseph Magwaza said about 60 families had moved and were waiting outside the gates.

"They have nowhere to go

nd night in misery

(310)

now so they take shelter under the zinc. But the ground gets wet in the night and they wake up very cold."

Acting director of urbanisation Tshepiso Mashinini said that squatters were specifically told they would not be allowed on to the site until certain legal technicalities had been dealt with.

After some squatters moved in last week there were fears of a mass invasion of all 1 800 families presently living in Zevenfontein. The TMC placed full-time security guards at the Diepsloot site to prevent them moving in. The site can only accommodate 1 000 families.

Star 11/4/95



Out in the cold . . . as winter begins to bare its teeth, hundreds of squatters are having to make the best of makeshift shelters near Diepsloot, in the veld north of Johannesburg.

PICTURE: MOTLHALEFI MAHLABE

Squatters' plight 'politicised'

BY ANNA COX

The IFP and PAC arrived last night at the site where hundreds of squatters are camping in the open near Diepsloot and claimed that the ANC had politicised their plight.

The parties' representatives allege that the 300 squatters from Zevenfontein allowed to stay on the site last week after their illegal occupation are all ANC supporters. They also claimed a group which is sleeping rough are being kept out of the Diepsloot site because they support the IFP.

Housing and urbanisation chairman Lyndsay Bremner said the council was not responsible for people who are still hoping to be allocated sites "outside the procedure laid down".

She said they had been fully informed of the process and the parameters under which the sites would be released.

"This took place by way of both public meetings and the distribution of pamphlets in three languages which were circulated on both sites last Friday," she said.

Hundreds of squatters, including newborn babies and pregnant women, have spent the past few days in the veld at Diepsloot sleeping under zinc and other building materials from their demolished shacks.

Star 12/4/95 (310)

Squatters to meet officials

(310) ~~Beeld~~ Sowetan 12/4/95

By Joshua Raboroko

OFFICIALS of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Chamber and squatter representatives will meet tomorrow to discuss the problems facing homeless people at Zevenfontein.

Hundreds of squatters from Zevenfontein have spent five days stranded and without homes in chilly weather in the veld near Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg.

When Sowetan visited area yesterday, mothers with babies on their backs, pregnant women and pensioners were huddled in makeshift zinc shacks protecting their children.

Gauteng MEC for housing Dan Mofokeng said yesterday the provincial government would try to find alternative accommodation for the families. "We have asked local authorities to find land to settle homeless people."

Freezing conditions

A representative of the squatters, Mr Lucky Mosimane, told reporters that yesterday had been the fifth day 300 squatters had spent in the open in freezing conditions.

They were trying to settle at Diepsloot, but were told there was "no room" for them on the site.

Municipal security guards would not allow newcomers on the site, already occupied by hundreds of other squatters from Zevenfontein.

Mosimane said the squatters could not go back to Zevenfontein as their plots had been taken by other squatters.

Mr Richard Ramuthogi, a father of six, said he had obtained permission to settle at Diepsloot, but on arrival on the site he was refused entry.

"I am stranded with my children and spent five nights in the chilly weather. I do not know what to do," he said.

TMC denies abandoning squatters

(310) SOW 13/4/95

■ BY SELBY BOKABA and PAULA FRAY

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council yesterday hit back at criticism that it had left women and children to sleep in open veld next to the Diepsloot squatter settlement.

The TMC said the stranded squatters had repeatedly been offered transport back to the Zevenfontein camp until registration at Diepsloot was completed. Accommodation would have been arranged for the stranded squatters at Zevenfontein.

The Diepsloot site opened prematurely last week after about 300 squatters from Zevenfontein moved in illegally. Hundreds of others, including newborn babies and pregnant women, have spent the past few days sleeping in the veld.

IFP and PAC officials claimed the ANC had politicised the plight of the squatters, and said that those allowed to move into Diepsloot were all ANC supporters, while those sleeping outside were IFP supporters.

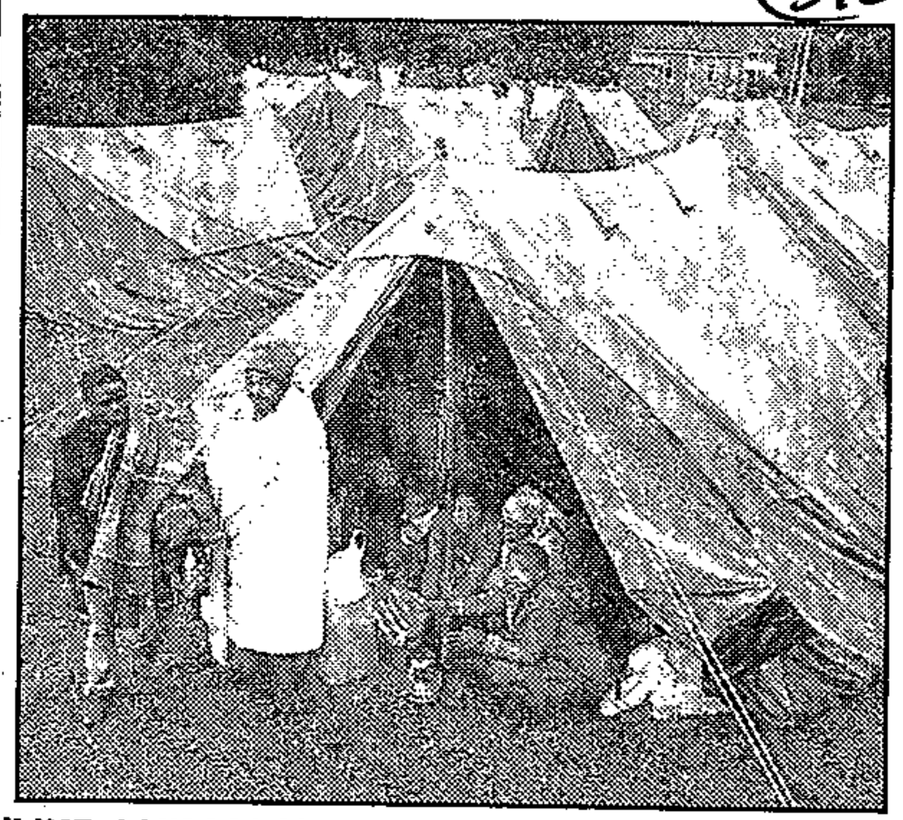
But an ANC representative at the camp, Simon Skhosana, said the people had been moved in regardless of their politics.

The IFP's Joseph Magwaza said the TMC had promised that registration would begin last week, but the people were still waiting for this to happen.

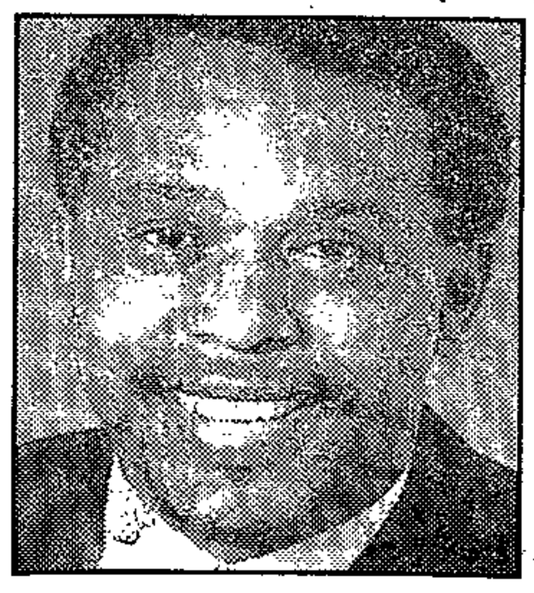
A disillusioned Magwaza, who was in the Diepsloot camp, said he did not believe registration would ever happen.

The forgotten squatters of Electric House

(310) Star 15/4/95



'LIKE ANIMALS': Squatters feel living conditions have worsened in temporary accommodation.



TOKYO SEXWALE: The Gauteng premier and his government have been accused of neglecting squatters whose shacks at Liefde en Vrede were demolished by the authorities last winter.

NEWTON KANHEMA

GAUTENG Premier Tokyo Sexwale and his government have been accused of neglecting squatters whose shacks at Liefde en Vrede, near Johannesburg, were demolished by the authorities last winter.

Although the squatters admit they were poor before they were evicted, they feel their circumstances have worsened since they moved to temporary accommodation at Electric House in Newtown. They believe their "humanity has been compromised".

They believe the Government they elected has neglected them by driving them to live "like animals" in the municipal building.

Forgotten

Their leader, Willie Dhlamini, said: "It was last winter when we were moved to these offices and we were promised that we would be here for only two weeks. I cannot believe that a year has gone by since we voted the ANC into government.

"These people are not serving their constituency.

"When we were thrown out of Mulbarton, the council was answering to the calls of its constituency. What is wrong with our representatives? Have we been forgotten or what?"

Dhlamini is one of 800 squatters who spent two nights in the open after their shacks were pulled down. Their number has swollen to 1 500, although it is not clear why.

Swollen

The decision to move the squatters was taken by the Johannesburg City Council management committee, then chaired by Ian Davidson. The action triggered an outcry.

Initially the squatter leaders arranged that certain rooms would be reserved for men, and women and children would occupy the remaining ones. After a while husbands and wives started sleeping together. As many as 60 people are sharing one room.

"Privacy is a luxury around here. A year later we are still here. Nothing has happened except meeting after meeting. We have wanted to meet the MEC for Housing, Dan Mofokeng, since October, and we are told he is busy. I am sure he no longer has time for us," Dhlamini said. It was becoming difficult to call meetings among the squatters "because I have told them of so many different things, none of which have materialised".

Some of the squatters expressed disgust with the way their problem had been handled.

"One is tempted to ask whether it is true that Nelson Mandela is the president of this country.

"People are beginning to say apartheid is here, and there is nothing we can do," said one, who walked away shaking her head.

Mofokeng said his department had reached deadlock in talks with the squatters.

"We have offered these people three alternative pieces of land but they are reluctant to take the offers. They say they want to go back to Liefde en Vrede, and it is unfortunate that this is not possible.

"If they are prepared to change their position we are willing to meet them as early as Tuesday.

No promises'

Asked whether the Government would build houses for these squatters, he said: "We are not promising them houses. I am not going to promise what the Government cannot do.

"People are claiming that we have built only one house since we got into office, but this is not true. We have built more than 500 houses in Protea Glen in Soweto. We have allocated subsidies worth R880-million and 77 000 families will benefit from this," Mofokeng said.

However, there were projects on which progress had been slow.

■ STAFF REPORTER

People who moved into Diepsloot West, which had been demarcated for the squatters from Zevenfontein, will have to leave voluntarily or face legal action, according to councillor Lindsay Bremner, transitional council chairman of housing and urbanisation. (310)

The Zevenfontein squatters were scheduled to move to Diepsloot West, north of Randburg, at the end of the month.

The outsiders, misinformed that the site was ready, began to erect shacks in Diepsloot, with people claiming to be landlords demanding rent from the squatters. Star 17/4/95

The transitional council has compiled a list of residents.

An agreement has been reached between municipal authorities and squatter representatives that no more illegal occupations would take place until the registration and allocation process was complete.

Council to act on illegal squatters

(310) sowetan 21/4/95

By Joshua Raboroko

IN an attempt to end corruption and violence, the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council is to prosecute hundreds of people who have occupied land illegally.

GJTMC chairman of housing and urbanisation Mrs Lindsay Bremmer told a Press briefing in Johannesburg yesterday that the invaders would be told to leave the land, failing which legal action would be taken against them.

"Invaders will be required to return to their original places and asked to await orderly allocation of sites," she said.

Action would be taken against those who had occupied land after a moratorium on land invasions was declared by the Gauteng administration last June.

The council would also lay charges against people found selling land in informal settlements.

Already a few cases of these "illegal sales" have been given to the police who were investigating. These people were taking advantage of the homeless "to make a quick buck".

Bremmer cited a case at Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg, where a piece of land was sold for R400 by these "unscrupulous people".

She said there were 250 080 homeless people living in 80 000 shacks in 50 informal settlements in the GJTMC area. The GJTMC also wanted to stop violence and killings in these settlements.

"Law and order must be maintained in these areas while we try to find alternative land to house the homeless," she said.

Bremmer also disclosed that the council had decided to act from next week against 3 000 people who had illegally occupied state-owned houses.

The occupants would be given three months to vacate the houses, failing which legal action would be instituted.

Council says it will not legitimise lawlessness

(310) Star 21/4/95

Time up for illegal occupants

■ BY CHARMEELA BHAGOWAT
CITY REPORTER

Land invaders and the illegal occupants of homes will face the wrath of the law from next week, Greater Johannesburg's metropolitan government announced yesterday.

In terms of the transitional metropolitan council's decision, immediate legal action would be taken against people who illegally occupied council houses from April 11 this year, when the executive committee passed a resolution to get tough on offenders.

The TMC's stand follows a call from the provincial government for local authorities to get tough with people who have breached an agreement last year not to invade land and property.

TMC housing and urbanisation committee chairman Lindsay Bremner said yesterday that the council had been forced to take a strong stand.

She said that in July last year civic organisations had agreed not to occupy homes illegally while the council placed a moratorium on taking legal action against illegal occupants.

"Unfortunately, some organisations and individuals exploited the situation and encouraged ongoing illegal occupations."

Referring to land invasions, Bremner said the invasions prejudiced people who were not on waiting lists for houses but who were waiting patiently for land.

She added that the TMC believed "if it countenances the continued invasions of land, it is legitimising lawlessness".

"To support such activity is to create the impression that queue-jumping is acceptable behaviour and that those who make the most noise can simply get their own way."

Bremner said the council was committed to implementing the Gauteng administration's recently announced rapid land release programme but would still be taking action against invaders.

ble your way through?

NEWS

Gauteng govt identifies land for homeless

Star 29/5/95 (310)

■ BY JO-ANNE COLLINGE

In response to the province's call to head off land invasions, local authorities in Gauteng have identified land suitable for rapid development and capable of accommodating 6 000 to 7 000 households.

The stands are located in six or seven localities under the jurisdiction of different municipalities, a senior official in the Gauteng department of development planning and land told The Star.

The province has specified that the land needs to be relatively well located with regard to work opportunities and community facilities.

It also must have access to existing bulk service systems, so that the servicing of individual sites can go ahead as rapidly as possible.

The idea is that standards of service should not be compromised by the need for the government to move fast to keep ahead of the homeless in their quest for land.

The rapid land release programme is separate from and complementary to the Gauteng department of housing's recently announced scheme to make 10 000 serviced sites, which it currently owns, available for development by emerging builders.

The planning department official conceded that the rapid land release programme had not been as rapid as hoped.

In early April the authorities announced that the land release plan was likely to see 15 000 families actually settled on sites before July.

Now officials are talking about the process of servicing individual stands getting going in July.

Before then the locations will have to be given final planning approval; developers will have to be invited to apply for the work and the choice of developers made; and the Gauteng Housing Board will have to approve developments for subsidy purposes.

It is understood that the housing board has agreed in principle to expedite these applications.

Flea market by day, urban squatter camp by night

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

Johannesburg Station is the sleeping quarters for hundreds of the homeless at night. It is in danger of deteriorating into a slum, a spot check by The Star showed.

Hundreds of men, women and children have found shelter inside and outside the station, some setting up stalls.

Some of the people say they were staying in flats, but were evicted for inability to pay rentals after losing their jobs.

"With no other alternative, we had to stay in the station," said Ciskein Lucky Nombwa.

From platforms 11 to 16, the place is in a terrible state. The homeless, most of whom are foreigners, have turned the blocks leading to the underground platform into dwellings.

Their belongings — bags, clothing and pots — are packed untidily around the area, so commuters had to excuse themselves to reach the platforms.

During the day, the place is a flea market, at night a squatter camp.

Some of the squatters could be seen cooking on pressure stoves, while others watched a large television set hanging on a wall. Nearby, a woman was breastfeeding her baby.

Most of the homeless seem not to bath, but those who do find it difficult. At one stage a blanket was held up while behind it a person sponged down. Others bath in toilets with cold water.

About 20 people, tired of sleeping on the floor of the station hall, have built a row of about 15 shacks on the eastern side of the station. They were erected just after the general election last year.

Simpiwe Mangaliso, one of the dwellers, said: "The ANC's victory gave us freedom."

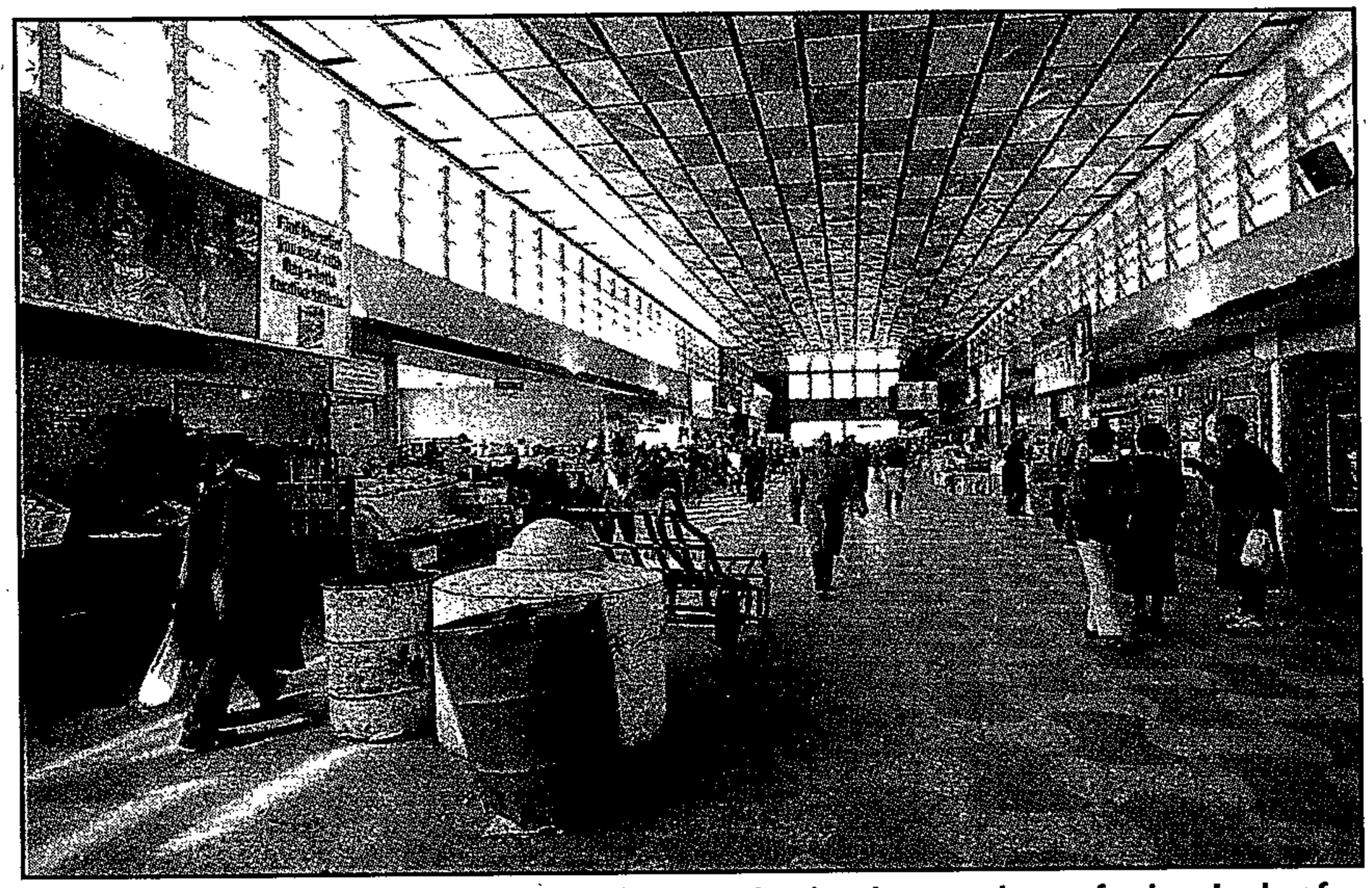
The tiny shacks have beds and wardrobes. The dwellers cook in a brazier outside, where they also do their washing.

Although they claim to be staying in better conditions than at the station, their main problem is water. Mangaliso said they go to nearby buildings to ask for water as they were not allowed to get water from the taps at the station.

Most survive by collecting recyclable cans and doing casual jobs.

"We are desperate for jobs as we often sleep without food," said Mangaliso.

Moving along the shacks, we came across a visibly sick woman who cried for help. "My husband is in jail and I'm hungry."



Station deteriorating . . . the Johannesburg station has become home for hundreds of men, women and children, and is in danger of becoming a slum. PICTURE: ETIENNE ROTHBART

Star 31/5/95 (~~264~~)(310)

Another woman, on returning from jail, found she has lost an eight-month-old baby.

Intersite Public Involvement manager Gill Sesoko said negotiations are still under way for the establishement of a Public Involvement Programme.

She said programmes to improve the station were on the cards.

Demolition man loves job

Star 9/6/95 (#27) (310)

■ BY ABBEY MAKOE
SOWETO BUREAU

His job involves destroying people's property and even ordering their arrest, but Soweto's assistant housing director Gawie van der Merwe wakes up every morning looking forward to going to work.

Last week he led his team of men armed with pistols, iron bars, spades and picks to Pimville, where 18 squatter families were an hour later wondering where to sleep after their shacks had been demolished.

On Wednesday the heavily built man, who is about 2,3m tall and has a face covered with a veld of brownish beard, did it again.

With his team of about 30 men, mostly in brown overalls and boots, he demolished shacks in Orlando east and left 54 families stranded in cold, winter weather.

"This is not my personal decision. No, no. See here, a Rand Supreme Court order. It was granted on May 19," he said.

As the first batch of shacks crumbled and a woman's screams filled the air, Van der Merwe whispered: "You know, I have two residents who just walked past, thanking me for what we are doing."

Captain Jaya Naidu of the Orlando police tried to intervene. "Sir, these people say they are asking for two more days to pack their things and go."

Van der Merwe interrupted: "Captain, captain. You know we have given these people two chances to do the same, but they haven't moved. I can't go back to my bosses empty-handed, captain. No. Besides, I will also have the community looking for my head."

As the squatters milled around helplessly, Van der Merwe said: "There is another squatter camp that side of Orlando east where we are going to demolish, I think next week. I just hope these people aren't going there because otherwise they'll meet with me again. And it won't be a nice encounter.

"The demolition has gone very well. I must say, I am happy at the way in which everybody is playing their role," he said.

■ Yesterday, the squatters, after negotiating with Soweto Administration officials, began rebuilding their shacks despite having undertaken not to do so. Van der Merwe was notified about it. He warned that he and his team would move in today.



All in a day's work . . . Soweto's assistant housing director Gawie van der Merwe explains why the police have to supervise his shack demolition missions. "It's an order from above," he says. PICTURE: NAASHON ZALK

Frustrated homeless people plan Roodepoort land invasion

(310) Star 13/6/95

■ BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
CITY REPORTER

Homeless people in Dobsonville, tired of waiting for land in Vlakfontein, Roodepoort, where they were promised low-cost housing, are planning to invade all land earmarked for development in the area.

The people said they would invade the land and other areas if the Gauteng government did not respond to a memorundum by tomorrow, which they submitted last month.

Discussion about housing development at Vlakfontein began in 1994 when the land was identified for low-cost housing for homeless people living at Doornkop without toilets, water and electricity.

However, the project had been unable to get off the ground as the council and the landowners are unable to strike a deal on the sale of the land.

Yesterday, Greater Johannesburg TMC housing and urbanisation chairman Lindsay Bremner said the project had been approved, but there were certain aspects which still needed to be investigated.

Operation Masakhane for the Homeless spokesman Sipho Somacele said the people could no longer wait and were tired of council and provincial government promises.

He said they were planning to invade the land.

The homeless are demanding that the land be made available to them soon as was promised, he said.

Somacele said they had had several meetings with the minister who promised to look into the matter: "We were shocked last month when he released a list of areas earmarked for development which excluded Vlakfontein."

A spokesman for the land owners in the area, Danie Fourie, said they were not prepared to give their land away at a low price.

He said the council wanted to buy the land as a package and land owners were willing to sell their properties only at a market-related prices.

"If we sell this place we need to go and buy somewhere else. This place has a low crime rate ... it is fairly safe and we should get what we deserve," he said.

Fourie said another problem was that it seemed the council did not have the finance to buy the land: "It is likely that this issue will go on for several months and the project might start only next year."

Squatters evicted twice in one day

■ BY SELBY BOKABA

A squatter community spent a chilly night in the veld after being evicted twice from two different sites yesterday.

The 147 squatters were first evicted from their settlement at Kayasand, Randburg, because the site had been earmarked for development. They were provisionally moved in trucks to a nearby site in North Riding.

However, shortly after arriving there with their belongings, a man claiming to be the owner of the land, and police, ordered them to go back to the previous site, community leader Alfred Mokotla said.

"Our wives and children have to endure this chilly weather without shelter yet we have a black government," one of the squatters said.

They were returned to Kayasands last night. Transitional Metropolitan Council spokesmen could not yet be reached for comment.

(310) Star 7/7/95

Squatters 'pose health threat' in Newtown

(310) Star 10/7/95

■ BY BRUNO JUBASI

The growing number of illegal squatters in Newtown near Braamfontein station is causing concern for the health and cultural life of the area.

Situated near the Market Theatre and Premier Milling, a major food factory in Newtown, the number of squatters in the area has been growing with new shacks being erected every day.

A council fieldworker working closely with the squatters said their growing numbers were causing concern as they were develping into a major health and crime risk.

"It is unfortunate that the squatter camp be placed next to such a prime area, people are now even scared of going to the Market Theatre for entertainment, workers from Premier Milling and train commuters are complaining of increased incidents of muggings," said the fieldworker, who requested not to be identified.

Proliferation

He said the council had been contemplating providing refuse removal, sanitation and clean water, but that the proliferation of squatters could not be allowed to continue unabated.

He also said the Johannesburg TMC could not use the Prohibition of Squatters Act indiscriminately without at least trying to find alternative accommodation for the squaters.

Most of the squatters said they were unemployed and therefore relied on hawking and other means to make a living.

Employees and management at Premier Milling said although the squatters were not posing a direct health threat at this point, they were concerned about the rising levels of crime.

Joseph Letlale, an employee at Premier Milling, said he had been a mugged number of times when coming from work and passing the squatter camp to Braamfontein train station.

"I do not doubt for a moment that I was robbed by people staying in the squatter camp," he said.

Jean Keenan, a spokesman for Premier, said while the squatter camp was about 500m away from their premises, their workers had to pass the squatter camp on their way to and from work and there had been complaints of muggings.

Cautioned

She cautioned that the growing number of shacks being erected on a daily basis will cause overcrowding, occupation of more ground, more litter and therefore increased health and safety threats.

She called on the Johannesburg council to deal with the matter before it reached alarming proportions.

Squatter leader Tobias Zwane said the council had promised to collect the refuse in the entrances of the camp, but until now nothing had been done about it.

Most of the squatters, some in the process of erecting new shacks, said they were unemployed and had nowhere else to stay.

The Star was unable to obtain comment from the Johannesburg council despite repeated attempts.

Real income of Gauteng squatters declines – study

(310) star 11/7/98

■ BY NORMAN CHANDLER
PRETORIA BUREAU

The average black household in Gauteng is living on just more than R2 000 a month, a Unisa study has found.

It was also found that between 1990 and 1994, the income of squatters declined in real terms, that of hostel residents remained at more or less the same level, while people fortunate to live in their own houses were better off.

"The average black household had an income of R24 416 a year and the average black man and woman earned R21 555 and R20 884, respectively," according to the study completed by the university's Bureau of Market Research.

In 1994, the household income of squatters was less than half (R13 629) of the income of other households (R31 642). Squatters also earned 70,3% of their income from wages, with householders on 81%.

Squatters generated a relatively high percentage of their own income, while pensions were "a fairly important source" of income for squatters, but in real terms, squatters were almost 12% worse off in 1994 than they were in 1990.

High costs

In a breakdown of household costs among Gauteng's black people, Unisa has found that 26,1% of cash income is spent on food, 9,1% on income tax and 9% on housing.

Squatters however spent 37% of their money on food as well as relatively large sums on fuel and light, transport, medical and dental services, and washing and cleaning materials. This high cost is attributed to a lack of electricity, unhygienic conditions and not being close to places of work.

Squatters move back

(310) Star 12/7/95

■ BY ANNA COX

The squatters evicted from private property in Kya Sands last week and inadvertently moved on to another private property in Northriding, have re-erected their shacks on the original site.

A spokesman for the developers of the Kya Sands property, Claude Victor, said he was still trying to find an alternative site to which to move them.

He said he was also talking to the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (GJTMC) to see if it could assist.

About six squatters moved on to the land, which is in an industrial area, about two months ago. Within a few weeks a squatter camp had grown on the property, Victor said.

"We asked them to move away as we are busy constructing on the site. It is dangerous for them to be living on a construction site and we will be blasting soon.

"We don't want to cause unnecessary heartbreak and we did offer to assist them with transport by making our trucks available to them but they are living here illegally and unfortunately we have work to get on with," said Victor.

He said the 148 squatters had been moved to a site in North Riding, identified by a Northern Metropolitan Substructure (NMSS) official, but this had turned out to be private property so the squatters were moved back to Kya Sands.

Community leader Alfred Mokotla said they were ordered to return to their previous settlement by the owner who arrived with police to evict them until a new site could be found.

The chairperson of Housing and Urbanisation for the GJTMC, Lindsay Bremner, said because the land is privately owned, neither the GJTMC nor the MSS had any jurisdiction. She said the claim that an official from the Randburg administration authorised occupation of private property would be inves tigated.

"Land owners are required to obtain a court order for any eviction to take place. People cannot simply be evicted. We appeal to all members of the public to support the GJTMC in our attempts to address this problem and not to take the law into their own hands," she said.

Homeless hundreds take over the 'promised land'

(310) Star 12/7/95

■ BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
CITY REPORTER

Hundreds of homeless people in Soweto yesterday staged a sit-in at the Roodepoort council offices and built shacks on privately owned land earmarked for low-cost housing despite a moratorium on land invasion.

The invasion comes after two years of negotiation with the Dobsonville/Roodepoort council and the Gauteng government to release privately owned land at Vlakfontein for about 4 000 homeless Sowetans.

Members of the Operation Masakhane for the Homeless (Omhle) flocked to land in Vlakfontein yesterday, carrying corrugated iron.

Others staged a sit-in at the Roodepoort civic centre demanding that the council should immediately release the land "as it was promised".

The Vlakfontein housing project had been unable to get going as the council and private landowners have been unable to strike a deal on the sale of the land.

The slow progress has raised anxiety among Soweto residents.

In May residents submitted a memorandum to the Gauteng government requesting that the matter be attended to urgently.

However, Omhle spokesman Sipho Somacele said the authorities did not respond to the memorandum.

He said they were disappointed when Mofokeng excluded Vlakfontein from a list of areas earmarked for housing.

Greater Johannesburg Housing and Urbanisation chairman Lindsay Bremner said Vlakfontein had been identified and approved for housing development and the council would negotiate with the homeless to vacate the land.

TMC firm on squatting moratorium

(310) Star 14/7/95

■ BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
CITY REPORTER

A decision to stand firm on the principle of evicting illegal land invaders despite a rise in the number of such invasions in the metropolis was emphasised by Greater Johannesburg authority yesterday.

Reacting to reports of new invasions, Transitional Metropolitan Council housing and urbanisation chairman Lindsay Bremner stood firm: "To support such activity is to create the impression that queue-jumping is acceptable behaviour."

Yesterday about 12 shacks were erected on a vacant piece of land at South Hills.

"Now three trucks outside my house are off-loading corrugated iron sheets. It means we are now going to have more burglaries," an angry resident said.

More squatters have been seen on a piece of land along Oxford Road, in Fordsburg and in Vlakfontein.

Bremner said there was a general disregard of the moratorium as new people illegally occupied land on the edges of existing informal settlements.

She said a strict policy on land invasion has been taken and invaders would be required to return to their original places and wait for the allocation of sites.

Teachers agree to pay offer

(Star) Star 14/7/95

■ BY LEE-ANN ALFREDS
EDUCATION REPORTER

All possibility of a teacher strike was ruled out yesterday when close on 1 000 South African Democratic Teachers Union members voted to accept the Government's final increase offer of 5%.

The decision came on the final day of the Sadtu's three-day national congress at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park.

In terms of the offer, all teachers earning between R18 000 and R24 000 a year will receive increases of between 6% and 10%, while teachers who earn more than R24 000 will receive 5%. The increase is effective from July and will not be backdated.

Sadtu had initially demanded 18,4%, but later agreed to settle for at least 11%.

In an unexpected turnabout yesterday, however, the union opted to accept the offer, thereby eliminating the threat of a teacher strike which has been hanging over the country for the past couple of months.

But the union indicated it was still not satisfied with the offer.

"We are convinced that it is the best the Government could offer. We will be looking at next year's increase to regain the ground we lost," newly elected president Duncan Hindle said.

Overcrowding hits NW squatting area

(310) sowetan 14/7/95

Josias Charle reports that the crisis is worsening in the Winterveld region

THE housing crisis at Winterveld near Pretoria is to come under scrutiny at the weekend, when North West MEC for local government and housing Mr Darkie Afrika visits the area. The meeting will be held at City Rocks grounds at 8am on Sunday.

Situated about 40km north of Pretoria, Winterveld is one of the biggest and oldest squatter areas in the country.

The overcrowding problem is being aggravated by landlords evicting tenants who refuse to pay rent. This forces home-seekers to erect more shacks, occupying land earmarked for housing or areas not suitable for residential purposes.

Residents have now formed the Winterveld Crisis Committee to look after the interests of evicted people. They oppose landlords who control vast tracts of land in the area.

Chairman of the WCC Mr Gilbert Mahlangu told *Sowetan* yesterday that the problem had reached crisis proportions and they had no choice but to seek a meeting with the MEC.

"Our original intention was to hire buses and go to Mmabatho to present our grievances, but now the MEC has agreed to meet us for two hours on Sunday to deal with the problem," said Mahlangu.

He said there was a feeling among residents that they should boycott the November local government elections. "People are asking what exactly they'll be voting for when they have no fixed addresses where they stay — let alone a decent roof over their heads." Mahlangu also urged the MEC to declare Winterveld a residential area as opposed to its present status as agricultural land.

White outrage ends abandoned family's stay in poverty-stricken squatter camp

(310)

Star 15/7/95

A destitute white woman and her children found warmth and generosity when they were taken in by the residents of a squatter camp, writes CHRISTINA LAMB

Corporasie — It seemed like the perfect cameo of the new South Africa. A white woman and her three young children had been left destitute when her husband ran off, leaving no money to buy food or pay the bills on their rented farm. Hearing of the family's plight, the local black squatter camp took them in.

Three tumultuous months later, they have been "reclaimed" by well-off relatives amid a burst of white outrage. Until April, the 262 families of Corporasie, 50km south of Port Elizabeth, counted themselves among the forgotten people of South Africa. The squatter camp has no water or electricity, even though power lines pass straight overhead to the smart white country club across the highway. Much of the day is spent collecting firewood and water to tend the few vegetables they grow to sell by the roadside.

Then Helena Pieterse and her three children arrived.

"This white lady came and told me her husband had gone off and she had no place to stay," said Goodman Gqamane, the camp's leader. "I felt so bad for her, she had nothing and didn't know how to look after herself."

Gqamane found her a two-room shack and the community rallied round to give her blankets and food. Gqamane took his wheelbarrow to the nearest water source 3km away and brought her water. He gave her R10 and arranged for two local teenagers to sleep in her hut as guards.

Fitted in

Pieterse's new neighbours were amused to watch her adapt to life in a tin shack after being used to all mod cons. The family slept on one mattress and someone found her an old tin tub to wash their clothes in.

"She was very scared and didn't know anything," said Jackson Toto Beki, her neighbour. "When we had mealie pap or tea we shared it with her. We took turns in fetching her water. I think she had never before even had to wash her own clothes."

Gradually, she fitted in. She joined the local church and found work packing and sorting eggs.

Then the local newspapers got on to her story. It caused an outcry, bringing home to many whites an all-too-real fear of what the future South Africa might hold. Offers of money and food poured in. A local businessman arrived at the camp bearing a gas stove. A woman came with R200. A local welfare organisation offered Pieterse accommodation, but she refused, saying that she was happy among her new friends.

Theunis Crous, a local ANC officer, was staggered by the white reaction. "I was furious," he said. "If people want to help, why don't they help all the community rather than just the white lady?"

But Pieterse's neighbours were not so upset. "We thought we would all benefit, as she had become one of us," said Qondile Koliti. They started making excited plans to set up a creche, with toys and milk for their children. They speculated about electricity and running water.

Dreams over

Last week, the dream was shattered. Pieterse's mother, in the north-western town of Thabazimbi, saw her story in an Afrikaans newspaper and collapsed in shock. A sister, Ella, was dispatched in a van to fetch her. Ella arrived ashen-faced on Tuesday and, at sunset, the van sped away with Pieterse and her children — and no goodbyes.

The small yellow shack in Corporasie stands empty. The squatters' dreams are over. "We're worried that when people see the white lady has gone they won't help us any more and we'll be the forgotten people again," said Gqamane. "We even thought of pretending she was still here." — London Sunday Times



IN SAFE KEEPING: Helena Pieterse and her three children with Corporasie squatter camp leader Goodman Gqamane

Randburg residents hatch plan to prevent squatter invasions

By PATRICK MAFAFO

In a move designed to prevent land invasions, residents of Olivedale and Bloubosrand in Randburg are inviting housing development plans from developers to fill up unoccupied land in their suburbs.

Some of the land is currently occupied by squatters.

According to a council report, close to 7 000 families live in informal settlements around the middle-class suburbs of Randburg.

"We are doing this to protect the value of our properties," says Ruth Fleming, a spokesman for the Ward 13 Community Forum. "Like everybody else, these squatters are hard-working individuals who simply desire a place to stay nearer to their places of work. It is the province's duty to accommodate them on land it inherited from the Transvaal Provincial Administration, such as Diepsloot.

"Over the past three years we have had a number of land invasions. Despite meetings with Gauteng provincial officials and local authorities, we have seen very little action on their part to house these squatters."

This week the residents of Bloubosrand entered into an agreement with a developer, Trusthomes, to build housing units priced between R65 000 and R100 000.

Trusthomes plans to develop 1 860 units on the 44ha site known as Bloubosrand Extension 1. The project proposal is already in the hands of the Gauteng government, the new owners of the land.

The developers have undertaken to find suitable accommodation for the estimated 90 squatters on the land. "This will not be far from their places of work," says Deon du Plessis, managing director of Trusthomes.

(B10) Star 29/7/95

North West squatters can build, says court

(3109 Star 21/7/95

■ BY NORMAN CHANDLER
PRETORIA BUREAU

A bid by Mabopane mayor Malose Lehobye to prevent the building of 1 470 houses on land occupied by squatters at Boikhutsong, Morula View, was dismissed this week in the Odi Magistrate's Court, near Pretoria.

The approval by the North West housing corporation, the North West government and the Mabopane branch of the SA National Civic Organisation (Sanco) that the site can be developed by Wakoma Development was being disputed.

The magistrate, M Setshogo, said she had based her decision on the fact that the Mabopane Transitional Local Council (MTLC) — under which Boikhutsong now falls — was not in existence at the time the development was approved.

Lehobye said in his affidavit that the land on which two show houses had been built was "reserved and earmarked for the extension of Morula View".

Exclusive rights

Investigations showed that no land had been allocated to a developer nor had services been provided, and that the MTLC had exclusive rights to the property, his statement read.

"The mushrooming of structures near (Marula View) definitely lowers the value of their homes," Lehobye and town manager Ramadingwana Mekwa said in separate affidavits.

Attorney Ernst Serfontein, of Bloch Gross and Associates, Pretoria, said in a replying affidavit that Boikhutsong residents had asked Wakoma Development to develop their area, owned by the North West housing corporation, as part of the RDP.

The MTLC had not been in existence at the time, and Sanco was the only body then recognised at local government level to have authority in the area, following the collapse of the Bophuthatswana government, he said.

Disregard

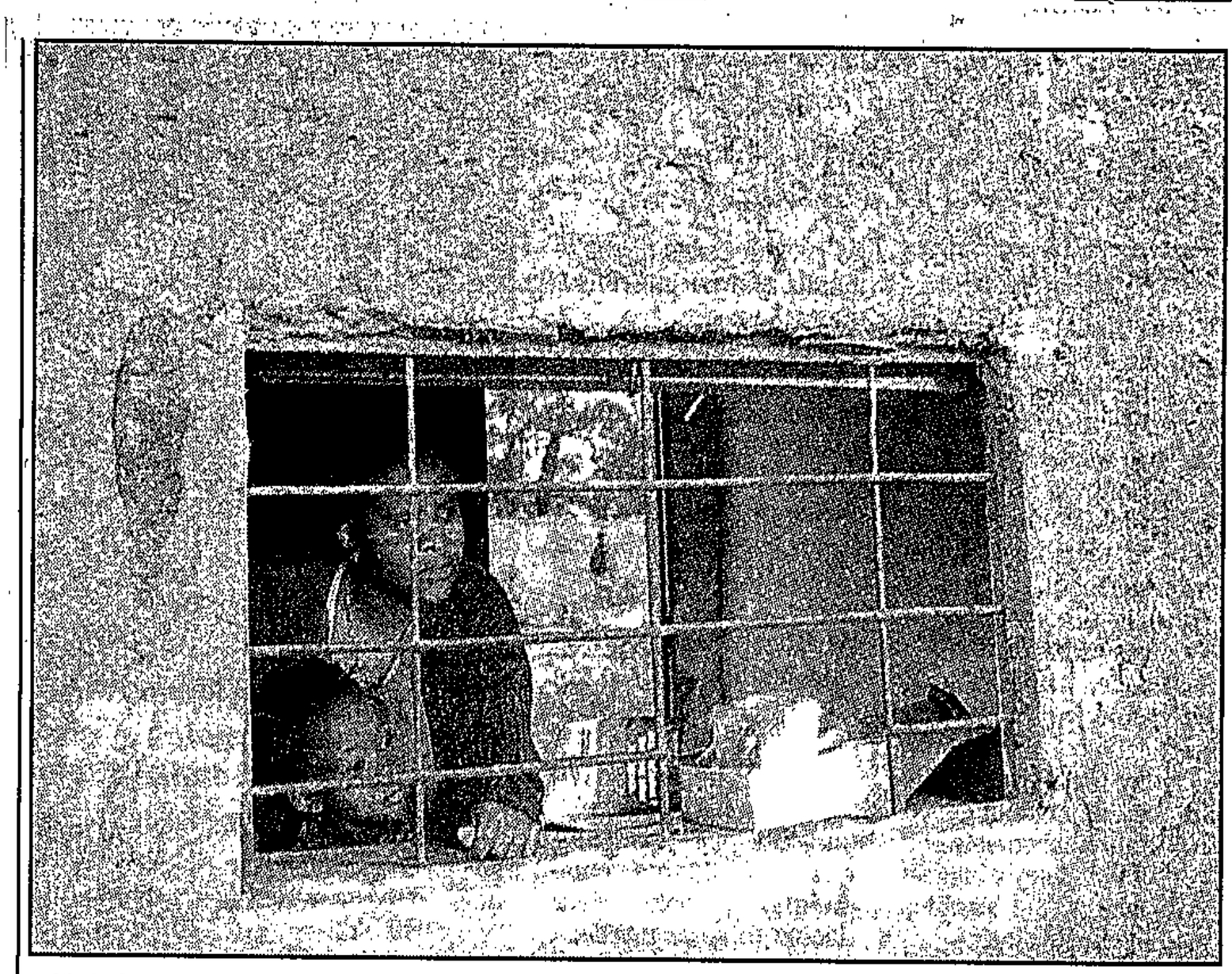
Serfontein added that Lehobye had been "perfectly aware" that the North West goverment had approved the project and also that plans for the houses had been lodged with the town manager of the MTLC.

"Although the land was originally earmarked for the extension of Morula View, it was agreed that the Boikhutsong development could be proceeded with," Serfontein said.

"The applicants totally disregard the wishes of the present occupiers of the property," he said.

If developers withdrew, residents would continue living in shacks, and later development of the site at the same cost effectiveness would virtually be impossible.

Upgrading of the squatter settlement would actually increase the value of Morula View properties, he added.



Helping out . . . Caroline Sealetsa with her daughter Mini at their spaza shop in the far east bank squatter camp outside Alexandra. PICTURE: NATASHA PINCUS

All eyes on Alex squatter problem

Star 2/8/95 (310)

■ BY ANNA COX

The Gauteng provincial legislature will take firm action on illegal squatting on the far east bank of Alexandra after a full investigation has been conducted, according to Gauteng Development, Planning, Environment and Works MEC Sicelo Shiceka.

He was reacting to the illegal invasion of land by about 1 000 squatters on the far east bank of Alexandra during recent weeks.

According to DP Gauteng legislature member Jack Bloom, it could become a "dangerous and explosive" situation since many Alexandra people had been waiting for years to get land allocated there.

Bloom said the number of squatters was growing daily.

The far east bank, a stretch of land adjoining Frankenwald and Marlboro, has been earmarked for some 3 800 low-cost houses for Alexandra residents in order to alleviate overcrowding in the township.

Sites had been prepared for over a year and some site allocations to their eventual owners have already been made, though no settlement has yet taken root.

Agreement

Low-cost housing was to have started on June 1.

Agreement was reached in principle that the provincial housing board would co-fund the building of a basic structure on each serviced site.

"We have been living here in the bushes since 1986. Most of us are unemployed. A few years ago we put up shacks and we will not move. We are a happy, criminal-free community but we want water and toilets," squatter Matthys Mongise said.

He said the 1 000 squatters were using "dirty" water from a nearby sewage pipe for drinking and cooking, and there were no toilet facilities.

"It is with God's help that nobody gets sick," he said.

Another resident, Jaza Malongisa, producing his membership card, said most of the squatters were ANC members.

"They signed us up and now they will not help us. Many of us helped them through the violence and now they tell us to go home. They still turn to us when they need help," he said.

New squatters moved in every weekend, he said.

80% of public parks occupied

City's green, open spaces bear brunt (3D) of squatting

Star 9/8/95

BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
HOUSING REPORTER

Suburbs of Greater Johannesburg could lose green open spaces to the homeless who are increasingly invading vacant land and erecting shacks alongside upmarket houses.

Chairman of the Transitional Metropolitan Council's housing and urbanisation committee, Lindsay Bremner, said there had been an increase of land invasions since last year's election.

"There appears to be an increase (of invasions), possibly due to people's new frustrations and the lack of visible improvements in their lives," she said.

Bremner said the council stood by its decision to evict invaders. However, since the introduction of a moratorium on land invasions only two squatter camps have been demolished.

The council obtained a court order to evict invaders who were erecting shacks on vacant land in Orlando East and City Deep.

Facilities

Squatters in the Carr and Burghersdorp area flouted the moratorium and in June this year successfully built shacks not far from the Market Theatre.

These squatters have not been evicted. Nor has the council provided them with water and toilet facilities. Lack of sanitary facilities is experienced by most squatter camps in the city.

Some squatter camps have been erected alongside upmarket houses, as has been the case in the suburbs of Rosebank and Houghton.

Although some invaders have not built shacks, they use vacant land as a sleeping place and have brought mattresses, stoves and pots.

Residents in these areas are complaining about the use of parks by the homeless and claim that there has been an increase in burglaries since the occupation of the land.

Although some residents were sympathetic to homelessness they would like to see the squatters removed.

But so far it has been difficult to win this battle, and residents are now asking the council to provide the squatters with sanitary facilities.

Relocation

In a letter to The Star, Houghton resident Lara Hirschman said she had been lobbying for the relocation of squatters at St John Road.

"Since their arrival the crime rate has escalated and the residents feel tremendously vulnerable and unsafe."

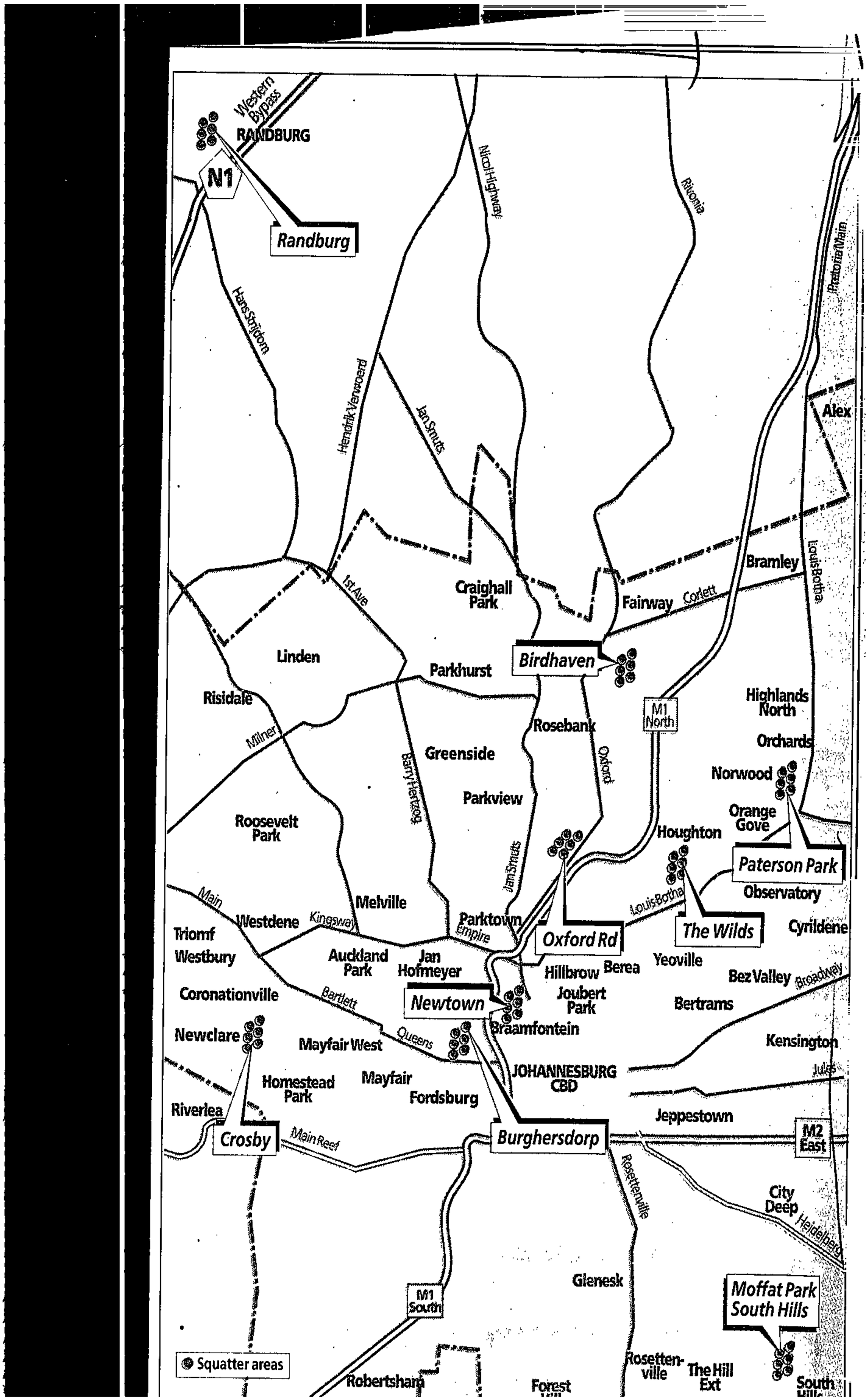
Bremner said they were not asking for the relocation of invaders only but were at the same time trying to find ways of creating affordable housing in the city.

Hirsch critisized the council for having a "couldn't care less" attitude.

Johannesburg councillor Claire Quail who has done research on squatters in the city, said that approximately 80% of public parks and open spaces in the city are inhabited by the homeless.

She said that squatters lived in unsanitary conditions. Residents in these areas also suffered because amenities deteriorated as a result of misuse by invading communities.

The TMC has been asked to consider urgent solutions for housing the homeless.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Bramley
Louis Botha
Parkhurst
Birdhaven
Risidale
Milner
Greenside
Barry Hertzog
Rosebank
M1 North
Oxford
Highlands North
Orchards
Norwood
Orange Grove
Parkview
Roosevelt Park
Houghton
Paterson Park
Observatory
Main
Melville
Jan Smuts
Parktown
Louis Botha
The Wilds
Cyrildene
Kingsway
Empire
Oxford Rd
Triomf
Westbury
Westdene
Auckland Park
Jan Hofmeyer
Hillbrow
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Bez Valley
Broadway
Coronationville
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Newclare
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Kensington
JOHANNESBURG CBD
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Homestead Park
Mayfair
Fordsburg
Riverlea
Jeppestown
Crosby
Main Reef
Burghersdorp
M2 East
Rosettenville
City Deep
Heidelberg
Glenesk
M1 South
Moffat Park
South Hills
Rosetten-ville
The Hill Ext
Robertsham
Forest
Squatter areas

Mogale said he was once confronted by six youngsters who demanded to drive the bus he

Sam Moume, director of a [illegible] of undertakers, blamed the targeting of buses on bereaved fa-

(310)

Park squatters in court as council seeks eviction

Star 17/8/95

■ BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
HOUSING REPORTER

Squatters at Moffat Park in South Hills appeared in the Rand Supreme Court yesterday to oppose the Greater Johannesburg council's application for an eviction order. The squatters were given five days to object to the council's application.

Greater Johannesburg housing and urbanisation chairman Lindsay Bremner said the council would react to the objection and the case would go to trial.

In the past four weeks, about 1 000 squatters have erected shacks at Moffat Park, known for its indigenous plants and wild birdlife.

According to ratepayers' association chairman Mark Matheson, the park had been used by neighbourhood children. However, since the squatters moved in, it had been unsafe.

"The squatter camp started only four weeks ago but every day trucks loaded with furniture drive to the park. It seems like someone is behind this act."

He said residents had decided that if the council was unsuccessful in removing the squatters, they would refuse to pay assessment rates.

A squatter at the park, who did not want to be named, said they were told by their leader that the land had been handed over to them and they had to pay R20 for a stand.

He said they had paid the money to a man, who they referred to as "ummeli", meaning a legitimate representative.

"If you earn a better salary you pay an extra R20 to subsidise those who cannot afford. Ummeli told us that we need to have about R2 000 more by the end of this month if we wanted full representation in court."

However, Bremner denied that the council had given the land to the squatters. She said they would be evicted as soon as the court granted the application.

sidered "nigh potential".

'Renewable energy sources such as solar energy should be more widely used to counter the inequality in energy use.

permit had been issued to a Finnish chemicals company. The waste was expected to arrive in Durban on August 23 and would be recycled by a Benoni-based company.

strongest economy in the region, has resisted efforts by fellow SADC members to scrap visas.

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Eviction order: council and squatters to go to trial

Deborah Fine

(310) BD 18/8/95

AN URGENT application by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council to evict about 800 squatters from a public park in Moffat Park, south of Johannesburg, has been referred to trial in the Rand Supreme Court to define the exact terms of the agreements between local authorities and the squatters regarding the 1994 squatting moratorium.

Adv Jonathon Josephson, SC, appearing for the council, asked for an order evicting the squatters saying his client, the owner of the park, was entitled to eject the squatters who had unlawfully occupied the property in breach of the moratorium agreement. According to the moratorium squatters who occupied land before June 9 1994 may not be evicted, but any land invasion after this date would be considered unlawful.

The council has alleged that about 20 people had lived informally in the park before June 9, but had not erected any shacks. Following the eviction of squatters from property in City Deep last month, people had moved into the nearby Moffat Park and erected shacks. There were currently about 160 shacks and about 800 people living in the park.

The situation had become "explosive" because about 300 Moffat Park residents had threatened to burn down the informal settlement.

Josephson submitted the people who had originally stayed in the park had also breached the moratorium by allowing other squatters to invade the park.

But Adv Fezile Memani, representing the squatters, said most of the people had lived in the park prior to the declaration of the moratorium, and had started erecting shacks only when the other squatters had done so. The other squatters had been moved there by the council, he said.

Both Josephson and Memani conceded there had been agreements between the government, civic associations, local authorities and squatters regarding the moratorium, but could not provide Judge EL Goldstein with the exact nature of the agreements or confirmation that the agreements were still in force.

Goldstein referred the matter to trial. He ordered the parties to clearly define in their pleadings the ambit of the moratorium, who had been party to the agreements, whether these agreements had been verbal or written and if the moratorium was still in force.

LAND CLAIMS (~~271~~) (310)
FM 18/8/95

Sins of the past

Summonses totalling R25m against the former Randburg Town Council and some of its councillors are being drawn up. This follows the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC)'s failure to respond to an attorney's letter demanding that amount in damages — as a result of the establishment of the Zandspruit squatter transit camp.

The TMC was given until last Friday to respond to the letter by attorney David Kahn, acting for a number of clients in the Randburg area adjoining the camp.

Kahn says he did not expect the TMC to respond to the letter of demand. "I will proceed to issue summonses based on each of 31 clients' individual quantum of damages suffered. Individual councillors of the former council will also be served," he adds.

In his letter to the TMC, Kahn says his clients have suffered financial damage as a result of the "negligence and mismanagement" by the former council and individual councillors. He says there have been numerous violations of the Expropriation Act regarding the expropriation of Plot 17 at Zandspruit which to date have not been resolved. "Few of the bylaws which have been passed have been adhered to."

He claims the town council was aware when it passed the bylaws that they could neither be implemented nor enforced. The camp — intended to house 300 families working in Randburg — now has about 1 000, mostly unemployed.

Landowners nearby have complained about sanitation problems, damage to their properties, theft and the killing of livestock. Kahn says his clients are claiming R25m based on damages they have suffered and their properties' potential loss in value.

"There is no alternative claim. My clients realise that, in the spirit of the new SA, they cannot expect the inhabitants of the transit camp to be forcibly removed." ■

Bulldozers move in

Police demolished about 100 shacks in Actonville, Benoni, yesterday morning on the instructions of the Benoni City Council.

A police spokesman said the squatters were illegally occupying council property.

Ester Hlatshwayu, who lived in the settlement, said police arrived soon after 9am and started demolition without speaking to the squatters.

She said she had no place to sleep and would stay where she was. "They can kill me — then I will rest," she said.

Town clerk Hennie Botha said the land had been invaded two weeks ago.

Negotiations to get the squatters to move elsewhere had failed, he said.

Two pieces of land – one industrial – had been invaded. The other had been undermined and was unsafe for people to live on. - Sapa.

(310) Star 19/8/95

'Council vehicles aid squatters'

Star 21/8/95 (310)

■ BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
HOUSING REPORTER

Irate South Hill residents yesterday claimed that council trucks were being used to deliver more squatters and building materials to Moffat Park.

The squatter invasion of the park is continuing despite a promise by the Greater Johannesburg council that security personnel would be sent there last week to prevent a further influx.

United South Ratepayers Association chairman Mark Matheson said a truck with a council emblem and registration LPY 915 T was yesterday dropping off building materials on the site.

"The truck is yellow on the sides and is driven by guys in orange overalls, the same colour as those worn by council employees. More trucks are moving in," he said.

Eviction order

Last week, Johannesburg Administration acting town clerk Stan Verrier said the council would prevent an invasion. However, residents said yesterday that more trucks had driven on to the site.

"There is a man there who is selling the land to these people. They are now placing bricks to mark out their sites and he is taking money from them," said Matheson.

The invasion of Moffat Park, known for its indigenous plants, started five weeks ago following the eviction of squatters from City Deep.

Last week, the squatters opposed a council application in the Rand Supreme Court for an eviction order and were given five days to object to the application.

The squatters claimed that they paid R20 to get land and an extra R20 to subsidise those who could not afford it.

20 000 new squatter shacks

~~127~~ 310

JOHANNESBURG: More than 20 000 shacks had been erected by squatters in the Vaal Triangle since June last year, the Gauteng housing department said in a report on land invasion this week.

The report estimated the province's squatter population at 2,2 million.

CT 23/8/95

Squatters 'fighting a losing battle'

~~320~~ (310) Star 26/8/95

By TROYE LUND

Squatters in Johannesburg's South Hills suburb have agreed to move un-conditionally, and say they will instruct their lawyer to drop legal proceedings against the Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC).

After a three-hour meeting on Thursday between 30 representatives of the Moffat Park squatters and ANC councillor Norman Prince, squatters decided they were "fighting a losing battle" after Prince made it clear they would be evicted whether the matter went to court or not.

"We have each paid the lawyer R20 and every meeting with him costs more. We cannot afford to pay the TMC lawyers' fees too if we lose in court. We just want the council to tell us exactly where we stand and what is going to happen to us," said a spokesman for the squatters, who has been living in the bush behind the park for eight years.

Other squatters said they had recently moved from the City Deep hostel.

"We will not tolerate land invasions. The dogs and bulldozers of the past will not be used, but if no negotiated settlement can be reached, the council has no choice but to force people off land they invade," said Prince.

He said the council would try to find temporary accommodation for those with no other place to live. He stressed that the TMC had no obligation to do so.

"We hope the council will help us to find somewhere to stay," said a woman with three young children.

Prince will explain the situation to the whole settlement tomorrow.

Two people, one house and a big headache for all

CP 27/8/95 (310)

By BENISON MAKELE

"OVER my dead body," says Nkele Lekgetho, who is fighting to reclaim her house which is being occupied by a SA National Civic Organisation member in Mohlakeng.

"Get a court order then I'll move out of your house," is the response of Peace Phetoe, Sanco's local branch treasurer.

"I don't have money for court orders and lawyers," replies Nkele . . .

The continuing sabre-rattling over the ownership of house No 3052 in Lembede street, Mohlakeng, reached a climax this week with both parties claiming they had received death threats.

A disgruntled Lekgetho, who said she had explored all avenues to get Phetoe to evacuate her house, vowed never to give up the fight for the house.

Removal

Lekgetho, who came to City Press offices with members of the Mohlakeng Joint Forum, said she was contemplating forcefully removing of the occupant of her house.

"I'm not scared of dying for what I believe is right. In fact, I'm prepared to die in the fight for my house because that's perhaps when Peace Phetoe can occupy the house.

"But as long as I live, he will have no peace in my house," Lekgetho said with tears in her eyes.

Asked why she wouldn't follow the option of seeking redress through the courts, she said she did not have the money for legal action.

"If one does not have money, must she have her rights trampled upon by those who have?" She further alleged that Phetoe, whom she claimed was extensively involved in Mohlakeng's civic structures, was sabotaging efforts to give the matter a fair hearing.

Asked to comment on the allegations Phetoe said he had told Lekgetho several times that she should seek a court order for his eviction rather than harass him. He said he had not entered into any transaction with her concerning the property.

Lekgetho won the house in an uncontested divorce action and is the legal owner, according to documents she brought to City Press.

However, Phetoe argues that he bought the house from her former husband and gave him R14 000 as a down payment.

He wants a court order because that will help him recover his money from Lekgetho's former husband.

He said he would move out if he was reimbursed.

City Press was unable to contact Lekgetho's husband who is said to be in hospital.

Asked how he entered into the agreement when there was already a court decision entitling Lekgetho to assume ownership of the house, Phetoe said that had he been aware of the divorce proceedings, he would not have entered into the deal.

He also dismissed allegations of house grabbing and corruption by Sanco members in Mohlakeng, saying the civic organisation was still prepared to help Lekgetho as a resident of Mohlakeng.

"Instead of waiting for the civic body to help solve her problem, she goes to the poor little boys from the Mohlakeng Joint Forum – something that won't help her," Phetoe said.

But Mohlakeng Joint Forum president Truman Seshoka said the forum had no confidence in the national civic organisation and was handling 10 cases of people who had been dispossessed of their houses by Sanco members.

Katorus upgrading project halted as illegal occupants refuse to go

■ BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
HOUSING REPORTER

Illegal occupants of houses in Tokoza which were vandalised and evacuated by their owners during violence are refusing to move out, bringing the relaunched upgrading project in the area to a standstill.

This is the second time that the special presidential project, which aims to repair about 1 500 Katorus houses in 18 months, has been halted.

The project failed to take off last year after residents claimed they had not been involved in the planning stages.

Early this month it was relaunched and Homeloan guarantee company was appointed to manage the process of finding the legitimate owners before repairing the houses.

About 300 houses in Tokoza and more than 400 in Katlehong and Vosloorus have been reclaimed.

While most of the houses have been assessed in Tokoza, no building has started.

"The situation is volatile at the moment," said Mike Morkel, a housing consultant who has been appointed to head the Reconstruction and Development Programme lead projects in Gauteng.

He said it had been decided that the renovation of Tokoza houses should in the interim be stopped after it was established that some of the houses were occupied illegally.

"We are now going through a talking process with everyone involved to see if the illegal occupants can move out, but we are not at an eviction stage," he said, adding that if the matter could not be resolved, the local council would decide whether to evict those who were occupying its houses.

Repairs should have started two weeks ago and finished in 18 months.

But, according to Octavia Hlatshwayo, spokesman for the displaced residents, the project could be delayed.

"These people are now vandalising the houses even further and there are many displaced people who are now afraid to claim their houses because there is not enough security," she said.

Hlatshwayo said that when the project was relaunched they were told there would be enough security, but this had not been the case.

She said that because of a lack of security in the area, most residents were afraid to reclaim their houses.

Hlatshwayo said they were also no longer sure whether the houses would be repaired in blocks as promised. "It is important that the repairs happen in blocks so that not just one person moves back, but a group. In this way, people will feel much safer."

However, Morkel said their plans would not be delayed.

Homeloan operations manager Dimakatso Moraka said there had been progress in other areas of Katorus but she refused to give details of the problems prevailing in Tokoza. "We are still meeting with the local community to discuss this matter further," she said.

(310) Star 30/8/95

Minister hits at squatters who block progress

(310) Sowetan 31/8/95

By Joshua Raboroko

GAUTENG MEC for housing Mr Dan Mofokeng has expressed impatience with people who are invading land earmarked for Reconstruction and Development Programme projects.

Opening a housing development at Ebony Park in the Midrand area recently, he warned that his department did not want landless people to protest where development was already taking place.

He said: "We are not going to tolerate attempts of disruption by people who want to block progress. We realise that some people are being encouraged to invade these new projects.

The project was launched by the South African Housing Trust development division, in association with the community and relevant stakeholders.

The project has been approved by the Provincial Housing Board and a social compact was signed by both parties. First-time homeownership and government subsidies for the project have also been secured.

According to the Gauteng Housing Department, more than 20 000 shacks were erected by squatters in the Witwatersrand and in the Vaal Triangle since June last year. This showed an influx of about 103 000 people.

The department said about 15 000 shacks were put up in the Vaal Triangle alone. Seven new squatter camps have sprung up there and on the Witwatersrand over the past few months.

In a report it is estimated that the province's squatter population is 2,2 million. This figure has sparked debate among political parties in the province.

The NP says the figure is alarming and squatting should be stopped while the DP has criticised the ANC for failing to act in time as it had promised electorates proper houses.

Mofokeng said the first phase of the project in the Midrand area will consist of 500 houses, with a total development potential of 2 700 units. Stands will range in size from 250 - 625 square metres.

The cost of constructing the civil infrastructure will be R2,5-million for the first 500 stands and a further R4,1-million for the next 1 000 stands planned for Phase 2.

Building contracts for the project are available to all members of the local builders associations which are being helped by established building developers, thereby contributing to capacity building in line with the RDP.

The delivery of housing on a "massive scale" would soon start, Mofokeng said, adding that the government's aim was to see housing conforming to SABS standards was delivered. Issuing a stern warning to people who have defrauded or intend to defraud first time homeowners, he said the government would arrest people who issued phoney receipts for land and housing.



Many hands make light work ... the Reconstruction and Development Programme gets under way.

NEWS

Anger in Eldorado Park

Invaders stay on

Star 31/8/93

(310)

■ BY BONGIWE MLANGENI
HOUSING REPORTER

Eldorado Park families who were left homeless last year after their homes were vandalised and invaded are appealing to the council to speed up the eviction process of the illegal occupants.

Christopher Peterson and his family have since lived in a backyard room holding on to promises made by the council that the invaders would be evicted "immediately" and residents' houses would be repaired.

However, a year has passed and most of the families from extensions 3 and 7 have been unable to go back to their three-bedroom homes.

The invaded homes were part of the Delft housing scheme which provided a complete house at a predetermined package price of about R35 000 for households earning less than R2 500.

Buyers who had already paid deposits had to withdraw from occupying the houses after being intimidated. The contractors also fled the area.

Peterson said he had finished paying for his house and was now forced to pay about R400 rent every month for the backyard room.

He said he was also receiving bills for electricity and water used at his house by the illegal occupants.

"The council is not helping us in any way and we have not heard a word from them," he said.

But Greater Johannesburg housing and urbanisation chairman Lindsay Bremner said a report would be presented to full council following communication between the council and the home-owners.

She said three months' notice has been served on the unlawful occupants. The council was planning to provide the home owners with caravans, toilets and security while their houses are being repaired. Some houses will cost up to R24 000 to repair. In some cases only minimal repairs will be required.

She said the project had been delayed because of extensive damages, adding that no repairs could be undertaken until the houses were evacuated.

Home is where the o

(310) CP

3/9/95

(319)

Shacks, crying infants and a bottle of wine . . .

By OBED MUSI

THEY live on the thresholds of posh hotels, soaring skyscrapers and green lawns – with their howling infants in cardboard boxes and canvas roofs over their heads.

They are the shack people of Jozi and say they "ain't movin . . . but ons dak nie ons phola hier" in the words of the old song which just means they like it here and are going to stay.

First are the derelicts around what used to be known as "Number Four" otherwise known as the old Johannesburg Fort – on the crest of Hillbrow – the suburb that has since become termed as "The Sodom of South Africa".

Now there I saw human decency at its lowest. There were one or two well-spoken guys who told me in impeccable English that this was their home.

One such was a Xhosa-speaking guy from a myriad of towns in the old Transkei who first said he was "Tshawe" but better known as "Ntsiimbindala" and who shouted to my photographer Tladi Khuele:

"Don't shoot! I'll sue you to hell and I will meet you in court for shooting me without permission."

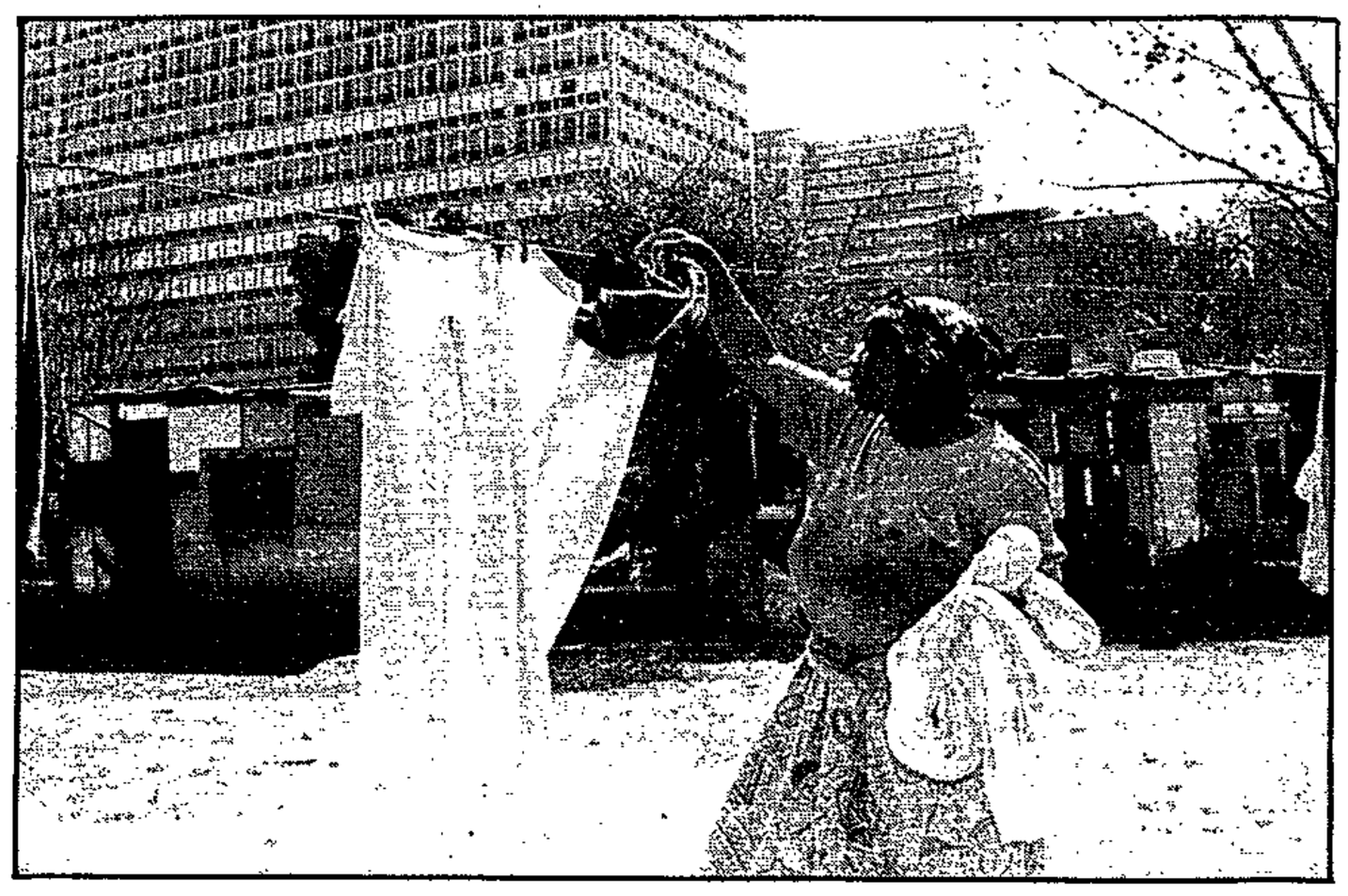
Our new friend was not only piqued but wanted to know from us whether we knew that he had come to Jozi after having done his "share of liberation work" as evinced by the admiring two women who emerged from the "mkhukhus" nearby – and who also wanted to be paid for the "privilege" of "shooting" him on the grounds that he had already been "shot".

Then he pointed dramatically at the grass-covered entrance to the old prison and said: "I used to be a convict inside there and I'm glad that they are now improving it . . . maybe our old days will be over."

Over the road several ex-patients of the old Johannesburg General Hospital were taking it easy on the grass – with a surreptitiously hidden bottle of wine being passed around – outside a lonely-looking grass-laden shack near the old door of "Number Four".

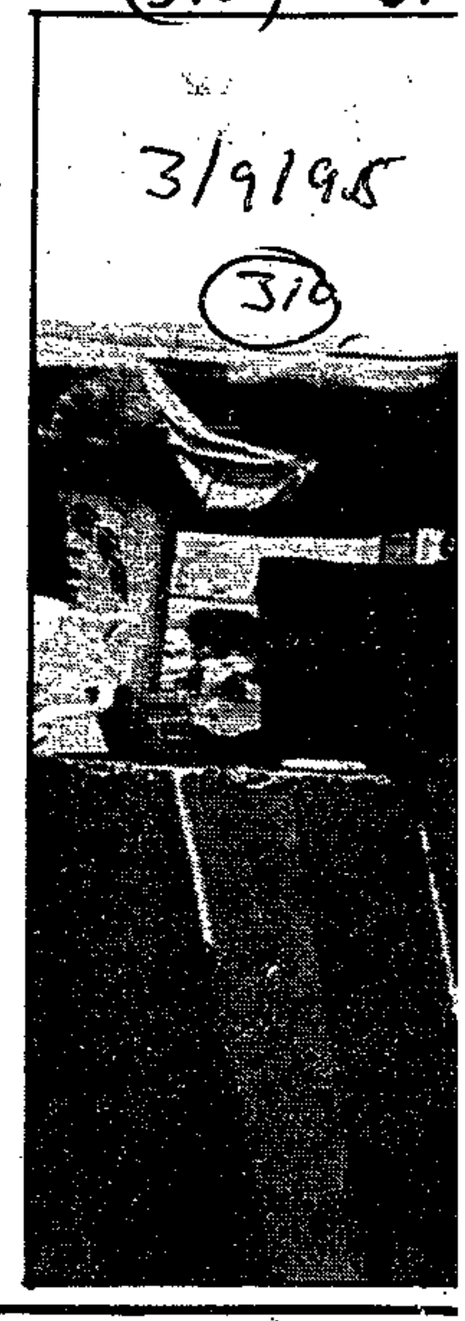
Somehow it was a sad visit to a place which had housed some of this country's most notorious gangsters.

But it vividly showed that the face of Joburg is changing so fast that next week we will be looking at how far this change has affected the City of Gold.



SKYLINE . . . A city squatter hangs out washing for the day.

■ Pic: TLADI KHUELE



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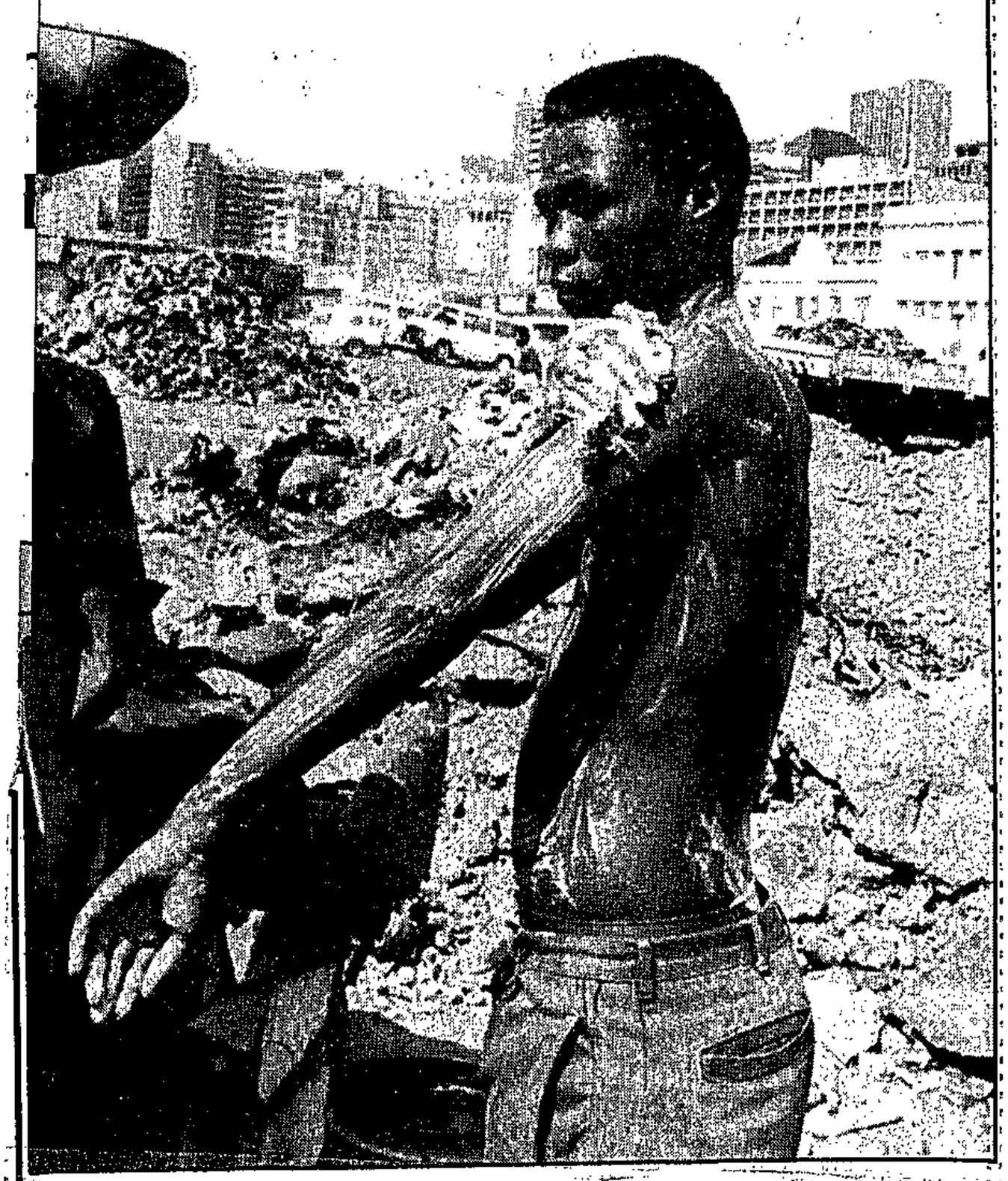


SOAP CITY . . . This guy wants nothing to do with Jozi dirt.

■ Pic: TLADI KHUELE

Council vows to stop Moffat influx

(310) Star 6/9/95

■ BYLORNA ZOKUFA
CITY REPORTER

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council has vowed to clamp down on people providing building material to squatters in Moffat Park in southern Johannesburg. One person has already been apprehended and been given an official warning.

"We are looking into the allegations of council vehicles bringing material to the settlement. Any person found guilty of this will face disciplinary action," housing and urbanisation chairman Lindsey Bremner said.

He said there were approximately 280 completed and 50 uncompleted shacks in the park and that the TMC had set up security measures to prevent the erection of any more shacks.

■The TMC will open a hotline tomorrow for mebers of the public to report any fraudulent selling of council-owned land. The hotline number is 080-011-6322

(310) Star 9/9/95

Gauteng squatters living in relative comfort

By TROYE LUND

Gauteng squatters lead more comfortable lifestyles than others living in similar circumstances in South Africa, Unisa's bureau of market research claimed this week.

"Although only 18% earn salaries, a surprising 52% own a TV. They also have more radios and amenities than any other squatters," said the study.

However, Gauteng shacks are poorly serviced.

"Off-stand" water is used by 62% of Gauteng squatters – they have to fetch their water elsewhere – while 52% rely on off-stand sanitation and 46% have no access to electricity. Squatters depend on the informal sector for a living and 47% have an income below the breadline.

Of the 894 400 black households in Gauteng, 176 200 live in shacks on serviced sites received from the state. A total of 168 000 households qualify for a subsidy of between R5 000 and R7 000, depending on their incomes.

There are 21 500 families in shacks who quali-fy for a first-time housing subsidy and 310 400, now living in rented houses, who are eligible for the same subsidy.

Police on full alert after 3 die in E Rand squatter camp violence

(310) Star 11/9/95

■ BY ADAM COOKE

Police are on full alert in the Zonk'iZizwe and Zama-Zama squatter camps on the East Rand, where tension is high following a week of hostility between warring groups.

According to police, three people were killed and several injured last week, in what has been described as "political violence" in the areas near Benoni.on the East Rand.

Police spokesman Warrant Officer Hampie de Kock said violence flared after two rival political parties held rallies in the area last Saturday.

The meetings were "coincidentally" held on the same soccer field in Zonk'iZizwe, and police said trouble started when a woman ran to the front of one of the converging groups and chanted at the opposition.

She was brutally assaulted and had to be rushed to the Natalspruit Hospital. Her house was petrol bombed later in the week.

Over the next two days, police reported 11 different cases related to the original clash.

Two men had been severely assaulted and a member of the Internal Stability Unit was shot in the knee while assisting another victim of attacks by roving groups of men, police said.

De Kock said that, with 24-hour patrols by SAPS and community police forum members throughout the area, police hoped to curb the violence.

In addition, meetings between opposition leaders were being organised.



More than 30 people and toddlers have been sleeping in the open after their shacks were demolished by the landowner in Lanseria, near Johannesburg. Most of their building materials were also confisticated, acoording to their spokesman Mr George Shirinda. PIC: LEN KUMALO.

30 people evicted from land

(310) Sowetan 19/9/95

By Russel Molefe

MORE than 30 people including young children have been sleeping in the open since Friday following the demolition of their shacks at a private property in Lanseria near Johannesburg.

A spokesman for the people, Mr George Shirinda, claimed yesterday that they had been living on the property for the past nine years without being "bothered".

"We do not have an alternative place to stay and we are definitely not going to move from this place.

The owner of the land, Mr Mike Nickson, said yesterday: "We spoke to them at several meetings in the presence of ANC officials that they should move out of the land because it was a private property. It was a blatant invasion of the land."

Judge grants squatters time to get legal help

(310) Star 20/9/95

■ BY SUSAN MILLER

Squatters in Oxford and St John's roads, Parktown, have been given until Tuesday to get legal representation to enable them to show why the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council should not evict them.

Mr Justice L I Goldblatt said in the Rand Supreme Court yesterday there was a degree of urgency about the eviction because a health hazard was being created, but the TMC itself had created a moratorium on evictions which had been lifted on April 11.

"Your client (the TMC) brought the eviction papers at the end of August and has not acted with great urgency," he said.

Judge Goldblatt said justice would be served if the squatters were given the opportunity to receive legal advice.

The judge instructed representatives for each squatter grouping to seek legal aid and file papers explaining why they should not be evicted.

Gauteng's squatters 'better off'

Stephané Bothma (310)
BD 5/9/95

PRETORIA — Gauteng squatters are better off than those in the rest of the country and while only 18,1% earn a salary, 52% have television sets, says Unisa's bureau of market research.

It said yesterday its study showed the notion of a major influx of people to Gauteng from other areas was incorrect.

Gauteng shacks were poorly serviced. While 62,7% had to use off-stand water, 57,8% had only off-stand sanitation facilities and 46,1% had no access to electricity.

Squatters were largely dependent on the informal sector for a living and 47% had incomes below the bread line. This figure was higher in other provinces.

"A surprising 52% had television sets and, of the other amenities, they also had more radios," the study said. Of the 894 400 black households in Gauteng, close on 20% (176 200) lived in squatter shacks on serviced sites which they received from the state, and 168 000 might be eligible for a consolidation subsidy of between R5 000 and R7 500, depending on their income.

A further 21 500 families in shacks and 310 400 in rented houses in the province were eligible for a first-time housing subsidy, the study showed. Only 7,5% of shacks had brick walls and each room was shared by an average of 1,68 people. The average shack had 2,3 rooms.

Sexwale is set to evict squatters

(310) Star 22/9/95

■ BY SUSAN MILLER

Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale yesterday received permission to give squatters on the "east bank" of Alexandra until October 17 to either leave the property or come to court and show why they should not be evicted.

Mr Justice I L Goldblatt, in the Rand Supreme Court, also granted the premier the right to authorise the sheriff to prevent any new settlers from attempting to move on to the Sandton site.

Counsel for Premier Sexwale has been ordered to serve the court notice on squatters living on this land by clearly displaying notices in English, Zulu and South Sotho, and by notifying them through the use of a system of loudspeakers.

If this controversial matter is unopposed on October 17, the squatters will be removed from the property and all their structures will be demolished.

The Supreme Court order would also prevent any of the squatters' leaders from letting sites on the property, and from collecting or receiving rent from any squatters.

Jo'burg squatter problem escalates with new invasion of bird

(310) Star

sanctuary 25/9/95

■ BY ANNA COX

The squatter problem in Johannesburg is escalating with a new invasion at the James and Ethel Gray Bird Sanctuary in Birdhaven.

Vagrants have always lived in the park but residents say many more people have moved in in recent months and that conditions were becoming unhygienic, unsafe and unsightly.

Residents claim that squatters are fishing in the ponds and stalking birds for food. One squatter has already built a raft and is regularly seen fishing in the stream. Concerned residents called an urgent meeting last weekend to decide what steps to take.

North Eastern Metropolitan Substructure councillor Claire Quail said residents fear that the park – which is well-used by walkers and bird watchers – was deteriorating daily because of lack of concern by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC).

Quail said a representative of the squatters had attended the meeting and there "was a degree of co-operation between them and residents".

It was agreed that plastic bags would be supplied to the squatters so that litter in the park could be collected. Another suggested solution was that more use be made of the park.

Residents indicated that they were prepared to pay for additional security. A petition was drawn up which is to be submitted to the TMC calling for immediate action to be taken.

Chairman of the Birdhaven Residents Association, Ivan Levy, said: "We intend putting pressure on all levels of government to resolve the squatting problem. The park is terribly polluted because of lack of cleaning and maintenance.

"We have made several requests for clean-ups but are told that there is no money in the budget. This park is one of the largest, unspoilt and undeveloped (spaces) in the city and should be looked after and cared for. Residents are concerned about security and the decrease in property values," he said.

Quail said many other invasions had taken place in the suburbs of Melville, Norwood and Patterson Park, including at Sandspruit near the Norwood Hypermarket and in Jan Smuts Avenue opposite the University of the Witwatersrand.

"The lack of interest shown by the TMC regarding squatting around Johannesburg is frightening," she said.

Chairman of the TMC executive committee Collin Matjila said two major initiatives co-ordinated by the Urbanisation Department had been started.

The first was a vagrancy forum which had been set up to investigate and come up with solutions regarding urban vagrancy.

The second was an Inner City Shelter Group set up specifically to facilitate the creation of shelters in the inner city.

Short-term steps to be taken were meeting with public safety officials and various other council departments and councillors to look at the role of the council's security in relation to the legal process that the council had resorted to in resolving the illegal occupation of public spaces, he said.

It was decided a report would be sent to the executive committee considering the role of the security department in this matter in regard to the court orders which were costing the council and ratepayers huge sums of money, Matjila said.

The squatters living in St John's Road in Houghton and in Oxford Road, Parktown, appeared in court last week after an eviction was served by the TMC on them.

They appeared without representation and the judge gave them one week in which to find legal representation.

Shackland fears at Liefde-en-Vrede

■ VELL RADEBE
TER

Fears that Liefde-en-Vrede, south of Johannesburg, will be overrun by informal settlements have again gripped residents in the area as the process of putting a housing infrastructure in place gets under way.

Greater Johannesburg Council acting town clerk Stan Verrier said the council had already laid electricity cables, roads, sewerage and lights installation.

Residents claim to have details of a council plan which reveals that 700 stands in the area had been subdivided for low-income housing. The stands, measuring between 750 and 950sq m, have been subdivided into smaller stands between 200 and 45sq m, they say. The council has denied the claims.

The settlement first came under the media spotlight last year when the council demolished shacks and confiscated building materials on the coldest night in June, leaving 700 people homeless.

The resultant uproar led to the intervention of the late Housing Minister Joe Slovo and the council eventually resolved the matter by accommodating families in electricity sheds in Newtown, Johannesburg.

Verrier said the council was waiting for the lifting of the moratorium on the sale of Greater Johannesburg land before selling it to the private sector.

He said the council had not yet resolved whether to subdivide the area into stands but confirmed that the land would be sold to the private sector for building purposes.

He said there were no particular companies who were presently lobbying to build houses there.

Resident Mike Birrell, who is also a sales consultant of Mod Homes Agent, accused the council of having planned small stands, alleging that this meant they planned to put up squatters in low-cost housing.

"Property values in neighbouring suburbs like Glenvista, Bassonia and Mulbarton will definitely go down," he warned.

Birrell said the availability of land in the south made it more viable to accommodate low-cost housing families there, rather than next door to upmarket housing.

He said banks were already reluctant to provide loans to prospective buyers in the area because of fears that their investment would diminish.

(310) Star 26/9/95

Squatters create highway hazard

■ BY ANNA COX

(310)

Illegal squatters in the East Bank area of Alexandra are creating major traffic safety and security problems, warns North Eastern Metropolitan Substructure councillor Jo Marais.

The squatters have cut fences to cross the freeway to get to the Linbro Park dump to forage for building materials.

Toddlers have been seen playing on the side of the highway, according to Marais, and bakkies delivering building materials were also going in and out of the camp through the broken fence off the freeway, creating traffic hazards. Animals from the camp were frequently seen on the road.

"It has become a serious problem and is of grave concern. Pedestrians and motorists are being put in serious danger and something has to be done urgently by the authorities before someone is hurt or killed," she said.

The squatters were also posing a security threat. Besides many stone-throwing incidents, the most recent being on Saturday when a Randburg man driving with his family was attacked and injured by stone-throwers, the crime rate in Linbro Park was increasing, she said.

The Rand Supreme Court on Friday granted Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale an eviction order against the squatters. It also gave the premier the right to authorise the sheriff to prevent any new squatters from moving on to the Sandton site.

The squatters gave been given until October 17 to leave the property or to show the court why they should not be evicted. The court order also prevents any of the squatter leaders from letting sites on the property.

Star 26/9/95

28/9/95 (310) (~~129~~) Star 28/9

Housing hopes falter

Continuing invasion of a piece of land near Eldorado Park earmarked for low-cost housing has left about 2 500 Thembalihle squatter families with little hope of ever occupying their promised land.

The land was invaded last year in February, making it impossible to continue with the Goldev Project which aims to build about 1 000 homes.

The families had all qualified for a Government subsidy under the project but could lose their subsidies as there was no progress on the development.

In an effort to save the project, the Goldev Housing Club Association recently submitted a memorandum to the Greater Johannesburg council demanding that the issue of invasion be resolved.

Goldev Corporation Aziz Shaikh said Thembalihle community members had been on their waiting list for about three years and were hoping to move into their houses this year.

Greater Johannesburg housing and urbanisation chairman Lindsay Bremner could not be reached for comment on the issue.

But, in a letter she forwarded to the corporation, she said the matter had been forwarded to the executive committee of the council. – Housing Reporter.

Barbed wire doesn't stop squatters

(310)

BY ANNA COX

Star 2/10/95

Police have cordoned off the illegal squatter camp at Far East Bank in Alexandra with barbed wire, but it continues to grow daily.

A visit by The Star to the camp yesterday showed new squatters erecting shacks beyond the cordoned section.

Eastern metropolitan substructure councillor Jo Marais said the situation was becoming very serious.

"New building materials are being brought in daily and new shacks erected on stretches of land outside the cordoned area. It is getting out of control. This shows the total lack of effectiveness of the Gauteng legislature, which should have taken action when the squatters started moving in in August."

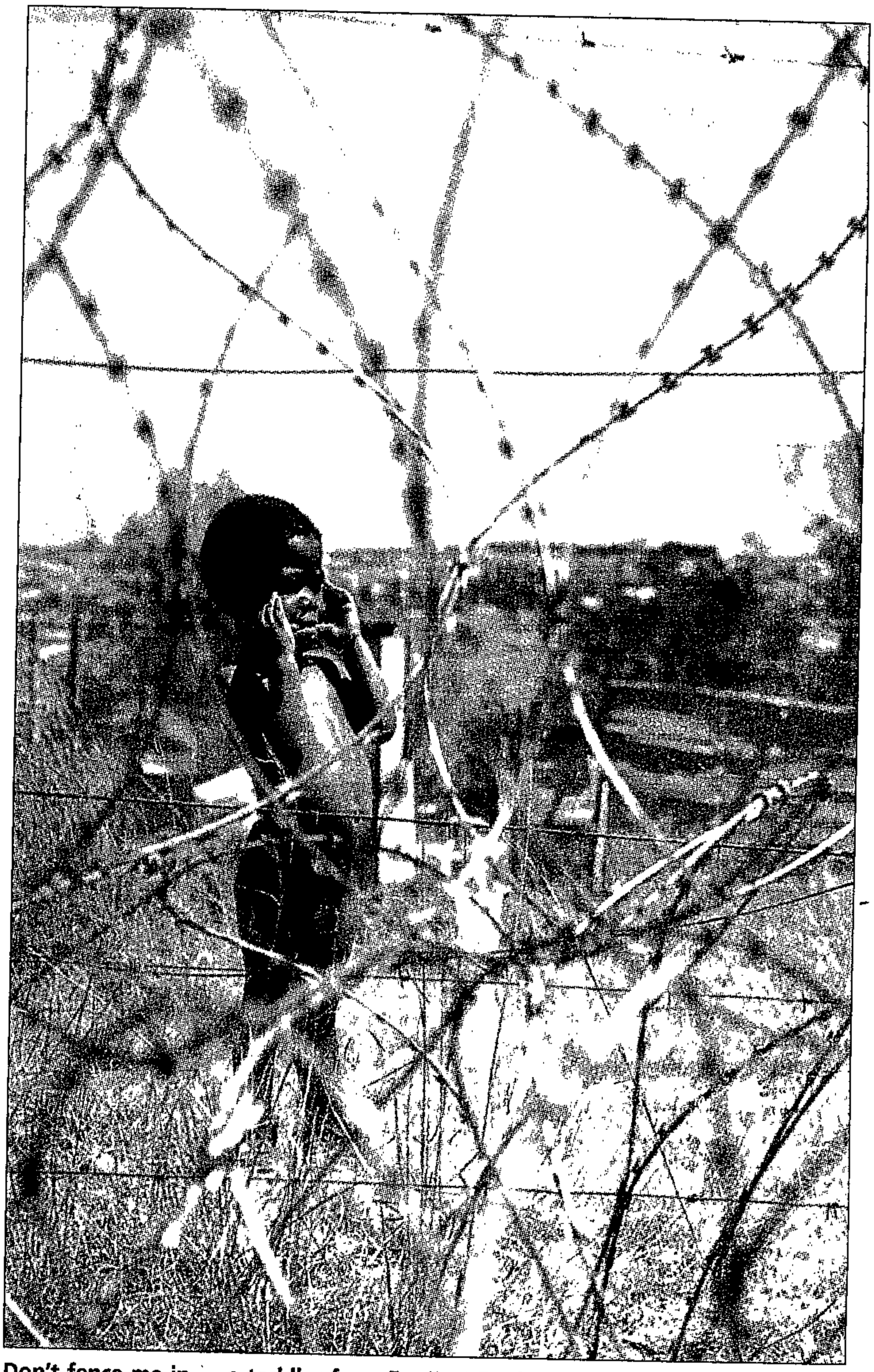
She said Alexandra residents believed a political party was behind the move to Far East Bank. The land had been lying vacant for five years and suddenly, just before elections, squatters started moving in.

Two weeks ago the Rand Supreme Court granted the Johannesburg council an eviction order calling for the squatters to move off the land or, by October 17, show why they should not.

Since squatters started moving in, a number of stone-throwing incidents aimed at motorists have been reported.

Squatters have also cut the fence between the camp and the freeway and regularly run across the road to go and forage in a nearby rubbish dump.

Police liaison officer Colonel Eugene Opperman said police had erected a barbed wire barricade to protect both motorists and the squatters themselves. More daily patrols would be sent to the area.



Don't fence me in ... a toddler from Far East Bank squatter camp gazes through the barbed wire erected around the settlement. Despite attempts to restrict its size, new arrivals and building equipment appear daily. PICTURE: JODI BIEBER

Shots fired at security men at squatter camp

(3/0) Star 2/10/95

■ BY TARYN LAMBERTI AND SELBY BOKABA

Several shots were fired at a security company vehicle when it was called in to prevent people from offloading building material at the Moffat Park squatter camp in southern Johannesburg last night.

An interim court order granted to the Johannesburg City Council on Friday seeks to prevent further land invasion and the erection of shacks in the municipal park.

Sapa reports that the case has been set down in the Rand Supreme Court for October 23.

Robert Smith, a South Hills resident, said he had called in NISS security guards after seeing people trying to offload building materials from a truck. The company is employed by the Johannesburg City Council to prevent further squatting in the park, which is inhabited by 3 000 squatters.

A security guard said the gunmen had fled after the guards returned fire.

A police spokesman said the Internal Stability Unit had been called in to assist the guards.

National Party councillor for Johannesburg South Theuns Oosthuizen last night accused the African National Congress of "sympathising and embracing the flaunters of the law".

"The indifference displayed by the ANC-led Transitional Metropolitan Council and their inability to act is leading to a build up of tension fast reaching the point of explosion," said Oosthuizen.

He said the NP would take legal action against the TMC if the court order was not executed.

'Nip problem in the bud'

Call to report builders of illegal shacks

Star 10/10/95 (35A) (310)

■ BY KARIN SCHIMKE
GAUTENG REPORTER

LAND invasions are being used by parties to embarrass the Government before elections, claims MEC

Gauteng residents who see any signs of informal structures going up on land that has not specifically been set aside for development must inform their local authorities immediately so that shacks can be broken down before they are fully erected.

This was the word yesterday from MEC for Development Planning, Works and Environment Sicelo Shiceka, who said the rate of land invasion was increasing rapidly as the local elections were drawing nearer.

He said there were two reasons for this: "The Government is vulnerable right now while it is preparing for elections and, secondly, political parties other than the ANC are using land invasion as a means of embarrassing the Government."

He said his department had received reports that parties were behind land invasions, particularly in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria, but he could give no other details until an investigation had been completed.

He called on communities to work closely with their local authorities in the meantime by informing them as soon as they saw any informal structures going up. In this way the problem would be nipped in the bud, while the rapid land delivery programme was being implemented.

In terms of this programme, people in stress areas (overpopulated areas) and crisis areas (where houses have been built on flood plains) could apply to local authorities for land.

So far 18 200 applications had been received and 16 projects were under way to reserve land for these people. The estimated cost of each of these sites was around R15 000 and each site would be provided with basic facilities.

"But while these people are waiting for land to build their homes on, others from across national and international borders are invading and building shacks, and people are getting very angry and frustrated at the situation."

He was also concerned about the number of shacks going up in open spaces in white residential areas. This was something which unnerved and scared white people and undermined their faith in the Government.

He added that local authorities were being given the capacity to deal with land issues more effectively, but that it was up to the community to inform them of illegal invasions.

Where people had been warned and evicted, the Government would not be above strong tactics.

"If we need to remove invaders, we will," Shiceka said.

Gauteng plans 20 000 sites in 16 areas in bid to stop land invasion

Ingrid Salgado

THE Gauteng government plans to spend R225m on providing land sites in 16 areas across the province in a bid to beat the growing squatter crisis.

It said yesterday money from next year's provincial housing budget would be used to provide up to 20 000 sites.

Development planning, environment and works MEC Sicelo Shiceka would not divulge the locations of the sites, saying this would encourage land invasion in the targeted areas.

The project, the rapid land development programme, had received temporary approval from the provincial housing board. Final approval was expected at the end of the month.

The board had received applications for about 18 000 sites, with each site costing government about R15 000.

Basic facilities would be provided initially and full services would be implemented later. A quota system would be used to identify crisis areas where overcrowding and lack of housing were most prominent, Shiceka said.

BD 10/10/95 (310)

The programme was initiated last year after a spate of land invasions, programme manager John Spiropoulos said. About 24% of Gauteng's population lived in informal settlements.

Shiceka said the province was investigating allegations that political parties were responsible for the increase in land invasions running up to the local government elections.

In many cases, invasions were the result of individuals selling government land. In Alexandra's far east bank, where about 1 500 squatters had settled on provincially owned land earmarked for development, police were investigating a man who had allegedly sold sites to squatters.

He said the project would begin to "change the mindset" of local authorities, who had to learn to be developers and not simply regulators. They tended to be indecisive in acting against land invaders, and task teams would be established to counteract this. Government would deal firmly with squatters, since a moratorium on land invasions and evictions was in place.

Gauteng development planning head Jan Opperman said: "Certain local authorities are trying to sidestep their responsibility to bring court orders against squatters by saying there is a moratorium on evictions." But the moratorium stipulated all land invasions from June last year were illegal.

The council's housing and urbanisation committee chairman Lindsay Bremner said there was "genuine frustration" at the lack of housing delivery. But squatters were being exploited by individuals and political parties.

am UPDATE

24(30) ARG 14/10/95

Squatters assault demolishers

JOHANNESBURG. — Police fired rubber bullets and a stun grenade at squatters in Alexandra after they began assaulting municipal workers ordered to demolish new or unoccupied shacks in the East Bank camp.

Police spokesman Eugene Opperman said police were asked to protect the sheriff of the court and local authority workers in the area during the demolition yesterday.

"While the workers were busy breaking down the shacks, a group of squatters assaulted some of the workers. Using minimum force, police fired a stun grenade to disperse the group," he said in a statement.

"One police officer was hurt when a brick hit him on the head. He was taken to hospital for treatment."

Lieutenant-Colonel Opperman said the workers then resumed the demolition of unused or newly-built shacks, but were soon disrupted again.

"A larger group formed nearby. Some workers were assaulted again. Police warned the squatters to refrain from their illegal activities and to disperse.

"This warning was ignored and police fired rubber bullets at the squatters. The squatters then dispersed." — Reuter.

No place to go for squatters evicted from park in wealthy Johannes

Star



HOMELESS AND DISHEARTENED: Evicted women sit on the pavement in Oxford Road PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN HOGG

By KURT SWART

Bewildered and forlorn, with their belongings strewn around their feet, three women and a toddler were left sitting on an Oxford Road pavement after being evicted from a park in Saxonwold this week.

They were part of a group of 27 illegal squatters who had settled in the suburb to the consternation of residents, the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council and the Government.

The conflict between squatters and residents reluctant to accept their new neighbours has also been seized upon by political parties whose candidates are standing for the municipal elections next month.

The Government and local authorities have vowed to crack down on land invaders, who have been increasingly erecting settlements throughout Johannesburg's northern suburbs.

Lindsay Bremner, chairman of the TMC's housing and urbanisation committee, said a final eviction order had been obtained on September 29. She said last week: "As soon as it is practically possible, the deputy sheriff will proceed to execute the eviction order, taking into account, inter alia, that police protection is required. Materials must be marked and stored. The structures will be demolished and the squatters evicted."

Similo Silwana of the Wits University Law Clinic said the squatters had been referred to the clinic after attempting to represent themselves in court.

"Their leader, Elias Mntambo, was advised by Mr Justice Cameron to get legal representation for the group. We agreed to act for them but only had a day to brief counsel. They were given a week to vacate the area. The squatters told us they were quite ready to move as long as the TMC could provide them with another place to settle."

On Tuesday, however, council officials accompanied by policemen dismantled the shacks.

Florence Mntambo, wife of the squatter leader, told the *Saturday Star*: "The law said we can't help you. The council says there is no place for us. They took our shacks and our materials and put us on the streets. They said we must move in five minutes. There were policemen with guns and council men with dogs. Elias has gone to town to look for another place for us."

Saxonwold resident Vivien Kuter said although she had been opposed to the presence of squatters in her area, she had been horrified by their eviction.

"When they did it, I felt terrible. I wanted to cry. Will God forgive us for this? It was shocking.

"I agree they can't stay here. There is no sanitation. If you don't have money and have no home, what can you do? The Government must do something for these people," Kuter said.

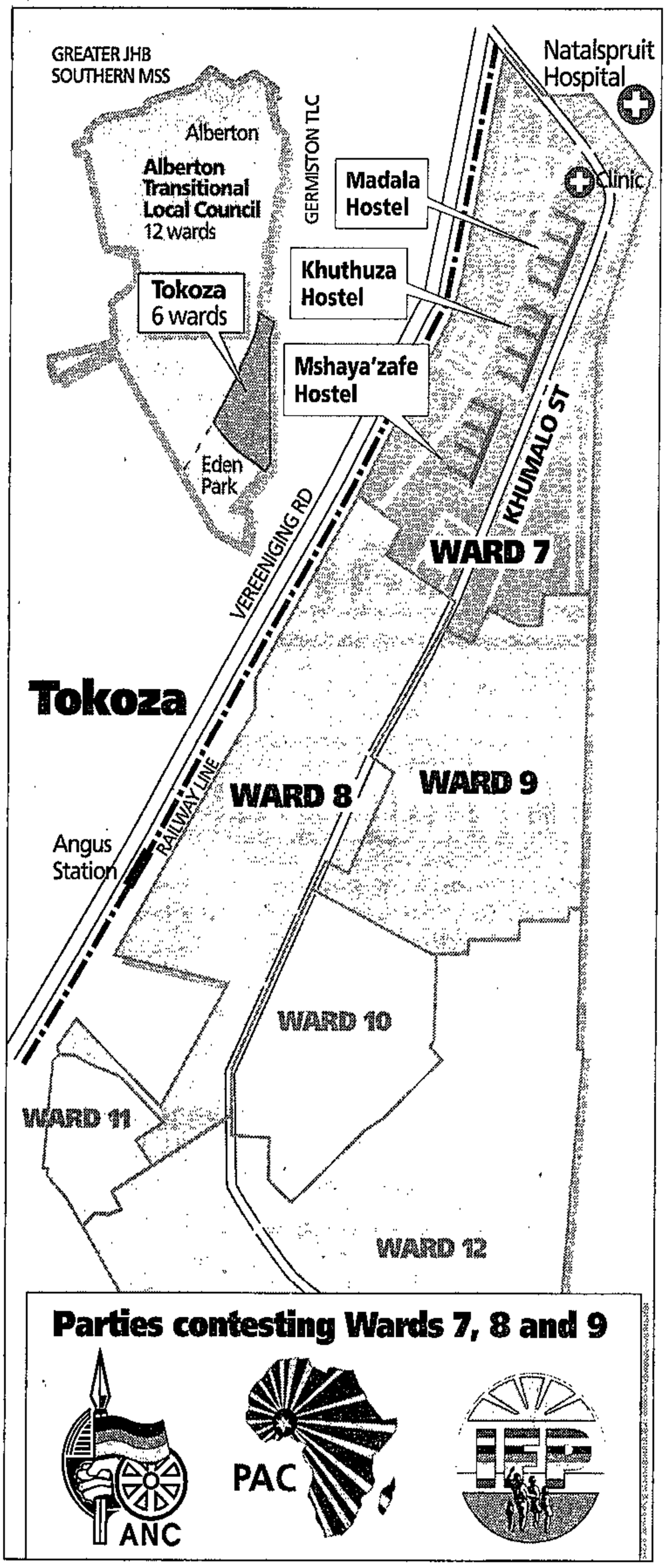
Bremner explained: "We are gradually working through a backlog of law-abiding citizens who've been living in very bad conditions for a long time. People who've been invading parks are at the end of the queue."

suburb

15 (310)

Seizure of abandoned hc

STAR 16/10/95 (3)(6)



■ BY MONDLI MAKHANYA
POLITICAL REPORTER

Tokoza resident Thandi Mthembu's sister was supposed to move back to her house at the weekend after a two-year exile in another part of the township.

However, when she went to her house last Sunday to make preparations for her return, she found that another family had moved into her home.

The family refused to leave and duly referred her to an induna (headman) in the Inkatha Freedom Party-controlled Mshaya'zafe Hostel.

"What can she do? She cannot go to the hostel and ask the induna give her house back. There's just no one to turn to," said Mthembu.

The occupation of houses which were vacated by war refugees is set to be the greatest headache for whichever candidates win the three wards that straddle Khumalo Street: the erstwhile battle zone which was once the epicentre of the East Rand war.

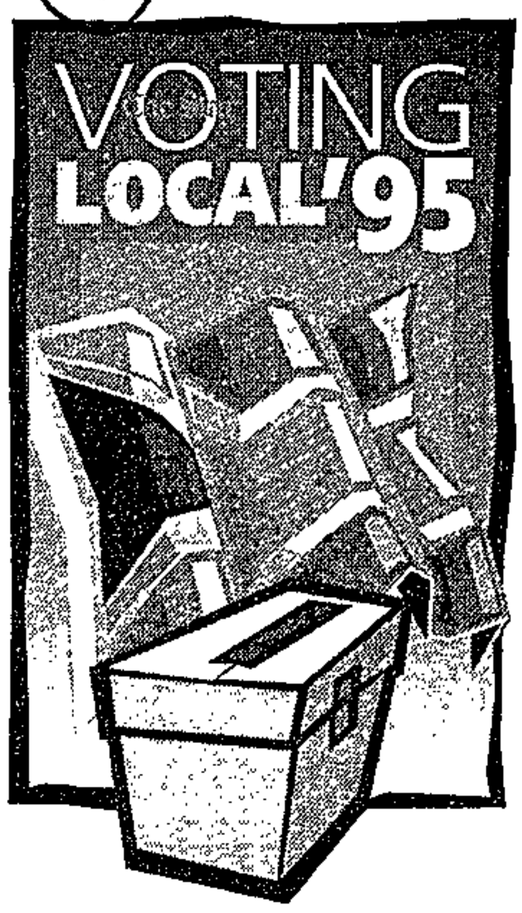
Scores of homes in this area are occupied by illegal tenants and the legal owners find it difficult to return because their homes are now in territory held by enemies.

Tokoza's wards 7, 8 and 9 constitute one of the most explosive election areas on the Reef. With three large hostels and an ANC stronghold nearby, it is going to be hotly contested between the IFP, ANC and PAC.

Both the IFP and the ANC are confident of winning, with the PAC sure of making significant inroads.

The issues in this area are not the regular demands for electricity, water and roads: here it is the battle for territory, with ANC and IFP supporters trying to occupy the no man's land that was created by the exodus of war refugees.

With many homes standing vacant, IFP indunas in the hostels have begun allocating houses to homeless party supporters' families from East Rand shacklands, while ANC supporting families are slowly trickling back.



In the process no man's land has gradually grown smaller, heightening tensions between the two sides.

"They (IFP supporters) just keep coming and taking our houses and nobody seems to be doing anything about it," said Tokoza resident Mandla Twala.

What angers residents is the fact that no candidate has come forward and told them how this issue will be addressed.

We cannot allow these people to run our township," said Reuben Mqaqho.

Meanwhile, in the IFP-controlled area, the complaint is the same. IFP supporters cannot return to their homes in the ANC-controlled territory.

"If anybody wants to talk about homes being taken over, they must give us back ours," said Lindeni Mchunu.

Another bone of contention is the slow pace of reconstruction of houses destroyed in the violence. The reconstruction is one of the Presidential Lead Projects, but progress has been slow.

The most consistent issue across the political spectrum is the ignorance about the candidates, the voting process, and what the election is all about.

None of the voters in the area seem to know how the candidates were selected except that there is "someone we've been told about".

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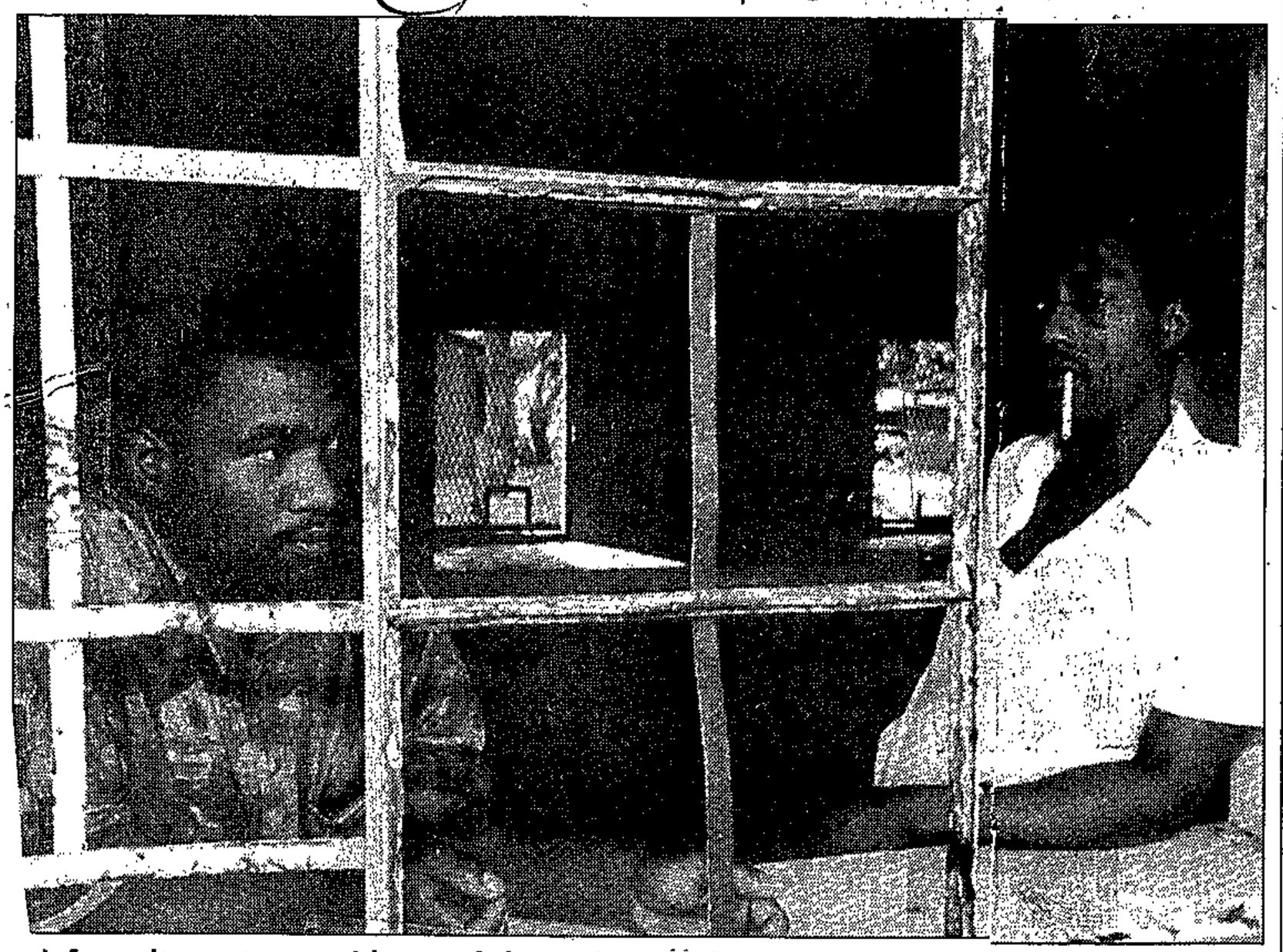
(310) Star 16/10/95



ief respite ... two residents of the Mshaya'zafe Hostel find time for a smoke break
d to unwind from the tensions in the township.

