

UBUMELWANE, 12 March 2014.

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Third Floor, Bloemhof Building, 112 Edward Street,
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Preference will be given to letters of fewer than 350
words. The deadline is Thursday at 13:00. Please give your
full name, address and phone number (for our records, not
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6.3.2014

People's Post

People's Post is published by WP Newspapers,
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FALSE BAY
30 972 copies distributed Thursday to the following
areas: Marina da Gama, Lakeside, Miltzberg, St
James, Kalk Bay, Welcome Glen, Da Gama Park, Ocean
View, Masiphumelele, Glencairn, Glencairn Heights, Glen
Marine, Glen Ridge, Fish Hoek, Clovelly, Sun Valley,
Sunnyside, Faerie Knowe, Imhoff's Gift, Capri Village,
Kommetjie, Simon's Town and Noordhoek.

'Nearly all' the toilets were open

The excellent report by Monique Duval on the removals in Masiphumelele ("Dwelling in a cloud of doubt", *People's Post*, 20 February) refers.

The Mayoral Committee member for Human Settlements, Tandeka Gqada, has to be taken to task for her blatant lie that the toilet doors at the new and terrible location – the Temporary Relocation Area people were sent to – "were unlocked as soon as relocation took place".

I am witness to the fact that the toilets remained locked.

I walked the alleys where people were moved to four days into the move and again six days after the move. On both occasions the doors were locked. Shame on Gqada for her careless attitude to poor people.

HORST KLEINSCHMIDT,
St James

Tandeka Gqada responds: Toilets were opened the same day the relocation took place.

Silulami Mtirara and Vuyo Tshongweni, both community leaders, were handed toilet keys and can confirm when the toilets were opened. The project manager has spoken to Tshongweni and he confirmed nearly all toilets were opened the same day.

Only one row was not, because the pipeline needed to be jet cleaned to remove sand. CA Holdings cleaned it the following week.

While I appreciate the concern of the resident, I take offence to this reckless public defamation.

Both myself and the officials in the Human Settlements Directorate take the plight of informal settlers very seriously and work tirelessly to improve the conditions in which they live.

The roll-out of services in informal settlements is an incredibly politicised and complex endeavour, and we would like to encourage meaningful debate rather than unnecessary mud flinging (sic).

Dear Ubumelwaners,

Where the toilets locked or were they unlocked, that is the question? The Mayoral Committee representative is offended at my comment in the letter to the People's Post. She says she did not lie and that the 'toilets were unlocked' on the day the removal took place. Well almost all toilets, she says. She argues that a 'project manager' handed the keys to two community leaders. But she was not there. I was there. The toilets were locked! Also on the 6th day after the removal, they were still locked! Why would I want to invent this story?

There is a new complaint: The toilets at the new site are not working and get blocked.

I am not pursuing a slanging match via the media, but I have checked with people again and they insist that they themselves cut the locks in order to gain access to the toilets, not just 'in one row'.

The Mayoral Committee member should accept that removals are politicised and highly contentious and will remain so. This is because it remains an outrage that 20 years after 'freedom' we continue to tell people: move your home and go with your belongings somewhere else. Yes, apartheid is the source of the problem, but we all remain indicted for as

long as some people have the status of being classified as that of being 'illegal'. Our house-help and her husband and children have been 'illegal' in Masi since 1999. There are plenty of reasons for this, and yes they may be partly to blame themselves for not having conformed to the bureaucratic imperatives.

But that is the whole point about us behaving like worthy neighbours to each other. Unless and until the ANC and DA make bigger strides to solve the gross inequality in our society, citizens with a conscience should stand up and say: YOU are not doing enough! Together WE are not doing enough!

If my spouse and I were told: You are an 'illegal'; don't look for work where there are no houses; leave your shack home, break it down, and go somewhere else; we will tell you to move again, not sure when; you had electricity? Sorry this time round there is none, (as yet); we might send a truck to move your walls, your roof and your possessions, but don't rely on it; you say your toilets were locked? Well we believe they were not locked. And they might add: it's not our fault that you earn too little to rent or buy a house; but you earn too much to qualify for an RDP house. - If I were told this in the country of my birth I would be on the barricades and shout revolution.

We read that it will take seventy years before the housing backlog in Cape Town is solved, given current budgets, etc. If I was in that queue I would not fold my hands and wait - possibly for the rest of my life.

As decent citizens we should make clear to the ANC and the DA that our current formula of running the country will lead to violence. The clouds are gathering. The formula of the DA: we extract maximum rates and taxes from the rich and then apply 64% of that to poor areas is patently not leading to a solution. We need an honest debate about what is sustainable and what leads to chaotic upheaval.

The way the police and law enforcement try to quell anger and 'service delivery protest' will lead to disaster. Police infringements are on the increase. Brutality takes place, not just at Marikana, Rustenburg but at Marikana in Phillipi.

This is a discussion we desperately need to have. I would like to have your response. None of us has the answers, but I know that the current formula by which we are dealing with the growing social divide, cannot hold.

Yours sincerely,

Horst Kleinschmidt.

PS: I have just heard that the authorities have agreed to fast track a second access road into Masiphumelele and that the drainage channels that cause parts of Masi to flood in winter, will be cleaned and upgraded. The City has also agreed to look for additional land because Masi is hopelessly over-crowded.