

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE RIOTS AT
SOWETO AND OTHER PLACES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

WHOLE SESSION:

2ND MARCH, 1977.

VOLUME 123

(Pages 5 943 to 6 016)

het en dit wil my voorkom na die gebeure wat plaasgevind het dat terwyl hy wat amptenaar was en ek neem aan die ander senior inspekteurs van Soweto maar net beleid kon uitvoer en hulle was inderdaad..hulle het inderdaad net hulle werk gedoen is dit klaarblyklik dat die meer senior amptenare in die Departement wat beleid moes formuleer en wat miskien meer sensitief moes gewees het vir die vertoë, elke slag hulle verantwoordelikheid ontduik het deur die gevalle keer op keer weereens terug te verwys na die meer junior amptenare wat alleen in terme van beleid kon optree. Mnr. de Beer soos ek sê het sy (10 bes probeer en hy het eerlik gedink dat die kinders gaan beter deurkom as hulle beide en Afrikaans goed magtig is. Hy het miskien nie kennis geneem van die feit dat in Blanke skole ons juis die geval het dat ons nie meer dubbel-medium skole het nie omdat - so het die redenasie gegaan - 'n Afrikaanssprekende kind vaar minder goed in wiskunde as hy sy wiskunde onderrig in Engels moet ontvang en daarom behoort hy na 'n alleen Afrikaansmedium skool te gaan. So ek dink ons..my indruk was om die fout te soek soos wat almal oorspronklik gedink het ten minste in die pers dat die fout lê by die amptenare, (20 onmiddellike amptenare in Soweto wat met die geval gewerk het was miskien foutief en dat die oorsake miskien 'n bietjie hoër op in die Departement by die mense gesoek moet word wat wel beleid sou kon beïnvloed of verander.

Ek het geen verdere vrae nie.

VOORSITTER: Dankie, mnr. Welz.

DR. YUTAR: Mnr. Welz, kan ek die bewysstuk kry asseblief?

GEEN VERDERE VRAE.

DR. YUTAR: M'Lord, the next witness in fact witnesses, is a committee of ten of the Mamati Greater Society Joint Residents' (30 Committee of Phiri Township, Moroka. They are all here, they want/..

want to testify and one at least will act as their speaker and the others may want to add something. I suggested that they all sit inside here, there are benches.

CHAIRMAN: It does look rather awkward to let them sit in the..

DR. YUTAR: My Lord, there is a microphone there - Oh, I believe it is not working. They don't need a microphone, they are going to speak in their own language. This is the Committee of the Society: Messrs. E. Dlamini - President; C. Mokhetseng - Gen. Org.; L. Mavuka - Adviser; E. Naka - Gen. Secretary; S. Mgweba - Vice-President; Mrs. D. Thabethe - Member; Mr. (10 S. Mshawe - Member; Mrs. C. Makwana - Member; Mrs. A. Twala - Member; Mrs. D. Hlongwane - Member.

They have prepared a memorandum and they would like to speak their language and Mr. Hlungwane has kindly consented to act as Interpreter. May I ask Mr. Hlungwane to swear them in please?

CHAIRMAN: I think only those who are going to speak can be sworn in, that would be easier. Who is going to speak on their behalf?

MR. HLUNGWANE: The President of the Association, Mr. E. Dlamini (20 will be the spokesman and they have agreed that they will listen carefully to what Mr. Dlamini is going to say and they will have to make some additions where necessary. There are about four languages involved here. They say they will understand their questions put in Zulu and anyone who wants to add anything will speak his own language.

DR. YUTAR: All right.

E. DLAMINI: sworn states:

DR. YUTAR: Now, they have prepared a memorandum for submission to His Lordship inquiring into the causes of the riots. (30

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR./..

DR. YUTAR: And they have advanced a few reasons which they believe led to the riots.

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: And the first one they say is: We believe that the main source of the riots, derives from the influx in general - I take it they mean influx control. The second reason they give..(intervenes).

CHAIRMAN: No, what do they say, is that correct?

MR. DLAMINI: That is correct.

DR. YUTAR: The second reason they advance in these terms is (10 the slightest mistake made by parents at the birth of their children turns them vagabonds because it is as if they are parentless and homeless.

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: And what they mean is that if a parent forgets to register the child then the child is parentless and as a result he may become a vagabond?

MR. DLAMINI: Yes, it also results in the child being ejected from the house of his own parents.

DR. YUTAR: And because it is difficult for children to grow (20 up under these conditions, which they advance as another reason.

