

SQUATTERS - T.V.L.

1996 - 1997

Rates shock for Soweto squatters

By Joshua Raboroko

RESIDENTS OF INFORMAL settlements in and around Soweto were shocked to learn that they are now expected to pay the same rates as homeowners in the townships.

The same shock awaits their counterparts elsewhere in the country, who will be expected to pay rates for the first time in terms of the Local Authorities Bill expected to be ratified by the Cabinet next week.

Millions of township home owners throughout the country will have to pay more in rates when the Bill becomes law later this year.

Squatters living in areas under the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council will have to pay about R21,50 for rates as from July 1.

The TMC recently approved the assessment rates, and residents living

13/8/96
Upset informal housing residents do not understand what they'll pay for

in squatter camps in and around Soweto are also expected to pay rates according to the size of their sites.

According to statistics compiled by the council, more than 100 000 people live in informal settlements in Soweto, Diepmeadow, Dobsonville, Alexandra Township and surrounding areas.

Sites at informal settlements have been valued by the TMC for rate charges. The council has begun the process of registering squatters on the valuation roll.

Mr Bob Mashaba of Soweto's Fred Clark squatter camp said he and other residents were unaware that they were expected to pay rates.

"Some councillors have informed us that we should support the

Masakhane campaign by paying for services as announced by President Mandela. They promised to come back to us with more information, but have not done so."

"We are shocked that we have to pay rates. What is that, and why should we pay for facilities we do not have?"

Residents said they did not have proper roads, street lights, sewerage, water or "sports fields, halls, parks and libraries that are luxuries to us".

Mrs Naomi Mofokeng said the conditions at the Fred Clark settlement were deplorable.

She said they had tried in vain to summon councillors to explain to the people why they were not getting facilities.

What rates are all about

By Joshua Raboroko

RATES are levies charged on the value of property and land owned by residents within a local authority.

Monthly assessment rates are based on the value of property, as reflected in the valuation roll.

The new valuation roll in Greater Johannesburg came into effect on July 1. Property owners can object if they do not agree with the value of their property as recorded on the valuation roll.

How the council determines this:

According to the valuation roll the value of a (an ordinary matchbox) site is R10 000.

The council charges 0,645c for every R1 in the total of the property. The value of the property (R10 000) is multiplied by 0,645, which gives a total of R645.

The total (R645) is then divided by 12 months, giving R53,75. The council then deducts a 60 percent rebate from the figure (R53,75) and the remaining 40 percent (R21,50) is then payable monthly by residents.

This new figure will appear in bills sent to residents this month.

In addition, residents will also pay for water, sewerage, and refuse removal.

Electricity bills are in some cases paid directly to Eskom, but for those residents who get their supply from the council, the rates will be reflected on their monthly bills.

The money generated by means of assessment rates is used to provide services such as roads, parks, libraries, halls and street lights.

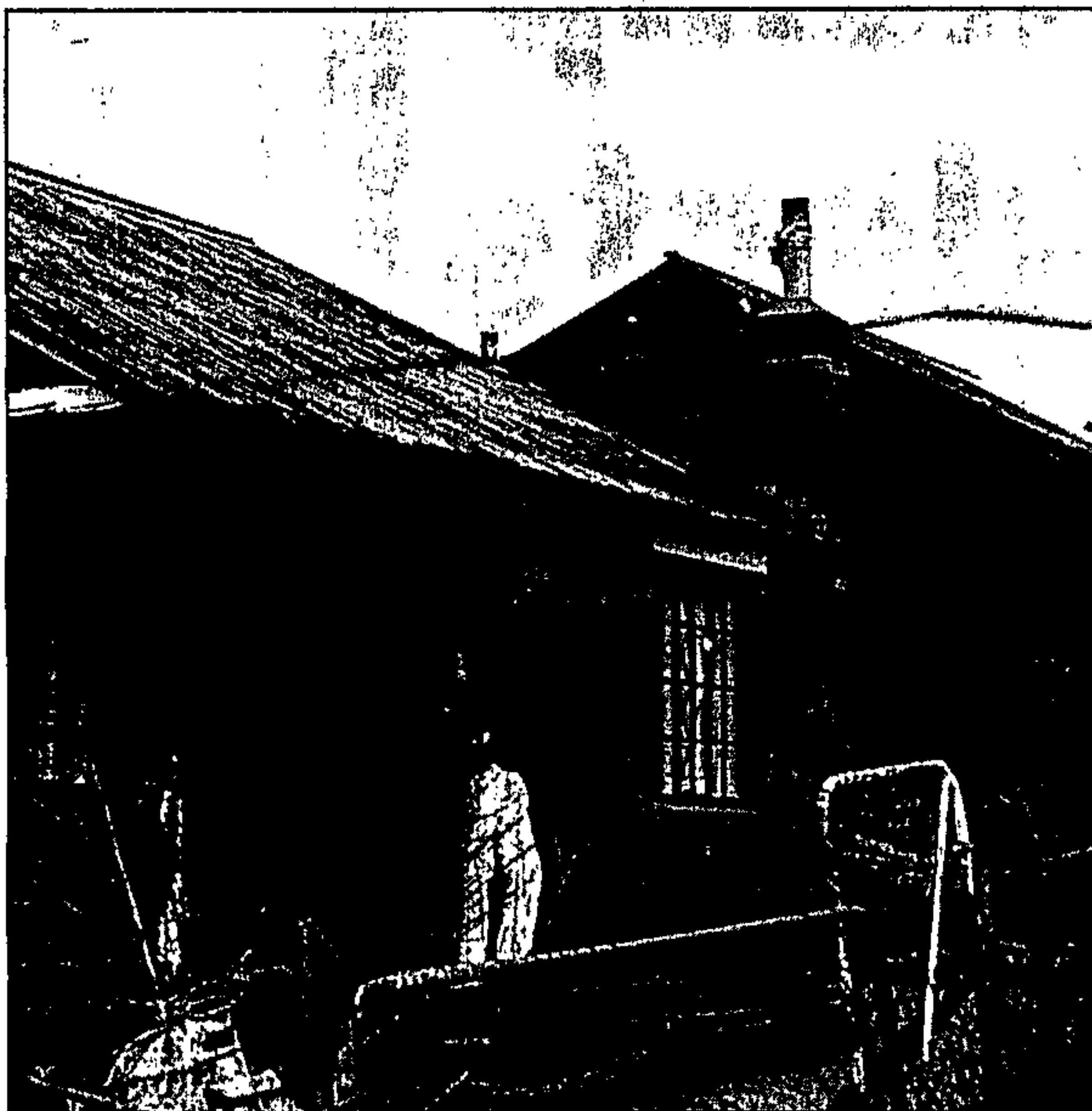
Residents of Greater Johannesburg have until August 26 to inspect the new valuation rolls of the substructures.

Forms are available at: Eastern Metropolitan Substructure: Sandton Civic Centre, Alexandra Civic Centre, Metropolitan Centre, Braamfontein. Telephone 881-6075 or 407-6883.

Northern MSS: Randburg Civic Centre: 1425A Sofasonke Street, Orlando; 1729 Zone One Diepkloof, Metropolitan Centre, Braamfontein. Telephone 407-6883.

Western MSS: Roodepoort Civic Centre, Dobsonville Civic Centre, Metropolitan Centre, Braamfontein. Telephone 766-2166 or 407-6883.

Southern MSS: Metro Centre, Braamfontein; Jabulani Centre, Soweto, Lenasia Centre, Ennerdale Centre. Tel 886-0163 or 407-6883



People living in "matchbox" houses such as these in Soweto will soon be paying monthly rates like those paid in the former "white" suburbs of Johannesburg.

PIC: PAT SEBOKO

Jo'burg residents have to pay up

By Joshua Raboroko

HUNDREDS of thousands of Greater Johannesburg residents - black and white - are to pay the same assessment rates based on new valuation rolls and increased water and sewerage tariffs this month.

The shock tariff increases for ratepayers were announced by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council amid protests from the civic organisations and concerned residents.

The TMC has approved an assessment rate of 64,5c for every rand in the total value of a property, a water tariff

increase of 20 percent and a sewerage charge hike of 40 percent.

The TMC has become the first metropole in South Africa to introduce uniform valuation rolls (assessment rates) that cut across previous apartheid-rated boundaries.

It has been equipped with the basis for achieving equity in property taxation after uniform rolls have been completed for all four metropolitan substructures which include Soweto, Dobsonville, Diepmeadow and Alexandra Township.

These mainly black residential areas and others to the south of Kliprivier have been valued for rating

purposes for the first time.

Assessment rates as a form of local taxation are levied on the value of a site as reflected on a valuation roll.

These rolls are complete lists of rateable property of all substructures within Greater Johannesburg and their value, which reflects the market value of these properties as at January 2.

These valuation rolls will include some 200 000 to 240 000 properties that have never been valued for rating purposes.

There are nearly 500 000 properties within the areas covered. Previously valuation departments existed only in Johannesburg, Randburg and Sandton.

This year private valuers were responsible for the valuation of Roodepoort, south and east Lenasia and Ennerdale.

Councillor Eugene Robson says assessment rates form an important part of the council's income. Certain services, such as electricity, water, sewerage, transport are classified as remunerative services and the underlying principle is that the users should pay for them.

There are, however, also certain facilities which are available to all, where no charges are raised for the use thereof, such as libraries, parks, sports fields and roads.

Star 13/8/96

Big anti-squatter demo causes traffic snarl-up

(310)

STAFF REPORTERS

Chaos erupted in Naturena in the south of Johannesburg this morning when residents, angered at the pending moving of squatters into the area, barricaded all exits out of the area, causing major traffic snarl-ups.

Residents started barricading roads with private cars at about 4.30am and later snatched graders and a bus to block off all exits.

Numbers swelled to several hundred when people on their way to work stopped to join the protest. Other motorists, trying to leave the area, drove around searching for sand roads leading to the freeway.

Police Casspirs were brought in to tow away vehicles shortly after 8am, when the situation was described by people on the scene as "becoming tense". Army vehicles were expected to be brought in to help with the towing.

Naturena residents are angry at the Southern Johannesburg Metropolitan Sub-Structure's plan to move squatters into the area from the Thembalihle Squatter Camp, near Lenasia.

Chris Ngcobo, chief executive officer of the SMSS, who was on the scene, said a tribunal would be held in Braamfontein today and residents "were welcome to come and air their grievances".

A final decision on the relocation of the squatters would be taken tonight, he said.

Sexwale rounds on Naturena protesters

Gauteng premier says the poor are being punished for being destitute

By FAKU-MTHUNGA MOYA
City Desk

The value of property in Naturena, southern Johannesburg, will not fall because of the settling of squatters from Tembahlile, but because of Naturena residents who are "middle-class upstarts", says Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale.

He said on Wednesday they were to be blamed for making the Tembahlile residents wanderers in their own land.

Naturena residents recently blockaded the suburb during rush hour in protest against the relocating of Tembahlile residents to nearby Mligund. They also trashed the driveway of Sexwale's house in Houghton, Johannesburg, last week.

The residents complained that the settlement would reduce the value of their property and cause an upswing in crime.

"The people who are fighting (the provincial government) are not the poor but the rich, or those who think they are rich. They are fighting us because we run with the poor," said Sexwale, adding that the poor were being punished for being destitute.

"I would rather let my property drop by 3% so that one day



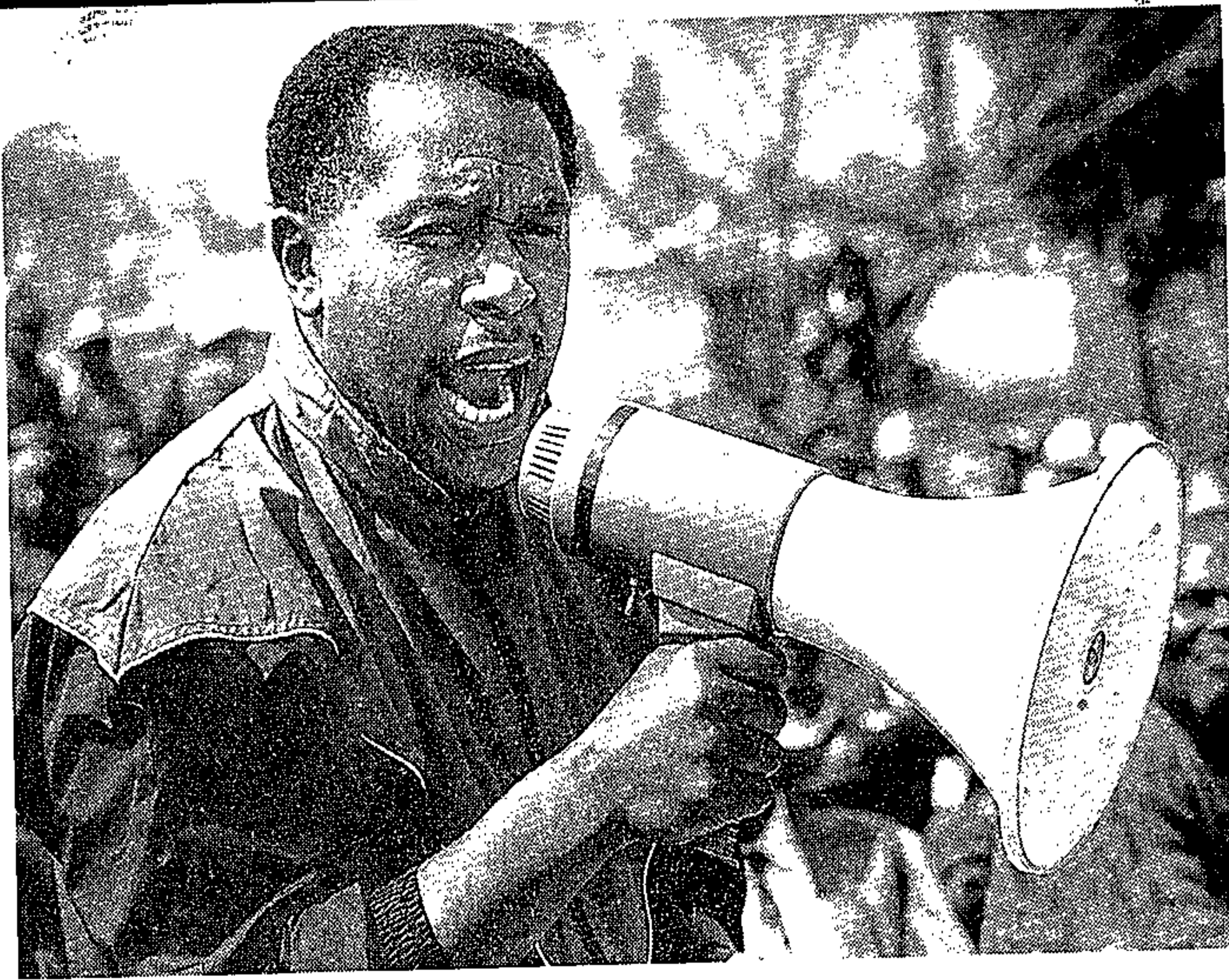
Calming measures ... Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale placates residents of the Tembahlile squatter camp near Lenasia, saying poor people are very much the concern of the Government.

It rises with that of all the people around me," he said.

Naturena residents needed to heed the example of Sandton residents who were prepared to

work together with the people of Alexandra to improve the "integrated development" where richer communities helped poorer ones to develop. He said the trend asked how Naturena residents hoped the lives of Tembahlile people would improve if they were left to their own devices. "We will never abandon the poor," Sexwale said.

Star 23/8/96
CHRISTINE NESBITT



Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale at the Tembalihle squatter camp south of Johannesburg yesterday dissuading protesters from marching to neighbouring Naturena where residents have protested against a low-cost housing project for the squatters. Pictures: TREVOR SAMSON

Sexwale 'will not abandon' squatters

Nonavenda Mathiane

GAUTENG premier Tokyo Sexwale promised Tembalihle squatter camp residents yesterday that he would not abandon them just because they were poor.

He said that by staying in Houghton he had become a symbol for the poor, showing that they too could live there some day.

Sexwale told more than 2 000 residents of Tembalihle — which is adjacent to Lenasia — that he was born at Shantytown, a squatter camp in Orlando, and was in Tembalihle to stop residents marching to Naturena.

Accompanied by Johannesburg mayor Isaac Mogase, members of the greater Johannesburg metropolitan council and southern substructure councillors, Sexwale received a tumultuous welcome and led the crowd in singing freedom songs.

While he would not say when houses would be built for Tembalihle residents, he spent the greater part of his speech denigrating Naturena residents, saying it was shameful that they had not tackled the previous government.

Residents carried placards bearing messages about housing, among them one that read: "Beware Watkins of your actions."

Sylvia Watkins, a Naturena task team member, spoke out on television on Monday against the building of low cost-housing in Naturena.

Midrand threatens legal action over erection of homes for 2 000 squatters

Midrand residents and businesses are threatening protest and legal action against the Khayalami Metro Council, formerly the North East Rand Metro Council, to prevent the erection of structures for almost 2 000 families at an informal settlement there.

Businesses are irate about the proposed settlement which is to happen in Commercia, an area zoned as industrial. The land was expropriated from local business by the council in May for the purpose of low-cost housing.

At the council meeting last week, Community Action Party councillor Finnie Janse van Rensburg accused the Khayalami council of failing to involve the Midrand council from the beginning of the process. She challenged the legality of the Khayala-

mi Metro Council expropriating land, arguing that the local government ordinance did not grant metro councils such powers.

"The council should not ignore the fact that businesses and residents in the area have invested hundreds of thousands of rands in their properties, and any low-cost development, unless well planned, would negatively affect them."

Charles Muller of the President Park Residents' Association said residents believed proper low-cost housing had to be established because the proposed informal settlement would be bordering two affluent areas in which properties were valued at around R500 000. Residents feared these would lose half their value if the shacks went up. - City Desk

(310) Star 26/8/96

Orange Farm sitting on a time bomb

By Khangale Makhado

THE community of Orange Farm in the Vaal Triangle, one of the biggest informal settlements in South Africa, will be torn apart if the conflict between factions of the African National Congress continues to escalate.

The conflict centres on the councillor for Ward One, Mr James Madikane.

His supporters, who have been called a private army by his opponents, are locked in conflict with the South African National Civics Organisation and the local community policing forum.

His opponents allege that he is preventing the development of Orange Farm, especially the schools, and is charging contractors money for keeping their contracts going.

March on police station

Recently, about 600 of them marched on the local police station to demand his arrest. They handed in a memorandum to station commander Captain Dirk van der Merwe.

In it they demanded that Madikane be removed from Orange Farm, failing which they would uproot his shack and dump it at the local authority's head offices in Jabulani, Soweto.

The marchers also called on the police to arrest Madikane, whom they allege was caught with a hand grenade and an unlicensed firearm in his possession.

Madikane has flatly denied all the allegations and believes there are elements who are out to discredit him.

He claims the confusion is the result of the failure of the Gauteng

‘We will not allow a person we elected to be victimised. If his life is threatened it could lead to a bloodbath’

government to introduce councillors to the community after the local government elections.

“I have not been empowered,” he says. “All this time I have been forced to service my constituency from my shack as I have no office.”

He says his supporters are not a private army but community members organised to defend state property and prevent vandalism in the area.

While the war of words continues, attitudes have begun to harden and supporters of Madikane say they will stand behind their leader “as he was elected by the people”.

Premier must visit

They feel the problem can only be resolved by premier Tokyo Sexwale visiting the area to talk to the community.

“We will not allow the person we have elected into office to be victimised. If his life is threatened, it could lead to a bloodbath,” says a Madikane supporter.

Gauteng ANC spokesman Mr Donovan Cloete has declined to comment, saying the matter is *sub judice*.

“There is an internal investigation into allegations we received from people there,” he added.



Flashback ... about 600 people demanded that councillor James Madikane be removed from Orange Farm during a march recently. PIC: LEN KUMALO

Madikane's opponents have threatened to take the law into their own hands if Safety and Security MEC Ms Jessie Duarte does not respond to their memorandum.

Duarte's spokesperson, Ms Sally Sealey, told *Sowetan* that they were trying to bring the two parties together and as soon as the memorandum was received, it would receive urgent attention.

She said, however, that while it

was not the department's function to remove any person from a political position, they will look at allegations which are criminal in nature.

“We were out there with the MEC recently, and learnt that some people wanted to march on Madikane's home. We warned them we would have no problem with the march, as long as it was peaceful,” she said.

“In the past we assigned 40 detectives to investigate allegations of

assault and intimidation, as well as the illegal purchase of land, but the problem was that people could not really identify the culprits.”

She said the role of the department was to try and bring the parties together and also to strengthen the community policing forum in the area.

The Gauteng authorities will have to act urgently if this time bomb is to be defused.

Subsidy to house Jo'burg vagrants in the balance

By KARIN SCHIMKE

City Editor

How 28/8/96
The fate of about 6 000 vagrants in Johannesburg hangs in the balance because housing subsidies may not fall within the ambit of the National Housing Board's subsidy scheme.

The Greater Johannesburg Metro Council, with the Gauteng housing department and several non-governmental welfare organisations, last year began work on a R51-million programme to purchase and renovate buildings in central Johannesburg to house the vagrants in the next three years.

However, Lindsay Bremner, who chairs the council's housing, urbanisation and environmental committee, said yesterday that housing officials and councillors were concerned about news that the National Housing Board may refuse a proposed subsidy of R17-million a year over three years.

"Earlier this year the provincial housing department and the provincial housing board approved finance for capital costs. The council would pay running and maintenance costs, and welfare organisations would manage the shelters. But because of the nature of the national housing subsidy programme, and despite the province's agreement, through technicalities the National Housing Board will now have difficulty funding us," Bremner said.

She said it appeared the subsidy was being refused "based on the premise that the housing of homeless people should be undertaken by the Department of Welfare". Welfare did not, however, have a budget for the capital costs of purchasing and refurbishing buildings and had no programme for the housing of the city's adult homeless population, Bremner added.

Nine projects in central Johannesburg and one in Rosebank are now in various stages of renovation, but may have to be put on hold until financing is finalised. The shelters are to be refurbished to provide sleeping units, lock-up facilities, and communal ablution and cooking facilities.

People are to be housed temporarily until they can move on to more permanent accommodation.

Town council up in arms over squatter relocation

(310) Mar 18/9/96

By FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA
City Desk

The decision of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metro Council (TMC) to resettle squatters from Dlamini, Soweto, to a low-cost development project on the outskirts of Alberton is set to become a serious source of conflict between the squatters and Alberton residents.

The Alberton Town Council and several ratepayer associations have raised strong objections to the decision, which took the TMC's town-planning tribunal about 10 minutes to make yesterday.

The decision came after a day-long debate between the squatters, Alberton residents, town planners and consulting engineers.

The squatters left the meeting yesterday chanting with joy. However, the Alberton Town Council and its ratepayers, were incensed.

The council's grievances included lack of consultation in the planning process, lack of infrastructure, the size of the houses, concern about security and the residents' belief that squatters would be unable to maintain their houses.

Peter Dacomb, a town council representative, said the council wanted to be part of the planning and would not comment on or object to issues that had already been raised.

He said the council had to be regarded as an important role-player because the Liefde en Vrede low-cost housing project would border on Alberton.

A ratepayers' association, the New South Community Forum (NSCF), threatened to walk out of the meeting, claiming that the chairman, Norman Prince, had prejudiced the hearing by publicly stating his support for the resettlement.

The NSCF's Derek Skinner said the association decided against the walkout "because the

Chairman 'prejudiced hearing'

chairman would have gone on without them".

Bruna Haipel, the chairman of the United Ratepayers' Action Group, said their objections were meant to help the squatters who, were it not for the ratepayers, would be getting "far less than they will get now".

She raised doubts over the ability of the Dlamini community to pay for services, like electricity and refuse removal, because "most of them are single parents".

The town planning spokesman, Bruce Nicholson, said the exact size of the houses was still to be "workshopped" with the new residents.

The town planners said money had already been provided for the scheme. However, the Gauteng education department did not have the money to build schools this year.

A recent decision by the Gauteng government to resettle squatters from Thembalihle to Misgund provoked protests from Naturena residents who marched on Premier Tokyo Sexwale's home to vent their anger.

Prince said the Liefde en Vrede decision could form the basis of the TMC's approach to the Naturena project.

Landlords halt squatter development

Gavin Du Venage

CONSTRUCTION of a multimillion-rand low-cost housing project on the northeast Rand has been forced to a halt after residents obtained a court injunction to stop work.

Kayalami metropolitan council development executive manager Keith Naicker said that work on the Mayibuye project was stopped last week after residents won a court injunction ordering construction to cease.

The council will try to have the injunction overturned next week.

Residents and businesses have objected to the project which they claim will devalue properties.

The land in question fell under the Midrand town council until 18 months ago when it was transferred to Kyalami after a demarcation board hearing. The site now falls inside Kyalami on the border with Midrand.

However, most of the objectors lie on the other side of the boundary in Midrand. They claim the Kyalami council failed to discuss the proposed development with them and rejected alternative proposals put forward by residents.

The project aims to house 1 800 squatter families near the Commercial industrial park.

It will be one of the first of its kind in SA as it provides squatters with serviced sites and assistance to develop their plots into formal homes.

(310) BD 20/9/96
Funds to lay out and service the site were provided by the land affairs department and the Gauteng housing board.

Low-cost show houses will be built on several stands and squatters will be able to select a design from several variants. They will be assisted in obtaining the R15 000 housing grant needed to build on their plots.

The scheme is a pilot project that could be applied to more than 20 000 squatters living in the northeast Rand.

The metropolitan council hopes a formal settlement programme will end unplanned land invasions in an area which faces the influx of up to 4 000 squatters a day at times.

ANC proposal for squatters

(310) Star 23/9/96

The Centurion, Gauteng, branch of the ANC has recommended that three reception areas be established in the area to accommodate about 1 000 squatters from Knoppieslaagte informal settlement until the council identifies and develops land for them.

Addressing a press conference, branch chairman Moses Tsajwa said yesterday the families in the area were living in fear because the land they had occupied did not belong to the council and residents had been attacked by armed individuals earlier this month.

He said the Ward 10 Ratepayers' Association had nothing to

fear because the council was planning to keep the families on these temporary sites for a period not longer than two years. The reason the people were not allocated a permanent site yet was because the council wanted to install basic infrastructure and to encourage appropriate housing developments to fit in with the environment.

He said it was wrong to see these reception areas as concentration camps. Before people were moved, temporary measures would be taken to provide water, sanitation, lights and security to guard against a potential influx, he said. - City Reporter.

Hostel dwellers kill 8 squatters

ET(BA) 24/9/96

(310)

By Guy Oliver

LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — About 500 mine hostel dwellers yesterday attacked the settlement of Springvale Farm near Stilfontein, killing eight people and injuring eight more as clashes intensified near the Anglovaal-owned Hartebeesfontein mine and Randgold-owned Buffelsfontein mine, police said yesterday.

At least 18 people have been killed since Sunday morning when a series of explosions ripped through the settlement.

The shackland bombs were manufactured using commercial explosives, commonly found on mines, senior superintendent Pieter du Plessis, the police spokesman for North West province, said yesterday.

As residents ran from the blasts, they were stabbed or slashed to death by their attackers and others were wounded by shrapnel. Ten people were killed and 14 critically injured in the first wave of violence.

Tito Mboweni, the labour minis-

ter, visited the scene yesterday.

The latest mine-related violence will not fall under the ambit of a commission of inquiry established to investigate mine violence on the Gold Fields'-owned mines of East Driefontein, Northam and Leeudoom which has claimed the lives of at least 35 miners since July.

"The facts are completely different... the issues are complex and not related," Mboweni said after his visit.

The commission is chaired by John Myburgh, the Judge President of the Labour Appeal Court.

The Gold Fields mine violence has been attributed to, among other things, rivalry between the ANC-aligned National Union of Mineworkers and the Inkatha Freedom Party-linked United Workers Union of South Africa.

Du Plessis said the root cause of the violence at Springvale appeared to be a "friction" between Pondo- and Sotho-speaking mineworkers, but "this is still to be established".

Mboweni said such expla-

nations were "superficial".

Yesterday's violence began in the morning when Buffelsfontein Pioneer hostel dwellers descended on the settlement, about 1km away, armed with knobkerries, knives and stones, Du Plessis said.

The settlement residents lease the land from three white farmers.

The hostel, leased by Buffelsfontein mine, accommodates about 3 000 workers.

About half are employees of the Anglo American wholly owned subsidiary Shaft Sinkers. The company specialises in sinking mine shafts.

A Randgold spokesman said production at Buffelsfontein was not affected, but the violence was a cause for concern. Production continued as normal at the Hartebeesfontein mine.

About 86 policemen were placed on the road between the hostel and the settlement and about 100 soldiers were scheduled to be deployed last night to bolster the security in the area, Du Plessis said.

Reprieve for Auckland Park squatters

By ANNA COX

About 40 squatters who illegally invaded a piece of council-owned land in Auckland Park, Johannesburg, have been granted until tomorrow morning to move.

In the meantime, the Northern Metro Council has undertaken to try to find alternative accommodation for the people.

The council served an eviction order last week within four hours of the squatters taking occupation of the land, giving them until yesterday to leave the site.

A private security company,

hired by the council to carry out the evictions, arrived on site yesterday.

The squatters, however, appealed to officials for time to find alternative accommodation.

Last-minute negotiations between the squatters, NP councillor for the area Paolo Andrade, residents of the area and ANC councillor Fahdiel Moosa resulted in a 48-hour reprieve.

The squatters claim that they relocated from Melville Koppies and the Faan Smit Park in Auckland Park where they had been harassed by

police.

Andrade said although the council had acted within the law and could have evicted the squatters, it had agreed to give them a further 48 hours on humanitarian grounds.

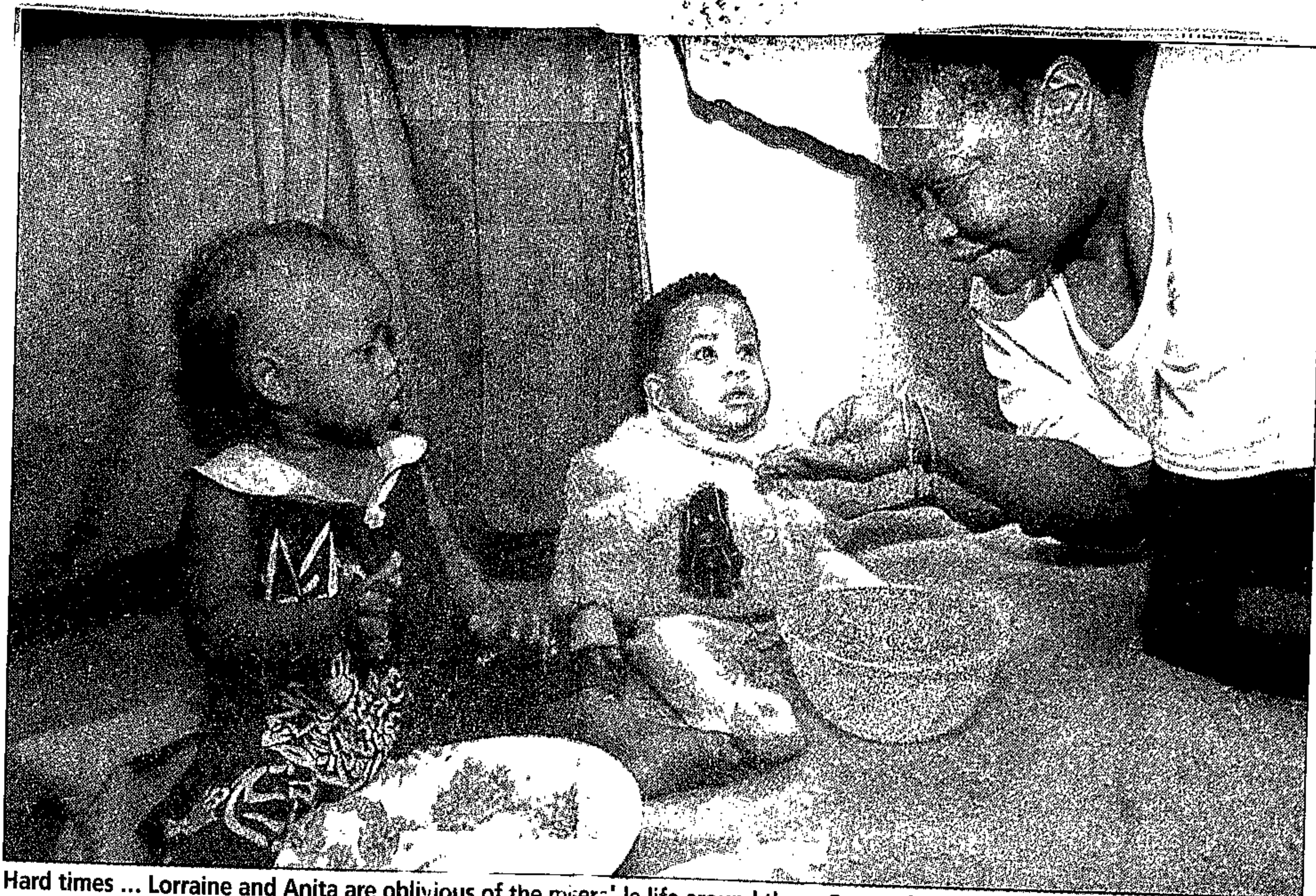
"The council has assured us that every effort will be made to find them alternative accommodation," he said.

The site was prime land valued at R15-million and was ready for development, Andrade said.

He added that immediate action had to be taken to prevent a huge illegal invasion by other homeless people.

STW 22/10/96

(310)



Hard times ... Lorraine and Anita are oblivious of the miserable life around them. Betty Tshabalala, a resident at Turkish Baths, is worried about their future.

Shelter plan 'goes terribly wrong'

Renovated building promised so much, but it's derelict and dangerous

By BONGIWE MLANGENI

When night falls at Turkish Baths – a shelter for about 250 homeless families – friends become foes, neighbours turn into strangers, and women and children become victims of rape and abuse.

Only in February, the residents officially renamed this place Ntlo Ya Mohau, meaning a "house of mercy". Now residents call it a "hellhole".

The white building at the corner of Nugget and De Villiers streets in downtown Johannesburg became a haven in January to a group of homeless people who two years ago had invaded the Red Cross building a few blocks away.

Their relocation came after the Johannesburg Housing Trust for the Homeless (JTH) decided to make them the first beneficiaries

of a housing project. In this project, JTH planned to convert unused industrial buildings into transitional homes.

The families at Turkish Baths were supposed to be an example of how homelessness, affecting about 8 000 people in the inner city, could be addressed.

Before they moved into their new home, the walls were repainted, damaged toilets and sewerage pipes were fixed, and there was electricity – conditions better than the dark and derelict Red Cross building. The upgrading was funded by the Greater Johannesburg Metro Council which paid R200 000 to revamp the vacant building, owned by the Public Works Department.

Despite JTH's good intentions, life has been merciless in this overcrowded shelter which lacks privacy and is divided by cardboard boxes, sheets of cloth and

corrugated iron.

"We are breeding a generation of thugs and futureless citizens," says resident Betty Tshabalala.

She refers to the project as "a plan that has gone terribly wrong". Most people are unemployed, shebeens have sprung up in every corner and most children do not attend school.

At night children and women jump at every sound as they are targets of rapists and molesters.

"Most people are always drunk and troublesome. Theft is another big problem – you can not leave your food on the table."

But even worse, someone was killed last month, someone was stabbed, and this week a woman was raped, she adds.

Residents say current living conditions do not tally with what they were promised when they moved in. They expected to have security and identity cards to pre-

vent overcrowding. JTH also promised them training on various jobs skills such as plumbing and primary child care.

"Everything is breaking up. We are sleeping in corridors, some in toilets," one resident says.

Walking around the building, one is buried in a strong musty smell and loud music. The floors are dirty and toilets blocked.

JTH co-ordinator Mapule Sebone admits the project has turned into chaos.

"Only a few people pay the R10 a week we had agreed on to maintain the building. We are facing a real crisis."

She says the trust is still waiting for about R280 000 subsidy allocation from the provincial government to turn the building into family units. "We are not giving up," Sebone says.

Next week the trust will discuss resolving the problem.

(310) (310) Star 30/10/96

Squatter camp feels left out

310 Nov 11/11/96
By FIKILE-NTSIKELELO MOYA
City Desk

While some squatter communities around Gauteng prepare to move to better residential areas, one of the oldest in the region, Mshenguville, does not understand why they are being left behind.

The squatters first invaded the site set aside for a soccer ground and a golf course in 1980.

Sixteen years later, Mshenguville still does not have electricity, running water, roads or recreational facilities. There are no proper addresses and no postal service for the community.

The area is one of the least-served in Soweto. According to a local resident, Donald Madonsela, the squatter camp now has 20 taps and "many" portable toilets – a far cry from the days when the community had to make do with the veld or nearby township toilets and two taps – but not nearly enough.

Residents have complained that criminals use the cloak of darkness to mug or rape women who use the communal toilets at night.

/ Nobesuthu Sibiya, a matric

pupil, said she could not concentrate on her studies during the day because of the noise. At night she is at the mercy of the local "spaza shop" for candles. "If I find them closed, then I cannot study," she said.

Some residents want to move to a better area. "This is no place to raise children," said Pinki Moreti, adding that her daughter lived with her father to avoid diseases which are rampant in the area.

She is awaiting the "promise made by council", after putting her name on the housing waiting list, to be moved to either Snake Park, near Dobsonville or Orange Farm, south of Soweto.

About 410 families are served by a mobile clinic that makes its rounds on Thursdays. Those who get ill on other days use the nearby Mofolo Clinic.

"Ambulances fear coming here because this was once an Inkatha stronghold," said Moreti.

Local ward councillor Podile Kgasago said he was aware that residents wanted to move and hoped that the Southern Metro Council would respond to their concerns in the next council meeting later this month.

Squatters in Newtown still wait for promised land

Invasion at Eikenhof dampens relocation hopes of homeless families who live in squalor

(B10)

Star 21/12/96

by TOMMY MAKOE

Two years ago, when Liefde-en-vrede, south of Johannesburg, squatters were evicted from the land they had illegally occupied, it was with the promise that they could be relocated within three weeks.

They were temporarily moved to what used to be the transport department offices in Newtown, Johannesburg. Although they protested fiercely against their eviction in June 1994, they gave up the fight when they were promised land in Eikenhof.

It is now more than two years later and the squatters still have no land of their own. They are still cramped in the filthy and smelling building waiting for their promised land.

Raise hopes

"We have been forgotten. I do not know why there is such a delay. We have no choice but to live under this filth. We are forced to live in this condition," said squatters' representative Lucky Mabaso.

He said they were tired of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's promises.

"They come, raise people's hopes and just vanish. Every time they come, they tell us they have identified land for us. They said they were going to move us to Eikenhof, but now the place is occupied by other people," said

Mabaso.

He said they were also told they were going to occupy open land next to New Canada station, but that never happened.

Mabaso said more than 1 200 people now live in the building, in which offices have been turned into makeshift homes.

Between six and 12 families share the offices, with no doors separating each family from the others. Anything from blankets and curtains to corrugated iron are used as walls and doors to separate them.

"There is no privacy here and as a result, children see things they are not suppose to see. You cannot wash freely and have to wait until children are sleeping because the toilets have no doors," said Lucky Mothibi.

Those who work have to wake up early to avoid the long queues at the three washing basins on each of the three floors.

"When we arrived here, 75% of the residents were employed but now only 50% are. Most of those who have lost their jobs were fired because they arrived late at work or were unable to go to work because of the living conditions here," said Mabaso.

France Ratlhale, a security officer, finds it hard to sleep because he shares an office room with seven other families.

"Mostly I work night shifts and in the day I cannot sleep because

there is a shebeen in our room. The music is loud and the drinking goes on for the whole afternoon," said Ratlhale.

He said most of those who worked also had to spend sleepless nights because of the noise from vehicles passing on the nearby freeway.

On the *Saturday Star's* visit to the building this week there was a strong smell of urine from the poorly serviced public toilets. Within the building, the smell of smoke from paraffin and gas stoves was ever present.

Rooms in the basement had been flooded from the water which enters through broken windows on rainy days and from the toilet.

"Individuals lock the toilets because some people here do not want to wash them. I wish I had my own toilet," said Roselinah Madala. "You should come on a Saturday and, I am telling you, you will not be able to enter one of these toilets because of the smell from people's waste matter and urine."

Thembi Kgang said her four-month-old baby was recently hospitalised for three weeks, suffering from viral meningitis. Kgang said the baby picked up the infection from the "unhealthy environment".

The desire for housing was highlighted when one resident mistook the *Saturday Star* team for officials from the provincial housing department.

"Where is the house you promised me after you ran down my shack with a bulldozer? Where is it? Until when must I wait?" asked the infuriated man, who identified himself only as Bra Khumalo.

On a nearby window, the graffiti reads: "Now homelessness has come to an end - siyakhona (we are going there)".

"This was written after the news that we were going to move to an area next to New Canada station. People were happy but ... it never happened," said Mabaso.

According to a spokesman for the Southern Metropolitan Substructure (SMSS), Lawrence Boya, the council was not planning to move the squatters to the now occupied land in Eikenhof.

Development

He said nearby land was available but was awaiting development, which would start next year.

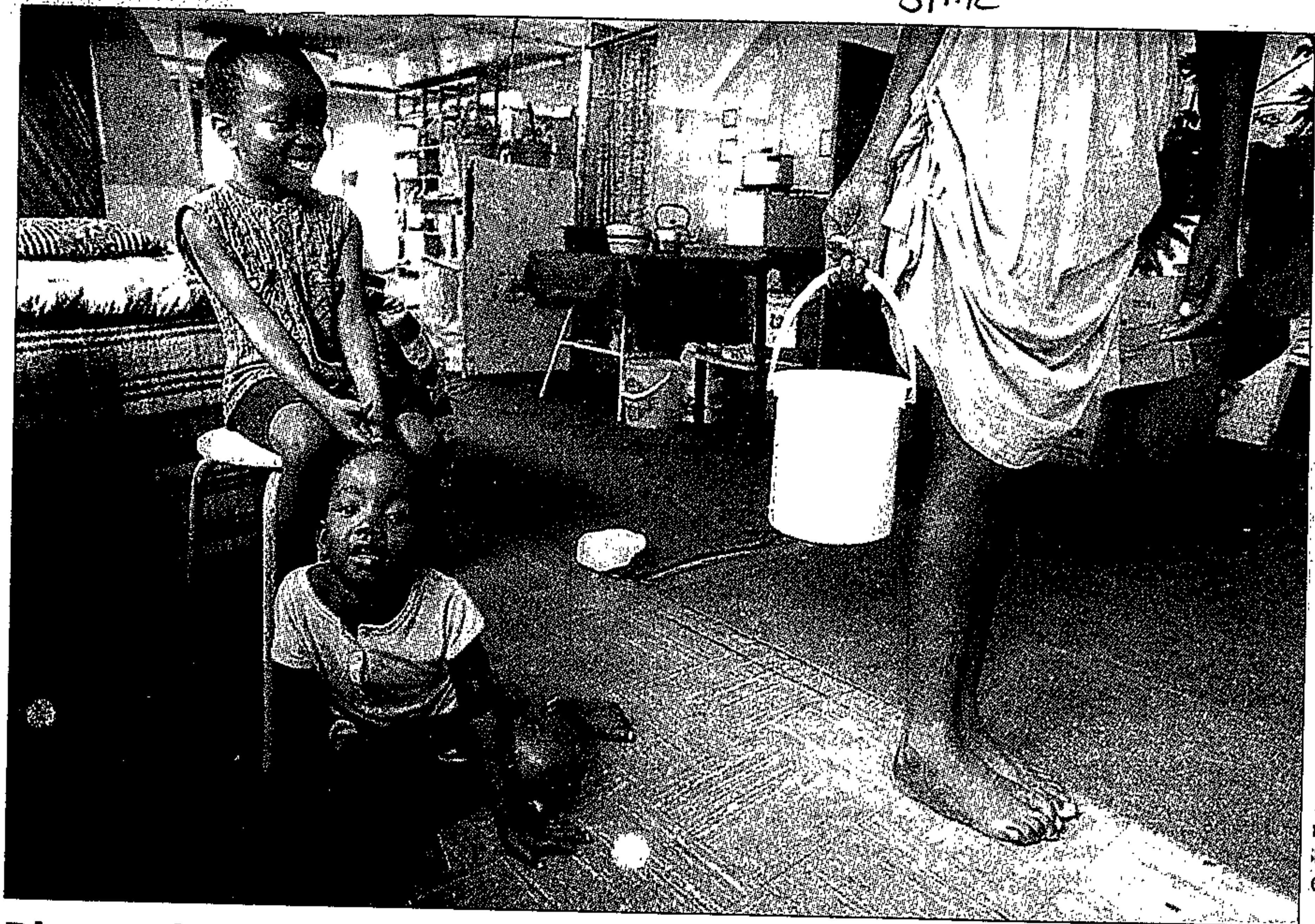
"It is now the responsibility of the SMSS to move the people. We will go on with the plans of the now defunct Johannesburg City Council which identified land for the squatters in Eikenhof."

But Boya said his council was aware that the promised land could not accommodate the squatters' community, which had grown since they were temporarily relocated. "While we are going to move some to Eikenhof, we will have to look for alternative land to accommodate the others."

316

21/12/96

STAR

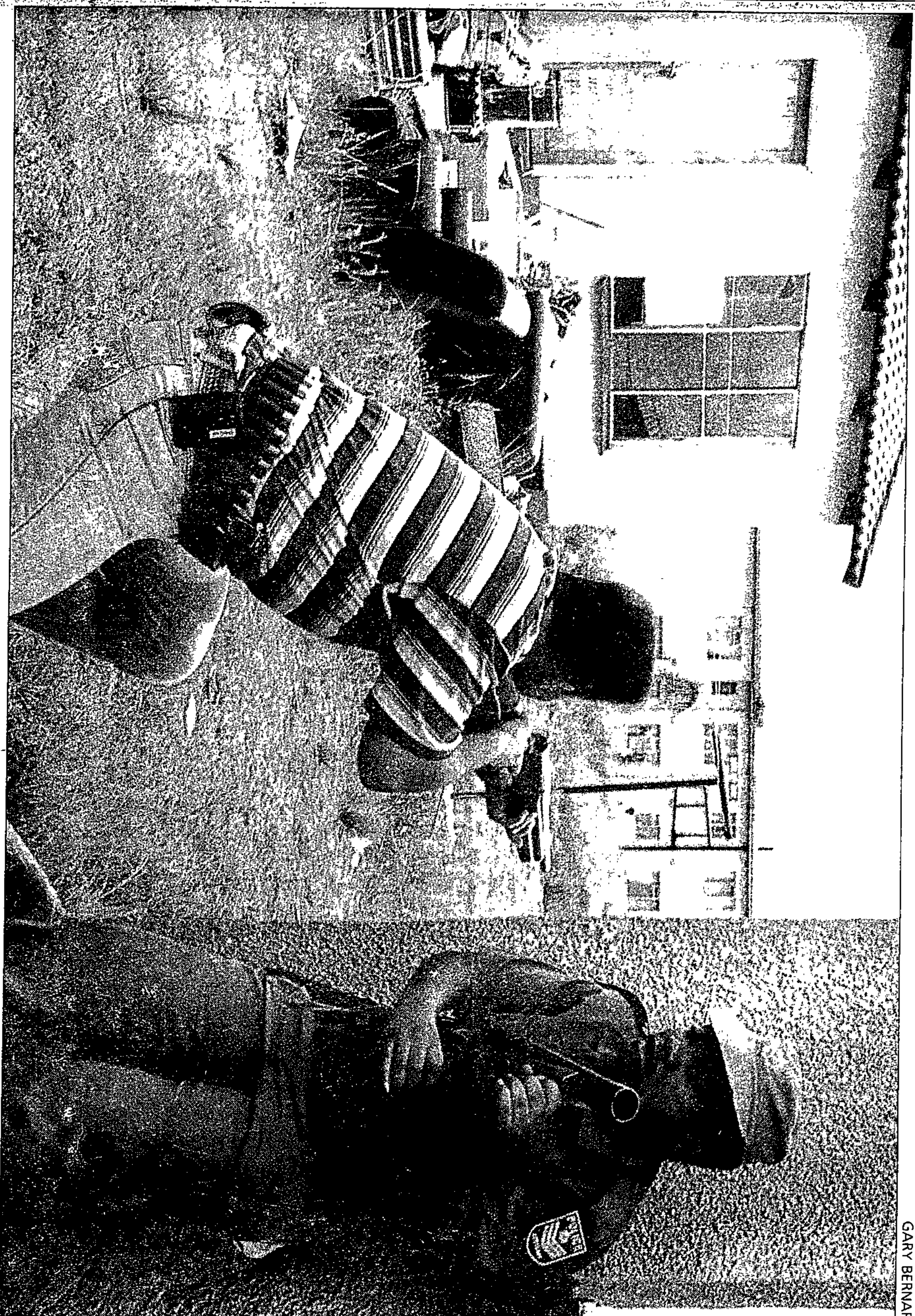


Disgraceful conditions

ABOVE: Showing a brave face ... these children know of no other home besides what used to be the transport department building, in which more than 1 200 people now live

RIGHT: Washday blues ... Sheila Vuso removes dried clothes from the washing line on the roof-top of the dilapidated building in Newtown





War zone ... police used buckshot and stun grenades after people threw stones and fired at them when they moved in yesterday to evict families which had illegally occupied houses in Eldorado Park. The occupiers claimed that when the houses stood empty and incomplete, they spent money on repairs before moving in.

Evictions spark racism

accusations

(210) Nov 24/11 97

BY MIKE MASIPA
AND PATRICK PHOSA

The Southern Metropolitan Sub-structure (SMSS) has dismissed accusations of racism made by the Brown People's Movement (BPM) following the evictions of illegal occupants of houses in predominantly coloured townships of Eldorado Park in Johannesburg and Boksburg's Reiger Park.

BPM president William Volmink told protesting Eldorado Park residents yesterday that the eviction of 15 families in the area, 18 others in Reiger Park and Wednesday's power cut in Nigel's Alra Park and Mackenzieville were aimed at Coloured people.

Residents clashed with police in the four townships across Gauteng this week in protest against evictions and power cuts. Police said the areas were calm overnight after fears that residents might damage evacuated houses in retaliation.

The clashes started at Alra Park and Mackenzieville in Nigel on the far East Rand on Wednesday morning when hundreds of demonstrators barricaded streets to show their displeasure over electricity cuts. The Greater Nigel Town Council had switched off the supply to 432 houses.

The defaulters hit back by vandalising meter boxes, resulting in a blackout of the townships.

Police used stun grenades, teargas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters.

15 families find their home sweet home after battling to oust squatters

By Fikile Ntshikolelo Moya
City Desk

When Elizabeth Petersen and her husband Chris found curtains on windows in their half-built house in Eldorado Park, Johannesburg, two years ago, they were convinced their neighbours had moved into their house by mistake.

But when "the neighbours" violently chased them away, they knew something was wrong and reported the problem to the local council. They were told there was a slight problem that would be resolved shortly.

It is only now, however, after

much confusion and legal hassles, that the "slight problem" has been resolved. The illegal occupants have finally been evicted and the Petersens and 14 other families have moved into their houses for the first time.

But rather than enjoying their stay in their new homes, they live in fear following threats by the previous, illegal occupants.

Mrs Petersen has reason to take their threats seriously: two other houses in the area have been gutted by fire and the families cannot move in. Other homes were badly vandalised.

Southern Metro Council spokesman Muff Andersson said

the walls of the vandalised houses were in danger of collapsing and one of the roofs had been damaged, making it too dangerous to live under.

The council has circled the houses with a heavy ring of barbed wire to prevent them from being vandalised further.

The houses were built in 1993 as part of the former Johannesburg council's Delft scheme. The scheme provided for a council-led initiative where small businesses were allowed to tender and develop low-cost houses for the council. Prospective owners paid deposits of R500 and arranged bonds of between R33 000 and

R35 000. Ownership of the houses was to be transferred once the houses were paid up.

But, during the local government transition, the houses were invaded by illegal tenants who, in some cases, finished building the houses before moving in.

They could not be thrown out because of a moratorium on evictions instituted after the 1994 general election.

The Southern Metro Council was granted an interdict to evict them last month.

"We delayed evicting them, seeing that it was almost Christmas and did not want them spending it on the streets,"

said Prena Naidoo, chairman of the council's executive committee.

The move angered the rightful owners. "I was very upset. I had wanted my children to spend Christmas in their own home," said Mrs Petersen.

The evictions followed months of talks with community organisations. The evicted families would be accommodated at Weiler's Farm, near Vereeniging, if they accept the offer, according to Naidoo.

Said Mrs Petersen: "This could have been solved peacefully if the council had dealt with this when it began."

Gauteng's homeless hit back

By Joshua Raboroko

WELLERS FARM, an informal settlement 45km south of Johannesburg, has become the new "dumping ground" for homeless people removed from the fringes of Gauteng's affluent white suburbs.

Families are frequently dispatched in truck-loads to the Wellers transit camp from Moffat Park, Johannesburg's Park Station, Devland, Edgaredale, Faraday Station and Alexandra's East Bank.

Many homeless migrants come from a Soweto bursting at the seams as a result of unmanaged urbanisation and the influx of illegal immigrants, newly-weds and rural folk seeking a better life.

Recently about 3 000 families from Eikenhof, south of Johannesburg, resisted being moved to Wellers Farm. They claimed the area was too far from their places of work.

They also refused to move because they claimed that neighbouring white farmers wanted to build a cemetery and recreational facilities in the Eikenhof area.

People dumped

"Why must people be dumped in some squalid area, simply because whites want a cemetery and rugby fields? We are not moving," residents shouted at a meeting recently.

Officials of Johannesburg's Southern Metropolitan Sub-Structure and squatter leaders have since been locked in talks to resolve the matter.

Residents are afraid that the council will resettle them elsewhere. More than 1 000 people have so far been resettled in a part of Wellers Farm called Thulamtwana (Don't cry, child).

The transit camp was set up by the Gauteng government and the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council to prevent illegal squatting on the periphery of white suburbs.

The squatters were accused of invading land earmarked for development.

However, the "settlers" feel they are being removed because they live near the city's white elite and the emerging black middle class.

Strict security measures have been put in place around the Thulamtwana camp.

Residents are forced to walk for about two kilometres to get transport to various destinations. There are no schools, clinics or shops in the

‘Why must people be dumped in some squalid area, simply because whites want a cemetery and rugby fields? We are not moving’

area, and people have to live by their wits to survive.

Basic services like water, sewerage, portable toilets and refuse removal are supplied by Johannesburg's SMSS. But residents have to stand in long queues to get water, and about 10 families use one toilet.

There are numerous social problems, including unemployment and poverty. Some adults complain about young women "who trade in sex" to support themselves.

A 21-year-old woman from Eastern Cape said: "Tata, I have to struggle to get money to feed my child. Sometimes I go without food for days."

"My friends and I have resorted to prostitution to survive. It's bad but there's nothing else we can do."

Evicted from shack

She was evicted from her shack near Park Station and later abandoned by the father of her child.

"I was happy in my city shack because there was peace in the area. I made ends meet by selling fruit and vegetables."

"Life is miserable here. Our children cry for food every day - that's why we call this place Thulamtwana."

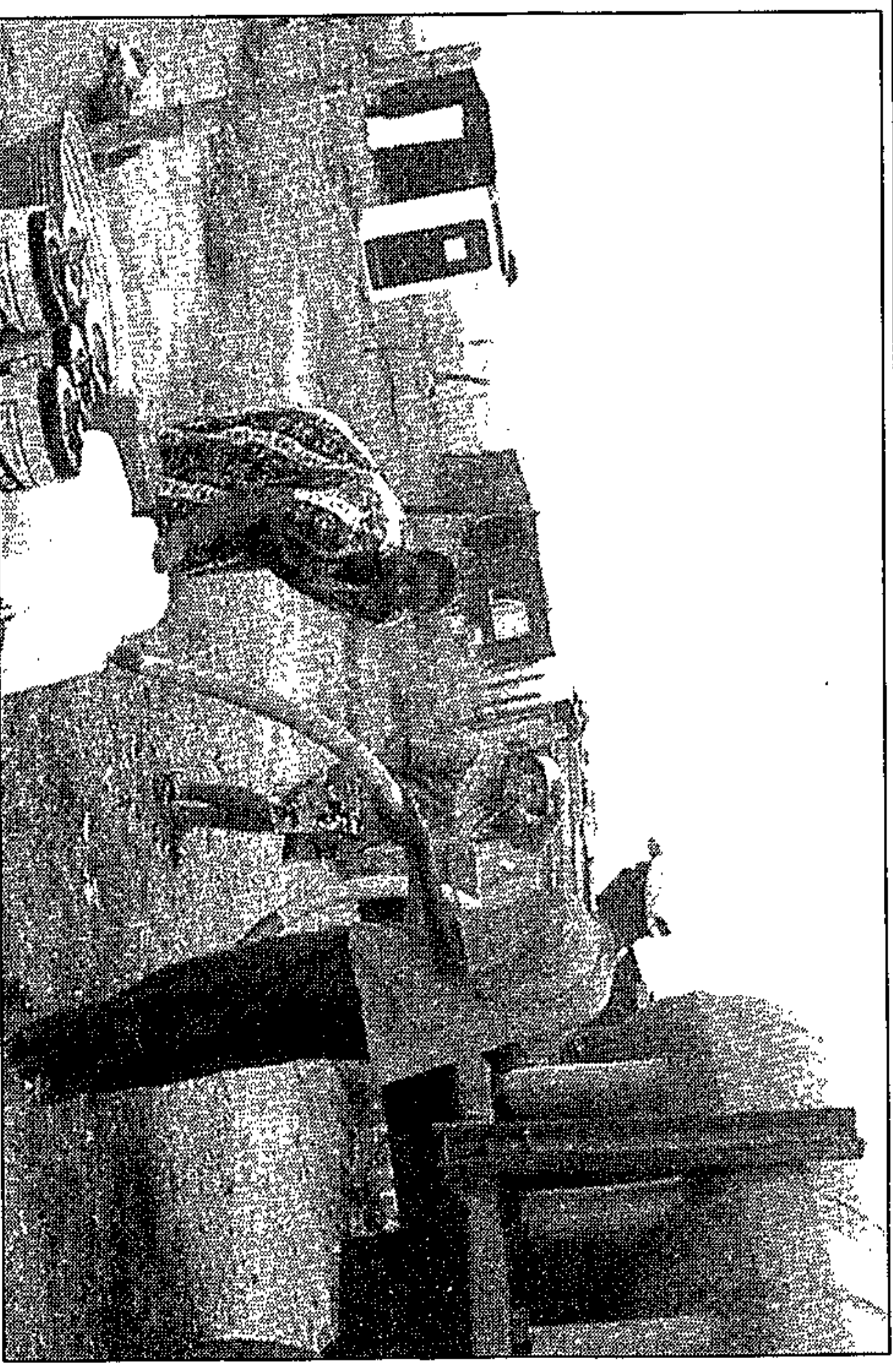
A local leader said instead of spending money to maintain the place, Government should improve the environment and build proper houses.

"Water is often a problem during rainy days. Life is hell here," said local leader Mr Mbululo Ngehazi (25).

3 000 Eikenhof families recently refused to move to Wellers Farm

Sowetan 12/2/97

(310)



Residents of Thulamtwana at Wellers Farm, south of Johannesburg, fetch water for domestic use. Water and other services like waste removal are provided by Johannesburg's SMSS.

PIC: MOFFAT ZUNGU

A tin shack acts as an African National Congress office, where complaints are heard by unemployed women volunteers.

"We don't get paid for listening to problems and for lobbying for an organisation we love so dearly," said Ms Nobantu Nxumalo (28).

Crimes such as theft, rape and child abuse are frequently reported to the ANC office. The nearest police station is about 25 kilometres away in De Deur.

Some disgruntled young people say they thought their misery would end after the 1994 election, but the opposite is true.

"We still haven't got the homes we were promised before the elections. There's no work and the Reconstruction and Development Programme, to which we all looked forward, has been stopped," they told *Sowetan*.

Gauteng MEC for development and planning

Mr Sicele Shiceka said: "Wellers Farm is the first project in the country to demonstrate a proactive attitude and co-operation between provincial and local government."

"This historic move also illustrates that the Government is serious in its attempts to stamp out the problems of rapid urbanisation."

In terms of the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, a local authority may, through a notice in the Government Gazette, declare portions of land as transit areas for the temporary settlement of homeless people.

These transit camps are intended to act as catchment areas for families evicted for invading land.

About 200 000 people live in about 90 000 structures in informal settlements in Greater Johannesburg. Most of them have been living in these areas for over 10 years.

Squatter-camp residents demolish shacks and build houses

(310) 444 113/99

By TOMMY MAKOE

A growing number of Gauteng squatter-camp residents are breaking down their shacks to build formal houses, in anticipation of the Gauteng government's plan to develop these areas into fully fledged townships.

The plan, which is awaiting the go-ahead from Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofokeng, will target two of the biggest informal

settlements - Orange Farm and Ivory Park.

Although the plan has yet to be formally approved, shack dwellers in some areas have gone ahead and "implemented" it themselves, by breaking down their homes and building houses.

According to Gauteng Housing Department spokesman Orдела Mahlangu, the implementation of the project is being delayed by legal technicalities.

Orange Farm and Ivory Park in particular have seen many squatters building formal houses in what used to be shackland with no electricity, poor infrastructure and virtually no services.

The improved houses have gardens, lawns, running water and electricity. There is transport and a growing number of schools, shops and clinics. Improvements are mostly carried out with private money. Roads, however, re-

main untarred and in bad condition.

"All we wanted was to be given land to build our own houses out of our own money. But for some squatter camps it is difficult for people to build their own houses because they illegally occupied land, and as a result they cannot build houses on land that does not belong to them. Most of us here could only build houses after this land was allocated to

us," said Jebogo Toka, who has now built a four-roomed house in Ivory Park.

Toka, who pays R33 in service rates, said she was proud, after four years of squatting in various areas, to own a house on land that belongs to her.

Alice Mcholo, who also lives in Ivory Park, said she stayed in a three-roomed shack before she received a R15 000 government subsidy to build her own house.

Better deal for squatters

(310)
By BUNTY WEST

More than 4 000 families squatting on Gauteng provincial administration land near Leratong Hospital in Krugersdorp are to have their water and sewerage facilities upgraded.

The settlement started after 71 families were evicted from a nearby farm in July 1995.

They had invaded the farm, which lies within Roodepoort's boundaries, in the hope of jumping the housing queue.

On eviction they were moved to their present site until another site could be found for them.

This never happened and, within a few months, the settlement had grown to 1 000 families.

Known as Leratong, the area is now home to more than an estimated 4 000 families.

A register will be taken of all the residents in order to prevent further growth of the settlement.

Illegal occupants given ultimatum

(104) (310) Sowetan 15/4/97

By Mokgadi Pela



Yesterday
Interdict

IZENI ZULU

THE Gauteng department of land and housing has issued a week's ultimatum to illegal occupants of houses in Thokoza.

The move follows incessant pressure from the Thokoza Phenduka Displacees Committee (TPDC) and the local branch of the South African National Civics Organisation.

Spokesman for the department Mr Jubie Matlou said yesterday that if the ultimatum was not honoured "we will use force to remove the illegals".

He confirmed that the department would hold a meeting with the Alberton sheriff to issue eviction orders against those not complying with the directive.

If the move goes ahead, it will bring to an end the plight of more than 600 families who were evicted from their homes seven years ago at the height of the warfare between hostel inmates and residents.

The department's ultimatum coincides with the apparent willingness of the Thokoza branch of the IFP to speed up the process.

Speaking to *Sowetan* at the weekend, branch secretary Mr Petrus Sithole said the IFP wanted a list of those whose houses had been illegally occupied "so that we can assist in returning them to their homes".

The law

Coordinator of the TPDC Mr John Khumalo has reacted favourably to the department's ultimatum, adding: "It's time the law protected those whose rights have been violated. We will watch with keen interest to see if the department acts on its threat."

Leaders of the TPDC have in the past called on the Gauteng department of safety and security to provide the necessary protection to "those who have moved into their houses so that we do not experience acts of intimidation from faceless people". Matlou said security was being considered to prevent acts of vandalism and intimidation.

Thursday April 17 1997 SOWETAN

Weiler's Farm to get R10-m

(~~123~~) (310) Sowetan 17/4/97

By Joshua Raboroko

WEILER'S Farm, an informal settlement situated about 45 kilometres south of Johannesburg, is to be turned into a "modern township" with basic services and communal amenities.

Gauteng housing and land affairs department has allocated R10 million to upgrade various projects, including land acquisition, community participa-

tion, pre-planning investigation and establishment of 4 800 residential sites.

Presenting his budget in the legislature this week, Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng said the upgrading would be introduced by the government together with the Weiler's Farm Thuthuka Foundation and the Greater Johannesburg Southern Metropolitan

Local Council.

The project would be started this year and completed in 1999, Mofokeng said, adding that similar projects would be undertaken in other informal settlements.

The more than 2 500 families of Weiler's Farm have been without basic amenities since the settlement was established in 1986 when the community was permitted to settle there.

Alex squatters on the brink of river disaster

Star 23/4/97 (310)

Sheer weight of shacks threatens to send them tumbling into Jukskei River unless people move

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

Authorities warned yesterday that 20 000 people living on the banks of the Jukskei River in Alexandra are in danger and have begun planning their removal to a safer area.

They warned that the river-bank was close to collapsing under the weight of about 5 000 shacks, many of them occupied by legal and illegal immigrants.

Eastern council official Anthony Blandford said: "Because of erosion by the river along the heel of the bed, the river banks are in jeopardy of caving in. This has become a life-threatening area. Flooding from tributaries of the Jukskei could cause the banks to collapse anytime," he said.

He added that because the problem had become too big for

the Eastern council to handle alone, the Department of Home Affairs, several countries' embassies and President Mandela himself had been asked for assistance.

The president had been asked to make the area a priority project and had also been invited to inspect the area personally, said Blandford.

The main problem with the relocation of people was that there were many foreigners from other African countries, he said.

According to Blandford, the council's long-term plan for the foreigners was to provide development and empowerment programmes so that they could eventually return to their countries and contribute to their economies. He said negotiations were in progress to relocate the foreigners to a Department of Home Affairs reception area in Randfontein,

and to relocate the South African citizens to the Far East Bank of Alexandra.

"We are looking at land in phase 3. The shacks which will be erected there will be only on a temporary basis for about 18 months to two years," he said.

A registration process was already in progress to fully ascertain how many people were living along the river, he added.

To facilitate the solution of the problem, the council had recently launched the Jukskei River Project. A steering committee had been formed involving participation of all neighbouring communities, civics and industrialists in nearby Marlboro, said Blandford.

He also said the Department of Water Affairs was helping with advice on the rehabilitation of the river and river beds once the squatters had moved.

Star 5/5/97

600 Tokoza families to be evicted tomorrow

30(310)
**STAFF REPORTER AND
OWN CORRESPONDENT**

The sheriff of the court will serve formal eviction orders tomorrow on 600 families who illegally occupied houses that were abandoned at the height of the violence in Tokoza.

Gauteng government spokesman Themba Maleleke said the legal owners and tenants who fled their homes in the Phenduka area, have for the past seven years been squatting all over the East Rand with friends and families.

As tension rises ahead of the final steps to evict the illegal occupants, the Tokoza Phenduka Dis-

places Committee and local councillors have pleaded for maximum restraint.

The TPDC urged members at a weekend meeting at the P.R. Maphanzela Higher Primary School to play their part in avoiding inciting violence.

The illegal occupants have expressed concern that they have nowhere to go if they are evicted and have called on the Gauteng government to provide them with alternative accommodation.

But Maleleke said the illegal occupants would be expected to return to the areas from which they had come.

M16 16-22105/47



Political problem: 'We are true citizens who have voted for the ANC. All we're begging for is living space'

Waiting for the caterpillars

ORRAINE SITHOLE, a mother of three, looked up at the sky and sighed, mumbling, "I'm sure God will help us". She does not know how long her corrugated iron shack will remain on the dusty Pretoria hillside.

In January Sithole — who is "not sure" how old she is — and 2 800 other families invaded private land on the outskirts of Mamelodi East, a township outside the city.

Last month they received a final eviction order, giving them until Thursday last week. "But the caterpillars did not come, maybe they'll come tomorrow," she said this week.

The invaded land, perched on a steep hill, has been christened Bohlabsatsi (Where the sun rises) as its residents believe they are the first in Pretoria to greet the sun each morning.

But neighbours in an adjacent squatter camp which is both developed and legal prefer to call it Shushumela (The place into which people have crawled).

Bohlabsatsi is ruled by a committee which some would call a "land mafia": it makes residents pay R70 a month for sites, plus a R20 "legal fee" and R5 for the water hijacked from the pipe serving the neighbouring camp.

One of the camp bosses, Fana Konyane, denied that he charges rent but acknowledged the legal fee: he believes it justified because of the eviction threat.

He insisted that all the residents are locals — mostly from backyard shacks in Mamelodi. But when committee members' backs were turned, residents admitted to the presence of illegal immigrants, some of whom have paid hand-some for their sites.

The committee rules Bohlabsatsi with an iron hand. Visitors are immediately escorted to their headquarters housed in a shack.

The planning of the settlement has been sloppy: sites are not plotted to a uniform size and no slots have been left for schools, soccer pitches or community halls. The committee insisted this was the spin-off from a desperate rush to claim the land.

Konyane sings the right song: "We are true citizens who have voted for the ANC," he said. "All we're begging for is living space, just a small place to dwell."

The camp has become a political football, kicked energetically between the local ANC branch politicians who back it, and the ANC-controlled Pretoria city council which says it stymies development. For now, the council appears to have lost interest.

A CROWD of 200 quietly formed in a semi-circle around the main shack. They remained silent for about 45 minutes, apart from one woman's exuberant cries of *yabo* when she heard something she really liked.

They were listening to the interview with Agrinette Madwayi (40) and two other senior members of the residents' committee. The two lieutenants prefaced any interjection with the words, "May I add?", while Madwayi gently regained control of the conversation with the words, "I will continue".

Their settlement, Agrinette Hills, is one of the forlorn, anonymous collections of shacks which line a stretch of the N1 highway linking Johannesburg and Bloemfontein.

It is the product of one of Gauteng's most recent land invasions. Ironically, the land, owned by the provincial government, was earmarked for an RDP housing project. The invaders eyed the land for about a year while backyard residents in the local township.

They approached the local council to discuss appropriating the land, but the negotiations never bore fruit. At one stage the council insisted the land was privately owned.

Amid confusion over ownership Madwayi and her advance team struck: "So we invaded. We wanted the solution to who owns this land."

The 370-shack settlement was formed on the night of March 20 when Madwayi led three women and four children on to their chosen patch of land. "It was very late and there was darkness," she said. They put up a plastic tent in which they were bombarded by mosquitoes: "We didn't sleep really. We just prayed that God might give us this land. The next day the people came here."

By the afternoon they had mapped out, with whitewash, plots for 25 shacks, leaving room for roads, a school, a creche, a playground and a community hall. And a soccer pitch on which the Agrinette Hills youth team beat the neighbouring Kanana (Promised Land) camp's side the day.

As new residents streamed in the homeless and unqualified surveyors, architects and builders — whom Madwayi calls "the technical team" — mapped out additional stands.

As for services, there is a clinic half a kilometre down the road which recently invited all mothers to bring their children for polio vaccines. Police only enter the settlement to visit their friends. Residents fetch their water in buckets from a serviced camp across the road. There are no toilets.

Madwayi said many of the children do not go to school, although there is a creche in the camp run by a resident. She said it was unlikely they would be evicted. "It must be OK as the land is the government's. We love our government." In fact, the provincial government now tacitly accepts the new camp and monitors it.

Residents have applied to the government for housing subsidies with guidance from the South African Homeless Peoples' Federation, which also helps train the "technical team". The non-governmental organisation enjoys financial support from the government. It has been criticised by Gauteng Housing MEC Dan Mofekeng for being involved with land invasions. But Madwayi says the federation has little to do with the choice of land — only its development.

Agrinette Hills' residents are not fans of South Africa's housing programme: "The government cannot accommodate us. If we followed the right channels and procedures we wouldn't be here," said Madwayi.

Agrinette Hills has started a social security kitty, which is fed by R1 or 50c contributions from all the residents. The money, stashed in a bank account, provides start-up cash for small businesses or just to help residents "survive".

After the interview Madwayi asked, "Can we sing a song", at which her audience broke into melodious singing. The chorus was, "Amandla imali nolwazi [Power is knowledge and money]".

'It must be OK as the land is the government's. We love our government'

needed

in Alex

MtG 16-22/5/97

THE mixture of human excrement and rotting rubbish festering on the banks of the Jukskei River creates a pungent aroma that hovers over the riverside shacks in Alexandra township.

When the Jukskei floods, the front line of motley shelters built precariously on the flaky bank is usually washed away. Last year eight people drowned.

Margaret Motsiyo, who occupies shack 861, says she "runs" uphill to drier shacks when it rains. She moved to the township from Tzaneen in the Northern Province and has since lost three of her five children. They "got sick". She could not say what caused their deaths. Alexandra is served by one clinic.

Apart from a smattering of brick housing and apartment blocks, Alexandra has become a warren of tiny, makeshift, overcrowded shacks. Toilets are a luxury; a few portable chemical huts are provided by the Eastern council.

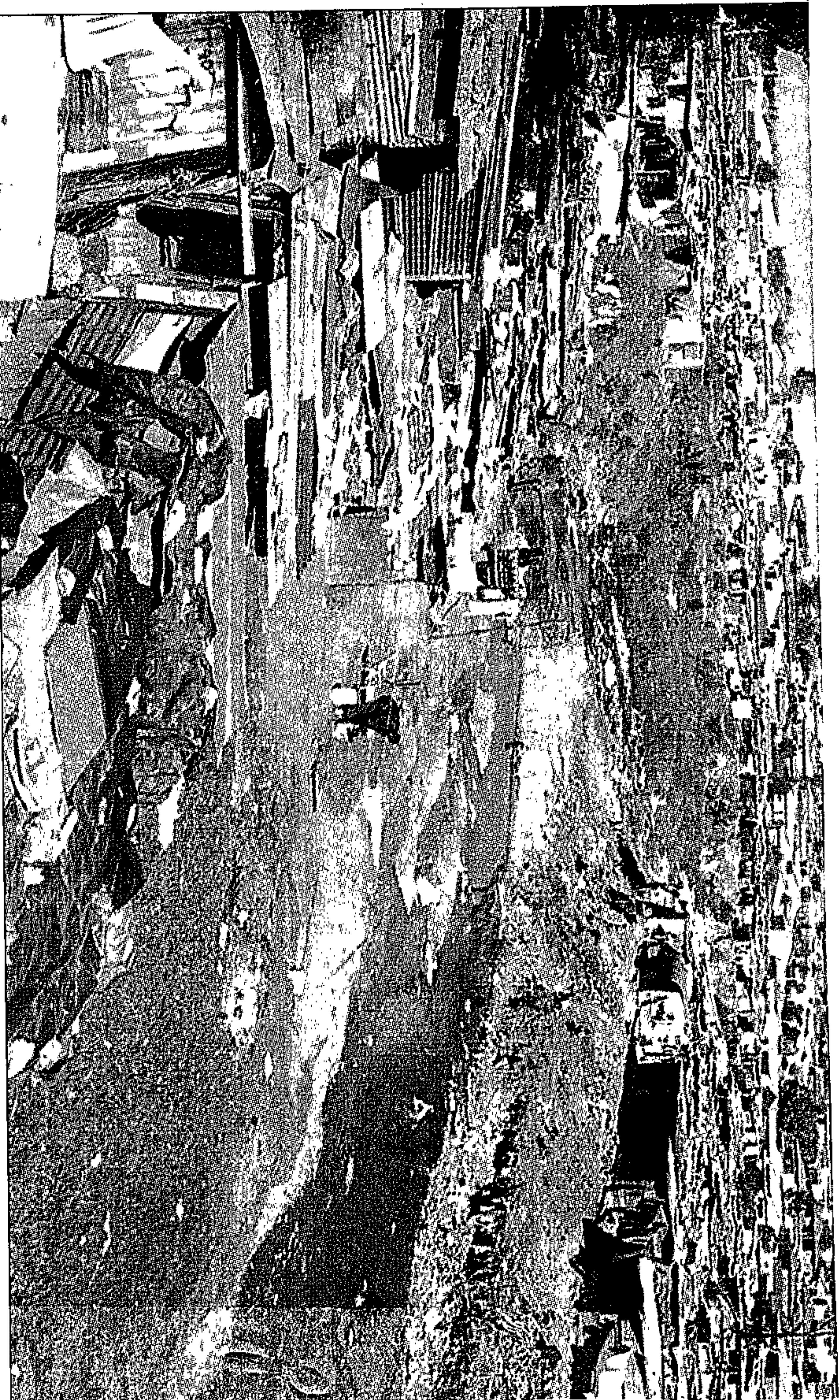
Goats and cows wander the streets, a throwback to the rural roots of many residents. Emaciated dogs sift through huge piles of rubbish.

Shacks in some areas, such as the river bank, are so tightly packed that it is impossible to navigate through them without crouching to avoid overhanging zinc roofs.

Each dwelling is secured with a chain and a padlock as gangs periodically raid them for the occasional prized possession like a stereo.

Alexandra's population has doubled in the past 10 years to about 500 000, according to rough estimates.

Eight years ago 27 families a day were believed to be moving in.



A river runs through it: The flooding of the Jukskei River is just one of the problems residents in overcrowded Alex have to face

PHOTOGRAPHS: TANGENI AMUPADIHI

Mzwanele Mayekiso, president of the township's South African National Civic Organisation branch, said the figure has certainly increased.

A section of the township is called Maputo, where the predominant language is Portuguese.

The pressure to expand this section and neighbouring Sijuela is so great that several shacks have been constructed on top of graves in the adjoining cemetery.

The high school attended by Sijuela children asks an annual contribution of R30 to R50, subject

to a means test. Of the school's 1 400 students, about a quarter have paid.

Alexandra's schools are wracked by violence and crime. One teacher said a pupil of hers had been shot dead over the weekend by her boyfriend, while two schoolboys had been arrested last week on hijacking charges.

Many children suffer from malnutrition. Those who do not make it to school play alongside the goats in the Jukskei, which also serves as a sewer.

Most residents are still engaged in a rent boycott. The services that exist are pathetic. Mayekiso says that even if the council does deign to collect rubbish the streets are filthy by midday.

The only obvious signs of development in most of Alexandra are tarred roads, which are generally in an appalling state, and the odd communal tap. "They [the government] need a Marshall Plan here," said Mayekiso.

He added that, in addition to the illegal immigrants, many of the

shack-dwellers come from outside Gauteng. There is some predictable resentment among residents towards the Mozambicans, although several of them have become active in the civic organisation.

Unemployment is estimated at 60% to 80% and the number of adults roaming the streets during work hours appears to support this. Most of those who do work are employed in neighbouring Sandton.

They go there in taxis. No buses or trains link Alexandra to the rest of South Africa.

heartland. Mungo Sogot and Tangeni Amupadhi report on the urban time bomb

is drowning Gauteng

(310) M+C 16-22/5 1997

rarely have access to water, sewage facilities or rubbish removal. In Bickersdal on the West Rand, about 80 000 residents of a camp are served by seven taps. It is one of several camps in the region perched on dolomitic ground, which can contain massive and dangerous sinkholes.

If not for the energetic taxi system, most settlements would remain cut off from the rest of the country. It took just two days for a taxi route to start serving the Johannesburg settlement of Diepsloot.

Most shacks are assembled from scrap metal and wood, but a few squatter camps provide prefabricated units which sell at R800 each.

The Nokhipa family, who live in a two-roomed shack in a Mamelodi settlement, use a paraffin stove for cooking and a candle for light. The children walk about 2km to school. Both parents are unemployed and survive from relatives' hand-outs.

The children sleep on the kitchen-cum-living room's cement floor (many squatters quickly stake their claim by throwing a cement floor on to the bare veld). In winter, two blankets shield

them from the cold. The staple food is maize porridge and chicken gblets or sour milk. Bread is a luxury. And going to bed without a meal is common.

The land invasions highlight the failings of the national government's ambitious mass housing strategy. They signal that the challenge of homelessness will not simply be met by building brick houses, but by concentrating on more land and services for South Africa's most marginalised people — the new immigrants to the city and those spilling out of townships.

Apart from a scattering of nine pilot projects, the Gauteng government and local councils cannot provide most settlements with basic services — let alone schools and clinics. Most camp children do not receive any formal schooling.

Mofokeng says the education department only has enough money for the salaries of teachers in existing schools. But the provincial government wants to provide even less support to

these settlements. Mofokeng says he wants a larger slice of his budget to go to housing — as opposed to services for squatters — and that it is the duty of local authorities to cater for the settlements.

Local authorities are folding their arms and waiting for provincial government to deal with the problem," he says.

However, the executive director of the Centre for Development and Enterprise, Ann Bernstein, warns: "The only long-term mass housing solution for South Africa is the provision of subsidies for land and services."

Gauteng provincial authorities are concentrating, through the Operation Mayibuye programme, on finding and upgrading suitable sites to resettle the squatters — but this is far too little to cater for the tens of thousands flocking in.

The provincial government also monitors the sprouting of new camps and the growth of existing ones.

Seven employees patrol the entire greater Johannesburg area every day, while four do the same in Pretoria. Like a human radar screen, they tour camps, counting the number of shacks and multiplying them by 6,1 — what they believe to be the average shack household — to come up with a population estimate.

The government does not even know what land it owns. It is poring over the sketchy records bequeathed by its predecessors. Mofokeng wryly comments that one of the ways his department discovers what it owns is if the land is invaded: "They only go for government land."

Mofokeng says the department is compiling a data base using information from its homeless waiting list, which at the last count stood at 350 000 families. The list is designed to discourage land invasions.

Although the illegally occupied land is usually state-owned, the authorities are reluctant to evict, particularly

in winter. The land invaders are rarely sloppy trespassers; they are often highly astute planners who are aware of their rights and of the reluctance of government and local councils to fight them.

The inflow into the province coincided with a revamp of the old laws which allowed officials to erase new settlements with bulldozers. Now, a magistrate presides over an application for evictions and there is an investigation into whether suitable, available land exists to which the squatters can be transferred.

Although many residents of suburbs complain that Gauteng's new settlements are crime dens, there is little evidence to back this view.

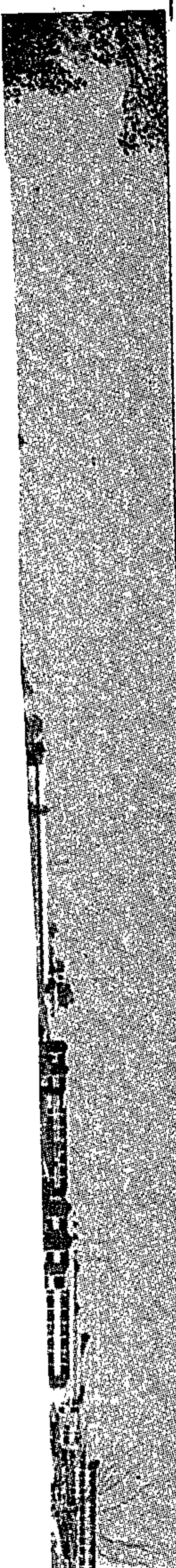
The provincial land department's director of land affairs, Carin Engelbrecht, says it is more the case that the police are unable to access these areas — either because there are no roads or because they are too frightened.

Those settlements provided with basic services by the provincial government or the council appear to run smoothly.

Johandeo, a settlement near Sebokeng, which is one of the Gauteng government's jewel pilot projects, is so clean that on the day the *Mail & Guardian* visited it children from the school were burning rubbish.

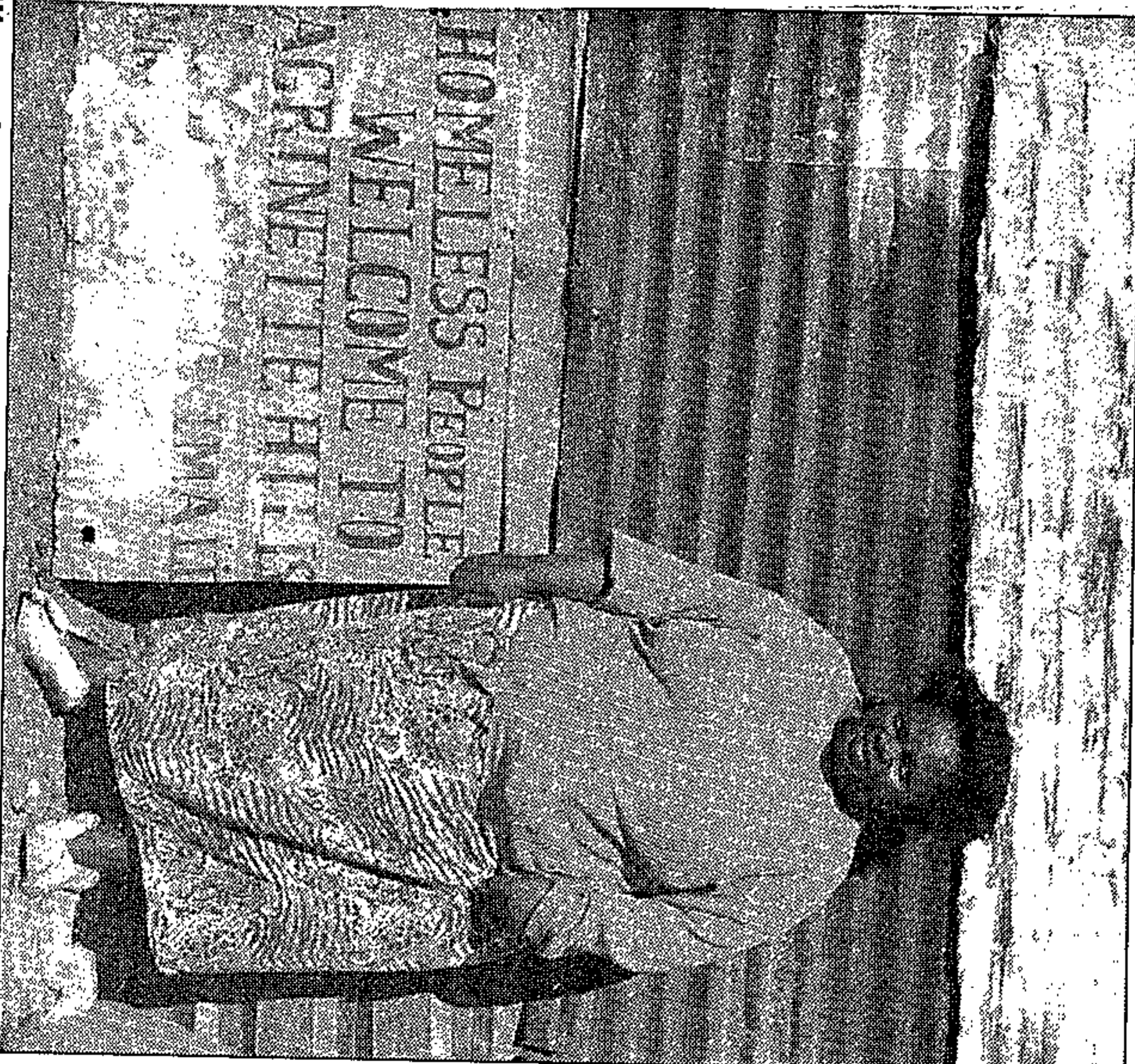
But already, separated only by a field, a new squatter camp has arisen.

Marshall Plan' is



11-15 16-22/05/97

Millions of people camped in informal settlements are transforming the country's industrial



Warm welcome: Agriette Madwayi led the land invasion

Homeless find a home in the Hills
M+C 16-22/5/97 (310)

A human flood

THEY often strike in the early hours of a cold winter's morning. Groups of men armed with bags of chalk and a flag assemble on empty land. They mark out plots with the chalk, sometimes leaving space for a soccer field.

In a matter of hours they will have mapped out their new home. They then erect the flag — often the national colours — name the camp after a prominent political leader and quickly bring in as many women and children as possible.

These are the shock troops of a movement that is fundamentally transforming South Africa's industrial heartland. Thousands of people are pouring into Gauteng every month — most estimates put it as high as 20 000 — creating new settlements, swallowing up empty tracts of land and placing an unbearable strain on public resources.

Conservative estimates put the population of the Gauteng urban conurbation — both Greater Johannesburg and Pretoria — at more than eight million, but the provincial gov-

ernment says there are 11 million. It is now the second-largest metropolitan spread in Africa after Cairo, and possibly the fastest-growing emerging city in the world.

"If you sit down and think soberly about the problem, you won't even start to tackle it," concedes Dan Mofokeng, the Gauteng MEC for Housing and Land Affairs on whose desk this monumental problem falls.

"The other day I was visiting a friend in Benoni," adds Mofokeng, sketching the rapidity of the process with his hands. "The next day when I came back there were so many shacks on both sides of the road, almost overnight."

These new city dwellers are flocking in from KwaZulu-Natal, North-West, the Free State and the Eastern Cape, but there are also many thousands from beyond South Africa's borders attracted to the industrial magnet of Gauteng.

The mushrooming informal settlements, which provincial government officials estimate house three million, are populated not only by those fleeing rural poverty but also by resi-

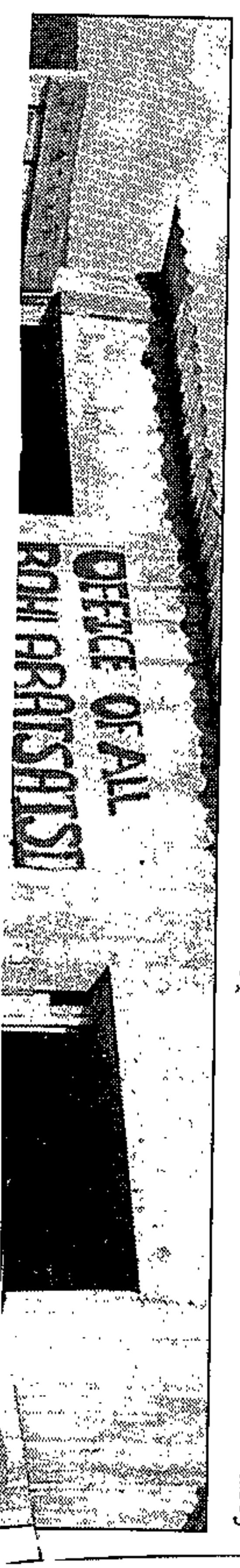
dents of "backyard shacks" from existing townships — who are believed to mastermind the invasions.

The challenge that the new wave of urbanisation poses to the authorities is not simply one of resources but whether the state will be able to govern them — whether the new residents will become taxpaying citizens who benefit from schools, roads and clinics, or whether they will continue to live in a world apart.

The government is grappling to construct a coherent urbanisation strategy while faced with a dearth of reliable statistics describing the scale of the problem. Estimates of the population of Soweto alone range from one million to six million.

The current wave started after the 1994 democratic elections. "The people wanted a big city life," explains Mofokeng. "In the first two years there was a huge crisis. It is only now that we are beginning to plan properly."

Many of Gauteng's new residents live in wretched conditions: they



Homeowners at mercy of tenants

Squatters threaten to burn houses down when asked to leave, and nothing is done by either council or police to help

By ANNA COX
Sandton Bureau

The harassment of Alexandra property owners by tenants living illegally in their homes is increasing daily, according to the Alexandra Land and Property Owners' Association spokesman Keke Koalepe.

The owners are often terrorised by the tenants - who don't pay rent - and find themselves in a position where not even the law is on their side.

Koalepe himself fell victim to this situation last weekend. He had two people living in his house who had not been paying rent since 1994. He obtained an eviction order and the sheriff evicted the tenants. Koalepe removed the door and roof of the rooms but last Friday - a day later - they returned and laid a charge of theft against him.

Koalepe is desperate: "It seems there is no law which protects property owners. This is my property, it is my private place - I paid for it but it is taken over by other people who do what they like and live here for nothing. I want the rooms for my daughter who has finished her matric."

"We are terrorised by these tenants and have no legal protection. We don't know which way to turn," he said.

Koalepe is one of hundreds of Alex property owners who face the same problem. Yet no one appears to be able to help them.

The Human Rights Commission's (HRC) head of the legal department, Mogam Moodliar, said the commission was seeking legal opinion to ascertain whether the owners had rights in terms of the Land Restitution Act.

DP Gauteng MPL Jack Bloom said he was disappointed in the approach of the HRC which had attempted to mediate the issues rather than directly ensure that legal rights were upheld.

Eastern Council communications officer Keith Peacock said a registration process was in progress to find out who the legal owners and tenants were, but until such a register was complete it would be impossible to carry out evictions.

The land dispute started under the Group Areas Act when the Government expropriated properties and then granted owners permission to rent their own properties back from the State. Many repurchased their homes in the 1980s.

Caroline Nkosi is another victim of tenants. She has 10 living on her property. Her children want to move in, but they are unable to do so because the tenants refuse to move.

"People come here and build their shacks on my property wherever they want and I can do nothing. If I dare tell them to leave they threaten to burn the house down. Nobody at all is helping us - the councillors and the police do nothing."

FILED
ITALY

Millions to upgrade squatter camps into formal townships

(310)

By TOMMY MAKOE

Star 30/8/97

Hundreds of Gauteng squatter camps are to benefit from a multimillion-rand provincial housing department programme to upgrade them to fully fledged townships.

This community-based programme, with a total budget of R35-million, is to be allocated to both the former Transvaal Provincial Administration informal settlements and other upgradable squatter camps, which mushroomed largely after 1990.

Gauteng director of land affairs Caren Engelbrecht said that before the 1994 general election, the now-defunct TPA had initiated a programme to formalise the informal settlements. The new provincial government is now implementing the long-promised plans as well as looking at more recently established squatter camps on both private and state land.

She said R6-million out of the total budget would be spent on the settlements identified before 1994. The remaining R29-million would be used to revamp nine other squatter camps that were not earmarked by the TPA for upgrading.

The provincial government has invited local authorities to apply for funding to upgrade informal settlements in their jurisdiction.

Already the Benoni Transitional Local Council has applied to upgrade four settlements in its area, and applications have also come from the Lekoa/Vaal, Boksburg, Khayalami and Thutuka local authorities.

Engelbrecht said the provincial government had identified 200 upgradable informal settlements.

"Formalising the other 200 upgradable squatter camps could take more than 10 years - this depends on the funding," she said.

"It is a long-term goal because the problem is that most of them were occupied without any formal planning. They have poor infrastructure and, besides, the legal process of formalising them is complex.

"Each site will cost between R1 200 and R1 600, which will be part of the subsidies for the upgrading of the sites. Because of budget constraints, our priority for now is low-cost areas," Engelbrecht explained.

Most of the provincial funding covered town-planning costs, surveying, transfer duties and the purchase of land.

Formalising

She said her department had completed all the paperwork for formalising Orange Farm, a squatter camp near Vanderbijlpark with 30 000 sites. Orange Farm will be declared a township next month.

The department is also investigating other former TPA squatter camps, including Zonk'iZizwe on the East Rand, Ivory Park and Rabie Ridge near Kempton Park, Doornkop in Soweto, Poortjie near Krugersdorp, two squatter camps in Rietfontein, and Soshanguve next to Pretoria.

"They will probably be fully formalised in the next six months," Engelbrecht said.

As they continue to await their promised land, squalor and anger become part of their lives

By TOMMY MAKOE

Christopher Qunu (68) is slowly dying in the basement of a Johannesburg office building. There is no electricity, no ventilation, and the floor is flooded with human excrement from the blocked sewerage.

Qunu, who does not know what he is suffering from, cannot walk, has problems breathing and has no energy. He is confined to a sofa in the fly-infested, dilapidated building.

Like the other 540 residents, Qunu was part of the Mulbarton squatter camp group which was "temporarily" moved into what used to be the Department of Transport's building after they were evicted.

The then Johannesburg city council promised to relocate them after only three weeks. Three years later they are still waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. Conditions in the building have deteriorated. Qunu has been living in the fifth since December.

"I have nowhere else to go... this is the place I call home," he said.

Removing sewerage water from her room in the basement has become a daily task for Catherine Adams. She cannot get used to the stench.

"Every day the sewerage floods my room. I always get sick from the water. Who knows? I may be very

sick, I do not stop coughing," she said.

One cannot escape the strong odour of human excrement and paraffin, even when standing outside the building. Little wonder: there are only nine toilets in this three-storey building.

"I am afraid to go to the doctor because I fear I have TB. My clothes smell of sewerage even though they are clean," said Dennis Nyembe who has bricks blocking sewage from entering his room.

About 16 people live in each former office.

Willie Dhlamini, who for the past three years has been leading the struggle to have the people moved, said they started negotiations with the Southern council more than two years ago and nothing had been done.

Dhlamini added that the anger of the people who had been promised homes was reaching boiling point.

But the people who live in these appalling conditions are not the only homeless people who have waited years for promises of relocation to be fulfilled.

Families in Soweto's Dlamini squatter camp and Thembalile near Lenasia have seen their living conditions deteriorate while they wait. Both squatter camps are in dangerous areas.

Thembalile is built on dolomitic land; Dlamini near a flood plain in what used to be a dumping area.

Dlamini and Thembalile squatters who have been waiting for their land for more than 10 years said they thought their dreams had come true when they were allocated

What can you do when you wait 10 years in a leaking shack? You build the house even though you know it can fall any time

land early last year in Mligund North, in the south of Johannesburg.

But because residents of Naturena and Alberton objected to their relocation near their areas, they have not been moved.

During the *Saturday Star's* visit to Thembalile, Amos Petersen, a resident, said there were no more public toilets because

they have been removed.

"Older people are the ones in trouble as they have no pit toilets like the rest of us. They have to ask neighbours for the use of a toilet," he said.

"They tell us the land is dangerous to live on, but why are they not giving us alternative land, because we cannot afford to buy it," Petersen asked.

Thembalile councillor Daniel Bovu said the portable public toilets were removed for health and safety reasons.

"The majority of the people complain they cannot use the toilets at night because they can be easily attacked. People whose shacks are close to the toilets also complained about the stench. After much consideration we decided to remove them because most have pit toilets in their yards," Bovu explained.

The long wait for allocated land has led many residents to build houses in dangerous areas.

In Dlamini squatter camp, all the houses built on top of the dump have cracked.

"What can you do when you have waited 10 years in a leaking shack for a proper house? You built the house even though you know it can fall at any time," said Thabho Rantel.

Residents of these areas are still going to live in these hazardous

conditions for another year. According to the chairman of the urban town-planning tribunal, Norman Prince, all the people will be relocated between June and November next year.

"Approximately 5 000 squatters from Thembalile will be moved to their promised land at Mligund North and all the squatters in Dlamini will be moved to Liefde-er-Vrede next year."

Prince added that last year's opposition of the people of Naturena to the relocation of the people was based on ignorance. "They thought the people were going to start another squatter camp. But after we had consulted with them and provided them with the plans of our intended formal and decent housing in the area, they agreed."

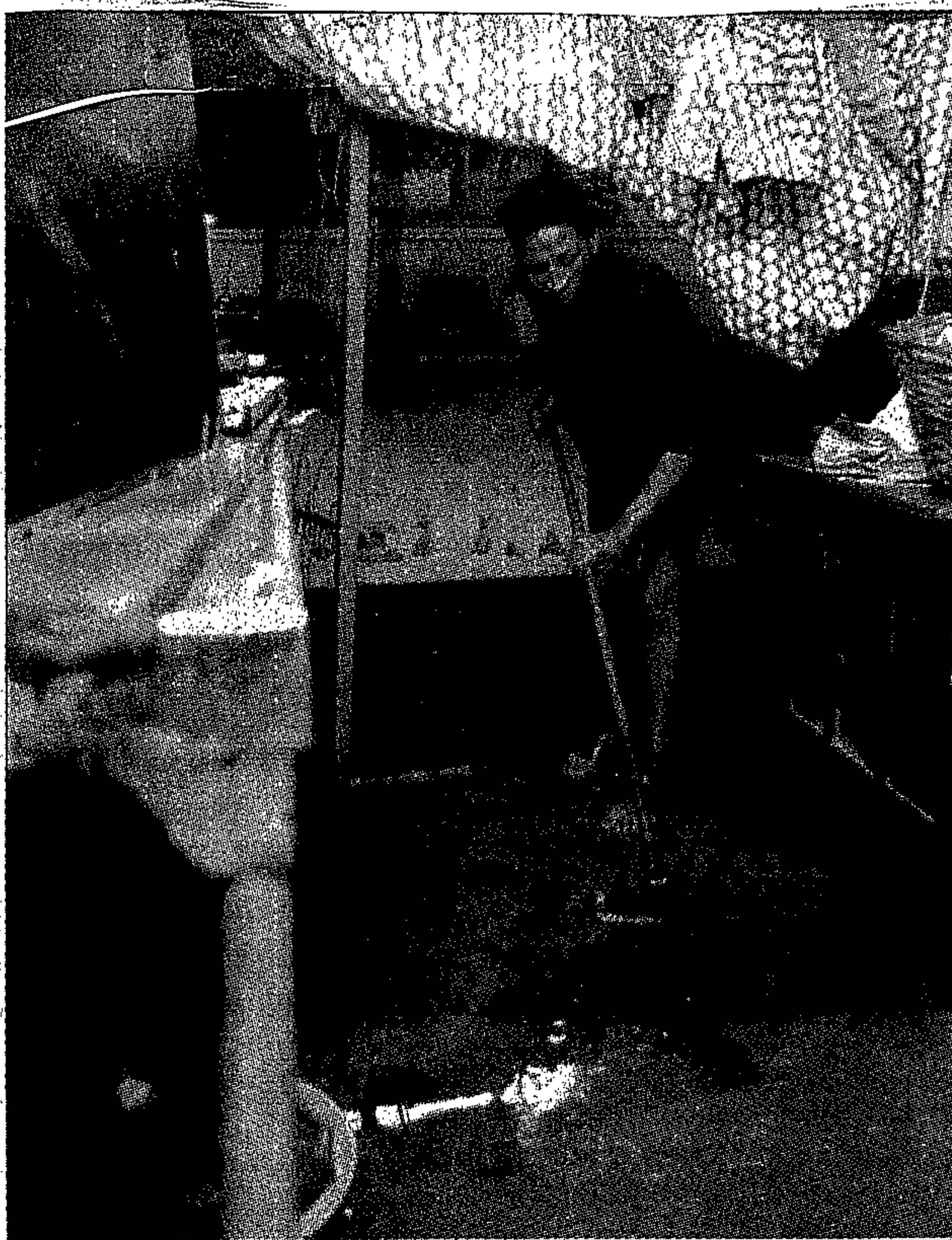
But the people who are living in the former Transport Department building will remain there for an undisclosed period.

"We are still going to conduct a survey to find out who lives in the building. We want to find out if they have properties elsewhere and whether they are working in the city," Prince explained. "From there we will consider if we can find them an alternative place around town."

He said the process of relocating people was part of the Rapid Land Release programme, aimed at housing 22 000 Gauteng people.

6/4/97

(310)



HUMAN STENCH: Catherine Adams sweeps the sewage from her room in the former Transport Department offices

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE

Squatters must move away, S2

Star 15/9/97

A grim time ahead for 23 families who have been evicted from their temporary h.

By MELANIE-ANN FERIS

The future of 23 families evicted from their homes on a Rainbow Chicken property close to Lanseria airport last week looks grim.

They have until today to find other accommodation before being evicted from the property where they have been living, in tents, for the past few days.

The private landowner who took pity on the 23 families and has allowed them to live on her land since last Tuesday has been receiving death threats from other landowners.

"I don't know who they are, they disguise their voices and say ugly things to me. They even threatened my children and said they would mutilate them and me. I felt sorry for these people (the squatters), but if things carry on like this then they will have to go," she said yesterday.

The squatters are now waiting for the outcome of a meeting between neighbouring farmers and the owner of the land on which they were given refuge.

Neighbouring landowners have already told the homeless group to leave the property by today because the owner had not consulted them before allowing them to squat.

Sam Selepe, one of the evicted residents, said they were waiting for the landowners to decide whether they

could stay until other accommodation was found for them.

"We were getting additional material to set up shacks, but we cannot do so because of the threats from the neighbours. They said we are disturbing them and that they don't feel safe and that we will be evicted on Monday," he said.

One of the neighbouring farm owners confirmed that they were unhappy about the squatters moving in and confirmed that a "closed" meeting would be held to discuss the problem.

He was, however, unable to say when this meeting was scheduled to be held.

"I have people on my farm. I look after them because they have been here for many years. They are not people from outside.

"What I want to know is where they (the squatters) are coming from? Where were they before? I feel sorry for them, but this is a big problem," he said.

Immediately after squatters moved into the area, property values dropped and crime increased, he added.

Another problem was that the squatters were continually breaking down fences on the farms, he said.

He said he was not aware of any threats nor of the fact that the squatters had been given until today to move out of the area.

Families must leave today

By MELANIE-ANN FERIS

A woman stares up at gathering storm clouds in dismay, as a young child clings to her skirt. Hers is one of 23 families from the Bloubosrand/Lanseria area who were evicted from their homes last week.

They were offered sanctuary on a small piece of land for the next three months until other accommodation was found for them, but now have to move because of continuous threats to the property owner.

When they were evicted from their homes on the Rainbow Chicken property close to Lanseria airport last week, they took with them only a few possessions they could transport by car.

With a few pieces of corru-

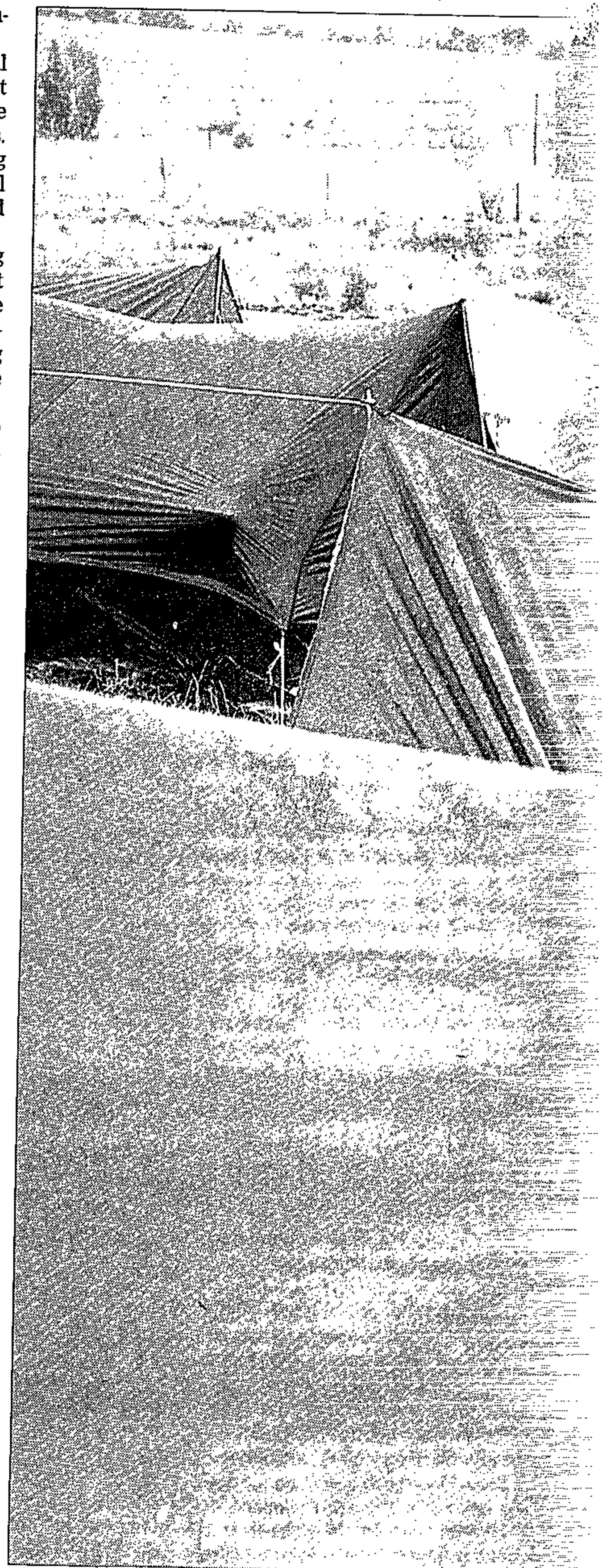
gated zinc they managed to find, the families put up a small shack, barely 2m in length and breadth, where the women and children could sleep. Another shack was erected for the men, but this offers little protection against the elements.

The Rhema Church came to their assistance with 16 tents, the majority of which can only accommodate two people, and several bags of mealie meal.

The squatters receive water from the main house, but have no toilet facilities, except for a single outside toilet which serves those families already living on the property.

Those who have jobs buy food which they contribute to the whole community, and everyone "eats from one pot".

Continuous rain over the



past few days has made their situation almost unbearable as they are forced to stay inside the cramped tents.

There is no electricity, and people try to burn candles inside the tents, but they know

this is dangerous.

