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# "GET OUT" ORDER STUNS TENANTS IN "GREY" FLATLAND

By Rafiq Rohan

THE anguish of residents who have been told to get out of their "Whites only" apartments in Durban's Albert Park come through strongly at a get-together held in one of the affected buildings on Saturday night.

The occasion was a dinner to which I had been invited. But the main item on the menu was the threats of eviction.

Those who received eviction orders for living in contravention of the hated Group Areas Act expressed feelings ranging from fear to anger, from despondency to hope.

"We are not politicians. In fact I have never really been interested in politics till now" said Dion, who along with his wife and child have been occupying a modest flat for the past year.

The family is Coloured but one would



Flats fronting Albert Park — Durban's "Grey" residential area.

hardly believe it as the couple could quite easily pass for a White.

### SHORTAGE

Most of the people who took up accommodation in the White flats did so because of the chronic shortage of suitable accommodation in the Black areas.

"I have never felt so uncertain about anything in my entire life" said Vinodh, a sales assistant in central town. "I really don't know what to do. I have not troubled anyone by my presence here because I have kept very much to myself."

During the conversation that always came back to the topic of evictions it became quite clear that these were people who were not concerned about the politics of this country.

They simply wanted to get on with the business of living their lives privately and independantly without interfering with anyone.

A number of the comments indicated an almost total lack of understanding of the situation in this country.

Comments like, "I did not know that the Group Areas Act existed any longer" were heard.

### FORCED OPTION

Another tenant, Russel, spluttered out, in anger, "Now do you blame the people when they join the ANC. It will be going from one wrong situation to another but what are people expected to do when this happens to them?"

At that another "il-

legal" Indian tenant from a block of flats in Mac Arthur Street popped in to say hello.

He also came to tell his friends that he and his pregnant wife had found a place in Parlock and were moving out.

Russel jumped up and challenged him. "Look, I am a Coloured and you are an Indian but that makes no difference. We are brothers — we must stand firmly together in unity.

"They created the problem — let them live with it and sort it out. If we all move out then they will have beaten us" he argued.

Most of those illegal tenants who pointed out that they were not prepared to move out had their hopes pinned on Mr Sayed Iqbal Mohamed, of the Durban Central Residents Association, and the PFF's Mr Peter Gastrow.

"I am sure that Mr Mohamed will help us to fight these evictions" said Russel with a glimmer of hope in his eye.

"Mr Gastrow is also trying his best for us. He is trying to get us to live here permanently so he has asked us to fill in an application form for a permit from the government. I just hope this works for us.

"I really don't want to pack up and move again. Things are tough in our areas. There is no accommodation. Where there is, we have to pay extremely high rents. At least here the flats are cheap and well-looked after" he said with everyone nodding in approval.

The future looks bleak for these tenants who are living in uncertainty.

The dinner party went on in a seemingly jovial atmosphere. However, nobody, no matter how jovial they pretend to be, could ignore the spectre of the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads.