

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

WHOLE SESSION:

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VOLUME 40

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JOSEPH BAFUNANI MOKOENA: sworn states:

ADV. JACOBS: Your Lordship, the witness requested that his name and identity must not be published.

CHAIRMAN: Then his name and identity will not be published.

ADV. JACOBS: You are a scholar at the Phatometsane High School in Nebo. Is that correct? -- Yes.

Do you remember on Tuesday, the 22nd day of June this year, approximately four o'clock in the afternoon, you went to the Aboo Restaurant in Nebo. That is an Indian shop, is that correct? -- That is correct. (10)

You went there to do some shopping. -- Yes.

Can you describe to the Commission what happened after you left this shop? -- Yes.

You may proceed. -- There comes two cars, that was two Valiants and one Combi.

Do you remember the colour of the Valiants or not? -- Not the Valiants but the Combi colour was yellow.

And do you remember the registration numbers of the vehicles or not? -- Yes.

What was it? -- It was TJ and TP. (20)

Yes? -- Now there were three men in the Combi and the others were the boys. They asked me that I must go with them at Sekhukhuneland.

Now the boys, were they big boys or men or what was the position? -- No, not big boys.

The age more or less? -- The one who speaks to me it was just imagination he is 24 years old.

So one of them approached you, came to you? -- Yes.

From which vehicle was this one? -- The Combi.

And what did he say to you? -- He told me that (30)
our fellows and our parents are dying outside, people are shooting/...

shooting them, now let us go to fight and burn schools so that the law must also see that we can do something and I told him that no, I cannot go. He shows me the gun and says: do not be afraid, let's go.

Did he take out a gun? -- Yes.

Was it a gun or a revolver or a pistol? How big was it more or less? -- Just like this.

9 inches more or less. Yes, and then? -- And then he says that they are going to start in Sekhukhuneland.

To do what? -- To burn schools. (10)

And to what did he refer? You said he said that the law must see that you can do something. Did he use the term law or did he mention any other term? -- Yes, he says that the law must see that they can do something also to - we can do something that to show that they are also free(?)

Did he tell you why you must do this? -- Yes, he told me that why they do this.

Why? -- He says because many people have died and others are in jail and then they are suffering.

Is it because other people are killed and suffering? (20)
-- Yes.

Therefore you must do something. -- Yes.

To show the law that you can also do something. -- Yes.

Is it correct that in Sotho the term 'law' actually refers to government? -- Yes.

If you are talking about the law, do you actually mean the government or what do you mean by it? -- I mean the government..

Yes, and after he told you this and showed you the gun, what happened then? -- And then I said to him, no, just (30)
wait a bit, we were at the cafe. Now in the middle is a street
and/...

and this side is a cafe and then that side is a general dealer who sells some groceries there. And then I say wait for me there at the cafe, I will come, I am just going to the shop, there are some groceries which I am going to buy. They stand there next to the Combi and then I went to the shop and then after that I went to the shop, stand there and then I take the back door and go away and go to my teachers and told them what had happened and then they take me to the police to the policeman to the office.

You laid your complaint there at the police station. (10)
Is that correct? -- Yes.

Now did this man also say something about the teachers or did he just talk about the burning of schools? -- Yes.

What did he say? -- He says that .. (inaudible) ... of policemen, they say that we must also burn these houses of teachers.

The houses of teachers? -- Yes.

Why? -- Because the teachers also are staying in the houses of government.

Of the government. -- Yes.

(20)

No further questions, Your Lordship.

CHAIRMAN: How many people were there in the cars and the Combi? -- Can I say it was about 27.

Pardon? -- I think it was 27.

27? -- Yes.

And were they men, women, children? -- No, there were three women.

But the only one that - only one of them talked to you?
-- Yes.

Did you know him? -- No, I saw him once upon a time (30)
when we were playing softball.

You/...

You were playing softball? -- Yes.

Where was he? -- At the other school.

You saw him there? -- Yes, but .. (inaudible)

Did you play and did he play? -- No.

Did you play? -- Yes, I was playing.

He did not play? -- Yes.

Do you know whether he was still at the other school or not? -- No, I do not know that.

When he spoke to you, did he tell you that he knew you?
-- When he arrived here? (10)

Yes. -- Yes, I can know him.

Did he speak to you as speaking to a man that he knew?
He did not talk as if he was talking to a stranger? Did he know your name? -- No.

Did he know who you were? Did he know you came from the other school? -- Did I know him from other school?

No, he, do you think he knew who you were? -- No, he knows I am attending school.

The other school. -- Yes, at that same village.

NO FURTHER QUESTIONS. (20)

ADV. JACOBS: Your Lordship, Dr Yutar will lead the next witness.

DR. YUTAR: Edele, die volgende getuie is mnr. Ackermann.

IGNATIUS WILHELM ACKERMANN: verklaar onder eed:

DR. YUTAR: U is die hoofdirekteur van die Bantoesake-Administrasieraad van die Hoëveldgebied. -- Ek is.

En hierdie Raad regeer die volgende Bantoe gebiede: in Belfast, Hendrina, Ogies, Middelburg en Witbank. -- Ja.

U het nou 'n volledige memorandum opgestel in verband met die oproer in die stedelike Bantoe gebiede binne die (30) regsgebied van die Bantoesake-Administrasieraad Hoëveldgebied,

dit R338 382.

DR. YUTAR: Die volgende skedule bevat 'n opsomming van die direkte skade as gevolg van onluste op 20 en 21 Julie 1976. Die besonderhede is daar uiteengesit hoe daardie bedrag van R148 382 bereken is. -- Dit is korrek.

En u sê daar: Bogenoemde bedrae sluit nie indirekte verliese in soos onder andere verlies aan inkomste by bier en drank en koste met voorbereiding van eise nie. -- Dit is reg.

En heel laaste is daar 'n skedule wat gaan oor die motorvloot en tegniese toerusting. -- Dit is net die (10) skades uiteengesit hoe dit opgemaak is.

Nou hierdie is maar 'n kort opsomming wat volledig uiteengesit is in BEWYSSTUK 104. -- Dit is die oorspronklike.

Geen verdere vrae nie, Edele.

GEEN VERDERE VRAE.

DIE KOMMISSIE VERDAAG VIR TEE. DIE KOMMISSIE HERVAT.

MR HLUNGWANI: M'Lord, we have one minister of religion who has opted to come and give evidence before Your Lordship. There is no application for any secrecy. He is Reverend Mabokela. (20)

CHARLES POLTAX MABOKELA: sworn states:

MR HLUNGWANI: You are a pastor of which church? -- The Methodist Church of South Africa.

In Witbank? -- Yes.

Would you kindly tell His Lordship what happened just after the first riots in connection with the Commission that has been formed?

CHAIRMAN: Was there a committee, you say? -- A committee. I am in the Witbank Location here which is Tushanang Bantu Township, that is the old location. Now, actually 7 (30) years in Witbank, appointed by our church. when these riots started/...

started, I will not just remember the date, but after the first riots we were called in town here all the parents which was ministers, U.B.C.'s, principals of various schools and traders which is businessmen.

MR HLUNGWANI: May I interrupt you there? This committee was formed after you had been visited by the local Member of Parliament. -- Yes.

Go on. -- Minister Janson I think, of Parliament. When we got to town here we learned that we were called by him and he addressed us as parents and then he asked us all that (10) he is here to come and ask us whether could we give him help according to the riots and speak to children as parents and he is applying more specifically on behalf of ministers, they should all join with the U.B.C. members in order to get the township children quiet in the location. So he then elected a committee which was cut into two. The first committee was called Daily Report Committee of which I was also elected the manager and then the second committee was a Joint Committee which was supposed to sit towards the weekend when we thought could sit on Thursdays so that this committee must give (20) a report to that one.

Now this Joint Committee was formed of the members of the U.B.C., the teachers, principals of schools and the ministers and the parents. -- And the traders, the businessmen.