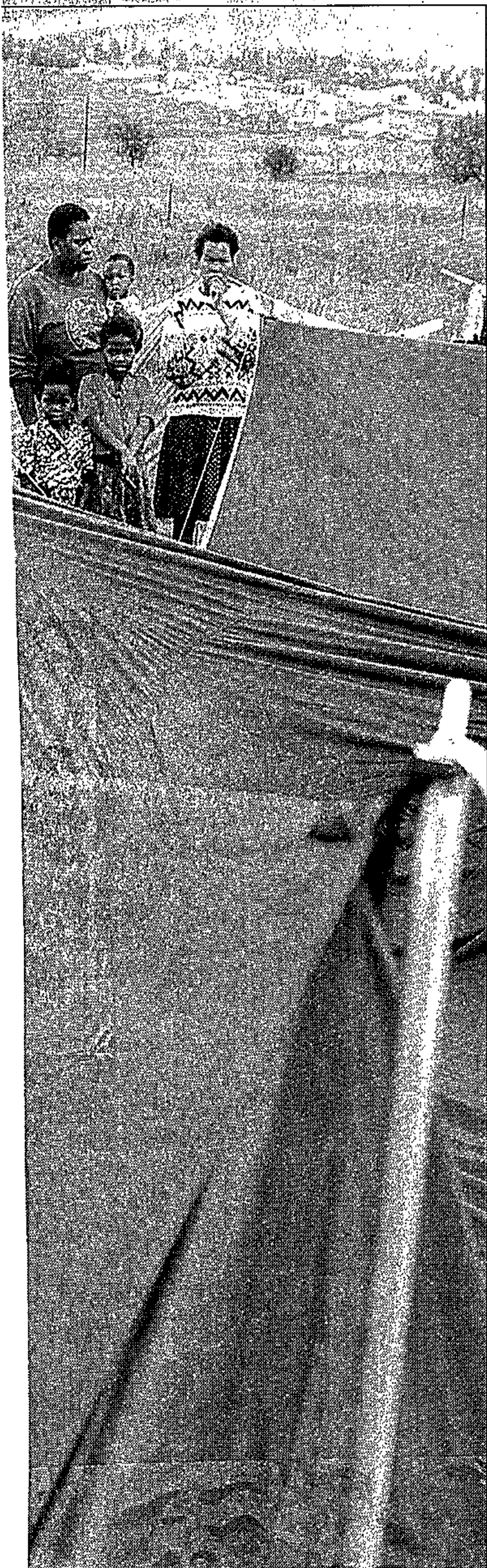
The squatters are not sure what the future holds as they await the outcome of a meeting scheduled to be held by other landowners, where their future is to be discussed. No indication

y neighbours

(310)

omes near Lanseria

JOHN ROBINSON



Uncertain future ... 23 evicted families find a temporary home in a few tents, but will soon have to move if neighbouring landowners have their way.

cillor for Ward 28 which includes the Bloubostrand, Lanseria, Zandspruit and Northgate areas, said yesterday: "We are trying our best to find place for the people. We are ashamed of the way they've been treated."

has been given to them on when it will be held. Meanwhile, the squatters have been given until today to move out of the area, but they have nowhere else to go.

Petros Sithole, ANC coun-

STAR

15/9/97

Sowetan 17/9/97 (310)

Rhema to shelter squatters

HA 10/9
TWENTY-THREE families evicted from a property near Lanseria Airport and given temporary refuge by a landowner, yesterday moved to yet another a temporary shelter in Randburg.

African National Congress councillor Mr Petros Sithole said the squatters, evicted from property owned by Rainbow Chickens last week, were transported to a property in Kya Sands by the Rhema Church yesterday.

Sithole said the move was temporary, adding that he feared people might be opposed to the presence of the squatters in Randburg. He said the families would resist attempts to have them removed from the new premises.

After their eviction last Tuesday, the families were first given refuge by a private landowner – a gesture which provoked anger among neighbouring farmers. The landowner said he had received threats since allowing the

families onto his property. He had given Sithole notice to vacate so that he could get some peace.

Rhema Church leader Pastor Ray McCauley yesterday offered to mediate between landowners and the families.

“When we first heard about this a week ago we were prepared to take the families onto our church farm in the area, so long as the Gauteng authorities supported us in bringing all the stakeholders together,” he said. – Sapa.

Homeless flocking to Lanseria farms

Some ANC politicians are accusing farmers of evicting blacks to form a white laager in the north

By ANNA COX

The threat of land invasion on farming land around Lanseria, north of Randburg, has reached crisis proportions because the area has become a high-growth, development and industry node which provides many jobs, says ANC north political co-ordinator Boeta Raja.

Between 6 000 and 12 000 people in the area were homeless and gravitating to farms and large tracts of unused land. This was resulting in tensions between squatters and land-owners which could erupt at any time, said Raja, who has called on the Northern Council to speed up land provision.

He has also called on the provincial government to expedite the rezoning of land. But Pule Buthelezi, Northern Council executive com-

mittee chairman, said the short-term solution was to ask farmers for a reprieve from evictions to give the council time to find longer-term solutions.

In recent weeks there has been an endless stream of evictions, land invasions, death and arson threats by both land invaders and farmers.

The homeless – and some ANC politicians – are accusing farmers of evicting blacks from the area, saying they want to form a white *laager* in the north. Farmers say they simply want to make a living on the land and will not tolerate illegal land invasion on their properties. They claim people are deliberately being brought in by the ANC to bolster numbers for the next election.

This claim was dismissed by Raja, who says that the ANC was against land inva-

sion and has, in fact, assisted farmers where there were genuine invasions. But he said many farmers in the area were evicting tenants to beat the Land Tenure Act, which would give tenants rights to land.

One of the main causes of

Prospect of work drawing people in

the land invasions was that Lanseria and surrounding areas were regarded as high-development areas providing work opportunities, said Raja.

"Alexandra is very overcrowded and this has now become the first stop for many people from other provinces. The vast stretches of vacant

land, coupled with employment opportunities, are drawing people here," he said.

Raja said a forum consisting of all roleplayers had been formed to find a solution.

Many farmers have unwittingly fallen victim to land invasions. One purchased a farm on which a certain number of workers were living. After she took occupation, the workers started bringing in family and friends and the numbers grew quickly.

When the owner got an eviction order, the council asked her to stop the eviction until alternative land was found, but nothing has been done for the past 18 months and the number of people on her property is growing daily.

Three hundred people were arrested by Krugersdorp police two weeks ago for land invasion in Nietgedacht, opposite the Lion Park, many

of whom are still in jail because they have nowhere else to go.

The land is owned by the Gauteng province, but has been leased to Pieter Wasserman, from whom it was expropriated in 1992.

Wasserman now fears for his life and that of his family following numerous threats made to him after the evictions. He said the land had been in his family for the past 100 years.

"I am afraid now but there is nothing I can do. I have not been given notice to vacate by the province and am therefore the legal lessor of the land," he said, adding that he ran a protea and peach farm.

Recently 23 families were evicted from a chicken farm and when a neighbour offered to take them in she was threatened, allegedly by neighbours who don't want the squatters in the area.

SAW 17/9/97

(210)

Squatters demand action

(310) *sowetan* 1/10/97
By Dan Fuphe

ABOUT 2 000 members of the Greater Germiston Squatters Association gathered outside the administration offices of the Germiston Town Council, on Monday demanding that their organisation be recognised and that the council provide them with facilities.

GGSA chairman Mr Majola Mkosana, told Germiston mayor Mr Caiphus Sambo that residents had decided to march on the council after officials apparently ignored their letters for recognition.

"From today, we hope that the council acknowledges the existence of GGSA," Mkosana said.

In a six-point memorandum presented to Sambo the marchers demanded that:

- Officials recognise the GGSA;
- The council appoints a senior liaison officer to assist them with efforts to improve their lives;
- The principle of self-determination and the involvement of GGSA members in the provision of homes or facilities be accepted; and
- Full disclosure be made by council of any plans regarding squatter camps or any informal settlements in the area.

The memorandum also read: "Our members are decent, homeless people living under appalling conditions in the city of Germiston.

"The credibility of the present administration must be questioned as long as this problem is not seen to be receiving the attention it deserves."

It also lashed out at the local Town Council for evicting 580 people including 68 young children from the old Germiston police station.

"For 18 months this eviction has been inevitable yet the council did nothing about the future of these people,"

The memo further read. "If 580 people cannot be considered what hope is there for the 200 000 presently living in similar conditions?"

Sambo said while he sympathised with the GGSA, it would take about six months for his council to address their demands.

NEWS NATIONAL

Land invading families facing the boot

See page 3/10/97 (3/10)

By Joshua Raboroko

MORE than 500 families living on an informal settlement outside Mohlakeng township, near Randfontein, are to be evicted from their shacks on Monday because they have illegally invaded land earmarked for housing development. The eviction order was granted by

the Johannesburg High Court after the Greater Randfontein Transitional Local Council argued that they needed to curb illegal land invasions in its area of jurisdiction. GRTLC chairman Mr Roos Krans confirmed yesterday that they applied for a court order and said the area was earmarked for low-cost housing and other developments.

The local authority had approved several housing projects in an attempt to reduce the housing backlog, which he said was in the region of hundreds of thousands of home-units in the area. He said the council was negotiating with the people for an alternative relocation, failing which they would probably have to go back to backyard shacks in Mohlakeng and other areas.

The Mohlakeng Backyard Homeless Organisation said yesterday they occupied the land after failing to obtain homes from the council. MBHO spokesman Mr Tunediso Modise said infrastructure was developed by the Independent Development Trust at an estimated cost of R3,5 million but was vandalised by people protesting against the apartheid regime.

They started to negotiate with the new local town council without success. Most of the families came from backyard rooms and shacks in Mohlakeng and had no homes. The residents were desperate and the evictions would frustrate them further, said Modise, who added that families had prepared themselves to resist the evictions.

Violence flares as squatters are evicted

Star 8/10/97 (310)

1 dead, 4 hurt as 600 shacks demolished near Randfontein

By GILL GIFFORD

One person died and four were injured when squatters clashed with the police and members of a private security firm who tried to evict them from municipal property near Randfontein on the West Rand today.

About 600 shacks were demolished by a private security company which started the eviction process at about 5.30am.

The squatter camp was this morning cordoned off with barbed wire and the security guards smashed up the shacks with crowbars. There were sporadic clashes - including exchanges of gunfire - between the residents and the security guards.

Groups of panic-stricken women and children huddled together as the evictions and clashes continued. The evictions were scheduled to go on for most of this morning.

Police spokesman Sergeant Herman Esterhuizen said the Randfontein Town Council acquired a court eviction order to

move the growing community off municipal land bordering Mohlakeng township just outside Randfontein.

About 150 workers from AB Security started breaking down shacks and moving people off the land just before 6am.

The body of an unknown man was found in the settlement. He had been shot in the

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**Police have
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the situation**
”

chest and right leg.

Residents from the camp marched to a house in Mohlakeng where they gathered and started throwing stones.

Esterhuizen said it had not yet been established who the

house belonged to.

Police who were monitoring the situation fired rubber bullets to quieten the crowd. Residents fired back and one woman was injured.

Lucina Mokoena (37) was shot in the right shoulder.

A docket of public violence was opened at about 7am.

Esterhuizen said “police have fired no live rounds and are on hand to monitor the situation”.

He said building material from the demolished shacks would be taken to Botha plots in Randfontein where they would be stored for seven days and then sold on public auction if unclaimed. Property left on the scene would be taken to police stores in Randfontein.

As evictions proceeded two more injured people were reported injured. Gregory Manzine was shot in the right leg and another unnamed man was also shot.

At about 8.15am 28-year-old Henry van der Schyff from AB Security was stabbed in the head and arm. He was taken to hospital in a serious condition.

One dead, four hurt as squatters (310) defy eviction

ARU 8/10/97

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg – One person died and four were injured when squatters clashed with police and private security staff trying to evict them from municipal property near Randfontein on the West Rand today.

About 600 shacks were demolished by a security company, which started the eviction in the early hours.

The squatter camp was cordoned off with barbed wire and security guards broke up the shacks with crowbars. There were sporadic clashes – including exchanges of gunfire – between residents and security guards.

Groups of panic-stricken women and children huddled together as the evictions and clashes continued.

Police spokesman Herman Esterhuizen said the Randfontein Town Council had acquired an eviction order to move the squatter community from municipal land bordering Mohlakeng township just outside Randfontein.

The body of an unknown man was found in the settlement afterwards. He had been shot in the chest and right leg.

Residents from the camp marched to a house in Mohlakeng, where they gathered and started throwing stones.

Sergeant Esterhuizen said it had not yet been established who the house belonged to.

Police who were monitoring the situation fired rubber bullets to subdue the crowd. Residents fired back and a woman was shot in the right shoulder.

Sergeant Esterhuizen said: "Police have fired no live rounds and are on hand to monitor the situation".

He said building material from the demolished shacks would be stored for seven days and sold by public auction if unclaimed.

Squatters threaten violence over removal

BD9/10/97 (310)

Pule Molebeledi

SQUATTERS evicted from council land in Randfontein on the West Rand in an operation which left at least one person dead yesterday had vowed to attack property and kill a person if shacks were demolished today, Sanco spokesman Jonathan Pace said.

Sapa reports Pace said the squatters had vowed to attack a house in neighbouring Mohlakeng in reprisal for the first shack demolished. If a second shack was demolished, they would attack an electrical substation, then take a life in for the third.

The joint police and private security company exercise to evict the squatters left one person dead and five seriously injured. Police spokesman Sgt Herman Esterhuizen said the operation was met with violent resistance by some squatters who stoned and threw petrol bombs at AB security company employees. Police responded by using rub-

ber bullets and tear gas.

Esterhuizen said the body of a man was found later with bullet wounds in the chest and leg. One of those injured was a security company employee who was stabbed in the head and back.

Two vehicles, one belonging to the Randfontein Trading Centre and another to Western Board and Timber Sales, were damaged by petrol bombs.

Esterhuizen said police were called in only to monitor both the squatters and the security company which was employed by the Randfontein sheriff.

Some squatters had already started rebuilding their shacks yesterday and vowed not to move.

Esterhuizen warned that police would demolish any shacks rebuilt during the night.

Pace disputed police statements that only one person had been killed, saying that reports on the ground indicated that as many as four people had been killed. Esterhuizen denied

claims by squatters that a woman and her one-day-old baby were among those killed.

Randfontein town clerk Ernest Lambani said the council obtained a court order on September 19 to evict squatters from the land adjacent to Toekomsrus and Mohlakeng townships. The squatters moved on to the land on September 17.

The court gave the squatters 15 days to remove their shacks and belongings. The two weeks following the court order saw the number of shacks mushroom from 57 to more than 1 000, Lambani estimated.

He said the land invasion was led by the Homeless People Federation and the Backyard Shack Dwellers' Association. The organisations were dissatisfied with progress on a low-cost housing project in the area, known as Mohlakeng Extension 4.

Picture: Page 3

Council admits it can't cope

By ANNA COX

The 400 people evicted from a private farm in North Riding, Randburg spent their second day on a pavement in the area last night.

The homeless people have built makeshift shacks as protection from the wet weather but most of their belongings got soaked after last night and this morning's rains.

No solution has yet been found as to where to move the squatters, who claim they have nowhere else to go.

Randburg ANC secretary Greg Scheneeman said the party was still investigating alternate sites to which the squatters could move.

The Johannesburg Northern council admitted yesterday it could not cope with the intensifying squatter and illegal invasion problem in the area.

Neighbouring residents expressed fury at the Northern council's inability to assist and offered to move the squatters and their belongings to camp outside the council's administrative offices in Randburg.

The council said last night that technical assessments were being made on land around Zandspruit and Diepsloot to check its suitability for housing, but it did not have huge chunks of land where people could be housed, said communications officer Khanyi Mkonza.

The council had identified land for development but its efforts were thwarted by landowners who did not support development, said Mkonza.

Shattered shacks and ruined dreams

There are no roofs over the heads of families after violent evictions

Star 9/10/97 (310)

By BUNTY WEST

More than 400 squatters, the remnants of the 5 000 people who illegally invaded Randfontein Council land at Mohlakeng on the West Rand three weeks ago, spent a cold night in the open veld after being evicted yesterday.

Their shacks were destroyed and removed yesterday by AB Security, a company employed by the Randfontein sheriff to evict the squatters.

There were violent clashes with the police earlier in the morning and one man was reported shot dead. At least four others were injured.

The evicted squatters spent the night huddled next to their household goods and lit fires to keep warm as temperatures plummeted. Some, like Albino Zandimele, with his wife and three children, have nowhere to go. They moved out of their backyard lodgings in Mohlakeng 10 days ago to stake their claim on a little land.

Dr Billy Reid, Randfontein's assistant town clerk, said that negotiations over the land were under way when the area was

invaded. An eviction order was sought and the sheriff and the security company were removing the squatters.

Those left on the land say they are desperate and have nowhere to go. A council source said it was possible the people would be found an alternative site.

Trouble started at the squatter camp early yesterday morning. A man died after being shot in the chest and leg during the clashes which followed. At least four others were injured.

South African National Civics Organisation official Jonathan Pace said reports indicated that as many as four people had been killed. The Star could not verify this.

More than 1 000 shacks were erected in two camps in the past three weeks. When guards moved in at 6am, residents of the lower camp fought back.

Later in the day, after the lower camp was demolished, they moved into the top camp, where residents put up little resistance.

For Johannes Moribe and Beauty Mopedi, the dream of owning their own piece of land had come to an abrupt end.



Both previously lived as backyard squatters in Mohlakeng, paying the homeowner R80 a month for the privilege of erecting a 3sq m hut in the back garden.

"I came here because the land was free. I had even started paying R6 a week into a fund, started by a group of squatters, so that we could build proper houses. Now I really have nowhere to go and I will sleep here tonight protecting my few possessions even if it pours with rain," Moribe said.

Sidney and Anton, both Std 2 pupils at Toekomsrus Primary School, returned from school to find their home demolished. They were led away, too dazed to speak.

STAR

9/10/97

(310)



THYS DULLAART



Stranded ... little Sheila Gmana stands on the spot where her Mohlakeng home used to be before the men with crowbars moved in yesterday.

Injured ... a squatter is helped away after he was allegedly assaulted by members of the security team who tore down his shack.

North Riding homeless vow to stay on pavement until they are helped

By ANNA COX

The 400 squatters who have been living on a pavement in a residential area in North Riding, Randburg, since Monday have vowed to remain there until Greater Johannesburg's Northern council finds them alternative land.

North Riding residents and the squatters themselves have lashed out at the Northern council for failing to assist the group, who were evicted from a private farm in the area on Monday.

They have accused the council of making false promises.

The squatters have built makeshift shacks on the pavement, but have no toilet

(310) Star 10/10/97
or cooking facilities.

Some claim they have not eaten since Tuesday.

Abraham Mailula said there were pregnant women, and children, sleeping in the rain.

The council sends in a water tanker once a day.

"The council doesn't want to help. They make empty promises. We will stay here until they find something for us," Mailula said.

David Motsatsing said people were soaked every time it rained and most of their possessions were wet.

He too said he would remain until the council did something.

North Riding resident Jenny Allen said she and a

group of neighbours spent all of yesterday trying to find alternative accommodation, but were blocked every time by council officials who threatened to remove the squatters if they went on to council land illegally.

The Northern council said it could not cope with the intensifying squatter and illegal-invasion problem in the area.

Technical assessments were being made on plots of land around Zandspruit and Diepsloot to check their suitability for housing, but the council did not have huge chunks of land where people could be housed, communications officer Khanyi Mkonza said.

Land only for those squatters on waiting list

BY BUNTY WEST

The Randfontein council yesterday identified a piece of land south of the town as a suitable temporary home for some of the squatters who invaded council-owned land in Mohla-keng on the West Rand three weeks ago.

According to Zeph Mhlongo, chairman of the executive committee, town engineers were completing their reports about the temporary site and would place them before council as a matter of urgency.

If necessary, a special council meeting would be held to ensure that there were no delays in transferring the land.

"But only those who already have their names on the council waiting lists will be eligible for a place on the site," Mhlongo said.

On Wednesday, at the start of

the evictions, there were clashes between AB Security personnel, employed to demolish 1 000 shacks in two camps, and the squatters. One man was killed and several were wounded.

Fighting started as AB Security arrived to demolish 600 shacks at the first camp. In the afternoon, at the second camp, there was no resistance.

Trouble began again in the late afternoon when squatters from the first camp tried to rebuild their shacks.

Security men sent to the scene were attacked by panga- and axe-wielding residents. Four men suffered head injuries and one was in a serious condition last night.

Yesterday, as squatters picked their way through the smouldering remains of the devastation left during the demolition of their shacks, most

vowed to remain on the land.

Angry that their possessions had been carted off to a storage facility in Randfontein, many said they had lost their belongings "stolen by the workmen in red overalls" - AB Security employees employed by the sheriff.

The scene was one of havoc as the two camps, which had held 5 000 people, were strewn with furniture, bedding, building material and barbed wire.

Large fires, set by AB Security, burnt what was left of the combustible items, and squatters stood around warming themselves as temperatures plummeted and the overcast sky promised more heavy rain.

The squatters, many of whom have lived in Randfontein for several years, came from Toekomsrus and Mohla-keng, where they had lived in backyards.

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Squatters look on as last shacks come down

Pule Molebeleli

PD 101101974

THE threat of violence by squatters on the West Rand fizzled out yesterday as a private security firm, AB Security Guards, accompanied by SA police members, burned down material left from shacks demolished on Wednesday.

The 1 000 shacks, situated adjacent to Mohlakeng and Tsekomsrus townships, were illegally erected on council land last month.

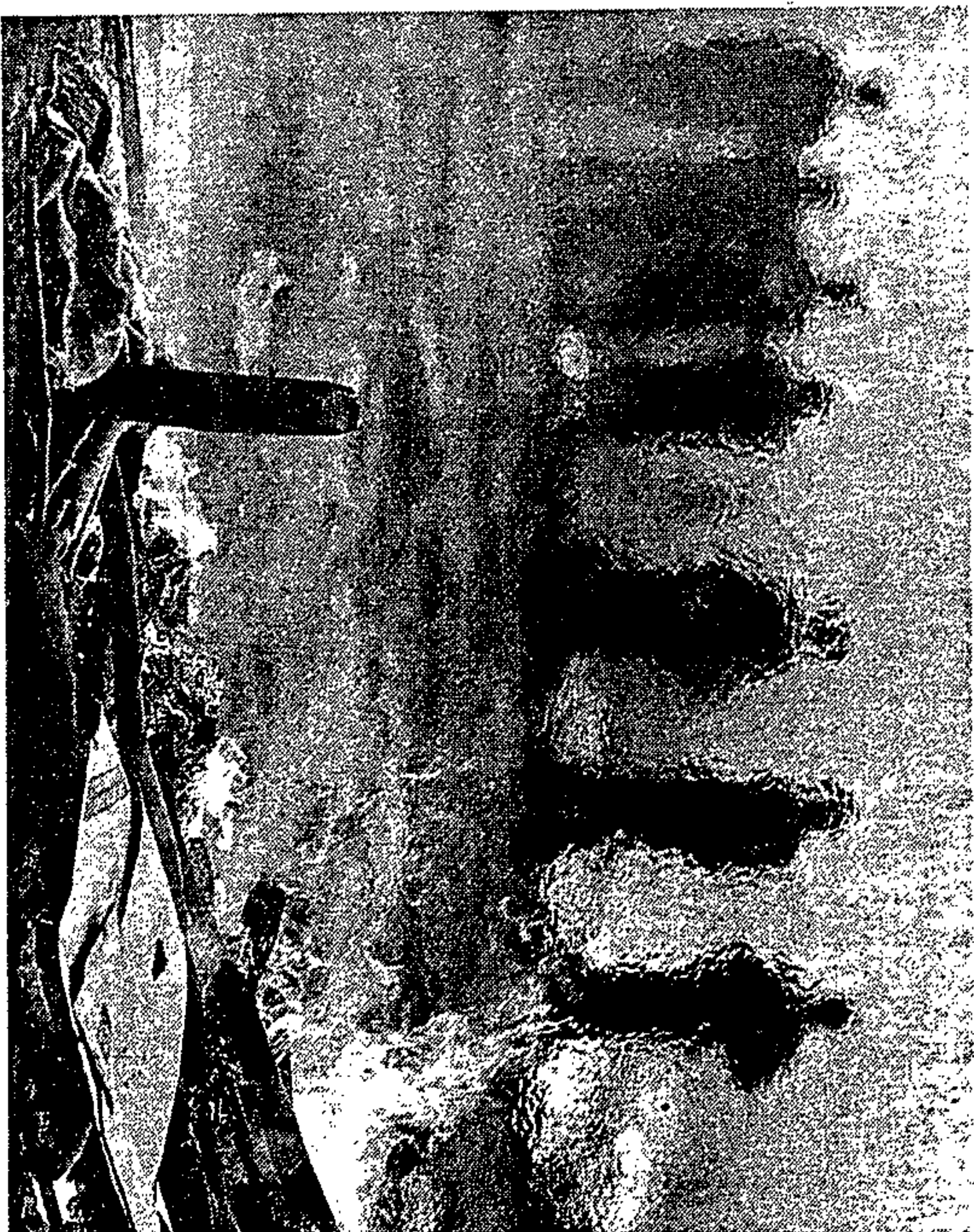
The Randfontein council got a court interdict on September 19 to evict squatters led by the Backyard Shack Dwellers' Association and Homeless People Federation. They were told to vacate the land, but did not do so.

Squatters looked on as the security guards, wearing red overalls, went about their job torching poles, plastics, cardboard and papers.

The mood was sombre as groups of men stood around heaps of scrap metal from the demolished shacks.

This was in contrast to the threats made by squatters on Wednesday that they would attack property, an electrification substation and kill a person if their shacks were demolished yesterday.

Police spokesman Sgt Herman Esterhuizen said there were no incidents as security guards dismantled the remaining four or five structures. He said the operation was completed by midday and the squatters had dispersed.



AB security guards, accompanied by police, burn poles and cardboard left out during the demolishing of shacks in Randfontein on the West Rand as squatters, who had occupied council land, look on helplessly. The squatters spent the night in the rain after their shacks were demolished.

Pictures: TYRONE ARTHUR

Sanco calls on Randfontein council to quit

(310)
Sowetan 10/10/97

THE South African National Civics Organisation (Sanco) yesterday called for the resignation of the Randfontein town council and condemned what it termed the brutality and heavy handedness of the police during Wednesday's squatter evictions which left one person dead and at least eight injured.

A statement issued by Sanco's Mohlakeng branch threatened mass action if the Randfontein town council did not resign immediately.

"The community of Randfontein has given the councillors enough time to deliver but they have failed. The only alternative left for them is to resign," the statement said.

Sanco said the community of Mohlakeng had waited patiently for a number of years for the Randfontein Transitional Local Council to facilitate the building of houses in Mohlakeng Extension Four, where infrastructure was installed in 1992 through funding from the Independent Development Trust.

"The Randfontein TLC has chosen to drag its feet until the community lost patience," the statement said.

Sanco said it had submitted a housing proposal to the mayor of Randfontein, Gerrith Rooskrantz, in May but had not received any response.

Loss of life

"This action by the council and the police unfortunately led to the loss of an innocent life and injury to a number of people," the statement said.

Sanco indicated it would call a mass meeting to plan further action.

The situation in the area was yesterday described as quiet but tense.

Police spokesman Sergeant Herman Esterhuizen said no incidents had been reported yesterday and police were patrolling the area. He confirmed that the private security firm, AB Security which had been contracted to carry out the evictions, had completed its work on Wednesday. — Sapa.

Call for houses for W Rand squatters

Sowetan 10/10/97
By Sello Seripe

CONCERNED residents in Mohlakeng near Randfontein have called on the Randfontein Town Council to provide alternative housing for thousands of residents whose shacks were pulled down by the council on Wednesday.

Mr David Ntong, a spokesman for an ad hoc committee representing tenants of a suburb near the Zenzele squatter camp which was demolished, yesterday called on the council to deliver houses as promised.

Ntong said during earlier negotiations the council had promised to supply basic needs such as water and temporary sanitation facilities while an alternative area to accommodate the homeless was being arranged.

Denying that he was instrumental in ensuring that the council evicted the squatters, Ntong pointed out that the committee supported the

homeless in their demand to be provided with houses.

Meanwhile, the council yesterday continued to pull down the remaining shacks which were illegally pitched on its land.

Employees of a security firm hired to demolish the shacks also burned the wooden pillars used to fortify the shacks.

Residents said they spent the night in open veld in the damp following heavy rains which hit the Reef late on Wednesday and yesterday.

However, some women and children were lucky as they were accommodated for a night at a local hall while men remained behind to keep an eye on their property.

Mrs Nombulelo Diwu (34) and her two sons Lolwethu (4) and Omphile (18 months), were however, not so lucky. They spent the night in the veld.

"I do not know where we are going to sleep tonight," she said.

1002 - 1003

Council offers squatters land

By Sello Seripe (310)

SQUATTER families of Botshabelo settlement, near Evaton in the Vaal Triangle, agreed to vacate private land belonging a local businessman after the Vereeniging/Kopanong Metropolitan Council (VKMC) promised to provide them with alternative land.

The 200 families have been living under threat of eviction since September 3 after businessman Tony Ford obtained a court order empowering him to reclaim his land from the families.

Yesterday morning, the local sheriff and wreckers from a Johannesburg security firm escorted by policemen moved in, but decided to hold off any action against the squatters when officials from the SA Homeless People's Federation (SAHPF) and the local SA National Civics Organisation intervened.

SAHPF spokeswoman Agrinette

Madwayi said landowner Ford had given the community until the end of the week to move.

Addressing the community at an emergency meeting held at the settlement, chairman of the VKMC executive committee Jeff Rademeyer told residents that the land was privately-owned and the council had no power to stop the eviction.

However, he said, the council was prepared to provide alternative land and water if the community agreed to be resettled.

"We have already identified land and what we need is a commitment by the community that they will voluntarily relocate," he said. The council-owned land on which they would be accommodated is about 4km away.

The residents praised the council for its efforts and agreed to vacate the land. Further negotiations would be held between the council and the SAHPF.

Evicted squatters suffer while they wait

Council says it is trying to find suitable land for people it ejected last week

By BUNTY WEST

Squatters evicted from vacant council-owned land outside Randfontein on the West Rand last week are still waiting - in appalling conditions behind Mohlakeng council offices - to be relocated.

They invaded the vacant land in Mohlakeng three weeks ago and the council sought an eviction order to have them removed. The forced removals, during which one man died and several others were seriously injured, were undertaken by 150 security men contracted by the town's sheriff. Hundreds of shacks were

destroyed, and corrugated sheeting and some furniture moved to a store, while the homeless people spent a miserable night in the veld.

Randfontein council relocated on Saturday and moved them to the Mohlakeng site and provided basic facilities for them while it waits for a report on suitable land for relocation. "Our big problem is not to find a piece of land but to put services on to the land. We are only compounding the problem if we do not install services," said town secretary Philip Barnhoorn. But at the Mohlakeng site there is only one water tap for

the estimated 1 000 people.

The council has provided tents and a rundown store-room. Cooking is done on open fires next to the chemical toilets and the freezing rain pours through gaping holes in the tents - one of which houses more than 200 people.

There are huge gaps between the bottom of the tents and the ground, and women and children are forced to sleep in the draught on thin mattresses. Baba Shaxane, niece of Leah Tutu and a flowergirl at the Tutus' wedding, has lived in Randfontein for nearly 40 years. Accompanied by her two children she was one of the land

invaders who had spent more than 10 years as a backyard tenant in Mohlakeng.

She is in charge of communal cooking and says there is only enough food until tomorrow.

"I lost most of my possessions when we were evicted, and what's left is piled up and open to the rain in a corner of this compound," Shaxane said. Oupa Bila is an angry man, blaming the "fat-cats in council" for their predicament. "We voted these people into power and now we are worse off than under the white government. They are doing as little as possible to help. Sanco hasn't even

been to see the conditions in which we are living, yet they claim to speak for us."

A creche has been started by one of the women, Priscilla Thibedi, and 30 children under the age of 6 are kept amused in the old storeroom, surrounded by people lying on beds trying to keep warm.

"I am an unemployed teacher and these children have been severely traumatised by what's happened to them over the past week. By doing activities with them, I try to keep their minds off what has happened and the conditions in which they are being forced to live," Thibedi said.

Star 17/10/97 (310)

Jujskei farmers and land developers on collision course over squatters

By Anna Cox

Thousands of farmworkers and their families in the Jujskei Crocodile Catchment Area (JCCA), north-west of Johannesburg, stand to lose their homes through the massive industrialisation taking place there.

Desperate property owners who are being blamed for the evictions have now offered to purchase land with their own money. They plan to rehouse the farmworkers who have been living in the area for generations and who are allegedly being evicted by unscrupulous

developers who get rid of them as soon as they take occupation.

Landowners also claim the Land Tenure Bill, aimed specifically at farmers, is discriminatory because it focuses on farmers only and not on commercial property owners, who can leave the farmworkers with no rights to the land on which they have lived for years.

JCCA spokesman Wessel Swart said the association has made urgent representation to Land Affairs and Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom to test the provision of the Extension of Security of Tenure Bill

in resolving the problems.

"We are prepared to take legal action to ensure that property rights of farmworkers are enshrined. The process will be supplemented by court action to protect common law rights. We want to avoid court action because it will effectively freeze any development in the subregion in the next five years and will negatively impact on our own aspirations and those of progressive landowners, but we will go that route if we have to," said Swart.

It is estimated there are more than 10 000 people living on farms. The JCCA, represent-

ing 14 areas and about 800 farmers, has consistently offered to assist the Northern council with its problems over evicted workers, but their offers have been ignored. Numerous requests for meetings had never been answered, said Swart.

The Northern council has welcomed the offer of land.

Councillor Ruby Mathang, however, accused some of the landowners of making false sales of their farms to evict workers and to circumvent the Land Tenure Bill.

He said the council had made written representation to the Land Affairs Department

highlighting the potential problems in the area and for them to be taken into consideration for the bill.

The landowners have also lashed out at politicians who have been blaming them for evictions taking place in the area.

"We take the strongest exception to the deliberately selfish and malicious statements by these people to create instability and destroy goodwill. We are determined not to accept the blame and the racist-based accusations that we are attempting to start a Volksstaat in the area," said Swart.

Property owners say "shack farming" in the area is one of the main causes for the evictions. People were buying pieces of land which did not have services and hiring out stands at between R80 and R250 a month. Squatters eventually stopped paying because there were no services and the result was that owners then started evicting, said Swart.

Unoccupied property also posed a problem because it was invaded illegally and when the owner decided to make use of it, he then had to embark on the whole lengthy and costly eviction process.

8 Feb 2010 197

(310)



Forced out ... these Randburg squatters are some of the estimated 2.4 million people living in shacks in South Africa.

BY JOSSE ADLER

The world as it is: Wednesday morning, October 8 1997. One person has died and four are injured. This follows action by a security firm hired by Randfontein Town Council to cordon off council-owned land and demolish about 500 shacks erected in past weeks and evict their residents from Mohlakeng backyards.

The backyard-dwellers-turned-land invaders were protesting against the failure of the town council to discuss with them development plans for sites where they could build. They maintain they have been fobbed off by the council for many months. That is, until they invaded land and the Randfontein council served notice of court proceedings to evict them.

The problem of inadequate accommodation in backyards is enormous. In 1988 the Urban Foundation noted that 2.4 million people lived in shacks in the central Witwatersrand. Of all shackdwellers, 82% took place in the backyards of black townships. Generally speaking, little has happened to alleviate this situation since then.

Since 1995 some politicians, including the Gauteng premier, have made vocal promises of 350 000 houses in a very short time. In the meantime, housing

Randfontein Town Council should turn back from the path of litigation and meet with representatives from Mohlakeng instead

Concerns of homeless must be met

delivery has occurred at snail's pace, and what housing has been built is not for the majority of people desperate for a place of their own.

Why did the Randfontein Town Council not meet with its "homeless" constituency from the backyards in Mohlakeng to

address a need that has existed for decades and has become a crisis issue?

Why did the council wait until frustrated, homeless people from the backyards invaded land to try to get the council to talk with them?

Why did the town council not respond to the plea to talk about proper and effective ways to develop, but prefer instead to

engage in costly litigation and security people with guns, to demolish and evict? Why the inevitable result of people being hurt, a life lost - and still no safe homes?

Why is the Randfontein Town Council now spending money on litigation and violent means rather than on developing serviced land and housing so deeply longed for?

Why did the Randfontein Town Council not enlist help from provincial offices and other sources to help get appropriate development negotiations and plans on track?

The new SA constitution enshrines "the right to housing". Some would have preferred the right to habitable shelter and security as an aspirational goal,

but our new leaders went the whole hog with a big promise. Much work has been done to start to bring relief to land hunger and homelessness. A housing policy is in place, along with legislation and institutional mechanisms and funding for the capital subsidy scheme.

In Gauteng the province has the Mayibuye development plan in the Department of Land and

Housing, and the Metro Council has the Rapid Land Delivery Programme.

Local governments have been put in place. The role and responsibility has been devolved to the new local councils to take on delivery of land and housing, supported by provincial and national government.

We have to do things better. Our leaders must show the way in using the resources we have to build things up, to help people to make their lives better so they too can join in the construction of a new community and society in our transforming South Africa.

The Randfontein Town Council should turn around from ignoring and litigating against its voters: it can lead the way even at this late stage, in meeting with representatives from all quarters in Mohlakeng to get sustainable, hopeful development on track.

The most important question is: can government, which has invested so much in transforming the housing/shelter policy, transform local government, the vital link in the whole programme, and translate the dream into reality?

The challenge of immediate response to the needs of five decades of unaccommodated urban people in the backyards of former "black townships" is with us now: failure to meet it is to risk the future of good government and stable urban settlement in the most populous region of our country.

The author is senior programme facilitator of the Interfaith Community Development Association.

Star 21/10/97

(310)

BY JOSIE ADLER

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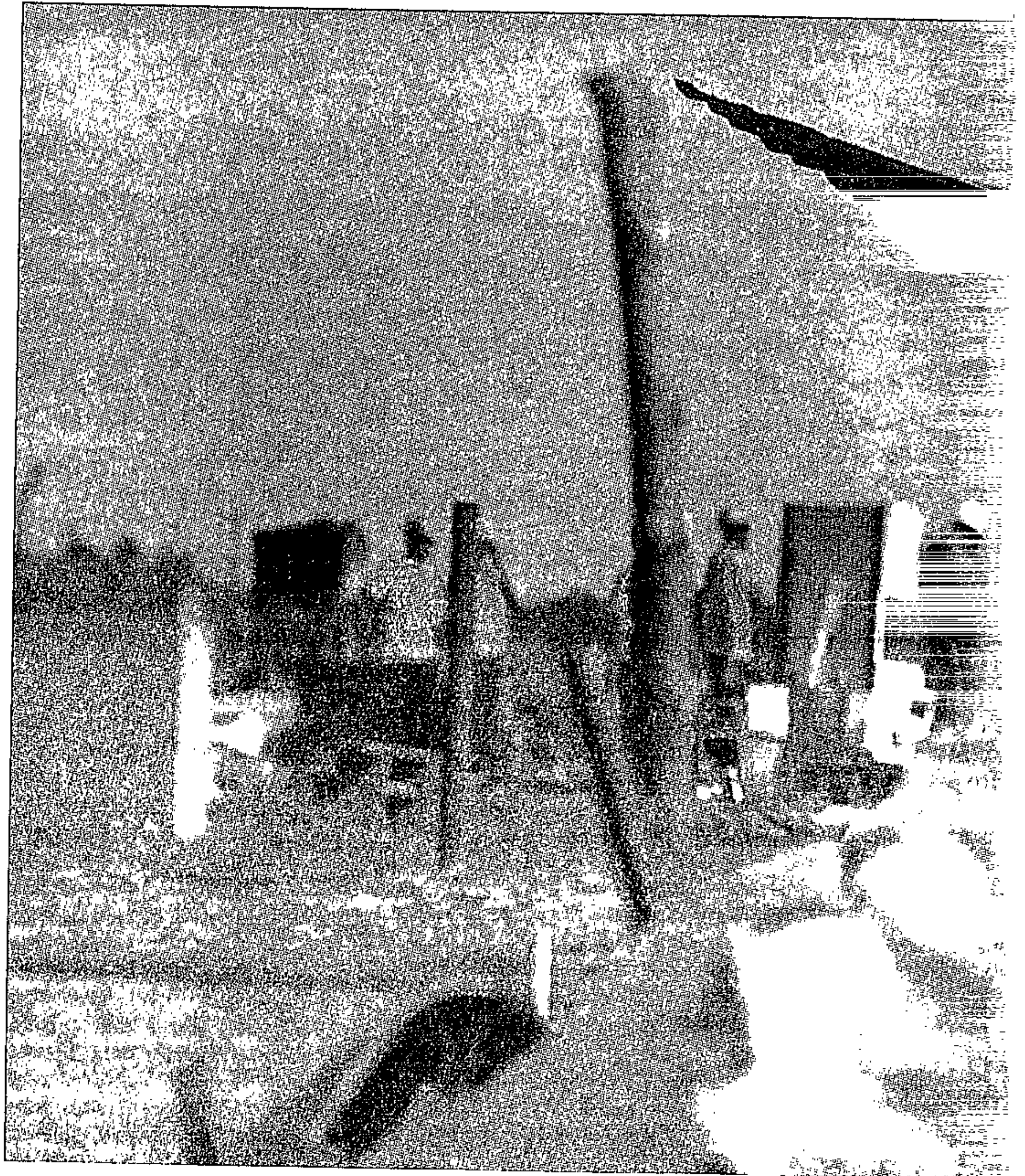
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Much work has been done to start to bring relief to land hunger and homelessness. A housing policy is in place, along with legislation and institutional mechanisms and funding for the capital subsidy scheme. In Gauteng the province has the Mayibuye development plan in the Department of Land and

Housing, and the Metro Council has the Rapid Land Delivery Programme.

Local governments have been put in place. The role and responsibility has been devolved to the new local councils to take on delivery of land and housing, supported by provincial and national government.

We have to do things better. Our leaders must show the way in using the resources we have to build things up, to help people to make their lives better, so they too can join in the construction of a new community and society in our transforming South Africa.

The Randfontein Town Council should turn around from ignoring and litigating against its voters: it can lead the way, even at this late stage, in meeting with representatives from all quarters in Mohlakeng to get sustainable, hopeful development on track.

The most important question is: can government, which has invested so much in transforming the housing/shelter policy, transform local government, the vital link in the whole programme, and translate the dream into reality?

The challenge of immediate response to the needs of five

decades of unaccommodated urban people in the backyards of former "black townships" is with us now: failure to meet it is to risk the future of good government and stable urban settlement in the most populous region of our country.

■ *The author is senior programme facilitator of the Inter-faith Community Development Association.*

Upgrade for 30 Gauteng informal settlements

310

Move to turn squatter camps into townships will give residents security as well as basic services

Star 27/10/97

By THEMBA SEPOTHELE
City Reporter

Residents of Doornkop squatter camp in Soweto

sighed with relief yesterday after learning that theirs was among more than 30 poor informal settlements that will be upgraded into fully fledged townships.

The Gauteng Housing and

Land Affairs Department announced at the weekend that it had approved 30 applications to upgrade informal settlements into townships.

The move, made in terms of the Township Declaration Act, will enable the provincial government and local authorities to facilitate development and install infrastructure in these areas.

For Doornkop resident Ellen Tholo, the upgrade means an end to living with uncertainty and squalor. Tholo, who has lived in the shack settlement for two years, has never enjoyed basic services such as water, electricity and ablution facilities.

"It's a dream come true. I once had a dream that the area would be declared a township, but never thought it would

happen," Tholo said.

Mpho Maleka, another resident of Doornkop squatter camp, popularly known as Siliverton, said that since arriving in the area in 1993, she had heard rumours that the community would be removed, and the announcement of the development had finally put paid to the rumours.

"I am relieved because there

was a rumour that we will be moved to another place in January next year since the area was earmarked as a business site," she said.

Among the squatter areas which will now enjoy the improved status are Tamboville in Benoni, Phola Park on the East Rand, Sebokeng Extension 24, Far East Bank and Diepsloot West Extension 1 and Extension 2 squatter camps.

Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg; Zonki Zizwe, Rabie Ridge and Ivory Park on the East Rand; and Poor Tjie on the West Rand were the first huge informal settlements to have been declared townships.

The programme to upgrade informal settlements is aimed at improving conditions in the areas over the next 10 years.

36 homeless after houses demolished

Josey Ballenger (310)

BD 15/12/97
ABOUT 36 adults, pensioners and children have been sleeping outside since Wednesday after the demolition of their homes on a private holding in Sun Valley, Midrand, despite pleas to the landowner to delay eviction until other accommodation was arranged, residents and African National Congress (ANC) officials said at the weekend.

The residents — some of whom have lived on the land since 1979, when it was owned by their then-employer — said that five armed men pointed guns at the pensioners who were home on Wednesday afternoon before setting fire to and bulldozing the 10 houses on the property.

Midrand Metropolitan Local Council councillor Susie Naidoo and Arvin Bhana, Midrand ANC branch chairman, said the plot's current owners, Louis du Plessis and his mother Erika, were granted an eviction order from the Pretoria High Court earlier this year and had contacted Naidoo a few months ago to find other accommodation for the residents.

Naidoo said she had put the residents on the waiting list for a government housing project on the Edenvale-Midrand border, but that the houses would probably not be available until next month.

She said she had tried to "stall" the eviction.

ANC sources said the destruction and threat of force was not within the landowners' legal rights.

Bhana said he hoped a nongovernmental organisation could provide temporary shelter, as neither the council nor the ANC had such facilities. The Du Plessis's, who were reportedly out of town, could not be reached for comment.

Kahn

BD 15/12/97
Continued from Page 1

on respect for rank and command structures. "We will not allow friendships, camaraderie, political influence or racism to inhibit us" in restoring standards, Kahn said. On the other side of the discipline coin, greater emphasis would be placed on internal and public recognition for good officers.

A system of performance standards to be introduced over three years would allow a more accurate assessment of

individual performance. Achievers would be promoted, and pay differentials within grades would make it possible to reward good work.

Kahn said his plan also depended on progress with reforms of the entire criminal justice system to which the SAPS was contributing. It was necessary to lighten the burden on the police, courts and prisons by allowing spot fines or admission of guilt payments in many less important cases.

None of the problems facing SA crime fighters was unmanageable. The key was to decide which were important and to focus on them first.

EU

Continued from Page 1

policies, but wider economic issues can be debated by all 15 members.

All 11 would-be EU members will participate in a March 30 kickoff meeting in London. The first six will start detailed membership talks while the EU will open "preparatory talks" with the rest to address some economic and political problems holding them back.

Turkey, on the other hand, was told to fold its tent and go home.

Unable to overcome serious human rights problems, solve its territorial dispute with Greece or come to grips with a myriad economic difficulties, Ankara was not even deemed ready for the second team.

"Everyone recognises Turkey is a significant power, that it's a great people," said British Prime Minister Tony Blair. "The criteria that we apply to Turkey are the same criteria we apply to all the countries. Europe is willing and wants to work with Turkey."

To mollify the Turks, EU leaders invited them to a European conference, essentially annual summits involving EU members and the 11 declared candidates. The gesture failed to excite Ankara and its acceptance of the deal was in doubt.

The others, however, were delighted. "I am sure there will be many technical problems," said Prime Minister Janez Drnovsek. "But I think Slovenia has clearly overcome some of the prob-

lems. I think the major problems have been overcome."

Czech President Vaclav Havel called the integration of his country into the EU "a priority that has no meaningful alternative".

Getting the new members into the union will involve \$84bn in economic aid, grants and soft loans in the 2000-2006 period to help the aspirants come up to EU standards.

None of the prospects are expected to be ready to join for at least four or five years, some much longer.

The EU leaders said they expected the Cyprus' Greek and Turkish factions to form one negotiating team to bring all of Cyprus into the EU. The northern third of the island, home to 200 000 Turkish Cypriots, is occupied by 30 000 troops from Turkey.

Turkey said yesterday it had cut political dialogue with the EU and rejected an offer to take part in a pan-European conference next year on joining the bloc. "There will not be a political dialogue between Turkey and the EU," Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz told a news conference, adding that Turkey would ignore EU statements on its rows with Greece and Cyprus.

He said Turkey would go ahead with integrating Turkish-held northern Cyprus if the EU launched membership talks with the island's internationally recognised Greek-Cypriot government. However, he did not say Turkey had withdrawn its application for EU membership. Yilmaz said Turkey would seek to boost ties with EU member states. — Sapa-AFP-AP.

PEANUTS

By Charles Schulz



SQUATTERS - GAUTENG
1998 - 1999

Gauteng braced for land invasion spree

SPAN 21/2/98
By JACQUI REEVES

Gauteng can expect a wave of land invasions later this year and in early 1999 as the country approaches the next general election.

International examples have shown that land invasions increase in the year before an election and that state-owned land is seen as a "soft" target.

Carien Engelbrecht, land affairs director in Gauteng, said this week her department was aware of this problem and planned to release more than 34 000 sites for settlement projects before March next year.

"No government wants to be heavy-handed with evictions in the year prior to an election, because the publicity that evictions generate causes people to question whether the government has delivered on election promises," Engelbrecht said.

She said South American

examples had repeatedly shown this to be true and that her department would be working hard to keep land invasions in check.

In addition to the large number of landless already in Gauteng, and the additional 20 000 people who enter the province each month in search of work, the Gauteng department of housing and land affairs also has to deal with a "land mafia" that is operating in many informal settlements.

The "land mafia" helps the homeless to jump the housing queue by organising them into groups and securing pieces of land for them to invade.

The organisers charge the homeless R50 to sign a housing list and usually collect about 2 000 signatures.

Land near Johannesburg or close to any major urban area is the most favoured by the "land mafia".

■ See Page 9

Gauteng has 2,5-m landless

Samet 18/3/98
MEC spells out pivotal role of local
authorities in providing housing

By Joshua Raboroko

LOCAL authorities has to play a pivotal role in the delivery of low-cost housing by providing essential services, land, safety and security, says Gauteng MEC for housing and land affairs Mr Dan Mofokeng.

In his 1997-98 annual report, Mofokeng says through formalising residential areas, the size of the rate base of local authorities is increased.

"This also assists in ensuring that the Masakhane campaign is a success because local authorities are better able to render proper services and residents are able to acquire secure title," he says.

He says the upgrading of informal settlements extends good local governance to these areas, adding that the opening of township registers and the

release of land allows the authorities to formalise road reserves and servitudes and to prevent their illegal occupation.

It was estimated that 2,5 million people were presently landless in the province, saying about 378 000 households were targeted for the delivery of secure tenure through the transfer of land valued at R7,9 million.

The provincial housing backlog was estimated at 761 000 households. The figure escalated at a rate of some 40 000 households a year as a result of natural growth and inward immigration.

As part of the national target to deliver one million units by April 1999, the department has set itself a delivery target of 243 000 units in that period.

The provincial hostels upgrading programme aims to improve the living conditions of some 90 000 inmates.

Council workers demolish shacks

(310)
Sowetan Reporter

HUNDREDS of families have been left homeless by a group of men – allegedly deployed by the Northern Metropolitan Local Council (NMLC) – who destroyed more than 400 shacks in the Diepsloot squatter camp, north of Johannesburg, yesterday.

Ms Nomawethu Dube (25) and her two-month-old baby girl Thandokazi were without shelter last night because of the action. "I had just finished bathing my baby at about 9am when I heard people shouting. I rushed outside to investigate and saw these men demolishing my neighbour's shack," Dube said, adding that her neighbour had tried in vain to reason with the men.

Dube, who claimed she had been living at Diepsloot for more than a year, said the men had told the squatters they had to find alternative dwellings as they were occupying land

illegally. "I was so confused I did not know what to do or where to start packing," she said. She was helped by other residents to collect and move her belongings. She slept in the open last night, guarding her belongings.

NMLC mayor Daniny Kekana, said yesterday the order to evict the squatters had come from the Gauteng department of housing.

He said the department had set aside a budget to develop Diepsloot. This, however, had become impossible because of the high number of illegal squatters in the area.

As far as he was aware, Diepsloot residents had been warned of the eviction, which he said had started on Tuesday.

When Sowetan visited the area yesterday afternoon, schoolchildren were wandering around trying to locate their families whose shacks had been flattened.

Sowetan
14/5/98

Angry squatters rebuild shacks after eviction

By ANNA COX

SPAR 15/5/98 (310)

Diepsloot squatters started re-erecting their shacks at the informal settlement north-west of Johannesburg yesterday after they were bulldozed on Wednesday.

Although only some of the evicted residents received a week's reprieve following intense negotiations between community leaders and Greater Johannesburg's Northern council, most of the squatters started rebuilding last night.

It was agreed that the 120 shacks built above the floodline of the Jukskei River could be temporarily re-erected until next Wednesday, when another meeting would be held. The 80 shacks built below the floodline would not be reconstructed and the residents would be requested to leave the area.

The residents stoned cars on the R511 on Wednesday

night to protest against the demolitions. Riot police were called in and the road was closed off for several hours.

Council spokesman Pule Buthelezi said the council had decided to take action when some 200 families illegally invaded the area last weekend.

"We have people on a waiting list. The council reaffirms its position of zero tolerance towards land invasions. It is on this basis that it was decided to demolish the most recently erected shacks in Diepsloot this week," he said.

It cost the council R300 a month just to maintain one shack and this was draining the council of the limited resources available for providing services to the area, Buthelezi said.

Three people, including community leaders, were found to have been selling land illegally to the invaders, and charges would be laid against

them, Buthelezi said.

"The people next to the river must leave because it is dangerous and it is our responsibility to ensure their lives are safe. The council will monitor this and ensure that it does not happen again," he said.

Most of these "recent" land invaders, however, claim they have been living in Diepsloot for over a year.

"If the council says we have been here for one week, they lie. Look at our gardens and homes. We could not build them in one week. They gave us no notice. They just came while we were getting ready for bed and broke down our homes. Everyone, even small children, slept in the cold," said squatter Mavela Mtshale.

Edwin Matabutsepe was lying on his bed outdoors. "They broke my TV. We all slept in the cold, so we made a fire. We will stay here until the Government gives us land," he said.

Squatters on sinkhole land have nowhere to go

(310) Mar 18/1998

Informal settlement facing eviction is demanding alternative land while authorities are haggling over who is responsible

By EDDIE JAVIVA

Controversy is brewing between the Germiston local council and S&J Land Investments over the provision of alternative land for more than 20 000 squatters facing eviction.

The squatters are currently occupying a plot of land in Johannesburg, Germiston, while the council, provincial government and the company haggle over who is responsible

for finding alternative accommodation for them.

While the dispute drags on, the informal settlement is facing eviction. A court order to evict them from the land was postponed to June 9 for representatives of the squatters to file affidavits.

Lawyers for the squatters are putting pressure on the Government to provide land for the squatters.

"It is the Government's responsibility to help the squat-

ters," said Sanjay Makanjee, lawyer for the squatters.

"The community is angry because nobody wants to take responsibility for the problem. The law states clearly that squatters can only be evicted when alternative land has been secured," Makanjee said.

A spokesman for Land Investments, Sharon Wapnick, said her client had been negotiating with local and provincial government for three years. "All parties are working to-

gether to solve the problem," she added.

"The land is mined below the surface and is therefore unfit for human habitation. There are sinkholes and the community might disappear if the land caves in.

"We must provide proper accommodation for these people. We have included the squatters in the talks. We are sensitive to the plight of the community and we don't just evict people. We are aware of the housing

problems and we want to play a role in securing alternative land for these communities," Wapnick said.

Gauteng chief director of land and assets management Carina Engelbrecht said the provincial government was facilitating discussions between the owners and the council.

"This problem has got nothing to do with the provincial government. We have moved in because we are concerned that there might be sinkholes."

Engelbrecht confirmed that members of the legislature had intervened three years ago when the owners tried to evict the squatters.