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: Then they say the further reason: Now the pupil... I take it they mean the children - lose interest for their grievances...lose interest because their grievances are not taken to heart by the authorities concerned.

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: And then they go on to say..speak in these terms: An ex-Prime Minister from Europe spoke of the Winds of Change in 1960 when he was touring Africa. (30

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR./..

DR. YUTAR: As a matter of interest do they remember his name?

MR. DLAMINI: Mr. MacMillan.

DR. YUTAR: Quite right, quite right. And then they go on. But instead of putting the advice into operation, by the then Prime Minister of South Africa, established his own ideas which have caused all these damages.

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: Are they trying to suggest thereby that the South African Prime Minister did not heed what Mr. MacMillan said (10 about the winds of change?

MR. DLAMINI: That is so.

DR. YUTAR: Then they go on: It is a well known fact that when the Union of South Africa was founded in 1910 everybody was free to vote for his/her credentials in the Union Parliament now called the White Parliament.

MR. DLAMINI: That is so.

DR. YUTAR: I think if my Learned Friend points out that they are making a mistake there, it was only those resident in the Cape that were entitled to vote. I understand their (20 grievance is that they haven't got the vote today in the Union Parliament?

MR. DLAMINI: That is so.

DR. YUTAR: And then they go on: In the early 1950's native representatives were abolished to be given confined working conditions.

MR. DLAMINI: That is so.

DR. YUTAR: And then they go on, I am just going to quote the words they use over here: Unaware that in 1946 before the present Government came to power, it was passed in Parliament (30 that a person working for any business be insured for an unemployment/..

unemployment fund after losing his job but all this has failed so if we as workers had the franchise our votes would count.

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: And then they go on: If we had the franchise and were represented in Parliament as before we would be assured of adequate votes.

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: We would be assured of.. a proportionately reasonable share of the land of this country and its resources (10

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: And one thing we are sure that the status quo where a Black man has no say in these matters even in his own areas like Soweto..they mean over there that if things were as they were originally, they would have a say in these matters, unlike the position now in Soweto where they allege they have no say.

MR. DLAMINI: Correct.

DR. YUTAR: And then they go on that the..I think they mean the Black man is an object of instruction by the Whites as outmoded and untenable and it must change. (20

MR. DLAMINI: Correct.

DR. YUTAR: When the parents are supposed to take their cases to the Urban Bantu Council they haven't got the means as to how they could contact them.

MR. DLAMINI: Correct.

DR. YUTAR: How the U.B.C. is functioning is just anybody's guess.

MR. DLAMINI: Correct.

DR. YUTAR: We have got some press cuttings that shall prove what we say. (30

MR. DLAMINI: Correct.

DR./..

DR. YUTAR: Have they got some there?

MR. HLUNGWANE: The President has forgotten the cuttings at home.

DR. YUTAR: If you will ask him to send it to me in a letter I will hand them in.

MR. HLUNGWANE: The President of this Association hands in a document here where pictures of those to be voted for the U.B.C. appear and these people are voted for but they don't take any matter from them.

DR. YUTAR: In other words it is an electioneering pamphlet? (10)

MR. HLUNGWANE: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: Right and the other document?

MR. HLUNGWANE: : The other document is a list of names of candidates.

DR. YUTAR: Oh, a list of candidates. Who stood for election?

MR. HLUNGWANE: Who stood for election.

DR. YUTAR: Right, we go on now. We have also got some letters from some offices and some more proof that are supposed to be some points of the cause of the trouble, fundamental points of the cause of the trouble. (20)

MR. DLAMINI: Correct.

DR. YUTAR: And we would be much pleased if this memorandum would bear good fruits or interest

MR. DLAMINI. Yes.

DR. YUTAR: We all hope that. And to make the one who reads it to be thirsty not for water but to be thirsty for getting more and more to meet two or three of the members of this Mamati Greater Society Joint Residents' Committee.

MR. DLAMINI: Correct.

DR. YUTAR: And that is the conclusion of their memorandum. (30)

MR. DLAMINI: Correct.

DR. YUTAR: Does the President want to say anything more?

MR. DLAMINI: When people are elected to serve on the U.B.C. they are all 12 in number, 11 members and one of them is to become the chairman. As soon as these people are voted to the U.B.C. nothing is heard from them, no meetings are conducted or nothing is done to call us together. The next thing you see or you hear about is that they..a child must be removed from a parent's family. When one goes to find out you are told you cannot ask anything because you are not a member of the U.B.C. But when you are the voter you are a good man, but after you have voted you are nothing. We should expect when any complaint is to be taken to the authorities, the chairman has to take all the 11 members with him, but he usually just goes alone to go and talk to the authorities. And the next thing you hear, you just get a paper that such a thing and such a thing has been resolved and we just wonder when this resolution has been taken without the other 11 members. (10

DR. YUTAR: Is that the reason why, when you come to speak to the Judge, you brought all the members of your committee with you? (20

MR. DLAMINI: Yes.

DR. YUTAR: Is there anything else you would like to say?

MR. DLAMINI: Just as I am speaking now, there are children whose parents have died and they are being ejected and when I try to say something I am silenced.

DR. YUTAR: By the U.B.C.?

MR. DLAMINI: The Senior Superintendent silences me because I am not a member of the U.B.C.

CHAIRMAN: Did he speak to the person that he voted for, who came in? (30

MR. DLAMINI: The grievance is just that the people we have voted for/..

for don't want to listen to us.

DR. YUTAR: Anything else?

MR. DLAMINI: That is all, I will give others a chance to say something.

DR. YUTAR: Well, is there anybody else who wants to say anything?

MR. MOKHETSENG: Mr. Chabedi Mokhetseng, the General Organiser.

CHAIRMAN: Yes?

MR. MOKHETSENG: I want to add and confirm what the President has said, but more especially the children who are refused (10 to be on the parents' permits, all falls under the influx control as the President has said. This results in this that when these children grow up they will never get to school they cannot be admitted at school without birth certificates and baptismal certificates. These children will grow up in the streets. They are children who will have no law. It is just like a child who is born and is not given proper advice. Such a child is a child of parents who are said to have no permission to be in the township. When a woman, when a parent is pregnant she is always in panic and when the child is born the child (20 is born in that panicky state. When an expectant woman is at her home she always listens to any noise at the door, any knock frightens her and when a policeman comes in she only sees a torch in the room and she is always frightened. We are sure not to get a healthy child from that woman. I could say a child is born whose mind doesn't work properly. That results in this that that child will never get to school. Such children are multiplying now, girls and boys. There are quite a lot of children who do not even know who their fathers are, because most of them, their fathers are just those who came temporarily (30 there on contract. Most of the mothers of the children in

Soweto/..

Soweto are from the rural areas who run away from the rural area frustrations to the townships. And then these women and their children who form a separate community of its own. Now their life, these children's life worry us who are lawful residents of the townships. Such children when they grow up, don't work, their work is only to go on pick-pocketing. They do this pick-pocketing also in the trains and all these children are products of influx control, because they themselves these children grow up and make other children who are like themselves. And when the time comes that such a person (10 should get a house then that person has no right to get a residential place in Soweto. Now this forms part of the community whose existence is only there to commit crime. I could say that a hungry stomach knows no law. That is why they do anything just to get something to feed their stomachs. We have two groups of children in Soweto there. They are the group of children who have their parents and who come from proper homes and then the other group which I was speaking about, when the group which is quite lawful got some upheavals in school with their education, they started demonstrating and this other (20 group, the unlawful group, joined in and started violence in Soweto. Now the general grievances of the school children were then marked..by the other group who are not scholars. It actually caused an acceleration of the rioting. The President has said that we have elected members to the U.B.C. I say those members of the U.B.C. we elected, should have handled the grievances of these children before they started rioting. These children were frustrated because they did not have anywhere to take their grievances to because the U.B.C. could not be a forum where they could air their grievances. The lawless children (30 mixed with the law-abiding children and influenced them to rioting/..

rioting. I am quite sure that these children would not have done as they did if there were good shepherds for them because sheep without a shepherd will be exposed to marauding animals. I will sit down and give my other colleagues chance to say something on what the President has said.

DR. YUTAR: Anything new, we don't want any repetition. All right, next one.

MR. L. MAVUKA: (Discussion with Mr. Hlungwane).

DR. YUTAR: Mr. Hlungwane, can we put it this way: He agrees with what the two previous speakers have said? (10

MR. MAVUKA: Yes, I agree fully with what they said.

CHAIRMAN: You had better get his name, I think we haven't got his name yet.

MR. HLUNGWANE: Lawrence Mavuka My Lord. He is..his capacity in the..he speaks in his capacity as Adviser of the Association.

DR. YUTAR: Is there anything new that he wants to say, that he would like to say which has not been said already?

MR. MAVUKA: The memorandum has not been logically set..things that had to come first came in the middle or in the last...

DR. YUTAR: But it has all been covered, we read the whole memorandum out. (20

MR. MAVUKA: I want to confirm all that the President has said and I speak here as one who was involved in the whole thing I nearly died in the riots of last year. I speak as a parent close to people who were rioting, they were most of them were just children who did not know who their parents were. I really agree with what the President has said, that would be much better if this Association was to be allowed to meet the Superintendent and try to discuss the problems of the children in the townships. I would..we would like that this Association be recognised by the authorities so that when election/.. (30

election comes, this Association also be considered. These people we have chosen are the people who are responsible of the ejection of the widows when we expect them to protect them and this Association has the power to..this Association could be given power to administer that..(background noise) that would be accepted. If this Association was to be recognised we would help to point out some of the mistakes done by the authorities. The authorities or the Government has now got a very bad name in that it is a Government which cannot treat its subjects fairly. Our Association want to try to discourage(10 that spirit. One grievance we have is this that a Black child who is qualified as a White child will not get the same recognition. That is one of the things we want to put right we want to implant this spirit that no one race should look down upon the other, because of colour. I think this must come to an end because our children think that we have failed and that they have got to take up. Our request is this that there must be communication. That is all.

DR. YUTAR: Thank you very much. Now do the others agree with the first three witnesses? (20

MR. HLUNGWANE: Yes, we are well represented. (Members agree with first three witnesses).

MR. S. MGWEBA: There is a little thing which I want to put right.

CHAIRMAN: Right, let him mention it.

MR. MGWEBA: I just want to name these things one, two and three.

DR. YUTAR: Right?

MR. MGWEBA: From 1957 to 1961 I was a member of the Advisory Board. I was elected to this position by people who loved me. Just because of many talks from the City Council, I resigned (30 and said I did not want to continue as a member. I want to

say/..

say something about influx control. The effect of influx control on our children. That was started by the U.B.C. itself with the result that all the children must be in possession of a pink card. It was then said that all parents must get to a certain office to get these cards. These pink cards caused a lot of people to lose their jobs because they had to go and queue at this office. All the children who had no pink cards were removed from school. They became children who roamed the streets without permits, without pink cards. The law of the City Council before the West Rand Board and also the (10 law of the West Rand Board says anybody who wants something must make an application. And then the U.B.C. made an application that our children must pay lodgers' fees. These permits cost R1 a month each person. Our children are to pay lodgers' permit whether you are at school or not at school. The West Rand Administration Board as also the City Council before it said anybody who wants work, has to apply for it. People applied for work people went to the Council offices, produced their passes and looked for work. These people are to sit just as we are seated here and a White man comes to stand in the (20 middle. This White man has got a document and in this document are vacancies. This White man reads just the first item on the list of jobs then he says there is work at such and such a street and then just that first item, there comes about a thousand contract workers from the Homelands and then they are all taken in these jobs. And then these people who queue before this White man have houses in the township, these people could not pay rent and these people who have no money cannot get to the Homelands by train. Last week I went to the pass office. At one stage I went to buy a plate of food, and I got my plate (30 and my plate was on top of the table and I went to look for salt and/..

and when I came from where I went for salt, I found that there were four people who were eating food out of my plate. The money that I had was 50c. I asked these people why they ate my food and they just said well, they had no money, they have no food and they couldn't get home, so I understood their position. I took out my only 50c, gave it to them. That was due to my heart which was sore for them. The City Council and the West Rand Board, that is the influx regulation. The law says a person has got to apply for a house, that was in 1957 and in 1957 when it was said they were the last people (10 to be given houses. There is no place given to the people who have made application. People were taken from their houses they were taken for example firstly from Sophiatown these people were housed and when the Sophiatown people were housed, there was still a long waiting list without houses. Alexandra was also taken, Alexandra was also housed. George Goch was also housed and when all these people were being housed, there were still people who were still waiting for houses to be given to them. What is happening now, those people who were housed up to 1957 are being removed from these houses, they are being (20 ejected because some of them have lost their spouses. The members of the U.B.C. tell some few people that they must buy houses. The Superintendent agreed to these things. I say that the Superintendents agree to what these people are doing because on Monday, the 28th I took four people to the hall, Phiri hall with some complaints because my President told me I must take these people to lay their complaint. I plead that the Court listens to me, about what I have been telling the Court and how the West Rand Administration Board administers us.

DR. YUTAR: It is all on record.

(30

NO FURTHER QUESTIONS.

CHAIRMAN/..

CHAIRMAN: Have you got all their names?

MR. HLUNGWANE: I have all their names.

COMMISSION ADJOURNS UNTIL 3/3/1977.