PICTURE: THEMBA HADEBE

Alex squatters defy eviction order

(310) Star 16/10/95

■ BY ANNA COX

The illegal squatters on the Far East Bank of Alexandra have until tomorrow to get off the land – but a visit to the camp by The Star yesterday found no sign of attempts to move away or to demolish the shacks.

In fact, materials were still being brought in and more shacks were being erected beyond an area cordoned off by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council. There was no sign of the municipal police who were supposed to be on the site to stop new squatters moving in.

The GJTMC and the Gauteng provincial legislature obtained an eviction order in the Rand Supreme Court three weeks ago ordering the eviction of the squatters by October 17.

On Friday, police fired rubber bullets and a stun grenade at squatters when they assaulted municipal workers who tried to prevent new squatters from moving in.

Squatter Moses Motaung, who said he had come from Mpumalanga to look for work, said he had heard about the eviction order but would not be moving.

"I have nowhere else to go, so I will wait and see what happens," he said.

Joseph Ntuli also said he had nowhere else to go and would be waiting until tomorrow to see what would happen.

The Far East Bank, a stretch of land adjoining Frankenwald and Marlboro, has been earmarked for the building of about 3 800 low-cost houses for Alexandra residents to alleviate the overcrowding in the township.

Construction of low-cost housing was to have started on June 1. Agreement was reached in principle that the Provincial Housing Board would provide co-funding to enable a basic structure to be erected on each serviced site.

About 1 700 squatters have been using water from a nearby sewerage pipe for drinking and cooking. There are no toilet facilities on the site.

box,

Disease is not always confined to the body. Now,

Land invasion puts Gauteng infrastructure under stress

(310)

Star 18/10/96

■ BY KARIN SCHIMKE
GAUTENG REPORTER

The ever-increasing problem of land invasion and illegal immigration in Gauteng could lead to a collapse of the infrastructure.

This warning comes from provincial leaders who are now formulating a strategy to engage central government to find a solution.

Sicelo Shiceka, MEC for development planning, works and environment, and Dan Mofokeng, MEC for local government and housing, yesterday took a helicopter tour of the province with local journalists to highlight the extent of the land invasion problem.

At a press conference afterwards they said: "We cannot deal with this problem on our own. We are going to need a holistic approach which embraces central government too".

Mofokeng said Gauteng had become the "milking cow" of southern Africa and because of industry it was a "major magnet" to the unemployed from neighbouring countries and provinces. In some places there were as many as 20 extended families living on 500sq m of land.

Shiceka said the appeal to national government would be twofold: resources needed to be channelled to Gauteng, and other areas desperately needed to be developed to halt migration.

"Each province and centre has its own strengths, and appeals and incentives need to be developed to keep people where they are so that they can earn livings and build houses there and not here."

Mofokeng and Shiceka said land hunger was so great, the backlog in housing so enormous and the migration of people to Gauteng so rapid that their departments were struggling to cope. They feared a collapse of infrastructure and services in the future which would not only harm the people of Gauteng, but the whole of southern Africa.

They said delivery from their departments was being hampered by current legislation on illegal squatting and by the high rate of land invasion. "Land earmarked for development is being invaded daily."

Residents warn of 'race war' over refuse-dump vagrants

■ BY SHIRLEY WOODGATE

Vagrancy, widespread shebeen drinking and crime in general could force residents near the sprawling Waterval municipal refuse dump in western Johannesburg to take the law into their own hands.

Should this happen, a "race war" could erupt in the area.

That is the warning from Louwna Klintworth, chairman of the Albertville/Triomf Action Group.

Situated in End Street, the rubbish dump is seen by residents as a serious health hazard, with vagrants sleeping on the vast tract of open land, which is littered with human faeces. There are no toilet facilities.

"Our appeals for help have been stalled for the past three months by the Greater Johannesburg TMC, and nothing has been done to address problems which have escalated over the past three years," Klintworth said.

A 1 000-name petition demanding action has been handed to the TMC, and the problem has now become a burning election issue.

Klintworth said vagrants living on the nearby open land adjoining the Melville koppies illegally looted the rubbish dumped by members of the public.

They set up shop outside the entrance where they sold anything from old car parts to broken furniture, wood and iron, and created a traffic hazard in the road.

The vagrants became progressively more aggressive throughout the day as they spent money raised from the sale of residents' rubbish on liquor from a nearby shebeen.

Schoolchildren were too frightened to pass the junk salesmen on their way home, and domestic workers were regularly accosted and robbed of their money.

Where the border fence still existed, it was covered with plastic bags, while smoke from the burning dump polluted the air over the two adjoining suburbs.

The petitioners have warned they will withhold rates and taxes unless the authorities take action.

TMC executive director of water and waste, Mel Watson, said the refuse dump on part of the large landfill site was a free facility for city residents.

Police had been called in to control the area, security was being improved, and the road was being curbed to prevent motorists from stopping to do business with the hawkers.

Meetings had been held with local residents plus existing councillors, and a solution was on the cards.

Ultimately, the entire landfill site was earmarked as sports fields, since the release of methane gas made housing unlikely, Watson said.

(310) Star 18/10/95

Tense stand-off in land dispute

Star 23/10/95 (310)

■ BY TAMSEN DE BEER

Anger and tension ran high at a day-long stand-off between about 100 Edenvale workers, Edenglen residents, armed police officers and private security personnel in a dispute about land yesterday.

The firing of a single shot – for which workers, police and security personnel all denied responsibility – fuelled the situation to boiling point and was further aggravated by both sides drinking beers in the hot afternoon sun.

The workers, mostly domestic or factory workers from the area, toyi-toyied in protest against what organiser Bafana Mazibuko said was a lack of co-operation from the Edenvale Town Council on providing land for housing.

Irate and emotional residents, believing that the workers intended to erect a squatter settlement on a piece of privately owned land on the corner of Aitken and Pallister roads, kept up a vigil opposite the workers before being moved about 70m away by police.

Mazibuko said the workers had occupied the land as a protest, but had been forced to move across the road to a servitude under electricity pylons, where they continued toyi-toying.

Police officers handed the workers a court interdict for their removal from the private property and told residents to keep calm.

Residents, many of them armed, were adamant that the workers' presence was a threat to their property and persons.

"I will not have them pinching my water or invading my privacy," said resident Jeanette Erasmus.

Others threatened to withhold their rates, and to hold a rally later this week. The residents have formed a Concerned Residents of Edenvale Action Group, saying the presence of squatters would devalue their properties.

ANC Modderfontein/Edenvale representative Fred Kobus and National Assembly MP Smangaliso Mkhatshwa held lengthy discussions with both sides. The workers dispersed at about 4pm.

The root of the conflict lies in an extensive piece of land owned by AECI, adjacent to the servitude, that the workers want for formal housing developments.

Mazibuko said about 5 000 people living and working in the Edenvale area wished to buy the land as they had no homes of their own or no longer wanted to live in domestics' quarters.

He said the company had been approached, but did not want to sell the land to the workers.

A meeting is to be held today between the workers' committee and Kobus, Mkhatshwa, North Rand mayor Isaac Mhlangu and a representative from the office of Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng.



Suburban Sunday with a difference ... residents watch workers toyi-toying past.

PICTURE: JODI BIEBER

Council, squatters differ

(310)

Court hears of eviction moratorium

Star 25/10/95

■ BY SUSAN MILLER

Former chairman of the Johannesburg Management Committee, Ian Davidson, yesterday told the Rand Supreme Court that a so-called moratorium on the eviction of squatters was intended to be applied only to a specific situation in the Liefde and Vrede squatter camp, south of Johannesburg.

Davidson, currently deputy chairman of the executive council of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (GJTMC), was giving evidence in the trial involving the GJTMC which is trying to get an eviction order against about 1 000 squatters living in Moffat Park in Johannesburg's South Hills suburb.

Counsel for the squatters, advocate F R Maimane, has suggested the Moffat Park squatters would have a right or a "legitimate expectation" to remain living in the park if they were living there before June 1994 when the "moratorium" on evictions was issued.

Davidson said while the moratorium arose from a "crisis management" meeting involving himself, Gauteng Provincial MEC for Housing, Dan Mofokeng, and other leaders, it had not been intended to apply to the Greater Johannesburg area generally.

Residents of South Hills told the court there had been virtually no squatters or people living in Moffat Park until late last year and the numbers had increased substantially after July this year.

Dozens of Moffat Park squatters again attended the trial. The case continues.

xhego

300 shacks in park, court hears

(3.10 Star 26/10/95

The number of squatter dwellings in Moffat Park, in Johannesburg's South Hills suburb, had grown to about 300 since 1992, an official from the public safety unit of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council said yesterday.

Louis Engelbrecht was testifying in the Rand Supreme Court during a hearing in which the GJTMC is seeking to evict 1,000 squatters from the park.

"The squatter problem started getting out of hand in 1994 and dozens of houses sprang up early this year," he said.

Counsel for the squatters Advocate F R Maimane, has argued that his clients have a right or a "legitimate expectation" to remain in the park if they were living there before June 1994 when a "moratorium" on the eviction of squatters was supposedly issued by the Johannesburg management committee.

Counsel for the GJTMC yesterday closed its case and Maimane will start argument today. – Court Reporter.

Alexandra shacks 'will be demolished daily' – Opperman

Star 26/10/95 (310)

■ BY ANNA COX

Shacks on the Far East Bank of Alexandra will be demolished every day until November 2 when the eviction order issued by the Rand Supreme Court takes effect, deputy director-general of the Department of Development Planning Environment and Works Jan Opperman said today.

He was reacting to reports that the sheriff had yesterday started evicting squatters and said this was incorrect.

"The court order was only effective for the original squatters who will be moved off the land on November 2. What we are doing in the meantime is demolishing shacks which go up overnight and over weekends.

"We want to prevent the camp from growing in size and will be demolishing shacks every day until the matter is finally resolved," said Opperman.

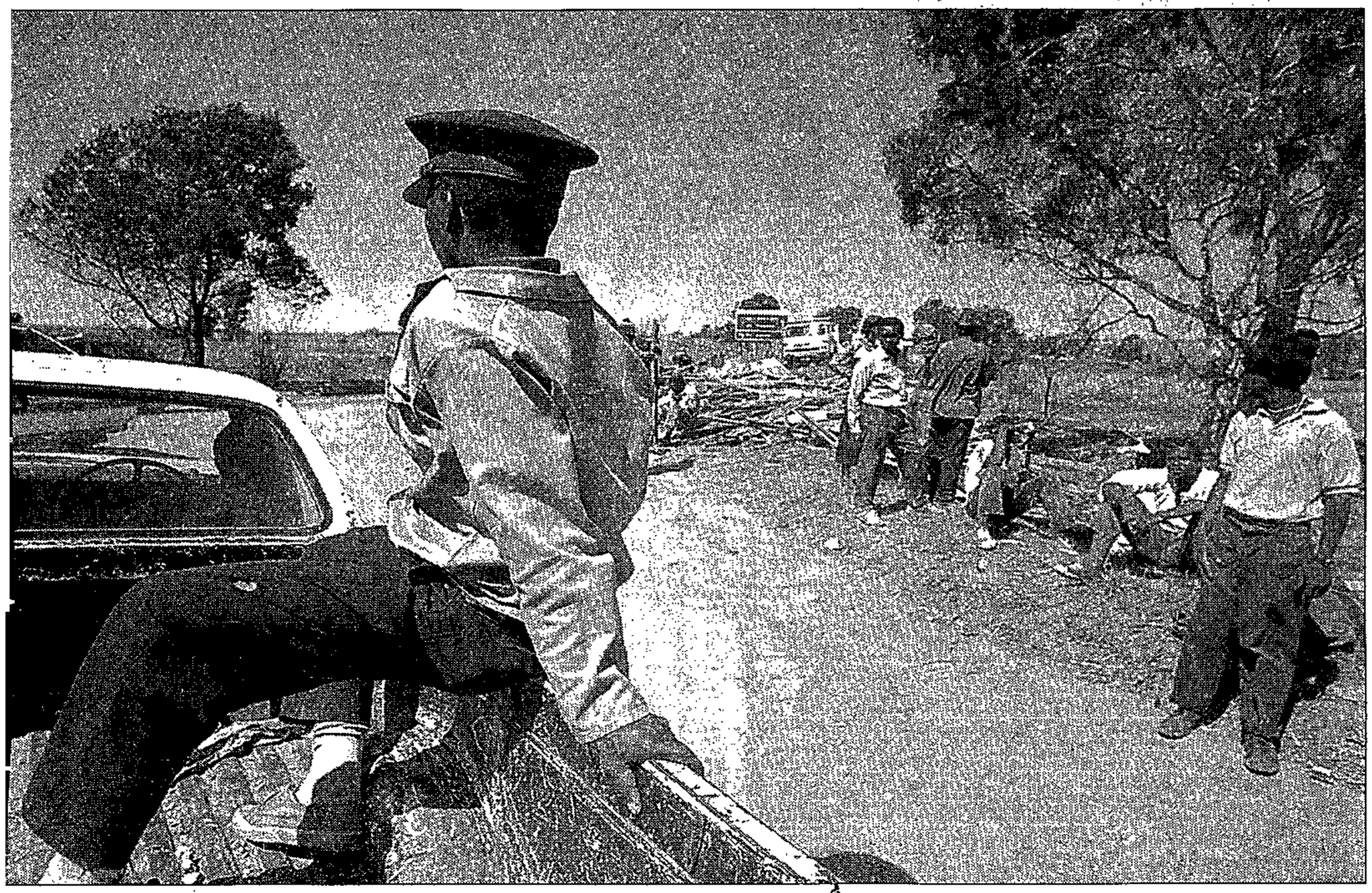
Only 35 of the 1 700 people living there had obtained legal representation.

The people of Alexandra were bringing pressure to bear on the province to act firmly against the invaders and vacating the land would be in the best interest of the squatters, he said. "The Government is making every effort to deliver land and housing as quickly as possible via the Rapid Land Development Programme.

"There are people who have been waiting for relief for many years. We cannot ignore them and allow land invasions which are not acceptable to the Government and to the population in general.

"The development on the Far East Bank is already in the late stages of planning and preparation for occupation by people identified from Alex, who are in circumstances of crisis too. Provincial Board funds are available for this," said Opperman.

A policeman was slightly injured yesterday and two cars damaged when squatters started throwing stones at provincial officials who were demolishing the shacks. Traffic officers closed off Marlboro Road after the incident.



Angry ... squatter shacks in Alexandra's East Bank camp were demolished yesterday. PICTURE: THYS DULLAART

Plea for Gauteng govt help

Land invasion threatens mass homes project

BD 26/10/95

Robyn Chalmers

GAUTENG's largest mass housing project, the Golden Highway Development (Goldev), is facing collapse following the invasion by squatters of more than 400ha earmarked for resettling 15 000 homeless people.

A crisis meeting is to be held between Housing Minister Sankie Mthembi-Nkondo and co-developer Goldev Corporation on Monday in a bid to resolve the issue.

Goldev Corporation CEO Aziz Shaikh said yesterday he had been thwarted in his attempt to get help from the Gauteng government, despite repeated requests. "We have been in a consultative process on the project for two years with more than 12 000 homeless people, a number of whom are located in the dangerous dolomite areas of Lenasia Extension 9 and 10."

The process had involved weekly workshop sessions with prospective home owners on all the development issues such as town planning, roads and services, and a high level of consensus has been reached. "But this process has been eroded by ongoing land invasions, and no one seems prepared to sort it out despite us having knocked on every door available," he said.

Shaikh said that after an urgent request to President Nelson Mandela, a meeting was set up with Mthembi-Nkondo which he hoped would produce results and allow the construction of low-cost homes to proceed.

He said almost 1 500 subsidies had been approved under the capital subsidy scheme for development of phase one of the project, while a further 2 200 subsidies were in the pipeline.

In conjunction with co-developer Newhco, a total of 825 stands had been serviced and a number of showhouses were under construction. Further development, however, was being stymied by the land invasions.

"We have received threats from invading squatter communities that they will take over any houses that are built, and the Gauteng provincial board has indicated that no further subsidies will be approved until the sit-

Continued on Page 2

Land invasion

BD 26/10/95

Continued from Page 1

uation is sorted out," he said.

Goldev — located southwest of Johannesburg near Eldorado Park — was launched two years ago after the former Johannesburg city council made land available for development through a joint venture between Newhco and Goldev Corporation. The project was a response to the massive housing needs of the surrounding areas, including Soweto, Kliptown, Klipspruit, Lenasia and Eldorado Park.

The project launch became possible after the formation of a compact between representatives of the Civic Associations of SA, landowners in the area, the city council, the former Transvaal Provincial Administration, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, financial institutions and members of the private sector.

Fellow low-cost housing developer Newhco, meanwhile, warned that the lack of delivery on the housing front had forced the group to restructure and become more commercially orientated to survive. Its annual report released this week showed Newhco's delivery component lost R9,7m on turnover of R89,1m for the year to June. It had lost R8,45m the previous year.

"The fact that it was not possible for Newhco to operate profitably for the second successive year reflects the extent to which lack of political commitment to a clear governmental housing policy has prevented large-scale delivery," MD Rod MacGillivray said yesterday. "(It also) underlines the urgent need for firm and unambiguous direction to emerge from the policy environment," the report said.

MacGillivray said the group's delivery arm had been merged with The Land Investment Trust, the group's bridging finance arm, in a bid to improve the capitalisation of Newhco.



No you don't ... police scuffle with a man suspected of carrying a petrol bomb while workers were demolishing shacks in Alexandra. The line through the picture is a cable, apparently used to illegally tap power for shacks.

110 shacks down in Alexandra raid

Star 27/10/95 (310)

Shacks in Alexandra north of Johannesburg were demolished yesterday after police fired rubber bullets and stun grenades to disperse protesting squatters.

Police said squatters stoned council workers as they were trying to clear the road which had been blocked with logs.

About 60 policemen were at the site throughout the day.

Council workers earlier began demolishing shacks in terms of a court interdict obtained by the Gauteng government.

In the afternoon the demolition job continued without resistance while squatters competed for building materials at a nearby dumping site.

Johannesburg city council deputy director for development, planning, environment and works, Jan Opperman, said new shacks would be demolished daily until the Rand Supreme Court's final judgment on eviction on November 2.

An earlier eviction order, which is to come into effect on Thursday, applied only to existing squatters, and ordered that the land be protected from further invasion, he said.

Opperman said 110 new shacks had been demolished by council workers and demolition teams which had been hired by the sheriff.

The area has been earmarked for phase two of a housing development project for Alexandra residents, he said.

He added that all plots had already been allocated.

He said Alexandra residents were angry about the invasion by people from Zambia, Mozambique, KwaNdebele and the Free State.

"These people came from somewhere. We feel they should return there," Opperman said.

The Government had an obligation towards "legal" Alexandra residents who had been waiting for land for years, he said.

The squatters later accused Alexandra residents of stealing their building materials.

"I do not know what to do now or where I will sleep tonight," squatter John Maluleka said. – Sapa.



Police move in on squatters at Alexandra township north of Johannesburg yesterday after apprehending a man with a petrol bomb, far left. Squatter shacks were demolished after police fired rubber bullets and stun grenades to disperse protesting squatters.

Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

Moffat Park squatters fight eviction in court

Susan Russell

BD 27/10/95 (310)

A RAND Supreme Court judge was asked yesterday to reject evidence by the greater Johannesburg transitional metropolitan council's former chairman, Ian Davidson, that last year's moratorium on squatter evictions was intended to apply only to a specific group in one settlement.

This submission was made by F Maimane, counsel acting for more than 1 000 Moffat Park squatters who are resisting court action instituted by the council to evict them.

Among issues in dispute are the exact terms and ambit of the moratorium agreement in the region following negotiations between the council, provincial authorities, community organisations and squatters.

The court heard that in terms of the moratorium the authorities had agreed not to evict any squatters who illegally occupied land prior to June 9 last year.

Maimane argued that his clients were already living in the park in Johannesburg's southern suburbs prior to June last year. The council, however, led evidence from a number of residents that there were only a few vagrants in the park at the end of last year and that squatters began moving in this year.

Davidson testified that the so-called moratorium had been intended to apply only to the Liefde en Vrede squatter camp, and was not meant to apply to the greater Johannesburg area.

Police fire rubber bullets at squatters

(310)

JOHANNESBURG. — Police fired rubber bullets to break up an angry protest by squatters trying to stop municipal workers demolishing their shacks at Alexandra's East Bank camp.

"Police used rubber bullets to shoot at squatters who threw stones and petrol bombs at them," spokesman Warrant Officer Andy Pieke said.

"That was the only reported incident in which police acted," he added.

Warrant Officer Pieke said police acted after about 75 squatters began throwing stones at them. Police fired rubber bullets and threw thunderflashes and stun grenades to disperse the squatters.

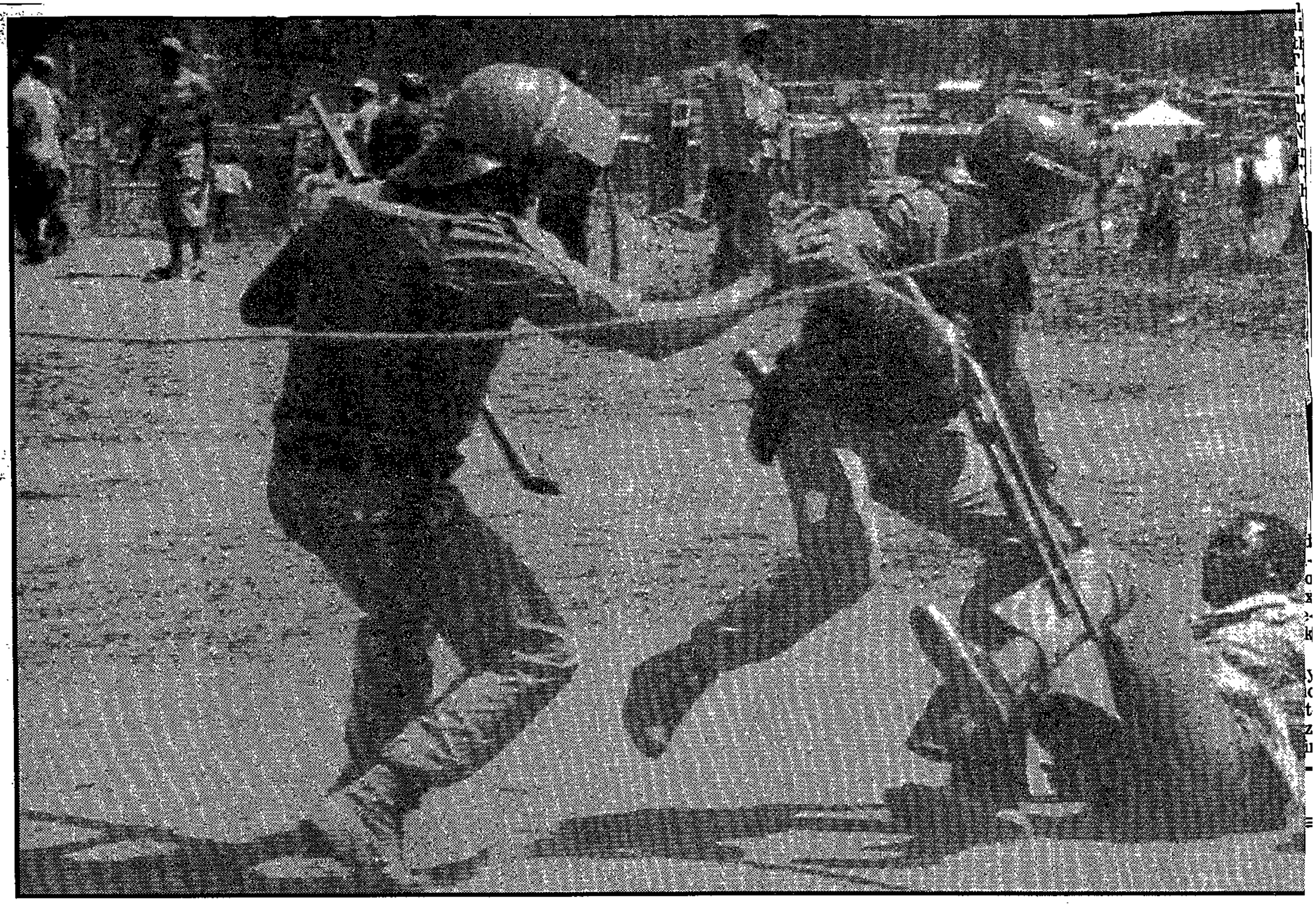
"No injuries were reported," Warrant-Officer Pieke added.

Senior spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Eugene Opperman said the police had also stepped in to protect journalists from squatters in the area, east of Johannesburg's centre.

"The squatters became very aggravated when the sheriff of the court and municipal workers started taking down the shacks there. ARG 28/10/95

"Because of the high presence of police there, they seem to have tried to convey their frustrations by intimidating Press people. One Radio 702 reporter had to be taken away from the scene by the police," said Colonel Opperman.

On Wednesday two cars were damaged and a policeman was hurt when squatters threw stones at traffic to stop the demolition — authorised in terms of an court interdict to the Gauteng government which plans to develop the land. — Reuter.



☐ **POLICE ACTION:** Police apprehend a man suspected of carrying a petrol bomb during a protest by squatters.

BROKEN HOMES



CARTED AWAY: Workers watch as their handiwork is driven off PHOTOGRAPH: TJ LEMON

Squatters show their anger as shacks are demolished

Tensions ran high at the Far East Bank illegal squatter camp near Alexandra, north of Johannesburg, yesterday as provincial authorities demolished another 71 shacks.

Although no incidents took place, journalists were asked to leave the area. Squatters toyi-toyied and shouted abuse at labourers who demolished their shacks.

They expressed anger and dissatisfaction that their building materials were being removed and dumped on an empty piece of land near Marlboro Drive.

About 60 policemen attached to the Alexandra Internal Stability Unit were on site to protect the workers, who were demolishing the shacks after two incidents this week when police had to fire rubber bullets and stun grenades to disperse protesting squatters who started stoning cars.

The department of planning, works and environment has obtained a Supreme Court interdict against the squatters, and any new shacks which are built are demolished. The area has been earmarked for a housing project. – Staff Reporter

(310) Star 28/10/95

IS

Demolition goes on under police guard

Tension rises as squatters return

Star 30/10/95 (310)

■ BY ANNA COX

Squatters continued to erect shacks on vacant land on the Far East Bank at the weekend after retrieving their materials which were dumped on the side of Marlboro Road by provincial authorities last week.

A visit to the site by The Star yesterday found many squatters returning to their original sites and erecting shacks. Tensions were running high and The Star was asked to leave the site.

Provincial authorities are expected to demolish the newly erected shacks today. Last week the Gauteng legislature said it would demolish new shacks on a daily basis and would continue to do so until November 2 when a Rand Supreme Court eviction order obtained by the Gauteng legislature and the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council takes effect.

Squatters toyi-toyied and shouted verbal abuse at the labourers demolishing their shacks.

Said Frans Sekgale: "They broke my shack and took my furniture and threw it in the veld. They even took my water. Now other people will steal it. We have nowhere to go tonight," he said. He came from North-West province to Gauteng to look for work.

About 60 policemen attached to the Alexandra Instability Unit were on site to protect the workers demolishing the shacks.

The area has been earmarked for a housing development project for Alex residents.

Committee formed on Alex issue

(310) Star 31/10/95

■ BY KARIN SCHIMKE
GAUTENG REPORTER

A committee of squatters, provincial and local government officials and Alexandra residents has been formed in a last-ditch attempt to resolve the land invasion problem on the Far East Bank.

The land forms part of the provincial government's rapid land release programme and is earmarked for development, but since the moratorium on squatting in the province 110 new shacks have been erected.

Squatters were evicted by a court order which they resisted, and last week their shacks were demolished.

But yesterday Gauteng MEC for development planning, works and environment Sicelo Shiceka said a committee had been formed to "work on mechanisms for liaison and communication, and to identify and solve problems in the area".

He said, however, the provincial government stood firm on its position that land invasions were absolutely not acceptable.

"There is a moratorium on land invasions and evictions in place. That has to be respected by all parties."

Present at yesterday's press conference were two squatter representatives who said they were following the advice of their lawyers and had told their people not to carry on erecting shacks as this would jeopardise their position in court.

"We are not lawless people. We respect the orders of the court," said Ruben Mathe.

The committee would meet "within hours" to discuss the fate of the squatters who had been left without shelter after last week's shack demolitions, he said.

Action is promised over land invasion

(38) (310) (BD 31/10/95)

Robyn Chalmers

DEVELOPER Golden Highway Development Corporation (Goldev) yesterday held an urgent meeting with Housing Minister Sankie Mthembi-Nkondo to resolve the land invasion at Gauteng's largest mass housing project southwest of Johannesburg.

Goldev CEO Aziz Shaikh said yesterday the meeting had been positive and Mthembi-Nkondo had agreed to look into the issue after the local government election tomorrow.

"We are very positive that we will be able to come to some sort of resolution on this issue which has now reached critical proportions," he said.

Shaikh said he believed the housing ministry would hold talks with the Gauteng provincial government to resolve the problem and speed up delivery of mass housing in the province.

The meeting was held as the Goldev project faced collapse after the invasion of more than 400ha earmarked for resettling about 15 000 homeless families. This followed more than two years of consultation with about 12 000 homeless people, a number of whom were located in the dangerous dolomite areas of Lenasia Extensions 9 and 10.

Shaikh said the Goldev initiative recognised that for sustainable development to take place housing delivery for lower income households had to be community driven. He said while different portions of the land were owned by various landowners, significant portions were held by the former Johannesburg City Council, Bankorp and the Anglican Church.

The council had agreed through a land availability agreement with developer New Housing Company (Newhco) to make its land available for development by a joint venture between Goldev and Newhco.

In addition, Bankorp, which owned Devland extension 1, had reached agreement with the SA Housing Trust to acquire the land and make it available for further development in a joint venture between the Trust and Goldev.

Premier will sue over document leak

■ BY CLYDE JOHNSON
LOWVELD BUREAU

Nelspruit – Mpumalanga Premier Mathews Phosa and Environmental Affairs MEC David Mkhwanazi are planning to sue the "persons" responsible for leaking an internal ANC document to The Star last month.

The document speculated that Phosa and Mkhwanazi had purchased the Drum Rock Hotel and were leasing it to the Mpumalanga Department of Environmental Affairs for more than R177 000 a month.

Other allegations were that millions of rands had been spent on renovating the homes of senior ANC members out of the province's low-cost housing budget and that party officials – including Phosa – were living virtually rent-free on an estate between Nelspruit and KaNyamazane.

Both men said they had a good idea as to who was responsible for the leaking of the document to the press, adding they had no intention of laying the matter to rest.

"An internal ANC investigation is progressing well. We have already consulted with our personal legal advisers and intend suing the responsible person or persons for R2-million," Mkhwanazi said yesterday.

Mkhwanazi said they found it strange that the document had been leaked on the eve of the municipal elections.

Phosa has dismissed the five-month-[redacted] document as a "smear [redacted] denied all allegations.

He d[redacted]ed them as false, damagin[redacted]d defamatory.

Rober[redacted]ilke, managing trustee of the Linro Family Trust, which owns the Drum Rock Hotel and leases it to the Mpumalanga government, denied the building had been sold to either Phosa or Mkhwanazi.

Star 3/11/95

Premier and squatters' eviction court battle postponed

(310)

Legal counsel for the Alexandra East Bank squatters and for the premier of Gauteng yesterday agreed to postpone any court battle over the squatters' eviction to next Friday.

Counsel for both sides also agreed in the Rand Supreme Court that the interim interdict due to come into effect yesterday, allowing the council to begin evicting squatters and demolishing shacks, would also be extended until next Friday.

An urgent interdict brought by four of the squatters against the eviction and the proposed demolitions will be heard together with the premier's application.

Angry scenes on the East Bank have marred efforts by the council to demolish shacks which they say have been built since the interim order was granted two weeks ago. Police were called in when squatters stoned council workers.

The four squatters were represented by Advocate George Bizos.

Star 3/11/95

THE NOKIA ACADEMY

A song for strength as evicted squatters ask, where to from here?

(310)

Star 7/11/95

By Bongiwe Mlangeni
Housing Reporter

Mokgadi Mapiti listens quietly to the lyrics of Mariah Carey's song, along the lines of *"when you feel like hope is gone; look inside you and you will see the hero lies in you"*.

The song carries on as if Mapiti's fate is known to the singer: It plays as she awaits eviction from the Moffat Park squatter camp in South Hills, Johannesburg.

"It gives me strength," she says.

Yesterday was the last day for about 2 000 squatters to pack their corrugated iron sheets and leave the suburb. After a three-month battle, which on occasion left some squatters in hospital after a fight with residents and police, the court issued an eviction order and the invaders were given 10 days to leave.

But not one family has started to take down the small shacks which have become their homes.

"Where are we expected to go?" asks 20-year-old Mapiti, rocking her 4-month-old baby on her back.

JODI BIEBER



Bitter dawn ... Mokgadi Mapiti, her 4-month-old baby and other family members dread today's dawning, the deadline for the Moffat Park squatters to demolish their shacks.

Living with her parents, a sister, a niece and nephew in a two-roomed shack, Mapiti was shattered when she heard about the eviction order.

The Mapiti family began living in Moffat Park in 1984. Samuel Mapiti, Mokgadi's father, explains: "We were staying in small plastic shacks among the trees and our neighbours did not mind our presence, because they seldom saw us. But we decided that it was time we came out from the bush, so that the reality of our lives could be recognised and addressed."

Samuel says about 30 families were living "in the bush".

Mokgadi plans to go back to school next year to complete her matric. Samuel is using his life savings to educate his grandchildren:

"If I cannot give them a better home, let me give them a better education. They must be able to live a better life," Samuel adds.

Fight to evict squatters from W Rand house fails

By Lara Smith

A three-bedroom house in Florida, only a stone's throw from the Roodepoort suburb's picturesque lake, has been home to more than 60 people since February.

Some of the tenants have been there even longer, renting a back room or garage space from the owner since last year. At one time there were 10 people living in the garage alone.

The owners, Raymond and Rachel Delport, and their two young children are living in a borrowed caravan on Florida Lake after their hotel and liquor store business ran into difficulties.

They claim they tried to evict their tenants from the house three months ago, after being ordered to do so by the Roodepoort health authorities, but the ANC's local branch instructed the tenants to move back.

The couple received a water and electricity bill of R7 640 last month, are in arrears of R2 500 on their rates and taxes and have been told that the house will be auctioned next week to defray expenses. As both are unemployed, they have stopped paying the bond.

From the outside the house looks more run-down than its 4th Avenue neighbours and its garden is littered with papers and empty bottles, but it is the interior that tells the real story.

The 60 tenants have occupied every available space, sometimes sleeping five to a room, more than one to a bed. Even the kitchen has been subdivided into two rooms.

There are no communal cooking facilities, no hot water and no electricity.

Rachel Delport said they could not evict the squatters as the ANC had threatened legal action if they did so, and that the ANC had told them to stop paying rent.

"We're desperate. They are going to sell our house and it's all we've got.

"I don't want those people there. We have tried to evict them but every time we tell them to get out they laugh in our faces," she said.

ANC Roodepoort chairman Kerensa Millard admitted she had advised the tenants to move back in after they were "illegally evicted".

Star 10/11/95

(310)

Judge postpones Alexandra squatter case

(310) Star 13/11/95

COURT REPORTER

The court battle involving the Alexandra East Bank squatters has been postponed to this Wednesday, after Mr Justice J J Goldblatt said he had not received the court papers timeously and felt he could not do justice to the matter.

Judge Goldblatt said in the Rand Supreme Court on Friday that it would be making a "mockery of the judicial system" if he dealt with the matter under those circumstances.

Counsel for the premier of Gauteng, as well as counsel for the squatters, agreed to an extension of the interim interdict granted on November 2, which suspended evictions and the destruction of shacks on condition no new people moved on to the land.

Advocate George Bizos SC said he was representing the "community" of people which had been living on the land before the court order was granted on September 21, and which claimed to have been living there since 1992.

Counsel for Premier Tokyo Sexwale pointed out the urgency of the matter. The situation was "very explosive" as Alexandra residents who had been waiting for years to get houses were angered that people had simply moved on to the land, which had been earmarked for development.

He said that evictions and the destruction of new shacks had also effectively been halted.

The judge suggested that counsel approach the judge-president or deputy judge-president to get a specific judge appointed for the hearing on Wednesday.

An urgent interdict brought by four of the squatters against the eviction and the proposed demolitions, will be heard together with the Premier's application.

Zevenfontein residents resist eviction order

Sowetan 6/11/95 (310)

By Charity Bhengu

SOME of the 200 people who were told to vacate a farm in Zevenfontein near Randburg resisted the order, saying they had worked and lived in the area for more than 40 years.

Yesterday's move followed a September court ruling that ordered residents to vacate the area by November 15.

The residents said they had nowhere to go because they had not been given enough notice.

Squatter camps

They said the nearby squatter camps were full and could not accommodate them.

Mr Simon Skosana (39), who was born on the farm, said the new owner's lawyer, Mr Christo Sutherland, had lied to them saying he would find them alternative accommodation elsewhere.

"The new owner first ordered us to demolish our shacks, which we did. Later we were surprised by the order that we should leave the area."

"Frankly, we owe them nothing. My deadline was November 15 and we have given them enough notice to go elsewhere," Sutherland said yesterday.

The land in the expensive Randburg area was bought by an overseas businessman tor factories.

"The building of factories would be advantageous to the residents because there will be job opportunities for them," said Sutherland.

When *Sowetan* visited the area, Mrs Johanna Chebe, who was sitting with her children and grandchildren under a tree, talked about the pains and traumas of eviction. They were at their wit's end.

Chebe said she came to work at the farm when she was a young girl more than 40 years ago.

She said she was saddened by the fact that she had to leave a home that was full of tender memories. She also had nowhere else to go.

(310)

Guards and Moffat Park squatters clash again

Star 20/11/95

Tensions flared again yesterday between municipal security guards and 300 squatters in Moffat Park, southern Johannesburg, who demanded that their material for building more shacks be returned.

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitical Council has passed a by-law preventing the squatters from building more shacks on the property.

The security guards have to monitor whether material is being brought in and must confiscate it if it is.

Already, 3 500 people are living in the area.

Ratepayers' association chairman Mark Matheson, who witnessed the clash between the two groups, said the squatters had vowed to take back their material by force if necessary.

"This situation goes on every weekend," Matheson added.

"The city council needs to enforce its by-laws for all people, not just on its homeowners and ratepayers." – Sapa.

THYS DULLAART



Packing up ... Park Station squatters take stock of their belongings yesterday, ahead of today's move to shelters around the city, to allow the revamp of the facility to go ahead.

Removal of squatters from Park Station will begin today

(310) (~~284~~) Star 20/11/95

By Shirley Woodgate

The biggest planned removal of squatters from Johannesburg's CBD starts today with the relocation of more than 1 000 homeless people who have taken illegal shelter at Park Station over the past four years.

The move precedes the multimillion-rand revamp of the station as part of a R47-million facelift commissioned by SA Rail Commuter Corporation aimed at creating a world-class transit centre for long-distance trains and luxury coaches.

The first phase was started in August by the SARCC's property management arm, Intersite Property Management Services, said managing director Jack Prentice.

Plans to move the homeless will be carried out in phases. To start with, about 650 people, who have been registered as permanent station dwellers, will be moved to shelters within the CBD.

Steps will be taken to prevent further influx as squatters are being moved out.

In recognition of the emotive nature of the move, a management structure drawn from Park Station community leaders has been set up and each registered squatter will be given an identity card.

Security will be stepped up to ensure that only those with IDs will have access to the station until they have been moved, said Prentice.

ID problems halt removal

Star 21/11/95 (310)

STAFF REPORTERS

The promised "biggest planned removal" of squatters in Johannesburg's CBD failed to materialise yesterday when "administrative" problems prevented the removal of the homeless from Park Station.

Intersite Property Management Services managing director Jack Prentice said officials were having problems drawing up documentation as many squatters had failed to provide adequate details needed for relocation.

The delay in the deadline was a welcome relief for some of the squatters when The Star visited them yesterday as the recent showers had added to their miseries. Many of their shacks of cardboard and metal sheeting had caved in during the rains, exposing the occupants to the elements.

"The children are crying like the rain," said an old man propped up by a walking stick. He has lived in the squatter camp for four years and dreads the move, which he believes will come tomorrow.

But his pessimism is not shared by his younger neighbour, Jabu Richard Ntsindane, who is only too pleased to be folding up his cardboard walls. He says the new location cannot be worse than the Park Station camp, which straddles the city's railway lines.

The move forms part of the first phase of a multi-million rand facelift aimed at transforming the facility into a world-class transit centre.

Station families to be moved

(310) Sowetan 21/11/95

Joshua Raboroko

JOBLESS and destitute families squatting on the platforms and pavements of Johannesburg Station are to be moved to various locations, including the inner-city and the central business district, by the end of this week.

The squatters – about1 000 families consisting mainly of hawkers, illegal immigrants and homeless people – are to make way for construction of Intersite's new Metro Concourse, a project dubbed the Parkcity Project and aimed at revamping the station at an estimated cost of R4 million.

Chairman of the Homeless Forum Mr Alex Bhiman said yesterday that after consulting the affected families it was decided that some be moved to two sites in the inner city starting today.

The forum, in consultation with Intersite, a company representing the railways, were working on "suitable alternative accommodation" for the rest of the people.

Many of the families were willing to move away from the "adverse conditions" and lack of security in order to facilitate the construction of the station.

The move was also aimed at the Reconstruction and Development Programme project aimed at creating jobs for themselves and to improve their socio-economic status.

It was hoped that the interim measure would solve the problem until delivery of low-cost housing next year.

Various organisations have been requested to help these people.

IN BRIEF

Bid to tackle land invaders

Star 23/11/95 (310)

An interdepartmental unit has devised a three-pronged strategy to help resolve homelessness and mushrooming of shacklands

BY JUSTICE MALALA and MARTINA SCHWIKOWSKI

Faced with the prospect of disease or death, as their houses were situated on dangerous, dolomitic ground, the people of Themb'elihle decided to form a housing club to buy a safe piece of land.

After years of saving they were finally ready to move last year. But their dreams were shattered when a group of squatters invaded the land, and to this day the problem remains unresolved.

This story represents the quandary facing Gauteng authorities as land invasions continue. On the one hand are the legal owners; on the other, groups of landless, homeless people with nowhere else to go.

To deal with the crisis, a team from the departments of safety and security, local government and housing, and development planning has been trying to formulate plans to deal with the issue.

Because of its economic opportunities, Gauteng finds itself at the centre of an ongoing influx of people from surrounding provinces and neighbouring countries.

These people are targeting state land for occupation, leading to the Government losing control of the allocation of land. Even worse, such land sometimes falls into the hands of cliques who lease it to desperate people.

At the moment there are only three mechanisms to effect evictions. The first, legal spoliation, means the state can take back its invaded land only if it acts within 24 to 48 hours, although this time frame is still under review by legal experts.

The second mechanism is the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, which had been used in the past for summary removal of squatters. But it has become unconstitutional, and administrative procedures cannot supersede the due process of law. Further complicating the debate is the state's obligation to offer alternative land to those it removes from invaded land.

The interdepartmental unit is exploring three plans to combat the problem of land invasions. The first envisages the protection of strategic state properties, and assumes that legal spoliation would be the main way of blocking the invasions.

The programme would entail the appointment of private security firms to "drive by" identified properties and notify a response unit as soon as an invasion occurs. A provincial response unit would be formed to remove illegal land occupants.

The second plan envisages the establishment of reception areas for landless people, who could then be moved to areas ready for settlement when these become available. What still needs to be defined is whether these areas should be permanent, and whether these areas should be on provincial, local authority or private land.

The third idea is one of land redistribution, which has as its main assumptions that the real problem is one of landlessness, that the state needs to release huge areas of land for settlement, and that if the state does not do this, "others will.

The problems the unit faces are daunting, but what is clear is that the state must take the initiative to stem the invasions in the interest of good governance. Further, the state's response must reflect its responsiveness to the needs of the homeless and show firmness in relation to lawlessness.

Sowetan 23/11/95

Squatters still at Park Station

(310)

ABOUT 100 squatters at Johannesburg railway station who were to move to alternative accommodation yesterday had not budged by 5pm. They had indicated their willingness to move, said Mr Roeloff Crowther, marketing manager of Intersite, the property management arm of the SA Rail Commuter Corporation.

The 650-odd homeless people who live at the station are all due to move to make way for a R47 million development. Crowther said squatter leaders were apparently having difficulty mobilising their community, but he added there was no question of a protest. Those not due to leave the station yesterday will move when alternative accommodation is found.

Meanwhile, 19 of the squatters living at the station have been employed by the developers. A spokesman for SARCC said squatters with skills would be employed as the need arose. — *Sapa*

Last shacks go as station squatters move on peacefully

(310) Star 25/11/95

By KURT SWART

The last few shacks of the squatter community who had lived for years in the open in atrocious conditions within Johannesburg's Park Station were removed without incident yesterday.

Squatter leader Josias Moloi paid tribute to Intersite Property Management Services and late housing minister Joe Slovo for the relatively painless "voluntary relocation" of his 650-strong community to other shelters in the Johannesburg CBD and on the West and East Rand.

The relocation of the community, which, with the addition of traders in transit and other temporary dwellers, numbered more than 1 000, began on Monday. The aim of the exercise is to make room for a R160-million upgrading of the station and a new Metro Concourse transit centre.

Intersite, the property management arm of the SA Rail Commuter Corporation, co-ordinated the move following six months of negotiation with the squatters.

The squatters were registered by Intersite to distinguish permanent destitutes with nowhere to go from traders sleeping temporarily in the station.

"It is important that it be known that this is not a forced removal but a voluntary relocation of destitute people," said Intersite general manager Joe Faller. "We were determined not to go the route of forceful evacuation. All of them have agreed to move after an amicable solution was reached in extensive community consultation over the past six months. Their ranks had been swelled by foreign traders, mostly from Mozambique, Malawi and Kenya.

"These people want proper meals and a roof over their heads. Staying here they are creating a health hazard. The alternative accommodation is a lot more comfortable and hygienic, with ablution and washing facilities that they do not have here."

The remaining shacks were surrounded by piles of rubbish; tin cans, rotting carrots, tea bags and banana peels; and soggy cardboard boxes near pools of foul-smelling stagnant water. Along walls were heaps of human excreta.

Reunited

"We also identified the disabled people for more care, and we have helped people who wanted to be reunited with their families, some as far away as Cape Town. We are a community-oriented business," Faller said.

Squatter leader Moloi, megaphone in hand, directed squatters on to buses taking them to the identified shelters.

"Those two combis are taking the disabled people to welfare. I'm very happy, also with the role played by Intersite. I have been on the station for four years, trying to link up with the churches and inviting them to help us. They did, with food and blankets and by advising people on where to get jobs."

Moloi said a delegation of squatters had gained an audience with Slovo and that his advice had been invaluable in securing a solution, 11 months after his death.

"Joe Slovo told us that the fundamental problem was accommodation and job creation and that we could not achieve anything if we did not organise ourselves. We should negotiate for employment for our people so that we can integrate ourselves with society. Unfortunately he left us before the second meeting," Moloi said.

Despite the calm proceedings at the station yesterday, at least one squatter was left angry and embittered.

Butas Vorslag claimed that station security guards had broken down his shack and stolen his belongings.

He remonstrated angrily with an impassive, shotgun-wielding security guard, watched by others wearing riot helmets and flak jackets.

"Call your soldiers and your police, bring your guns and shoot me," he shouted.

"They broke everything," he told journalists. "I bought things with my own money. My heart is sore. Why do they do this?"

Apparently his shack had been demolished by the guards, who stopped their action when Intersite personnel, including Faller, arrived at the scene and told them not to demolish any more shelters.



NEW LIFE: Watched by a station security guard, one of the Park Station squatters washes his clothes before being moved to shelters i the central business district. The removal of the 650 squatters went ahead without incident yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: TJ LEMOI

120 squatters return to Park Station

(310) Sowetan 28/11/95

THE relocation of about 120 homeless people squatting at Johannesburg's Park Station hit snags at the weekend when they were rejected by residents of a shelter on the East Rand.

"To avoid unsafe conditions they were returned to Park Station," Intersite, the marketing arm of the SA Rail Commuter Corporation, said yesterday.

It said the group was given special permission to remain at the station until alternative accommodation was found.

"Approximately 120 people who were relocated to an East Rand shelter had to return to the station as existing dwellers at the shelter were unhappy with the newcomers," Intersite said.

Intersite is relocating the homeless living at the station to make way for construction of a R47-million Park Station transit centre for long-distance and luxury coaches.

Shelter residents reject Park station squatters

CT 28/11/95 (310)

JOHANNESBURG: The moving of about 120 squatters at Johannesburg's main railway station hit a snag at the weekend when they were rejected by residents of a shelter on the East Rand.

"To avoid unsafe conditions they were returned to Park Station," Intersite, the marketing arm of the SA Rail Commuter Corporation, said yesterday.

It said the group was given special permission to remain at the station until other accommodation was found for them.

Intersite is moving the homeless living at the station to make way for building a R47-million Park Station transit centre for long-distance and luxury coaches.

At the weekend 406 people were moved to various shelters and missions in and around Johannesburg's central business district and some were reunited with their families, Intersite said.

About 100 men and women were reunited with their families as far afield as Maputo, Louis Trichardt, Port Elizabeth, Transkei, Queenstown and Cape Town.

"Many people indicated the desire to be reunited with their families, and the number of people considering the option is continually increasing," Intersite said.

"These people were issued with train or bus tickets and were also given a small amount of money for refreshments and to cover transport costs from their destination stations to their homes."

The railway company was still trying to find accommodation for about 245 people still at the station. Those being moved are first registered by Intersite.

"The move over the weekend was peaceful and non-confrontational," Intersite said. — Sapa

Ex-convicts terrorise the homeless

(310) Sowetan 30/11/95

By Joshua Raboroko

A GANG of ex-convicts are allegedly conducting a reign of terror at the Drill Hall, the former South African Defence Force headquarters in Twist Street, Johannesburg.

Thugs are reported to be extorting R50 a month from homeless people to sleep on the premises.

People claim they are forced to pay an extra R5 a week to enter the building and threatened with 'eviction' at gunpoint if they do not pay. They say the former prisoners subject them to constant searches. The extortionists also body search women and children.

Appeal for help

About 500 homeless people living at the Drill Hall have written to the Minister of Public Works, Mr Jeff Radebe, Gauteng premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale and the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, to highlight their plight.

The building is owned by the Department of Works and hawkers, illegal immigrants and unemployed families with young children, have been temporarily accommodated pending its renovation.

In a letter in possession of *Sowetan* the families appealed to the authorities, as "a matter of urgency", to free them from the danger posed by the ruthless group of about 20 to 30 people who have "seized control of the Drill Hall".

Reign of terror

In their reign of terror former prisoners:

- Hold meetings at which the chairman brandishes a pistol and there is a constant threat of violence;
- Conduct mandatory searches at the gate and demand R5 a person a week "gate money" to get access to the premises;
- Threaten everybody on the premises with eviction unless they pay R50 a month for sleeping space;
- Make arbitrary rules such as the sudden demand for R5 gate money or R50 for sleeping space – with the threat of eviction; and
- Control the sale of drugs and guns on the premises and daily threaten women and children.

Fined

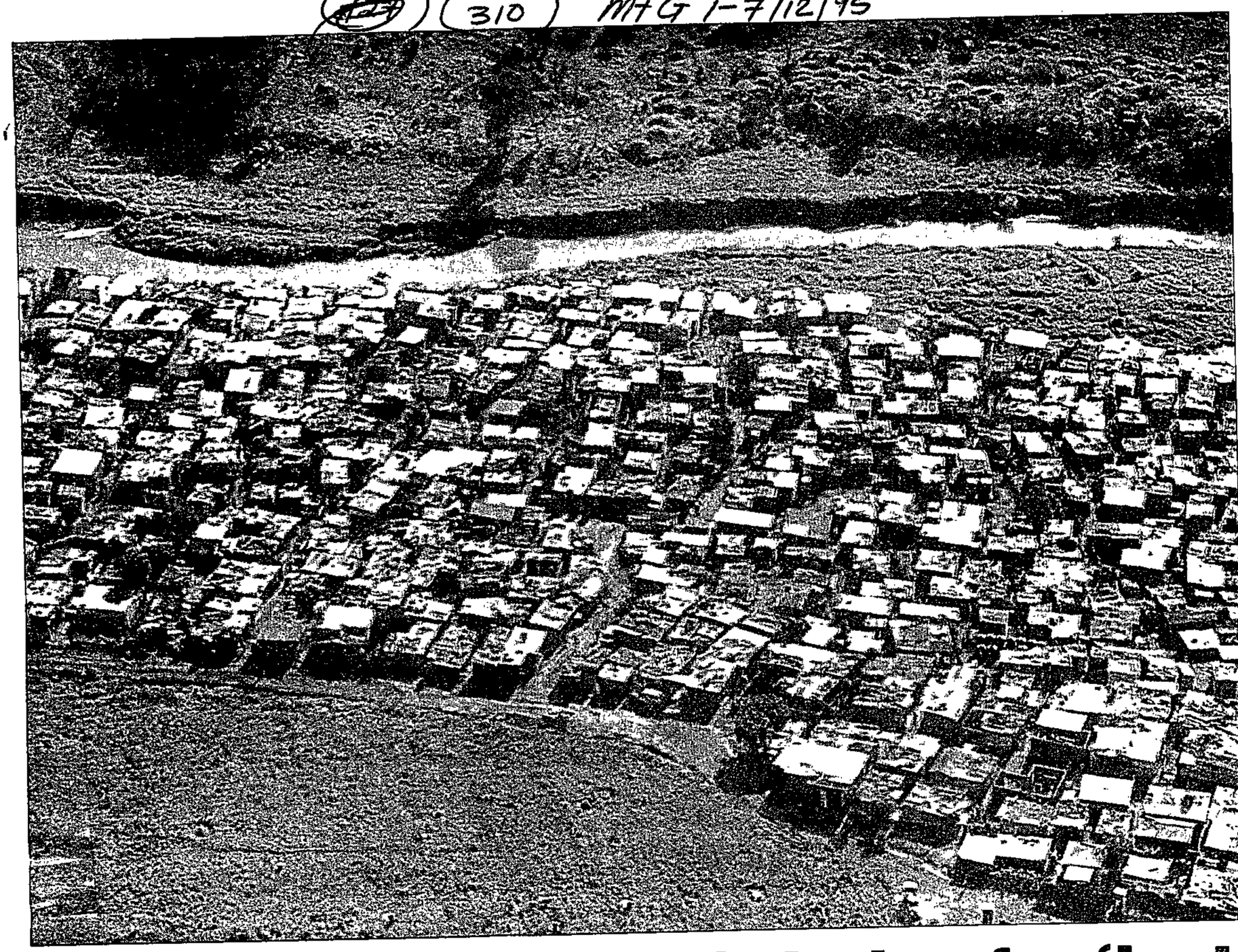
A witness told *Sowetan* yesterday that many people have been fined between R50 and R100 after being found guilty of various offences, including drunkenness, adultery, trespass and theft of property.