"Negotiations have been going since then," she said. "All the parties must find a lasting solution to the problem. We cannot allow people to continue living in such dangerous conditions. We are confident that the matter will be sorted out as soon as possible," Engelbrecht said.

Eastern Council admits it has no money to help 'tent people'

More than 350 squatters living on municipal ground nearly a year after eviction

By BUNTY WEST

Nearly a year after being forcibly removed from the Welcome Home Centre in a Doornfontein factory, more than 350 people are still without a permanent home and live in tents on municipal ground at Marlboro Gardens.

When they were evicted they were told that they would be housed in new premises within six weeks, using R3-million set aside for that purpose by the Eastern Council's housing department.

But neither the money nor accommodation became a reality and residents in the tent camp do not believe they will ever be moved.

Unofficial "mother" to the residents, Rosemary Moshoe-

shoe, said the authorities have forgotten them and turned what was to be a six-week wait on unsuitable land into a permanent situation.

"Officials used to visit us to see what our problems were, but now no one comes and we don't know what is happening. One resident has already died from tuberculosis, and five others are ill with the disease," Moshoeshoe said.

The situation is getting worse as people lose hope and faction fights break out.

"Some of the residents make a few rand by collecting tins, paper and plastic for recycling. At weekends they come

back here and drink the money away. Then the fights break out and we don't sleep because of the noise," said resident William Dichabe.

He said that calls to the Bramley police station went unheeded and even the Flying Squad would not come out to help when there was trouble.

This was denied by Bramley police spokesman Captain Altus Mouton, who said all complaints were attended to. "We have to prioritise our call-outs and at weekends we are busy, but we do respond as soon as staff are available," he said.

They were promised premises in six weeks

According to John Angus, a spokesman for St Michael's Church in Bryanston, which is providing food and clothing for the families, the council has no money for land, let alone permanent accommodation.

"I keep going to meetings with council officials but they won't admit they can do nothing to help these people.

"We are supporting them but the situation cannot go on as we've made them dependent on us and they really need to be helping themselves," Angus said.

Attie Adendorff, the acting crisis manager for the Eastern Council, admitted that council had nothing planned for the tent village as there was no money to move the people elsewhere.



Window of hope ... Noxola Ndlomo (22) at the window of the tent she has lived in for the past year.

Homeless move out of Rissik St PO

Historic building gets a cleanup in preparation for filming of a commercial

By Thamma Supotornakul

Homeless people who found refuge at Rissik Street Post Office, one of Johannesburg's inner-city historical buildings, have now left because security has been beefed up.

Now a film company is cleaning up the dilapidated building in preparation for the filming of a commercial.

The post office, which was declared a national monument, is standing empty while the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council waits for the private sector to come forward with a proposal to develop it.

Before A-B Security and Callguard security officers were deployed to keep a 24-hour eye on it, hobos and streetchildren occupied the building. They vandalised it by stripping copper and electric wires.

A security guard, who did not want to be named, said doors, electric cables and plugs

had been removed from the building.

He said that after taking over from council guards two months ago, everything was scattered around and guards found a blanket and leftover food.

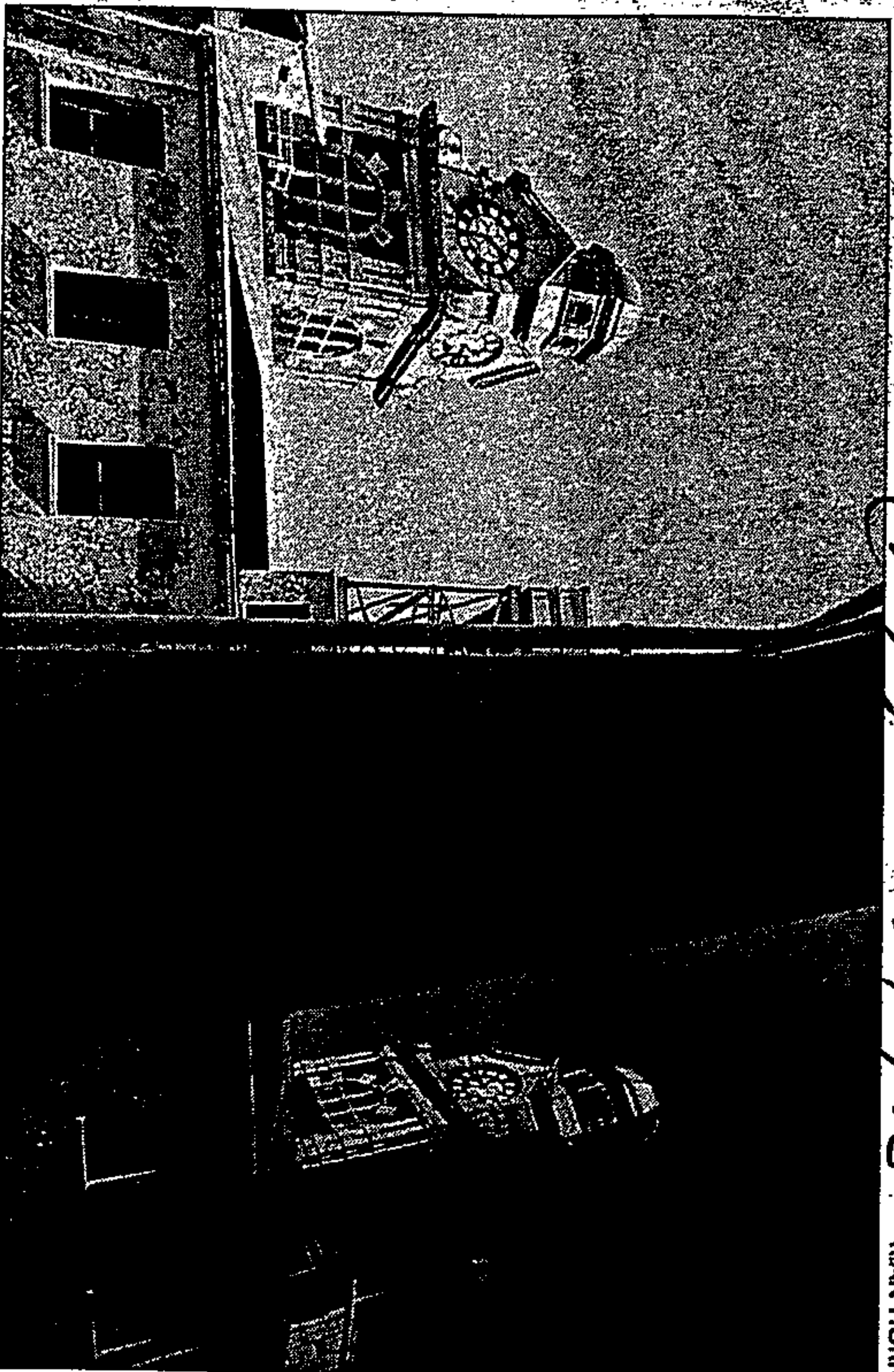
"When we were posted here, there was no security and everything was strewn all over the show. We found empty cans and a blanket in one of the rooms. Toilet basins had been broken and a sink stolen.

"No one can move in now because the security is tight. We have guys who work day and night shifts," he said.

Southern council chairman Prema Naidoo confirmed that homeless people had lived at the post office.

"We are not allowing anyone to use the place as a centre or shelter.

"The building is over 100 years old and in terms of the law we cannot demolish it. We are waiting for the private sector's proposal," he said.



Dilapidated grandeur ... the Rissik Street Post Office has an uncertain future until Johannesburg has the funds to renovate it.

(310) Star 10/8/98 RIAN HORN



Concerned neighbour Debbie Moolman and Sanco chairman Moekeksi Khasipe at the Meyerton informal settlement where the community took it on themselves to clean up the area at the weekend. They claim the local council is refusing to service their five-month-old settlement.

PICT: PAT SEBOKO

Squatters (30) plead for water, land

Sowetan 20/8/12

By Khangale Makhado

ABOUT 800 families at the Meyerton informal settlement on the Vaal have threatened to stage campaigns against the local council unless they are provided with water and other services.

Residents at the squatter camp, which was established in April this year, say efforts over the past five months to convince the Vereeniging-Kopanong council to provide water taps, a sanitation system and the removal of refuse have so far drawn a blank.

Local South African National Civics Organisation chairman Mr Moekeksi Khasipe told *Sowetan* yesterday that the situation was "getting out of hand".

"The only water we have access to is brought in large containers and people have to queue. We have even offered to pay for the services in advance but the council remains adamant.

"Even the local white community, which was initially opposed to our set-

tlement, have since realised we are peace-loving people and have joined hands in our fight to get better services," Khasipe said.

This was corroborated by Mrs Debbie Moolman, who was on the committee opposed to the squatters.

According to Moolman the squatters cannot be "wished away".

Housing development

Chief executive officer of the Vereeniging-Kopanong Metropolitan Substructure, Mr Linda Mngomezulu, said the council could not find alternative land for the squatters. In addition the council was considering a housing development in the area.

"As an interim measure, the council may consider water provision and other minimum services to avoid a health hazard," Mngomezulu said.

"The council is having serious financial difficulty as a result of nonpayment – but negotiations will be held to determine appropriate means of payment for the preliminary services."

Outrage as showcase housing venture is made a squatter camp

Undertaking was that proper services be installed first

By ANNA COX

Squatters, Midrand residents and industrialists are outraged by a decision by the Khayalami metro council to start moving homeless people onto vacant land at Commercia 34 in Midrand.

This was done despite a written undertaking from the council that squatters would not be moved onto the land, known as the Mayibuye Project, until top structures had been built and proper services installed.

The council now plans to move 40 families a day onto the site until 1 800 have been relocated.

About 40 squatter families were moved from a privately owned property in Broadwalk, Midrand, over the weekend, just prior to a vicious storm. Women and children were forced to sleep in toilets while their belongings were damaged by the rain.

There are only two fire hydrants on site and only a few taps and toilets that work.

Squatter Aubrey Sekutenyane said he was not happy about the situation.

"But there is nothing we can do - they demolished the other site. People have been sleeping in the toilets for

shelter from the rain, but yesterday we built our shacks again, but all our things got wet. We have been promised houses soon," he said.

But the council only has enough money for 400 of the 1 800 units until the end of 1999.

The move had been planned several weeks ago and officials could not have predicted the weather, said metro development execu-

Plans to move 40 families a day to site

tive manager Keith Naicker. He said people had been moved onto the land without houses because there was no money.

He denied that the council promised to build top structures and said the agreement had only been made in principle. "There will be houses on that land as soon as money is available," he said.

This has infuriated many Midrand ratepayers and local industrialists who claim they worked for years on a plan which cost hundreds of thousands of rand, to establish a proper, model housing

settlement from which all parties would benefit.

Local resident Bobby Lake said what had happened at Mayibuye was "a municipal shame". "It is inhumane to expect people to live like this. Instead of moving families, as promised, into completed houses, these settlers have had to rebuild their shacks next to toilets and will still have to wait for up to two years for the promised houses to be built.

"Many residents are appalled by this pitiful delivery of what promised to be a showcase development. There was intense pride in the plan worked out between the settlers, the neighbouring residents, the Gauteng housing department, Eskom, and the housing board. We even obtained additional subsidies for them because of the ground conditions on the site," she said.

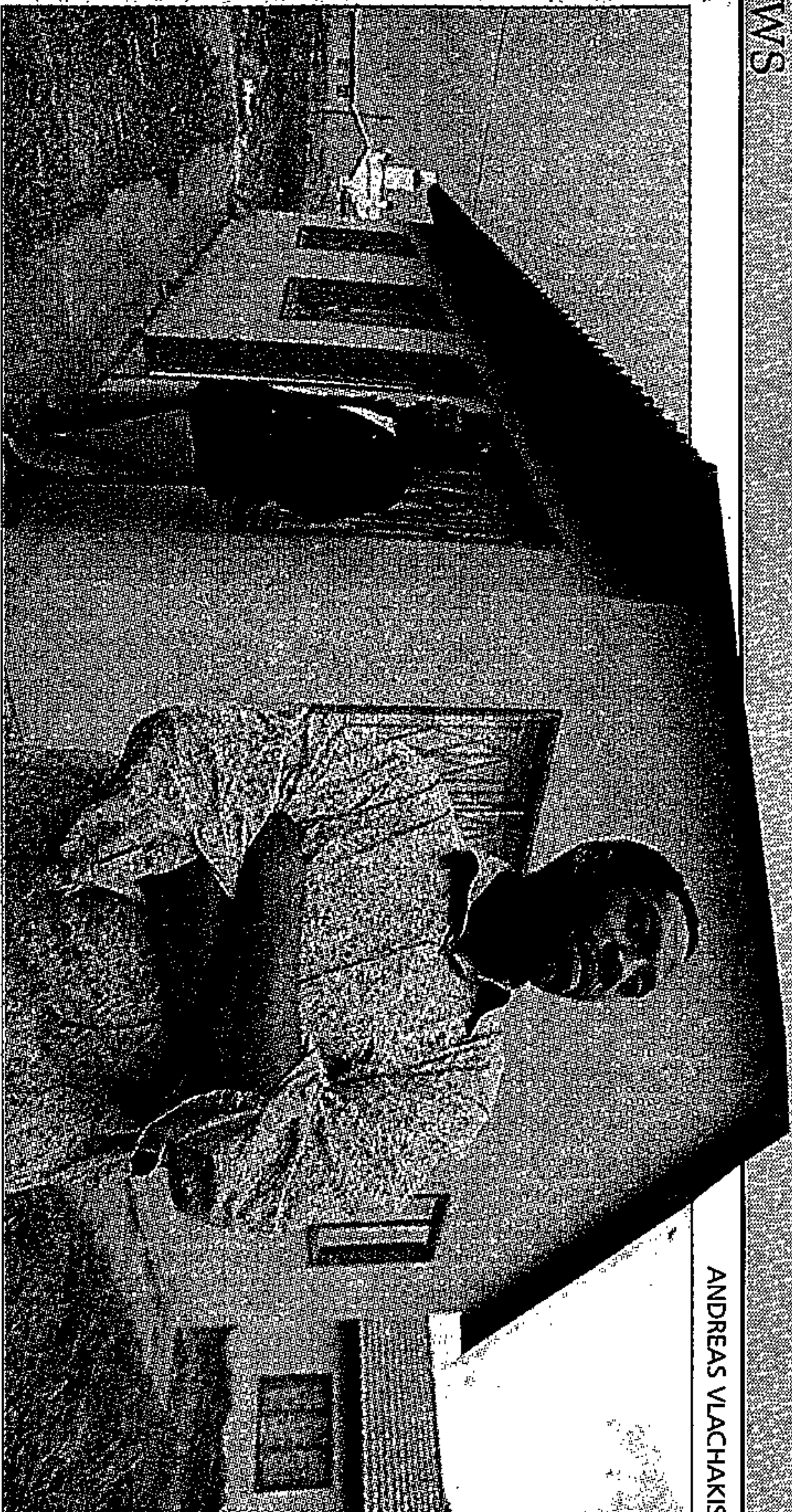
The local authority watchdog has now written to the public protector, to the president and to the minister of provincial affairs for urgent intervention.

Spokesperson Janet Schofield claims that by moving people onto the site without proper services, numerous contraventions of the National Environmental Management Act and of the constitution took place.

88-01 20/9/98

(310)

ANDREAS VLACHAKIS



No compromise
... Lucas Maphula and Moses Kube-ka are illegally occupying vacant houses in Lenasia South.

Occupation of houses in Lenasia continues despite threats

By **THEMBA SEPOTOKELE**

Homeless people who illegally occupied vacant houses in Lenasia South extension, south of Johannesburg, have refused to move out even though they face prosecution.

They have been served with eviction orders by the Gauteng housing and land affairs department.

Department spokesperson Tommy Makoe said yesterday the occupants would be charged with trespassing and once evicted, no other accommodation would be provided.

But the illegal residents have vowed not to vacate the properties despite threats of evictions by the department.

Some of the houses were originally used as schools and

others are still being used as creches. But now 18 empty houses have been invaded.

Illegal occupant Lucas Maphula said no one was prepared to vacate the houses as they had been empty for four years without any move to allocate them to people on the waiting list.

"We are prepared to negotiate payment with them like everybody else but we are not

(310) Stan 5/10/98

prepared to move out." His sentiments were echoed by Moses Khubeka who said occupants refused to sign letters when ordered to by police over the weekend.

Security officer Sipho Msibi said people in the neighbourhood were relieved that the houses had been occupied because they harboured thugs when they were empty.

Drill Hall dwellers face eviction

BY WELCOME SKOSANA

THOUSANDS of homeless and unemployed people who have sought refuge at the old Drill Hall complex in Johannesburg now face eviction.

The Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council says all dwellers "must leave the hostel".

The Drill Hall is situated between Plein and Twist Streets.

Most of the dwellers are from KwaZulu Natal, Free State, Port Elizabeth and Eastern Cape regions.

The council has issued notices saying that they must evacuate the building "before March".

The council says the hostel has been turned "into a health hazard and sewage was flowing in the corridors" and that there was "no proper sanitation".

The building has no electricity or clean, drinking water supplies.

Children living in the building were not attending school, the council says.

Alternative accommodation units offered by the council will cost dwellers R600 a month.

But dwellers say they are being kicked out because they have refused to pay rent until the hostel was fully serviced.

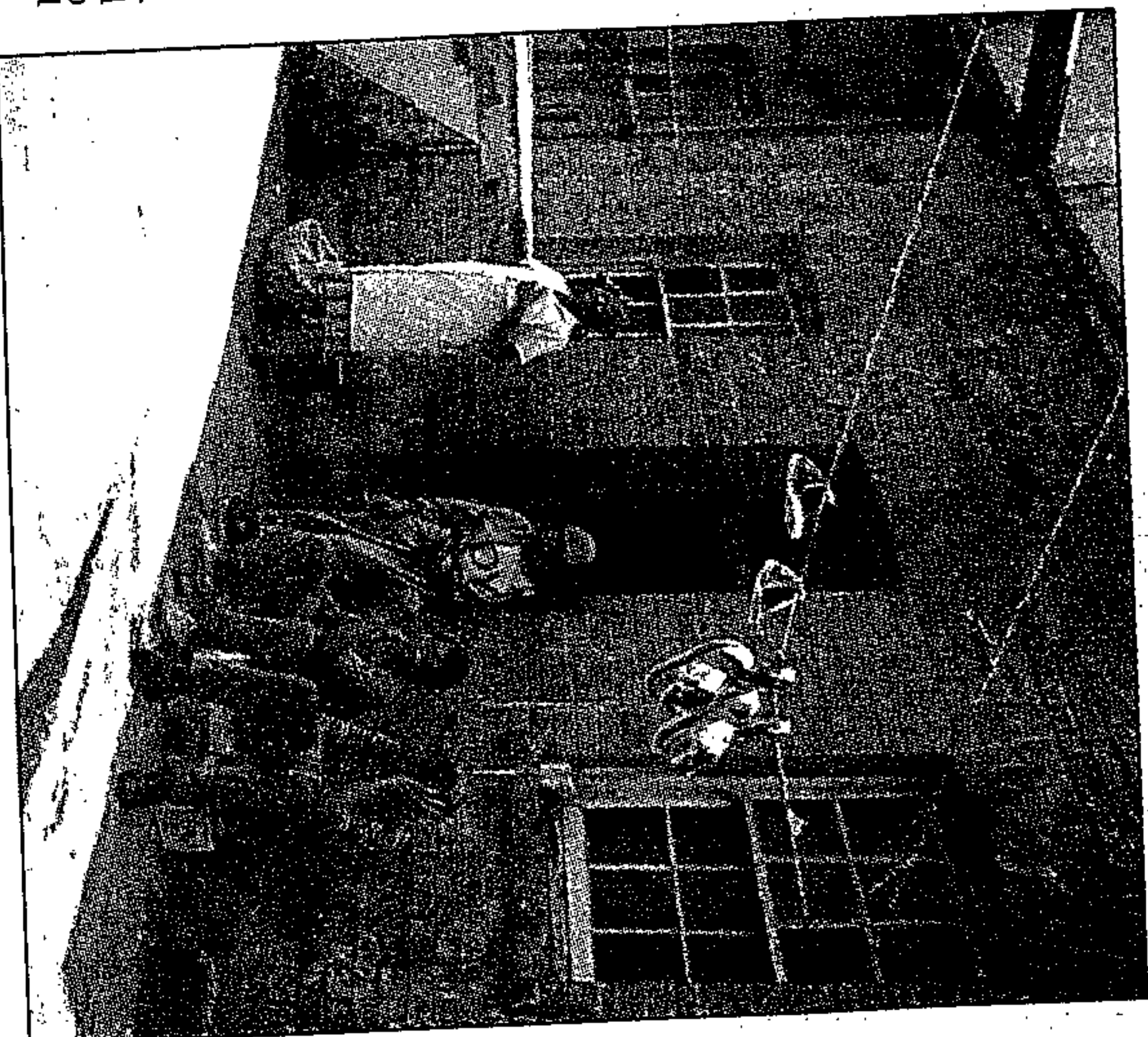
Sam Makabulane, one of the occupants, said: "I've been staying in the area since 1994 and paid hostel indunas R350 for a room when I first moved in."

He says they were initially promised by the council that they would not have to pay rent "until the hostel was fully developed".

However, the council decided last year that they "should suddenly start paying rent for living at the hostel".

"How can we possibly pay when most people are unemployed and living under such filthy conditions?" he asks.

The alternative accommodation was "expensive" and the children could not go to school as their parents could "hardly afford candles".



RELUCANT TO MOVE... A group of urban dwellers contemplate their uncertain future after being told that they may longer live in inner Johannesburg's old Drill Hall. **■ Pic: WELCOME SKOSANA**

CP 24/1/99

Angry residents evict squatters

By JOHANNES VOGEL

Angry residents hit back violently at criminals in Bellevue East last weekend when they trashed a block of flats occupied by drug dealers and other criminal low-life.

Armed with sledgehammers, and backed up by people with automatic shotguns and at least one carrying a handgrenade, they turned De la Rey and Gascoyne streets into a battlefield.

They smashed windows and doors and forcibly evicted about 150 squatters who illegally occupied the Leighton Court flats. The building has no electricity, water or sewerage. The owner has apparently abandoned the building with an estimated amount of R175 413 outstanding on rates, taxes and service fees.

A resident told the *Saturday Star* it was "even too hot for the police to handle", and they had only sprayed teargas before retreating.

A resident living opposite said the last straw was when one of the



TAKING ACTION: An irate resident smashes down a door at Leighton Court

occupants broke into his house on Sunday morning. "They orchestrated all their criminal activities from the building," he claimed.

Residents involved in the "clean-up operation" said most of the houses in the area - which in the "good years" might have sold for R1-million or more - are up for sale.

(SIO 30)
"But even the 'For Sale' signs were stolen and our properties are devaluating by the day. We had no option," a woman said.

However, Superintendent Jameison Radingoana, of the Yeoville police, said they would not tolerate people who took the law into their own hands.

Richard Brown of the Safer Cities Project said building inspectors would be sent to assess the situation and make a decision about the future of the building.

The residents claimed that the flats are used for drug dealing, a shebeen, stolen goods and prostitution.

Maurice Smithers, chairperson of the Yeoville Community Development Forum, said the problem was that there were two desperate groups of people: the property owners and residents; and the squatters, who have no income or a place to stay. He said there were plans on the table to restore the area.

Various occupants of the building denied they were involved in any wrongdoing.

SPAR 27/12/99

Squatters camp outside baths

By BUNTY WEST

(30)

Many of the squatters who illegally moved into the Turkish Baths, at the corner of Nugget and Noord Streets in Johannesburg eight months ago and who were evicted last week, are still camped on the pavement outside, refusing to be moved to Weiler's Farm.

Security personnel employed by the Metro Council evicted more than 150 squatters from the building, which the council wants to upgrade and turn into a shelter for homeless people. Within weeks of it being emptied of squatters last year it was re-occupied.

Anthony Blandford, the executive officer for project facilitation and supply services in the Eastern Council's Urban Planning department, said the department had already received a R250 000 subsidy from the province to turn the building into a shelter.

"The invasion effectively stopped any work being done and we had to go back to court to get the people removed. They were given adequate notice yet ignored us, so we had to forcibly remove them."

The building, which has no water or toilet facilities, was in a mess after the council-retained security workers moved in. Cardboard partitions, separating families within several rooms, still lay on the ground as adults, many with small children were moved into the street.

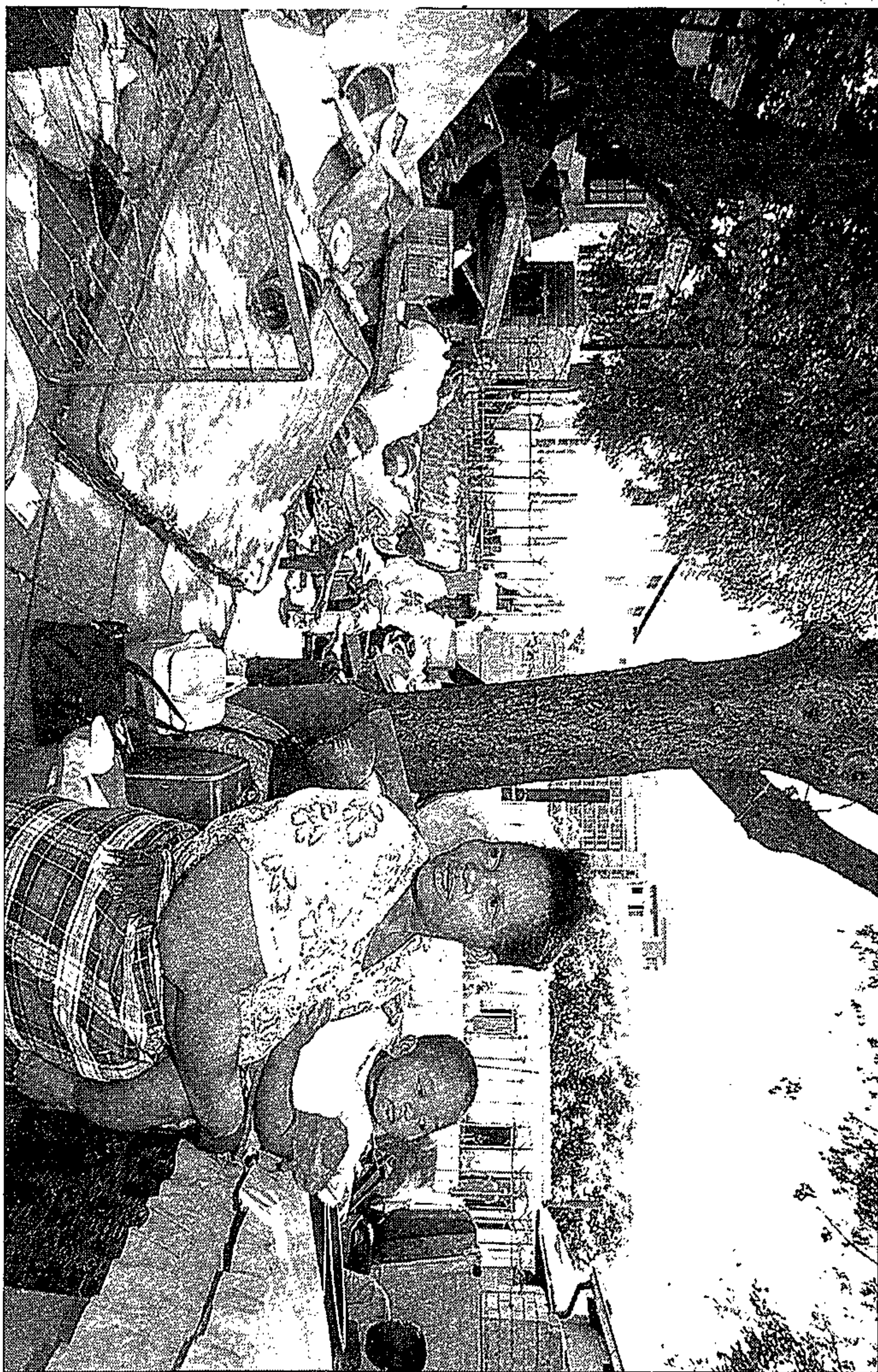
But according to the squatters they were not given any warnings that they would be evicted.