Now it was .. (inaudible) the Daily Report Committee and the Joint Meeting Committee. -- That is right.

How many times a week would the Daily Report Committee meet? -- We were supposed to meet every day, but the Daily Report Committee only met twice together with the Joint Committee also met twice and that was the end of the (30) whole thing.

Now/...

Now just tell His Lordship what happened on a Wednesday that was the week - that Friday of that week there was something that the students were to do. Now on the Wednesday just tell the Commission what happened. -- It happened that the principal of the Elukhanyisweni Secondary School, the principal, Mr H. Kona, we were in the meeting, in the Daily Report Meeting on Wednesday at Elukhanyisweni Secondary School. Now members who were there, I can describe them although I do not know whether I should call the names, because we were not many.

It is not necessary.

(10)

CHAIRMAN: How many were there? -- Well, the chairman was not there who is supposed to be the mayor of the township, he did not turn up, and I was with Reverend Nkosi of the N.G. Kerk and the secretary, Mr Makwakwa and Mr Ehlers. That was all. So we thought well, there is no meeting without the chairman. We even opposed that well, if the chairman is not here then what are we going to do, what will be the agenda. Then we left out. Now when we left out, the principal of the school, because he is not far from the school where he stays, got hold of me and Reverend Nkosi of the N.G. Kerk (20) because Reverend Nkosi has got a car and then we were in the car and then he stopped us and he said look, two reverends, I am happy to see you, could you please do me a help. Come to school tomorrow, on a Thursday, and address the students as they want to march to town on the Friday. Now actually we were not interested - myself I was not interested to know what are they going to do in town because I did not want them to come to town. I just said well, seeing that we were elected in town to help the principal and the community, we can do so and then the reverend who was with me also agreed to (30) come and help the principal the following day. But to my surprise/...

surprise when we left, in fact we went to go and report to our secretary, Mr Makwakwa, that we are going to help the principal tomorrow, then he said well and good, that is just, those are the people we want in the township, that is Mr Makwakwa, we went to his house. So we went home. Now the reverend, on the way going home, he talked to me on the way, that is Mr Nkosi, then he said to me: look, I am sorry, I could not just have told the principal that I will not be able to go and address the students tomorrow, I will be occupied. So could you please go there and go on my behalf too. (10)

Is this the ... -- That is the Reverend Nkosi who asked me to go.

The Reverend Nkosi who was with you. -- Who was with me.

Yes? -- Then he just talked to me on the way before he took me to my place and I said now I do not know what to do, I am a bit stuck, I got at my place, I told my wife about the affair, drank a cup of tea and I said to my wife: look, I think I am going to other colleagues of ministers because we were asked by Mr Janson to do so, so if they ..(inaudible) .. I do not know what will I do and then I started at the (20) Anglican Church to Reverend Daba. That was in the evening on Wednesday. So I went to all the ministers of religion in the township trying to request them to help us tomorrow, because when I met Reverend Daba at his place, he appreciated the request and then he said to me we must come and start at his chapel, at his church so that we must pray in the morning before we go to school, so let me round up the other ministers; I did likewise. Now they all promised to do so, they will come with us tomorrow and we have put the time of 8 o'clock in the morning so that we must be at school at nine, but to (30) my surprise the following day, on Thursday, when we were about to/...

to go to school, I first chatted to my principal, I said: look, chief, the gentleman here has requested me and him to come and assist you last night, he all of a sudden turned back and said he cannot come and help, but I got all the other ministers and then the principal said happy, if those ministers can come it will be something good. So we went to Reverend Daba at the Anglican Church, it was only myself and him, waiting for the other ministers. Then we decided to pray there, both of us and then go to school and then Reverend Daba also said no, let me go and make sure, we are now going from my place (10) here to house and house, house to house to the other ministers so that I must also be sure that they do not want to go. So we did so. When we find the other one, he says: my leg is not happy and my feet are sore, the other one says my wife does not want me to involve myself.

MR HLUNGWANI: In short, they gave different excuses. -- Different excuses. That was now the day when we were going, when we were going to them we were going to school, but we started with them first. So when we went both of us, when we got there, it was 9 o'clock. (20)

CHAIRMAN: So only the two of you went. -- The two of us.

Yes? -- When we got there, the principal asked the students to come to the hall, to gather in the hall, the boys were all there, form 3 and 5 and he asked us to come in and address the students. Well, I started to read the Scripture and I spoke to the children religiously as a father to them and I tried to show them that there is no business for them to go to town even if there is anything that is going to happen in town, it is not their business, but as a father to them I feel I must speak to them and try and talk to them that they should (30) not go to town tomorrow.

MR/...

MR HLUNGWANI: You even told me that some of them even burst into tears. -- That is what they did.

When you spoke to them. -- They even cried all of them. Then Reverend Daba prayed.

And then at that meeting, the principal gave you some grievances written on a piece of paper. -- That is right. Thereafter, after the prayer and all this then the principal told us the grievances of the students. He had a piece of paper and he told us well what are the grievances of the children. (10)

Could you mention some of them as far as you can remember to the Commission? -- If I remember well I think one was that they say - that is what the principal was telling us - one was that they say that the rent and the permits in the township is rather too high for the parents to pay.

They spoke something about the moneys paid for permits by scholars who reside outside the township. -- Actually they went to the extent that if one stays outside and he is a student here and he has got the mother, the father passed away and the mother is only living on washing from a White lady and (20) they do not have enough money, something of the sort.

And what did they say about wages? -- Then they went on to say well, the parents do not get enough wages from their employers and they cannot support them well in order to buy books for them and clothes and school uniforms and school fees, etc.

As far as you know, is there any compulsion on the students to be in their uniforms when they get to school? -- Well, that is what I know - all schools have uniforms - all students have uniforms in the various schools. (30)

What happens then to a student who can only afford to buy

a khaki pair of trousers and a shirt and cannot afford this expensive uniform? -- It is really hard if that particular student hasn't got the uniform of the school, because principals of the schools they go to the extent of speaking very hard to her or him so that she or he should get some friends or relatives to buy uniform for him because the school belongs to the uniform.

Do they sometimes kick these kids out outside the class? -- They sometimes tell them to go back home because of the uniform. (10)

CHAIRMAN: Who would tell the kids to go back home? -- The school sometimes the child comes at home and says the school told me that I must come back home because I haven't got a uniform so I really want a uniform because I want to go to school.

MR HLUNGWANI: It is either the principal or the assistant principal.... (inaudible - both speaking simultaneously)

Now you mentioned a further grievance. You said they spoke about unknown members of the Urban Bantu Council. -- Yes, that was also of the grievances that the principal told us (20) that the students are complaining about that U.B.C.'s in our township here are never elected and they do not know who they are and they do not know whom to complain for the Bantu township manager as far as they are concerned because they have no U.B.C. members in the township.

They said they did not have any man they know to whom they could lay their grievances. -- Actually that is how they put it that as far as they know that there are U.B.C. members supposed to be elected by the Committee, but as far as Witbank is concerned, they are not known, so they do not know (30) whom to take grievances to.

Now, as a church leader, spiritual leader in the township, what is your opinion about the election of the U.B.C. members? -- I really would like to give my short opinion on this matter, more specially on the side of election. In fact, I belong to the church that annually, yearly elects members of the church, even the president, up to the chairman of the district and various ministers. Now, with the townships as far as I have gone round in places, various places, we always hear when U.B.C. members are going to be elected, they are announced and anybody who has the right to, say perhaps he wants to be (10) a candidate and then he puts in his name at the contest to be a member of U.B.C. So as far as I am concerned, I am so near to Witbank, I have never seen elections for U.B.C.

You only hear that there are new members? -- No, we hear there are members of the U.B.C., but we do not know them and I think that is one of the points that I can really say as a leader of religion, a spiritual leader in the township, more especially on the side of the U.B.C. .. (inaudible) I have the right to go to my U.B.C. member in my block or whatever it is and make some sort of complaint, that I know he is (20) the man to contact, the superintendent in the location. But so far we do not know who are these members.