A spokesman for the Gauteng premier said yesterday the matter had been referred to the MEC for social welfare Mr Louis Le Roux.

is already over-full, say officials. But what is to be done about the problem of homelessness?

the shape of the city

(Story) (310) M+G 1-7/12/95



Homes lost in civil war

Rehana Rossouw and Ann Eveleth

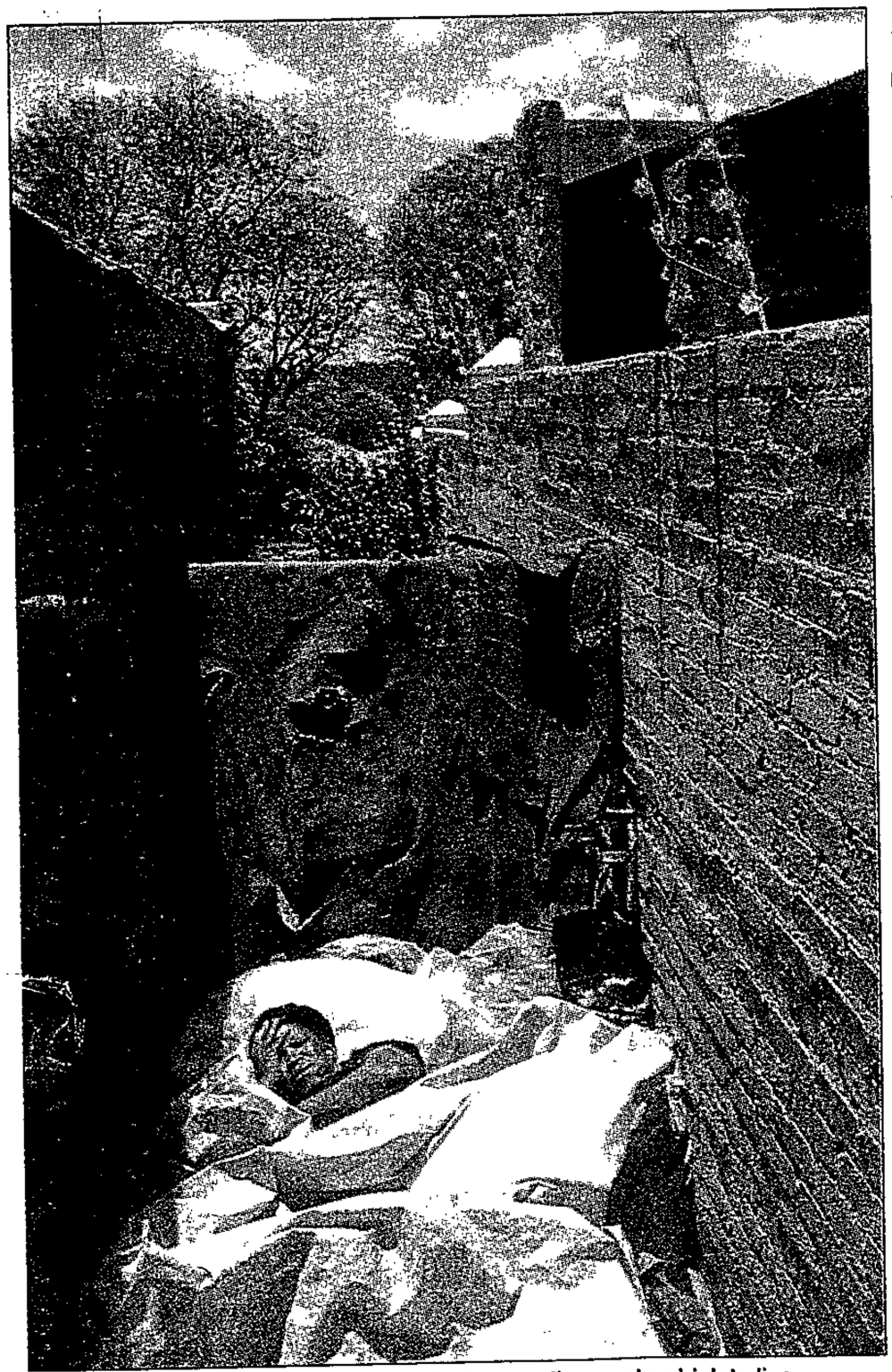
THE civil war in KwaZulu-Natal has created a destitute class of people who have converted pavements in the centre of Durban into an informal camp site.

Most of the single mothers and children who have turned the crannies of the city into their home are refugees — over the decade, 600 000 have fled from political violence in the province's rural hinterland.

Durban's deputy medical officer for health, Greg Munro, says it is impossible to estimate the number of homeless in the city as no proper surveys have been done. The number of street children could be as high as 3 000, he says.

Crossroads and KTC squatter camps near the airport remain an unsightly welcome for visitors to Cape Town, but the city has escaped the CBD travails of Durban and Cape Town.

The flow of migrants into Cape Town is not as heavy as the streams going into the country's other major cities, and this has given planners some breathing space.



Alley cat: A homeless woman above, finds a small space in which to live — between the walls encircling homes in one of Johannesburg's plush suburbs. Others are squatting on some of South Africa's richest real estate — the Parkview golf course. At top, the sprawl of a squatter settlement alongside Alexandra township

PHOTOS: HENNER FRANKENFELD

Solution for 'lost city'

M+G 1-7/12/95

Hazel Friedman

'GOD has blessed us," says single mother Mavis Somdanyana.

A year ago she was about to be dumped on the pavements. Today she and 434 tenants from seven buildings in the highrise slum of Hillbrow are home-owners through a unique scheme that could solve the inner city housing problem.

Called the Seven Buildings Project (SBP), the scheme entitles tenants to a R5-million subsidy through the National Housing Forum. This will help them buy the buildings and assist in reviving an inner city slum which many call "the lost city".

Somdanyana's new home is in Branksome Towers, which sits in the porn-pawn area of Joubert Park.

Somdanyana, who has three children, makes R500 — in a good month — from selling hot meals on the streets, 12 hours a day. But this home is the start of a new life. "It has been a struggle on many fronts — a struggle for a home and my dignity as a woman and mother."

We are sitting in her bedroom because the other room serves as a transit-stop for homeless friends and their baggage. The interior of her modest flat contrasts starkly with the dereliction and decay outside. Cloths prevent the wind from penetrating broken windows, cushions cover the well-worn couch and bright posters camouflage cracked and peeling walls.

Born in the Eastern Cape, Somdanyana came to Johannesburg in 1983. In 1987 she settled in Argyle Court, which was soon to become the nucleus of the SBP under the helm of resident and Actstop member, Pressage Nkosi.

With the breakdown of the Group Areas Act in the late 1980s, the racial demography of areas like Hillbrow and Joubert Park underwent a radical transformation. Fearful of the "grey *gevaar*", banks redlined the area and greedy companies operating under sectional title took over the buildings, forcing tenants to pay exorbitant rentals and encouraging ideal conditions for the creation of an urban slum.

Buildings were overcrowded, maintenance broke down and crime flourished, while the city council sat back and watched Hillbrow become an open wound in a blighted urban landscape.

While they still had a roof over their heads, they were not considered poor enough for a housing subsidy. Yet they were not rich enough for bank loans

"Finally we took action by organising a rent boycott," says Nkosi, "which forced David Gorfil — who owns the seven buildings — to attend to our grievances."

By 1991, Gorfil, who had been running the buildings at a loss from huge water and effluent accounts, wanted to shut the buildings. But he agreed to grant the tenants time to develop an alternative.

Although the tenants had resumed paying rent, they did not have leases and were therefore illegally occupying the buildings. Ironically, while they still had a roof over their heads, they were not considered poor enough for a housing subsidy. Yet they were not rich enough for bank loans.

But tenacity has finally triumphed. In January transfer of ownership will take place into a company owned by the SBP. Although the tenants will not be owners in the conventional sense — they will continue to pay rent — as sectional title shareholders their interests will be represented by a company director from each of the seven buildings. The SBP has arranged for affordable rentals to be paid in proportion to tenant income, of which a percentage will be allocated for building refurbishment.

As a member of the building's management committee, Somdanyana, along with other women tenants, is responsible for cleaning the building, while male residents are in charge of maintenance, rent collection and security. Nkosi says there is no safer place to park a car in Johannesburg than outside the SBP buildings.

"Maybe other homeless communities will now be encouraged by our success and assert their rights to decent housing and a clean neighbourhood. The city council won't do it for us, even our old comrades in the struggle who are living the good life can't help. We have to do it ourselves."

[redacted] they make their homes. The city

Shack-dwellers change

Urban planners, white suburbs, and the homeless are locked in a struggle of competing needs, writes **Justin Pearce**

POLITICAL squabbling has halted Johannesburg's plans to house its homeless. Shack settlements have proliferated in the city while municipal and provincial authorities have failed to reach a universally acceptable plan to accommodate squatters in formal housing.

At the heart of the conflict are the opposing demands of planners who want to reshape a city that was designed along apartheid lines, and existing residents and bankers who fear low-income housing near established residential areas will deflate property prices in the exisiting suburbs — the nimby (not in my back yard) syndrome.

Plans by the Johannesburg municipality to provide land for the homeless are in danger of being blocked by a cautious Gauteng Provincial Housing Board (PHB), which appears to have been swayed by these fears.

According to senior local government sources, the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council could withdraw from participating in the province's subsidised housing scheme if the PHB does not shift its position.

The Johannesburg TMC was due to meet with PHB representatives this week, to negotiate a way out of the impasse.

To make matters worse, Johannesburg is full to bursting point, with a severe shortage of available land for new development.

In terms of national housing policy, responsibility for developing new housing rests ultimately with the nine provincial housing boards, although decisions can be overridden by MECs responsible for housing and planning. In Gauteng, the provincial government asked local authorities to identify sites suitable for rapid development.

First in line for land in the new development areas are squatters living in areas which are dangerous or unsuitable for continued occupation — the river floodplains in Alexandra township, for example.

> **'We need to convince people that it is okay to live next to low-income neighbours'**

Development sites had to be found to give residents access to employment and leisure, and close to available transport, water and sewage facilities — in several areas of the city, in mainly white suburbs, such facilities are there and underutilised.

The TMC duly identified five sites, all surrounded by or bordering on existing residential areas. The sites are Bloubosrand, bordering on Randburg; Lombardy East, near Alexandra on the eastern fringe of the city; and Maroeladal, Misgund and Liefde en Vrede in the south.

According to PHB chair Martin van Zyl, the board is concerned that the TMC, in identifying the five sites, did not follow national housing policy guidelines, which require consultation with communities already in existence next to the proposed new developments. The board has also raised questions about the council's failure to provide a blueprint of the kind of development envisaged.

The TMC has deliberately kept quiet about which land has been earmarked for development, to avoid an outcry from local residents which could scupper the programme before it began. And according to TMC sources, the urgency of the situation precluded formulation of cut-and-dried plans demanded by the PHB.

Rather than presenting a complete proposal, the TMC intends allocating sites with water and sanitation laid on, which residents are to develop as best they can. Out of the R15 000 subsidy promised by the province for each house, the TMC intends to spend R5 000 on infrastructure, and make the remaining R10 000 available as a starter subsidy to the homeowner, which can then be augmented by applying to the national housing subsidy scheme.

Van Zyl said the board "wants to see an integrated city, but we want to protect the rights of everybody". He pointed out the rights of existing property owners must be safeguarded as well as those of the homeless.

He emphasised the PHB had not rejected Johannesburg's five suggested sites, but that there were still problems.

"It is not for us [the PHB] to prescribe sites, but Johannesburg should rethink the whole process," he said. "There was no consultation: If you don't have a plan, how can you negotiate?"

But there are growing fears in local government that the PHB has been swayed by the interests of bankers and lobbying by established property owners. The PHB, a statutory body which exists in each province, comprises six representatives from each of three sectors: government, community organisations, and commerce, including banks and building contractors.

People who have dealt with the Gauteng PHB have suggested certain interest groups on the board are better organised than others, and that banks and property owners have a disproportionately loud voice. Bankers oppose low-cost housing development close to established residential areas, fearing this will devalue property and undermine the security of bonds.

Stuart Grobler of the Council for Banks of Southern Africa (Cobsa) said Cobsa favoured development that followed a gradual progression from high- to low-income housing, rather than having high- and low-income areas side by side.

The TMC's position, conversely, is to allow mixed-income development in the same area, and, in the words of one senior TMC official, "we need to convince people that it is okay to live next to low-income neighbours".

The issue is more than just a racial one — some established Soweto residents are uneasy about squatters taking up residence down the road.

While other Gauteng cities have had no difficulty in identifying land which meets national Housing Department criteria for development without treading on the toes of existing communities, Johannesburg's location at the centre of the Gauteng conurbation means the city has almost no room left for expansion.

Much of the vacant land to the south of the city is geologically unsuitable for housing development — to the west, north and east the existing built-up area borders on other municipalities. Cobsa argues the city is full, and that sites for low-cost development should be kept outside the city.

The city itself argues such a scheme will perpetuate the apartheid model which has low-income housing far removed from centres of employment, and is determined to accommodate its homeless within its own borders.

Born under a wandering star

... Friedman

ARMSTRONG BADUZA (52) recalls the day Archbishop Trevor Huddleston arrived at his father's house in ... armed with musical instru... "I was too young to play but ... who managed became interna... stars," he says. "I became a ... star instead."

... also remembers his father lead... the residents of Alexandra Town... — then a freehold area — on the ... rent boycott in the 1950s. ... marched with the people to ... — which later became Moroka ..., where they built a shanty in protest against the govern... My father was a leader of the .... That's why they banned ...

... proud memories of his father ... replaced by recollections of ... days and and cold nights ... by dagga and booze. "My ... was called Baduza of the ... I was known as Half-and-half, ... I used to buy half-a-jack ... and half-a-dozen beers ... if I got sick with ulcers, I would ... an alcoholic."

... the age of 17, the son of ... Baduza — an African ... Congress activist and com... communist until he became a ... has had a street-eye view of ... only home he has known, ... brief spells at his father's and longer stretches in prison, Johannesburg's Drill Hall and ..., where he now sleeps. ... when it undergoes refurbish... he will be forced to leave. "I ... because there is nowhere ... me to go. But at least I have ...

... is one of the writers for ... *Talk*, a publication written ... by the homeless and pro... in partnership with St ...'s United Church, Central ... Mission and the Central ... Partnership. ... also the paper's sales man... represents the street sellers ... editorial board. This is ... first job, apart from a stint ... orderly, which he had to leave "because if I didn't, I would never have stopped stealing from the hospital."



Have no home, will write: Armstrong Baduza is on a mission to help the homeless PHOTOGRAPH: RUTH MOTAU

But how did the child of one of South Africa's most famous sons end up destitute? "I didn't want to learn. I hated politics and religion. I wanted freedom, but my father was very strict. He used to tell me money was dirty. But that was what I wanted. And fast cars."

He recalls the time he stole a car and drove it to show his father. "I stopped myself because I was wanted by the police and I knew he was ashamed of me."

When his mother died in the Transkei, he stole money to attend her funeral. He arrived too late. Ten years ago, when his father passed away, Baduza was in prison. His voice falters, then becomes more measured.

In the muted light filtering through the stained glass windows of St George's chapel, Baduza looks serene. He has the eyes of a priest who has seen too much pain. And he writes with the passion of a prophet about the homeless and the need for education, his achingly beautiful prose peppered with humorous anecdotes and quotes from the scriptures. "I only went up to standard three, and my mother knew I would never be educated, so she taught me to read the Bible. I also read James Hadley Chase."

And there are anecdotes. One of Baduza's friends, Linda Bakwana, has exposed the homeless gangsters who exploit "their own kind" by charging R5 per person to sleep at the army's Drill Hall. "Luckily I left before they killed me. Now apparently they force people to pay R50 for a tiny space."

He also recalls that "one day I was selling the newspaper in the street and this BMW bumped into me. Next thing the police come to ask me why I tried to hijack the madam!"

Another time he was collecting empty cans at at bus shelter. He leaned too close to an elderly woman, who clutched her handbag, yelling for help. "I was lucky I didn't get into trouble. My friend was selling *Homeless Talk* and this rich, white couple got into an argument because the husband said he wasn't homeless so he didn't need our newpaper. The wife began to shout at him, so my friend said that he didn't want the newspaper to a cause a divorce."

"I have never been married, I don't have children," says Baduza. "But now I want to settle down, to help my people and be at peace. When I was a youngster, freedom was my food. But Jesus told Peter to feed his lambs with truth."

And he adds: "Are the lambs of Jesus not the youngsters?"

Suddenly Armstrong Baduza, street kid-turned street-wise sage, sounds just like his father.

EU backs boers' trek to Mozambique

M+G 1-7/12/95

Despite resistance from many influential Mozambicans, the project to settle Afrikaner farmers in Mozambique appears to be gathering favour. Marion Edmunds reports

THE European Union (EU) has agreed to finance research into the viability of settling South African farmers in Mozambique and other African countries.

Funding for the research would come from EU funds earmarked for the Reconstruction and Development Programme and, depending on the outcome, could lead to further EU money being made available to settle Afrikaner farmers in South Africa's neighbouring states, according to EU ambassador Erwan Fouéré.

A letter has been written to Shaheed Rajie, the Director for International Funding in the RDP office, with this proposal.

The organisation wanting to dispatch farmers to African countries, the South African Chamber for Agricultural Development in Africa (Sacada), has interpreted the EU's gesture as a sign that the project — which is being championed by President Nelson Mandela — is receiving international recognition. Sacada secretary Willie Jordaan said this week that the EU had said the farming project "was the best noise out of Africa in the past 30 years".

He said that Sacada had endeavoured to bring its policies into line with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and claimed that it was set to become an international development agency.

Jordaan said his organisation had been approached by about 12 African countries interested in white South African farmers but, at the moment, was concentrating on Mozambique, Zambia, Zaire and Angola, with Mozambique being the test case. Mandela's spokesperson Parks Mankahlana said this week Mandela has asked the Tanzanian government to accept Afrikaner farmers to help develop the agricultural sector.

Both Mankahlana and the Mozambican Embassy denied Mozambicans had opposed the settlement of Afrikaner farmers, as was reported on SABC radio this week. The Mozambican government could not be reached for comment yesterday. But a negotiator from Mozambique's agriculture ministry has been quoted on several occasions as saying Afrikaner farmers were neither needed nor wanted in large numbers. He said they would not want to be settled on land in communities and that, in certain provinces, like Maputo, they would not be welcome at all, and would never get freehold possession of the land.

According to Jordaan, about 1 000 people, disillusioned with the new South Africa, are poised to trek to Mozambique. One, Egbert Hiemstra, cites affirmative action, trade unions, new land legislation and drought in South Africa as reasons to invest and farm in neighbouring states.

Not that it's going to cost much hard cash to farm across the border. He says Mozambique will lease land to the farmers at 60 cents per hectare per year, if not give it away for free. He said negotiations with President Mandela are under way to allow the farmers to have dual citizenship and continue to vote in South African elections.



General Constand Viljoen: Convinced President Mandela of the benefits of the project

PHOTOGRAPH: HENNER FRANKENFELD

Hiemstra already owns two farms in Lydenburg, and wants a third in Mozambique.

Although he has been to Mozambique to have a look around on behalf of Sacada, he has not yet chosen the spot he hopes will be his.

"It's like being a small child in a sweet shop," he said. "There are just so many beautiful, fertile places to choose from."

Hiemstra denies the project is a throw-back to the past, a desperate attempt to create an Afrikaner *volkstaat* in a country too poor to resist.

"It's not an *apartheidspolitieksfoefie*," he said indignantly. For every two farmers who settle, Sacada has promised to train and establish one local black Mozambican as a commercial farmer. Anybody will be able to attend their schools, if they are prepared to respect Hiemstra's "community's standards" and anybody can come on the great trek, as long as they are strong, fit and enterprising. Two black South Africans have asked to be part of the project, said Hiemstra. When approached this week, Fouéré was cautiously optimistic about the project.

"The project could be successful in so far as it seeks to promote complementary progress in agriculture in the region and in so far as it makes the transfer of expertise possible and allows development where it is badly needed."

Fouéré has had discussions with General Constand Viljoen, who initiated the project, and has convinced Mandela of its benefits. Viljoen had argued to Mandela that settling Afrikaner farmers would stimulate the economies of neighbouring states and provide food and employment for locals, and that this would stem the flow of illegal immigrants into South Africa. But not all Mozambicans believe white South African farmers are the solution to their problems.

One analyst, who asked not to be named, said: "Mozambique needs capital, not white South African farmers."

Dutch funders take flak over 'blank cheques'

M+G 1-7/12/95

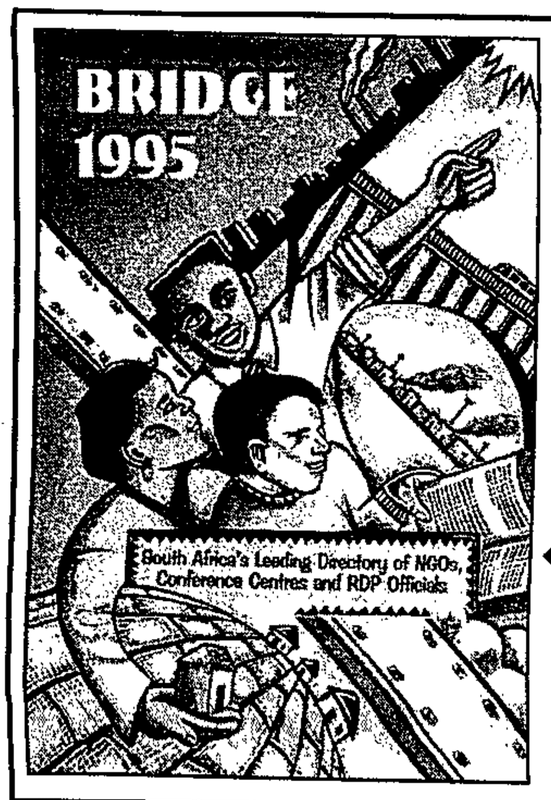
Evelyn Groenink

DUTCH do-gooders have run into flak at home for handing out R20-million to South African political parties without any built-in checks and balances on how the money is spent.

The organisation giving the money is the Foundation for the New South Africa (FSA), which is made up of representatives of political parties in the Netherlands. Dutch critics are joined in South Africa by Ivor Jenkins of Idasa and Oscar Dhlomo of the Institute for Multiparty Democracy. "It is extremely dangerous to just give blank cheques," says Jenkins, emphasising the need for strict criteria and monitoring.

However, a Dutch/South African conference was held last week to decide on "stricter monitoring" of the use of the distributed monies and "to stop funding further projects" if the funds appear to have been spent on other than the stated purposes. The blank cheque system is defended by acting president of the FSA, Klaas Groenveld. "We don't want to be paternalistic. We will still try to avoid interference. All we want to do is to help our counterparts," says Groenveld.

Tom Lodge of the Department of Political Studies at Wits University also defends the idea of blank cheques. "If you want to support parties and that is a way to help establish a democracy, then you mustn't prescribe what to do with the money. If you don't trust them, you mustn't give them money in the first place."



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NOMINATIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE PAN SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGE BOARD

The *ad hoc* Select Committee on Members of the Pan South African Language Board would like to invite nominations from the general public of persons for appointment as members to the Board.

A Pan South African Language Board has to be appointed in terms of the Pan South African Language Board Act (Act No 59 of 1995). The Board will consist of members who shall in terms of the Act be fit and proper persons for the offices held by them, be South African citizens, be broadly representative of the diversity of the South African community and be supportive of the principle of multilingualism.

The Act stipulates that the following categories of members should serve on the Board:

- *Four persons who shall be acknowledged, practising language workers of whom -*
  - *(a) one shall be an interpreter;*
  - *(b) one shall be a translator;*
  - *(c) one shall be either a terminologist or a lexicographer; and*
  - *(d) one shall be either a language teacher or a literacy teacher.*
- *Three persons who shall be language planners.*
- *Five persons who shall have specialist knowledge of language matters in South Africa.*
- *One person who shall be a legal expert with special knowledge of language legislation.*

All persons and institutions who wish to make nominations in this regard are requested to submit the names, addresses, telephone numbers and other relevant details of the nominees to the Committee by no later than 23 January 1996. Please indicate clearly the category of interest of the nominee. Nominations not clearly indicating the category of interest, shall not be considered. All correspondence in this regard should be addressed to:

The Secretary to Parliament
P.O. Box 15
Cape Town, 8000 fax no: (021) 461-7969

Attention: Mr CRM Neluvhola or Mr GT Matikal
Enquiries: (021) 403 2820 or 403 2654

Alexandra squatters win reprieve

Star 11/12/95 (310)

By Susan Miller

The Far East Bank squatters in Alexandra have won a reprieve from eviction through a court ruling that Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale, who brought the application, is not the legal owner of the land.

Mr Justice IL Goldblatt ruled that in terms of Proclamation No 24 (Premiers) 1994, published by the applicant in the Gauteng Provincial Extraordinary Gazette of December 3 1994, Sexwale was not the owner.

Judge Goldblatt said the history of the land was that it was declared a "defined area" on February 3 1993 in terms of section 2(11) of the Black Local Authorities Act, 102 of 1982 and the administrator acquired the powers of a city council over the property.

The land was transferred to the administrator on October 20 1993 and he was holding the property purely in his capacity as the local authority and not in his capacity as head of the Provincial Administration. Judge Goldblatt said therefore, when the constitution came into effect on April 27 last year, the administrator owned the property in his capacity as a local authority, and the only rights and powers he had over the property were those of a local authority and the powers he exercised were those given to him under a section of the Local Government Transition Act.

He said that it was clear from a proclamation published in an Extraordinary Provincial Gazette on December 3 last year that the assets of local government were transferred to the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council and the administrator/premier no longer had any capacity as a local authority over the property.

Judge Goldblatt said the premier had been succeeded by the TMC as the local authority over the property and the "new" TMC of 1 September 1995 with its four substructures had taken it over.

He said he was accordingly satisfied the property was not owned by the premier and that he was therefore not entitled to bring an action for the ejectment of the squatters from it.

■ Judgment has been reserved in the case of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council and Crown Mines Limited against the Main Reef Road squatters.

Counsel for the GJTMC said in the Rand Supreme Court yesterday that the squatters were a nuisance, were alongside a busy road and were interfering with a neighbouring church.

Advocate George Bizos SC, appearing for the squatters, argued they should not be evicted unless alternative accommodation is found for them and that a decision to evict should be taken by a body or functionary which is politically accountable to the electorate and not by "an unelected bureaucrat".

Far East Bank squatters win a reprieve

310

Sowetan 11/12/95

Sowetan Correspondent

THE Far East Bank squatters in Alexandra Township have won a reprieve from being evicted because a court has ruled the Gauteng premier who brought the application is not the legal owner of the land.

Mr Justice IL Goldblatt ruled that in terms of Proclamation No 24 (Premiers), 1994 published by the applicant in the Gauteng Provincial Extraordinary Gazette of December 3 1994, premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale was not the owner.

Judge Goldblatt said the history of the land was that it was declared a "defined area" on February 3 1993 in terms of section 2 (11) of the Black Local Authorities Act 102 of 1982 and the Administrator acquired the powers of a city council over the property.

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He said that it was clear from a proclamation published in an Extraordinary Provincial Gazette on December 3 1994 that the assets of local government were transferred to the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council and the Administrator/Premier no longer had any capacity as a local authority over the property.

Squatters 'council's baby'

JOHANNESBURG. — Gauteng authorities would consult the greater Johannesburg transitional metropolitan council about a squatter problem in the far East Bank area of Alexandra, the province said.(310) ARG 2/12/95

This follows a Rand Supreme Court ruling that the area involved did not belong to Gauteng, but to the council.

Development planning MEC Sicelo Shiceka said in a statement the court's ruling meant Gauteng did not have the power to evict the squatters.

Gauteng's position that squatting was to be condemned because it hampered development remained unaltered, and the province called on the squatters to respect the rule of law. — Sapa.

Alex squatters safe for a while

Star 2/12/95 (310)

Premier Tokyo Sexwale said the Gauteng government would begin an "urgent discussion" with the Greater Johannesburg TMC, "as soon as possible" on the Far East Bank squatters of Alexandra.

He was responding to a Rand Supreme Court ruling on Thursday that the Gauteng government does not own the land on which the squatters have set up their shacks. The provincial government had thought it was the rightful owner of the land and therefore had the right to evict the squatters.

The court did not rule whether the squatters may stay. Until such a decision is made, the status quo is maintained. – Staff Reporter

Moffat Park residents face definite eviction

Sowetan 13/12/93

310

By Russel Molefe

ABOUT 280 families who earlier this year illegally occupied land at Moffat Park, Johannesburg, face eviction by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council on Monday.

This follows the dismissal of the squatter community's appeal against the eviction order granted to the GJTMC by the Rand Supreme Court in May. The squatter community's appeal was dismissed on December 7.

At a Press briefing yesterday, chairman of the Southern Metropolitan Sub-Structure Mr Prema Naidoo said the GJTMC was against illegal invasion of land because it seriously prejudiced the rights of people on the waiting list for houses.

"Should the GJTMC have permitted the continued invasion of land, it would have been legitimising lawlessness. To have supported such activity would have been to create the impression that queue-jumping is acceptable behaviour and that those who make the most noise can simply get their way at the expense of those who are waiting in line," Naidoo said.

He said officials of the GJTMC and Southern MSS had been consulting with the squatter community and persuading them to move voluntarily prior to the dismissal of the appeal.

Deputy chairman of GJTMC executive committee Mr Kenny Fihla said the squatters would not be given alternative accommodation because "we don't want to set a wrong precedent".

"If they are given alternative accommodation, it will be like rewarding them for illegally invading the land. We don't want to reward them," Fihla said.



NO CONSOLATION . . . Rev Kabelo Masilo conducts the vigil for Mrs Mphali in the open veld near the plot from which her husband was evicted just before her death.
Pic: ANDRIES MCINEKA

No place to mourn

CP. 3/12/95 (310)

By BENISON MAKELE

ABSALOM Mphali (73) found himself with no place to hold his deceased wife's vigil after his eviction from the Mulders-drift plot they had stayed in for 41 years.

He was evicted yesterday on the eve of his wife's burial today.

His wife was buried in Kagiso township, Krugersdorp, today.

A distraught Mphali told City Press that he started living on the farm "a long time ago" as a tenant while his wife did general domestic jobs at the farmhouse.

"When my wife was struck with stomachache, I sent her to hospital where they told me that they expected her to be discharged the following day. But to my shock she died that same day," the old man recounted.

Two weeks before she died, a van der Linden had come to the plot in the company of police to inform him that he had to sign a certain document.

"I did not understand why I had to sign the document but I obliged because I did not want to argue," Mphali said.

Yesterday morning, van der Linden came to the plot accompanied by the police, who said that he must evacuate the plot immediately as the new plot owner had other uses for the buildings in which the old couple had spent their lifetime.

Asked if he had been given notice to evacuate the plot, the old man said he had not been aware of the impending eviction but thought that the "papers" he had previously signed amounted to that.

The owner of the farm allegedly said she did not care what would happen to Mphali and threw his things out with the assistance of the police.

"My heart is painful because I have been staying with Mrs Marais (the owner) for a long time as friends," Mphali said.

Alex threat to oust squatters

(310) Star 4/12/95

Clashes with residents feared likely after court rules that Gauteng authorities cannot evict shack dwellers

By Anna Cox

Alexandra residents are threatening to clear out squatters from the township's Far East Bank following a ruling preventing the Gauteng government from evicting the shack dwellers.

Alexandra Land and Property Owners' Association spokesman Darky Rametsi said people were getting "agitated" and worried that further legal action would lead to lengthy delays. People were not prepared to await another court decision.

"There is a major problem looming and if something is not done, officials will wake up one morning and find the squatters gone," he said. Rametsi did not say how the clearout would be accomplished, but it is apparent it could lead to bloody clashes between residents and squatters.

The Rand Supreme Court ruling on Thursday said the Gauteng government was not the owner of the land and that relief should be sought from the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council.

"Alex people are becoming scared, believing they will lose their land," Rametsi said last night. "They were waiting for the court decision and now it has again been delayed. Some people have had their names on waiting lists for 30 years.

"They never took occupation of the land illegally even though it was on their doorstep and they were entitled to it. How do you think they feel watching outsiders coming in and claiming the land?"

Land occupied by the squatters has already been serviced and officials were preparing to allocate sites to Alexandra residents when about 1 500 moved in in August.

Another community leader,

> **Soon there will be too many people to move**

who asked not to be identified, said that despite promises, the number of squatters was growing every week. "Soon there will be too many people for the authorities to move – we are going to have to do something ourselves before our land is gone," he said.

Far East Bank councillor Alan Fuchs said he would today be calling on the council to take urgent steps to resolve the matter.

Premier Tokyo Sexwale said on Friday the Gauteng government would begin urgent discussions with the council on the issue.

■ The Rand Supreme Court ruling last week on the Far East Bank squatter issue, in which Mr Justice I L Golblatt found the land does not belong to the Gauteng government, invalidates last month's local government election results, says former Sandton councillor Jo Marais.

The Demarcation Board placed the Far East Bank into Ward 5 (Buccleugh/Kelvin) and Marais said yesterday she had asked at the time for the area to be included into the non-statutory Alexandra wards. She had made the request because the ward would become too big for one councillor to handle once the Far East Bank had been developed. Another 20 000 people are expected to move into the ward, which already holds 15 000 residents.

Her request was turned down by Greater Johannesburg TMC officials who said the Far East Bank fell outside the former Black Local Authority Act and therefore had to be included in the statutory wards.

"Judge Goldblatt's ruling last Thursday clearly states that the land was included in the Black Local Authority Act and this invalidates the demarcation of wards and therefore the local election results. Residents have the right to take the matter to the Constitutional Court to get the election results set aside," she said.

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Squatters threatened

(310) Sowetan 5/12/95

By Wilson Ramothata

TENSIONS are running high between residents of Alexandra Township and squatters from nearby Far East Bank following a decision by the residents to evict the shack dwellers from a piece of land earmarked for low-cost housing.

Residents have threatened to personally remove the squatters despite a ruling by the Rand Supreme Court last week Thursday preventing the Gauteng government from evicting land invaders in the area.

Alexandra Civic Association spokesman Philemon Matshitela said yesterday that his organisation would meet the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council and the Gauteng government this week to attempt to resolve the matter.

"As a civic organisation we are not going to allow people to take the law into their own hands. We say the government should device means to prevent violence that could spark in the area," he said.

IN BRIEF

Alex squatters call on Govt for help after eviction threat

(310) Star b 12 95

By Anna Cox

Squatters on the Far East Bank of Alexandra are calling on the Government to intervene following the threat by residents to evict them after a court ruling prevented the Gauteng government from doing so.

Squatter leader John Malatji said people living there feared their lives were in danger and the threat made by Alexandra's community leader Darky Rametsi was "undermining" the court judgment.

The squatters plan to hold a party on Sunday to celebrate their court victory: "We are prepared to negotiate with people living in Alexandra," Malatji said. "We have registered all the people living in the camp and 95% of them come from Alexandra. Many of us fled the violence and floods – we are not illegal immigrants – we are locals. We have not occupied the serviced area," he said, saying he himself has lived in Alexandra since 1976.

These claims have been denied by chairman of the Alexandra Displacees Crisis Committee, Tsietsi Kungoane, who said: "We have investigated and found no displacees to be living there."

"If people claiming to be displacees are living there they should identify themselves and we would ask them to leave the area immediately as we have distanced ourselves from the Far East bank squatters. If they stay they will not be catered for when land is given to us as compensation for our lost homes," he said.

East Bank councillor Aaron Siboyane also said most of the squatters came from other provinces.

Alex squatter case simmers

(310)

By Wilson Ramothata

THE executive committee of the Eastern Metropolitan Sub-Structure has authorised Metropolitan Legal Services to seek a court order to evict about 1 500 shack dwellers from Far East Bank in Alexandra Township.

This came in the wake of a ruling by the Rand Supreme Court preventing the Gauteng government from moving the squatters.

The court last week ruled that the Gauteng government was not the legal owner of the land and that the matter should be be resolved by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council.

Acting chairman of the EMSS executive committee Mr Sol Cow said yesterday they would pursue all measures to prevent the further erection of illegal structures and invasion of council-owned property.

Meanwhile, tension between residents and the squatters has heightened with the residents threatening to personally evict the squatters.

Sowetan 8/12/95

Alex squatters back in court

(310) MtG 8-14/12/95

Justin Pearce

ALEXANDRA'S Far East Bank squatters will soon be back in court, when Johannesburg's Eastern Metropolitan Substructure tries, where the provincial government failed, to have the squatters evicted.

Last week, after a blaze of publicity condemning the squatters as "land invaders", Premier Tokyo Sexwale's government failed in a supreme court application to have the squatters evicted. The Witwatersrand Local Division of the Transvaal Supreme Court ruled that the Gauteng government was not the owner of the land occupied by the squatters, and therefore had no legal right to evict them.

The court declared the Eastern MSS to be the owner of the land, and the forthcoming case is likely to see the squatters' claims to legitimate occupancy being subjected to court scrutiny. Affidavits submitted by the squatters in last week's court case suggest that the status of the squatters is far more complicated than the label of "land invaders" would suggest.

The case of John Malatji, first respondent in last week's action, is typical of the 450-odd families who face eviction. Malatji says he moved to Johannesburg in 1976, and lived in his uncle's house in Alexandra township until February 1994, when he and his uncle were both forced to flee their home after attacks by the residents of a nearby hostel.



Shack, sweet home: Many Far East Bank squatters moved to the area after losing their shacks elsewhere PHOTOGRAPH: HENNER FRANKENFELD

In addition to political violence, other Far East Bank residents cite the loss of their former shacks in floods, or the loss of their jobs as domestic workers and with them their accommodation, as reasons for moving to the contested area. Some 30 families claim to have been in the area since 1992, with others joining them subsequently.

The situation is further complicated by the squatters' claim that they moved their shacks from the area earmarked for phase one of the East Bank development scheme, at the request of development contractors Dipac. They claim Dipac told them to move to the land they now occupy, which has been pegged out to form phase two of the development scheme. All the squatters maintain that they moved to Far East Bank out of necessity and have nowhere else to go. Their defence is likely to invoke their constitutional rights to dignity and security.

Alan Fuchs, councillor for the Far East Bank region, said the claims of long residency were no more than a "red herring", and that their occupation of the land was illegal. He said there were plenty of residents of Alexandra township and the adjoining suburbs who would testify that the Far East Bank squatters had moved to the area only recently.

He emphasised that the land which the squatters are occupying had been set aside for development which was intended to benefit those residents of Alexandra whose names have been on housing waiting lists for many years.

Fuchs said the MSS would like to see litigation going ahead within the next few weeks if possible. He expressed concern that Alexandra residents were threatening to take the law into their own hands and evict the squatters, and that the squatters were celebrating victory prematurely.

But, with 180 respondents named in the case, establishing the legitimacy of their claims to the land is going to involve a much lengthier court case than last week's, where the victory claimed by the squatters rested on little more than a technicality.

(310) ARG 9/12/95

Station squatters relocated

JOHANNESBURG. — The last 270 homeless people squatting at Johannesburg's Park Station have been relocated, according to the Spoornet group.

They said 150 had been moved into a building in nearby Braamfontein and 120 into a shelter in Boksburg on the East Rand.

They said this was a temporary arrangement for three to six months, as the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council hoped to be able to provide accommodation for the squatters within this period. — Sapa.

End of road for Moffat Park squatters after court battle

(310) Star 9/12/95

Time is apparently up for the Moffat Park squatters, whose leave to appeal against a judgment ordering their shacks dismantled was dismissed this week. The date set for the removal of the shacks is "on or about December 18", according to the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (GJTMC).

Residents of the area and the 3 000 or so squatters have been at loggerheads since the middle of last year. The residents want the squatters out and are not prepared to consider any compromises, while the squatters believe they have a right to live in the park. Both sides have warned of violence if no solution is found.

Earlier this year the GJTMC took the squatters to court to get them to remove their shacks from the park. At the end of October a Supreme Court judge ordered the squatters to dismantle their shacks by November 6, failing which the structures would be demolished.

But by November 6 the squatters had sought leave to appeal against this judgment, and not a single shack has been removed.

On Thursday a Rand Supreme Court judge dismissed the squatters' appeal with costs. The council's cross-appeal was partially allowed, which in effect means the original judgment stands.

"The matter has been addressed by both the GJTMC and the Southern Metropolitan Substructure and ... the council shall, prior to execution of the court order, consult with the community of squatters at Moffat Park, as well as the residents in the area, whereafter the order will be implemented ..." said Collin Matjila, chairman of the GJTMC executive committee.

Moffat Park squatter shacks to be removed

(310) Star 13/12/98

Squatter shacks at Moffat Park in southern Johannesburg would be removed on Monday in accordance with a Rand Supreme Court judgment earlier this month, Johannesburg TMC executive committee deputy chairman Kenny Fihla said yesterday.

The court ruled the shacks, housing about 300 families, were illegal and could be moved. The squatters, however, had the right to be in the park as it was a public space.

Fihla said the TMC was committed to acting against land invaders and to stopping queue-jumping among the homeless as this slowed down the provision of housing.

Although the council and its substructures did not have the jurisdiction to build houses, it was compelled to act against land invaders. This apparent contradiction over local, provincial and national competencies was part of South Africa's new democratic structure which would be solved in time, Fihla said.

The TMC's acting director for urbanisation, Tshepiso Mashinini, said about 70 000 families were living in free-standing informal settlements in greater Johannesburg.

The council had already launched several initiatives to release more land for development under the rapid land-release project and to upgrade informal settlements established before a June moratorium on land invasions.

These would alleviate problems but it would still take several years to redress the housing backlog, he said. – Sapa.

Squatters to 'resist' evictions

Sowetan 14/12/93 (3rd)

By Russel Molefe

SQUATTERS at Moffat Park, Johannesburg, yesterday vowed that they would resist their eviction to be carried out by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council on Monday.

The threat followed an announcement that the eviction order granted to the GJTMC by the Rand Supreme Court in May would be implemented

The squatters' appeal was dismissed with costs on December 7.

The squatters, most of whom are from Transkei, Pietersburg and Lesotho and claim to have been staying in the area for many years in the open before erecting shacks early this year, said: "Even guns and police dogs will not make us move."

Sowetan yesterday established that there were 808 shacks in the area with 2 897 people staying there.

Follow-up meeting

Squatter representative Mr Patrick Tyane said a follow-up meeting with Southern Metropolitan sub-structure officials on their pending eviction is to be held tomorrow. The meeting would determine whether they would be evicted.

He was adamant that squatters were "ready to lay down their lives" to resist the evictions. They believed the GJTMC had been coerced by surrounding white residents to carry out the action.

"We understand that people should wait for houses which have been promised. But do we have to wait in the rain for those houses?" Tyane asked. Mr Ernest Mgwevu (61) said he had been staying in the area since 1939 before erecting a shack early this year.

"I used to dig small pits, covered with a tent and sleep with my wife and children. This was long before these white suburbs were established.

"Five of my eight children were born here but today I'm told I have to move away.

"They have not provided us with alternative accommodation but they want to evict us.

"To move away from this place will be the last thing to do during the remaining years of my life," Mgwevu said.

Deputy chairman of GJTMC executive committee Mr Kenny Fihla on Tuesday said the squatters would not be provided with alternative accommodation after being evicted because "it would be like rewarding them for illegally invading the land."

The Star ... Friday December 15 1995

Bring squatter guards back, say residents

(310)

BY ANNA COX

Star 15/12/95

Angry Randburg residents are up in arms about the removal and reduction of security at five squatter camps in the area.

About 200 residents handed a petition to the mayor of the northern metropolitan substructure (NMSS), Danny Kekane, outside the Randburg municipal offices this week demanding the reinstatement of an external security company, the rehousing of the Zevenfontein squatters in another area, and the removal of councillors involved in negotiations for the removal of security.

Kekane gave residents the undertaking that the matter would be reviewed and that residents would be given an answer by today.

Last week the NMSS took a resolution to remove a private security company altogether from the Zevenfontein and Diepsloot camps, to reduce guards at Blouboskrand from nine to seven, at Zandspruit from six to one and at Diesploot West from 10 to two.

The security company providing the service has been given notice to withdraw and in future guards would be employed from the community, said the resolution.

Chartwell, Bloubosrand and Dainfern residents have decided to stage a protest to show their concern at the reduction of security. They fear it will mean an invasion of thousands more squatters to the camps.

"We are very angry. The councillors did not even debate the matter. They passed it through in a few seconds," said spokesman Ann van Zetten.

"Our lives and our homes are at stake, yet they spent hours debating whether certain councillors should get cellphones. We are very worried about the security of our properties – security cannot simply be removed overnight," she said.

Chartwell resident Dr Cecile Gerin said the removal would mean the invasion of thousands more squatters to the area.

"We saw over the Christmas/New Year period last year how the camp grew," she said.

The Star ... Friday December 15 1995

Station squatters resettled

Star 15/12/95 (310)

A city centre community of destitute people has been successfully moved to welfare homes in a settlement negotiated with all parties concerned

By Shirley Woodgate

More than 100 former squatters at Park station, Johannesburg, have been readmitted to a Boksburg welfare centre after being thrown out last week, bringing the city's first negotiated removal of homeless people to a successful conclusion.

Faced with removing about 750 permanent inhabitants living illegally in appalling conditions on the station, Intersite, the property management arm of the SA Rail Commuter Corporation, entered into discussions with the squatters four months ago about their future.

The actual move got under way four weeks ago when shacks housing hawkers, jobless and destitute families and children were taken down, said Intersite managing director Jack Prentice.

All went well until about 120 people who had been moved to the welfare home in Boksburg returned to the station at the end of last month, after being rejected by some of the residents.

"Subsequent negotiations with the shelter management and residents resulted in an agreement that the 120 homeless people can be accommodated," Prentice said.

The relocation has now been completed, with the return to the Boksburg home and 150 people moving temporarily into a vacant building in Carr Street until the transitional metropolitan council provides permanent accommodation from April.

The squatters agreed to the move that finally saw 223 adults relocated to the Welcome Home Centre; 44 people moved to the Christian Service Foundation; 41 women, children, disabled and aged men to the Lighthouse care and rehabilitation centre; and about 120 people reunited with their families countrywide, Prentice said.

The permit and registration process that was introduced to identify "permanent" squatters was successful, and now that the entire community had been moved, any new people who wanted to sleep on the station would be turned away, he added.

The way is now clear for work on a new R34-million metro concourse and a R47-million transit centre for long-distance trains and luxury coaches.

"The two projects form part of the greater Park City project which will transform Park station into a more commuter and pedestrian-friendly environment. It will also contribute to the desperately needed redevelopment of the CBD, which will act as a catalyst for future investment in the city," he said.

Johannesburg evicts Moffat Park squatters

(310)
Mduduzi ka Harvey BD 19/12/95

MUNICIPAL workers guarded by police, army and private security personnel yesterday bulldozed shacks belonging to more than 200 squatter families at Moffat Park, south of Johannesburg.

Squatters scurried to save their belongings and one man set fire to his shack before it could be bulldozed.

Sapa reports a confrontation between squatters and contract workers attempting to remove building material almost developed, but a heavy police contingent intervened, firing teargas and stun grenades.

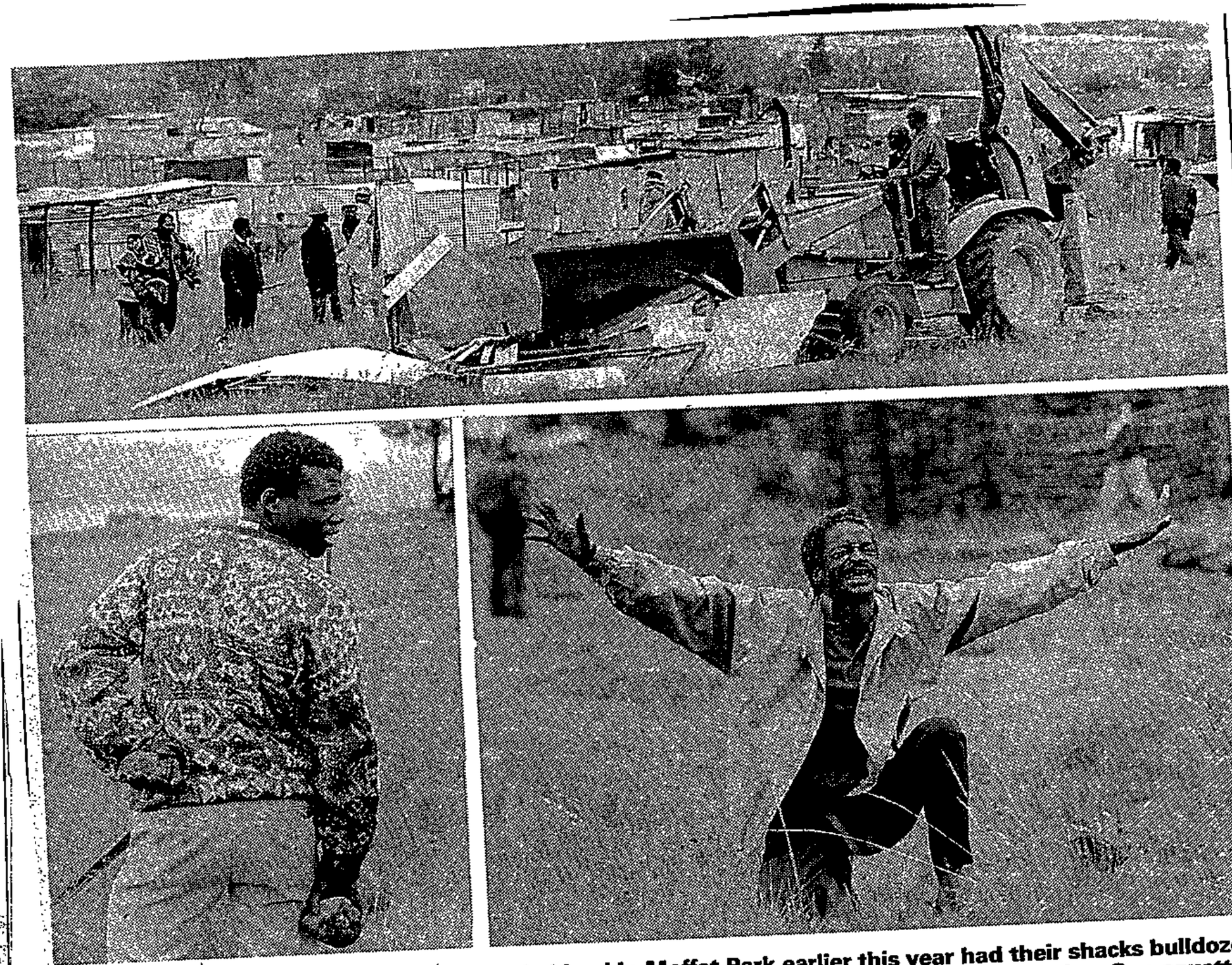
Police said a man was arrested after allegedly attacking a policeman with an assegai. There were no other reports of violence, but it emerged late last night that squatters had begun re-erecting shacks in the park.

Gauteng local government and housing deputy director-general Enos Ngutshane said the local authority had to act on illegal land invasions. Provincial government had no authority to intervene on local authority land. Greater Johannesburg council urbanisation acting director Eric Phukwana said the decision on how and when to evict the squatters was made by the Supreme Court sheriff after a court order was issued.

Moffat Park community leader Joshua Nxele said the squatters would stay in the park as they had nowhere else to go. They "demanded their land back" and accused officials of stealing their property. They were outraged that the council had evicted them without providing alternative land.

Last week a council spokesman said providing alternative land would set a precedent, with squatters expecting to get land every time they invaded.

Picture: Page 3



Hundreds of squatters who illegally occupied land in Moffat Park earlier this year had their shacks bulldozed after failing to comply with a Supreme Court interdict to remove the structures by yesterday. One squatter, below left, armed himself to protect his property, while another, below right, pleaded with officials not to destroy his belongings.

Pictures: NICKY DE BLOIS

STAR 14/12/95

Teargas fired while squatters' sh

Moffat Park demolitions begin in earnest, but rebuilding has already restarted

(310)

By Troye Lund and Patrick Phosa

Squatters living in Moffat Park, Johannesburg, were not fazed by the teargas and stun grenades that police fired at them while workers tore down shacks. They began rebuilding them immediately after workers and police left last night.

"Any structure that is rebuilt will be knocked down again. The court order requires that the area must be completely cleared," said Sgt Pieter Opperman, spokesman for the Booysens sheriff.

He said the 700 shacks that were demolished yesterday were "a fraction" of those to be flattened over the next few days.

The demolition follows an eviction order issued by the Rand Supreme Court after the squatter community's appeal was rejected with costs on December 7.

Internal Stability Unit police used grenades and teargas when squatters tried to prevent workers from dismantling their homes.

SAPS spokesman Capt Deon Peens said squatters had armed themselves with axes, sticks and pieces of wood, but that there was no violence between 3.30pm and 6pm. Police confirmed that a 28-year-old man was arrested after he allegedly attacked a policeman with an assegai.

Workers will resume the demolition task today.

Squatter leader Joshua Nxele said squatters had never agreed to leave the park voluntarily. He said that as they had nowhere to go, they had no choice but to sleep in the area last night.

Community leader Richard Zakhela said removing the squatters and leaving them in the cold with no alternative accommodation would lead to an increase in crime.

Contract workers loaded building materials into trucks surrounded by a strong police contingent while squatters sang and shouted insults.

Johannesburg south's sheriff's office confirmed that building materials were being stored and residents could reclaim them from 100 Sheffield Street, Turffontein.

Southern Municipal Substructure executive committee chairman Prema Naidoo said the council was doing everything possible to prevent illegal land invasions and did not want to set a precedence by supplying squatters with alternative land.

He was disappointed that the



Demolished ... a Moffat Park squatter gazes at what was once his home and is now a ruin, with s

acks flattened

Star 19/12/95

DEBBIE YAZBEK



diers and policemen in the background.

clearing operation had ended up in conflict and hoped the rest of the process would be peaceful.

But a nearby Risana suburb resident said he was "excited about the long overdue removal of the squatters. It is a relief to see the shacks being demolished. Moffat Park used to be very beautiful until they invaded the land. And crime has escalated ever since. I have no pity for them at all."

2 900 Moffat Park squatters left in the cold

(310)

Sowetan 19/12/95

By Russel Molefe

GREATER Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council officials, backed by a large contingent of heavily armed policemen and soldiers, razed Moffat Park squatter settlement in Johannesburg's south yesterday, leaving more than 2 000 people out in the open.

The 2 987 people, who were staying in 808 shacks, illegally invaded the open space early this year igniting resentment among white residents in the surrounding southern suburbs.

The residents forced the TMC to apply for an eviction order in the Rand Supreme Court which was granted in May.

However, the squatters' representatives appealed against the eviction order but it was dismissed with costs on December 7.

The squatters, some of whom were hurling abuse, watched helplessly as the TMC officials, assisted by some residents, demolished their shacks yesterday.

A meeting held on Friday between the squatters' representatives and the Southern Metropolitan Sub-Structure, which was also attended by minister in charge of the RDP Mr Jay Naidoo, but failed to avert the eviction.

The evicted squatters, most of whom are from Transkei, Pietersburg, Lesotho and some from previously demolished shacks around Johannesburg, have not been provided with alternative accommodation.

Deputy chairman of the TMC executive committee Mr Kenny Fihla earlier said the squatters would not be provided with alternative accommodation because "it would be like rewarding them for illegally invading the land".

Fihla said the invaded land was a public park and the squatters may continue staying there as long as they do not erect illegal structures.

The squatters yesterday said they had no alternative but to sleep in the open. Most of them claimed they had been living there in the open for many years before erecting shacks early this year.

Mr Ernest Mgwevu (61) claimed he has been staying on the land with his wife and children since 1939.



After 56 years of living in Moffat Park, south of Johannesburg, Ernest Mngwevu, 73, his wife Elsie and daughter Martha were one of the 200 families whose shacks were bulldozed this week following an influx of squatters in the area earlier this year.

Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

Homeless people defy court order

BD 20/12/95

Mduduzika Harvey

310

POLICE had to fire rubber bullets and stun grenades at a group of 150 disgruntled squatters at Moffat Park, south of Johannesburg, after squatters threw stones and sticks at police and Rand Supreme Court officials yesterday.

Gauteng police spokesman Andy Pieke said a man had been arrested and charged with interfering with an order of the court.

No injuries were reported, and by yesterday afternoon the area was reported to be quiet.

The demolition of 500 illegal shacks continued yesterday, with Rand Supreme court officials saying the eviction process would hopefully be completed in a week.

A sheriff's office official said contract workers had continued demolishing the structures and were trying to complete the process as soon as possible.

But she expected the eviction to take some time because of the rain, which made it difficult for vehicles to move in the area, and also the availability of vehicles to transport the squatters' belongings to storage facilities.

Day two of the evictions, which followed the failure of squatters to obey a court order to leave the park voluntarily by Monday, continued under the watchful eye of a heavy police presence.

Police said a man was arrested after allegedly attacking a policeman with an assegai. This followed attempts by squatters armed with pieces of wood, metal and axes to prevent contract workers on Monday from effecting the demolition of about 300 shacks.

The ANC, which has been under pressure from the squatters because of evictions, said there were a lot of expectations for government to deliver on its promise to provide housing.

ANC provincial secretary Paul Mashatile said government was dealing with numerous demands for housing, but these demands could not be achieved overnight. More effort would be put into addressing the issue next year.

Sapa reports that squatters accused the ANC of "selling out" poor people after it had promised them housing, and the Johannesburg council of failure to provide them with alternative land.

Gauteng local government and housing spokesman Thabang Mamonyane called on squatters not to invade land which was earmarked for development as it would hinder plans to develop the land for housing.

Comment: Page 6

Plan to hire Cuban doctors goes ahead

Kathryn Strachan

BD 20/12/95

SA NEEDED 800 doctors in the public service immediately and a further 1 200 over the next two years, health deputy director-general Ayanda Ntsaluba said as his department was making plans to bring over the first wave of Cuban doctors.

Ntsaluba declined to reveal how many Cuban doctors would be coming to SA in early February, but other sources said about 100 would be recruited initially.

The interim SA Medical and Dental Council will be in Cuba selecting doctors in the next few weeks.

Following a provincial assessment it was found that there were 800 vacant posts, almost all of which were in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Northern Province.

A further 1 200 doctors' posts had been frozen, mostly by previous homeland administrations which did not believe they could afford so many posts.

Once the available 800 posts had been filled, the department would assess the workload in the various provinces and free the frozen posts.

Ntsaluba said that while these frozen posts were absolutely necessary for health services, they would be unfrozen only a year or two down the line. The department was first looking at building new clinics and creating the infrastructure before taking on new staff to service them.

Responding to doctors who feared an influx of Cuban doctors would make them expendable and take away their negotiating power, Ntsaluba said: "SA doctors will always be our first prize."

But as the department was not able to fill posts, particularly in rural areas, interim plans had to be made. "We are very conscious this can only be a short-term solution, a stop gap measure."

Doctors who work a 56-hour week for R3 500 a month after tax, and specialists who earn R5 500, fear that government will ignore their demands for higher salaries because there will be Cuban doctors to fill their places.

"We need a strong, vibrant public sector, and we cannot do this without taking care of those few people who have stayed in the public sector."

The Medical Association of SA complained about the timing of the Cuban plan, saying it should have been introduced after incentives had been offered to rural doctors, but Ntsaluba said the gruelling working hours were forcing many doctors to leave the public sector and they could not afford to delay the plan. "Every day doctors are leaving, and every day counts."

Transnet to evict Thokoza squatters

Deborah Fine

BD 20/12/95

310

TRANSNET has secured a Rand Supreme Court order for the eviction of squatters illegally occupying land in Thokoza, near Germiston, which has been earmarked for the development of low-cost housing early next year.

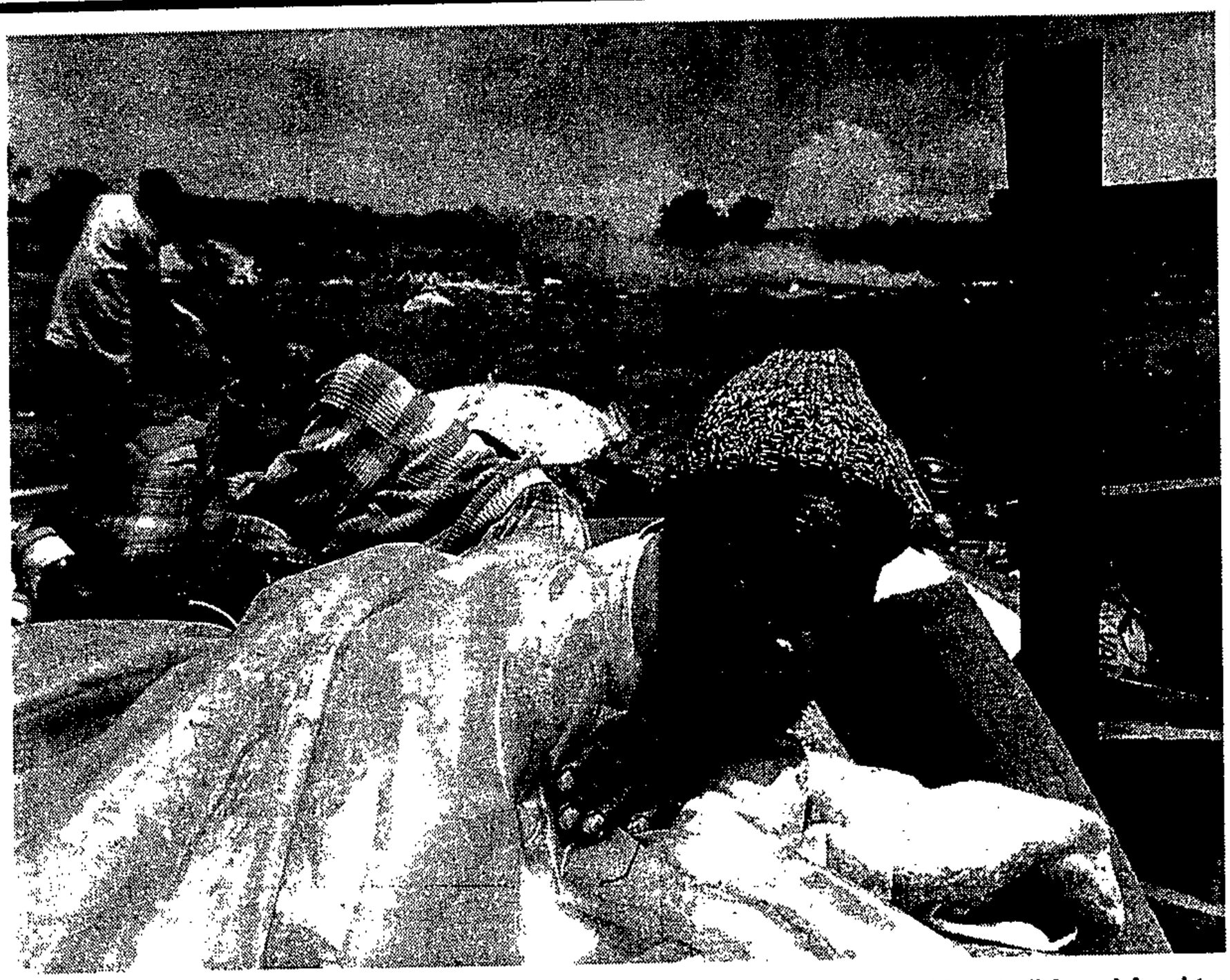
The order — granted yesterday by Judge JC Labuschagne — authorises the Alberton/Germiston sheriff to demolish about 25 shacks and evict squatters unlawfully occupying the Transnet property situated on the farm Palmietfontein, adjacent to the Mpilisweni hostels.

Transnet projects manager Willem Janson said in papers before court that the squatters had been "extremely hostile" towards Transnet employees. He had also been informed by Thokoza police that they were reluctant to evict squatters without a court order because it was "dangerous" for SAPS members to enter the settlement.

Janson said the occupied land had been set aside as part of the Katorus presidential project for the development of a township comprised of 562 residential stands, two schools, three business sites and a community centre.

A project linked capital subsidy had already been allocated to the project by the provincial housing board to assist Thokoza, Katlehong and Vosloorus residents to obtain affordable housing.

Transnet would begin developing the land in January.



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Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS

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BD 20/12/95 (310)

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BD 20/12/95 (68)

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Transnet would begin developing the land in January.

Court gives go-ahead for squatters' eviction from Transnet land near Tokoza

Star 20/12/95 (310)

By Susan Miller

The Rand Supreme Court has authorised the Alberton-Germiston sheriff to evict squatters and demolish their 25 shacks on a portion of land owned by Transnet in Tokoza near Germiston.

The order was granted by Justice J C Labuschagne yesterday after an action was brought by Transnet Ltd against "certain illegal squatters".

Papers filed by Willem Janson, Transnet projects manager, said the squatters could not be named as they had refused to give their names to him when he visited the property on December 6.

He said the illegal residents had been hostile towards anyone visiting the property and the Tokoza police had told him it was dangerous to enter the settlement.

Janson said the property had been earmarked by Transnet for the development of a township consisting of 562 residential stands, two schools, three trading sites and a community centre.

Janson said the project would provide housing for the homeless in Tokoza, Katlehong and Vosloorus and was part of the Katorus Presidential Project which aimed to provide affordable housing for people illegally occupying housing in those townships.

The matter was urgent because the commercial development of the property was due to start in the new year.

Janson said Transnet was also under pressure from the Alberton Transitional Local Council and the police to address the squatter problem as the situation was "getting out of control".

Outraged squatters burn their shacks

Sowetan 20/12/95 (310)

Squatters say the ANC has forsaken them after helping it win elections

THE REMOVAL of squatters from Moffat Park in Johannesburg entered its second day yesterday as angry squatters took to burning their building materials as a protest against their eviction.

Contract workers said yesterday the park should be cleared by the end of the week.

The removal of the 500-odd shacks resumed amid a heavy police presence after squatters armed with pieces of wood, axes and metal tried to prevent workers from removing their building materials on Monday.

A police spokesman said a man was arrested on Monday after he allegedly attacked a policeman with an assegai. Most of the squatters whose houses had been removed on Monday had spent the night in the open.

Some had left for unknown destinations while a few had set alight their shacks before they could be flattened by bulldozers.

A contract worker said several squatters on the far side of the park had started to break down their shacks and cart off the building materials. About 300 shacks were demolished on Monday, he added.

A former residents' committee member and African National Congress member accused the ANC of "selling out the poor people" after it promised them houses.

He said the residents' committee had unsuccessfully appealed to ANC members in the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council to stop the forced removal or supply the squatters with alternative land.

"The TMC, the Gauteng government and premier Tokyo Sexwale now have a party for the middle class. They have sold out the poor people like Judas Iscariot," he said. He claimed most Moffat Park squatters are ANC members or supporters.

Squatters were at a loss as to where they could move to and most had not been informed that the building materials had been taken for storage and could be reclaimed from the sheriff's office at 100 Sheffield Street, Turffontein.

"It seems impossible for us to stay here because they have removed all our building material," the former committee member said.

Fellow squatter Ms Christina Moloi accused Sexwale of "dumping us after helping them win the elections".

"I thought Mandela's government would look after us, but they have all turned their backs on us," she said. – *Sapa.*



Down to the ground ... A large contingent of policemen, traffic officers and soldiers demolish the shacks in Moffat Park squatter settlement on Monday.
PIC: LEN KUMALO

'Moffat Park settlers get a 'raw deal'

(310) Sowetan 20/12/95

By Russel Molefe

THE story of the Moffat Park squatter settlement in the southern suburbs of Johannesburg reads like a land claim lodged with the authorities in an unusual manner.

The more than 2 000 people who were living in 808 shacks do not believe that they illegally invaded public land and had to leave or face the wrath of the law on Monday.

Grief-stricken people watched helplessly as Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) officials, together with a large contingent of heavily armed policemen, traffic officers and soldiers, descended on their settlement and demolished their shacks.

When one listens to the tales of the many people staying there, the impression they give is that their fight was "for the return of the land to its rightful owners".

Take for instance Mr Ernest Mgwevu, who intermittently stopped to wipe away tears while he told his story.

Mgwevu (61) arrived in the area from Transkei in 1939 with his wife and three children before the surrounding white suburbs were established.

"I used to live in the open with my family. Sometimes I would dig a pit, cover it with a tent and sleep with my wife and children," the sobbing Mgwevu said.

"Other people later joined me and we used to change sleeping spots because racist whites attacked us for nothing. One man was killed; his body was doused with petrol and burnt".

In 1940 he left his family in the area and joined the South African army during the Second World War. He was discharged "with nothing" in 1945 and returned to his family.

"From that time, I survived on 'piece jobs' while living here. These white suburbs were established while I was staying here – and there was already a handful of people here.

"I no longer have any surviving member of my family in Transkei and I don't understand when they say we are to be evicted from this area. Do they want to evict us because the whites around here are saying so?"

The squatters have been on the receiving end of many attacks from nearby residents. Four people, including a woman who is now a quadruplegic, were allegedly run over deliberately by a car and were seriously injured in September.

That same month another man, known in the area only as "Mzala", was allegedly burnt to death in his shack after an attack.

The squatter area is situated near a building with Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging swastikas. Security guards on horses used to patrol the area. But they might stop now that the squatters have been removed.

The TMC obtained an eviction order from the Rand Supreme Court and it was implemented on Monday. Executive committee deputy chairman Mr Kenny Fihla said the order was motivated by a determination to eradicate land invasion.

He was adamant that the squatters would not be provided with alternative accommodation as this could amount to "rewarding them for illegally occupying land". Fihla added that land identified for housing development would not be made known out of fear that it would be invaded by the homeless.

Acting director for urbanisation Mr Tshepiso Mashinini said an initiative has been taken to upgrade those informal settlements which were established before the June moratorium on land invasions.

The informal settlement where the TMC was taking action are those which were established after the declaration of the moratorium, Mashinini said.

He estimated that there were more than 70 000 families in Greater Johannesburg living in free-standing informal settlements. Squatter representative Mr Patrick Tyane was not happy with the explanations. "They should give us alternative accommodation. They say we should wait for houses which have been promised, but where are they?" he asked angrily.

Judge denies application for eviction of homeless

BD 21/12/95 (310)

Deborah Fine

A FIXED policy to simply evict all illegal squatters without first examining the merits of each land invasion would no doubt lead to social, ethnic and economic warfare, Rand Supreme Court judge J P Roux said yesterday.

Dismissing an application by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council for the eviction of about 120 squatters illegally occupying vacant land adjacent to Main Reef Road in Langlaagte, Roux said mass eviction orders could mean "potential disaster" for the Johannesburg metropolis.

He found the council had been "quite wrong" in adopting a blanket resolution in April this year to take legal steps against all illegal land invaders without first considering the merits of each case and debating alternative options.

Taking a policy decision simply to evict squatters without attempting to find alternative accommodation for them would not solve the serious squatting problem facing the greater Johannesburg area.

The eviction of squatters would not result in their being "spirited away" and they would probably just move on to adjoining ground, leading to conflict and public health hazards.

As a local authority and public body, the council had a duty to all people in Johannesburg, including squatters. Moreover, squatters were also entitled to administrative justice in terms of section 24 of the constitution.

Evicting the Main Reef Road squatters without first considering the individual merits of their predicament or providing alternatives would not serve the ends of justice, Roux said.

The council was ordered to pay the costs of the application.

In a separate matter, the Edenvale/Modderfontein Town Council was granted court permission to use a loudspeaker to announce to about 5 000 squatters illegally occupying land in Thembisa of the council's intention to seek an order for their eviction.

The use of the loudspeaker — and the delivery of the intention in English, Zulu and Sotho — will replace notification through personal service.

Zululand University on verge of collapse, claims Buthelezi

BD 21/12/95

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — Zululand University was threatened with financial paralysis and even a shutdown due to a financial backlog of more than R32m, Home Affairs Minister and university chancellor Mangosuthu Buthelezi warned this week.

However, a university source said the R32m Buthelezi mentioned was incorrect. Student fees totalling R53,3m were owed to the university. The Students' Representative Council wanted the arrears written off, but vice-chancellor Prof Charles Dlamini had refused, the source said. Buthelezi held a meeting with them earlier this week in a bid to find a solution.

In a memorandum circulated at the meeting, Buthelezi said he had appealed to Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu to make bank overdraft facilities available to the university. It was a fact that traditionally black universities acted as "bankers" for students because they could not obtain bank loans without security.

Buthelezi said all universities faced financial problems. One university — whose problems were discussed at Cabinet level — had an overdraft of more than R90m.

"It is not an overstatement to say that in general our university and technikon systems seem to be on the verge of collapse," Buthelezi said.

One of the problems was low government subsidies to tertiary institutions. Central government was, however, developing a plan to help needy students pay their fees. Bengu had reportedly unveiled a R300m aid scheme to assist 7 000 students during the 1996/1997 financial year.

Buthelezi said Zululand University would have to seek innovative ways to raise the funds, and he was willing to assist. The university's alumni should be the primary source of wiping off the deficit. The alumni, once "ensconced" in their jobs, "forget everything about repaying the loans that enabled them to be there", Buthelezi said.

However, he was aware of the fact that many students came from poverty-stricken families. Such students would have to be "carried" by those students who were in a better financial position.

The Star ... Thursday December 21 1995

Council cannot evict squatters, court rules

Judge says social consequences of an eviction must be appreciated

(310) Star 21/12/95

By Susan Miller

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council was yesterday told by the Rand Supreme Court it cannot base squatter evictions on a "hard and fast rule" but must consider each case on its merits.

Mr Justice J P Roux set aside the council's decision to institute action against the Main Reef Road squatters, living on the corner of Church and Main Reef roads. He dismissed an application for an eviction order.

He also said it was "obligatory" for a local authority such as the TMC to make inquiries into each case and debate alternatives for squatters before attempting to get an eviction order from the court.

The judge accepted a counter-application by advocate George Bizos, representing the squatters on behalf of the Legal Resources Centre, to review the decision to base the eviction of squatters from land on a resolution passed in April this year.

The resolution included a general policy to take action to evict squatters from council-owned land.

He said this was not a case where squatters were occupying land owned by a private individual. These squatters were occupying land owned by a local authority which governed the most populous area in the country, he said.

Judge Roux said the TMC had a duty to all people living in the metropolis, including squatters and those affected by the homeless masses.

"Under section 24 of the constitution, every person is entitled to equal treatment," he said.

Judge Roux said that in 99% of cases, squatters had no defence in law but those seeking to make a general policy regarding squatter evictions should appreciate the "potentially disastrous" consequences of an eviction order.

"Evicting squatters will not result in their being spirited away. They will squat on adjoining ground or elsewhere in the metropolis, and social, ethnic and economic warfare will no doubt follow," he said.

"The fact that squatters have no legal right to occupy the land is not a determining factor."

▶ 'Halt evictions, end squatter flood' ... Page 5

Judge denies application for eviction of homeless

(310) BD 21/12/95

Deborah Fine

A FIXED policy to simply evict all illegal squatters without first examining the merits of each land invasion would no doubt lead to social, ethnic and economic warfare, Rand Supreme Court judge J P Roux said yesterday.

Dismissing an application by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council for the eviction of about 120 squatters illegally occupying vacant land adjacent to Main Reef Road in Langlaagte, Roux said mass eviction orders could mean "potential disaster" for the Johannesburg metropolis.

He found the council had been "quite wrong" in adopting a blanket resolution in April this year to take legal steps against all illegal land invaders without first considering the merits of each case and debating alternative options.

Taking a policy decision simply to evict squatters without attempting to find alternative accommodation for them would not solve the serious squatting problem facing the greater Johannesburg area.

The eviction of squatters would not result in their being "spirited away" and they would probably just move on to adjoining ground, leading to conflict and public health hazards.

As a local authority and public body, the council had a duty to all people in Johannesburg, including squatters. Moreover, squatters were also entitled to administrative justice in terms of section 24 of the constitution.

Evicting the Main Reef Road squatters without first considering the individual merits of their predicament or providing alternatives would not serve the ends of justice, Roux said.

The council was ordered to pay the costs of the application.

In a separate matter, the Edenvale/Modderfontein Town Council was granted court permission to use a loudspeaker to announce to about 5 000 squatters illegally occupying land in Thembisa of the council's intention to seek an order for their eviction.

The use of the loudspeaker — and the delivery of the intention in English, Zulu and Sotho — will replace notification through personal service.

Zululand University on verge of collapse, claims Buthelezi

BD 21/12/95

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — Zululand University was threatened with financial paralysis and even a shutdown due to a financial backlog of more than R32m, Home Affairs Minister and university chancellor Mangosuthu Buthelezi warned this week.

However, a university source said the R32m Buthelezi mentioned was incorrect. Student fees totalling R53,3m were owed to the university. The Students' Representative Council wanted the arrears written off, but vice-chancellor Prof Charles Dlamini had refused, the source said. Buthelezi held a meeting with them earlier this week in a bid to find a solution.

In a memorandum circulated at the meeting, Buthelezi said he had appealed to Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu to make bank overdraft facilities available to the university. It was a fact that traditionally black universities acted as "bankers" for students because they could not obtain bank loans without security.

Buthelezi said all universities faced financial problems. One university — whose problems were discussed at Cabinet level — had an overdraft of more than R90m.

"It is not an overstatement to say that in general our university and technikon systems seem to be on the verge of collapse," Buthelezi said.

One of the problems was low government subsidies to tertiary institutions. Central government was, however, developing a plan to help needy students pay their fees. Bengu had reportedly unveiled a R300m aid scheme to assist 7 000 students during the 1996/1997 financial year.

Buthelezi said Zululand University would have to seek innovative ways to raise the funds, and he was willing to assist. The university's alumni should be the primary source of wiping off the deficit. The alumni, once "ensconced" in their jobs, "forget everything about repaying the loans that enabled them to be there", Buthelezi said.

However, he was aware of the fact that many students came from poverty-stricken families. Such students would have to be "carried" by those students who were in a better financial position.

Judge blows whistle on squatters' eviction

(310)

Sowetan 21/12/95

A RAND Supreme Court judge yesterday told the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Transitional Council it cannot base squatter evictions on a "hard and fast rule" but must consider each case on its merits.

Mr Justice JP Roux said this yesterday when he set aside the GJMTC's decision to institute action against the Main Reef Road squatters, living on the corner of Church and Main Reef roads in Mayfair, and dismissed their application for an eviction order.

He also said it was "obligatory" for a local authority such as the GJMTC to make enquiries into each case and debate alternatives for the squatters before attempting to get an eviction order from the court.

Judge Roux accepted a counter application by Mr George Bizos, SC, representing the squatters on behalf of the Legal Resources Centre, to review the GJMTC's decision to base eviction of squatters from their land on a resolution passed in April.

The resolution included a general policy to take action to evict squatters from GJMTC-owned land.

The judge said in the interests of justice, the counter-claim should be allowed.

He said this was not a case where squatters were occupying land owned by a private individual but where the land was owned by a local authority which governed the most populous area in the country.

The GJMTC had a duty to all people living in the metropolis, including squatters and those affected by the homeless masses.

"Under Section 24 of the Constitution every person is entitled to equal treatment," the judge said. He said in 99 percent of cases squatters had no defence in law but that those seeking to make a general policy regarding their evictions should appreciate the "potentially disastrous" consequences of an eviction order.

"Evicting squatters will not result in their being spirited away; they will squat on adjoining ground or elsewhere in the metropolis and socio, ethnic and economic warfare will no doubt follow," Judge Roux said. – *Sowetan Correspondent.*

Taxi boss fears for his life



Sad reflection ... new arrivals, reflected in a dressing table mirror, carry materials to add to their houses in Orange Farm Extension 10 yesterday.

Orange Farm squatters demand ownership of serviced sites

(4) (310) Star 22/12/95

By Ernest Mabuza

Angry and confused squatters in Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg, gathered at their local authority offices yesterday demanding to be given ownership of serviced sites in the township's new extensions.

This follows the invasion of serviced sites this week by squatters who were living in Extension 10. There are 3 200 serviced sites in Extensions 9 and 10.

The squatters say Ward 2 councillor Chris Rabaji promised them sites provided they followed the proper procedures.

The council agreed at a summit held after a mass meeting last month to cut the R350 payment for the site allocation set by the Southern Metropolitan Substructure to R64. Task and monitoring teams were formed to monitor the allocation of sites.

Local ANC chairman Mphethe Mahlatsi said the meeting had agreed that equal numbers of people from squatter camps and backyard tenants would be screened for the allocation of sites.

"Zone 10 squatter leaders then took R2 from squatters and told them to invade land," Mahlatsi said.

Rabaji blamed the confusion on "certain people" who were trying to sabotage the land allocation process by exploiting helpless squatters.

"There is an effort to undermine the ANC. People are abusing the people's trust in the ANC to further their own political objectives," he said.

Elijah Motaung, a tenant in the township, said he was angry that the councillors were doing nothing to stop squatters from invading the sites.

"People from the administration have been dodging us when asked about site allocations. I have been on the waiting list for four years and I don't think I will ever get the site," Motaung said.

Meanwhile, squatters continued to erect shacks on serviced sites in Zone 10. Johannes Selepe, who was busy building his shack, said: "I waited for a long time to get this opportunity and could not wait to join my neighbours who were moving to Extension 10."

Land invasions are counter-productive and won't be tolerated, says council

BY CHERYL HUNTER

The Johannesburg council will continue to try to stamp out land invasions because they are counter-productive and are being exploited by the "squatter mafia", executive committee deputy chairman Kenny Fihla said yesterday.

He was speaking at a media conference following Wednesday's Supreme Court decision that the council could not base land evictions "on a hard-and-fast rule", but must consider each case on its merits.

The case coincided with the eviction of several hundred squatters from Moffat Park, southern Johannesburg, over the past two days.

Gauteng MEC for Development, Planning, Environment and Works Sicelo Shiceka said the squatters were to be given temporary accommodation at the council-owned Hambro House in Braamfontein until land could be found for them.

Fihla took a firm stance in the face of difficult questions. "The government is against land invasions and while we will examine each occurrence and its circumstances in light of the recent court decision, we have a government policy which states that land invasions are counter-productive.

"We have identified three categories of people – those who are genuinely destitute; those who have lived in the area for a long time; and those who want to gain and sell land, the squatter mafia," he said.

An unrelenting Fihla said there were many opportunists among the squatters who chose to squat in order to jump the queue of the land development process.

"Many of these people have other sites where they can live, but they accumulate the sites, sell them and exploit the poor."

Shiceka also took a dim view of squatters: "Land invasions are not acceptable. We have constantly condemned it and are setting an example with Moffat Park.

"Squatting undermines land values and revenue collection by local authorities. The RDP cannot be implemented under these circumstances because we will not be generating revenue from these areas," he said.

Fihla said the Moffat Park squatters had to be moved now because "when the law is being transgressed you do not wait to arrest a criminal. If you delay, you create problems and achieve the exact opposite of the desired result."

RIAN HORN

(310) RTAW 22/12/95

Sowetan 22/12/98

Council shelters destitute squatters

(310)

By Russel Molefe

THE Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council has taken a sudden turn and offered squatters at Moffat Park, whose shacks have been demolished, alternative accommodation at an undisclosed building in the city.

This is contrary to an earlier declaration by the TMC that the squatters would not be provided with alternative accommodation because "it would be like rewarding them for illegally invading the land".

The granting of the accommodation apparently followed intervention by Gauteng MEC for development, planning, environment and works Mr Sicelo Shiceka, who said he had to cancel his annual leave to help solve the problem.

Shiceka said yesterday the accommodation offered to the squatters was temporary because it is situated in an area which will not be developed. He did not identify the building for fear it might attract other homeless people.

Concerns by squatters about their dogs, chickens and goats would be addressed he said.

Justifying the demolitions of shacks during the recent rains, Shiceka said white residents in surrounding areas would have taken the TMC to court for not implementing the eviction order obtained from the Rand Supreme Court in May.

It was also found that the squatters not only included genuinely destitute people who wanted shelter but also opportunists who squatted because they wanted to jump the queue of the land development process.

The "land mafias" who sold land to the destitute had also been exposed. These people were being investigated, he said.

A spokeswoman for the squatters, Mrs Albina Mathakgane, appealed to the authorities not to place them in alternative accommodation "forever".

Land-invaders and homeless to be investigated

(30) NRG 23/12/95

JOHANNESBURG. — A task group has been formed to investigate land invasion and the acceleration of housing provision to the homeless in Gauteng.

Sicelo Shiceka, Gauteng MEC for development, planning, environment and works, made the announcement at a media conference in Johannesburg following controversy surrounding the eviction of hundreds of squatters at Moffat Park south of the city.

Squatters have been evicted since Monday in terms of a Supreme Court order.

The Gauteng government has identified sites across the province where the homeless could settle, Mr Shiceka said.

Meanwhile, about 120 Moffat Park squatters were relocated to a council building in the city, said Kenny Fihla, deputy chairman of the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council's executive committee

Facilities at the building were better than at the park where there was no running water or sanitation.

The task group would constist of representatives of the Greater Johannesburg TMC, Southern Metropolitan Substructure and the provincial department of development, planning, environment and works, Mr Shiceka said in a joint statement with the TMC.

It would later include all the province's metropolitan substructures.

He appealed to the homeless to restrain themselves and give the government more time to address the housing problem.

The land invasion problem in Gauteng was "unacceptable," Mr Shiceka said. It impacted negatively on investor confidence and could jeopardise the four percent economic growth rate in the province. Land invasion also undermined property values.

"While the government understands the problems causing it (land invasion) the people must follow the right channels. Even in African culture you speak to the chief, you don't take land by force," he said.

SMS executive committee chairman Prema Naidoo said there was an agreement between former Moffat Park invaders and the council that the park would not be invaded again.

Land invasion was undermining the chances of those patient people who "wait in the queue". Alternative accomodation for land invaders would be sought in places not earmarked for immediate development, Mr Shiceka said.

"We cannot disadvantage the people who wait in the queue. People must not think they will get land by invading land," he said.

Mr Shiceka said some squatters were "land mafiosi" who sold land to others. These people would be prosecuted.

On Tuesday squatters opted to burn their own dwellings, most said because they did not know what would happen to the building materials.

(1) TBWA (CAPE) 512031

Task group to look into solution to squatter crisis

Star 23/12/95 (310)

A task group has been formed to look into land invasion and the acceleration of housing provision to the homeless in Gauteng, the provincial government said on Thursday.

Gauteng MEC for Development, Planning, Environment and Works Sicelo Shiceka made the announcement at a media conference in Johannesburg following controversy surrounding the eviction of hundreds of squatters at Moffat Park, south of the city centre.

Squatters have been evicted since Monday in terms of a Supreme Court order.

The Gauteng government identified 30 000 sites across the province where the homeless could settle, Shiceka said.

Meanwhile, about 120 Moffat Park squatters were relocated to a council building in the city, deputy chairman of the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council's executive committee Kenny Fihla said. Facilities at the building were better than at the park, where there was no running water or sanitation. The building would not be named, for fear that other people would "swamp" it.

The task group would consist of representatives of the Greater Johannesburg TMC, the Southern Metropolitan Substructure and the provincial department of development, planning, environment and works, Shiceka said in a joint statement with the TMC.

It would later include all the province's metropolitan substructures.

Shiceka appealed to the homeless to restrain themselves and give the government more time to address the housing problem.

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Shiceka added that some squatters were "land mafiosi" who sold land to others. These people would be prosecuted.

On Tuesday, many squatters opted to burn their dwellings because they did not know what would happen to the building materials. There had been problems in informing the squatters that their goods would be held at the Turffontein sheriff's office and handed to the owners at a later date, said Naidoo.

Moffat Park residents' spokeswoman Albina Mathakgane appealed to the government to give the squatters until yesterday to collect their belongings and move.

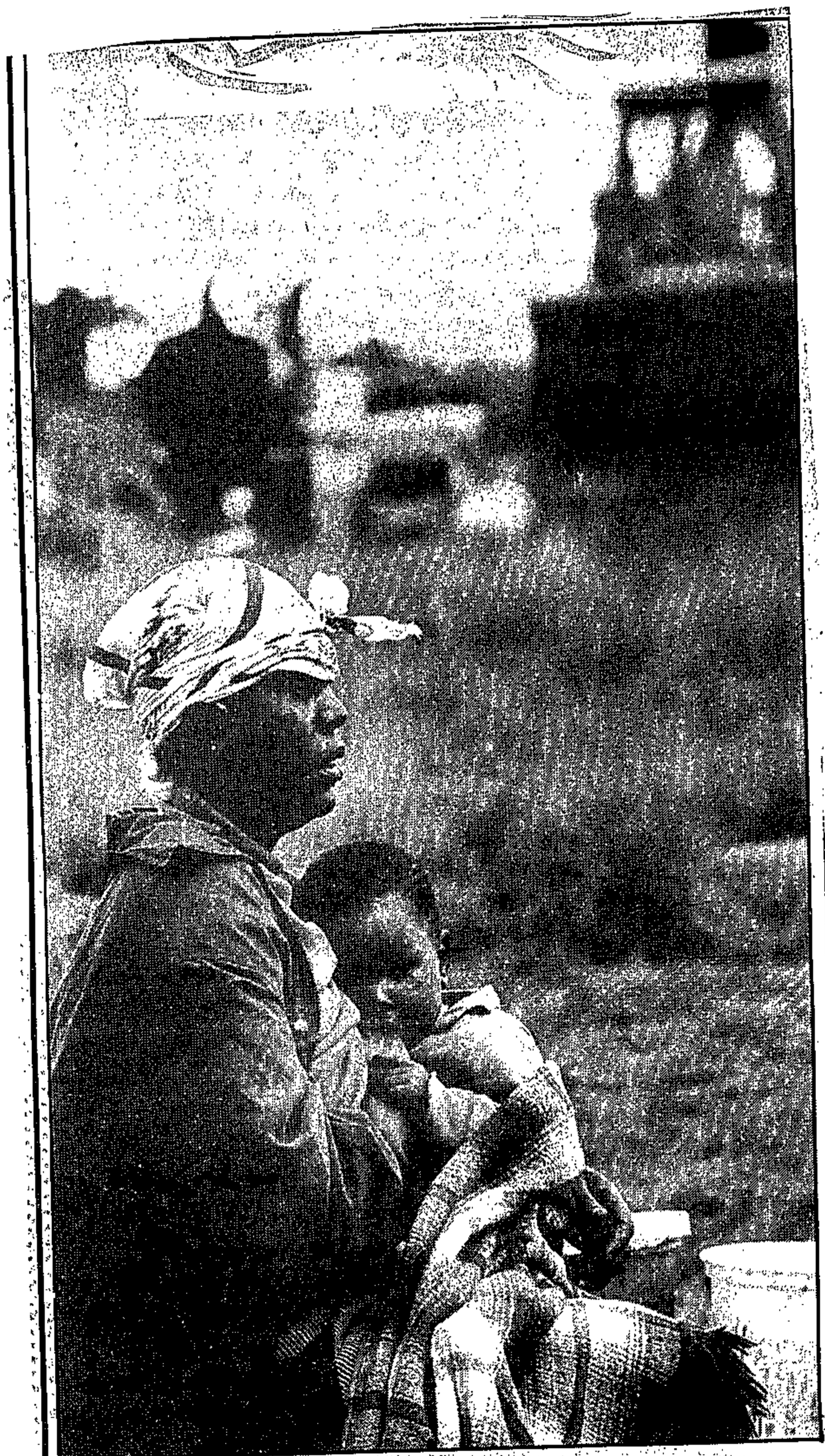
She also said she hoped the squatters would not stay long in the city building because "we will be many and there won't be any privacy".

Naidoo said arrangements were made to house families together after squatters complained they were split up according to gender.

The joint statement said squatters' shacks had been dismantled to prevent serious confrontation between residents and squatters. – Sapa

of 24/12/96

(510)



WHY? . . . Mama, why are they doing this to us? Shivering on her mother's lap, this child seemed to be asking as she watched her parents' shack going down in ruins. [Pics: TLADI KHUELE]

Lost battles on all fronts

CP 24/12/96

(310)

By BENISON MAKELE

GOVERNMENT'S iron-fisted determination to discourage land invasions left Moffat Park squatters shivering in the rain after their shacks were annihilated this week.

In addition to the destruction of their shacks, the squatters, most of whom are unemployed, lost about R32 000 in legal fees after the Rand Supreme Court ruled in favour of the council and ordered them out.

The council applied for an eviction order in May and the Court ruled that the squatters be given time to evacuate what council authorities call a "park".

The squatter community appealed against the court's decision but their appeal was dismissed with costs last week and they had to leave the area by December 18.

But they became adamant that they were not leaving the place that they had come to know as home and threatened to resist any move to force them out.

The squatters' eviction followed year-long enmity and running battles between the residents of the nearby suburbs of Moffat Park, Southills and Regents Park and the squatter community.

Residents had often accused the squatters of criminal activities and invading land in which their children played in while the squatters claimed the residents were "racist" simply out to provoke them because they were black.

During a press conference two weeks ago the council had emphasised the fact that they would not seek alternative accommodation for the squatters because that would encourage land invasion.

But, due to humanitarian reasons, the council had to renege on its tough stance and accommodate the squatters in an old derilict building in Braamfontein where they occupy two floors.

This follows ANC veteran Walter Sisulu's visit to the camp on Wednesday.

Sicelo Shicela pleaded with the squatters to accept the alternative accommodation provided by the council on Friday failing which they would be arrested should they be found still occupying the veld.

Squatters say they were given accommodation after the plight of babies and old people left stranded after the demolition of their shacks came to the notice of Walter Sisulu.

They started moving into their new home on Friday while some remained at the camp refusing to get their goods into trucks provided by the council.



DESPAIR . . . Journalists watch in Moffat Park and eager destroyers demolish the shacks of squatters. The squatters said Winnie Mandela would have prevented their shacks being destroyed and accused the men of the camp of being cowards because they did not fight to keep their shacks.

'Season of illwill' for squatters

(310) CP 24/12/95

By BENISON MAKELE

CRIES OF despair drowned in the droning of bulldozers as Moffat Park squatter camp, south-east of Johannesburg, bit the dust on Monday.

The sheriff and his men came to execute a court order to evacuate the squatters in the company of a strong police and army contingent supplemented by private security men.

A middle-aged woman went beserk and ran around the ruins of her shack crying: "My God, my God, where are you in these hard times?".

One of the "white" shack destroyers said: "To hell with her, this is our land," as he continued on his path of destruction.

A man nearby answered, "Where do you think you can find God now? Our Gods are these people," pointing to an army of zealous destroyers busy annihilating their shacks.

For the squatters the season of goodwill had turned out to be their "season of illwill".

'No shelter'

Babies had no "manger" to shelter themselves in against the drizzling cold on Monday morning as their parents' shacks were being destroyed.

South Africa's rainbow flag flew obliviously in the cold breeze in one of the shacks.

The destroyers however would not leave it alone – they cut its life short by felling the pole on which it was hoisted.

The passion with which the destroyers – mostly "white", mixed with a handful of unwilling black municipal workers – undertook their task of destruction left one in no doubt as to the seriousness of their mission.

Ironically, they looked like they also did not have homes of their own.

Willem van der Merwe, the sheriff, said his men were "casual labourers" hired only for the destruction of the Moffat Park squatter camp.

"What have we done to deserve this?", cried a 13 year-old boy at seeing his parents' shack going down in ruins.

"If Winnie Mandela was here, this wouldn't have happened," lamented one squatter.

But the estranged wife of President Mandela was nowhere to be seen.

Cowards

"Men from this camp are cowards. At Jeppe we fought with the destroyers and they didn't demolish our shacks," shouted a woman to ululations from the crowd of squatters.

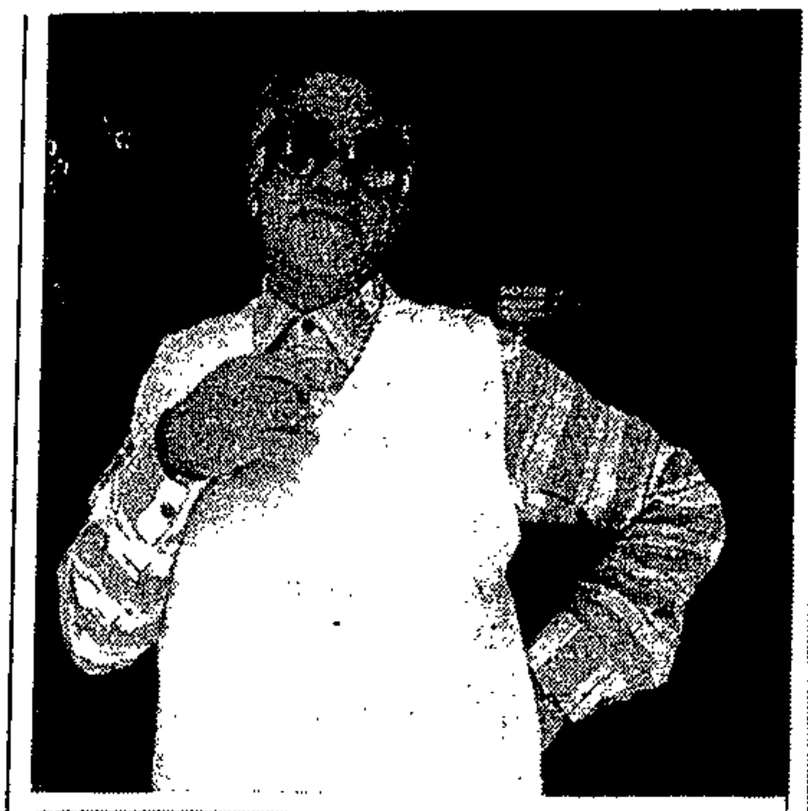
White neighbours watched the unfolding scenario with relish through binoculars atop their high walled fences.

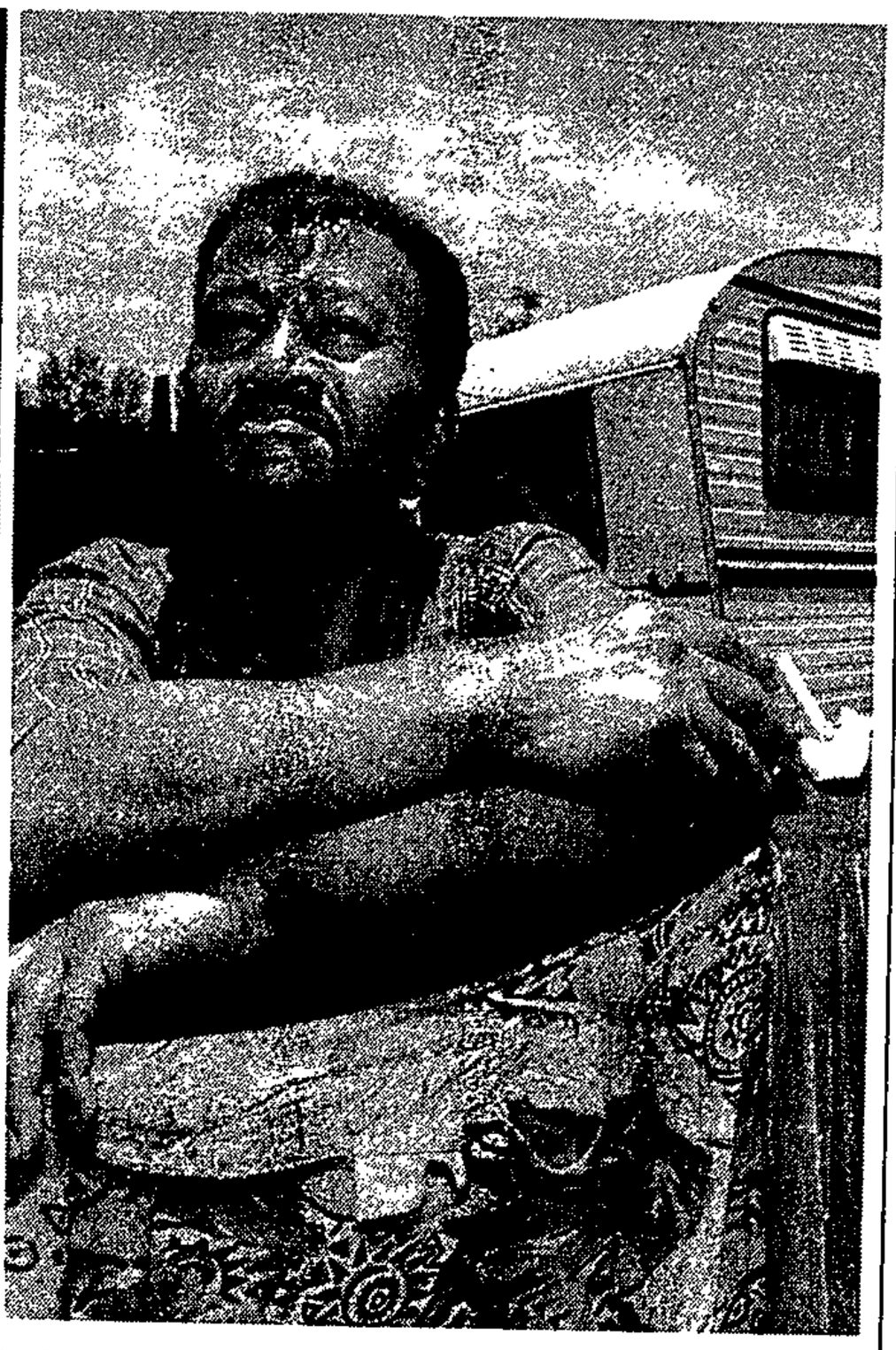
They had nothing to lose but everything to gain in the evacuation of the squatters whom they had constantly accused of crime in the area.

"I want them to go. They are a nuisance in the area and besides that's supposed to be a park free for our children to play in," said one hefty man who would not reveal his identity.

ANC's Walter and Albertina Sisulu came to address the squatters and to offer an accommodation alternative for them in the event of them moving from the squatter camp.

Sicelo Shiceka, Gauteng MEC for urban, rural development and the environment, gave them until Friday evening to evacuate the settlement failing which those found still squatting in the place will be arrested for tresspassing.







Father Jay da Silva, left, of the Portuguese Catholic church in Langlaagte, Johannesburg, watches as a squatter from the adjoining Langlaagte squatter camp collects water from the church building. Joseph Hannie, right, a caravan dweller, was one of the first inhabitants of the squatter camp.

Pictures: NICKY DE BLOIS

Court decision brings cheer to homeless in Langlaagte

Nomavenda Mathiane

PORTUGUESE Catholic mission priest Jay da Silva has lost many of his parishioners, and his water bill has soared because of the squatters who have settled next to his church in Langlaagte, the busy industrial area south of Johannesburg.

But on Wednesday Judge J P Roux dismissed an application by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council to evict Langlaagte squatters, on the grounds that individual merits of their predicament had not been considered and the council had not provided alternative options.

Da Silva, who claims to have been pastor in the area for many years, said there were only three shacks next to his church in June, but by August the entire area was occupied.

Although none of his parishioners had been robbed or attacked by the squatters, Da Silva said attendance in church had dropped because the parishioners feared for their lives.

He had laid a complaint with the council about the high water bills caused by the squatters who got their water supply and toilet facilities from the church.

The people who have erected homes on the corner of Main Reef Road and Church Street come from Mayfair and the surrounding areas' backyards. The judge's ruling that they should not be evicted without alternative accommodation has raised the hopes of the squatters who said they were tired of being exploited by ruthless landlords from the nearby suburb of Mayfair.

Mavis Kula, born in Sophiatown, said she had been living in Mayfair where she paid R350 for sleeping in a dining room which she shared with four other tenants.

Excited about the judge's ruling, Kula said she had nowhere to go and said she hoped government would give them accommodation near Langlaagte which had become their home.

Joseph Hannie, who was the first to move into the area, moved to Newclare township on the West Rand from Florida, but he had moved on because of violence, he said.

Hannie, like most people in the squatter settlement, is unemployed. Although he is a qualified cutter, he says he has been unemployed for years.

People survive on piece jobs. Some clean cars for people working in the nearby industries. The women work as chars in Mayfair.

Langlaagte is probably one of the few squatter camps where the community is mixed.

Although their priority is getting accommodation, for now they want a fence around the camp to keep robbers and thieves out.

"We are being discredited by people who break into firms and run into our camp. We get blamed for things we have not done" Hannie said.

Mbeki

Continued from Page 1

ANC to avoid pointing finge
help find a solution. The
demned the massacre.

Powell said the IFP beli
the "base line" for peace wa
tional mediation. "The
agreement was the cornerst
which our participation in th
was built. If the cornersto
there, the whole edifice is ver

ANC KwaZulu-Natal safe
curity spokesman Bheki Cel
attack was a "joint venture" b
and the police. He said po
warned last week that Shob
could be attacked. They did
Instead, they raided Shobash

Floods

Continued from Page 1

he said, referring to one of t
main townships. Most of Sob
other low-lying areas had alre
evacuated and plans for the ev
of Edendale would be implen
necessary, Haswell said.

A spokesman for the SA Ai
Durban-based 15 Squadron
Messerschmitt BK-117 helico
been sent to Maritzburg to hel
Police Service, the SA Army a
organisations. Budhram said
copter would be used mainly
ing bodies and, if necessary, fo
ing people to safety.

But Haswell said the 'D

Squatters demand removal of housing minister

JOHANNESBURG: President Nelson Mandela and Gauteng Premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale would be asked to remove from office regional Housing Minister Mr Dan Mofokeng and Development Planning Minister Mr Sicelo Shiceka.

Tembisa Committee Eleven spokesman Mr Junior Ngubeni said the ministers had failed in their brief to provide housing.

The committee was named as respondent in a court application for an order to evict about 5 000 squatters. — Sapa

(310) CT 28/12/95

Squatters given eviction reprieve

(310) ED 29/12/95

TEMBISA squatters facing eviction were given a reprieve yesterday when a Rand Supreme Court judge postponed the case for a month to allow respondents time to obtain legal representation.

The Edenvale-Modderfontein council applied for an order to evict about 5 000 squatters in Tembisa, Ivory Park and Phomolong by January 4.

Judge G Leveson postponed the hearing of the application to January 30 after a representative of the squatters submitted they had not been given enough time to prepare their defence.

About 80 squatters attended court yesterday. Their spokesman, Junior Ngubeni, told the court their attorney was overseas on holiday. Leveson said he could not deny the respondents an opportunity to seek legal counsel.

The squatters have been living on the local authority's land since September last year.

After a 10-minute recess the judge postponed the case, complaining that the first two respondents called to testify were not answering his question of why the squatters should not be evicted from the public property.

In postponing the case, the judge ordered the respondents to serve their affidavits on the attorneys of the applicants by January 15. He also ordered the applicant to reply by January 25.

Ngubeni said on Wednesday the squatter's group would approach President Nelson Mandela and Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale to sack MEC for housing Dan Mofokeng and MEC for urban planning Sicelo Siceka for allegedly failing to provide housing.

Mofokeng's spokesman, Thabang Mamonyane, said yesterday the call for the MECs' sacking was groundless. — Sapa.

Reprieve for squatters

29/12/95 (310) Rowetan

SQUATTERS in Tembisa on the East Rand facing eviction were given a reprieve yesterday when a Rand Supreme Court judge postponed the case for a month to allow respondents more time to obtain legal representation.

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An urgent application was lodged by the council on December 23 and yesterday was the return date.

Judge Levenson said he could not deny the respondents an opportunity to seek legal counsel. – *Sapa.*

Moffat squatters not faring much better in heart of city

(310) Star 30/12/95

By MIKE COHEN

A few pieces of furniture, some blankets, clothing and numerous other odds and ends are scattered all over the pavement in front of what was once a business site in Braamfontein.

Several people sit in front of the building, waiting. A woman watches her clothes dry on a line she has rigged up between two trees.

Inside the building are housed more than 120 people who were relocated there from the Moffat Park squatter camp earlier this month.

They sleep side-by-side in huge dormitories or in passages. The place smells foul and looks filthy. After a short while in the building one's skin starts to itch.

The squatters are surrounded by all their worldly possessions. Some even brought chickens from the squatter camp with them, but they were taken away by the Animal Anti-Cruelty League.

League chief inspector D J L Infield said yesterday the squatters could reclaim the animals within seven days if they could house them properly. Otherwise, new homes for the chickens would have to be found.

The building in De Korte Street has just four toilets and a few basins. There are no kitchen facilities and residents say the water supply is inconsistent, but they will stay there until the council decides what is to be done with them.

Andrew Mbanda has been living in the building with his wife and children for about a week. He is unemployed and relies on other people for food.

Firms in the area are concerned about the squatters affecting their businesses. One businessman said crime in the area had risen significantly. – Sapa

SQUATTERS — GAUTENG

1996

JANUARY — JULY.

Whites allegedly burn shacks

Sowetan (310) 4/1/96

Moffat Park squatters say police were unwilling to arrest suspects

By Dudu Mvimbi and Shadrack Mashalaba

RESIDENTS of Moffat Park squatter settlement are angry after residents from a nearby suburb burnt down their shacks on Tuesday evening.

Three shacks including one belonging to Mr Witness Tyhaliti were burnt down with furniture and other possessions valued at more than R2 000.

According to Tyhaliti, around half past ten in the evening he was confronted by two white men who told him to vacate the land or else face their wroth.

"I ran away for help to a nearby friend and when we came back we saw the men pouring petrol on my shack and setting it alight, and suddenly left the scene," said Tyhaliti.

"We tried to extinguish the raging flames but to no avail. All I am left with now is what I am wearing," he said.

He further alleged that when he went to the police station to report the matter he saw the two white men who came to his shack earlier.

"I told the policemen that those men were the ones who burnt my shack and a police captain Schoeman told me to leave the men alone," said Tyhaliti.

Captain Schoeman from Moffatview police station, who refused to give his first name, yesterday confirmed the burning of the shacks and said they were still investigating. No arrests had been made.

Executive member of National Homeless People of South Africa, Mr Jomo Mathe said: "We understand that the government cannot build houses for everyone. What we are asking for is a piece of land with water and sewerage. We will build houses ourselves."

Burning of shacks

The burning of the shacks followed after they were demolished by the Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) officials assisted by some residents late last year.

Attempts to reach the Deputy chairman of the TMC executive committee Mr Kenny Fihla yesterday proved fruitless. His office said he was in a meeting.

At home ... Moffat Park resident Patrick Habib and his family are adamant that squatters should move.

Squatters will not give up battle for Moffat Park

(310) Star 5/11/96

By Justice Malala

The last remaining 50 families of Moffat Park are determined that they are not moving.

Living in plastic structures not higher than the waist, gripped by fear of attack from white residents and without homes or property, without water or toilets, they are holding out in a desperate battle with authorities to stay in the park.

The families are the last of the 3 000 people who squatted on the large, unused tract of land and who were removed by the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Chamber two weeks ago.

Private security guards hired by the chamber daily pull down any structure that goes up in the park, but as soon as the plastic shacks are brought down the structures go up again.

Crawling out of yet another newly erected plastic shack, which he shares with his wife and four children, Samuel Mapiti, says he has nowhere else to go now.

"They broke down my first shack, which I built strongly to make sure my family would be safe. When they (the guards) came over here, they broke my asbestos sheets and took away the corrugated iron roofing.

"I have nothing left, so I cannot move to another place. My furniture is still here and there is no way I am moving away. Where can I go?" he said.

The Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Sub-Structure is powerless to move Mapiti and other squatters from the park because the order issued by the Supreme Court last week stipulated that the shacks could be removed but not the people as the park is a public place.

"We will not leave. Perhaps if they give us all the property we have lost in the rains over the past two weeks, our building material and other things, we will leave. But we have decided that these are our homes," Mapiti said.

In the park, all that still remains is wet furniture, heaps of wood and the plastic shacks dotting the landscape.

There are also remnants of lives brought abruptly to a halt: a school Afrikaans anthology of short stories discarded in the bushes, an abandoned tomato and maize patch, a child's red shoe ...

The squatters are angry with the Government of National Unity, in particular the ANC.

"In the local government elections, the Pan-Africanist Congress warned us not to be cheated for the second time and we laughed at them.

"But now there is an ANC (local government) council and look where we are," said Mapiti.

Embattled squatter camp tense after another shack is set alight

By Justice Malala

The remaining squatter families in Moffat Park spent another fearful night this week when a knee-high shack made of plastic was set on fire, fanning repeated allegations of attacks by white residents.

Moffat Park squatter leader Jomo Mathe said the fire broke out at about 11.30pm on Tuesday after shacks made of plastic continued to reappear in the park over the festive period.

The squatter community has laid charges of arson.

Shacks were pulled down two weeks ago after the Rand Supreme Court granted the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Sub-structure an order to have them removed.

But the families opted to stay on in the park, despite an offer to house them in a building together with about 700 others in Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

Southern Metropolitan Sub-structure executive committee chairman Prema Naidoo this week condemned the attack, saying violence was not conducive to finding solutions to the area's problems.

"Through this irresponsible deed, these individuals have hampered plans to dismantle the shacks and relocate the people living within the park to a site identified within the Greater Johannesburg area," he said.

He said officials were also looking into pressing charges against the parties responsible, as Moffat Park is council property. He appealed to residents and squatters not to take the law into their own hands.

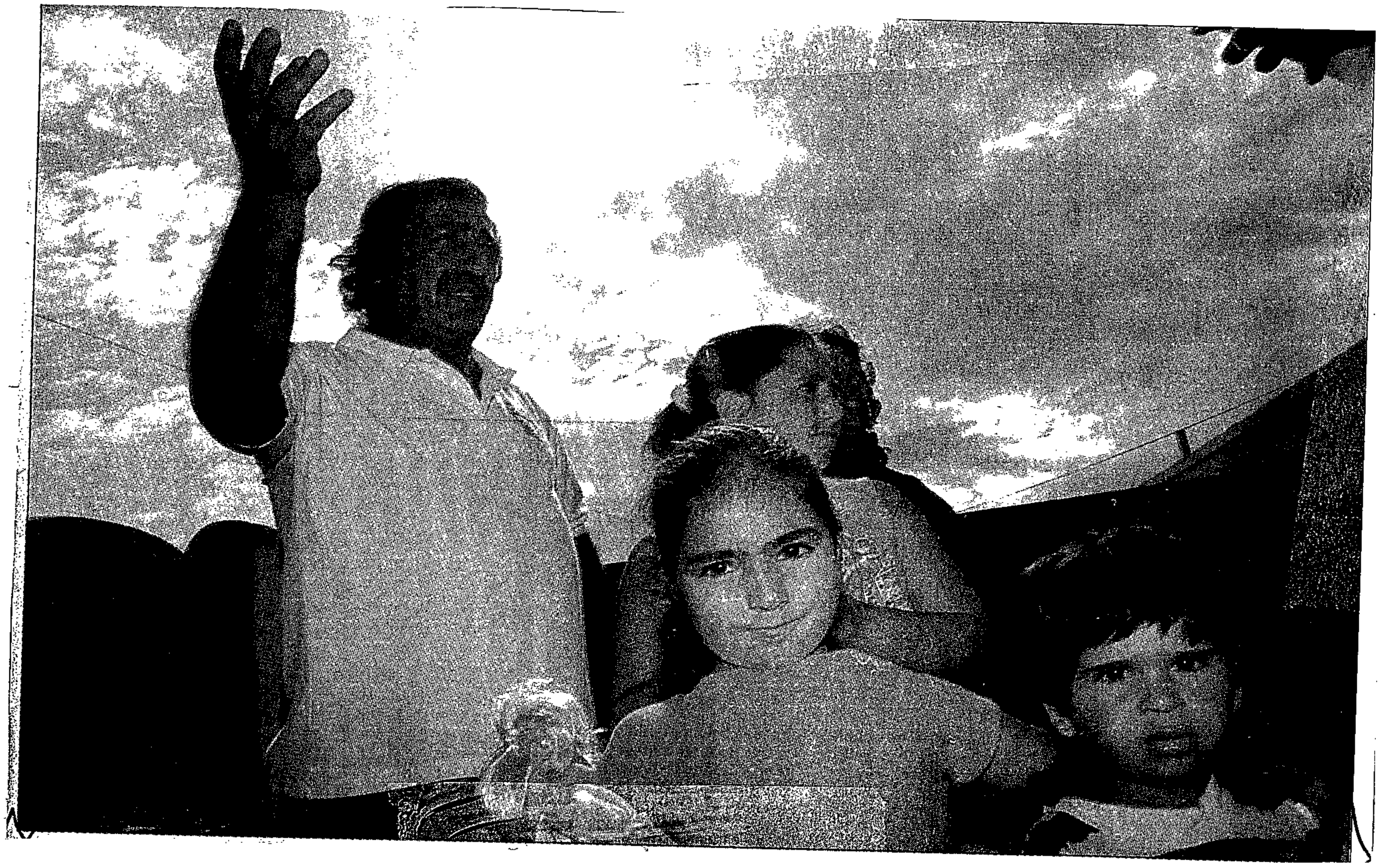
Mathe alleged that attacks on the squatters occurred throughout last week, before New Year's Day. This culminated in several shacks being pulled down by residents on New Year's Eve.

"The Government has tacitly given residents the right to attack us because of the decision to bring down the shacks. That is why we fear this may happen again," he said.

A resident close to the park said the incident was due to the council's inability to act quickly in removing everyone from the park.

"They demolished the shacks but failed to remove the people's property. That is why they remain here and will not go away," he said.

STAR 5/1/46 (510)



Squatters poised to mobilise over land

Mduduzi ka Harvey

COURT battles and mass-evictions in the past few months have led squatters in Gauteng to form the National Homeless Organisation of SA, which will lobby provincial government to alleviate their plight.

About 7 000 squatters from Moffat Park, south of Johannesburg, and Tembisa on the East Rand plan to lobby for the release of land to the landless, threatening mass action if Gauteng's government does not comply.

Organisation president Junior Ngobeni said the body was trying to mobilise squatters across the country.

Squatters understood government was not in a position to provide housing for the homeless in the next three

310
BD 5/1/96

Continued on Page 2

Squatters

310

Continued from Page 1

BD 5/1/96

years, as promised during elections. However, if land with water and toilets was provided, the squatters would form self-help projects to build houses and maintain their surroundings.

They were "tired of government's footdragging" on housing and had decided to form task teams at squatter camps in Gauteng to engage in talks with the provincial land affairs, local government and housing ministries on how to reach a solution. If government failed to accept the compromise by homeless communities, it should be prepared to face mass action intended to halt evictions, Ngobeni said.

At Moffat Park, 120 squatters waiting to be moved to alternative land still did not know by yesterday where they would be moved.

In Tembisa, 5 000 squatters face eviction on January 30 in terms of a Rand Supreme Court order.

Moffat Park spokesman Jomo Mathe said the lack of communication between provincial government, Johannesburg council officials and squatters was a problem. Officials were making decisions with residents from surrounding suburbs without informing the squatters.

In the past two days southern metropolitan substructure executive committee chairman Prema Naidoo has met local government, housing and land affairs officials in a bid to secure land for the squatters, but no agreement has been reached.

Southern substructure spokesman Grant Walker said the council was looking at its Johannesburg buildings for squatter accommodation and as soon as a suitable building was identified squatters would be moved. Substructure and provincial government officials would meet on Monday to discuss allocating land for the homeless.

Site allocation dispute at Orange Farm stirs up bloody

(310) CP ~~7/12/95~~ 7/1/96

By JEFFERSON LENGANE

HUNDREDS of demonstrators who live on stands in extensions 9 and 10 at Orange Farm marched to the administration offices on Friday to deliver a memorandum calling on the authorities to stop allocating stands to people who do not come from Orange farm squatter camps.

They warned that this must be done if "bloody violence is to be averted".

Three people have already died over the allocation of stands.

The official position was that only the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council had the authority to allocate stands for a sum of R350, but some political parties and councillors were usurping this right and allocating stands to their supporters free of charge.

This led to clashes between those who had paid for their stands and those who had not.

Criminal elements were taking advantage of this and were cashing in on the confusion by selling stands to which they were not entitled.

Friday's demonstrators were those people who had not paid their R350 fees and maintained they were entitled to stands because their councillor, James Madikane, had allocated the sites "free of charge".

They claimed that the stands were developed exclusively for them and accused the administration of bringing in people not entitled to live there so they could obtain fees.

Most of the protestors were unemployed and could not afford a fee.

They claimed the allocation of stands for a fee was "corruption and a ploy to deprive the unemployed of their rightful stands".

The protestors' contention was denied by the senior administration officer, John Mahlangu.

He said: "Madikane is not entitled to allocate sites without the authority of this office. Although as a councillor he is entitled to discuss the allocations with us, he has never done so.

"The R350 I am accused of receiving as a bribe to allocate stands is paid to the administration and those who paid have receipts. If anyone says he paid the amount to me and does not have a receipt, that would be a basis for a criminal charge against me.

"I know where the problem arises – unethical people are taking advantage and are allocating stands to which they are not entitled for a fee.

"The fee was agreed to at a meeting of all role players.

"My fear is there will

threats

be more bloodshed if attempts are made to forcefully remove valid stand owners – this has already cost three lives."

A joint statement was issued by the administration and the protestors saying that all allocations would be stopped until further notice.

The demonstrators also agreed not to make any further protest.

Moffat Park squatters may get temporary site

Star 9/1/96 (310)

By Cheryl Hunter

A decision will be reached later today on whether to relocate the former Moffat Park squatters temporarily to a piece of land identified in the Southern Metropolitan Substructure.

Johannesburg council officials met last night to discuss the move after the chairman of the council's executive committee, Collin Matjila, had been to view the potential site yesterday afternoon.

Southern MSS spokesman Grant Walker said the site chosen would still be a temporary allocation as the council refused to give the impression that the way to get land quickly was by illegally squatting somewhere.

> **They cannot avoid the waiting list in this way**

"These people will receive a place to live while their names are added to a register and they take their place in the queue of homeless people who have been waiting to be allocated land," he said.

"They cannot avoid the waiting list in this way and we will not set a precedent by granting them land ahead of others who have been waiting for longer than they have," he added.

Walker was reluctant to name the land under consideration, saying it would be invaded by others if the location were made public.

Squatters who had been relocated from Moffat Park and who were currently being housed at a municipal building in Braamfontein would also be moved to the new site.

Walker could not confirm when the squatters would be moved: "If the site is approved, we have to build a fence around the area first, as there is a railway line in the vicinity and we cannot risk people's lives. We will also have to build a small bridge on to the site."

He said the council would provide rudimentary services including portable toilets and water tankers.

In the meantime, a letter has been sent to the health department requesting health care at the Braamfontein building where as many as 300 people are living.

The squatters were allegedly told they could claim their building materials for their shacks on December 27, 28 and 29 but none had done so, according to the sheriff of the court's assistant Charl van der Merwe.

Van der Merwe said the materials were being kept in storage until council lawyers decided what would happen to them.

Squatters wanting to claim their materials have to present the sheriff's office with a reference number handed to them when the shacks were torn down or give an indication of where their shack was built, he added.

Walker said that once the new land had been approved, squatters would probably be notified again that they could collect their materials from the sheriff.

SOWETAN Tuesday January 9 1996

Marathon meeting on squatters

Sowetan 9/1/96 310

A piece of land has been identified for the relocation of squatters

JOHANNESBURG COUNCIL officials were still locked in a meeting late yesterday to try to agree on a site to which squatters living in Moffat Park could be relocated, southern substructure spokesman Grant Walker said.

A piece of empty land had been identified in the greater Johannesburg area and it was hoped this would be approved by midweek as suitable, he said. The council would probably provide basic amenities for the squatters.

Walker was reluctant to name the land under consideration, saying it would be invaded if the location was made public.

Squatters relocated from Moffat Park and now being housed at a municipal building in Braamfontein, would be moved to the new site.

In the meantime, a letter has been sent to the health department requesting primary health care at the Braamfontein building, Walker said.

As many as 300 people are living in squalid conditions. None of the squatters, whose shacks were torn down at the Moffat Park squatter camp, had come to collect their building materials, sheriff's assistant Charl van der Merwe said yesterday.

The squatters were told they could claim their materials from December 27 to 29 but none had done so. Several shacks were torn down last month after the Supreme Court granted the council an order to remove the shacks.

Van der Merwe said the materials were being kept in safe storage until council lawyers decided what would happen to them.

For squatters to claim their materials they had to present the sherriff's office with a reference number handed to them when the shacks were torn down; or give an indication of where their shack was built. Once new land had been approved squatters would probably be notified again. — *Sapa.*

Officials seek land for 120 Moffat Park squatters

(310) BD 9/1/96

Mduduzi ka Harvey

THE Gauteng land affairs ministry and Johannesburg's southern metropolitan substructure have launched a joint effort to identify urgently suitable land to relocate the remaining 120 Moffat Park squatters who were evicted last month.

This was disclosed by the substructure's executive committee chairman, Prema Naidoo, yesterday

The squatters have not yet been relocated, despite four days of talks between the council, the substructure and provincial government officials aimed at finding suitable land owned by the council or Gauteng.

Naidoo and land affairs officials inspected a piece of land yesterday. If it was suitable, the squatters would be relocated in the next two days, he said.

New site sought for squatters

(310)

GT 9/1/96

JOHANNESBURG: Council officials met yesterday to try to agree on a site to which squatters living in Moffat Park could be moved, southern substructure spokesman Mr Grant Walker said.

A piece of empty land had been identified in the greater Johannesburg area and it was hoped this would be approved by mid-week, he said.

The council would probably provide basic amenities for the squatters.

He did not name the site for fear of its being invaded.

Squatters moved from Moffat Park who were being housed in Braamfontein would also be moved to the new site. — Sapa

Land release plan to take off soon

(127) (310)

The Gauteng government announced yesterday that it would make land available to homeless people, but warned it would not condone illegal land invasions.

The administration and Greater Johannesburg's local government structures had identified land which could be used as reception areas to relieve the crisis of land invasions in the next few weeks, Development Planning, Environment and Public Works MEC Sicelo Shiceka said in Johannesburg.

He said a task team that had been formed to look into land invasion in Greater Johannesburg would report to local constitutional structures and the province for final ratification in the next two weeks. Star 12/1/96

"Government wants to assure people that they are seriously looking into the issue of land release. However, government will not condone the illegal invasion of land," Shiceka said.

He said the move demonstrated the willingness on the part of the government to release land in the province. – Sapa.

Crime and land invasions top council's agenda

(310) (355) Star 13/1/96

By BRONWYN WILKINSON

Greater Johannesburg's newly elected officials are back at work after their end-of-year break and are to hold their first meetings of the year next week.

With only two Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council meetings between the local government elections and the recess, councillors had little to accomplish last year and less opportunity to show their mettle in their new positions.

Several issues are likely to dominate council agendas this year. All three main parties have committed themselves to fighting crime. The burning issue of the devolution of powers will have to be solved, but councillors await a provincial decision on this matter.

The council will also have to battle the matter of land invasions and has promised to consider each eviction on its merits, but not to be soft on the issue. Finally, if the council cannot convince more people to pay for their services, the TMC faces an enormous financial deficit.

This year will give the public a chance to gauge the performance of their new representatives according to their election promises. The three main parties in the council have already laid out their priorities for 1996.

Fighting crime is top of the priority list for the ANC, NP and DP, with the DP to push hard for the introduction of a metropolitan police force.

The NP and DP intend working towards increasing the level of payment for services and the ANC promises to improve the delivery of those services. The ANC also plans to work on budget proposals that will address the needs of the city's poor and on trimming the administration and making it more efficient.

On the DP agenda, along with crime and payment for services, are ensuring the development of a cost-effective infrastructure and pursuing privatisation.

In its turn, the NP promises that its councillors will also fight crime, increase the level of payment for services, increase housing delivery, fight unemployment and preserve public open spaces.

The TMC held only two meetings before it went into recess last year. The first meeting was dominated by the ANC and NP rejecting a proposal by the DP that councillors be paid according to a record of their attendance at meetings. The second meeting addressed the hot issue of the devolution of powers. At that meeting a recommendation was made to the Gauteng legislature that would take the power to make local planning and development decisions away from local councils and place it with the TMC.

The TMC's executive committee holds its first meeting of the year on Tuesday, followed by the first full council meeting on Thursday.

SOWETAN Monday January 15 1996

Stranded squatters to know their fate

(310) Sowetan 15/1/96

By Joshua Raboroko

THE remaining Moffat Park squatters in Johannesburg who refused to move to an alternative site when the Metropolitan Sub-structure (MSS) demolished shacks on the site, will know their fate after a meeting of the council tomorrow.

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional MSS executive committee is hoping to move the squatters by Wednesday, depending on the outcome of the meeting.

Chairman of the Southern MSS councillor Prema Naidoo said yesterday that a group had requested to remain on the land temporarily after the bulk were forcibly removed following a court order.

The rest of the squatters were moved to the council premises in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, while the authorities are trying to identify and develop areas to resettle them.

Some of the desperate homeless people remained on the premises hungry and destitute during the Christmas festive season because they had nowhere to go.

The MSS and the Gauteng Provincial Legislature are jointly in the process of trying to identify land where the squattrs who invaded Moffat Park can be settled.

Naidoo said: "We hope that the squatter community will conform with the efforts being made by the MSS to move them. Their stay at the council-owned premises will not be permanent.

"It must also be taken into account that there are people who have been on the waiting list for a long time and land invaders cannot expect to jump the queue or be allocated land immediately."

Gauteng MEC for development planning, environment and public works, Mr Sicelo Shiceka, said communities under threat of eviction for illegally squatting were to be provided with sites within the next few weeks.

It ain't grand, but Li'l House on the Prairie offers shelter from life's storms

By ALEXANDRA SMIT

White squatters have been living in quiet harmony together with flat dwellers on the fringes of Hillbrow in a home they call "The Li'l House on the Prairie".

Built under a huge, leafy tree on a grassy island situated at the crossroads over the road from the Hillbrow police station and where municipal buses travel to Rosebank and Orange Grove daily, the Li'l House is sturdy yet quite unobtrusive.

Bound together with logs and ropes, the house is complete together with a waterproofed roof fortified out of cardboard, plastic and wooden boards.

The founder of the settlement was angry when he spotted us, threatening to break the photographer's camera if he took any pictures identifying him.

"My mother-in-law said she would allow me to come back home if I found a job. But if she were to see a picture of me in the paper, like this ..."

After several reassurances and the the appearance of fellow squatter Gerrit van Wyk, he calmed down and warmed to us.

"We get along very well with the police. They sit over there and they know about us, and if there's any trouble I just call them."

They live at the foot of Manley Court and Maxwelton, on the corner of Goldreich Street and Claredon Place, and were warned by the flat's superintendent that the shelter had to "be raised up to 5 feet and then it would no longer be a shelter, it would be a living place".

They complied with this and are under no immediate threat of eviction. Since they moved in six months ago, the settlers have "been working on residents' cars and done some tiling for the flats, from which they can make about R20 or R30 a day".

They were scanning the smalls in a daily newspaper when we arrived, and said: "Jobs are a bit slow because of January, you know. But at least we don't steal."

The shack has three mattresses, neatly laid out, and people are welcome to spend a night there, out of the cold.



HOME FROM HOME: Gerrit van Wyk (49) was living in an abandoned minibus before seeking refuge in the Li'l House on the Prairie

PHOTOGRAPH: DURMONT HERALD

Van Wyk (49) has been staying there for about two weeks, which is a long time.

"He was sleeping in a lane in an old combi and they nearly killed him.

"The next day he came and asked me if he can come and sleep here," explained the founder.

"Three okes have passed away since I have been here – once the ambulance leaves they never come back.

"One ou staying with me was always complaining about his stomach and on Christmas Day I called the ambulance from the police station. They took him to hospital and he also passed away."

The Li'l House is powered by two car batteries and now the residents have lights.

"We used to have a portable TV but they came and stole it."

Survival depends on what flat-dwellers give them to eat. "Sometimes they even make a meal for us and some shops give us bread or fish or milk."

They use the police station's toilets and shower at the recreation centre.

Washing of clothes is usually done by hand, but sometimes the founder's wife comes to take his washing to do it at his former home.

"I am looking for a job," he pleads. "I go to many interviews. I'm a qualified fitter and turner but had an accident on the job and was retrenched."

If he does find work, the Li'l House on the Prairie will have new tenants looking for a way to re-enter society.

Star 27/1/96

(310)

Jo'burg squatters' promised land to be revealed next week

(310) Star 27/1/96

By BRONWYN WILKINSON

If you have been playing by the rules for years and have patiently waited for a housing subsidy, the chances are you're losing out in the urban land wars.

And while city officials refuse to reward land invaders with land, they seem to have little choice in the matter.

Next week, the city is expected to announce that it has found two large tracts of land which will be temporary "reception areas" for the people who have turned Moffat Park into one of the city's most controversial squatter camp sites.

That should settle the Moffat Park question – for now. But Grant Walker of the Southern Metropolitan Substructure refuses to identify the "reception areas" for fear that they will be invaded and that there will be no room for the Moffat Park people.

By-laws can remove the squatter shacks, but not the people – the public has a right to use that land

Every time a squatter is moved, thousands more swarm in like locusts, spreading their plastic and tin wings and covering up whatever empty space they can find.

Squatter camps first appeared in about 1986 when a former mayor of Soweto divided up a piece of land in Mofolo into hundreds of tiny squares.

The area became known as Mshenguville. It was followed by camps dotted around most urban areas, camps carrying names like Freedom Park or Mandela Park.

The older camps now resemble poor, but well-established, suburbs. The homes look permanent, with colourful flowerbeds and vegetable gardens – even precast concrete boundary walls.

The newest camps consist of one or two shacks huddled against a tree or wall, usually built out of discarded plastic sheeting or cardboard boxes. Still others spring up overnight as fully fledged camps housing thousands of people.

There is something rather poignant about efforts on the part of the city and provincial government to deal with the massive and mutating problems of land invasions and squatters.

On the one hand, officials have the question of council-owned parkland being overtaken by the destitute and their makeshift homes. Bylaws, say the council, can remove the shacks, but not the people – the public has a right to use that land.

On the other hand, there is the even more emotive issue of land designated for development – the promised land. About 30 000 pieces of land have been proposed for this purpose. Again, the city refuses to identify them in case they are invaded.

For years now, millions of people have patiently filled out applications for housing subsidies. After a lengthy wait, some have been lucky enough to be granted their money and even designated a little plot of land to call their own.

But by the time they get to that site, the land has been taken over and occupied by land invaders – often moving in in their thousands. Sometimes the invaders believe they too have a right to the land.

Council officials say a land mafia moves around the city conning the homeless. They approach a destitute family and tell them they have a tract of land on which they can build a legal squatter camp – for a price.

Having paid their money, the squatters move on to the land, only to be evicted by a council which has promised the land to someone else. The battle over the promised land starts and blood is usually shed.



GRIM CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS: Every time a squatter is moved, thousands more swarm in like locusts. Squatter camps first appeared in about 1986 when a former mayor of Soweto divided up a piece of land in Mofolo into hundreds of tiny squares. It was followed by many others, some carrying euphemistic titles such as Freedom Park

In Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg, such a battle has raged on and shows no signs of abating. Some families living there say they have paid more than R1 000 for their plots, only to get there and find another family with a site permit for the same place, having paid R350 for the same tract of land.

Somewhere, there are other families who have been granted legitimate bonds and subsidies to develop that same land, and the city is waiting to lay down water and sanitation pipes – which it cannot do while the place is swarming with invaders.

But even the identification of land has its problems.

There is a uniform housing policy in place and each of the nine provinces has a provincial housing board. Ultimately, the responsibility for development rests with these boards.

The transitional metropolitan council finds a tract of land and recommends to the provincial board that the land be used for development. According to national housing policy, existing communities in the area must be consulted if a neighbouring piece of land is to be developed for low-cost housing.

Established communities have no record for welcoming an influx of destitute newcomers.

Also, bank officials sit on the provincial boards and, as several council officials explained, the banks do not want low-cost housing near established residential areas because of the effect this may have on property prices.

If, however, a piece of land is agreed upon, the chances are that by the time the council bulldozers move in to lay the water and sewerage pipes, hundreds of plastic, tin and wooden shacks will already have been erected. Lengthy court battles ensue and the poor people who have been allocated that land can only wait.

In some cases, the invaders are moved into council-owned buildings in town just to clear the area. But once they are there, the matter is still not settled.

One council official said that when some people from Moffat Park were moved into a building in Braamfontein, calls flooded in from businesses in the area fearing a crime wave.

The Gauteng government has promised that, using a two-pronged approach, this will be the year of delivery on housing.

On the one hand, the province says it will deal with the problem of people flooding into the province. On the other it will address the issue of people currently without land and shelter.

South Africa is about 1,2 million square kilometres in area. At the last official count – in 1994 – there were 40 435 300 people living legally in the country.

All things being equal and taking things on the most simplistic level, each of us should be entitled to about 30sq m.

Somehow, there just has to be enough to go around. The job of the provincial housing boards and council officials is to juggle the mathematics to make sure there is.

It ain't grand, but Li'l House on the Prairie offers shelter from life's storms

By ALEXANDRA SMIT

White squatters have been living in quiet harmony together with flat dwellers on the fringes of Hillbrow in a home they call "The Li'l House on the Prairie".

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"The next day he came and asked me if he can come and sleep here," explained the founder.

"Three okes have passed away since I have been here – once the ambulance leaves they never come back.

"One ou staying with me was always complaining about his stomach and on Christmas Day I called the ambulance from the police station. They took him to hospital and he also passed away."

The Li'l House is powered by two car batteries and now the residents have lights.

"We used to have a portable TV but they came and stole it."

Survival depends on what flat-dwellers give them to eat. "Sometimes they even make a meal for us and some shops give us bread or fish or milk."

They use the police station's toilets and shower at the recreation centre.

Washing of clothes is usually done by hand, but sometimes the founder's wife comes to take his washing to do it at his former home.

"I am looking for a job," he pleads. "I go to many interviews. I'm a qualified fitter and turner but had an accident on the job and was retrenched."

If he does find work, the Li'l House on the Prairie will have new tenants looking for a way to re-enter society.

Star 27/1/96

(310)

Council will stay mum on land reserved for squatter housing

Star 29/1/96 (310)

By Hopewell Radebe
City Reporter

Johannesburg's Southern Metropolitan Substructure Council has decided not to publicise land earmarked for housing and resettlement of squatter communities to avoid land-grabbing and invasion.

The media, councillors and the homeless are to be included in the ban, the council decided.

It made the decision in its meeting last week after a heated argument as councillors expressed dissatisfaction about the executive committee being secretive about "as sensitive an issue as land identification and development".

The meeting resulted in the identification of land in the Southern MSS for the homeless, a visit to the proposed sites and a discussion on the financial implications for the areas.

NP councillor Linda Lewis urged that at least councillors in wards where developments were planned should be informed and even sworn to secrecy if necessary to enable them to participate or understand the dynamics involved.

Although she was opposed to "impatient line jumpers" undermining those on waiting lists, every councillor was committed to serving the 70 000 homeless families in the southern substructure alone and should be informed about development plans.

Exco member Loretta King said secrecy could not guarantee information not reaching the wrong ears. Council had to deal firmly with land invasion.

Exco chairman Prema Naidoo urged co-operation and warned that the MSS should guard against publicising the availability of land because most homeless people seemed to be heading for Greater Johannesburg.

Squatters in court as eviction case argued

Star 2/2/96 (B10)

By Susan Miller

Dozens of squatters from Tembisa arrived at the Rand Supreme Court yesterday to hear counsel for the Edenvale-Modderfontein Transitional Metropolitan Substructure argue for their eviction.

Mr Justice J. Myburgh heard argument by advocate Jonathan Josephson, representing the substructure, and advocate Jannie Kotze, representing the squatters.

The substructure initially brought the application on December 20 and the squatters were given until yesterday to show why they should not be evicted.

Kotze argued that the application should be dismissed on a technicality because the substructure had failed even to try to name some of the approximately 5 000 squatters as respondents.

He said the court could not be asked to serve an order on "faceless respondents" who would not be bound by the order, and added that property laws in South Africa seemed to be "in transition".

"The right seems to be developing in South Africa, which is still not on the statute books, that a council should investigate the possibility, of alternative accommodation before evicting squatters," he said.

Josephson said the substructure was worried about a possible outbreak of illness and the fact that people had started to erect brick structures on their sites.

He said the squatters were occupying land that had been earmarked for low-cost housing, and that resentment against these "queue-jumpers" was mounting among people who had been patiently waiting for accommodation.

Judge Myburgh reserved judgment.

Star 6/2/96

Illegal Alex squatters must move

(310)

By Anna Cox

The Eastern Metropolitan Substructure has agreed to issue an eviction order against the squatters living illegally on the Far East Bank of Alexandra.

The council also agreed to form a committee to liaise with all parties concerned to give effect to the eviction order.

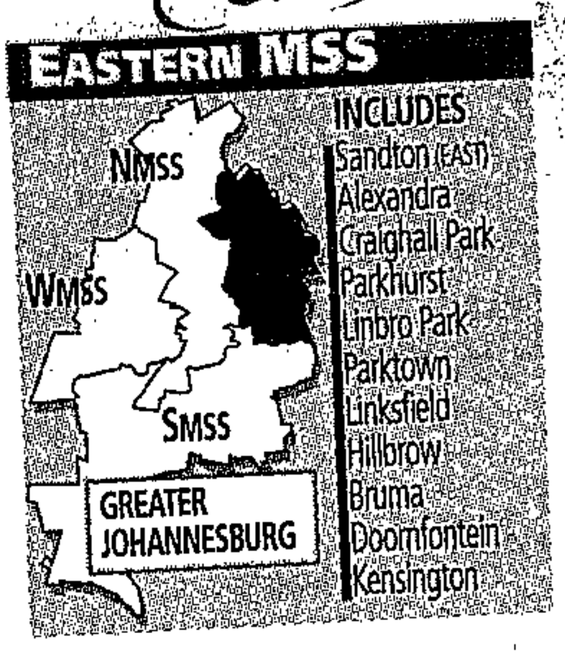
Executive committee chairman Nkele Ntingane, deputy chairman Sol Cowan, councillor Alan Fuchs, who represents Kelvin/Buccleuch, and councillor Aaron Siboyane, who represents Alexandra East Bank, will serve on the committee.

Alexandra councillors claim that despite the services of a full-time security company hired by the council to prevent more people entering the camp, numbers have grown.

Said Siboyane: "There is no security at night and many new shacks have been erected.

"We believe they are trying to increase their numbers deliberately."

Squatter leader John Malatji said the number had increased because of the recent threat of floods in the Jukskei River as a result of heavy rains.



"About 100 people came here looking for a place to stay and we could not turn them away.

"We are telling everyone that we will be happy to move from here if they give us other land," he said.

The Gauteng Provincial Legislature last year applied for an eviction order, but the Rand Supreme Court found the land did not belong to the province, but to the Greater Johannesburg Transistional Metropolitan Council.

Irate businessmen threaten mass exodus from Marlboro

Star 8/2/96 (B10)

By Anna Cox

Marlboro businessmen are threatening to vacate their premises and rent them out to squatters because they feel the Sandton Administration is doing nothing to protect them against increasing squatting and crime in the area.

At a meeting to discuss security yesterday, all of the 50 factory owners present said they had suffered multiple hijackings, murders, robberies and burglaries. One said he had been burgled 48 times in the past few years.

Said Mark Elders: "We are desperate. This is becoming a ghost town. Hundreds of factories have closed down over the past two years. The property values in this area are nil. You cannot give factory space away in this area.

"I had three staff members murdered here; I had four bakkies stolen. I have one left and I refuse to replace the others because they will only get stolen again."

Nick Gonifas, who owns three factories and employs more than 100 people, said he was on the point of leaving Marlboro because of the crime.

The businessmen claimed that some factory owners who had left the area were letting their premises out to squatters.

"The Sandton Administration has done nothing to prevent this or stop it – they simply turn a blind eye. If this carries on we will all do the same."

PIC: AP

Senior policemen 'stupid' – Coetzee

By Josias Charle

FORMER Vlakplaas chief Mr Dirk Coetzee told the Rand Supreme Court yesterday that he had made telephone calls knowing that his phone was tapped and his superiors were listening to his conversations.

Testifying in the Eugene de Kock trial, Coetzee said he thought this was illegal. He denied a submission by defence counsel Mr Flip Hattingh, SC, that the police had obtained permission from the former Minister of Law and Order to tap Coetzee's phone.

"The defence has reliable information that ministerial permission had been sought to tap your phone," Hattingh said.

"I am 100 percent sure that my phone had been tapped illegally," retorted Coetzee.

Coetzee also admitted that he had referred to his seniors as "stupid and arrogant". "There were many juniors who could have done a better job than various generals and colonels, who were stupid and arrogant."

He said he was disliked by senior policemen "who were wolves in sheep's skins as they had committed worse acts than I have", said Coetzee, who has confessed to taking part in various illegal activities.

Asked by Hattingh why he believed there was war between himself and the police establishment, Coetzee replied: "I always fought them because I did not allow myself to be downtrodden."

Squatters' shacks torched

(310)

Sowetan 9/2/96

MORE than 300 squatters in Fairland, Johannesburg, have lost their homes and all their belongings in a fire they say was lit deliberately by a company trying to force them off the land.

The squatters said they saw their shacks go up in flames and were forced to run for their lives yesterday when security guards from a ceramics making company nearby set them alight.

A spokesman for the company refused to comment and referred enquiries to his lawyers who were not available late yesterday.

The squatters said three security guards had been arrested, but police were unable to confirm this at time of going to press.

Mr Elias Ngobeni said five security guards arrived at the camp on horseback, two were armed and the others carried knobkerries.

"They were very reckless. They each had a five litre can of diesel and poured it over our things before setting them alight. They stole some of the goods from my spaza shop and threatened to fight us if we did not leave," he said. - *Sowetan Correspondent*

Career counselling

By Oupa Ngwenya

HIGH school pupils in Soweto will be the first to take part in the Preparation for Work programme workshop at Emndeni Career Centre tomorrow.

Sponsored by Standard Bank, this Nation Building project provides Standard 9 and 10 pupils with valuable career information for work.

Standard 10 pupils will complete a career counselling questionnaire in which they will answer questions on their preferred field of work.

Participants will be helped to define their goals, recognise their strengths and weaknesses, and will be equipped with job-seeking skills. The workshop also deals with how to write a CV and how to finance one's studies.

Sowetan 9/2/96





ONE MAN'S DEBRIS: Scrap material left after a police raid on squatter shacks on Alexandra's Far East Bank are snapped up by nearby families to ... build more shacks (310) PHOTOGRAPHS: TJ LEMO

Invasion delays Alexandra development

Star 10/2/96

By CHRISTINA STUCKY

A local authority has decided to continue with legal action to evict squatters on Alexandra's Far East Bank, but it would prefer an out-of-court settlement to solve the problem of the illegal land invasion.

Last week, the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure agreed to take the necessary legal steps to obtain an eviction order for the squatters.

The matter is still in the hands of the lawyers, but while the bureaucratic machine grinds into action, residents of the overcrowded township wait to occupy the land that was earmarked by the Government for their use. The development has been halted because of the land invasion.

In October, after the Rand Supreme Court found that the land was not owned by the province but by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, there were about 570 structures on the land.

Sol Cowan, deputy chairman of the Eastern MSS's executive committee, said the community had increased by about 25% since then. Many of the new residents arrived because of the recent heavy rainfalls.

The local authority hired a security company in December to ensure that the squatter camp did not grow any further and blocked off most of the entrance points to the camp.

Three guards patrol the area on horseback, seven others take turns driving around the camp around the clock, but as one security guard said, their presence has been only marginally successful.

The guards' brief is to prevent people driving into the area with building equipment, but once the building starts they have no power to halt the construction. Often, the guard said, cars will dump material at one end of the Far East Bank and drive empty into the camp. The people then transport the materials on foot across the veld.

At a meeting on Thursday, the executive committee decided to go ahead with an application for an eviction order – and to continue trying to find a way to settle the matter out of court.

Cowan said: "The consensus among the so-called leaders of the camp is that they don't want to meet any of us to discuss the problem." The consensus among the committee members was to keep trying.

"Our first choice is a non-legal settlement," Cowan said. "But if we can't we must look after the interests of the residents of Alexandra. We're ready to develop that land. Everything is in place, but we can't do it because of the invasion." The problem of land invasion has caused major headaches for the Government at all levels.

The Green Paper on South African Land Policy states that land invasions will not be tolerated and legal action will be taken, but simultaneously shows understanding for those suffering the plight of landlessness.

"Our approach says the solution to land invasions lies in the efficient delivery of land," said Sue Lund, deputy director-general of the Department of Land Affairs. "We must get ahead of land invasions rather than treat them."

One way to attempt to stay ahead of the squatting problem is the Gauteng government's Mayibuye programme, which is being piloted in the province. The programme is to be launched within the next six months, said Corinne Engelbrecht, director for land administration in Gauteng. Once in place, it is designed to serve as a rapid land release programme with the aid of local authorities.

She added that another important aspect in finding a solution to landlessness is providing residents with a sense of security through tenure.

The Government's dilemma is that it does not want to reward squatters with land but also does not wish to "dump them on a street corner, because they will just go and settle elsewhere", Engelbrecht said.

Gauteng's bid to halt land invasions

Robyn Chalmers

BD 14/2/96 (310)

THE Gauteng government has kicked off its bid to halt land invasions by calling for tenders to develop16 000 serviced sites in the province at a cost of up to R800m.

Housing policy and support services deputy director Thabo Molobi called yesterday for the region's emerging developers and contractors to tender for the development of houses costing up to R50 000 each. The sites are around Pretoria, northeast Rand, the east Rand and south of Johannesburg.

This follows last weekend's agreement between Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom and Gauteng ministers to release huge tracts of land.

Gauteng provincial housing board chairman Martin van Zyl said the developments would fall under the project-linked subsidy scheme, and the board would make up to R75m available initially. "These are sites which ... have been identified as being of priority by the province and they require fast-track development programmes," he said. There were another 180 000 sites owned by government structures but many had been invaded by squatters. Gauteng had asked local authorities, parastatals and private sector bodies which owned serviced sites to take part in the programme.

Molobi said developers had to adhere to several principles, including entering land availability agreements with the province. Joint venture agreements should also be undertaken between large and small contractors.

Homeless people rally against govt

CP 18/12/96

HOMELESS people from across Gauteng yesterday held a rally in central Johannesburg to protest against evictions. (310)

Government needed to realise the homeless were not squatters but people who needed a place to live, South Africa Homeless People (SAHP) national president Patrick Makgadela said.

They did not want developers who built only toilets, but developers who built schools and homes.

SAHP has built 120 houses in KwaZulu-Natal and given loans for houses on the East Rand.

Government had given the organisation R10-million for housing construction after it showed the homeless could do something for themselves, Makgadela said.

Vusi Ntsuntsha, president of the SAHP Gauteng, said the organisation had built houses in a Sebokeng squatter camp with the help of foreign donations.

The crowd on Saturday carried anti-eviction banners and ANC flags, and sang liberation songs.

A similar rally was reported to have taken place in Durban. - Sapa

should try [illegible] no jobs, no food ... nothing.

"The only chance to get a decent meal comes on Wednesdays when some good Samaritans pull up here in a van and give us soup and bread," says Motaung.

However, her chosen place of abode resembles a pigsty. Heaps of smelly rubbish piles and rivulets of filthy water fill up every vacant piece of land and men, women and children all scramble and battle for space.

This is life at the Jack Mincer Square. The park – near Shell House, the headquarters of the ruling African National Congress – has become home to scores of the homeless and the unemployed.

Motorists driving past turn their heads in total disbelief as the inhabitants [illegible]uteng Department of Development, Planning, Environment and Works?

According to Gauteng MEC for Environmental Affairs Mr Sicelo Shiceka, the GJMC is the body charged with the task of cleaning up the city.

As for the shacks along Twist Street, Shiceka told *Sowetan* that a project to upgrade the Jack Mincer Square was in the pipeline.

When discussions are completed and the plans get underway, the squatters will be relocated.

Meanwhile, these homeless, hapless and harangued citizens of Johannesburg's mini-shackland remain defiant as if declaring: "As long as the authorities have not found alternative accommodation – *ons dak nie, ons polla hier*."



Life on the street ... Some people desperately try to live a normal life even if home is just a street pavement.

SOWETAN

23/02/96

310

Surviving in a shackland

(310) Sowetan 23/2/96

By Lulama Luti

IT is 10.30am and clouds of smoke envelop the Jack Mincer Square along Twist Street in Joubert Park, sending many a passer-by scuttling for cover to try to avoid the billowing fumes.

Unperturbed, a dozen or so women hustle around their braziers and continue to ensure that their fires keep burning – to help their R200-a-day cooked mealie cob businesses.

Further afield, inside the park, scores of men sit, huddled around five-litre plastic containers filled with an illicit brew –*mbamba* or *Barberton* – and a seller explains that a *skaal* (a 500ml oil can) costs one rand.

A few metres outside the park, Nthabiseng Motaung (27), hammer in hand, is hard at work nailing her rickety shack into shape. Hers is the eighth in a line of corrugated iron and wood structures on this piece of street along a busy bus and taxi route.

Motaung tells how her parents' house was taken over by sub-tenants in Naledi, Soweto, and how she and her siblings were left homeless.

She swings her the hammer and comments nonchalantly that she chose the tough streets of Johannesburg and has since decided to come and live in this tiny shackland.

Build us houses

"I don't know how much longer we are [illegible] be here. They (the authorities) build us houses'

of this eight-shack mini-township go about their daily chores.

And for Christine van Wyk, who hails from Bishop Lavis in Cape Town, there is no doubt who covers the cost of her life on the pavement of Twist and Plein Streets.

Poignantly she says: "We're under the government here and we don't pay rent; finish and *klaar*."

Not far from the city shackland near the Alexandra taxi rank, a group of hawkers stand with plastic bags and shovels in a bid to clean up the area, battling a swarm of green flies hovering over the squalor.

Rotten goods

Mischievous taxi drivers cheer them on. "We've long been telling them not to dump their rotten goods here. Now they must clean it up or we don't want them here," said a queue marshal nearby.

While efforts to clean up and refurbish a degenerating Johannesburg – epitomised by the construction of Bank City, the SA Reserve Bank Building and the ambitious multi-million rand Park City project – most of the city remains run down, filthy and congested.

Is there hope that Johannesburg will ever be as clean as it used to be? And exactly who is responsible for the city's cleanliness? Is it the new Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council or the



Down and out ... Many homeless people [illegible] con[illegible]

Evicted Moffat Park squatters get new serviced sites

(310) Star 23/2/96

BY LORNA ZOKUFA

City Reporter

Moffat Park squatters will become the first group of shack dwellers to be relocated to land set aside by the Gauteng government and the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council.

Although officials would not reveal the location of the new site, the council will start moving the squatters next week.

Shacks were demolished and building equipment confiscated by the sheriff of the court in December.

The families originally from Moffat Park, including those who moved to Braamfontein earlier this year, were registered yesterday for access cards to the new site.

Gauteng MEC for Development Planning, Environment and Works Sicelo Shiceka said the area had already been pegged into sites of about 100sq m each.

He said the site would have basic services such as water, sewerage (in the form of chemical toilets) and refuse removal.

"This should in no way create the impression that land invasions are acceptable and that all those who invade land will automatically be entitled to an alternative site," he added.

Tongaat-Hulett fights bid to settle squatters

(310)

Deborah Fine

BD 23/2/96

THE Tongaat-Hulett Group and the Greater Benoni city council are thrashing out in the Rand Supreme Court a dispute as to whether the council is entitled to settle squatters on council land which falls within the blast safety zone around the group's Benoni metal processing plant.

The plant, Tongaat-Hulett subsidiary Hulett Metals, operates an aluminium powder atomising plant situated near the boundary of an adjacent council-owned property originally zoned for the purpose of "non-European housing" in 1948.

Tongaat-Hulett counsel Adv Robert Wise SC said yesterday that aluminium powder was hazardous when suspended in air or exposed to water and could be highly explosive.

The plant was originally built in the 1940s, surrounded by a 50m safety zone. Subsequent to a blast in Industria in 1980 in which 13 workers were killed and debris was flung as far as 70m, the group decided to adhere to US and German safety codes which stipulated a 91,4m safety zone.

Although this meant the zone would encroach on the adjacent — then vacant — council-owned land, the group did not offer to purchase the property, which was considered uninhabitable and used as an ash heap.

But recently squatters had illegally begun building houses on the land close to the plant's boundaries.

The group asked the court to prevent the council from allowing squatters to build or occupy the houses until the land was incorporated into a lawful town planning scheme. Closing the plant would result in 323 job losses.

Opposing the application, Adv Anton Trichardt for the council said the group was "isolating itself from the reality of SA's housing shortage" and attempting to gain free of charge an area of land which it had failed to acquire — or provide — to operate safely.

It should not be the council's problem that the group's land was too small to comply with its self-imposed safety standards, which had no legal status in SA. It had been the group's responsibility to ensure the plant was situated on a site that would not infringe on the rights and safety of land owners or occupiers of adjacent properties.

The case continues today.

Squatters' relocation sites kept secret to avert invasions

Star 24/2/96 (310)

By KURT SWART

The location of temporary sites for squatters to be resettled by the Johannesburg council is being kept secret for fear that these will be invaded by other groups of homeless people, the council said this week.

The sites, dubbed "reception areas", are part of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council's plan for combating land invasions in Gauteng.

"Land invasions within Greater Johannesburg have become a major area of concern for the Gauteng government and the council," Southern Metropolitan Substructure executive chairman Prema Naidoo said, when announcing plans to move the 2 000 Moffat Park squatters to a "reception area" next week.

The area has been pegged into sites of 100 square metres each in preparation for the move, and will have basic services like water, refuse removal and sewerage in the form of chemical toilets.

Council spokesmen remained tight-lipped about the location of the site.

"We have decided not to name the site as we fear that it will be invaded by other homeless people," a spokesmen said.

Naidoo this week described the concept of resettlement to reception areas as an "historic move".

"It illustrates the government is serious in its endeavours to stamp out the problem that stems from the rapid urbanisation process."

Reception areas are not new, and are referred to in the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951 as transit areas. Under the act, local authorities may, by notice in the Government Gazette, declare land as transit areas for temporary resettlement of homeless people.

"The transit areas are, therefore, to act as catchment areas for people evicted for illegally invading land," said Naidoo.

The council will provide trucks for one week to assist the Moffat Park squatters in retrieving their building materials from the sheriff of the court's depot.

Large communal tents will be provided for a week to allow the squatters time to erect their own structures.

NP 'not daunted' by Williams' step

Sowetan 26/2/96

De Klerk believes that his party's vision will soon be achieved

NATIONAL PARTY leader FW de Klerk said the party would "rise above" last week's resignation of Minister of Welfare and Population Development Mr Abe Williams amid allegations of corruption.

"We have to rise above that and I am sure we will," Deputy President De Klerk told reporters at the weekend.

Williams quit on Thursday after his home and offices were raided for evidence connecting him to the fraudulent use of pension moneys running into millions of rands.

Williams denied any wrongdoing.

Three other NP officials have left in recent weeks for "career or family reasons," according to the party leadership.

The departure of the most senior non-white NP politician – one of six members of the conservative NP in President Nelson Mandela's 32-member national unity cabinet – could not have come at a worse time.

The party is seeking to broaden its base ahead of partial elections at the end of May in the Western Cape, its stronghold, and in KwaZulu-Natal Province, the bastion of the Zulu Inkhata Freedom Party.

De Klerk announced earlier this month that his party was repositioning itself ahead of general elections in 1999 as a "moderate – truly non-racial and Christian" party that will serve as a "counterbalance" in South African politics.

The NP has denounced the "monolithic and mono-ethnic" hold over South African politics enjoyed by the ruling African National Congress since the country's first multiracial elections in April 1994.

"It's not socially acceptable in black circles to say that you are an NP supporter," De Klerk complained.

"Millions of South Africans share our values. We want to convince them that we have really changed," De Klerk said, while acknowledging that the NP is burdened by its past role as the architect of apartheid. – *Sapa-AFP.*

Squatter shacks razed by Alexandra residents

Sowetan 26/2/96

310

By Russel Molefe

MORE than 400 angry Eastbank, Alexandra Township, residents yesterday descended on the "Rasta informal settlement" and demolished about 50 shacks which have mushroomed near their upmarket homes.

The residents also set some of the building materials on fire in an apparent bid to prevent the squatters from re-erecting their structures which mushroomed about three weeks ago.

Sowetan was told the "Rasta informal settlement" was an extension of the "Highway informal settlement" which hit the headlines last year when violence erupted because the invaders resisted relocation.

The decision by residents to demolish the shacks was taken at a mass meeting which lasted about two hours yesterday.

The residents, armed with hammers and iron rods, then marched to the informal settlement where they ripped down the shacks.

Minutes later, gunfire was heard and pandemonium broke out with residents retreating to their homes.

Squatters said they were made to pay R50 for a site by a man who had also put up a structure in the area which he used as an office.

Mr Khathatso Mabena said they were told the R50 was for installing water pipes and other services.

"I paid R50 last week and bought building materials worth about R500 from the hardware store. I was about to complete the erection of my shack when the residents came and demolished all the structures here," he said.

By late yesterday, several shacks had been re-erected and police were on standby following threats of revenge at night by the squatters.

Bullets fly as home-owners tear down, burn sq

Star 26/2/96 (310)

Alexandra residents decide to 'protect their investment' after they hear 500 more shacks are to be built

By Anna Cox

Squatters, police and Alexandra residents exchanged gunshots when about 400 irate home-owners started burning shacks in the Far East Bank squatter camp yesterday.

The situation remained tense throughout the day following threats by squatters of a revenge attack on residents during the night. Police and the army remained on standby throughout the night.

The residents, mainly property owners from the East Bank, took the decision to take the law into their own hands after they were told that a squatter leader had sold another 500 sites on the southern portion of the Far East Bank at R50 each and shacks would be erected by the end of this week.

The residents, armed only with gardening tools, hammers and iron rods, moved methodically from shack to shack, ripping them to pieces before setting the debris alight.

It was only when the squatters started firing on them that they dispersed. The squatters fired on a journalist and a photographer from The Star as they fled with Alex residents.

Eastern Metropolitan Substructure councillor Aaron Siboyane said the authorities had been warned in November that residents were preparing to take action, yet nothing had been done.

"Enough is enough. We are looking at our long-term investments. We believe we must act now. We must protect our investments as the Moffat Park residents did," he said.

The chairman of the East Bank Civic Association, Pule Phalatsi, said residents should blame themselves for doing nothing.

"We did all we could in our power to abide by the law, but the law did not abide by us. We have no other choice. It is the will of the people that the shacks will be done away with. We cannot wait for people to do things for us any longer," he said.

Anguished Zimbabwean resident Moses Makeba said: "I have paid my money for this site and was told I could build here. I have done nothing wrong."

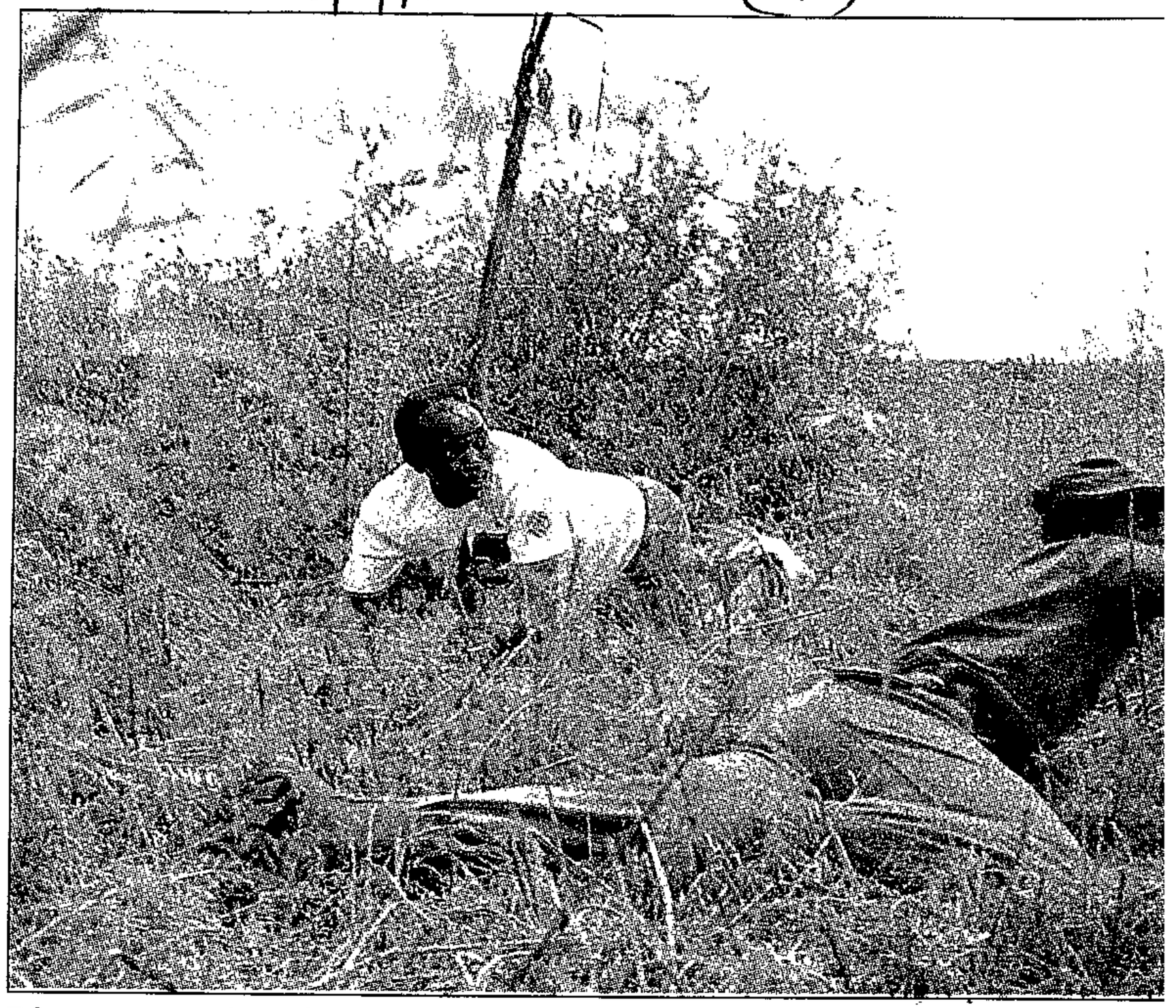
Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan councillor Sizakele Nkosi said papers had been prepared for a new eviction order but, given that a crisis had arisen, pressure would be put on the authorities to take immediate action to remove the squatters peacefully.

The Gauteng legislature last year served an eviction order on the squatters but lost the case in the Rand Supreme Court when it was found that the land did not belong to the province.

Protecting and securing the Far East Bank squatter camp was very difficult, said Benny van der Walt, manager of the security company appointed by the Johannesburg council.

■ Police spokesman Captain Elize Visser said police had received no reports of incidents during the night.

"Everything is quiet," she said this morning.



Take cover ... members of the SAPS Internal Stability Unit were on the scene at the Alexandra Far

STAR

26/02/96 (310)

iatters' shacks

NAASHON ZALK



ast Bank squatter camp when residents burnt shacks.

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Tongaat-Hulett wins an interdict to stop squatters

(30) BD 26/2/96

Deborah Fine

THE Tongaat-Hulett Group has won a Rand Supreme Court order interdicting the Benoni council from allowing squatters to settle on council-owned land which falls in the blast safety zone around the company's Benoni metal processing plant.

The interdict is valid until the proposed settlement is formally incorporated into a lawfully proclaimed town-planning scheme or approved under the Acts governing informal settlements.

Tongaat-Hulett claimed the council was allowing squatters to erect houses on a section of council-owned land adjacent to the property on which Tongaat-Hulett subsidiary, Hulett Metals, operates an aluminium powder atomising plant.

Aluminium powder could be explosive and Hulett Metals had adhered to safety codes which stipulated a 91,4m building-free safety zone around the plant.

Although the zone encroached onto the council land, Tongaat-Hulett had not attempted to acquire the property because the site had always been considered uninhabitable.

Recently squatters began building houses which fell in the safety zone, and the council failed to prevent this. The council was considering declaring the area an informal settlement.

By failing to follow the Town Planning Ordinance, the council had denied Tongaat-Hulett the opportunity of making representations to acquire the land or prevent the squatters moving into the blast zone.

The council submitted Tongaat-Hulett was not entitled to impede the proposed settlement simply because the firm had failed to acquire, or provide, the amount of land necessary to safely conduct its plant.

Judge R Van Schalkwyk found that Tongaat-Hulett had been justified in bringing their application in terms of the common law of nuisance.

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Call for calm after Alex residents destroy shacks

(310) Star 27/2/96

By Anna Cox

An appeal for calm has been made by Eastern Metropolitan Substructure authorities after Sunday's invasion and demolition of shacks on the Far East Bank by Alexandra residents.

East Bank residents who marched on the squatter camp and set fire to about 30 shacks intend staging a protest meeting outside the Sandton administration's offices tonight before the council's monthly meeting.

East Bank Civic Association chairman Pule Phalatse said the march on the camp was just the start of action against the squatters, who had invaded land which rightfully belonged to Alexandra residents who had been waiting for years for land.

EMSS executive committee chairman Nkele Ntingane said she was appealing for restraint and calm.

"An interdict was waiting to be served for the eviction of the squatters, but the council was looking for alternative land to relocate the people before serving it," said Ntingane.

She said negotiations for land were under way with the Northern MSS.

Squatter camp leader John Malatji condemned Sunday's attack, saying his community was peace-loving and would definitely not be attempting a revenge attack.

Malatji has been accused of selling sites for R50 but denies this.

Hei said the police had taken him in for questioning but had found nothing to charge him with.

He added that most of the people living on the Far East Bank were Alexandra residents who had been waiting for land for the past 30 years.

(310)

Appeal for calm after residents storm shacks

ARG 27/2/96

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — An appeal for calm has been made by Eastern Metropolitan Substructure authorities after the invasion and demolition of shacks on the Far East Bank by Alexandra residents.

East Bank residents who marched on the squatter camp on Sunday and set fire to about 30 shacks intend staging a protest meeting outside the Sandton Administration offices tonight prior to the council's monthly meeting.

Chairman of the East Bank Civic Association Pule Phalatse said the march on the camp was just the start of action against the squatters who had invaded land rightfully belonging to Alex residents who had been waiting for years for land.

"We are tired of waiting for the local authorities to act — we want action now," he said.

EMSS executive committee chairperson Nkele Ntingane said she was appealing for restraint and calm.

"We don't want to see lives lost — there has been enough violence in this country.

"The squatter leader who is illegally selling stands will be brought to book and prosecuted.

"We understand the desperation and anger that people are feeling after they have been waiting for the land for a long time but they must not take the law into their own hands," she said.

An interdict was pending for the eviction of the squatters, but the council was looking for alternative land to relocate the people before serving it, said Ms Ntingane.

She said negotiations for land were underway with the Northern MSS.

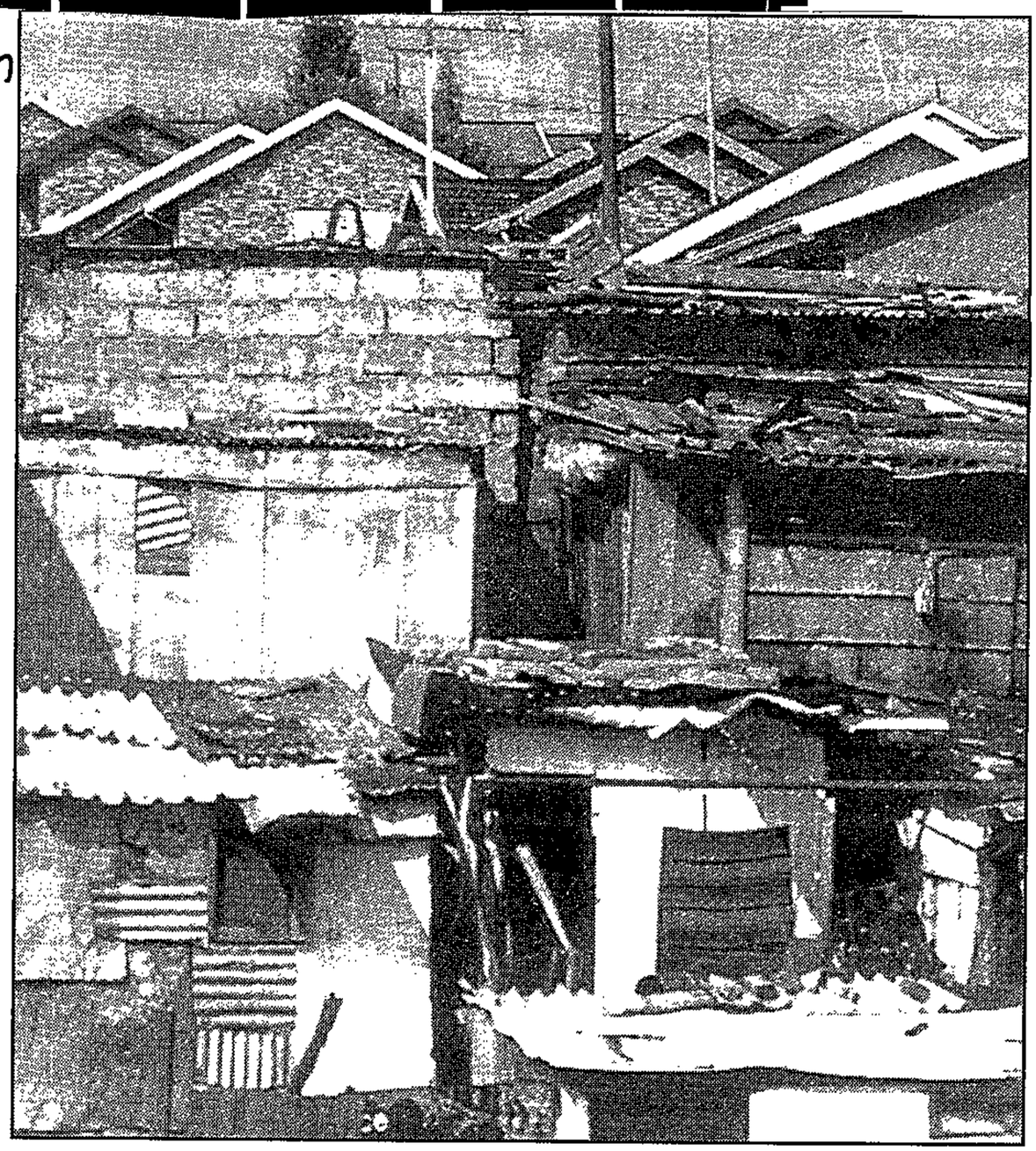
Squatter camp leader John Malatji, condemed Sunday's attack, saying his community was "peace-loving" and would definitely not be attempting a "revenge" attack.

"We are Christian people and although some of our people wanted a revenge attack we have talked them out of it. We are calling on the government to protect us and if there are injuries we will blame it on them.

Anger in Alexandra as squatter camp grows

(310) Sowetan 28/2/96

Authorities will have to act fast to defuse a highly explosive situation



The stark contrast between the tin shanties and luxury houses on Alexandra's East Bank tell a tale of two cities. PIC: CLEMENT LEKANYANE.

By Abdul Mllazi

PHILIP Mabale bought a house in Alexandra's posh East Bank section for R60 000 seven years ago. Last week Alfred Mlwakuhle erected his shack for nothing just a stone's throw away.

Mabale and Mlwakuhle are neighbours in Alexandra's "suburb" which boasts luxury houses and expansive lawns that would put some of the houses in white suburbia to shame. Both are black but live in totally different worlds.

The two are caught up in a conflict between property owners and newly settled squatters on Alexandra's East Bank. This boiled over into a shootout at the weekend.

Property values threatened

Mabale (44), a policeman, said he was worried that the encroaching squatter camp would bring down the value of the property in the area.

This fear led about 400 irate homeowners to take punitive action against the squatters on Sunday by burning their shacks.

But far from serving as a deterrent, the burning of the shacks was met by resolute fire from the squatters in the gun battle that followed.

As tempers flared, police officers, who had come to restore order, were forced to run for cover.

As the police crouched in the metre-high foliage, the mushrooming squatter camp – spreading towards the West Bank – showed no sign of giving in to residents' anger. The prevailing mood was nothing less than "over our dead bodies".

To an outsider East and West Bank are one area. After all there are no official boundaries and the area is too small to be divided into two suburbs. But residents know where one section begins and the other ends.

Mabale and other property owners said they decided to take the law into their own hands when they heard that a "squatter leader" had sold 500 sites outside the area and that more shacks would be erected before the end of the week.

"We are almost completely surrounded by shacks. On the western side, the whole area is infested with squatters. The southern side was the only area that was still unoccupied," said Mabale.

When he moved from Soweto, he wanted a quiet area with class but he did not want to move to a white area. East Bank was the ideal place, as it exuded an air of affluence.

On the other hand, the burgeoning shantytown where Mlwakuhle lives represents the obverse side of the South African reality. It is a poverty-stricken place where one shack almost abuts the next and roads are non-existent.

"I don't blame the squatters: the Government should have addressed their problems long ago"

Mlwakuhle moved to the East Bank to escape the floods which ravage the banks of the Jukskei River in the rainy season. His old shack and belongings were washed away twice in as many years.

He cannot afford a decent house because he is unemployed. He came to Johannesburg in 1985 and the only place he could afford was a crowded room at Merafe Hostel in Soweto, which he fled at the height of political fighting in 1991.

Having settled in Alexandra, Mlwakuhle thought his days as a refugee were over – until the rains came. "I lost everything in those floods. That was 1994. It was the same thing in 1995, which is why I decided to move.

"We've only been here a week and now we hear that the people in the houses do not want us here". For him, it seems, there is no place to run.

Other squatters say the first group moved into the area last November. There were only five shacks then. Now there are close to 100 and the number is still increasing.

The communities of haves and have-nots lived in harmony until Sunday. The squatters did not know why the homeowners converged on their shacks with garden tools, tore them down and burnt them.

"We only heard yesterday that the residents did not want us here. We have nowhere to go. The Jukskei is dangerous," Mlwakuhle said as he prepared to put up his shack again.

"By the end of this week, it will be finished," he said, knitting his brows as the first drops of rain began to fall.

Mabale said the ground the squatters occupy should be turned into a graveyard because the existing cemetery in Alexandra is already overcrowded.

Government to blame

"The local authorities should find land for these people and develop it. I don't blame the squatters: the Government should have addressed their problems a long time ago," said Mabale.

Like all residents of suburbs facing the sorry spectacle of squatters, Mabale and other East Bank homeowners are concerned about the value of their properties.

The squatters, on the other hand, need to feel the soil beneath their feet and feel confident that they are safe from the Jukskei. What they desperately need is a roof over their heads, no matter its form or shape.

Alex residents demand council action on squatters

(310)

By Anna Cox

Star 28/2/96

About 200 chanting Alexandra residents disrupted last night's Eastern Metropolitan Substructure monthly meeting for over an hour demanding immediate action against squatters on the Far East Bank of the township.

They handed Mayor Justice Ngidi a memorandum calling for action by 5pm tomorrow, failing which they would take action themselves.

Councillors met the residents outside and tempers flared with residents accusing councillors of "false promises, arrogance, insensitivity and irresponsibility".

Chairman of the East Bank Civic Association Pule Phalatse said the situation had reached crisis point.

"Our action on Sunday of demolishing shacks and this protest meeting are just the start of what we will be doing. The best is still to come. If the council is incapable of doing anything, we will."

When the first squatters moved in last August, residents reported the matter to the authorities yet nothing was done, he said. Now there were more than 1 000 shacks on the Far East Bank.

Chairperson of the executive committee Nkele Ntingane said the matter would be given top priority. A special council meeting would be held to find a solution.



Alex squatter issue on table

(30)

Sowetan 29/2/96

By Wilson Ramothata

NEGOTIATIONS between the Eastern Metropolitan Sub-structure and the Gauteng provincial government over a piece of land where squatters in the Far East Bank, Alexandra Township, are to be relocated are at an advanced stage.

EMSS executive committee chairman Ms Nkele Ntingane said yesterday negotiations with the MEC for development planning, environment and works Mr Sicelo Shiceka began a month ago.

She said although there was no specific area earmarked to relocate the squatters, she hoped the issue would soon be finalised.

Ntingane said it was unfortunate that the weekend skirmishes between East Bank residents and the squatters came at a time when the matter was receiving serious attention from the authorities.

Asked why the council had taken so long to evict the squatters, Ntingane said it would have been impossible for the council to obtain a court interdict ordering the evictions before alternative land could be found for them.

Ntingane reiterated a call to the squatters to remain calm and not to take the law into their own hands.

"As a council, we understand squatters' need for proper accommodation," she said.

Responding to Tuesday's protest by residents outside the council offices in Sandton, she said it was a democratic right of every citizen to picket as long as their actions did not interfere with the "public's interests".

Meanwhile, East Bank Civic Association chairman Mr Pule Phalatse said it was about time the EMSS speeded up the process to evict the squatters, adding that the area where the shacks were being built had been earmarked for low-cost housing.

"These people are delaying development in the area," he said.

Property owners threaten squatters

(310)

Mduduzi ka Harvey

BD 29/2/96

IN A bid to resolve a conflict between property owners and squatters in Alexandra township's East Bank, the executive committee of Johannesburg's eastern substructure council would hold a special meeting today, committee chairman Nkele Ndingana said yesterday.

The meeting follows threats by the East Bank civic association and property owners to take the law into their hands if the council failed to evict squatters from the area by 5pm today.

Civic association member Aaron Sibuyane declined to comment on the threatened action, saying the association's executive committee would meet today to decide on a plan of action.

About 200 civic members stormed a council meeting in Sandton on Tuesday evening demanding that squatters be evicted immediately.

Another meeting — this time of the whole council — will be held after the committee meeting today.

Ndingana said the land occupied by the squatters had been earmarked for development of low-cost housing and the process to put services in place had began when the land was invaded.

Legal steps by the province to evict the squatters in December failed when the Rand Supreme court found that the province had no jurisdiction as this was a local authority competency.

Ndingana said the local authority would institute legal proceedings to evict and hopefully relocate the estimated 500 squatters. It was waiting for a court date.

Shots were fired and property owners embarked on a campaign to burn down shacks over the weekend. No arrests had been made.

Govt set to act on land invasion

Robyn Chalmers (310) BD 29/2/96 (306)

THE Gauteng government is planning to intervene directly in the Goldev project — the province's largest low-cost housing scheme which has been stymied by mass land invasions.

Sources said yesterday the proposed intervention was part of the provincial government's strategy to halt land invasions, involving the release of state land on a massive scale.

The sources said the strategy was likely to include resettlement of squatters who had invaded the Goldev sites. The provincial government had already called for tenders to develop 16 000 sites at a cost of up to R800m.

Goldev former CEO Aziz Shaikh said yesterday talks which had been held over the past 18 months with Housing Minister Sankie Mthembi-Nkondo, Gauteng housing MEC Dan Mofokeng and other government officials were starting to pay off.

Referring to a meeting last week, he said: "There was a sense of urgency within provincial government at coming to grips with the land invasion issue."

Goldev acting CEO Luyanda Gwina said squatters were continuing to move onto the 400ha area near Eldorado Park which had been earmarked for the resettlement of about 15 000 homeless people.

Construction of homes had, however, started on a small section of land within the Goldev project. Between 25 and 30 low-cost housing units had been built in the first phase of 1 200 units.

"We believe that by the end of June we will have finished 400 units and will be putting up a supply depot on site to negotiate material prices," Gwina said.

Moving out of Moffat Park

Star 1/3/96 (3rd)

Shack dwellers in Alexandra's Far East Bank will also be moved to a new site

By Lorna Zokufa and Anna Cox

At least 500 families from Moffat Park were expected to start moving to Weilers Farm near the Grasmere toll plaza south of Johannesburg from sunrise today.

Chairman of the executive committee of the Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSS) Prema Naidoo said he was not expecting resistance from the shack dwellers to the move.

"We registered 500 families last week and they were all issued with access cards to Weilers Farm. This shows that most of them are willing to move to the new site, but if they do not move, then we will have to go back for another eviction order," Naidoo said.

He added that councillors of the SMSS had received no objections when they met Moffat Park community leaders yesterday.

They had also met some of the leaders from Moffat Park who were being accommodated at Hambro House and Transport House in Braamfontein after being evicted from the park.

"The site has already been pegged into sites of 80 to 100 square metres so that families can erect their shelters. We will also put up tents temporarily where families can stay for one week while they put up their shacks," Naidoo added.

The Gauteng provincial government has announced that a layout plan of Weilers Farm will be prepared.

In Alexandra, the 3 500 Far East Bank squatters will be moved to another, as yet unnamed, site on March 22 by the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure.

A resolution was taken at a special council meeting held yesterday following a deadline given to authorities by Alexandra residents for them to find a solution.

> **"Most of the families are willing to move to Weilers Farm"**

The new land is within the Northern Metropolitan Substructure but councillors will not identify it for fear of invasion by other squatters.

Squatters and neighbouring communities will only be informed of the location of the site the day before the move. The EMSS will provide transport to the new site for the squatters.

Security in the squatter camp will be stepped up with immediate effect. Fencing will be erected with noticeboards advising that illegal squatting is prohibited and that any person squatting illegally will be removed and charged.

The brief of the security company patrolling the area will be extended to increase manpower and a more comprehensive service.

A publicity campaign will also be instituted to inform the community of the actions taken by the EMSS. Furthermore, legal action will be taken against people selling building material and stands.

Chairman of the executive committee, Nkele Ntingane, said squatting was a national problem which was "not of our creation".

"We have to undo the problem in the most humane manner possible. There are many other groups in Alexandra which need land, such as the people displaced by violence and those living on the river banks. We hope to start our rapid land release programme by the end of the year," she said.

Alexandra residents, angry that authorities had done nothing to remove the squatters, marched on to the camp earlier this week and set fire to about 30 shacks.

They also staged a protest meeting at the monthly meeting of the EMSS and delivered a memorandum to the mayor demanding that immediate action be taken.

Squatters press for deeds and police station

About 200 Diepsloot and Zandspruit shack dwellers marched on the Northern Metropolitan Substructure civic offices yesterday to air their grievances.

Diepsloot community leader Lucky Mosimane said one of the complaints was the squatters' inability to build proper houses because they did not have title deeds promised to them.

Another was that no action had been taken on a request for a police station, and that the squatter camps had no services. Chairman of the Chartwell Concerned Residents' Association Lawrence Digon said neighbouring residents shared the same concerns as the shack dwellers. He said the problems were far wider than the two camps and stretched to other squatter camps such as Bloubosrand.

"If there is no meaningful communication, the authorities will face mass action," he said.

The substructure's acting chief executive officer, Pat Lephunya, said the officials were aware of the grievances and most had already been addressed in the new budget. – Staff Reporter.

Moffat Park squatters relocated

JOHANNESBURG. — About 400 squatters evicted from Moffat Park have been relocated from a city council building to Weiler's Farm, south of the city. (310)

The squatters were evicted last December and were temporarily housed in a council building pending an appropriate relocation site.

Council spokesman Grant Walker said squatters would be provided with tents while they await delivery of their building materials, confiscated last year under an eviction order.

Some squatters said they would stay put until community representatives verified the suitability of the new site. — Sapa.

ARG 2/3/96

Alexandra's East Bank squatters tentatively agree to pack up and move to unnamed spot

(310) Star 2/3/96

By CHRISTINA STUCKY

Members of the East Bank Civic Association (EBCA) of Alexandra said they agreed "in principle" to a council decision on Thursday to move illegal squatters on the Far East Bank to an as yet unnamed "reception area" in the Northern Metropolitan Substructure by March 22.

Meanwhile, the squatters, voicing concern over being moved without being informed of the location, said they wanted a meeting involving all key players where they would be included in the decision-making process.

EBCA members on Sunday stormed the Far East Bank and burnt down about 30 shacks that had been erected by illegal squatters on the property earmarked for development for residents of Alexandra, some of whom have been waiting for land for many years.

On Tuesday, EBCA representatives stormed a regular council meeting of the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure. The council was handed a memorandum demanding that action be taken immediately to settle the ongoing dispute.

"Failure to do so will leave us with no option but to go in there ourselves and do what we can. Any damage or loss of life will unfortunately be laid at your doorstep," the memorandum, signed by EBCA chairman Pule Phalatse, read.

At a special council meeting on Thursday, the council passed a resolution to register the squatters on March 19, compiling a database of the names, and moving them on March 22 to a reception area in the Northern MSS.

For fear of illegal land invasions of the designated area, the location of the reception area would not be publicised and the squatters would be informed of the whereabouts of the reception area only the day before their relocation.

The council promised to provide transportation for the squatters and their possessions. "Emergency services" – water, sanitation and refuse removal – would be provided on the new site.

The relocation will affect about 3 000 people in more than 900 structures.

Sol Cowan, deputy chairman of the Eastern MSS, stressed that the new site was a "temporary solution to the problem of urbanisation". "Gauteng is receiving a lot of people from other provinces looking for work here. This must be solved in a national, holistic way."

Nkele Ntingane, chairman of the executive committee of the Eastern MSS, reiterated that the problem of illegal land invasions was a national issue. "Unfortunately, we are sitting here having to undo problems that are not of our own creation. We are trying to find humane solutions," she said.

Phalatse said yesterday that EBCA agreed "in principle" with the council's decision.

"If the process follows as outlined in the resolution, then we are prepared to give it a chance," he said, adding that in future the council should take a more "pro-active role" in similar matters.

He said he would report to his "constituency" either tomorrow or on Tuesday on the council's plan. He added that the council would have to call a meeting with representatives from the council, EBCA and the squatter community before the plan could be fully endorsed by EBCA. Until such a meeting, he promised that no action would be taken.

Squatter leaders also demanded a meeting of all role-players in the dispute, arguing that their concerns had not been considered sufficiently in the process.

In the squatter community some uncertainty prevailed yesterday over the details of their relocation. Most had heard about the council decision from the media.

"Where are we going?" asked Phineas Hamse, who has been living on the Far East Bank for the past one-and-a-half years. "We are staying in a nice place. We have spent money to bring taps into our shacks. Most of us work in Sandton. We can't afford to go far away from our work."

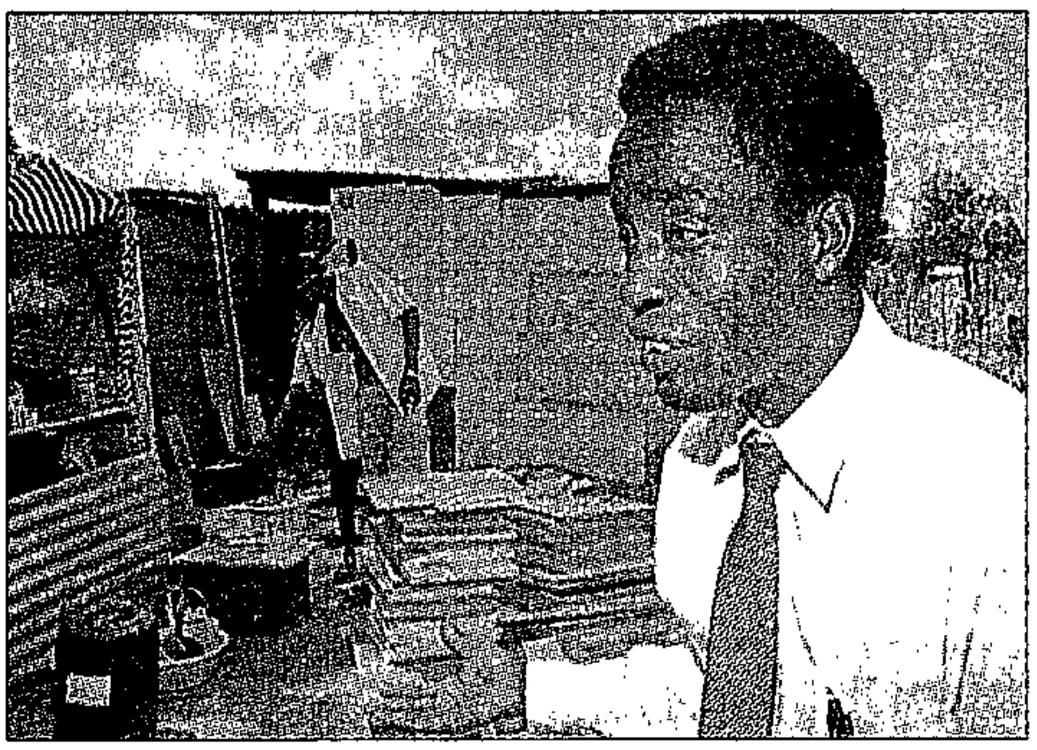
The men gathering around Reuben Mathe, secretary-general of the Steve Biko village, as the community has named itself, agreed that one of the main reasons for wanting to remain on the Far East Bank was its proximity to their workplaces – and the investment many in the community had made in developing the area.

"The land where they want us to go is not yet developed. It's like they're promoting squatting," Mathe said. "It's useless to put me where there is no infrastructure, because I'll still be a squatter. Then maybe they move us again when they want to develop that land and I'll still be a squatter. I'll be a squatter for 40 years."

Mathe and his colleagues said they would move only if the council "cuts stands, puts in water and electricity and builds schools for our children".

This is precisely the dilemma of the Government, which is trying to come to grips with illegal land invasions. Government policy is against illegal land invasions but for humane solutions to the squatting problem.

Government officials are willing to find alternative sites for squatters, rather than evict them with nowhere to go, but cannot "reward" squatters by moving them to developed sites, essentially allowing them to jump the queue ahead of those who have made formal application for land from the Government.



NO GO: Squatter camp resident Phineas Hamse says squatters do not want to be moved from Alexandra because most of them work in Sandton PHOTOGRAPH: THYS DULLAART

Evicted squatters settle down on their new land

(310) Star 4/3/96

But they say they have small plots, long distances to travel to work and children for whom they have to find new schools

By Lorna Zokufa
City Reporter

THEMBA HADEBE



Here at last ... former Moffat Park squatters have already started moving into their new homes in Weilers Farm, south of Johannesburg, in large numbers. The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council has provided tents for families while they put up their shacks, and water is trucked in every day.

The exodus by Moffat Park squatters to Weilers Farm, about 10km east of Lenasia, was well under way yesterday as squatters started building their shacks and registering for plots of land at their new home.

Moffat Park was very quiet, with only a few shacks left standing and no people on site.

Most of the squatters from Moffat Park had their shacks demolished in December after the Greater Johannesburg metropolitan council obtained a court order to evict them.

Some stayed on at the park and others were temporarily housed in Braamfontein.

At Weilers Farm, where more that 2 000 people have moved in since Friday, residents were being shown their new plots yesterday as more families streamed in.

Those who had already begun building voiced their dissatisfaction with the size of their plots.

"The plots are very small, and so is the distance between the shacks.

"We are afraid that if a fire starts in one shack, then all the other shacks surrounding it will burn down," said Joshua Nxele.

While a few residents relaxed and listened to music outside the tents that have been provided by the council yesterday, others were trying to make arrangements for their children's schooling.

"We have to make sure that our children find a school nearby so that they do not miss out on any classes," said a woman who wished to remain anonymous.

She said her children had not been to school since last week.

But schooling for their children was not the only worry that residents have had to deal with since their move on Friday.

Nxele said they were also worried about transportation to and from work.

A trip to Johannesburg's city centre will take about 45 minutes.

"Many of us work far from this place, and we have had to negotiate with the taxi association to provide transport for us," Nxele said, adding that he estimated it would cost him about R8 a day to travel to work.

"We will just have to adapt to the conditions and try to survive.

There is no other way," he added.

Confusion as homeless asked to restart march

(310) Star 6/3/96

By Norman Chandler
Pretoria Bureau

The homeless became temporarily lost yesterday as hundreds marched to the Union Buildings and then back to the start-off place, and police and organisers argued about who had issued a call for the protest to start.

Homeless people from several provinces – brought to Pretoria on a fleet of buses – were to have marched from Brown Street in the central business district to the Union Buildings to hand over a memorandum to the government protesting against the inclusion of a property clause in the new constitution.

The organisers, the National Land Committee (NLC), said the clause would prohibit the government from expropriating land for redistribution. The memorandum was to have been given to President Nelson Mandela but could not be because he was undergoing a medical checkup in a Johannesburg clinic.

The NLC claimed the police had forced members to start marching, but police said an organiser had indicated protesters should proceed.

The march was completed without further disruption.

DEBBIE YAZBEK



Keeping hope alive ... Miriam Mlume is looking forward to the day when her shack will be replaced by a bigger brick house.

Dream of owning a home becomes reality

The families of Power Park in Orlando East are making sure that an opportunity of a lifetime does not pass them by

(310) Star 6/3/96

By Bongiwe Mlangeni
Housing Reporter

The principles of the RDP will soon be a reality for 500 families of Power Park in Orlando East when they replace their shacks with proper houses.

These Sowetans have learnt that if they do not work towards transforming their lives at the squatter camp themselves, owning a home will remain a dream.

For this reason, the Building Training Centre (BTC) and the community are working on a self-help building project.

Already, the only creche in the area has been completed and is taking care of 60 children from the neighbourhood.

It was funded by a local Catholic church and was built by community members who received training from the BTC.

BTC training head Simon Mohale said that the project would benefit hundreds of unemployed residents.

The BTC was launched in 1992 in Mofolo South and is funded by the German Chamber of Industry.

It has trained about 80 residents in brick laying, plastering, roof carpentry and plumbing.

The trainees attend a 12-week course which is restricted to a maximum of 12 trainees at a time.

While the project will offer job opportunities, for local resident Miriam Mlume the benefits will be much more.

This mother of five, who has been living in a two-room shack since 1990, said that it was the first time that she could look forward to a better future for her children.

"Once this plan is successful and we have our houses, surely our lives will change and we can move on.

"Right now, life is too difficult," she said.

The project proposal has been submitted to the local council and the Provincial Housing Board.

Mohale said that while the proposal was being discussed BTC would be offering more training to residents.

"When we implement the project the shacks will have to come down and residents will be part of the building process," said Mohale.

About 485 stands are available. They all have services such as electricity, water, sanitary facilities and tarred roads.

All residents stand an equal chance of qualifying for the Government subsidy and the money will only need to be used on the building of houses as the site already has services.

Appeal gives squatters stay of eviction

(310) Star 11/3/96

Legal wrangling has given Tembisa squatters some breathing space. It has saved them from being evicted more than a week ago by the Edenvale/Modderfontein Metropolitan Substructure from the land they have illegally occupied.

Squatters, who were supposed to have left the area on March 1, have launched an application for leave to appeal against the Supreme Court ruling.

Chief Executive Officer Johan Louw said the matter was receiving the council's attention. But the council would have to wait for the court's decision on the squatters' application.

"We understand and appreciate the plight of the homeless and we will make every effort to solve the situation to the best advantage of our community," Louw said.

National Association of the Homeless of South Africa chairman Junior Ngubeni said they would appeal against the ruling made by Mr Justice J F Myburg.

Judge Myburg had authorised the sheriff of the court to evict all persons occupying 10 separate patches of land around Tembisa extension 11, Umthambeka and Phomolong sections. – City Reporter

Rightwingers' escape: warders investigated

Alleged AWB bombers are suspected to have had keys enabling them to unlock their cells, after which they managed to get past checkpoints and razor-wire fences

By Anso Thom
Crime Reporter

Prison warders who were on duty when four rightwingers escaped from Diepkloof prison at the weekend have been questioned as part of the top-level investigation ordered by the correctional services commissioner.

Correctional services spokesman Brig Chris Olckers confirmed that chief deputy commissioner, functional services, Lt-Gen Timothy Khoza, had visited the prison yesterday to question warders and investigate the "total spectrum".

Olckers could not yet say how the men had managed to get past the security checkpoints, including razor-wire fences, surrounding the Johannesburg prison.

Police spokesman Supt Eugene Opperman said police had received information from the public regarding the escapers. "We are following up all possible leads," he said. A reward of up to R250 000 would be considered as information came in.

Olckers said the men escaped from the single-cell, awaiting-trial section with Solomon Zabane (18), who was facing an unrelated murder charge.

Jan Bastiaan de Wet of Ottosdal, Abraham "Adam" Myburgh and Nicolaas Clifton Barnard of Ventersdorp, and Ettienne Jacobus le Roux of Heidelberg were awaiting judgment in their trial in connection with a series of bombings during the runup to the 1994 election.

The escaped rightwingers, all members of the AWB, were due to reappear in court on March 29. Their cells were found unlocked early on Saturday, indicating they had used keys. They had also sawn through two grille doors and smashed open a door reinforced with a steel plate.

Opperman said the men were dangerous and should not be confronted.

Star 12/3/96

Corpses and car retrieved from dam

By Anso Thom

Police are probing the possibility of drugs having led to the death of two men whose bodies were found in Leeupan dam near Benoni.

A police source said they had information that the two might have been using drugs before their death. The car was also retrieved from the dam, but the men's belongings had been taken from the boot and left next to the water.

Police spokesman Insp Tommy Thompson said Mohamed Akbar Shaik (34) and Ahmed Shaffer Khan (30) of Actonville went fishing at Leeupan at 6pm on Friday with the intention of returning the same night. At 6am on Saturday their families went to look for them and found the contents of the car's boot on the ground.

Police alerted the water wing and dog unit, who retrieved the bodies and car from the dam.

Thompson said there were no visible injuries to the bodies.

He could not confirm whether the men had been in the car when it went into the dam. The bodies were found about 5m from the car, he said. Postmortems and forensic tests would be conducted.

Storm over threatened land invasions spreads

~~309~~ (310) Star 12/3/96 ~~306~~ ~~307~~

By Norman Chandler
Pretoria Bureau

Anger among farming communities in Northern Province, Mpumalanga and the Free State over threatened land invasions has spread to the Western Cape.

The National Land Committee as well as other organisations representing landless or dispossessed people have threatened to invade privately owned rural property if a property rights clause is included in the new constitution, due to be published soon.

A delegation of Western Cape Agricultural Union officials met Premier Hernus Kriel and Local Affairs MEC Piet Marais at the weekend to discuss the issue, in particular efforts by various organisations to render the Western Cape's Proclamation 5004 unlawful. This proclamation guarantees the rights of property owners, and this right was confirmed by Kriel and Marais.

W Cape farmers discuss issue

"The delegates agreed that the Western Cape Agricultural Union should continue to work towards a practical solution to the problem," said the union's president, Chris du Toit, who is also president of the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU).

The meeting is the latest development in an ongoing battle by farmers to protect their property. The Transvaal Agricultural Union has called the Government's proposed land policy "socialist" and "communistic", while the SAAU has warned against land invasion, saying farmers will use every form of resistance to oppose the practice.

Thousands of claims to rural land have been lodged by individuals and groups throughout the country in terms of the proposed three-pronged land policy, spelt out in a green paper published last month.

According to the paper, land redistribution is designed to provide the poor with land for residential and productive purposes, land restitution is to restore land and "provide other remedies" to people dispossessed by discriminatory legislation and practice, and the land tenure reform programme is planned to extend security of tenure of all South Africans.

The policy paper also makes it clear that priority to land will not be given to people or groups who take part in land invasions or threaten to do so.

Court tells squatters they will have to take down shacks

(310)



THYS DULLAART

Homes wanted ... Junior Ngubeni, chairman of the National Association of Homeless in SA in a protest meeting of squatters outside the Rand Supreme Court yesterday.

By Hopewell Radebe
City Reporter

Star 20/3/96

Tembisa squatters who have been illegally occupying land belonging to the Edenvale/Modderfontein Metropolitan Substructure will have to take down their shacks and leave, in spite of all their efforts to stay.

This follows the Rand Supreme Court's refusal to grant them leave to appeal against an eviction order.

Squatters who delayed their eviction by launching an application for leave to appeal missed the proceedings while they were toyi-toying outside the court during the hearing yesterday.

Advocate Jannie Kotze, representing the squatters, argued that the substructure had no urgent problem which required their immediate eviction.

Mr Justice J F Myburg, dismissing the application for leave to appeal, said he could find nothing that could persuade another court to rule differently from his finding.

Judge Myburg agreed that he did not address the issue of alternative land last month, but he was satisfied that the meeting of the substructure which was held on December 11 had dealt extensively with the issue.

He said the minutes showed that land had been identified and the matter was going through appropriate procedures.

Last month he had given the squatters until 8am on March 1 to leave all the property belonging to the Edenvale/Modderfontein Metropolitan Substructure.

Squatters have vowed that they would not leave the area unless alternative land had been made available for them.

National Association of the Homeless of South Africa chairman Junior Ngubeni said they would be petitioning the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein against the court ruling.

Jo'burg authorities name five areas to be released to 4 000 homeless families

(310) SAPA 28/3/96

BY ANNA COX

Five areas, to be released by greater Johannesburg local authorities for some 4 000 homeless families, were identified at a Randburg public meeting last night.

They are in Witkoppen, Bloubosrand in the Northern Metropolitan Substructure, Lombardy East in the Eastern MSS, Liefde-en-Vrede and Misgund in the Southern MSS. Exact locations have not been disclosed.

Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan chairman of the housing and urbanisation committee Lyndsay Bremner said the release of the land, known as the Rapid Land Release Programme, was only part of a multi-pronged approach to supply housing for 250 000 homeless.

She said that although there would be public participation, it would not undermine the rights of the Government to make decisions.

Bloubosrand Community Forum chairman Wayne Schluter said the news was "bad". He said residents had not been consulted.

"We will be holding a residents' meeting to decide what action to take," he said.

Jo'burg and Gauteng in plan to relocate 67 000

BD 2/4/96 (310)

Mduduzi ka Harvey

THE Johannesburg council would work in consultation with the Gauteng government to relocate about 67 000 homeless families in the province who qualified for land under the rapid land development programme, council planning and urbanisation chairman Lindsay Bremner said.

The first phase of the relocation was launched last week when land was made available to house 4 000 of the city's homeless families and was only the beginning of a series of programmes aimed at solving the province's housing backlog.

The areas identified for implementation of the programme were Witkoppen and Bloubosrand in the Randburg area, Liefde-en-Vrede and Misgund near Soweto, and Lombardy East in Sandton.

Criteria used to select the families included investigating whether they were living in hazardous conditions and whether they lived in areas where there was serious social conflict, Bremner said.

In addition the province emphasised the need to spread the communities geographically.

The first phase of the programme will involve the moving of families from Zevenfontein, Alexandra and the Soweto areas of Thembelihle and Dlamini.

Initially the families would be housed in shacks and provided with temporary services like toilets and clean water. Then, through consultation with the province, houses will be built under schemes which will aim at employing the families.

Bremner said the communities living adjacent to the identified areas had been informed about the programme, as well as the township application procedure which would be followed.

The next step, which forms part of the standard township application procedure, would be the placing of advertisements announcing the council's intention to establish townships on the prospective sites, allowing objections to be lodged with the town planning tribunal.

Once the legal proceedings had been completed, Bremner said, the townships would be laid out, rudimentary services installed and stands for occupation would be allocated.

Bremner said while early occupation of the land could be expected, the stands would be developed in accordance with existing town planning schemes, which included provision of proper housing conforming to current by-laws.

The fast track approach, she said, had been adopted to prevent possible invasion of the sites should development be slow and to alleviate the chronic living conditions of the beneficiaries.

Clash looms over new invasion

Star 3/14/96

BY ANNA COX

310

About 200 Diepsloot residents living in a nearby transit camp and in surrounding areas north of Johannesburg last night invaded a new site in the area, set aside for the relocation of some 2 000 squatters living illegally on private property.

The invaders were given until 5am to leave by the Northern Metropolitan Substructure (NMSS) which has taken a firm stance on the land invasion. However, by 9am today, the relocation area was still occupied.

Diepsloot community leader Lucky Mosimane said people living in Ward 15 had been waiting for years to be allocated sites.

"It is unfair that people from other areas will be brought to this area when there are people who have been waiting for years for a piece of land," he said.

NMSS executive chairman Pule Buthelezi said today that the invasion would not be tolerated.

Security staff were moved on to the reception area last night to warn the invaders to leave by 5am today.

Buthelezi said the reception area formed part of a structured programme to deal with the problems of landlessness, not only in the NMSS but in the entire Greater Johannesburg.

The SAPS has been asked to provide assistance to ensure the site is cleared of invaders and to monitor the area to prevent further invasion. Security staff from other administrations will also be called in to control the situation.

"We are adamant that the relocation will go ahead as planned for the communities specifically identified for this relocation. We are, however, confident that with the assistance of all the roleplayers, including the relevant communities, the relocation will be implemented successfully," said Buthelezi.

The squatters to be relocated come from Fairlands, Kya Sands and Bloubosrand.

'Anarchic property invasions' not on – TMC

(310) Star 3/4/96

By Troye Lund

Greater Johannesburg's Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) will temporarily stop issuing summonses to evict people who are living in council flats illegally. But it is adamant that "anarchic property invasions will not be tolerated".

The decision follows angry protests at several council offices yesterday by members of the South Western Joint Civics Association (Sowejoca).

Sowejoca has demanded the TMC give its Greater Johannesburg members, mainly from coloured and white areas, the council flats they have invaded, and that it scrap all rent arrears and charge a flat rate of R65.

Johan Penton, Sowejoca chairman for Johannesburg's southern suburbs, said: "These protests are just the beginning. We will burn the TMC offices if necessary. The illegal tenants are mostly single, unemployed mothers. They cannot live on the streets. Tenants in Soweto are being given their homes. Others pay a flat rate. Why not coloured and whites?"

The protests were sparked by eviction summonses being served on residents who have invaded council flats over the past 20 months. A TMC housing department official said legal action would be delayed until reports had been given to each of the TMC's four substructures. Each substructure, in consultation with the TMC, would then decide what further steps to take.

Prema Naidoo, chairman of the Southern Metropolitan Substructure's executive committee, yesterday dismissed Sowejoca's threats as "blackmail".

"There is an eight to 15-year waiting list for council flats. These illegal occupants may be in a desperate predicament, but they have invaded their flats and are denying others – people who are also single, jobless mothers, but have been waiting their turn patiently on lists – the right to a home.

"I can understand that the lack of housing is a huge problem. But it is no excuse for invading council flats. Councils are also opposed to flat rates. Thousands of low-cost homes, for people who earn less than R1 500 a month, will be available in the next two or three months in all areas. This will relieve the situation," Naidoo added, saying his council would not allow flat rates.

The homes being given to Soweto tenants were "apartheid's stock rent homes". Tenants had rented them for more than 20 years without an option to buy.

Once the process was complete in Soweto, other areas such as Eldorado Park would also benefit from the transfer of stock homes, he added.

Smallest province, but Gauteng tackles land, housing head-on

(310) Star 3/4/96

Land invasions, overcrowding, squatter settlements, eviction of labour tenants and farmworkers, and the exploitation of backyard shack dwellers come under focus

By Karin Schimke
Gauteng Reporter

Seven programmes for the equitable redistribution of land in Gauteng have been proposed by the provincial department of development planning, environment and works. If implemented, they will tackle issues of growth and development while also trying to house and employ Gauteng's landless.

People affected by land issues were addressed at the weekend by MEC Sicelo Shiceka who outlined possible strategies for combating the many problems associated with the rapid urbanisation of the country's smallest province.

The problems include land invasions, overcrowding, growing squatter settlements, eviction of labour tenants and farmworkers, increasing crime and the exploitation of backyard shack dwellers.

Of the seven programmes, some have already been put in motion, most notably the rapid land delivery programme which releases land to people in crisis areas for permanent settlement in an organised way. The Mayibuye programme aims to provide secure, permanent settlement in such a way that it ensures community participation in future upgrading.

The policy of the Gauteng farmer settlement programme was adopted in the provincial legislature three weeks ago and this will allow farmers to settle on underused provincial land which they will have an option to buy after three years.

Two other proposed programmes are the release of land for economic activity to support small and medium-sized enterprises by making land available which will create jobs and boost the province's economy and the release of land to religious and welfare organisations to give them access to land for their activities.

The last, and most prickly, of the programmes is the reception areas programme. These would-provide alternative land for people who have been evicted due to illegal land invasions of government-owned land. Reception areas are expected to be established with the help of local authorities and will be provided with emergency services. Residents will have to pay a monthly fee for these, but no permanent tenure will be granted. The aim of this is to stem "queue-jumping".

Shiceka told the conference the programmes would, if implemented, attempt to redistribute land to disadvantaged groups and restore equity to people who had been dispossessed or suffered from exclusion from access to land.

They would also improve security of tenure, attempt to manage land resources effectively, promote greater involvement in decision-making around land issues, establish adequate governmental administrative capacity and contribute to co-ordination between different levels of government and society.

Diepsloot land invaders leave area

BD 4/4/96 C310

ABOUT 150 families who earlier yesterday refused to vacate a site at Diepsloot near Randburg finally left the area after officials of the greater Johannesburg northern metropolitan substructure held talks with them.

Substructure spokesman Edwin Decomb said families for whom the site had been earmarked had started arriving there yesterday afternoon. The substructure had earlier said the Diepsloot site was earmarked for 400 families from Olivedale, Kya Sands and Bloubosrand to be relocated there that morning, but about 200 families had invaded the area on Tuesday.

The invaders were given until 5am to vacate the site or be forcibly removed. However, only a few families left. About 150 refused to move.

Decomb said the substructure executive committee chairman Pule Buthelezi and senior official Lenzi Brummer had negotiated with the invaders and they left the site voluntarily.

"This reception area actually forms part of a structured programme to deal with the problems of landlessness, not only in the northern substructure but in the council as a whole," Buthelezi said. Land invasion would not be tolerated. —Sapa.

NEWS NATIONAL

Land delivery gets moving

(310) Sowetan 4/4/96

By Joshua Raboroko

GREATER Johannesburg Metropolitan Council has become the first local authority in Gauteng to introduce some of the seven programmes aimed at an equitable redistribution of land for development and planning.

GJMTC executive chairwoman of the planning and urbanisation committee Mrs Lindsay Bremmer said yesterday that five areas had been identified for the introduction of a rapid land development programme.

These areas are Witkopen and Bloubosrand in the northern metropolitan substructure, Liefde-en-Vrede and Misgund North in the Southern MSS and Lombardy East in the Eastern MSS.

The seven programmes, proposed by Gauteng MEC for development planning, environment and works Mr Sicelo Shiceka, hope to tackle growth and development while also trying to house and employ Gauteng's landless.

Land invasions

The programmes include solving the problem of land invasion, overcrowding, growing squatter settlements, eviction of labour tenants and farmworkers, rising crime and exploitation of backyard shack dwellers.

Some programmes are already in motion, most notably the rapid land delivery programme which releases land to people in crisis areas for permanent settlement.

Bremmer said the names of sites were not previously released in order to ensure that all stakeholders were informed and that the sites did not become targets for invasions.

The next step, she said, would be to put up rudimentary services and to allocate stands to people.

The Gauteng farmer settlement programme, adopted in the provincial legislature three weeks ago, will allow farmers to settle on under-used provincial land with the option to buy after three years.

Two other programmes are the release of land for economic activity to support small and medium-sized businesses.

Lastly, the reception area programme will provide alternative land for people evicted because of land invasion.

GARY BERNARD



Tight security ... policemen brace themselves for conflict with Diepsloot residents following clashes at a relocation camp in the area yesterday.

Squatters to be resettled after protest

(3D)

By Anna Cox

Star 4/4/96

The relocation of squatter communities to Diepsloot, north of Randburg, would go on until Saturday despite a protest land invasion of the new site yesterday by Diepsloot residents, said Northern Metropolitan Substructure executive committee chairman Pule Buthelezi.

Security at the new site has been stepped up to avoid a recurrence of the land invasion which took place, he said.

Buthelezi said municipal security members as well as policemen had been brought in to the reception area.

They would be on standby at night following threats made by the residents – who said they had first option on the land – to squatters brought from Olivedale, Bloubosrand and Kya Sands yesterday that their shacks would be burnt down during the night.

Discussions between councillors, senior officials and residents lasted several hours. A settlement was reached at about 2pm yesterday and the residents dispersed.

About 700 residents from the permanent informal settlement area in Diepsloot yesterday invaded the reception area, which was allocated to squatters living illegally on private land.

Council applies for eviction order although no date set for squatters' relocation

By CHRISTINA STUCKY

No date has been set to move squatters from the Far East Bank of Alexandra, but the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure is applying for an order to evict those who do not move voluntarily.

Initially the council agreed to register squatters on the Far East Bank on March 19 and move them to an area under the Northern Metropolitan Substructure's control on March 22. When it was discovered that there was too little land to accommodate the 3 000 squatters, the plan was put on hold.

Pending allocation of more land by the Northern Metropolitan Substructure, no new date would be set for the move.

This week the substructure said more land would be allocated, but the council was waiting for written confirmation of this, said Clive Eddy, acting town clerk for the Sandton administration. The council was also awaiting a court order "in case not all are willing to move", he said. Most had agreed to move, even though they would not be told where they were going until 12 hours before their removal. "Not all are willing to relocate to the northern substructure. Obviously we would prefer it if they moved willingly," he said.

East Bank Civic Association chairman Pule Phalatse said Alexandra residents had agreed to co-operate as the council was "taking the issue seriously".

The council has fenced the area, leaving only three access points, to prevent further squatting. Police are to patrol the area with 12 private security guards hired by the council.

The eastern substructure is to discuss the matter when it meets again on Tuesday.

(310) Star 6/4/96

Councils slate protest action

(310) BD 9/4/96

Mduduzi ka Harvey

THE Soweto, Randburg and Sandton councils have condemned the unlawful protest action carried out at the three councils' municipal pay offices by the South Western Joint Civic Association last week over the illegal occupation of council-owned houses.

The protests included the occupation of certain offices, and intimidation of staff. The councils have now vowed that any further action of this nature would be countered by council security and the SAPS. The association, which is led by councillor Basil Douglas, raised concerns that people illegally occupying the houses would be evicted over the Easter weekend. The councils confirmed no evictions would take place until specific instructions were issued, but this did not mean that legal processes would not be followed.

music at the Rand Easter Show in Johannesburg at the weekend. He is accompanied by Amilia Roggnt from Hungary. Picture: GARTH LUMLEY

Law enforcement 'is riddled with problems'

(ESE) BD 9/4/96

Mduduzi ka Harvey

LAW enforcement countrywide was riddled with problems, including an under-staffed police service with low morale and an overloaded judiciary system which had led to a decline in prosecution and conviction levels.

Research conducted by the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (Nicro) indicated that there seemed to be also a perception among judicial officers that prison sentences were neither efficient nor effective and that the quality of cases taken to court for prosecution was often poor.

Contrary to the popular perception that prisons were overflowing because of an increasing stream of offenders sentenced to prison terms, the research indicated that in fact fewer people were being sent to prison. However, those who were jailed served longer sentences.

Judging by statistics compiled between 1977/78 and 1993/94, the law enforcement picture for SA was dismal, Nicro said. It appeared that only a fraction of reported crimes eventually resulted in convictions.

Of more than a million crimes reported to police in 1993, only 22% resulted in prosecutions, and of the total number of prosecutions, 77% resulted in convictions.

Alternatively, only 17% of reported crimes resulted in convictions.

It was found also that the number of convictions fell from a high of about 400 000 in 1984/85 to below 319 000 in 1993/94. In 1978, 22% of all convicted people were sent to prison without the option of a fine. This figure was said to have dropped to 15% in 1988/89 and rose to 16% by 1993/94.

This indicated that the number of people sent to prison had not increased but prisons were still overcrowded.

Nicro said statistics on prison terms explained the trend, indicating that the length of prison terms had increased substantially during the past 10 years. While less than 8% of offenders sent to prison were sentenced to periods exceeding two years in 1989, more than 20% were given such sentences in 1992/93.

Council committed to solving squatter crisis

BD 9/4/96 (310)

Mduduzi ka Harvey

THE eastern metropolitan substructure council has committed itself to consulting the various stakeholders involved in Alexandra's squatter crisis. It wants to help resolve the conflict between property owners and squatters, possibly in the next six weeks.

Executive committee deputy chairman Sol Cowan said the council would meet members of the Far East Bank community on a weekly basis to find ways to solve the impasse.

He said outstanding matters included registration of squatters to be relocated, settling outstanding legal processes and strategic planning on the tightening of security at the site.

Council spokesman Dalene van Wyk said that at a meeting between the SA Police Service and councillors, the police had made a commitment to improve security by providing two officers to work with the security firm employed to secure the site.

These developments follow the recent march by Alexandra property owners and displaced residents to the Sandton council offices, demanding that councillors immediately evict squatters from Alexandra's Far East Bank area.

Property owners accused the council of reneging on an agreement to have the squatters removed by March 22, to erect a fence to curb further invasions, hiring a security firm to monitor the area and taking legal action against any additional squatters found moving onto the land illegally.

Last week significant progress towards a resolution of the problem was made at a meeting attended by local councillors, the SAPS and members of civic organisations. It was decided two groups would be established to deal with security matters.

In addition, discussions were centred on action to be taken against individuals selling plots at the site, and clarification of the respective roles of the police and the security company employed to curb further invasion of the site.

The second group, consisting of all stakeholders, will address the legal process of relocation, the preparation of a reception area in the Randburg area and determination of criteria for relocation and implementation of the programme.

Squatters' meeting strike a stalemate

(310) Sowetan 10/4/96

By Wilson Ramothata

THE long-awaited meeting yesterday to resolve the dispute over the relocation of squatters at Far East Bank ,in Alexandra Township, failed to come up with any solutions.

One of the main roleplayers, the South African Police Service, yesterday withdrew from an agreement made last week with the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure (EMSS) to protect the area against further land invasions.

The SAPS said they had no powers to intervene or apprehend anyone erecting a shack on private land.

The commanding officer for Alexandra Township, Senior Superintendent Joel Mothiba, told the meeting at the Sandton Administration offices that they were acting on instructions from head office in Pretoria. "The land in Far East Bank belongs to the EMSS," he said

He said the security company hired by the local council had sufficient powers to protect the area.

Meanwhile, the squatters refused to attend the meeting, but instead sent a letter through an organisation calling itself the African Renaissance Civic Movement (Arcmo) which claimed to represent them.

Arcmo said it had come to its attention that "our people were never given a fair chance at any meeting called by the EMSS to defend their viewpoint regarding their eviction. We feel that their human rights were violated."

However, deputy chairperson of the EMSS, Mr Sol Cowan ,said the relocation issue would go ahead as planned "whether they attend the meeting or not."

Five city areas earmarked

(310)

BD 12/14/96

Squatters set for 'great trek' to Jo'burg sites

Robyn Chalmers

UP TO 40 000 squatters are to begin moving onto sites around Johannesburg, some close to residential areas, as part of provincial government attempts to solve the region's growing housing crisis.

The 5 000 families — or between 30 000 and 40 000 squatters — are viewed as emergency cases, who currently live on unstable land.

The five state-owned areas which have been earmarked so far for relocation are Bloubosrand and Witkoppen to the north, Lombardy East to the east, and Misgund North and Liefde en Vriede to the south of Johannesburg.

The relocations have caused an uproar among residential groupings, which have accused the province of a lack of transparency, saying they were not called on to discuss the relocations.

Greater Johannesburg metropolitan council urbanisation director Tshepeso Mashinini said the relocations had been on the cards for months as part of the Gauteng government's rapid land development programme.

"We have thousands of people living in dangerous conditions who have no homes and we have vacant land in areas around Johannesburg where they can move. The relocations will take some time to complete and there will be a further process to go through before they can begin ... so residents will be given time to lodge complaints."

Mashinini said the relocation of the 5 000 landless families would make only a small dent in the estimated 20 000 families — or up to 160 000 people — in Gauteng who needed to be moved urgently. It was imperative to conduct negotiations in secrecy up to a certain stage to avoid land invasions of vacant sites identified for development.

A total of 5 250 state-owned sites had been set aside for the first phase of development and each family would have to apply to the Gauteng housing board for a subsidy, with most believed to qualify for the maximum R15 000 subsidy. Families which qualified for the subsidies would be able to build formal structures on land allocated to them. This meant they would not exacerbate the squatting crisis, he said.

Residents from neighbouring areas have voiced concerns about how the children from the new settlements would be educated, and what provision would be made to cope with the increased transport and health needs.

A Chartwell Landowners' Association spokesman said the organisation had not been consulted on the relocations or informed about them until recently. However, Mashinini said a town planning tribunal would hear objections before building could begin on identified sites.

Residents near newly allocated squatter land will have opportunity to air views

(310) Star 3/4/96

Squatters will not move to sites close to established Johannesburg residential areas earmarked for their occupation before residents get a chance to air their views at tribunals, the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council said yesterday.

Council urbanisation director Tshepeso Mashinini said almost 40 000 squatters were living on unstable land and were viewed by the council as emergency cases.

The earmarked sites are Bloubosrand and Witkoppen in the north, Lombardy East in the east, and Misgund and Liefde en Vrede in the south.

Residents could have their say at a tribunal scheduled for mid-May.

If the sites were approved, the relocations would probably begin in July or August, Mashinini said.

The time between now and July would be used to set up temporary services in the areas, and the relocations could take up to 18 months to complete, he said.

Assessments of services available in the areas and their capacity had been done and provision for the necessary schools, clinics and other amenities would be made where necessary.

A database had been established and listed families would be allocated plots. Official notification of the proposed sites in the north would probably take place on April 24. – Sapa

Defiant squatter leaders take land

(310) Sowetan 15/4/96

By Wilson Ramothata

SQUATTER leaders yesterday defied the authorities and allocated plots to more than 2 000 people near New Canada railway station outside Soweto.

Squatters from Mandelaville, the Orlando Masakhane informal settlement and Diepkloof said they would start erecting their shacks later this week.

The area has been divided into eight blocks, and each family has been allocated a site.

A spokesman for the squatters, Mr Samuel Mathebula, said the plots were "given" to them by a Mr Jeff Morutwane of Diepkoof, who claimed he owned the land.

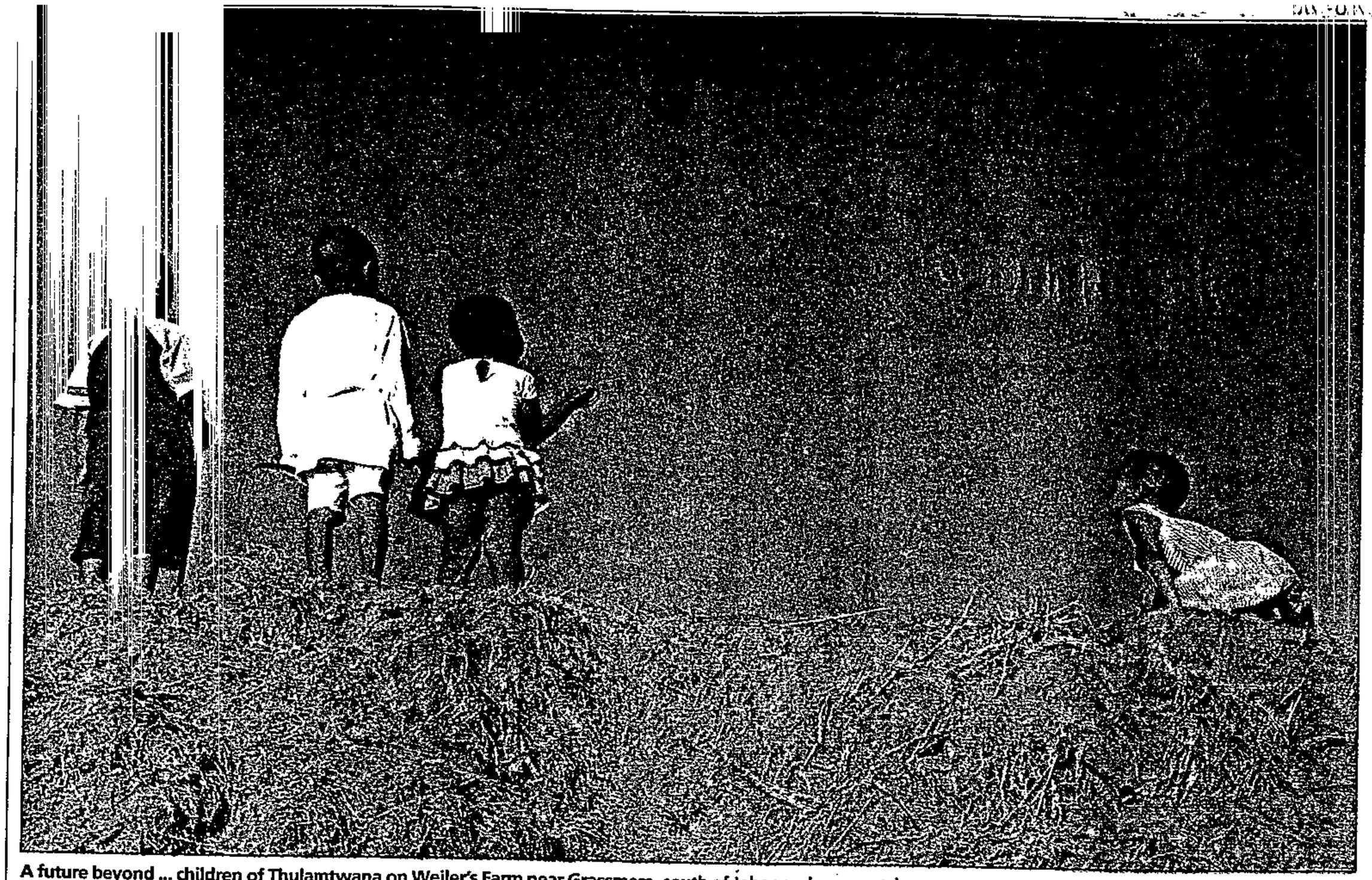
Morutwane could not be reached for comment.

Health risk

Mathebula said the squatters were forced to move out of Mandelaville because of poor living conditions. "Shacks are built right next to each other posing a serious health risk. And people use the area as a dumping ground – they even dump dead dogs here. So, we have exchanged Mandelaville for this piece of land," he said.

He added that the area was flooded with sewerage and that the toilets were always full.

Security officers from the Transitional Metropolitan Council were last week deployed in the area to monitor the situation after the squatters invaded the land.



A future beyond ... children of Thulamtwana on Weiler's Farm near Grassmere, south of Johannesburg, watch a soccer match from a soil embankment next to a sports ground near their home. Many homes have yet to be built and some families are living in marquees.

Displaced Moffat Park squatters are unhappy with their new farm sites

Star 23/4/96 (310)

By Hopewell Radebe
City Reporter

Joshua Nxele had vowed never to leave Johannesburg's Moffat Park where he had a modest shack. But at the weekend he found himself rebuilding his shack with his neighbours at Weiler's Farm, an informal settlement near Grasmere, south of Johannesburg.

He is one of hundreds of former Moffat Park squatters who agreed to be moved to 120sq m plots in the settlement, fondly nicknamed "Thulamtwana" (don't cry, child) because women and children have "shed tears for land and shelter".

Women, children sobbed

Nxele, who has been moving from one squatter camp to another over the past seven years, said it was "the sobbing of children and women" when council bulldozers came to destroy the shacks at Moffat Park that tortured him emotionally and psychologically.

He feels defeated because Moffat Park was much closer to the city, and he was able to walk to the nearby shops daily in search of employment. "We did not volunteer out of our good hearts to be moved where poverty and joblessness would make fun of us," he said. "We faced the fact that rich people do no want poor people as neighbours."

The Thulamtwana community is dissatisfied with the size of their plots. They want stands as big as those of people who first came to Weiler's Farm, which are between 200 and 300sq m apiece.

Facilities inadequate, says leader

Two marquees have been put up at the entrance to the area to accommodate newcomers without shelter.

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council has employed a security firm to stop those not on the register from entering the settlement to demand space.

There are temporary toilets and water supply, but Thulamtwana Eleven Committee general-secretary Andries Manene said these were inadequate.

Manene also said the cost of transport was a problem. It now costs squatters R12 a return trip into the city, where it used to cost only R3,80 from Moffat Park.

New home for Alex squatters

Sowetan 29/4/96 (310)

By Wilson Ramothata

THOUSANDS of squatters living at Far East Bank, near Alexandra Township, will be relocated to Diepsloot, north-west of Johannesburg, from today, the Eastern Northern Metropolitan Substructure said yesterday.