Many refused to move from the pavement unless council found them an alternative place to stay.

When council suggested taking the families to Weiler's Farm, in the far south of Johannesburg, most families refused to go.

Contractors have moved into the building to start refurbishing the facilities as an official shelter.

On the street ... Lindive Mtshali, with her daughter Ngobile, stands amid the furniture and belongings of families evicted from the Turkish Baths. They have refused to be moved to Weiler's Farm. The province intends turning the baths into a homeless shelter.



THEMBA HADEBE

Pay up R300, or get no site!

(3/0) CP 7/3/99
Squatters claim councillor ripping them off

By STEVE DLAMINI

UNEMPLOYED and poor residents of an informal settlement in Soshanguve north of Pretoria are being forced to pay R300 to a councillor before being granted permits to occupy sites allocated to them.

Those who fail to pay are kicked out of the Block SS-MK informal settlement.

The councillor could not be reached for comment this week and failed to return phone calls from City Press.

The mayor of the Greater Akasia/Soshanguve Town Council, Olive Lukhuleni, said the issue was between the councillor and residents.

"He is the man to talk to," she said.

The Gauteng government has often warned residents of informal settlements not to pay money to anyone who promises them houses.

Residents say the councillor said the money was in payment for permits for the sites and would also be used for the development of the area.

The Block SS-MK informal settlement has no toilets, roads or water, and residents are living in broken-down shacks.

"Residents say that despite promises that the area would be developed, they are forced to hide behind bushes to relieve themselves and have to walk long distances to fetch water.

The chairman of the Block SS-MK Crisis Committee, Johannes Mokgetle said tension among residents was high.

Mokgetle said the allocation of the site permits meant that residents could start building their own low-cost homes for which they would receive government subsidies.

"Some of us refused to pay the R300 because we did not trust the councillor.

"Nowhere have residents of an informal settlement paid anything be-



NATURE CALLS... Thabo Mogolwane (5) and Madidimalo Seakamela (6) squat in the bush while little Portia looks on. ■ Pic: STEVE DLAMINI

fore they were allocated houses and the government subsidies," he said.

"He (the councillor) threatened residents with eviction and some have been forced to leave out of fear for failing to pay the money."

Residents have shown City Press receipts they received from the councillor after paying him.

Mokgetle said that unlike some informal settlements in Gauteng, theirs hardly had any toilets, water taps or electricity.

To answer the call of nature, residents have to wait until dark, then pretend they are looking for something while searching for a place to relieve themselves.

Local Community Policing Forum chairman Oupa Nkosi said residents had tried several times to call the councillor to a meeting to demand their money back, but he

always failed to show up.

"We tried several times but we could not succeed.

"He does not have our interests at heart," Nkosi said.

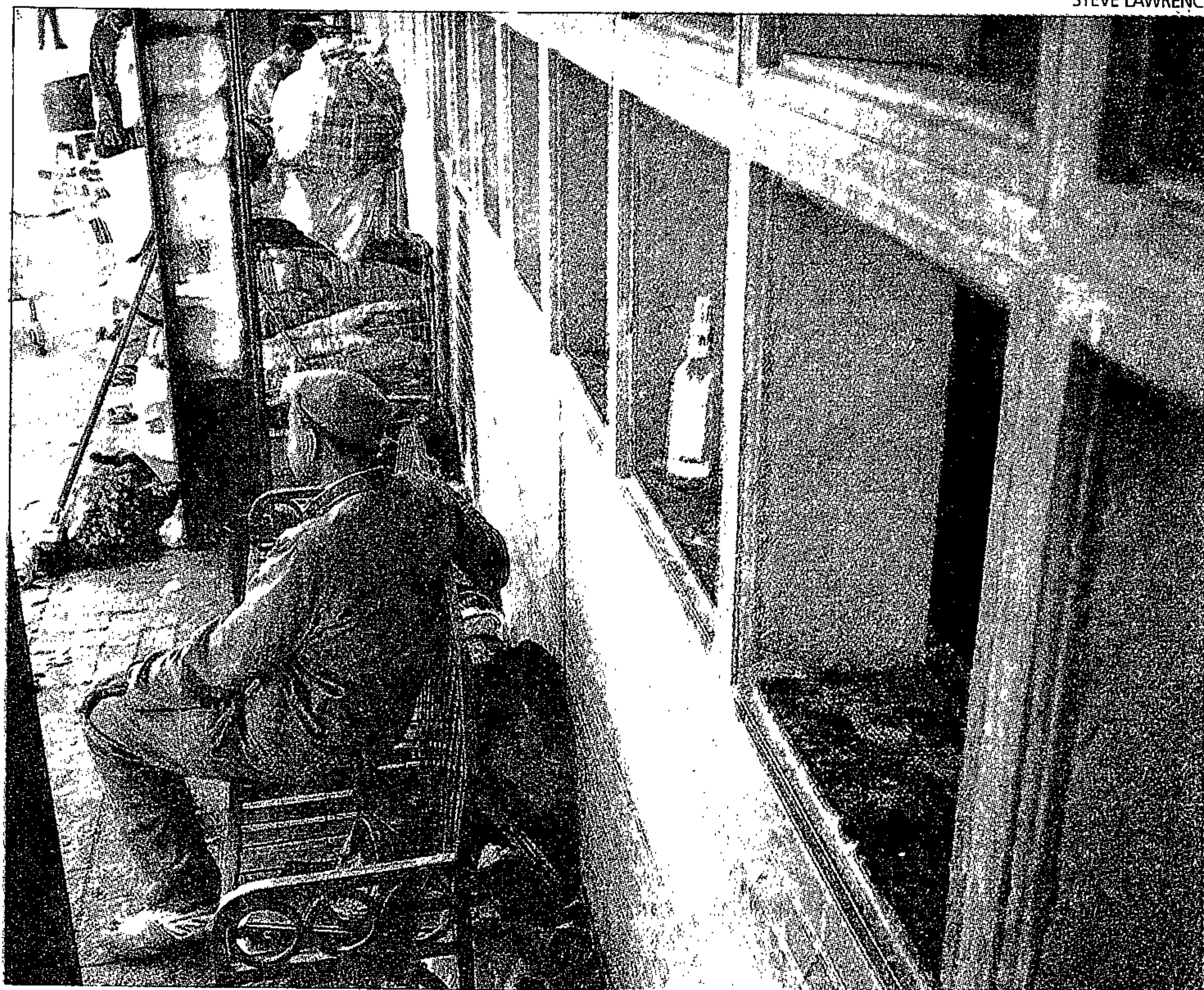
"The government is not aware that we are suffering here.

"When government officials visit the squatter camp they are being driven to a better developed area where the councillor has a house.

"Our women have to walk about 2 km to fetch water at our neighbouring squatter camp.

"Sometimes these people don't want to provide us with water, saying that they are paying for water that they don't use," Nkosi added.

David Seanego, who also paid R300 to the councillor, said: "I still can't see why I paid. Some of us don't work and we are demanding our money back."



No home of his own ... Esrom Motemela rests during the heat of the day. He has been living in and around the Johannesburg Library Gardens for 15 years

'Squatters killing Gardens businesses'

BY BUNTY WEST

Homeless people living in and around Library Gardens in central Johannesburg are chasing away customers from the few shops which are left doing business.

According to local shopkeepers, turnover has dropped dramatically and the rentals charged by council are so high that it is impossible for them to recover their monthly costs, let alone make a profit.

They blame most of their problems on the habits of the more than 20 squatters who live in the park who the shopkeepers say, defecate, urinate,

beg and steal from passers by and visitors.

Farouk Badat, who owns the Library Gardens takeaway, said the council already charges him R2 500 a month in rent and now wants to put it up to R3 000. "I don't think the monthly rental is worth more than R500, as over the past five years my customer base has dropped by 50%," Badat said.

He said every day he and his wife had to clean the steps of the shop because of the filth left there.

Badat added that apart from the filth, his storeroom which is housed across the park, had been broken into several times.

"My wife has even been held up at gunpoint," he said.

A King Pie staff member said the squatters were definitely a problem and chased customers away.

But the squatters were adamant the situation wasn't of their making.

David Mpheli, a spokesperson for the mainly middle-aged men who sleep in the park, said the unemployed people who live in the park were honest.

Mpheli said that tsotsis moved in during the day to harass and steal. He did admit that the men used the toilet in the park and begged from passers by.

"The toilets are closed at night so we have nowhere else to go except in doorways," he said.

Esram Muthamela, who says he has lived in the park for the past 15 years, said shop owners forgot about the times when the squatters had called the police to catch criminals, and when they helped arrest wrongdoers.

Despite several calls to the ward councillor for the area, Lennox Zembe, he did not respond.

A Parks Department official said no one from the department was available because of a one-day strike.

(310) 12/3/99

A precarious existence in Nugget Park

Aaron Nicodemus

Nugget Park, a small dirt square at the corner of Nugget and Saratoga streets, has become a battleground in Johannesburg's war on homelessness.

Every so often — there's no predicting when, homeless people say — an unmarked car or van will pull up to Nugget Park, men in street clothes will get out and begin taking all their belongings.

Clothes, blankets, food, chairs. And worst of all, according to Thobela Elizabeth "Lizzy" Makoba (55), the men take their identity documents.

"They are coming like vultures for us," she says. "They have taken my ID three times. When they come here, they take everything. I'm left with nothing."

Makoba and several other homeless people in Nugget Park, including Sam

Mosia (55), were arrested on a Friday evening recently and held at a local jail. When they appeared before a magistrate on the Monday, he simply released them. The Nugget Park homeless tell harrowing stories of being beaten, sprayed with water and choked by tear gas.

M+G 26/3-1/4/99 (310)

Judy Bass, co-ordinator for Paballo ya Batho, a homeless outreach program administered from the Central Methodist church, calls the city's actions "deplorable. I think the worst thing for me is the total disrespect for humanity."

"They have succeeded in clearing the streets of the poor. The things they take — it might be rubbish to them but it's all they have."

Homeless communities on Plein Street and on Brande Street have also been targeted, Bass said.

The crisis manager for the Eastern Metropolitan Council, Arthur Adendorff, says that the confiscation of personal possessions on park property is part of his job.

'I only have so much patience before I am expected to produce. You have to come to a point where the talking is over and you have to go over to enforcement'

"We cannot sit back and watch the place going to the dogs," Adendorff said. "Our job is to keep the parks clean and safe. We cannot allow people to sleep and do business in our parks."

Adendorff says that 18 months ago, prostitution was being conducted outside the nearby school, that 40 homeless people lived illegally in the park and that there was a flourishing illegal beer-brewing business there.

Adendorff says the prostitutes are gone and many of the homeless have



Defenceless: The Eastern Metropolitan Council raids places like Nugget Park every so often as part of its war on the homeless. PHOTOGRAPH: NADINE HUTTON

been relocated to Wheeler's Farm, located near Soweto. "I'm doing my job," Adendorff says that his enforcement unit regularly sweeps the park, confiscating materials used to make homemade beer. As part of that, the unit also takes blankets and chairs and clothes.

But any IDs accidentally taken should be returned. "We will return the IDs, and I have instructed my men to return all IDs," he said. Some IDs probably end up being dumped with the rest of the trash, he said.

He says: "I only have so much patience before I am expected to produce. You have to come to a point where the talking is over and you have to go over to enforcement."

As to the methods used to remove the homeless, Adendorff said that the homeless people in Nugget Park and other areas have been given verbal warnings and eviction notices, and provided with a place to stay.

The homeless have nicknamed the relocation point of Wheeler's

Farm "Tula Ntswana", literally "Quiet, My Children". The nickname relates the shame and pain homeless people feel at being relocated there.

The city council originally cleared some high grass away, brought water three times a day and provided portable toilets. But when more and more homeless people were brought in, they were dumped in the tall grass and told to create their own space.

Toilets overflowed, and water was delivered only sporadically. Many of the homeless people at Nugget Park tell humorous stories about the big snakes that live in the grass.

But more importantly, the remote location left few options for people to find food or "piece" jobs, part-time work that is occasionally available in the city.

"There's no way we can live there," says Mosia, who along with about half-a-dozen homeless people walked back to Nugget Park.

The city is actively trying to deal with its homeless problem. Accord-

ing to Matume Gaffane, the Eastern Metropolitan Council's executive officer for housing, the council has begun renovating the Turkish Baths building on the corner of Nugget and De Villiers streets as a homeless shelter.

The homeless people who had "invaded" that building were evicted after proper notice and a court order, he said. The council is spending R380 000 to renovate the building, which will hold up to 150 homeless people. Several other projects are either under way or finished.

Gaffane says that the homeless people sleeping on the pavement outside are blocking construction equipment from getting into the building.

"The building is supposed to be occupied by homeless people, but we have to get the equipment inside," he said.

The building should be completed by May, and then the council will begin taking applications from homeless people.

CP 11/4/99 **Crackdown on land use**

By MOIPONE KOMANE (310)

THE GREATER Johannesburg Metropolitan Council has taken a tough stand on illegal land usage following a metro-wide survey which revealed that close to 400 cases of this problem exist in Greater Johannesburg.

In the past three months notices and summons were served, investigations conducted, scrapyards were terminated, and court eviction orders were issued to illegal land users.

This enforcement programme will be extended to the remaining inner city suburbs that will be surveyed over the next six months, and the same procedure will be applied.

In the NMLC four scrapyards in Klipspruit were closed down and

the figure in the SMLC stands at 12.

"Residents need to understand that a trading license does not exclude a person from having to comply with town planning schemes or by-laws.

"Application forms are available at council offices to apply for consent-use at a cost of R300. Applicants need to supply a title deed to property and/or a power of attorney," said Councillor Parks Tau, chairperson of the Planning and Urbanisation committee.

Adjoining land owners must be informed and given 28 days to raise objections. An advertising notice must be displayed on the site and applicants must write a motivation letter to reinforce the application.

"We are not being unsympathetic, we will view each case on merit," added Councillor Tau.

Residents have sinking feeling

People living in the Thembalihle informal settlement disagree over council plans to move them to another area, and plan to march to the Premier's Office tomorrow

BY THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

Residents of the Thembalihle informal settlement near Lenasia are divided over the Southern council's plan to relocate them to Vlakkfontein, south of Johannesburg.

Those in the camp of the Thembalihle Development Forum (TDF) are preparing to relocate to Vlakkfontein near Zakariya Park, while those who support the Masibambabe Civic Organisation are reluctant to move out.

This division threatens to tear the settlement apart and those sympathetic to the civic organisation have planned a march to the office of Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga tomorrow to demand that the area be proclaimed a township.

Despite being warned that the area was at risk because it had been built on dolomite and might sink, some of the residents are opposed to being relocated to Vlakkfontein, and say they enjoy and prefer living in Thembalihle.

Rufus Meya, Masibambabe Civic Organisation secretary, said residents had been lied to about the area being dolomitic.

"It is surprising that council appointed geologists keep on claiming that the area is not suitable for development but nothing has happened for the past 10 years while we've been staying there."

"I do not understand why the council failed to develop the area. They upgraded a taxi rank but failed to install street

Star 12/14/99

(310)

STEVE LAWRENCE



Condemned ... the Thembalihle informal settlement may show a peaceful scene, but council plans to move residents to Vlakkfontein may be strongly resisted.

lights and ablution facilities for us," Meya said.

He said residents were billed for services which they were not receiving, but stopped when plans to relocate them to Misgund North, near Naturena hit the rocks in 1996.

Realising that a low cost housing project was on the cards, residents of Naturena protested.

Residents were promised accommodation at Daveland

but the area was invaded by people from other parts of Gauteng.

They were later promised they would be settled either in Finetown or PoorTjie, but refused to go because the areas were too far from the Johannesburg CBD.

Those who are prepared to start a new life in Vlakkfontein, are expecting to move in July.

According to Meshack Tebe TDF spokesperson, more than

2 000 residents have registered to move to Vlakkfontein.

"People are divided about this issue because they don't understand the area. They have been misinformed and told that it is an agricultural area."

"Despite that, people are preparing to relocate because they have seen that sites are being developed."

"They are tired of staying in shacks where there are no services and security," Tebe added.

Entrepreneurs must follow rules

BY THEMBA SEPOTOKELE

The Southern council recently served 265 people with summonses for illegally operating businesses on council land within its jurisdiction.

Prema Naidoo, the council's chairperson, said over the last three months, council had issued 70 summonses to people operating spaza shops from their homes without the council's permission.

Naidoo added that 195 summonses were served to people for operating pavement panelbeaters and spray painting services and those operating businesses from makeshift offices or medical surgeries on council's land.

One resident served was July Moosa of Eldorado Park who received a spot fine of R1 000 for operating a spaza shop from his house.

Moosa, a retrenched municipal employee has operated the shop since 1984.

He was infuriated by the fine because he said the business helped to pay his children's school fees, food, monthly rental and his services.

Naidoo said residents

needed to understand that an ordinary trading license was in itself not enough for any person to start trading.

"We are not unsympathetic to the needs of the community and we will view each case on merit. We understand the plight of the jobless and the poor and promise to assist wherever possible."

"Provisions of the town planning scheme and related municipal by-laws must be complied with before trading can take place," Naidoo said.

Residents wanting application and rezoning forms should contact council offices and application for consent-use costs R300.

"Applicants must write a motivational letter to back their application. Application for consent-use may be granted based on motivation and taking into account the conditions under which the application is applied for," Naidoo added.

He said complaints were based on property values being lowered, damage to roads, residential areas used as storerooms and panel beaters and spray painters using harmful chemicals.

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Police clash with forest-dwellers protesting at relocation from reserve

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Durban - Police and military reinforcements from Ulundi and Richards Bay have been sent to St Lucia after police came under fire yesterday from militants armed with AK-47s and handguns during ongoing violence which erupted in the Dukuduku Forest this week.

Last night, KwaZulu Natal Safety and Security MEC Nyanga Ngubane said he would ask Premier Lionel Mtshali to convene an urgent cabinet meeting to discuss the crisis with Forestry Minister Kader Asmal "so that we can bring this issue to complete finality".

Ngubane, who is also in charge of traditional and environmental affairs, blamed a "small clique of saboteurs" for intimidating and forcing Dukuduku forest dwellers to blockade the road to St Lucia with burning trees.

"We cannot allow this situation to continue, because it is starting to undermine the tourism of KwaZulu Natal and South Africa as a whole," he said.

By late yesterday, at least eight people had been arrested for public violence following a series of clashes.

Earlier in the day police retaliated with teargas and rubber bullets after coming under fire from a mob of about 300 forest dwellers, following renewed attempts to blockade the only road between Mtubatuba and St Lucia.

The road was closed for a while after protesting forest dwellers set fire to logs and planks and pulled debris onto the road.

Police spokesperson Superintendent Mayan Naidoo confirmed that AK-47s and handguns had been used against the



8 Jan. 7/5/99

(308)

PATRICK MTICLO

police, but said no one was injured in the shooting.

She said a contingent from the public order policing unit from Mtubatuba had moved deep into the forest to saturate the area, and a light aircraft was to be sent to monitor the situation.

Heavily armed policemen in body armour, KwaZulu Natal Nature Conservation Service rangers and soldiers from the

nearby 121 SA Infantry Battalion were positioned along a stretch of the road about a kilometre or two from St Lucia village yesterday afternoon.

Small groups of forest residents were walking on the side of the road over a distance of a few kilometres. Many of them were carrying sticks and some bush knives and they appeared extremely tense.

Ngubane said although he

was satisfied that the situation was now "under control", it was imperative to find a permanent solution to the long-standing problems at Dukuduku.

Although the recent flare up was initially attributed to a dispute over the harvesting of *ncema* grass, the conflict follows a recent initiative by Asmal to prevent the destruction of the rare Dukuduku indigenous forest, by relocating thou-

sands of forest dwellers to nearby farms at Monzi.

Ngubane broke off a meeting with conservation service officials and senior traditional leaders yesterday morning when fresh reports emerged of violence on the St Lucia road. He then contacted senior provincial police officials, urging them to take decisive action by arresting anyone who attempted to block the road.

St Lucia Tourism Association chief Derick Holman issued a statement declaring that the violence was "an isolated incident" and that appropriate steps were being taken by the authorities.

Although the Mtubatuba-St Lucia road has been reopened, motorists are advised to contact the Provincial Road Traffic Inspectorate in Mtubatuba (035 550-0156) for the latest situation.

Tense situation ... Dukuduku forest dwellers gather on the Mtubatuba-St Lucia road where further confrontations with police occurred yesterday.

Shilowa faced with land invasion poser (310)

By Joshua Raboroko

THE Gauteng government of Premier Mbhazima Shilowa faces a major challenge over land invasion by hundreds of squatters in Finetown and Lawley, 40km south of Johannesburg.

This challenge will stare the Premier and his government in their faces when he officially opens the provincial legislature in Johannesburg this morning.

The two areas of Finetown, near Grasmere, and Lawley, next to Ennerdale, form part of what is referred to as the Valley of Shacks along the Johannesburg Golden Highway, stretching from Devland, south of the city, to Parys in the Free State.

Government sources say there

has been large-scale, illegal selling of land by syndicates to squatters, despite warnings from the Gauteng housing and land affairs department that it will prosecute those found trading in land. received reports about illegal occupation of land in the area, including in Finetown. She was unaware that the invaders paid for land and said drastic action would be taken against those found guilty of the offence.

Destitute, homeless people in Lawley claimed they paid between R10 and R30 a site without water, sewerage and roads. The land being invaded belongs to the province she said, adding that an urgent meeting has been convened with residents so they can explain how they obtained the sites.

However, Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council spokeswoman Ms Jenny Moodley said that officially there were about 400 families living in the Lawley informal settlement. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday.

They have been provided with basic services such as water and portable toilets, but there has been an influx of homeless people who have illegally settled on the land. The invasion comes when Shilowa's government is expected to make important announcements concerning his vision on the future control of the province. He was inaugurated as premier two weeks ago.

Moodley said the council Sources say the opening of the legislature today by Shilowa as premier is likely to focus on delivery.

Pretoria inner city tenants evicted

By SIEVE DLAMINI

MORE than 100 destitute people, including pensioners and disabled people have been left homeless after they were evicted from council flats in Pretoria.

The evictions at the Krugerpark and Shubartpark block of flats in the city have angered the inner city tenants, who accused the Pretoria City Council of being behind the evictions.

They threatened to embark on a mass action if the eviction process continued.

However, Nava Pillay, the council's representative responsible for the block of flats, denied any knowledge of the evictions.

"We are not evicting any person. We only took over the flats from the Gauteng Provincial Government at the beginning of July," he said.

"If there are any evictions going on, they might be conducted by the state attorneys, not the council. I don't know anything about the evictions."

He explained that the inner-city tenants had occupied the flats illegally.

"We have issued letters to the occupants to make themselves legal by filling in new lease agreement forms.

"Action will be taken against those who continue to occupy the flats illegally," Pillay said.

He warned that a period of a month had been granted for residents to make arrangements with the council.

Residents claim that the evic-

tions are being conducted by City Property on behalf of the council. Pillay said City Property was an agent acting on behalf of the council.

"They administer the flats on our behalf. They cannot evict people without our mandate," he said.

Some tenants claimed that they were evicted because they could not afford to pay their rates as they are unemployed and that others are pensioners and disabled people.

Other tenants claimed that they were unfairly evicted because they used paraffin stoves rather than electric ones.

The evictions at the multi-racial flats started about three months ago and are still continuing.

Many people claim that they have nowhere to go.

They have occupied the 23-year-old buildings for the past 20 years.

Sindy Kinte, a member of the Kruger/Shubart Housing Forum, said many people who occupied the flats were very poor and most of them were pensioners.

"The decision to evict these people is completely out of touch with the social realities here. Most of the people here are unemployed and most are pensioners," Kinte said.

Thabo Mahloele, a resident, said they demanded ownership of the flats.

"The council should grant us ownership of these flats rather than evict us," he said.

Louis Fourie, a father of three had received an eviction letter stating that he should be off the prop-



HOMELESS... An man waits patiently for transport after he and about 100 other people were evicted from municipal flats in Pretoria

Picture: Andries McInerka

erty by the end of August.

"I am unemployed and I cannot afford anything. My electricity supply had been cut because I cannot afford to pay for the rates.

"As a result I used a paraffin stove," he said.

Fourie said he was prepared to pay for his rates as soon as he finds a job.

Onica Mahlangu said she could not afford to pay the R850 for her bachelor flat. "These flats were meant for lower income groups, that's why we are here," she said.

Tuesday October 12 1999 SOWETAN

Department ignores order

By Siphile Mpye

THE demolition of shacks in Lawley, south of Johannesburg, continued yesterday despite a court order prohibiting the Gauteng department of housing from evicting people in the area.

The court ordered the return of material and property confiscated from the site and prohibited evictions of any kind.

However, Ms Delca Maluleke, the spokeswoman for Gauteng housing MEC Paul Mashatile, said they were evicting people who had built new shacks.

"Empty and partially built new

shacks were being demolished, not the old ones," Maluleke said.

As the order did not prohibit the demolition of new structures, they were pulled down, Maluleke said.

She said she expected about 1 500 shacks to have been destroyed by late yesterday afternoon.

Maluleke said the area was unsafe because it had a large concentration of dolomite and was unsuitable for housing development. "The area is earmarked for further development other than housing," she said.

She said residents would have to go on to a housing waiting-list and the ones who could prove that they

had lived in the area "for a long time" would be provided with alternative accommodation.

At the site of the demolitions, amid heated exchanges between residents, the police and members of a security company, the residents' representative, Mr Patrick Kubheka, and the department's Mr Mbulelo Musi appealed for calm.

Kubheka called for the return of all the confiscated property and the department acceded to the demand under supervised conditions.

During similar demolitions last week, a person was shot dead and four others were in clashes between residents and security guards.

Sowetan 12/10/99

Monday October 11 1999 SOWETAN

No quarter for land invaders

By Justice Mohale

THE Southern Metropolitan Local Council will continue to evict illegal land invaders in all areas of its jurisdiction in an effort to ensure that it is properly used, the council's chief executive officer, Mr Chris Ngcobo, said.

The decision follows the demolition of about 250 vacant shacks in Lawley Extension 2, south of Johannesburg, last week. It was a joint venture between the SMLC and Gauteng government.

Ngcobo said the council had warned the illegal occupants that it would deal with them severely if they continued to erect shacks on the land.

"We will not tolerate any illegal invasion of land and if they (squatters) persist, the council will have no option but to take legal action against them," Ngcobo said.

He said the demolished shacks had been vacant and the council suspected that somebody had erected them in order to sell them.

"As council we have a duty to

combat any action undermining our efficiency," he said.

Ngcobo said a large portion of the land was dolomitic and the SMLC had no intention of declaring it a residential area because the sink-holes posed a serious danger to the lives of the people.

He revealed that the land belonged to the Gauteng government but was on the process of being transferred to the SMLC.

According to SMLC strategic executive for corporate services Mr Greg Daniels the council had a legal right to demolish and confiscate the shacks.

"Although the council has not planned what it will do with the land after the transfer has been completed, it must protect it against any illegal invaders," Daniels said.

Chairman of the Ennerdale and Surrounding Civic Association, Mr Farouk Jardine, said the council was unsympathetic to the plight of the homeless people because it had failed to seek alternative accommodation for them before evicting them.