

The south african forced removals history essay



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In South Africa, apartheid was an important factor in the forced removal of many innocent South Africans, due to the color of their skin. Throughout the 1900's the struggle between segregation and equality was brought to attention, affecting almost every aspect of a black South African's life. From the causes, to the effects upon the civilians, the forced removals majorly affected the present day South Africa. From 1960 to 1983 the Bantustan Policy was enforced to forcibly move South African blacks out of the area designated for 'whites'.

There are many causes as to why the forced resettlement of blacks was conveyed by the government. The apartheid more or less originated back in 1652 when white settlers first arrived in South Africa. This history did impact the way the laws and policies were enforced later on 1948 on by the nationalist party. In 1910, the Union was formed. After this, the territorial segregation the white settlers had impressed was put in law with the 1913 Black Land Act. The Black Land Act limited the areas black Africans could occupy through ownership or rent. This act would become the basic land policy of South Africa up until the end of the resettlement. The Act also made the number of migrant laborers increase, since most of the industries and mines, which was and still is the main source of income for Africans, were occupied by black workers, but were located on 'white' land. During the 1930's and 40's, the amount of money blacks were paid in urban areas was considerably better than that of rural, and this began a migration of black Africans into urban areas. This countered the wishes of the dominant agricultural capitalists, who needed a good work force during the agricultural boom of the 1950's. Thus began the move towards forced removals, to keep

blacks out of 'white' urban areas. This need for the removal was the implementation of the Bantustan Policy. The Bantustan Policy was directed towards rural resettlement, urban resettlement, and resettlement within the Bantustans. These resettlements were to direct blacks from designated 'white' urban land and areas, which led to a superfluous amount of farm laborers.

By the beginning of the 1980's, almost 60% of the African population was based in the Bantustans (Kristen Henard). The 'black spots' or communities the blacks were forced into were overcrowded and unsanitary. These communities more or less became the dumping grounds for unwanted blacks, namely the elderly, women and children. The Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act amended in 1952, those Africans with the section 10 right had the right to remain there only if they were born in the area, and had lived there continuously, worked for one employer for more than ten years, or lived lawfully and continuously there for 15 years. For others, there was a 72 hour limit for visitation in the white areas. The influx control regulations of the Consolidation Act were furthered in the 60's when the labor was needed in agricultural areas, rather than industries. These regulations went along with the Bantustan dumping grounds, and the unproductive and redundant workers. In 1986, the Abolition of Influx Control Act was created to replace the Consolidation Act of 1952. The system of influx control regulating and controlling the movement and residential rights of Africans and the subsequent further restrictions or relaxations must be tied to the political environment and the economic needs of the white capitalists. As the towns are centers of wealth and power and the majority rule movement was

strongest in the towns, a permanent African population in the towns was perceived as rising political and security problems. In general the influx control regulation, aimed at reducing the number of Africans living permanently in the towns as much as possible so as to reduce the concomitant political threat they pose This amended both the 1951 Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act and the 1979 Slums Act, providing the essential administrative controls that could be used for population and African urbanization control. The 1923 Black Act was also influenced by apartheid, made to segregate the urban African population. On the other hand, the 1986 amendment to the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act provided for the possibility of ' controlled squatting' because it allowed the minister of Constitutional development and planning to designate land for this purpose and make suitable regulations related to the provision of services and a form of local government. The government thus acknowledged the ultimate impossibility of eradicating all squatters and at the same time the positive effects of this type of low cost housing considering the extreme housing shortage in the urban areas. This provision can also be interpreted as another attempt to divide and disorganize the dominated and oppressed class by giving preferential treatment to a certain group of squatters so as to induce a positive attitude towards the apartheid regime whereas all the other squatters still lived under the threat of conviction and eviction. They then continued to control that population with the Group Area Act, facilitating control over the black urban population. This act attempted to hamper organization among the oppressed urban working class. Also, the segregated townships were placed on the outskirts of cities. This was facilitated so that the blacks were away from sensitive business

centers, and to control political and economic faces of the towns. At one point in the forced removal era, the implantation of the many racially based laws resulted in 87% of the total land area of South Africa being owned by the white minority, whereas 13% was 'set aside' for the 5 to 1 black majority. This made obvious the intentions of the government, to make sure the black majority was run and controlled by the white minority.

Throughout the segregation, there was series of peaceful demonstrations, along with violent ones. In 1985, over a period of four days Africans resisted being moved from their home, Crossroads, South Africa, to the new government- run Khayelitsha Township. Eighteen people were killed during the movement, and 230 were injured.

The apartheid system can be described as state action designed to secure and maintain white domination by furthering white political and economic interests through control over the black majority population. The mechanisms of population control used, include the panoply of forced removal intended to control, divide and segregate the people of South Africa. Forced removals have occurred in different historical times with different functions and guises. Ultimately the whole process can be traced back to the structures of black economic exploitation and white political domination inherent in the apartheid regime.

The process of change began with the election of Willem de Klerk as leader of the National Party in February 2, 1989, his subsequent presidentship, and more specifically his speech on February 2, 1990 as he announced the repeal of apartheid legislation, the democratization of the state system, the

normalization of the political process, and the multi-party negotiation process for a new Constitution.

The latter was eventually set up in December 1991 under the name Congress for a Democratic South Africa. After a suspension in June 1992, the negotiations resumed in early 1993 and resulted in an agreement on the details of a transitional Constitution, including 34 Constitutional principles against which the final constitution will be tested, and the arrangements necessary to ensure free and fair elections set from April 26 to 28, 1994. The then elected transitional parliament, acting as a Constitutional assembly, would begin to draw up a final Constitution.

The forced removals of South Africa were heavily influenced by apartheid, meaning the white minority controlling the black majority. The struggle between equality and segregation originated when the white settlers first arrived in Africa, but finally concluded in the 90's. There are many causes, from regulations and acts, to the white supremacy. Although it ended, the effects still remain. Many South Africans still live in insanitary slums, having been forced and never left.