

Simonstown Black Sash Leads the Struggle AGAINST GROUP AREAS



A LONG and arduous struggle against group areas has been fought by the citizens of Simonstown. From the beginning, the Simonstown branch of the Black Sash has been at the head of the opposition.

When the proposals for the town were published, responsible citizens were horrified for, if put into practice, they would affect the lives, homes and livelihood of almost all the non-white citizens, apart from the expense of some £250,000. It was felt that since there had always been natural residential segregation in the town and there had never been any friction between the racial groups, the *status quo* should remain.

And so the Simonstown Group Areas Liaison Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Mrs. Willis, National Treasurer of the Black Sash. This was a corporate committee consisting of representa-

THE PASS LAW BATTLE — Continued.

here, or invalids in their families under treatment or in hospitals in this area. They would have to leave all these behind, and had no place in the Reserves to which they could "return". There was apparently no square inch of South African soil on which they were legally entitled to be.

Mr. De Wet Nel sent an investigator to the location. It was decided to postpone any decision about these women.

After being remanded several times, they were finally "endorsed out" — the law had run its relentless course, regardless of the heartbreak to the families involved.

But Wellington Branch, undaunted, is still continuing its effort to help these women.

tives of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches, Noorul Islam Mosque Trustees, Chamber of Commerce, Glencairn Civic Society, Simonstown/Glencairn Ratepayers and Civic Association, Woodlands Ratepayers Association, Simonstown Black Sash, Simonstown Indian Association and the Group Areas Co-ordinating Committee (which represents non-Whites generally).

A public inquiry was held on 3rd August and some of the organisations and the hundreds of individuals who had sent in objections were called upon to appear before it. The Liaison Committee felt that no expense should be spared in employing the best attorneys and counsel. By forming one corporate committee it was necessary to brief only one counsel and one attorney, who were willing to appear for any individual member or any component organisation as long as they objected to any group areas being proclaimed at all. To raise the necessary money, women of all races, working side by side, organised a morning market and a house-to-house drive, and the target of £400 was reached.

A petition against the advertised proposals was signed by 1,106 people, and a further petition was signed by all the shopkeepers in the town asking to have the shopping centre left as it was.

The result of the great effort made by Simonstown will not be known for many months, but it would be heartbreaking if the hard work and the united effort of so many different racial groups were not rewarded with the success it deserves. Even if the objections are over-ruled, a great deal has still been achieved, for Simonstown has set an example to the whole of South Africa.

As Others See Us

I HEARD a talk by Stephen King-Hall last week, and he particularly praised the Black Sash movement as a method of passive resistance. . . .

The South African correspondent of the League (London) said that branches in England are very interested in any information on South African affairs, and that great respect and admiration is expressed for the Black Sash, Professor Pistorius and Mrs. Margaret Ballinger.

—Part of a letter from the Editor of the Women's International League News Sheet (London) to a member of the League in Cape Town.