

Chapter two

Policies of Displacement – Forced Evictions and their Discursive Framing

From my own point of view, the way that a concept like hope can be made useful is when it is *not* connected to an expected success — when it starts to be something different from optimism — because when you start trying to think ahead into the future from the present point, rationally there really isn't much room for hope. Globally it's a very pessimistic affair, with economic inequalities increasing year by year, with health and sanitation levels steadily decreasing in many regions, with the global effects of environmental deterioration already being felt, with conflicts among nations and peoples apparently only getting more intractable, leading to mass displacements of workers and refugees ... It seems such a mess that I think it can be paralysing. If hope is the opposite of pessimism, then there's precious little to be had. On the other hand, if hope is separated from concepts of optimism and pessimism, from a wishful projection of success or even some kind of a rational calculation of outcomes, then I think it starts to be interesting — because it places it in the *present*.

*Brian Massumi*¹

Introduction

Policies of displacement in the Western Cape province cannot be understood without taking into account the interrelated histories of displacement and forced removals in the African continent, as well as present-day forced evictions that become continuously executed in all over Africa. Nor can the

1 Massumi, Brian: *Navigating Movements*. Interview with Mary Zournazi. 2002.

politico-economic condition of South Africa and the many facets of neoliberalism and neocolonialism on the whole continent be factored out. Forced removals as an everyday practice of colonial and apartheid administrations were part of the technologies of power that were invented to appropriate land and take full control of the people living on that land. The study of present-day forced evictions in the South African context leads very soon to the comparisons many people affected and investigators of the topic make, between forced removals during apartheid and forced evictions of today. Mncedisi Twala was born and raised and still lives in the township of Gugulethu, Cape Town. From 2010 on, he became part of a broader organised anti-eviction movement in the Western Cape. In one of our conversations he took issue with the term “eviction”: “They use the term ‘eviction’ to fool us. People created their homes in certain places for decades, and even those places they were originally forcibly relocated to. And because they want to make profit, they come in and forcibly remove people. Now, why is this term, ‘forced removals’, suddenly replaced by ‘evictions’? To make it sound better and let people not be reminded to apartheid!”² But if this view is shared by many people affected by forced evictions, that forced evictions, as they are called today, are a continuation of forced removals and therefore of colonial and apartheid policies, how can this interconnection be defined?

In regard to present-day forced evictions on the African continent, in February 2015, the World Bank admitted to have funded a development project in the Gambela region of Ethiopia that led to the forced eviction of thousands of Anuak people. The manner in which the eviction was executed through the Ethiopian state included brutal technologies of power such as rape, imprisonment and torture.³ Besides the World Bank’s involvement, similar state-controlled land alienations were carried out all over Ethiopia and especially in different parts of Gambela. In Lagos, forced evictions of informal settlement residents have become an ongoing state practice. In February and September 2013, around 10,000 people were forcibly evicted from Badia-East in the Ijora area of Lagos, after a king had claimed ownership over the land. The king’s claim must have suited the urban development plans of the city, as the Nigerian government carried out the evictions using the funds of a 200 Million USD World Bank financed project named the

2 Conversation with Mncedisi Twala. April 19, 2014.

3 Cf. Cultural Survival article: *World Bank Admits Link to Forced Evictions in Africa*. February 23, 2015.

Lagos Metropolitan Development and Governance Project. Senegal's Dakar is another example of an African metropolis interspersed with forced evictions. The evictions at the sites of Captage, Grand Yoff, Keur Mbaye, and Oest Foire, that left thousands of people homeless, are examples of an urban development policy that favours investment and profit over people. The forced eviction of about 4,000 Maasai people in the Kenyan Rift Valley, for the state to make space for the development of a geothermal project, is another more publicly known example. The World Bank's funding and henceforth complicity in this exercise of power is less known. The first evictions took place between 1982 and 1984, when the *Hells Gate National Park* was constructed and a US-American power company was authorised to drill dwells in order to generate power. At this point, the Maasai were closed in on a piece of land between the newly erected national park and Lake Naivasha. In 2014 they were expelled again. This time as a result of the new project that served the interests of a Kenyan state-owned power company.⁴ Fouad Makki opens up the discussion about the World Bank's involvement and the determining of land as "terra nullius". He explains:

"The Bretton Woods institutions, and the World Bank in particular, are today at the forefront of a thinly disguised narrative of terra nullius that is deployed to designate 'underutilised' or 'unproductive' spaces as ideal for large-scale commercial development[...]. A 2009 World Bank publication entitled *Awakening Africa's Sleeping Giants* posited the existence of a vast underused land reserve[...](World Bank 2009:175). A year later, the bank released a companion report classifying countries according to the criteria of yield gaps, defined as the difference between the attained and possible productivity of land. It found these gaps to be especially large for sub-Saharan Africa where no country appeared to be realizing even 50 percent of its potential yield (Deiningner and Byerlee 2011:182)."⁵

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- 4 Cf. Mariita, Nicholas O.: *The impact of large-scale renewable energy development on the poor: environmental and socio-economic impact of a geothermal power plant on a poor rural community in Kenya*. in: Elsevier Science Direct. Volume 30, No 11. 2002: pp. 1119-1128; IC Magazine article: *Maasai Protest Against New Land Concessions for Geothermal Extractions in Kenya*. July 7, 2014; Cultural Survival article: *Maasai in Kenya Go to Courts to Stop Evictions Caused by World Bank's Geothermal Power Project*. June 13, 2013; Cultural Survival article: *Kenya: Demand the World Bank Compensate the Maasai*. August 15, 2013.
- 5 Makki, Fouad: *Development by Dispossession: Terra Nullius and the Social-Ecology of New Enclosures in Ethiopia*. in: Rural Sociology. Volume 79, No 1. 2014: p. 93.

It is important to recall that the viewing of land as terra nullius originally began with the so-called discovery of unknown, blank spaces, that from the colonisers' perspective, had to be conquered, tamed and civilised. Today terra nullius are blank spaces in terms of the profit they yield, spaces that the capitalist imagination can project itself into, and upon which a practice of investment, development, and displacement can be incorporated.

Another example that is in accordance with this duality principle of profitable and non-profitable land has been the forced eviction of the BaSarwa people from their areas of residence in the Kalahari Desert of Botswana, their ongoing detention and torture through the state⁶, and finally, their brutal marginalisation. Even though they constitute the last existing hunters community, their ejection from their historical living environment, that is a continuous policy since 1960,⁷ emanates from that same logic of wildlife tourism and profit as authoritative over people.⁸ The discourse that now has to rationalise, justify and normalise the eviction propagates the BaSarwa as a serious threat to the eco-system of the area. The fact that they are "real" hunters, which means that they truly hunt, makes them intolerable and superfluous. That they themselves are historically part of that same eco-system gets erased. Discursively framed differently, but falling into the same category of serving politico-economic interests, the eviction of around 20,000 residents of the Joe Slovo township that is part of the bigger township Langa, north of Cape Town, is the last example that I would like to point to in this introduction into the matter. As I will open up later, the 20,000 people were evicted from their shacks, for the government to surgically replace the aesthetic appearance of those shacks with new constructed social housing units. On a ground that lies right next to the N2 Highway, the same road that connects Cape Town's inner city with the Cape Town International Airport, the shacks were undesirable reminders of a society drastically divided by class. Most of the residents evicted were promised a unit once the construction project would be finished. But the rents of the new apartments were so high, that a majority could never afford to move back. The examples show that forced evictions are a politico-

6 Cf. Survival International report.: *The Persecution of Botswana's Bushmen 1992-2014*. November 2014; Take Part article: *Survival alert: Botswana's Bushmen arrested and tortured for hunting while tribal*. January 14, 2013.

7 Bolaane, Maitseo: *The Impact of Game Reserve Policy on the River BaSarwa/Bushmen of Botswana*. in: Social Policy Administration. Volume 38, No 4. 2004: p.413.

8 Cf. The Guardian article: *How the Kalahari Bushmen and other tribespeople are being evicted to make way for 'wilderness'*. November 16, 2014.

economic practice carried out in both rural and urban areas, depending on the aim and scale of the particular development project. It is important to keep that in mind as forced evictions might be associated less with rural and more with urban displacement, while they are an established practice in both spheres.

Karl Marx explains the ways in which capital, in order to maintain its ability to accumulate profit, has the obligation of constant disappropriation. He emphasises that originally, the capitalist elite obtained its property violently. This violent dispossession enabled the elite to invest in production and continuously increase profit. In this way, profit became permanently re-secured.⁹ Rosa Luxemburg develops Marx's analysis when she examines capitalist land grabbing as the ultimate obligation of capitalism for it to be able to open up new markets and extract the profit that it cannot gather from its already established markets. In this vein, Luxemburg considers the capitalist mode of production as obliged to perpetually and violently access new markets, as it would not be able to maintain itself otherwise.¹⁰

To sum up this introduction into the matter, I pointed to a double-sided background that I suggest must be kept in mind and revisited during the whole process of researching forced evictions of the present in South Africa. One is parallel forced evictions in other African countries, and the encouragement to profitable development through international organisations such as the World Bank in the manners that are supported and advocated by these organisations. This aspect can be described as international assistance and advocacy. Second are forced removals as a preceding historical model that implicates the permanent question of interconnectedness to present-day forced evictions. The determining of land, irrespective of the life on the land, as terra nullius, implies ideas of worthless human life that are not only generated by capital interest and neoliberal urban planning, but also by colonial understandings of the human. This chapter asks the question of how this inflicted worthlessness becomes normalised and integrated in a discourse with its complex of signs, statements and practices that justifies the forced eviction of people today.

9 Cf. Marx, Karl: *Das Kapital – Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*. Paderborn (no date): pp.529-532.

10 Cf. Luxemburg, Rosa: *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals. Ein Beitrag zur ökonomischen Erklärung des Imperialismus*. Berlin 1923: p335-338.

Despite its broad practice as an adapted, old politico-economic technology, to look at one specific area will help to understand the complexity of forced evictions. Capitalism and neoliberalism as systems of production and thought constitute a large share in the causes behind. But what combination makes forced evictions of the present so aggressive in the postcolony and in the case of this work, in Cape Town, South Africa? What does the condition of the postcolony implicate?

To particularise the theme and be able to unravel the concepts of thought and discourses behind forced evictions and the structures that function between government and business sector, this chapter aims to complete a very specific task. One part of it is to look at four present-day cases of forced eviction in the Western Cape, of which all were executed after 2009, 15 years after apartheid officially ended. I would like to know, what the arguments propagated by politicians and the business sector are that make evictions manifest as part of an everyday practice of what is called urban development. Source of analysis will also be the approaches, with which the takeovers of land through business companies and city/provincial governments are constructed, and their connections and co-operations with different levels of policy making. What are their constituent particularities and how do they relate to neoliberal urban planning? For this purpose, my approach here involved two types of conversations with the people affected. Informal conversations were part of many encounters on an everyday basis during the research period. They helped to understand the routines that evolved out of a life that had to endure eviction, relocation and criminalisation, how this experience destroyed the social networks that the residents had built over years, and how they now had to negotiate new concepts and sets of relation inside new and yet unknown structures. Recorded conversations evolved from the resident's desire to voice their story on the one hand, and on the other the need to travel through the details of what had happened, from the first eviction threat to the actual eviction, the demolition of the houses and the relocation. In all cases, residents would refer to a specific person pointed out as spokesperson or as the one who can present details of the eviction process more elaborately.

The journey of confronting present-day forced evictions starts in District Six – Cape Town's closer city centre. It continues in Symphony Way, Philippi, crosses over to Joe Slovo, Langa, and ends in Tafelsig, Mitchell's Plain.

The District Six evictions

In May 2013, Mrs. Magdalene George, Mrs. Victoria Bart, Mrs. Latiefa Edries and Mrs. Nadia Essop, were standing on the ruins of their former houses in Pontac, Nelson, and Aspelling Street, telling the story of their life as a community, the process of their eviction and the ways in which they tried to fight the eviction. Mrs. Bart's mother was seven years old when she and her family moved into one of the 17 rental houses, and one month short of a hundred years when she died. The tenants built a cohesive community, helping each other out, paying each other's bills if a family faced shortages, and taking part in each other's family celebrations. The houses were situated in District Six, ten minutes on foot to Cape Town's city centre. District Six is an acronym for the Sixth Municipal District of Cape Town. It was named as such in 1867, when the Cape Colony establishment was preparing the transition from a state of constant rotation between Dutch and English occupation and re-occupation, into a so-called self-governing state that at that point needed new administrative structures. 38 years after the different British and Dutch colonies united to the Union of South Africa in 1910, the National Party's takeover of power in 1948 also meant the beginning of official apartheid. In 1950, the apartheid government passed the first three laws that together formed the *Group Areas Act*. They included the segregation of municipal districts into *white*, *coloured*, *Native* and *Asian* areas.¹¹ It was the practical realisation of spatial segregation based on race concepts, which built the central column of the ideology of apartheid. People that were classified as *non-white* were now forcibly removed from the newly declared white areas. After District Six had been declared white area in 1966, the number of people removed amounts to over 60,000.¹² The small section of District Six in which Mrs. George, Mrs. Bart, Mrs. Edries and Mrs. Essop were living, was not declared a white area under apartheid. Mrs. George sarcastically speculated that "Maybe they forgot about us".¹³ None of them thought that they finally would be evicted 18 years after the end of

11 The Group Areas Act. No. 41. Cape Town 1950.

12 Rasool, Ciraj: *Memory and the Politics of History in the District Six Museum*. in: Shepherd, Nick; Murray, Noeleen and Hall, Martin (eds): *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-apartheid City*. New York 2007: p.119; Swanson, Felicity: *District Six Forced Removals*. in: Field, Sean (eds.): *Lost Communities, Living Memories – Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town*. Cape Town 2001: p.51.

13 Conversation with Mrs. Magdalene George. May 20, 2013.

apartheid. In 2004, the residents received the first letter from the *Essop Mohamed Omar Will Trust* that called upon them to leave the houses as soon as possible, as they were going to be sold in an auction by one of the eight brothers who own the trust – Omarjee Essop Mohamed Omar. For years the residents resisted moving out of the houses. They elected Mrs. George, who was 76 years old when I met her the first time in 2013, to their official spokesperson. Most of the people living in the houses were pensioners. “We fought with everything we had to stay in the houses”, Mrs. George, Mrs. Victoria Bart and Mrs. Edries explained. They organised roadblocks, marches, and celebrations to raise awareness about the imminent threat of eviction. They corresponded with the lawyers of the trust, with the City, and with provincial government, writing letters after letters to prevent the evictions. Their struggle would last eight years, from September 2004 until February 2012, when the last evictions were enforced. Mrs. George recalled how another pensioner, Mrs. Charlotte Petersen, locked herself in her house on the very day of eviction. When the police broke into her house after two days, they found her unconscious lying on the floor. They took her to a hospital and from there to an old age home, where she died. “She was scared! She was 88 and she was born in that house! Can you do something like that to old people?” Mrs. George asked.

As in all other cases, the evictions were justified on the base of the *Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act* that was passed by the national government in 1998. Since the tenants are not protected by law in the moment of the houses being sold, they become “unlawful occupants” before the law, if they refuse to leave. The act claims, “...no one may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances”. In the District Six case, the judge of the Western Cape High Court argued: “I am satisfied that the respondents have all been given sufficient and effective notice to vacate the properties and that in disregard of such notice they have remained there unlawfully”.¹⁴

But in order for the trust to sell the houses, they faced two main problems. First, the houses from which the residents were evicted were declared national heritage and lay under the custody of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). This meant that they normally could not be demolished by law. Second, the zone in which the houses were built was not

14 High Court judgment of May 11, 2010: *Essop Mohammad Omar Will Trust against Magdalene George, Latiefa Edries, Veronica Bart and others*.

specified as business or industrial zone, but as a general residential zone, according to the zoning by-law that was passed by the provincial government of the Western Cape in October 2004.¹⁵ So to be able to sell the land to a business company, the trust had to convince SAHRA to exclude the houses from heritage status, and to negotiate the re-zoning of the area with the development officials of the provincial government. In May 2013, the trust succeeded with both proposals. The re-zoning of the area from residential zone into business zone is in process and SAHRA granted the permit to demolish and to build. The former residents asked SAHRA repeatedly, to do not give permission to demolish and build on the site. What is striking is the mechanism that leads to SAHRA being able to give permission to demolish by law. The City, together with the business developers and the Heritage Council, wait for the houses to disappear. In fact, every little material that is valuable and was part of the construction of the houses provides a source of income to homeless people, even though it might bring little earnings. All kinds of metal, wood and ceramic have been removed from the houses, so that one by another, whole walls and roofs disappeared.¹⁶ In other words, demolition by attrition. This is also why one year before the permit was granted, ward councillor Brett Herron could summarise calmly that “In our view the application to have the buildings demolished will most probably be successful and, although they have some heritage significance, any future regeneration of the street block in this hostile context may not materialise”.¹⁷ Private security forces that are engaged by the district or the municipalities and the South African Police, visited and controlled the sites repeatedly. They were also aware of people living on the stoops and inside the semi-ruins. The picture was a paradox. The darkened glass of the almost affixed office park with the businesswomen and men behind, faced the remains of the houses that were inhabited by new people that were trying to survive. The same scenario happened in Coronation Road, one of the main streets in the area of Walmer Estate, neighbouring Woodstock and District Six. “These houses were heritage”, explained the outraged Patrick and Elaine O’Connell, both living in Walmer Estate for almost 40 years. “Because they are not allowed to demolish the houses, they let them be demolished by people. After that, they make the argument that the houses are useless and grant the

15 Cf. Provincial Zoning Scheme Model By-Law.

16 Cf. also: Cape Argus article: *District Six: Our Street in Ruins*. April 30, 2012.

17 People’s Post Woodstock/Maitland article: *Vacant houses now drug dens*. May 22, 2012.

permission to build.”¹⁸ A local newspaper reports, “A heritage building in the heart of Woodstock has been demolished after the majority of the landmark was trashed by vagrants and vandals”.¹⁹ Right after, the property was bought by Old Biscuit Mill and Woodstock Exchange owner, Indigo Properties. The applied strategy followed the above-specified pattern.

From the beginning of the eviction process, the presence of the huge office park, named The Boulevard, right next to the houses in Pontac, Nelson, and Asphelling Street, was striking. The residents had been almost sure that there was a connection between Faircape, the owning company of The Boulevard, and the decision of the trust to sell the houses. So it was not surprising when two years after the evictions, Faircape eventually bought the land. The Essop Trust had gained the re-zoning of the land as well as the permission to demolish and to build. There was no obstacle left for Faircape to acquire the land. Interesting was the way in which the official at the Built and Environment Unit of SAHRA in charge of the case of the District Six houses, responded to my questions during our conversation. The official did not mention that he/she would like to stay anonymous. Nevertheless, since his/her responses are crucial to the understanding of corruption within urban planning agencies, I prefer to not reveal his/her name. The person asked me three times to turn the recorder off, to then explain the relations between Heritage Western Cape that is accountable to the provincial government, and SAHRA, that is accountable to the national government. He/she illustrated how their unit at SAHRA had given the recommendation to keep the houses as a heritage site and do not give the permission to demolish, but that Heritage Western Cape had put them under pressure to withdraw their recommendation. He/she agreed with the residents that there must have been a connection between Faircape and the trust beforehand: “They most likely had an offer from the developer neighbouring the houses, because if you look at the form of the development, the land on which the houses were built are a nice missing link for this development to complete itself.”²⁰ This would confirm the residents’ assumption that when Faircape approached the community to compensate them for the damage that the construction of the office park caused on their houses and cars and agreed to paint the houses’ roofs and pave the courtyards,

18 Conversation with Patrick O’Connell. June 1, 2013.

19 People’s Post Woodstock/Maitland article: *Operation demolition*. December 19, 2013.

20 Conversation with a SAHRA official. April 17, 2014.

it was to cover their future plans and to secure an alibi in case of investigations. But what drove Heritage Western Cape to put SAHRA under pressure in an underhanded manner and demand the withdrawing of their negative recommendation? There are two possible answers. Either Faircape had a contact link inside provincial government structures, which was powerful enough to enforce a demolition permit. This would mean that there was clearly corruption involved. Or, provincial government had a clear policy of generally supporting business developers and paving the way if there were legal issues obstructing the developments. Both assumptions speak of a discourse that favours development over the needs and rights of residents, those members of society who have no say in the decision-making processes that take place between business sector and government.

The last time I met Mrs. George, she gave me the four pictures I referred to in the first chapter - each one a record of their struggle against the evictions. One picture remains most strikingly in my head: Mrs. George standing in front of her house, behind her a placard pinned on her front door, on it was handwritten this slogan: "Do not let history repeat itself."

The evictions of the Joe Slovo Residents

The Joe Slovo settlement defined the south-eastern section of the township Langa, with about 20,000 residents living on the site.²¹ The number of shacks amounted a minimum of 4,386²², of which the majority ranged in size between six and ten square meters.²³ When the National Department of Housing²⁴, the Western Cape Department of Housing and the City of Cape Town launched their N2 *Gateway* housing project in 2004, it was advertised with the aim of building homes for the residents of informal settlements, as those of Joe Slovo and of other parts of Langa. A large part of the completed constructions and of the constructions in progress is located along the ten-kilometre stretch on the N2 highway between Bhunga Avenue and Vanguard Drive. The

21 Constitutional Court of South Africa: Court Case CCT 22/08, [2011] ZACC 8. *In the matter between: Residents of Joe Slovo Community, Western Cape and Thubelisha Homes, Minister for Human Settlements, and MEC for Human Settlements*. Cape Town 2011: p2.

22 Ibid.

23 Community Organization Resource Centre (CORC) and Joe Slovo Community Task Team: *Joe Slovo Household Enumeration Report 2009*: p.22.

24 Renamed 'Department of Human Settlements' in 2009.

Joe Slovo settlement formed one part of the construction site and was also the first ground to start the development project on. The *N2 Gateway* project was composed of three phases. The first phase comprised the construction of 705 housing units in Joe Slovo.²⁵ The briefing of the project that was run by national, provincial and municipal governments, announced the project as a plan to “contribute to access for the poor through spatial restructuring, instead of contributing to their marginalisation through peripheral location”.²⁶ The Social Housing Regulatory Authority, created by the Ministry of Human Settlement as a unit that assists with the strategic planning and practical implementation of the housing projects, issued the vision of the project as “To fast-track the eradication of shacks in the N2 Gateway Corridor area and to improve the living conditions of the community”.²⁷ But the facts about the new living conditions of the appointed community prove the contrary. The residents had been forcibly removed without any economic perspective of moving into the flats built by the project. The removal resulted in most of the adults losing their jobs. The enumeration report of the Joe Slovo Task Team, which represents the community, and the Community Organization Resource Center that was finished in 2009, warned explicitly:

“Most of the employed household heads currently find their workplaces adjacent to their community. Thanks to the proximity to the train station, about 57% of the households can benefit from relatively cheap train services. If the Joe Slovo residents had to devote a bigger portion of their income to transport the poverty cycle would worsen. Only 10.7% is spending more than R200 on transport at the moment. This already equates to a staggering 20% of the average household income. This will dramatically increase if and when people are relocated 20kms away. It is likely that many of the people gainfully employed at present will not be able to carry such an additional burden and will lose or even forfeit their jobs.”²⁸

25 The Social Housing Regulatory Authority: *Project Review Series – N2 Gateway – Joe Slovo*. Issue 3. Houghton and Johannesburg 2006: p.8.

26 A Joint Initiative of the National Department of Housing, the Western Cape Department of Housing and the City of Cape Town: *Briefing Document for the N2 Gateway Project*. Cape Town 2004.

27 The Social Housing Regulatory Authority: *Project Review Series – N2 Gateway – Joe Slovo*. Issue 3. Houghton and Johannesburg 2006: p.8.

28 Community Organization Resource Centre (CORC) and Joe Slovo Community Task Team: *Joe Slovo Household Enumeration Report 2009*: p.11.

The prediction proved true. The reason why most of the evicted residents could not move back to Joe Slovo and rent one of the new units was that the rents were unaffordable for the people removed. They ranged between R750 and R1100, amounts that the community members could not accomplish. This means that the result of the project, even though it was proclaimed differently, was the further marginalisation of the residents through peripheral location. Originally, the project's plan was to deliver 22,000 rental and ownership units, whereas as announced, 70% of the beneficiaries of housing built at the Joe Slovo settlement itself were planned to be residents of the same settlement and 30% to be coming from other parts of Langa.²⁹ After the construction company *Thubelisha Homes* was engaged by the project's officials to build the different blocks, the company, accompanied by the Minister for Human Settlements, and MEC for Human Settlements, applied for the eviction of the Joe Slovo residents. In March 2008, the High Court of South Africa decided in favour of the applicants and gave the order to evict. The judgment to the case stated among other things: "It is just not possible to rehabilitate and develop the land without first strategically relocating the occupiers of the informal settlement".³⁰ In order to express their protest to what the residents saw coming months before the court's decision, they organised a blockade on the N2 Highway itself that was violently smashed down by police. Over 12 people were wounded by rubber bullets. The government's strategy included the criminalising of the protesters, using false media reports in order to strengthen this discourse.³¹ Sfiso Mapasa, then chairperson of the Joe Slovo Task Team, which was formed by the community, recalled a very detailed picture of police brutality in our conversation. "The polisi shot us like nobody's business. We hospitalised more than five people. Some of the leaders were arrested...During the whole struggle, they tried to criminalise us and make up cases. My brother was imprisoned, but he managed to get out. Many others were imprisoned as well."³²

After the lawyers of the Joe Slovo Task Team filed an appeal, in June 2009 the Constitutional Court found, as the High Court did before, that the residents were "unlawful occupiers" and that the government officials had acted

29 Center on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE): *N2 Gateway Project: Housing Rights Violations As Development in South Africa*. COHRE 2009: p.8.

30 High Court of South Africa – Cape of Good Hope Provincial Division: Court Case NO: 13189/07.

31 *ape Times* article. Legassick, Martin: *Meet residents, Sisulu*. September 12, 2007.

32 Conversation with Sfiso Mapasa. January 28, 2015.

appropriately in seeking the eviction of the residents, as the project's aim was to promote more adequate housing compared to the existing housing in Joe Slovo.³³ But different than the order of the High Court, the one granted by the Constitutional Court included specific preconditions. Among other things it required the temporary residential accommodation unit to be at least 24 square meter in extent; to be serviced with tarred roads; to be individually numbered for purposes of identification; to have walls constructed with a substance called Nutec; to have a galvanised iron roof; to be supplied with electricity through a pre-paid electricity meter; to be situated within reasonable proximity of a communal ablution facility; to make reasonable provision (which may be communal) for toilet facilities with water-borne sewerage; and to make reasonable provision (which may be communal) for fresh water.³⁴ These preconditions emerged as a serious obstacle for the government to practically evict all the residents, as the relocation camp Blikkiesdorp, to which the officials had planned to remove the residents, did not feature the quality characteristics noted in the order. Therefore, the construction company had to continue the development with the remaining residents living on the site. What is not mentioned in the order is that about half of the residents were already evicted and relocated in the time period between the High Court order and the Constitutional Court order. Even after the order for eviction was discharged in a second decision of the Constitutional Court, because of government's inability to fulfil the court's preconditions, those who were evicted before had no opportunity to return. The ground they had lived on before was now set up with 705 apartments to which none of the Joe Slovo residents were relocated because the rents were unaffordable for them. More precisely, only one resident was able to rent one of the new flats.³⁵ The report of the Auditor-General that was commissioned by the National Department of Housing attests:

"The households that were removed from the informal settlements adjacent to the N2GP and accommodated in temporary residential areas (TRAs) could not return to the rental units constructed in Joe Slovo phase 1 due to affordability problems. Although the average income of households in the region

33 Constitutional Court of South Africa: Court Case CCT 22/08, [2009] ZACC 16. *In the matter between: Residents of Joe Slovo Community, Western Cape and Thubelisha Homes, Minister for Human Settlements, and MEC for Human Settlements*. Cape Town 2011: p.3,4.

34 *Ibid.*: p.6.

