

Black Sash Wins Support for **Protests against Group Areas Proposals**

THE GROUP AREAS ACT hit our town for the second time* when yet another area was advertised as a proposed area for the white group. The Group Areas Liaison Committee, of which the chairman and secretary are Sash members, again went into action and organised individual objections. Three more bodies joined the Committee, adding strength to the opposition. This time, the Town Council also opposed the advertised proposals. "D" Day for objections was the 3rd October — only 21 days are given to lodge representations — and it was not easy to complete the campaign in time. We often had to work late into the night.

Further Blow

During this very busy period, a further blow was struck. It seems that the Government is determined to upset the racial harmony and peace that have existed in this multi-racial town for over a hundred years, and create friction where none has existed before. The Town Council had applied for permission to re-site the African location, Luyolo, a much needed and long overdue project. They intended to build a new township with housing for all, recreational facilities, all amenities and plenty of room for expansion without encroaching on the "buffer strips" required by law. The Africans are fully in favour of this scheme according to a referendum taken by the Advisory Board, but the Government has refused permission on the grounds that Government policy must be carried out, and all African housing in the Peninsula must be centralised at Langa or Nyanga. It appears that there is a determined effort to create urban Bantustans. The African population is about 1,600, the majority

*In February, 1959, the Group Areas Board advertised drastic proposals for zoning the town which, if implemented, would uproot the Indians and most of the Coloured people from the town and set them down miles away on top of the mountain at Dido Valley.

A Group Areas Liaison Committee was formed and there were vigorous objections to the advertised proposals. Thereafter the Simonstown Sashers took over and two petitions — one signed by over 1,000 residents and another signed by almost every shopkeeper in the town — were sent to the Group Areas Board. A very large sum of money was then collected from citizens of all races to brief eminent Counsel to put the case at a public enquiry held in August, 1959, for all who had sent in objections. A report of this appeared in the September, 1959, issue of "The Black Sash Magazine". At the enquiry no one came forward in favour of zoning Simonstown. The Town Council proposed alternative plans believing that they were forced to do so, but admitted under cross-examination that they were unwilling to do this.

of whom have known no other home since the turn of the century, and yet these contented people must be uprooted from their familiar surroundings and dispersed among strangers, which does not seem a very wise way to foster better relations. Living 27 miles or more away from their work will entail being absent from their homes for about 15 hours a day and, with their wages already below the bread-line, they will have to pay the added cost of rail fares, which can only mean less food for their families, with all the attendant evils of exhaustion added.

Their health here is relatively good; one reason may be that fish, the protein lacking in most African diets, is often available at cheap prices. But we believe that a greater contributory factor is that the people live here happily, with their families, most of them in houses which *they own and have built themselves* on sites leased from the Municipality, surrounded by friends and relations, so that it is more of a village than a location. It is significant that during the "emergency" no cordon was placed round Luyolo.

Economic Impact

Apart from the great hardship this removal would cause the Africans, the economic impact on the town would be disastrous; ten shops would probably have to close down as it is reckoned that about £100,000 to £200,000 is spent here annually by Africans. Added to this, the cost to the town of the first threatened Group Areas proposals — before this latest advertisement — was assessed by the Town Clerk at the public enquiry to be about a quarter of a million pounds. This money would have to be found by the town, that is, the ratepayers. The final result of all this compulsory uprooting of law-abiding citizens would be a deathblow to commerce, and a ghost town would result.

The Branch sent a strong letter of protest to *The Argus*, and then found itself in the pleasant though unusual position of being commended in open meeting of the Council! The Chamber of Commerce has since called a public meeting of protest and a deputation will be sent to the Minister by the Town Council, headed by our M.P., and, we hope, supported by a petition of responsible citizens and neighbouring municipalities.

The Branch hoped for a quiet time after all this, but it was not to be. Beach Apartheid has reared its ugly head here, and the Administrator says that



A keenly interested audience saw "Notice to Quit", a documentary film on the effects of the Group Areas Act in the Cape Peninsula, at Claremont last month. Helping the organizer, Mrs. E. Stott (right) were (from left) Mrs. C. E. W. Henderson, Mrs. F. Robb and Mrs. J. Sinclair.

—Photo Hausmann.

non-Whites, who have customarily used four beaches—a natural segregation having grown up over the years—are to be allowed only one beach in the whole area. This beach is virtually unusable for various reasons. The swimming-pool that was built in the sea in 1937 by the Municipality exclusively for non-Whites from the town and up the line, must also be given up to Whites, and the Council's proposed alternative site for a new and larger pool to replace the old one must now become a "buffer strip". The Council is, however, negotiating with the Administrator for the buffer strip to be narrowed to enable the new pool to be built.

This Branch is still involved in the heartbreaking aftermath of the Emergency by being "Red Cross Field Workers" and paying out the weekly packets to ex-detainees and their families in Luyolo. All those working in the Dockyard were discharged on the date of arrest, although no charges were brought against them, and some had worked there for 25 to 30 years. Our local M.P. approached the Minister at our request to ask for their re-instatement. The Minister's reply was that they could not be re-instated in their previous jobs, nor given others in the Dockyard, because it was Government policy to replace all African labour with Coloured labour. The Minister further stated that the Africans had forfeited their right to the gratuities owing to them because they had absented themselves from work without leave. A few wise men had taken the gratuities owing to them at the time of the take-over from Britain, but others

had carried theirs forward. We are not letting the matter rest here.

It becomes increasingly difficult to face all these sorely tried citizens of ours and hold our heads up—the shame of white legislation is a burden indeed—and yet the work we try to do to help them, while achieving so little practically, does much to create better understanding and friendship between all races in our small town. We realise more than ever how necessary it is to continue to protest at every attempted removal of basic rights from any of our people—each time we lose a little of our own freedom and much of our self-respect—and one of the most obvious lessons learnt by our members is that freedom is indivisible.

What we try to build up, the Government tries to pull down. Enforced apartheid is a tragic thing for so many people of South Africa, and an evil which can bring nothing but bitterness, misery and frustration in its wake. It is, perhaps, only when one meets it daily at very close quarters that the full implications of all its horrors become evident. The glaring need for all who have the vote and therefore the means to effect changes in legislation, is to understand just one simple fact—that, whatever the colour of one's skin, a happy, contented family life, with an assured future, a home of one's own and a job of one's own choosing in a place of one's own choice, are still the fundamentally vital and driving interests of every man and woman.

B. D. W.



"This is not a house, this is bush!" Aged William Rens (above) derisively indicates his new "home" at Bontrug. Like hundreds of other Africans he was moved from one of the established locations by the Municipality. At the old location, Malmation, he had "a large house of wood and mud". But this house of wood and sacking—given him by a friend—lets in the wind and rain.

—Evening Post.

Primitive Conditions at Bontrug

LAST year (1959) the Addo Branch of the Black Sash fought against the removal of Africans from settled locations in Kirkwood to Bontrug, a bare hillside far from the town.

No housing had been provided for them, and they had to exist in primitive and insanitary conditions. A site rent of 10/- per month made life virtually impossible for many of the pensioners, who receive £1 per month. At Kirkwood location they had paid a rent of only 2/6d. per month. The Sash was successful in halting the removals, and a report of their efforts appeared in the August 1959 issue of *THE BLACK SASH*.

Later the Municipality again dumped Africans on the bare hillside. Farmers, Kirkwood residents and the Press joined the Sash in a pitched battle with the local Native Affairs Department, a report of which appeared in the February 1960 issue of *THE BLACK SASH*.

As a result of photographs and articles in *The*

Evening Post exposing the dire poverty of the people. The Ford Motor Company generously offered a load of car packing cases per day for as long as the Municipality cared to collect it. Only two loads were taken by the Municipality. The wood was unloaded at Bontrug but not distributed, and there the matter ended.

An unofficial committee was then formed to put the facts before the public. Appeals were made to the Minister concerned, the Member of Parliament for Kirkwood, the Leader of the Opposition, and Mrs. Margaret Ballinger. Letters were sent to the Department of Bantu Affairs in King William's Town informing them of the lack of educational facilities, and to the Department of Health in Uitenhage pointing out that the time, money and energy spent in fighting tuberculosis was wasted because of the appalling conditions in which T.B. patients were forced to live. It was also suggested that a sample of the water from the reservoir should be tested, since it was known to be brack, and it was reported that many of the inhabitants were suffering from diarrhoea