The chairperson of the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure (EMSS), Mrs Nkele Ntingane, said that registration of the squatters moving to the new area would take place before the relocation.

"All their building materials will be marked before they are transported to Diepsloot to avoid confusion," she said.

Ntingane appealed to the squatters to voluntarily relocate themselves and said if they failed to do so the Sheriff of the court would forcibly relocate them.

The Randburg Magistrate's Court last week granted the EMSS a relocation order to have the squatters removed from the area.

Ntingane said the land occupied by the squatters was earmarked for low-cost housing and people had been patiently waiting for its development. "Once the site is cleared, development will take place," she said.

She said the relocation, which was supposed to have taken place in March, was delayed because of logistical and administrative problems. "We are now pleased that the council has at last managed to succeed with the relocation," she said.

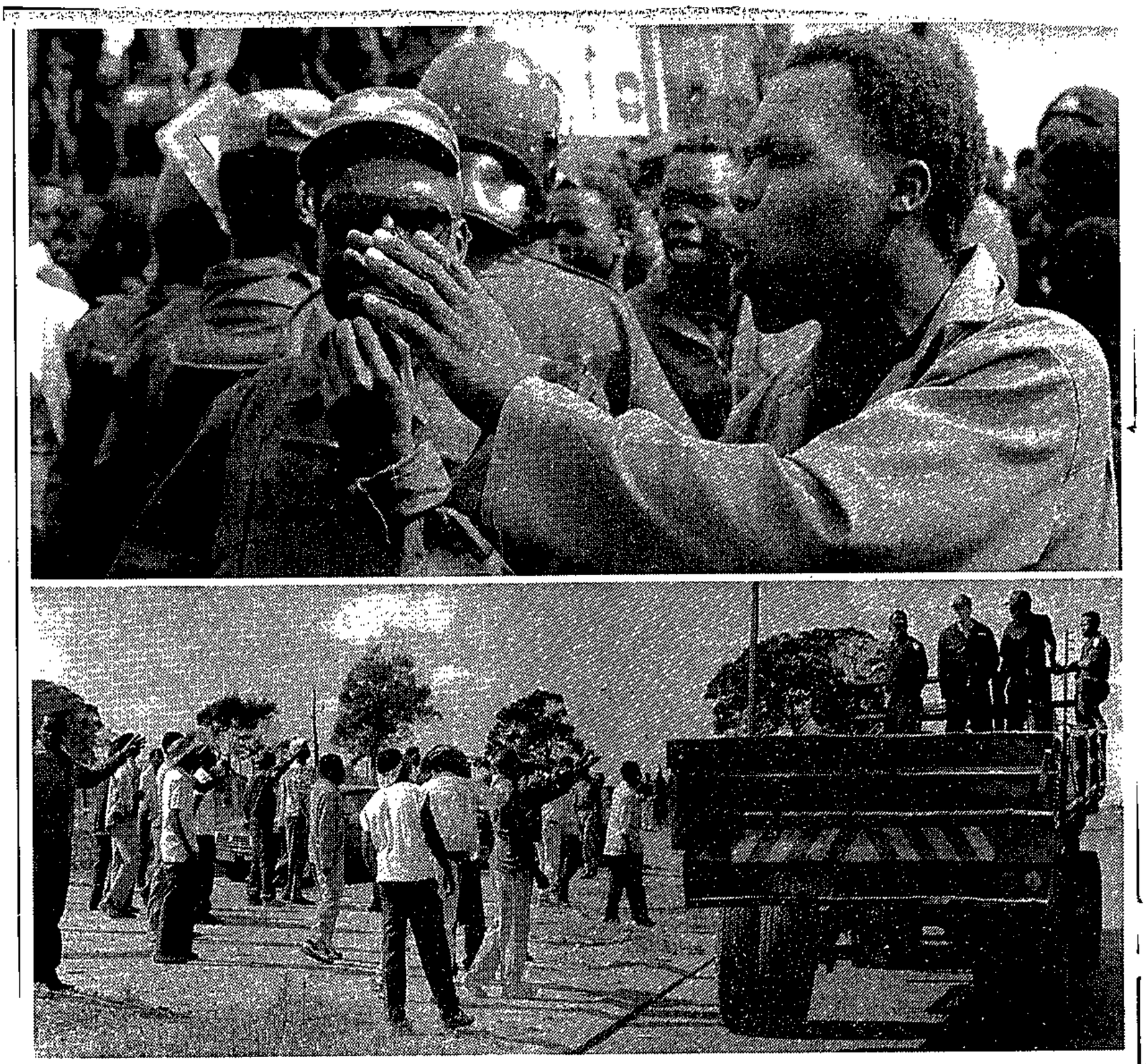
Squatter leader Mr Reuben Mathe said last week – responding to the court order granted to the EMSS to remove them – that the community strongly condemned the EMSS' application and the subsequent order.

He said the squatters would resist being moved from the area.

Meanwhile, squatters from Mandelaville, the Orlando Masakhane informal settlement and Diepkloof – all in Soweto – are apparently still bent on defying the authorities in their fight to settle on a disputed tract of land near New Canada railway station.

Yesterday afternoon a large crowd of people held a meeting on the land, apparently to plan their strategy in their fight to stay on the land.

The squatters have claimed that the land had been "given" to them by a Mr Jeff Morutwane of Diepkloof. But, Morutwane could not be reached for comment.



Angry squatters, top, from Far East Bank, Alexandra, oppose council plans to move them to Diepsloot, near Randburg. Others, below, voiced their feelings to personnel hired to monitor the move. Picture: GARTH LUMLEY

Squatters face deadline to move

(310) BD 30/4/96

Mduduzi ka Harvey

About 1 000 squatter households have been ordered to evacuate the Far East Bank area near Alexandra and move to Diepsloot near Randburg by Friday, or face the full force of the law.

Gauteng's provincial administration MEC Dan Mofokeng said the "might of the law" would be used to implement a court order granted by the Randburg Magistrate's Court last week to get the squatters moved by the deadline.

Gauteng safety and security minister Jesse Duarte visited the relocation co-ordinating centre yesterday, and said security in the entire Alexandra area would be stepped up to ensure the safety of residents and their property.

Yesterday a few families came forward to volunteer to be moved, but other squatters resisted plans for the move, saying they had not been consulted about the relocation plans.

Speaking for Sandton council, Dalene van Wyk said the squatters would be given two days to voluntarily move to the new site. If they failed to move, the sheriff of the court would have to enforce the court order.

She said that as soon as the reception area was fully prepared, the council's relocation facilitators would go into the area with loud hailers calling for the squatters to voluntarily move out.

Nkele Ntingane, the council executive committee chairman, said squatters who might want to inspect the reception area before moving there, would be provided with transport.

She said the area had been prepared with services, including water, toilet facilities, refuse removal and security.

The council's executive committee deputy chairman said yesterday he expected the process to be smooth, as security had been increased and a majority of the squatters had shown genuine interest in moving from the area.

Trickle of Alex squatters move out but rest dig in heels

(310) Star 1/5/96

By Anna Cox

About 20 families illegally occupying the Far East Bank of Alexandra were relocated voluntarily yesterday to a new site in Diepsloot, north of Randburg.

A bus was made available to take other squatters to see the new site and a few families took advantage of the offer.

The rest of the 3 500 squatters remained steadfast that they were not going to move.

A group of about 1 000 staged a protest march to the registration tent in the morning but dispersed without incident shortly after they were addressed by Eastern Metropolitan Substructure councillors.

Squatters are to be given until Friday to move voluntarily, but if they don't they will be forcefully evicted by the sheriff of the court in terms of an order granted in the Randburg Magistrates' Court.

MEC for Gauteng Provincial Administraion Dan Mofokeng, who visited the site on Monday, said the "full might of the law" would be used to implement the court order. MEC for Safety and Security Jessie Duarte said security within the entire Alexandra subregion would be stepped up to ensure the safety of all residents and their property.

Friday deadline set for evictions

Squatter leader Reuben Mathe said they would not leave and that if authorities looked for trouble, they would get it.

"We are not leaving the EMSS. We are Sandtonians, born and bred, and will not move to the Northern MSS, which has its own homeless people to accommodate. We live here, have jobs here and we cannot take our children out of school in the middle of the year. We were not consulted properly and will not leave. This is our land and we are entitled to stay. The only time they will take our shacks will be when everyone is dead," he said.

The African Renaissance Civic Movement, a non-political civic organisation, was at the camp yesterday to offer support to the squatters.

Secretary-general Manus Lottering said the Government could not move people around from squatter camp to squatter camp.

"People will only be moved to houses. The Government promised 150 000 houses and only two have been built. We will fight by whatever means necessary," he said.

EMSS executive committee chairman Nkele Ntingane said people had knowingly invaded the land illegally and could not be seen to be rewarded at the expense of law-abiders. "We are not dumping them. We are providing them with serviced land, including toilets and running water, which is more than they have here," she said.

150 000 homes promised, two built

NEWS NATIONAL

300 squatter families vow not to move

(210) Sowetan 2/5/96

No serviced sites and new relocation area too small, claims leader

By Mongadi Mafata

MORE THAN 300 squatter families at Far East Bank, outside Alexandra Township, vowed yesterday to resist any moves to be relocated to Diepsloot, north-west of Johannesburg.

The squatters have until tomorrow to move from Alexandra to Diepsloot.

Deputy chairman of Steve Biko squatter camp, Mr Phillip Makobe, told the community during a report-back meeting that he had inspected Diepsloot and was disappointed by conditions there.

He said there were no serviced sites and the area was the size on a football field and could barely accommodate all of them.

Amid shouts of: "*Siya hlala la! Re ya dula mo!*" (We stay here) Mokabe said they had been treated better by the previous government.

"If the Government handles our problems this way, then we still have a long way to go. The past government was far better than the present one," he added.

Chairman Mr John Malatji echoed his deputy's sentiments and said Diepsloot did not have tap water. He also disputed reports that 20 families had voluntarily moved from the area. Only 11 families moved to Diepsloot, he said.

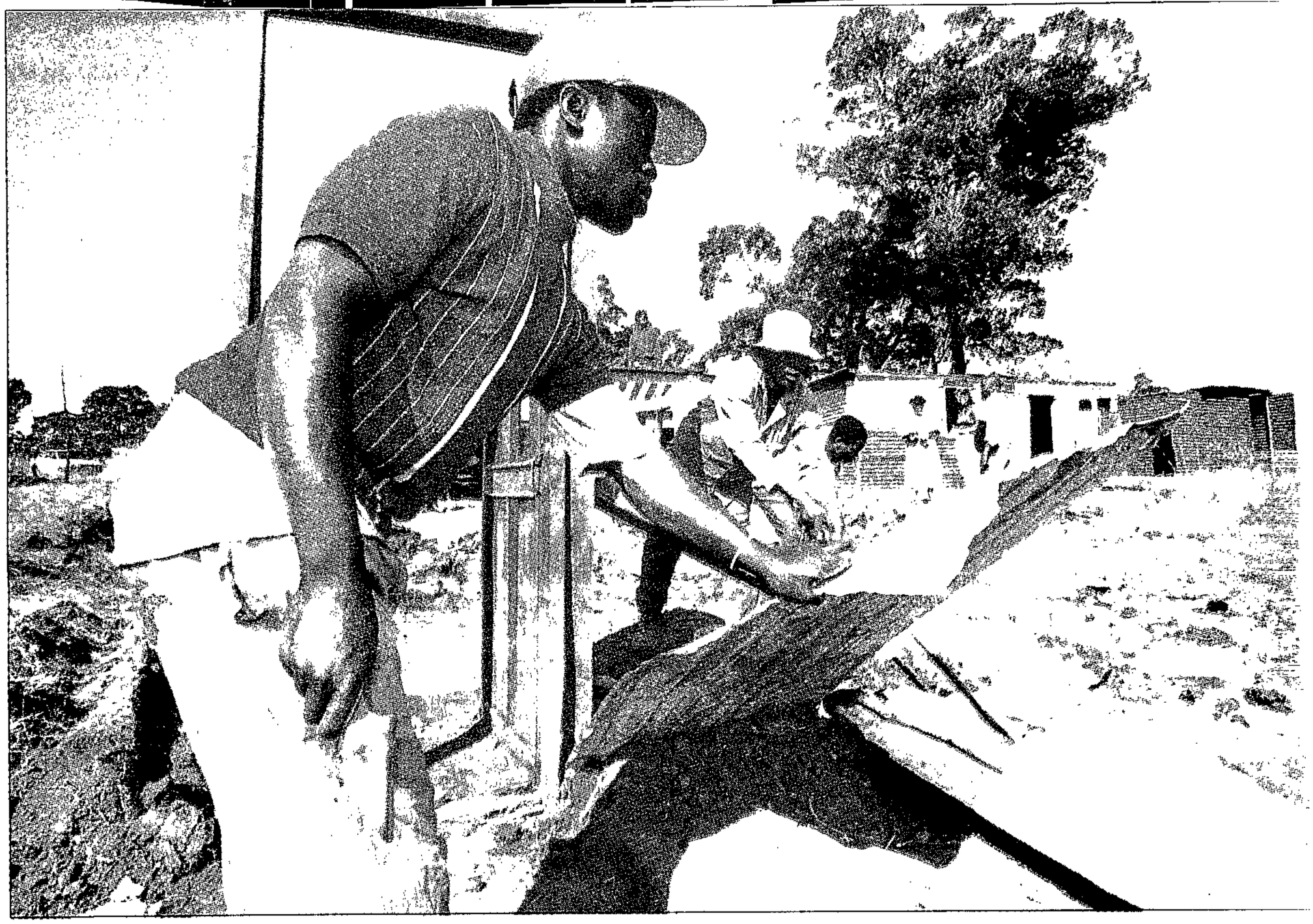
"Our area is 100 percent better than Diepsloot, which is serviced by a water tank. The Eastern Metropolitan Substructure wants to turn us into another Setshwetla," Malatji said in reference to a neighbouring squatter camp known for its cramped conditions.

Mandated leaders

The squatters mandated their leaders to resist the move to Diepsloot. They complained about the lack of toilets there and the higher costs they would have to pay for transport from the new area to their places of work.

Leader of the recently formed African Renaissance Civic Movement, Mr Manas Lottering, accused the government of attending to issues only when whites were affected.

"We are not prepared to be kicked around like a soccer ball from one squatter camp to another. We voted them into power and they should treat us with respect," Lottering told the squatters.



ON THE MOVE: Workmen break down a squatter shack on the Far East Bank in Alexandra before the voluntary relocation to Diepsloot PHOTOGRAPHS: TJ LEMC

Alex squatters divided on the merits of new home

(310) Star 4/5/96

By CHRISTINA STUCKY

All that Anna Mokhine has ever wanted is a plot of land she can call her own. For her, relocating from the Far East bank of Alexandra to Diepsloot has been a blessing.

"I am satisfied now," she said with a big smile yesterday as she stood, deed in hand, looking at her 7m by 12m stand with her baby glancing over her shoulder.

Emily Bethuan, on the other hand, is not at all happy about living in Diepsloot. "I don't like it here. It is too far," she said, as she piled sheets of corrugated iron that had just been unloaded from a truck on to her stand. "My husband works in Highgate. He can't come here every day from work. My child and I will only see him on weekends."

Mokhine and Bethuan are two of about 80 families who have relocated voluntarily from Alexandra's Far East Bank to Diepsloot in Randburg, just north of the Fourways Mall, with the aid of the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure.

The deadline for the voluntary relocation of squatters ended yesterday. Almost 1 000 families remain on the Far East Bank, refusing to move north, away from their children's schools and their places of employment in the Sandton area.



A BLESSING: Anna Mokhine signs a document giving her ownership rights to a plot in Diepsloot

From now on they are on their own – and at risk of being forcibly removed by the Randburg sheriff, who has orders to implement an eviction order granted to the Eastern MSS on April 22.

"The government wants me to go to Diepsloot. It is a nice site and I am safe there. Here I am not safe," Mokhine said while her shack on the Far East Bank was being torn down and loaded on to a truck.

Although she would prefer to stay near Alexandra, Bethuan grudgingly agreed to the relocation because "they said the police will come to break our houses".

Both women recently moved to the Far East bank from Alexandra, where they had lived for between 10 and 12 years. Life in the squatter camp on the banks of the Jukskei River offered a chance to escape Alexandra's overcrowded conditions.

The land on the Far East Bank has been earmarked to alleviate precisely these crowded conditions – but it is for Alexandra residents who have been waiting for years to get a plot on the land designated for the development of their homes, and not for illegal land-invaders.

The Eastbank Civic Association has been calling for the removal of the squatters even longer than the Eastern MSS.

The squatters' leaders have vowed not to move until the end of the year, by which time they say they will have organised new jobs and new schools.

The council insists that the squatters have been given adequate warning and provided with sufficient information on the relocation.

But in spite of genuine attempts on the part of the council to solve the matter as peacefully as possible, there are more confrontations on the cards.

On Monday, police fired rubber bullets "to calm tensions", as one daily newspaper reported, when squatters tried to prevent a family from moving to Diepsloot.

This coming Monday, when it is believed the sheriff will move in with his men to implement the eviction order, tensions are likely to flare again.

A handwritten placard dangling from a pylon in the squatter camp reads "Don't ever give up!" – lending credence to the fear.

Sheriff goes in under police guard to moye Alex squatters

Star 6/15/96

(310)

By Anna Cox

A large contingent of police and emergency services was on standby in Alexandra this morning to protect the sheriff of the court who was to start evicting 3 500 squatters illegally occupying the Far East Bank.

Squatters are still adamant they will not be moved and said they would resist any attempts to relocate them.

The squatters were given until Friday last week to relocate voluntarily to Diepsloot, north of Randburg. Yesterday they decided to stay put. Leader John Malatji said it was the unanimous decision of the people that the bulldozers would have to move them first before they bulldozed their shacks.

Malatji said the people wanted more time to organise their jobs and schools for the children.

Diepsloot informal settlement residents recently resettled on a nearby site said they did not want the Far East Bank squatters.

Community leader Lucky Mosimane said there were many people in the Northern Metropolitan Substructure area who had cast their votes in that area who were waiting for houses.

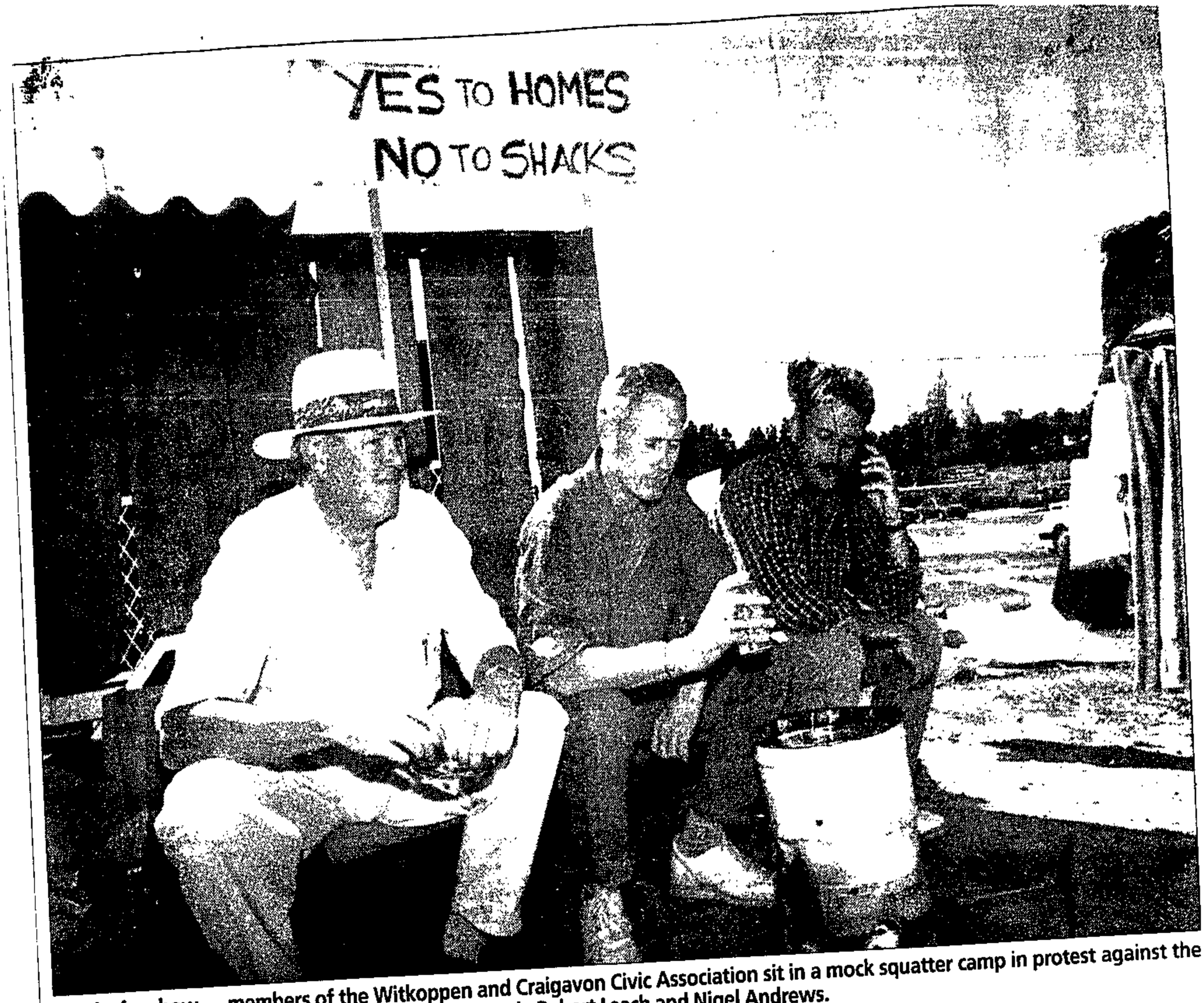
"There will be fighting today. We don't want people from Alexandra, we have our own people waiting for land," he said.

Eastern Metropolitan Substructure executive committee chairperson Nkele Ntingane said land invasion could not be tolerated as it stood in the way of development of an integrated, viable city which offered quality of life to all its citizens through appropriate development and efficient service delivery.

"We have a commitment to the entire community of the EMSS, not to certain sectors of the community, and it is against this background that the relocation of people living on the Far East Bank is necessary. That community invaded land while others living in extremely stressful conditions have been waiting patiently for development. We therefore did not negotiate with them but did consult them on the process.

"The land has been earmarked for housing development. Alex houses about 400 000 people, one of the highest densities per square kilometre in the country and development is urgently required.

"We are concerned that the community of the Far East Bank did not avail themselves of the opportunity to voluntarily relocate to Diepsloot. We have all the facilities available to assist them," said Ntingane.



Shacks for show ... members of the Witkoppen and Craigavon Civic Association sit in a mock squatter camp in protest against the Rapid Land Development Plan. From left are Ted Vonk, Robert Leach and Nigel Andrews.

'Shack camp' built to protest against land plan

Star 6/5/96

By Lorna Zokufa
City Reporter

A civic group in Fourways, Sandton, built a mock squatter camp over the weekend in protest against the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council's (GJTMC) Rapid Land Development Programme (RLDP).

The camp, made up of four shacks, was open to viewing by the surrounding community.

Between the small wooden shacks, with zinc roofs and plastic sheeting as windows, were washing lines.

Members of the Witkoppen and Craigavon Civic Associations (WCCA) sat around a barrel in which a fire had been lit and pretended to be squatters.

"Local residents need to be made aware of what effect this RLDP will have on them, and also really get a feel of what a squatter camp looks like.

"In this way, the community will be able to see the necessity of submitting their objection letters," chairman of the WCCA, Robert Leach, said.

The programme is part of the council's approach to supply housing to 250 000 people.

The chairman of the council's housing and urbanisation committee, Lindsey Bremner, said the most disadvantaged people would be offered land in five of the areas that have already been released throughout Greater Johannesburg.

Leach said although they did not object to the RLDP in its entirety, they were concerned at the manner in which shack dwellers were treated.

"We do agree that homeless people need to be housed, but the local authorities also need to consult residents who will be affected by the programme and the squatter community itself before such a programme is implemented," Leach added.

When Bremner announced the areas earlier this year, she said that although there would be public participation, it would not undermine the rights of the Government to make decisions.

Although the shacks have been taken down, Leach said mock-up camps would be built every weekend until May 21, the deadline for submissions on the RLDP.



EYEBALL THAT: Part-time council workers executing the court order to demolish the Far East Bank squatter camp take time off to admire pornographic magazines found in one of the shacks PHOTOGRAPH: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Change of heart as squatters decide they quite like Diepsloot

(310) Star 11/5/96

By CHRISTINA STUCKY

The deserted, rubbish-strewn landscape of the Far East Bank of Alexandra stood in stark contrast to the hectic activity at Diepsloot as families continued to move from one site to the other yesterday.

The week began with heightened tension as squatters on the Far East Bank refused to moved to Diepsloot, north of Fourways, and clashed with police.

By the middle of the week, squatters were demolishing their shacks and helping Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council officials to identify community members for registration at Diepsloot.

A representative of the Randburg sheriff's office said Monday's tensions were caused by "the lies the squatter leaders told the people. They said they would be put in a 'deep trench'," rather than a stretch of land named Diepsloot.

On Tuesday, he loaded about 20 people on to a truck to take them to the site. "Once they saw what a nice place we're giving them, there was a tidal wave of people who wanted to move."



LONG HAUL: A squatter on the move PHOTO: THEMBA HADEBE

Every day since then, an average of 300 households had moved. However, the representative said the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure's council had vastly underestimated the number of squatters. About 1 200 families had moved and 1 000 more were waiting to go.

At Diepsloot, people queued from early morning to be allocated plots. Some were angered by the slowness of the process and the fact that several shacks and belongings had been moved while their owners remained on the Far East Bank because of a lack of transportation.

A metropolitan council representative said he and his colleagues were so overwhelmed by the flood of people that they had asked the sheriff's office to slow down the move to ease pressure on registrars in Diepsloot.

"It's become a bit of a nightmare here," he said.

An influx of people from other areas hoping for a few square metres of land had added to the problem, he said.

Three squatter leaders sat behind the registrars, identifying members of the Far East Bank community. They said they were satisfied with the process, but echoed concern about the squatters who had been left behind.

The move is expected to be completed late next week.

Far East squatters find new life hard

(310) Star 13/5/96

By Anna Cox

Alexandra Far East Bank squatters relocated to Diepsloot by the Randburg sheriff have expressed great unhappiness at being so far from their jobs and children's schools.

One family in which both husband and wife work has calculated that between them they will be catching 12 taxis a day and spending R32 a day, or R640 a month, on transport.

Michiak Tibane works near the city centre and his wife Mary works as a domestic in Bellevue East. To get to work they will have to rise by 4am, face a one km walk to the main road, take a taxi to Fourways, one to the city centre and one to their places of employment. Mary works until 7pm, which means she will arrive home well after 9pm each day.

Shops are also far away. Fourways Mall about 13km away is the closest shopping centre. "We buy from the spaza shops here but their prices are very expensive," said Tibane.

Another family with a transport problem is the Mahlo family. Wife Violet is unemployed and her husband works in Alexandra. He too has to get three taxis at more than R10 a day to commute to work.

"Today is the first day he went to work from here. I think it will be hard for him. But we had no choice but to move," she said.

Each family has been given a 250 sq m site. There is one chemical toilet for seven families. Water is brought in every day. They will have to pay R11 a month for services.

Midrand site approved for homeless communities

(310) Star 16/5/96

By Hopewell Radebe
City Reporter

Homeless and squatter communities in Tembisa and Ivory Park are counting the days before they own land in the area following the approval of a R9,4-million land development project which will deliver about 1 800 serviced residential sites.

Urban development deputy manager Alida Kotzee said the North East Rand Metropolitan Council had launched Operation Mayibuye at the weekend to release land with basic services in terms of the Development Facilitation Act.

The project is part of Gauteng housing and local government department's rapid land development scheme.

About 117ha situated within the Greater Midrand Metropolitan Substructure, will be developed into 1 800 residential stands.

Sites will be provided for three primary and one secondary school and business facilities.

Kotzee said sites for community facilities and parks had also been provided.

The exact location of the settlement has not been revealed to avoid illegal occupation.

Metro Development executive manager Keith Naicker said the area had been chosen because it was close to light industrial and commercial business development and within walking distance for workers.

Kotzee said contractors would start land surveying and service implementation next week. Basic services like water, sewerage and roads would be installed before the land was allocated in June.

Alex squatters still await land

About 1 000 squatters in Alexandra's Far East Bank were still waiting for relocation to another site, Sol Cowan, deputy chairman for the executive committee of the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure, said yesterday.

The Eastern MSS was negotiating "on three fronts" to find land, Cowan said. (310)

Close to 2 000 Far East Bank squatters have been relocated to Diepsloot, north of Fourways, over the past two weeks, but there is no more available land there.

Once the new site had been identified, the remaining squatters would be moved "very soon", he said. – Staff Reporter

Star 18/5/96

1 000 squatters are costing millions

(310) Star 20/5/96

Idle contract workers play football with residents while R100 000 a day goes down drain because of a blunder

By Anna Cox

The taxpayers' bill for the once-disputed relocation of some 3 000 squatters from the Far East Bank of Alexandra to Diepsloot is rising by more than R100 000 a day.

Their move came to a sudden halt last week when the land to which they were being relocated north of Randburg was pronounced "full" before all squatters had been moved.

The council is urgently seeking new land for the remaining 1 000 people still waiting to be relocated.

Randburg sheriff, T C Siebert, in charge of the relocation, is charging R114 000 for the contractor whose workers are being kept idle while waiting for new land to become available for the leftover squatters outside Alexandra.

Penalties to the contractor for the past 10 working days amount to R1,14-million. Coupled with R1,8-million already spent on the removal at the beginning of the month of about 2 000 squatters, has brought the bill so far to some R2,3-million.

Another estimated R1,2-million, excluding daily penalties, is still required to move the remaining squatters once new land has been found.

Sheriff Siebert has decided to stay on site during the delay to prevent any land invasions by new squatters. He would not give a detailed breakdown of the costs but added that they were "not unreasonable" for the number of trucks and staff on site.

In the meantime, the squatters, who at first were opposed to the move and had violent clashes with the police, have during the waiting time befriended the sheriff's mainly white workers. They mingle freely and have impromptu braais and soccer matches on site. Squatter leader John Malatji said people had been having "great fun" with the workers.

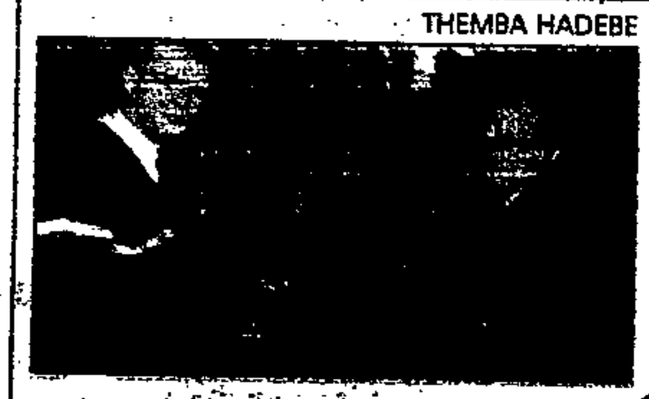
The number living on the Far East Bank had been seriously misjudged because there was more than one family living under one roof, said Eastern Metropolitan Substructure housing committee chairman Lyndsay Bremner.

"The sheriff also could not assess which people were original residents and which were new."

The Democratic Party has called for urgent steps to be taken to ensure that land is released immediately so that the process can be completed. It is also calling on the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council to reimburse the costs to the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure.

Councillor Anchen Dreyer said: "There is great urgency in finding new land. Every day is costing us R100 000 and the costs are mounting dramatically. We have not budgeted for this."

THEMBA HADEBE



Getting the chop ... Saxonwold residents Dave (left) and Charles Dewar are angry about the cutting down of more than 30 trees at the zoo.

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THEMBA HADEBE



Getting the chop ... Saxonwold residents Dave (left) and Charles Dewar are angry about the cutting down of more than 30 trees at the zoo.

Public invited to policy talks

Gauteng Department of Conservation and the Environment has invited the public to take part in national policy on the environment. Five hearings will take place but the department's good intentions have been made public at very short notice. Most interested parties will be hard-pressed to attend Johannesburg's only hearing today at the Gauteng Legislature because notification of the hearings was only faxed to The Star late on Friday. For more information, contact Thesipo Nage on (011) 498-5719.

Prince charming

London – British schoolgirls have a new heart-throb – 13-year-old Prince William. Teenage magazines say their readers have developed a passionate interest in the prince. Top-selling teen magazine Smash Hits is giving away 250 000 "I Love Willy" stickers to adorn the satchels and pencil cases of the nation. Smash Hits' editor said: "Our 13 and 14-year-old readers see him as classic boyfriend material." – Reuters.



Squatter invasion of city parks growing daily

By Anna Cox

A disturbing 80% of Greater Johannesburg's parks and public open spaces now have squatters, and urgent action must be taken to stop the land invasions.

City councillor Claire Quail says the estimate comes from the Greater Johannesburg Parks Department which has warned that, although there were at present only pockets of squatters in most of the city's parks, the numbers were growing daily with people arriving in the city looking for work.

The city did not have the budget for major relocations, and preventive action should be taken immediately to prevent another Moffat Park and Alexandra Far East Bank situation, which cost the city's ratepayers millions of rands, she said.

"The more people are allowed to invade the parks, the more it will cost taxpayers to eventually move them. It is essential action be taken immediately."

The conditions under which these homeless people were living were also inhumane and something should be done to alleviate their plight, Quail added.

Citing just one example, she said the number of squatters living in the Melrose bird sanctuary had doubled over the past few months. The problem had become so bad that the squatters were catching birds and eating them.

They were using the river to bathe and wash in, and water which was probably very contaminated to cook with, said Quail.

But council planning, urbanisation and environment chairman Lindsay Bremner said policing was not the answer. Various projects to address homelessness were already under way. These included reception areas, which had been successful, and a shelter programme providing 2 000 units in the inner city.

The reception areas would be reassessed and re-evaluated, and the shelters programme should be extended to suburban areas.

S (310) Star 22/5/96

Last of Alex squatters are on the move

(310)

By Anna Cox

Star 24/5/96

The relocation of the last 950 squatter families remaining on the Far East Bank of Alexandra resumed yesterday afternoon and is expected to be completed early next week.

Their relocation to a site in Diepsloot was stopped for some time due to there not being enough land for the entire squatter community.

The Randburg sheriff ,who is conducting the removals, has been charging the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure R114 000 a day in penalties while authorities looked for an alternative site.

Penalties had amounted to R1,6-million by Wednesday. Legal and relocation costs for the 2 000 squatters already moved amounted to R1,8-million and an estimated R1,3-million will still be spent on moving the remaining people – bringing the total to about R4,7-million to date.

The expropriation of the new 22-hectare site at Diepsloot was approved by the Northern Metropolitan Substructure earlier this week.

Executive chairman of the NMSS Pule Buthelezi warned however that land invasion would not be tolerated and no further expansion of the Diepsloot reception area would take place.

Speaking at the special council meeting called to approve the expropriation, Buthelezi said the approval formed part of the reception areas programme to alleviate a crisis situation.

"This resolution was taken in the spirit of co-operative governance. The NMSS does not operate in isolation. At the same time the point must once again be made that land invasions cannot be tolerated and this council's resolution specifically states that no further expansion of the Diepsloot reception area will take place after this relocation," he said.

Far East Bank squatter saga nears end

(310) Star 25/6/96

By ANNA COX

The saga of the Far East Bank of Alexandra ends this week as the last 1 000 remaining squatters are to be relocated to a new site in Diepsloot, north of Randburg, by Tuesday.

Moves by the Gauteng government to get housing built on the site are in full swing following the controversy surrounding the invasion of the area by 3 500 squatters, and their subsequent removal, which saw the first demonstration of fury by black property owners protecting their property rights.

The land invasion cost the taxpayer R4,5-million in legal fees, relocation costs and penalties charged by the Randburg sheriff when the first relocation site filled up and authorities had to find another site urgently.

The story of the Far East Bank began in August last year, when about 20 squatters moved on to the land.

Some 7 000 low-cost houses are to be built on the land. Alexandra residents have been on a waiting list for the housing for many years, and some have even paid deposits of R250 for pieces of land.

Neighbouring Kelvin and Buccleuch residents put pressure on the authorities to remove the small group of squatters, but nothing was done and the camp grew daily. By the end of April about 3 500 squatters were living there. They named their settlement Steve Biko Village.

GARY BERNARD



Men at work ... the first of three phases to build more than 5 600 low-cost housing units on the Far East Bank in Alexandra has started.

Housing construction starts in Alex as squatters relocated

(310) Star 29/5/96

By Anna Cox

The relocation of squatters from the Far East Bank of Alexandra to Diepsloot is not yet complete, but Gauteng Province has already started constructing low-cost housing in the area.

The first house is expected to be completed within the next eight weeks.

A total of 5 615 units are to be built over three phases. Phase one, with a budget of R11,5-million through Provincial Housing Board and Independent Development Trust funds, will have 918 units and is expected to be complete by July.

Applications for these units have already been received and approved. Residents have paid R250 deposit for occupation and have qualified for the housing subsidy. Houses are selling between R16 000 and R42 000.

The construction work of phase one is being carried out by Alexandra builders.

Phase two will see [redacted] construction of 1 187 units and phase three 3 510 units. A budget for phase two and three is in the pipeline. Gauteng liaison officer Jubie Matlou said the department was working closely with the Alexandra Civic Association, Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association and the Far East Bank Civic Association.

Squatters threaten to invade land

(310) Sowetan 7/6/96

By Charity Bhengu

EMOTIONS are running high among the 300 stranded former Far East Bank families at Diepsloot squatter camp near Randburg. They have been sleeping in the open since last week.

Their frustrations heightened on Tuesday when the Eastern Metropolitan Substructure ordered them out of the squatter camp.

They resisted the order and instead appealed to the Northern Metropolitan Substructure to come to their rescue.

At the time of going to press, the homeless squatters were still waiting for the NMSS who had promised to come up with a solution to the problem.

Their leader, Mr Ruben Mathe, threatened that if the NMSS council did not resolve their problem by late yesterday they would invade "any land we come across".

"We have been sent from pillar to post. We were evicted from the Far East Bank and promised land at Diepsloot. Now the EMSS has refused to allocate us plots. We have had enough."

He has the full support of his destitute followers, who said they had nowhere to go.

A squatter, Mr Renello Mathamala, said: "The people (from the government) we voted for to lead us are bent on treating us like dirt and have reduced us to mere criminals."

The EMSS said the squatters had apparently been misled by a former leader, whose name *Sowetan* has, who sold them fraudulent copies of registration cards for relocation to Diepsloot.

EMSS executive committee chairperson Ms Nkele Ntingane said her council accepted responsibility for the relocation of the Far East Bank squatters "but cannot tolerate the action by a person posing as a community leader who is intent on sabotaging the relocation process".

"We are committed to improving community life for all and such actions stand in our way."

Meanwhile, homeless men and women yesterday spent another day away from work in a bid to resolve the matter. Most of them said they had not been able to bath or wash their clothes since last week. "We are really desperate and do not know what to do."



An unfed little girl at Diepsloot cries for attention from her mother, who is more concerned about finding a place to live. These are some of the homeless squatters who have been sleeping in the cold with nowhere to cook and bath since they were forcefully removed from the Far East Bank, near Alexandra, a week ago.

PIC: MBUZENI ZULU

Bleak year ahead for Diepsloot folk

(310) Sowetan 12/6/96

Metropolitan substructures will not provide short-term facilities

By Charity Bhengu

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE who have been moved from squatter camps around Johannesburg and relocated at Diepsloot near Randburg face yet another bleak year of poor living conditions and inadequate water supplies.

Authorities of the Eastern and Northern Metropolitan Substructures told *Sowetan* yesterday that there were no plans to build houses, schools, creches, clinics or shops in the area in which more than 8 000 people have been resettled.

EMSS spokeswoman Ms Daleen van Wyk yesterday said the people could use municipal clinics in Bryanston and Randburg – many kilometres away from their Diepsloot settlement.

"Plans to develop the area are a long-term programme and will not happen this year," she said

NMSS spokesman Mr Edwin Dacoomb stressed that the relocation of people at Diepsloot was a temporary measure before permanent sites were found for them.

"This is a reception area which had to be adopted as an emergency measure for people who were under threat of being washed away by the Jukskei river in Alexandra township," he said.

Rebuild shack

A woman outside the Diepsloot settlement was yesterday busy trying to rebuild her shack for the umpteenth time.

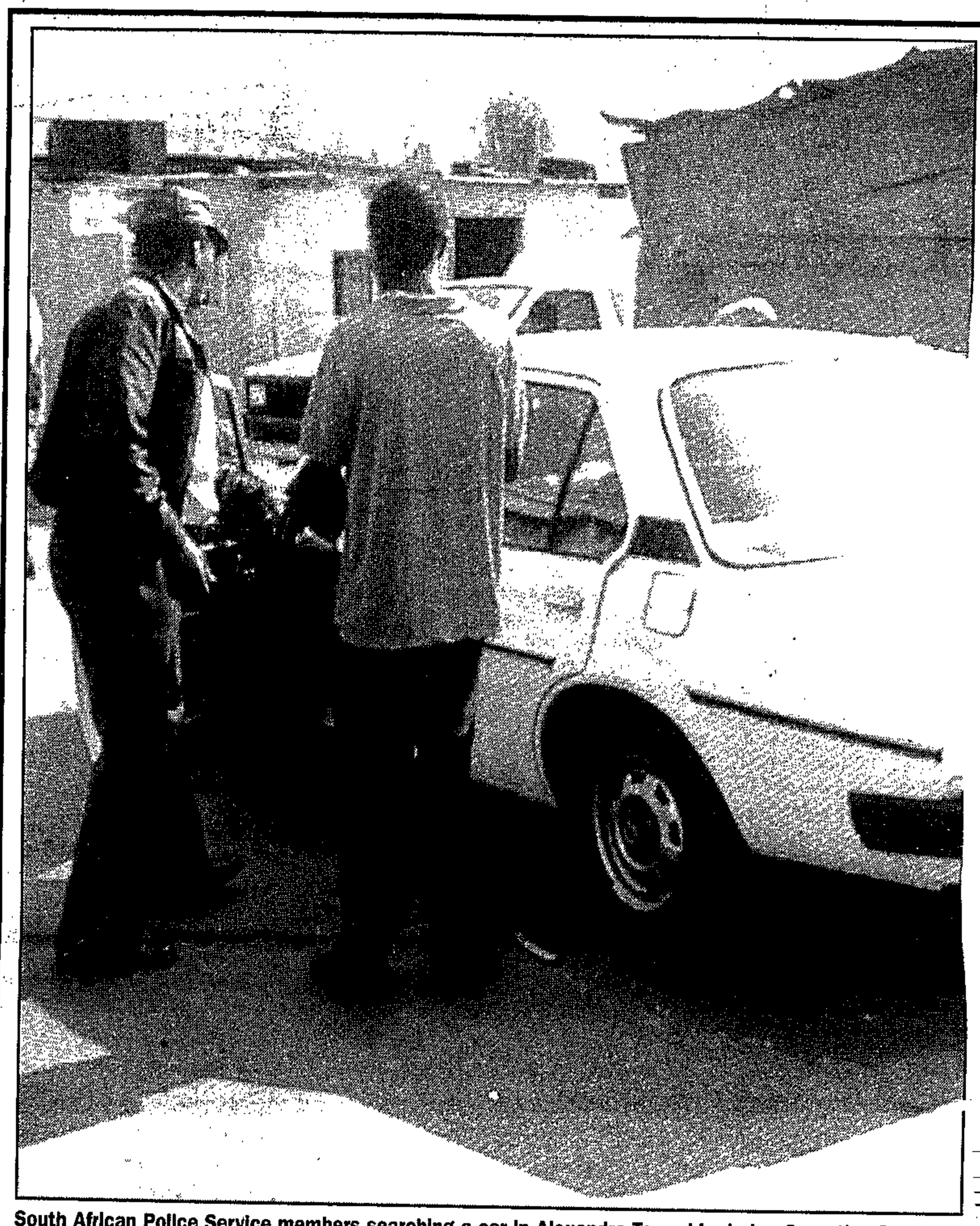
Mrs Elisa Makhurupetshi said: "We have tried to persuade the city council officials to give us land but have failed. Our children are falling sick from sleeping in the open."

Makhurupetshi is one of the 300 families who have been sleeping in the open for the past two weeks.

Mr Ruby Mathang of the NMSS said people such as Makhurupetshi were using children to gain their (NMSS's) sympathy. "We will not help them. They must return to where they came from.

"We gave sites to the 950 people who had voluntarily registered for the relocation. The sheriff of the court then sealed the place and guarded it," he said.

Mathang said the people who are now stranded outside Diepsloot had only themselves to blame. They had initially resisted the move from Alexandra's Far East Bank. "We have done our best to relocate them."



South African Police Service members searching a car in Alexandra Township during Operation Roolkat, which was initiated last Friday. The operation is part of the anti-crime plan that will be announced in Parliament this week by national Police Commissioner George Fivas. Dagga was found in the car.

Naturena indignant about squatter site

(310) Sowetan 15/7/96

By Themba Sepotokele

RESIDENTS of Naturena, south of Johannesburg, have lodged an appeal with the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council to intervene in the planned relocation of squatters to the area.

In a 53-page petition signed by more than 650 people last week, residents appealed to the GJTMC planning department to stop the resettlement at Naturena of squatters from the Misgund North informal camp in Lenasia.

The squatters are scheduled to be resettled in October and residents plan to use every means at their disposal to stop the move.

In a petition delivered to the chief executive officer of the GJTMC, Professor Nicky Padayachee, residents said there had been a lack of communication and no consultation as required by the council's policy and the Reconstruction and Development Programme before the resettlement was planned.

Ignores strategic goals

Residents said the proposed resettlement ignored the strategic goals of the Urban Development Strategy, which stipulates that low-cost housing should not be part of an up-market suburb. The resettlement would also be a health hazard because no environmental impact study was done as required by the Environmental Conservation Act.

To make matters worse, they said, the Naturena Civic Organisation was not informed about the move.

The residents said that as citizens and ratepayers of the country, they demanded that their case and their objections be heard.

A resident said: "To have squatters in our area will lower the value of our houses. This should not be allowed to happen."

Padayachee has given residents an undertaking that the council will discuss the matter. "An option would be to put the issue on the agenda of the Petitions and Public Participations Committee's meeting scheduled for July 30," he said.

48 000 residents to get electricity

(127) (56) Sowetan 15/7/96

By Josias Charle

ABOUT 48 000 Soshanguve residents are to benefit from a new R29 million electricity project launched at the weekend.

Under the project 7 500 homes have been electrified, benefiting the communities in sections FF, GG, HH, JJ and LL. At least 19 schools and 37 other stands will also have access to electricity.

The "switch-on" was performed by Soshanguve mayor Mr O Lukhuleni. Several parliamentarians including Deputy Education Minister Father Smangaliso Mkhatshwa attended the ceremony.

Lukhuleni urged residents to continue paying for their services as this would allow the council to be in a position to render better services to all.

"The special relationship that exists between a local authority and its residents places a responsibility and obligation on each citizen. A local authority and the services it renders can only be as good as the support and financial contributions it receives from its residents," Lukhuleni said.

The driving force behind the project, local councillor Mr Benny Makena, said the project has set an example of what can be achieved if the cooperation between the community, local authorities and developers was sound. He said the project was completed in seven months.

Makena said in under the project, 7 500 homes have been electrified as well as 19 schools and 37 stands and about 48 000 people will now have access to electricity.

Makena said the project was financed by the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council.

"This project was labour-intensive. About 302 residents were employed and benefited by about R1,5 million in wages," he said.

Editor dies in accident

By Victor Mecoamere

THE EDITOR of *The Sunday Independent* and *New Nation* supplement *Higher Education Review*, Mrs Karen McGregor, has died in a car accident in KwaZulu-Natal.

McGregor's 18-year-old daughter, also named Karen, who was an architecture student, also died in the accident which occurred on the N2 highway between Izingolweni and Harding last Thursday.

McGregor's husband Mr William Saunderson-Meyer, who is the communications and development director at the University of Natal, and their other daughter Amy (16) were injured in the accident.

Amy reportedly broke a collar bone and cracked a rib.

Saunderson-Meyer is in the intensive care unit of a private hospital but is reportedly recovering well.

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New register of Gauteng homeless communities

(310) Star 17/7/96

By Hopewell Radebe
City Reporter

Local authorities are opening housing bureaux to assist the Gauteng Department of Housing and Land Affairs in compiling a list of homeless communities.

Gauteng department of Housing and Land Affairs spokesman Jubie Matlou said all South African citizens buying housing sites and building or buying houses, irrespective of whether they could afford to or not, would have to register at their council administration offices around Gauteng.

He said concerned residents should visit their respective council offices to register, including those who had been registered on different waiting lists for years under the previous government housing system.

"Unfortunately, the department cannot rely on the housing lists compiled by the former regime on a racially based format which, in some cases, were subject to corruption and nepotism," Matlou said.

He said there was a pressing need for the compilation of uniform, transparent and non-racial waiting lists to counter queue-jumping and to bring the process of delivery of houses to a fair and equitable level.

He said the Gauteng government needed to know how many houses would be needed to alleviate the problem of homelessness, plan for a future strategy and balance areas showing an irregular spread of housing needs across the province.

Gauteng residents have until October 15 to register for this particular purpose.

The process is also hoped to assist the government to launch new housing projects using subsidies and to identify prospective home owners through a priority list.

Matlou said unforeseen circumstances had prevented the Greater Johannesburg Council from opening the bureau specially adopted to address these needs in the area yesterday like the rest of local councils in the province.

The number for general enquiries is 080-111-4886.

200 residents face losing homes

(310) (HH)

Sowetan 30/7/96

By Dan Fuphe

MORE than 200 residents of Wattville, near Benoni on the East Rand, will find themselves homeless if Hulett Metals demolishes their homes in keeping with Government safety regulations.

The more than 40 families built the informal houses on an empty lot adjacent to Hulett three years ago with the permission of the old Daveyton City Council.

But Hulett Metal insists that the residents are risking their health because the metals produced by the company emit powerful gases that pollute the air around the area.

The law requires that there be a buffer area between the factory and the surrounding residential areas.

The company's technical manager, Mr John Askeland, said since 1993 the company had made representations to the now defunct Wattville town council not to allow the building of informal housing in the area.

"Hulett Metals is the largest secondary aluminium operation in Africa and its products include aluminium casting ingots, powder, master alloys and deoxidants," Askeland said.

"As with many heavy industries there are risks associated with the production process. The adjacent site is therefore important as a buffer area."

The Wattville Civic Association argues that if the company complies with Government regulations many people will lose their homes.

Black firm forced to close down

(310) Sowetan 30/8/96

By Joshua Raboroko

FIVE squatter camps could pose a health hazard in Soweto when about 120 portable toilet cleaners lose their jobs on Thursday.

Portable toilets have been strategically placed in the squatter camps to alleviate the shortage of essential services, particularly ablution facilities.

Easy Loo manager Mr Sam Matona said the application to renew his contract to service the informal settlements had been terminated by the Greater Johannesburg Tender Board.

The contract has now been awarded to a white-owned company. "The selection of a white company smacks of racism because the board favours white contractors," charged Matona.

Greater Johannesburg TMC board adjudicator Mr Greg Karimalidis denied the claims and said Matona's contract had expired. The board had invited applications and Matona did not apply.

He added that the council thought he was no longer interested and the contract was awarded to another company. He denied the board favoured white companies. The board said they would review Motona's case after receiving a letter from his lawyers last week.

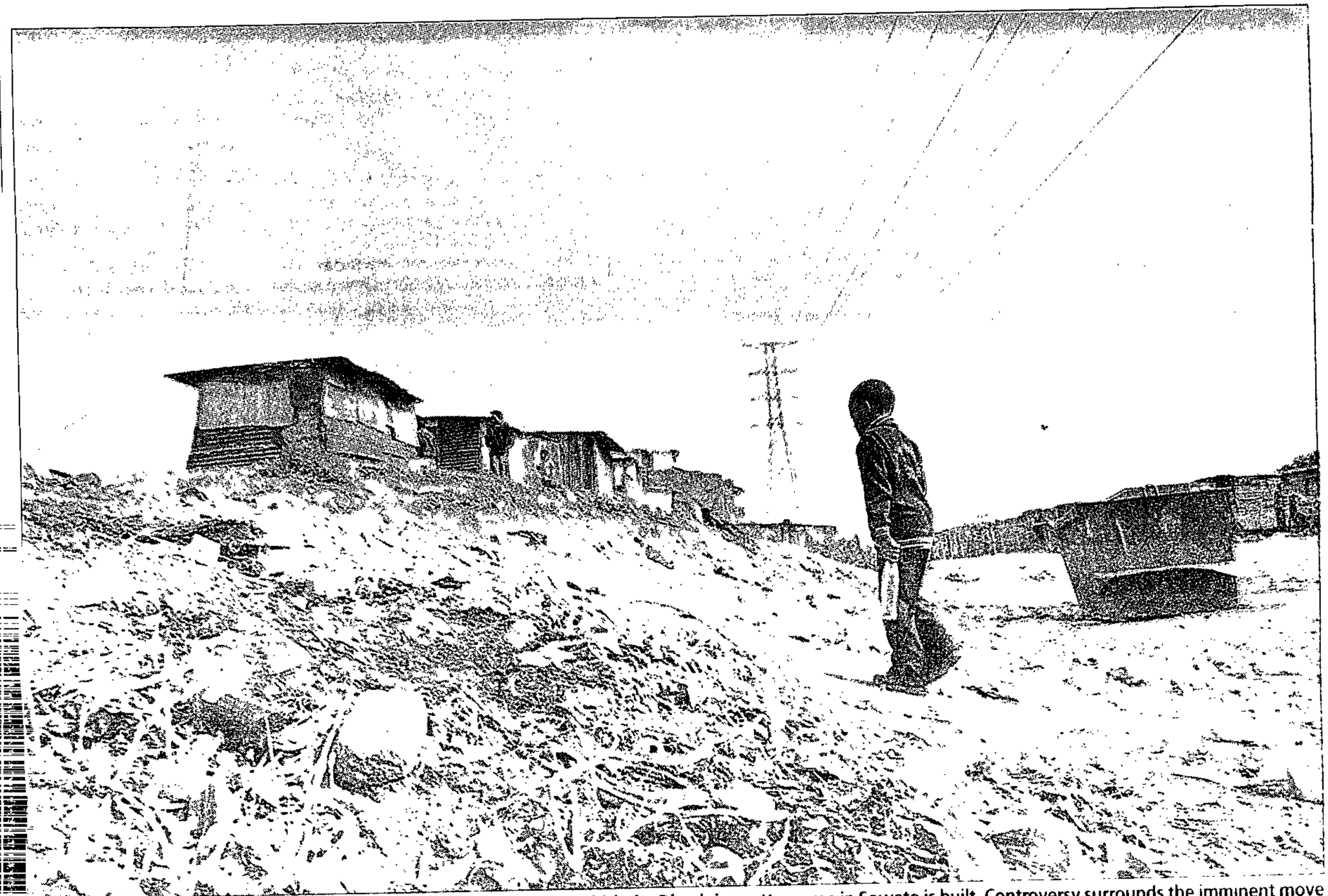
Easy Loo has serviced many squatter camps and communities at funerals, weddings and social gatherings with portable toilets for many years.

Motona was the winner of the *Sowetan*-Sanlam Entrepreneur of the Year Competition in 1984.

His growing business has been contracted to service squatters since 1984. He renewed his contract annually but claims he was not notified to reapply this year.

"I have no option but to close my operations. I will be forced to retrench my workers at the beginning of next month," he said.

NAASHON ZALK



Unfriendly surroundings ... a child walks over the rubble and litter on which the Dlamini squatter camp in Soweto is built. Controversy surrounds the imminent move of some of the camp's residents to Liefde en Vrede in Alberton.

Soweto squatters' move to Alberton enrages local ratepayers

(310) Star 31/7/96

By Fikile-Ntsikelelo Moya

Residents of the Dlamini squatter camp in Soweto are ecstatic about their pending move to Liefde en Vrede in Alberton, but ratepayers in the area to which they are moving are furious.

The Alberton Ratepayers' Action Group has accused the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council of forcibly moving the squatters to the rapid land development site.

They say there are no facilities at the new site and have also expressed fears of more crime, unemployment and a drop in property prices.

The council has denied forcing the squatters to move.

Nicholas Molefe, a member of the residents committee at the squatter camp, said moving from the squatter camp was their fervent wish.

His greatest concern is that the area where they now live is a health hazard, because about 8 000 people share 12 communal toilets and taps.

The lack of infrastructure at their proposed new home has not demoralised them.

Bruna Hyipel, a local councillor and chairman of the Alberton Ratepayers' Action Group, insists the ratepayers' protest is inspired by the wish to see the squatters have better facilities.

"We are not against them moving here, we are against the dumping of them here where there are no schools, clinics, police station and basic infrastructure," Hyipel said.

She claimed the squatters were being forcibly moved far from their work areas.

Chairman of the metropolitan council's town planning tribunal, Norman Prince, said the new area was 15km from the Johannesburg city centre, where most of the squatters worked, while the Dlamini site was 30km away.

Another squatter, Bernard Khuzwayo, who has school-going children, said if they were going to wait for schools to be built in Liefde en Vrede, "then we will wait for ever". Khuzwayo has been at the camp for nine years.

Prince conceded that Liefde en Vrede was a bare field, but said that consultation with "all roleplayers" was continuing.

"We cannot provide infrastructure until there is agreement on the plan," he said.

Prince said the decision on whether to go ahead with the resettlement would be taken after the final hearing on August 27.