

Louis Changuion and Bertus Steenkamp, *Disputed land: The historical development of the South African land issue, 1652-2011*. Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-86919-774-2, 469 pages.

The year 2013 marks the centenary of the proclamation of the important 1913 Land Act in South Africa. The present inequitable distribution of land as faced by the African National Congress (ANC) government in the post-apartheid South Africa can be traced back to the Natives Land Act of 1913, the Urban Areas Act of 1923, and the Group Areas Act of 1950. In the 1990s, after the unbanning of the ANC, there were high expectations among both the rural and urban people (especially those who were victims of land disposessions) that land would be speedily returned to them and that the advent of democracy would mean that opportunities to own and use land would be opened up across the country. After 1998, the ANC came with rather an unsuccessful ambitious plan of at least returning 30 percent of land to the original inhabitants by 2014. The ANC's government has since acknowledged that the above will be unrealizable.

To coincide with the centenary of the 1913 Land Act, Louis Changuion and Bertus Steenkamp published a book, *Disputed land: The historical development of the South African land issue, 165 –2011*. The book provides a thorough overview of the origin and course of the problem with land tenure in Southern Africa from 1652 to 2011. It shows that the debate over tenure reform in South Africa is not a new one. Indeed, it has long been a central feature of the wider debates over access to land by African people under colonialism, segregation, apartheid, and lately, democracy. This debate has pitted social and economic reformers of various hues against successive governments, with political expediency generally gaining the upper hand.

The twenty chapters of the book interrogate the historical development and impact of the land question in South Africa since the arrival of the white people, until the recent debates pertaining to return the land to the original people. The book starts by defining the concept of "land tenure". The first six chapters discuss the origin of the problem of land tenure in South Africa; the period of white settlement in the interior; legislation on land tenure in the two British territories in South Africa and in the Boer Republics; the expansion of British territory during the last quarter of the nineteenth century; and the land tenure in the ZAR. These chapters describe how it came about that the white minority population owned approximately 85% of the country's surface area, compared to the 15% of the black nations.

Chapters 7 and 8 describe the impact of the different wars, also on the question of land in South Africa. The following wars are highlighted: the Malabog War (1894); the Magoeba War (1894-1895); the Mpefoe War (1898); and the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). By the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, land utilization changed drastically. The book highlights contributing

factors as the impacts of the rinderpest (1896-1897) and the Anglo-Boer War. The Anglo-Boer War put the black land question on the back-burner for a while. For the white population of the two Boer republics, the war was a struggle for survival, and all other issues were of minor importance. From the black population there were certain expectations after the Boer governments were replaced by a new regime.

Chapters 9 to 12 discuss the introduction of the 1913 Land Act and the new challenges it posed. With the South African Party (SAP) in power from 1910 to 1924, the policy of segregation in politics, labour affairs, urbanisation and in terms of land tenure was applied. In March 1913, the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), the forerunner of the African National Congress (ANC), decided to send a delegation to Cape Town to object to the Minister of Native Affairs about the Land Act. In July 1913 another delegation was sent to the British King. With this information, the authors of the book attempt to show the resentment that such legislations received from those affected. Reaction to the Natives Acts of 1936 is also highlighted.

It is interesting to note that the book captures the role of the National Party's rule from 1948 to 1994 in chapters 13 to 18. These chapters indicate the successes and gains by the NP in entrenching the land question legislations. Chapters 19 to 20 discuss the new land policy under the ANC's government from 1994 to 2010. In trying to redress the land imbalances in South Africa, the ANC introduced several legislations. For example, the Restitution of Land Rights Act (Act 22 of 1994) was introduced. The aim was to achieve the land redistribution in South Africa within a reasonable period. This Act was amended several times after promulgation, the first time in 1995 with the Restitution of Land Rights (Act 84 of 1995); then the Land Restitution and Reform Laws Amendment Act (Act 78 of 1996); the Land Restitution and Reform Laws Amendment Act (Act 78 of 1996); the Land Restitution and Reform Laws Amendment Act (Act 63 of 1997); the Land Affairs General Amendment Act (Act 61 of 1998); the Land Restitution and Reform Laws Amendment Act (Act 18 of 1999); the Land Affairs General Amendment Act (Act 11 of 2000); and the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act (Act 48 of 2003). Furthermore, the book also tackles the land claims issue in South Africa and the challenges thereof.

Without doubt, the book shows that the problem of fair land distribution has actually become more complex than it ever was, because the population has increased drastically and the land has not. Just as the land policy of the successive white governments was race-driven, so is the current policy on land reform. The principle motive in the policies of the white governments of the past was to secure the white man's position. The principle objective of the current government is to benefit black people. The book dedicates more than 132 pages to Annexures. This helps in elucidating some of the information in the 20 chapters of the book.

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