

MEETING TO DISCUSS SCRAPPING OF GROUP AREAS ACT

Daily News Reporter

THE Durban Central Residents' Association has rejected the State President's approval of more "free settlement" areas and has called an urgent meeting this weekend to discuss action in support of the association's demand for the immediate scrapping of the Group Areas Act.

Mr Sayad Iqbal Mohamed, chairman of the association, said the State President seemed to be backtracking on the "scrapping" of the Act. He said the "Group Areas squad" was still harassing people and that leading estate agents were continuing with Group Areas evictions.

He said the declaration this week of several new free-settlement areas, including Cato Crest in Durban, created the impression of fundamental reform, but the De Klerk Government seemed committed to amending the Group Areas Act and not scrapping it.

The President apparently wanted to amend the Act while still retaining "group rights" or to replace the Act with certain measures based on group rights. He also wanted to create more free-settlement areas for inclusion into a new political dispensation.

SUNDAY TRIBUNE, JULY 15, 1990

Campaign to stop evictions

Brian King

A GROUP Areas Campaign has been launched following a dramatic increase in the number of evictions in Durban.

The Durban Central Residents' Association (DCRA), which launched the campaign at a public meeting on Thursday night, received nearly 70 complaints about threatened evictions this week.

Tenants of several blocks of flats were facing en masse evictions, it emerged at the meeting.

Guest speakers Simphiwe Mgoduza of the ANC's Stanger Interim Committee and Imran Moosa, of the Durban branch of Azapo, suggested that the DCRA have workshops on tenants issues and spearhead a campaign with other housing bodies for the introduction of a Tenants' Bill of Rights.

According to the DCRA, there were 15 evictions in Durban from June to December of last year, 21 from January to

March of this year, and 89 from April to July.

Officials appointed by the Department of Local Government, Housing and Works of the House of Assembly, who had replaced the Group Areas Police unit, were still harassing "illegal" occupants, DCRA chairman Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed told the Sunday Tribune.

Some leading estate agents, despite their public opposition to the Group Areas Act, were using new strategies to evict black tenants, it was said.

These included changing the locks of flats and cutting the electricity supply.

A call was made from the floor for estate agents to defy the Act while another plan of action suggested was to identify and "expose" racist estate agents.

Tenants' representatives meanwhile resolved to intensify their defiance of the Group Areas Act and to defy all eviction notices.

The Daily News, Saturday, July 14, 1990

Residents upset by office plans for block of flats

Daily News Reporter

FIELD STREET'S multi-racial block of flats, Harfield House, is to be converted into offices and irate residents who were given only a month's notice, are desperately trying to find other accommodation.

The owner of the Durban building refused to comment on the matter, saying it was "nobody's concern" what they did to the building.

Mr Martin Vezasie (31), a teacher at Fairvale High School in Wentworth, has lived with his wife in Harfield House for a year during which the rent was increased four times.

Mr Vezasie said he was desperate about finding alternative accommodation.

"It is so difficult to find a decent place to live and we don't have enough time to look for a home.

"Harfield House was convenient, although we had our problems and now that we have settled in, we suddenly get

chased out," he said.

He voiced his suspicion about the building being converted into an office block.

"Residents cannot help but be suspicious about the intentions of the owners.

"The decision to convert the block into offices must have been made some time ago.

"Why weren't we notified about it earlier and why can't we have more time to find alternative accommodation?" he asked.

Mr Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed of the Durban Central Residents Association said a meeting with tenants would be held today.

"The DCRA will not stand for harassment of any kind. We intend adopting a firm stance against landlords and estate agents who exploit tenants," he said.

Harfield House would be a test of the DCRA's new approach to the group areas problem, said Mr Mohamed.

POST, JULY 11-14, 1990

5

BRIEFS

DCRA to hold campaign meeting

Post Reporter

THE Durban Central Residents Association will hold a Group Areas campaign meeting at the Justice Hall, Ecumenical Centre, St Andrews Street, (tomorrow) Thursday at 7pm.

Issues to be discussed include information on Group Areas evictions, actions of agents acting for landlords in white areas and spiralling rentals.

DCRA lawyers will also be at hand to answer tenants' questions on Group Areas Act-related issues.

THE NATAL MERCURY, THURSDAY,

JULY 12, 1990

A NUMBER of people distributing pamphlets on behalf of the Durban Central Residents Association in the Point Road area, were intimidated by alleged Right-wingers.

One of the men distributing pamphlets said a white man walked up to him and snatched the pamphlets from his hand, and then pushed him 'aggressively'.

The pamphlets were being distributed to announce a campaign by the association to register disappointment that the State President has not made a commitment to scrap the Group Areas Act.

The association said they had invited major South African financial institutions, and foreign embassies to take a stand on the issue.

A meeting to launch the association's Group Areas campaign will be held today at 7 pm in the Justice Hall at the Ecumenical Centre in St Andrews Street.