35 Mail & Guardian article: *It's Our Duty Not To Be Silent*. August 24, 2008.

was approximately R1 200 per month according to the earlier versions of the business plan and communities had raised their concern regarding affordability, the actual tenant profile indicated that the income of 99,6% of the current tenants ranged from R1 500 to R7 500 per month. Consequently affordable housing was not provided for the target market identified.”³⁶

All these facts lead to the strong assumption that the government had planned to remove the Joe Slovo residents from the very beginning of the development project, and only let them return and move into the new flats, if they were able to pay the new rents, while officially claiming the opposite: “A better life beckons for the people of Joe Slovo informal settlement. The court has pronounced its judgment, and the biggest winners are the families who will soon put the misery of shack dwelling behind them.”³⁷ It seems as if the “good end” that was promised and never achieved, was used as a justification to push the project forward with the aim of physically removing the Joe Slovo residents from the area. The government’s purpose was an aesthetic upgrading of the space through the replacement of a poorer community by an economically better situated community, in order to render poverty invisible, respectively, and to relocate its visibility to a bigger distance from Cape Town. A 46-year old man who was evicted with his two children and three grandchildren (he does not want his name to be displayed), explained how the officials in charge of the project promised affordable rents in order for the residents of Joe Slovo to be able to live in the new buildings. During their first visits, residents would declare that they do not trust the government, neither the provincial nor the national one. He said, “Even at the time when they were saying, ‘hello people, we are coming to build better homes for you’, we knew that it was not us who were important to them, but the image tourists would have, when they would arrive at the airport for the soccer world cup, and would see our shacks on their right hand side, while driving towards the city.” Depelchin comes to the same conclusion when he writes that “FIFA may not have stipulated that all efforts must be exerted to keep all and any signs of extreme poverty out of sight but the message comes through and RSA is doing everything to hide the offending communities away. It is not difficult to understand the reasoning behind this: people who come to be entertained by the soccer extravagan-

36 Report of the Auditor-General on the special audit of the N2 Gateway project at the National Department of Housing. RP 177/2008: p.10.

37 Pambazuka News article: *Joe Slovo Residents Let Down By Court*. Issue 439. June 25, 2009.

ganza must not be disturbed by the sights of shacks".³⁸ Martin Legassick, the late writer, historian and old anti-apartheid activist who returned from exile in 1990, supported the Joe Slovo residents with reports and open letters. In his open letter about the politics of the Minister of Housing, Lindiwe Sisulu, he writes: "She (Lindiwe Sisulu) claimed she wanted to 'eradicate slums'. But what she is doing is merely moving the Joe Slovo 'slum' to Delft and installing better-off people in their place."³⁹ In a conversation we held, Legassick argued that "It is basically like apartheid. Capital wants workers, but it does not want to provide the cost to accommodate them. So you get evictions and violence."⁴⁰ The assumption of the man that was evicted together with his children and grandchildren, matches with a statement in the project's briefing, where it is emphasised that while the project has been initialised to address a zone suffering from poor living conditions including highly limited access to basic services and unemployment, it "has also been prioritised in light of its high visibility on the gateway corridor, linking the Cape Town International Airport to the main city."⁴¹ The N2 Gateway Project has been taken over by the governmental Housing Development Agency which has since claimed to be more inclusive.

The evictions in Symphony Way

Three hundred families did not hesitate to occupy houses that were built within the framework of the *N2 Gateway* housing project in Delft, after Frank Martin, a City of Cape Town Mayoral Committee member, had sent them letters in which he granted the permission for the occupation and promised to take full responsibility for this encouragement. The occupation demonstrates the high degree of desperate people in need of a dignified place to live in. Not only the 300 families addressed, but about five times more families occupied about 1,500 houses in December 2007. Most of the occupiers were backyard-dwellers, people who lived in poor living conditions in little shacks that were

38 Depelchin, Jacques: *Reclaiming African History*. Cape Town 2011: p.45.

39 Legassick, Martin: *Western Cape Housing Crisis: Writings on Joe Slovo and Delft*. Cape Town 2008.

40 Conversation with Martin Legassick. January 27, 2014.

41 A Joint Initiative of the National Department of Housing, the Western Cape Department of Housing and the City of Cape Town: *Briefing Document for the N2 Gateway Project*. Cape Town 2004: p.2.

placed in backyards of other people's properties. The life of backyard-dwellers is marked by the highest grade of insecurity, because it means that their immediate future is uncertain. The main tenant or owner of the house can ask the dwellers any time to leave or cut off their electricity or water as he or she pleases. Many backyard-dwellers find their belongings dumped on the street, without being given notice to vacate the place in advance. As many others in South Africa, most families who occupied the houses were standing on the waiting list to receive a house from the government between 10 and 20 years. Michelle de Jongh, a 40-year-old woman with two children, explained why the life in the backyards was unbearable: "In the movies, the shacks we were living in in backyards are inhabited by dogs. Nobody wants to make a dog life for his or her children. Where we were living, we had no electricity because the landowners decided that we don't need any. Many times we moved from one backyard to another because the landowners suddenly asked us to leave. If you are going to live in a shack, then you want to at least know that it is your shack and that nobody can kick you out."⁴² It turned out that the Mayoral Committee member Martin's encouragement had been an individual initiative that was not in agreement with the responsible units of the City and was therefore declared invalid. In February 2008, an Anti-Land Invasion Unit operation in which 20 people were injured and a three years-old child was shot three times with rubber bullets, ended the occupation of the houses and evicted all the people involved. On the same day they also loaded all the people's belongings, from pots and prams to bedding, furniture and electrical equipment, on their trucks and dumped them in places where the people could not find them again. About 500 residents, who did not have the opportunity to return to the backyard shacks they came from or move in with family members, decided to build little shacks on the pavement on a street called Symphony Way that is situated in front of some of the former occupied houses. The other residents either moved back to the backyard shacks, or moved in with family members, or accepted to live on a temporary site equipped with tents and daily hot food deliveries as well as outdoor water taps and portable toilets provided by the City. The camp in which they were placed was close to Symphony Way. The City only supported the camp with basic materials on condition that its residents would move to Blikkiesdorp as soon as the City would be ready for the relocation, whereas the allocation of responsibilities between provincial government and the City of Cape Town was

42 Conversation with Michelle de Jongh. May 2, 2013.

unclear. Those 500 residents who insisted to stay independent from provincial government and City officials did not trust the government and tried to resist their relocation to Blikkiesdorp.

Jerome Daniels, a community leader of the residents who remained on the pavement in Symphony Way, recalled in one of our conversations how Metro Police amongst others was deployed to threaten and frighten the community: “They came, they intimidated us with Law Enforcement, with Anti-Land Invasion, with whatever division they got, Metro Police, really they tried to intimidate us. To break our spirits.” Then he explained how the police made up a case to imprison him and another resident, who was also very much engaged in the community struggle. He remembered the judge saying openly in court while reading his judgment that he will find them guilty to set an example, because they would be troublemakers from the Anti-Eviction struggle. He sentenced them to one year of prison and five years in suspension, of which they spent a total of three months in Goodwood and Pollsmoore prisons. Jeremy Vearey, Major-General, Mitchell’s Plain cluster commander, and head of the anti-gang unit of the South African Police Service, agrees with Daniels that the City uses intimidation practices against people who face evictions and uncovers how Daniels’ case was not an exception. In our conversation he explained referring to a similar case of eviction, “The City’s Law Enforcement started harassing people and laid fake charges against people, resulting that I had to deploy members of the police to protect them from harassment by the City’s Law Enforcement and by Metro Police. We said you don’t touch people. If you touch any people here and we are not here, we will arrest you.”⁴³ Vearey was very clear about the City strategically criminalising the people that it wants to evict, in order for the courts to rule in their favour and to discourage people and push them to agree with their relocation. The ways in which Law Enforcement, Metro Police and Anti-Land Invasion Unit intimidated the Symphony Way pavement dwellers, both physically and psychologically, but also their struggle and their organising of themselves as a community, one can read in the book *No Land! No House! No Vote! – Voices from Symphony Way* that they have written and edited themselves.⁴⁴

Twenty-two months the community held out on the pavement in Symphony Way, before the Western Cape High Court granted the order for their

43 Conversation with Jeremy Vearey. April 29, 2014.

44 *Symphony Way Pavement Dwellers: No Land! No House! No Vote! – Voices from Symphony Way*. Cape Town 2011.

eviction in October 2009. The majority of families had no other chance but to accept their removal to Blikkiesdorp.⁴⁵ A 38-old man, who, as Daniels, is now obliged to live with his family in Blikkiesdorp, expressed his anger in a conversation:

“You will not believe when I say, that we preferred our shacks in Symphony Way, even though you would never know if its roof would resist the rain or if you would get wet at night, even though we had to learn how to deal with cooking on fire and collecting wood from the bush to make our own fire to cook, all these things. There, we had built our own support structures. We all learned how to share and take care of each other. We demanded our rights to housing, but they broke us and put us here, into these tin cans... They think we are stupid because we are poor. But we knew that this is not going to be a temporary camp. When we were living on the pavement in Symphony Way, they threatened us with this nightmare. We knew about people who were removed to Blikkiesdorp before, so we knew exactly what was awaiting us. I mean, look around, this place is scary... Apartheid, the same. They wanted to eliminate us and we thought we are resisting. And now, what is now? They still want to eliminate us.”⁴⁶

After ongoing struggles and negotiations with the City, Blikkiesdorp and other Temporary Relocation Area residents are now waiting to be moved into RDP houses of different housing projects in Delft, some after twelve years of living in a TRA. The delays in construction and allocation has left most residents frustrated and doubtful.⁴⁷

The Tafelsig evictions

In May 2011, about 5,000 people, the majority of which were backyard-dwellers, occupied the two open fields Swartklip and Kapteinsklip in Tafelsig/Mitchell's Plain, close to the Kapteinsklip train station. The fields were distinguished from each other so that 4,000 people came to live on the one

45 See also: Cape Times article: *Symphony Way families move to Blikkiesdorp*. November 3, 2009.

46 Conversation. May 2, 2013.

47 GroundUp article. Lali, Vincent: *Blikkiesdorp residents frustrated by housing delays*. June 29, 2018.

field that was Swartklip, and 1,000 people on the other field that was Kaptein-sklip. Before the occupation, they were living in shacks in Mitchell's Plain's backyards on other people's properties. Like the Symphony Way pavement dwellers, most of them were on the housing list for many years. The motivation and inducement to occupy the fields came from an organisation called the Backyard Dwellers Association. They took advantage of the desperation of people and even registered them for small plots of land against a registration fee of 10 Rand and handed out receipts and plate numbers. In the morning of the day after the occupation started, Anti-Land Invasion Unit and Law Enforcement entered the fields with trucks. They drove over the structures, then took the occupiers belongings and threw them on their trucks. This was an illegal vacation, as the City is only allowed to remove belongings of people during an actual eviction and according to the *Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act*, the eviction itself must be granted through a court order after all the circumstances of the residents were taken into consideration. After the City applied for their eviction, the first eviction order was granted on 1st of June 2011 by the Western Cape High Court. Many residents of the fields protested in front of the court against their eviction and their housing situation, accompanied by several hundred people from Joe Slovo, Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, Newfields Village and Blikkiesdorp, who came to support the occupants and show solidarity. Many supporters had experienced evictions themselves and demanded housing for the poor on placards. After the Anti-Land Invasion Unit and the Metro Police had realised the court's order and evicted the occupants from the fields, the evicted continued to return. They heavily refused to be relocated to Blikkiesdorp and referred to the relocation camp as a "death trap" or as a "hell hole". In stark contrast to the name of Blikkiesdorp that was given to it by its residents, the occupants of the Tafelsig fields renamed them New Horizon, a sign for people associating hope with a new life on the fields. "New Horizon" was standing versus "death trap" and "hell hole", such as independence and actively creating a new home versus the removal to a place where people would have no future prospects.

From the first eviction on, a seesaw began between occupants and City. People would return to the fields after being evicted again and again. They would build shacks and other structures to live in, being aware that the Anti-Land Invasion Unit or the police could remove them any time. As people would try to resist, both, the removal of the built structures and the eviction of people implied police violence and arrests. Verbal attacks were common practice dur-

ing the vacations. But once the police removed the structures, the occupants would rebuild new shacks overnight. Law Enforcement would come mostly in the morning and remove all the belongings people had. One of the occupants and later community leader, Faeza Meyer Fourie, explained in one of our conversations how they tried to circumvent Law Enforcement: “Law Enforcement would come every morning around 6 o’clock or 7 o’clock, and then they would break our stuff down and take our things. And then we looked at it and said, this is a pattern, why are we not defending ourselves. And then we started to bury our stuff. We would get up at five in the morning and we would make huge holes and bury all our materials and close it up. And so they would come and be very frustrated because they are not allowed to come on the field at night when it’s dark. So at night when they come there, they see all these shacks standing there and in the morning there is nothing.”⁴⁸ Fourie also emphasised the negative role of charity organisations. They would come in and declare the occupation as one of their new projects. They would bring blankets and clothes and bread and make people stand and pose with the bags of bread or with the donated clothes on and take pictures of them. Often the bread would be rotten, but the organisations would list it as project expenses. The pictures taken would be displayed on the organisations’ websites as tokens of their engagement. One example was an organisation called the Cape Charity Organization. Fourie was very determined about that if they had the knowledge of today, they would not have let these organisations abuse them and benefit from their struggle.⁴⁹

Until October 2012, the court decided four times in favour of the City. After every eviction, the occupant’s number on the fields dropped, so that at the end only about 150 people remained on the fields in resistance to the court’s decision. After having resisted over a period of 18 months, and only after being evicted over 15 times, the remaining occupants had no other choice but accept to be removed to Blikkiesdorp. A 40-year old man, who does not want his name to be displayed, explained in a conversation: “It was illegal to evict us. We were living on an open field where they even don’t want to build. We didn’t disturb anybody. The court decided that we are illegal occupiers, but we didn’t occupy anything but dry grass. The land belongs to the city, not to any private company or person. They could have let us live there.” When I asked him, why so many people, who were removed to Blikkiesdorp do not want

48 Conversation with Faeza Meyer Fourie. March 20, 2014.

49 Ibid.

their names to be displayed, he explained: “You know, every single person who lives here hopes to get out of here. All of us are on the housing list for so many years. We are afraid to speak openly against the government. You always think, if I do this, or say that, will they kick me out of the list? I don’t know. It’s better to be careful.”⁵⁰ It seems that before their removal to Blikkiesdorp, the residents of the fields had been highly aware of what would await them in the relocation camp. The same man explained about Blikkiesdorp: “When we were resisting the evictions in Tafelsig, we wrote a statement and declared that we see Blikkiesdorp as a concentration camp for the poor. We told them that we would rather continue living on an open field than come here. People die from hunger here or get murdered. They hanged a woman outside her house on the washing line. Another young girl was found stabbed lying on the ground. Look, here are no trees, no grass. Just iron and sand. In summer we boil inside these cans and in winter we freeze.” I asked his wife, what drives people to start battling with the City for living on a field, knowing that the City might have the power to remove them sooner or later? She explained how desperation forces people to occupation of land: “Before we moved to the field we were living in a little shack in the backyard of other people. They didn’t treat us equal and allowed themselves to talk to us in a very disrespectful way. We didn’t see that place we were living in as a home. Actually, we did hate going back there every evening after work. Then we heard that some people were planning to go and build new homes in Swartklip and Kapteinsklip. In the situation, where you are totally desperate, you hold on even a very little spark of hope. We thought, what if we succeed? What if they leave us live there? Other people on the fields thought the same. We all acted out of desperation, because we had no place to call home.” Her husband describing Blikkiesdorp as a “concentration camp for the poor” reminded me of a study I had read before about the criminalisation and marginalisation of homeless people in the city of Tempe/US. The “homeless campus” that the city created to relocate homeless people into a concentrated space was characterised by a homeless person affected as a concentration camp.⁵¹ To call Blikkiesdorp a “death trap” or “concentration camp” might be an attempt to demonstrate and make tangible the effects of the restrictions and containment imposed on people. A

50 Conversation. May 3, 2013.

51 Amster: Randall: *Street People and the Contested Realms of Public Space*. New York 2004: p.105.

cry-out to say, look how we are made to live. Recognise the atrocities we have to endure. See us.

Blikkiesdorp

Since all the eviction cases I looked at are somehow enmeshed in Blikkiesdorp, as the evicted people were either removed to Blikkiesdorp or were threatened to be removed to Blikkiesdorp, I would like to provide a deeper insight into the structures and circumstances residents of Blikkiesdorp are living under. Blikkiesdorp, Blackheath, Tsunami, and Wolwerivier are so-called temporary relocation areas (TRAs) peripheral to the City of Cape Town (Wolwerivier's official status is that of a so-called Incremental Development Area). Of the four, Blikkiesdorp is the one to which many evicted people were removed. It was built by the City in 2007. Forcibly evicted people from Joe Slovo, Symphony Way, Tafelsig, from Spes Bona in Athlone, from Gympie and Cornwall Street in Woodstock, from Ruyterswacht, amongst others, were relocated to Blikkiesdorp, despite the fact that none of the evicted agreed to move there. Mrs. George, who was evicted from the District Six houses, remembered the day when their ward councillor came to make her that offer: "He said the council hasn't got property and the only property available to put us in is Blikkiesdorp. I said put your mother into Blikkiesdorp. I was so upset. I said just get out here. Don't tell me I must go and live in Blikkiesdorp. Go put your mother in Blikkiesdorp."⁵² One of the main reasons why affected people would fight tooth and nail against their relocation to Blikkiesdorp was that they knew it would not be temporary. Most residents I talked to emphasised them knowing that the City did not plan their relocation as a temporary solution. This suspicion proved true as the relocated Symphony Pavement Dwellers alone just completed their twelfth year on the site. Others have been living there for fifteen years.⁵³ The relocation camp lies 30 kilometres outside of Cape Town and belongs to the municipality of Delft. Blikkiesdorp was named as such by residents who identified the place as "Tin Can Town" – that is its English translation. The City invested about 32 million Rand to build the about 1,600 one-room structures. The iron shacks are evocative of prison single cells, tide

52 Conversation with Mrs. Magdalene George. February 20, 2013.

53 Cape Argus article: *A place to call home*. April 30, 2014.

and dark. Each structure is inhabited by families between two and eight people.⁵⁴ To get to Cape Town city centre and back, residents have to pay a total of 30 Rand for minibus taxis. Daniels, who was removed to Blikkiesdorp from Symphony Way, emphasised in this regard that “For a person who is unemployed, who is struggling, I can tell you, to get hold of a ten Rand even, to get hold of five Rand, is difficult”.⁵⁵ In and around Blikkiesdorp, no social activity is possible, as there is no park nearby, no opportunities to buy affordable food, no public space to gather. Most people who were forced to live there lost their jobs, as they were not able to pay the high taxi prices that they have to pay due to the lack of a train and bus network that applies generally to the city of Delft. The weak infrastructure implies that almost no opportunities remain to find informal work. The high amount of unemployment means that most families are already under a higher social and psychological pressure, which forces them to be much more concerned with securing food for their families than trying to build a bottom-up community structure that would create at least more social life. But despite the social and economic pressures of everyday life, residents have founded the Blikkiesdorp Informal Committee. Being offered emergency health care by the government, Eddie Swartz from the committee commented in 2009: “Things are very critical. Patients get anti-retroviral drugs from the Delft clinic but they don’t have food. We have some help from NGOs but we need a container with 24-hour healthcare. Patients will die if there’s no ambulance to fetch them.”⁵⁶ The committee advocates not only the improvement of living conditions in terms of health care, unemployment, infrastructure and living facilities, but it also stands up for the purpose of public attention and awareness about the government’s policy of removing evicted people to Temporary Relocation Camps that they see as a process of systematic exclusion. A former staff member of the Alternative Information Development Center, André Marais, emphasised that Blikkiesdorp does not constitute a dignified space to live in and that families should try and resist as much as they can being removed to the site. At the end of our conversation, Marais added: “Have you been there? It is a big graveyard. You cannot do anything else in Blikkiesdorp but die.”⁵⁷ I assume that Marais’ symbolic comparison to a graveyard derives from the reality of life in Blikkiesdorp

54 Cf. The Guardian article: *Life in ‘Tin Can Town’ for the South Africans evicted ahead of World Cup*. April 1, 2010.

55 Conversation with Jerome Daniels. March 27, 2014.

56 Mail & Guardian article: *‘Dumping ground’ for unwanted people*. October 9, 2009.

57 Conversation with André Marais. April 28, 2013.

that is living in isolation. Daniels used a similar rhetoric when he said that “it’s not a dignified place to live and the reason is that people are dying”. He was also very clear about the issue of isolation: “Spaces like Blikkiesdorp are making criminal. If you stay in Blikkiesdorp, you will see it in front of your eyes, because people got nothing to do. There is no jobs, there is nothing. So it makes criminal.”⁵⁸ One will notice the factor of isolation at first sight, as the site is located in the middle of nowhere, in the sense that it is sandwiched in between sand dunes and roads with no facilities, not even a single shop or school. The fact that the shacks were built on demolition rubble and not on normal sand or gravel is quite symbolic, bearing in mind that many residents refer to Blikkiesdorp as a “dumping ground”. In view of the high number of residents suffering from asthma only after they have moved to Blikkiesdorp, and of the fact that I started coughing every time I entered the space and the taste of dust that remained in my mouth between one and two hours after my visits, together with the community we decided to try to get the rubble examined by a laboratory that would have the respectability needed for the examination to be taken seriously by City officials. Together with Shaheed Mahomed, a Cape Peninsula University of Technology lecturer who engaged with the Blikkiesdorp community before, we approached the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Stellenbosch. Mahomed was able to activate some of his connections and so we got invited by the Council to present our case in Stellenbosch. The Council agreed to inspect the site of Blikkiesdorp and to meet with the community. After our first meeting at the site, they agreed to conduct the examination of the rubble, which filled the members of the community that were present with a lot of hope. But after this first inspection and a long conversation with residents, they never answered again any of our emails, letters or phone calls.

Fouri wrote in her diary that she kept during their struggle on the Tafelsig fields, entry of 25th of January 2012:

“I spoke to William yesterday and said, it doesn’t really matter how the City offers us temporary relocation, we have refused. We have decided to rather sleep on the sidewalk. What kind of mother in her right mind would sleep on the sidewalk with her children rather than a house with light with a door that locks, unless she is on drugs? That is how serious we are that going to Blikkiesdorp is worse than where we are now. I showed him a photo of

58 Conversation with Jerome Daniels. March 27, 2014.

my daughter, and said, there is nothing I can contribute to her future. Staying here is at least an opportunity to make her future better. Taking her to Blikkiesdorp would not be right, it would be putting my child in a hell hole! They said to us, if you guys come live here, I hope you don't have daughters because the gangsters come and take your daughters and you cannot go and fetch them! I am so scared for her. She doesn't hang out, she does her homework. I am so proud of her. Girls in this society and day are not interested in school. And she is – she wants to do something with her life. For me to take her to Blikkiesdorp would be robbing her of that.⁵⁹

Conclusion

To conclude, forced evictions are an ongoing practice in the Western Cape. The low-income families who have been living for decades in the De Waal flats that belong to provincial government and are situated very close to Cape Town's central city, back dropped by Table Mountain with a fascinating view over the city and the harbour, have been threatened to be evicted and relocated to Pelican Park since the beginning of 2014. In 2015, 250 families were evicted from Skandaallcamp close to Tableview and relocated to Wolwerivier. The land from which the families of Woodstock's Gympie and Cornwall Street were removed from in 2012, was sold to *Swish Properties* whose plans to build a high-class luxury complex including 363 apartment units, a shopping mall beneath and a parking lot of 496 parking pays, were approved by the City's Mayoral Committee seven months after the evictions.⁶⁰ The families were relocated to Blikkiesdorp. The residents of Pine Road informal settlement in Woodstock face a similar future, as the City's plans to build social housing on the site will result in the removal of residents, none of whom qualify for social housing in the first place. The eviction order of 28 tenants in Bromwell Street, Lower Woodstock, to make space for a development project of the company Woodstock Hub, has been granted by the High Court in August 2016. The City now plans to remove the tenants to Wolwerivier, against which the affected

59 Conversation with Faeza Meyer Fourie. April 18, 2014.

60 <https://www.capetown.gov.za/en/MediaReleases/Pages/CitysMayoralCommitteeprovesexcitingdevelopmentprojectforWoodstock.aspx> (seen on July 6, 2013). The City has removed the link from their website, but Property Wheel website has kept the City's statement on their website. Property Wheel article: *Exciting Development Project for Woodstock Approved*. March 9, 2013.

families appealed in court. The list of past and forthcoming forced evictions is long. Relocation camps like Blikkiesdorp and Wolwerivier imply that the people affected by forced evictions must not only endure the loss of home, of their social networks that they created through life, and in many cases of their jobs that mostly represent whole economic bases of families that were built through long years of personal effort and thus of their livelihoods, but also their removal to undignified sites of social displacement and erasure. With the displaced communities, their informal infrastructures and support networks get destroyed, leaving no prospects of being able to recover them. If Blikkiesdorp was situated next to a highway, it would obtain one of those huge signs installed by the municipality marking it as a “high crime area”, asking drivers not to stop their cars at its edges. Exclusion and marginalisation are not only stable part of urban development, after the margins are created, they are also marked as danger zones inhabited by social rejects that the orderly city should circumnavigate. The warnings on those signs are more than any other political speech on the matter of discursive statements that intensify exclusion and compartmentalisation. As Daniels explained, places like Blikkiesdorp make not only criminal, but they make residents die a social death. The politics of off-city relocation is a practice that not only refuses to deal with questions of poverty and housing but obliterates these questions by placing low-income residents out of sight. Poverty becomes invisibilised so that orderly city life can produce itself as a patchwork of urban enclaves that do not have to deal with the disorders and dead ends of this system. They simply factor them out. Government officials are eliding the fact that the conceptualisation of forced evictions and relocation today borrows its technologies from the colonial and apartheid project. The postapartheid eviction of tenants from a part of District Six that was not declared *white* area under apartheid has a deep political meaning. The interconnectedness of this practice with the past gets silenced through referring to market forces over which the political sector would have no power. This rationalisation masks the fact that national laws and municipal by-laws are manufactured in favour of the market and its pushing for profit over people, not to mention that municipal authorities often grant eviction orders without the legally required court order, as was the case with the first evictions from the Tafelsig fields. This shows how the political sector has adopted the discourse of market-led urban development, without any frictions or contradictions between its own interests and the private sector. Especially the Joe Slovo evictions exemplify how the yearning for a world-class city status that is rooted in the capitalist imag-

ination, determines the removal of thousands of people, while hiding behind false promises of upgrading for the residents' benefit. Jared Sacks, a journalist who continuously chases eviction cases in the Western Cape, describes it to the point: "After having seen many similar evictions for years and speaking to a range of legal minds on the subject, it has become clear that municipal governments all over the country take advantage of the inability of poor communities to represent themselves effectively in the media and access legal representation. They use this vulnerability to flout various constitutional safeguards when evicting shack dwellers and homeless South Africans. Municipalities then frequently go on to publicly assert the legality of their eviction by misrepresenting laws and lying about the facts on the ground."⁶¹ Referring to a forced eviction case that took place in the beginning of May 2013 in the Philippi Township in the Western Cape, a government official stated that the eviction would have been conducted "in accordance with the *Protection of the Possession of Property Act*, which does not necessitate a court order". This was a surprise, as no one who has dealt with the subject of evictions before had ever heard of the mentioned act. Sacks investigated and found out that such an act does not exist. Experts at the Cape Town office of *Legal Resources Centre* assured him that "There is no such law called the Protection of the Possession of Property Act".⁶² This means that on the one hand, the government tried to circumvent a court trial, and on the other hand criminalised the residents who resisted their eviction. The corrupt calling back of the Heritage Agency's report on the District Six houses further demonstrates how far the involvement of the political sector in this regard goes. It also shows that the open announcement of the judge in the Symphony Way case about him setting an example through the prison sentences against the two residents is not a coincidence but derives from a narrative of rightfulness as part of a discursive practice.

61 Daily Maverick article: *City of Cape Town makes up law to justify eviction of the poor*. May 6, 2013.

62 Ibid.