

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

AFTERNOON SESSION:

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MNR. HLUNGWANI: Edele, die eerste getuie sal mnr. S. Ndala wees.

SONNY MILTON NDALA: sworn states:

MR HLUNGWANI: You are a member of the Advisory Board at Witbank Township? -- Yes.

You are also a businessman. -- Yes.

Could you tell His Lordship what grievances your people had at both townships - three townships, this Lynville. -- Ishanang and Akkerville.

You represent all those townships. -- I represent (10) all those townships.

You have one body which represents all the townships at Witbank. -- Yes.

You have met the one member of the investigating team(?) outside and you met your colleagues and drew up a list of grievances which you think and which you know your people suffer or have. -- True.

Could you just go on and you will stop for me to ask you a few questions. -- The first grievance that the people have there will be rent that they are paying. Our rent this (20) year increased from R10,92 for a five-roomed house to R17, and from R10,10 to R17 for a four-roomed house in a different area and R20 for the same type of house in another area. So the people feel very much frustrated with the payment of this high rent saying that they feel that they are not earning enough money to be able to meet the high rent.

Do I understand you to say that for example a person who occupies a five-roomed house in Lynville pays differently from one who has the same sized house in the other townships or is it a uniform thing? -- Well, the five-roomed houses are (30) only in Lynville. Now the Lynville rent is R17 for a

five-roomed/...

five-roomed house which R17 is paid by the same person who is occupying a four-roomed house at Akkerville.

Yes, I understand. Now this, when rent is being discussed or when you people are being told people have got to pay rent, do you actually communicate with these people and discuss with them to know why and how the rents are being put up? -- Well, in this particular instance we did not.

CHAIRMAN: You did not? -- We did not.

MR HLUNGWANI: So people did not know what was coming on them, they just were surprised to hear that rents were put up? (10)
-- They just received notices that as from the beginning of the other month the rent would be up.

Did you people as their representatives know about the rent before they were said to be paid out? -- Yes, we did.

And did you then tell the people? -- We did not tell the people, we suggested at our meeting that we should meet the residents but then we found that it was going to be useless because it had already been decided that the rent will be R17 so that there was no provision for any amendments to the amount that had been laid down by the Administration Board. (20)

Who decided upon the raising of the rents? -- The Administration Board, then it brings it to the U.B.C. for recommendation.

For recommendation? -- Yes.

And now when you as members of the UBC actually go against it or perhaps tell them that you have got an opposite idea about it, what does the Administration do? -- Well, the Administration, the information we got at that meeting was that if the rent will be less than this, then the Administration Board will not be able to run its affairs. (30)

Am I right to say that you were consulted and the rents were now put up in collaboration with the U.B.C.? -- Well, there was a condition that the U.B.C. put and it was that the Administration Board should make means to call the employees to raise the salaries of the Witbank inhabitants so as to enable them to meet the higher rent.

Did your body, the U.B.C. suggest that the rent not be increased before the condition is met, that is now asking the employers to raise the wages? -- Well, it was not put exactly like that, but it was a request. (10)

It was requested? -- Yes.

But you requested that the raising of the wages be done first before the rent. -- Yes, and the date for the raising of the rent was then deferred from the usual financial year to a month later.

And you say you did not contact the people to explain to them. -- No.

CHAIRMAN: Am I correct that the reason why you did not explain to them eventually was because it had already been decided that it was going to be raised? -- Yes. There was no point in calling a meeting telling the people. (20)

All you could do at that stage was to have the meeting and tell the people it has already been arranged. -- Yes.

MR HLUNGWANI: And if you actually conducted a meeting and went to the people and told them: look here, rents are now raised, did you want their views or did you just have them to accept it as it is? -- As I said, we were to tell them not to get views from them. So we felt it was useless, instead the people would just stone us.

They would stone you. -- Yes. (30)

Go on. -- Well, another thing that dissatisfies the community/...

community in Witbank is the permit, lodger's permit that has to be paid by youngsters and females who are still staying with their parents. The case is if your daughter gets a child whilst still at home, then after that she has to pay a permit of - a lodger's permit of R1,40 and your son who is working, pays a permit of R1 per month. The residents are not happy that their own children should be lodgers at their own homes. They feel that they should not pay the R1,40 because they help them to pay the rent and etc.

Your Lordship will remember this point has been (10) explained by one of the witnesses. Now what happens to a young man who gets married and before he gets a house of his own, does he stay in his father's house with his wife? What happens to him? -- Yes, if there is enough space they are allowed to stay with the parents, but then he pays the lodger's permit and his wife also pays the lodger's permit.

Now according to the customs of the Africans, you feel that your daughter-in-law stay with you without any expense? -- Yes, in fact immediately my son gets married, I have to stay with my daughter-in-law for some time to teach her (20) the rules and customs of my house.

Now the initiation of the bride by the sisters of the husband and the mother of the husband. -- Yes, that is something like that.

Go on. -- Well, another dissatisfaction goes, for instance if a young man marries a woman from outside the urban area of Witbank that woman is not allowed to come and stay with her husband in the location. Now what happens there is, well, if she does not qualify to come into the location and then they cannot stay together. Now, when they get to the (30) Administration offices, they are told that an application will

be made for them at one or the other homeland where both of them will qualify.

A man who is for example born and bred at Witbank township loses his right of staying in the township because of his marriage to a girl outside? -- Yes.

When he is not referred to one of the homelands. --
Excuse me?

I mean he is now referred to one of the homelands because he is married to a girl from outside the township. -- Yes.

Now what is the feeling of the young people on this (10) specific thing? -- As I have said that one of the complaints that they have that if they get married, they would like to stay with their wife and no one is happy to be told that he must leave the location and go to the homeland.

CHAIRMAN: That is a further point. -- Excuse me?

I say that is another point that you have got. -- Yes.

That you must not be told. -- Yes.

MR HLUNGWANI: Yes, you can go on to the next point. -- Well, one other point is we have a serious lack of accommodation in our location, especially in the old location. There (20) are many people who stay in very small houses in fact and some have no accommodation whatsoever. That is now they stay with other families, they become sub-tenants with other smaller families. Now people are not satisfied to wait very long on the waiting list for houses that are to be built.

M'Lord will remember that we have this point under the overcrowding accommodation. Go on.

CHAIRMAN: I wonder, would it be convenient to adjourn for 5 minutes at this stage? You are in between points now at the moment.

(30)

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNS.