

EPISCOPAL CHURCHMEN for SOUTH AFRICA

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—For A Free Southern Africa—

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C R O S S R O A D S

The agony of the people of Crossroads is far from being over. Contrary to an agreement between the residents of the self-created squatter settlement outside Cape Town and the South African Minister of Cooperation and Development, Dr Piet Koornhof, the machinery of the apartheid state is aimed at uprooting and scattering the gallant people of Crossroads.

Dr George Morrison, a deputy minister of Cooperation and Development (the department - once known as Bantu Affairs - which governs the lives and misfortunes of the country's 16 million Black Africans) stated that most of the community's inhabitants would be removed to the far-away Transkei and Ciskei bantustans. The remaining minority would be permitted to live in a not-yet-built township elsewhere in the Cape area. South African journalist John Kane-Berman, long-time authority on black and labor affairs, reports in London's GUARDIAN that Morrison 'has now made it clear, however, that only about one-quarter of the camp's 24,000 people will be rehoused in an official black township. The other 18,000 people in 3,600 families will have to go to the Bantustans.' Morrison said the condemned Africans 'were "totally and unacceptably illegally" living in the Cape Peninsula, engaged in "scrounging" jobs like "gardeners and caddies", and undermining jobs of legitimate work-seekers.' Morrison later averred that no one would be sent to the bantustans if he or she qualified to remain. 'I would like to emphasise that I did not intend to suggest anything in conflict with the undertakings given by Dr Koornhof to the Crossroads committee.'

Koornhof announced in April - after long 'negotiations' with representatives of the community and their supporters - that four categories of people at Crossroads could stay in the area and be housed in the new township:

- those men (and their wives and families) who were 'legal' in terms of Section 10 of the Bantu (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, i.e., those who were born and have lived continuously in one area and those who have 'lawfully' resided there for 15 years or worked for one employer at one address for 10 years;
- migrant workers in legal employment, and their families;
- self-employed people and their families;
- 'hard luck' cases, i.e., people in the area for a long time.

Not included were 'parasites' - described as those with no jobs or engaged in 'illegal' activities; 'criminals' - people with criminal records sentenced to 6 months jail or 100 Rand fines; and, those who could be 'persuaded' to go to the Bantustans.

The agreement was oral and its specifics are interpreted by Koornhof, his staff and the whites-only regional board, one of the 22 countrywide which determines day-to-day affairs of the African people in South Africa. Note Morrison's emphasis on 'illegally' and on Crossroads residents 'undermining jobs of legitimate work-seekers', pressing the exceptions in Koornhof's agreement and also attempting to exploit Pretoria's differentiation of blacks between Africans and the so-called Coloured people who under apartheid laws are 'entitled' to live and be employed in the Cape area. Though Koornhof last year in an emotional statement averred 'I want to deal with the thing (Crossroads) in a humane way, not with bloody bulldozers', though Pretoria is worried about its image that a Crossroads confrontation would damage, the intent and scheme of the apartheid regime has not altered. One way or another Pretoria aims to rid itself of Crossroads.