Now you ministers have got a certain organisation called IDAMASA, Inter Denominational African Ministers Association. -- Yes.

Now, you have your resolutions and you bring sometimes the complaints from your church members. Now as a body where do you then lodge your complaints on behalf of your members? -- As far as I think we had the last meeting of ours as ministers I think it was just on that very spot. (30) It was because of the events in the location. It was on basis

of the church, where there is nobody that stays except the spirit of God, but the rent was so high in our township and we even nominated members to go and see Mr Ackermann, the director of the township, because we have no U.B.C. members that we can contact.

CHAIRMAN: So you went direct to him? -- We sent delegates to him.

MR HLUNGWANI: And what results did your delegation have? -- I am sorry, I think on that meeting I was not present when they brought the results back, but when I asked my colleagues (10) when I saw them, they said our delegates only just vanished away from Mr Ackermann, did not come back with a report and as a result our chairman, who has left us in Witbank here, he is in Pretoria now, and we did not get any report about the answer.

Am I correct to say that even your ministers association, you cannot have confidence in them because they should actually have set a date of report back? -- Well, it is true what, well, I do not know whether I will be wrong to say our chairman was supposed to call a meeting for the report back and we did not hear - I was not present then. I do not know the others (20) whether did they get any report from him.

What do you think about - you heard something from the students in regard to a certain member of the Administration Board, the assistant manager. What did they think about him and also your church members? -- Well, more especially well we speak more or less hard with the parents in the township, as leaders of parents, but that is the only complaint that I get from my people and the various other people in the township here that our authorities that when do they held election for our own people, who is electing our people? Because we (30) must elect them. We do not just want to hear that so and so is

a U.B.C. member or so and so is a member of the U.B.C., because we do not know who is electing them. Now that actually refers to the authorities of the township.

You wanted to tell the Commission what the attitude of the director was towards you and your colleagues who were trying to suppress the riots and who were trying to talk to the students, advising them not to have any uprising, so you could tell the Commission what the attitude is and what happened. -- On the Monday following that Thursday when the principal asked us to go and address the students, well (10) I think Friday it was the court in town here, the case of the students and then Saturday, Monday, Sunday - ag, Monday, the township manager, Mr Viljoen, came to my place and I remember I was busy with other people at my place and then the police, Bantu police came to me and said there is a notice that is given by the township manager, but he is outside here in a small van. Could you please go and see him because he wants to see you. Then I went out and greeted him and asked him how is he and then he said to me: look, Rev. Mabokela, please, see that according to your notice there, you (20) are called by the director in town, which is Mr Ackermann. Now there is your time. My time was 2,30 to meet the director. So I said all right, I will do so. Then when I thought he is calling all the ministers because we had a complaint about the ministers who did not want to help us to go to the students. So well, I left it out and that day of the meeting of the director. I went there only to find that my colleague, Rev. Daba who was with me, addressing the students, he is also there. Then when we looked at our notes of notices, the time was different. I am to see the director at 2,30 and (30) Rev. Daba at 3,30. So he started with me actually. I went to

his/...

his office. That day he really hurt my soul and I am sorry, I am telling the Commission that today. Because in the first instance he told me that it is not him that speaks to me, what he is going to tell me is the people that I deeply belong to the throwing and the burning of the students in the township. It really surprises me because I thought I am helping him as an authority and on behalf of the request of the Minister of Parliament, Mr Janson. Then I said all right, go further, and then he took out a pad and he said to me: how long are you here in Witbank. And I told him. He said: wife and (10) children. I told him my wife's name and how many children. Then he said to me: I think it is about time that your church must take you somewhere else, not in Witbank, because we are enough of you. So I kept quiet. Then he said to me: have you got something to say? And I said yes. He said: all right, you can now go on. Then I said to him: well, sir, I do not know actually what is it that you are actually talking about. It is up to you. But it is a surprise to me today when we are trying to show and tempt our life for Witbank as a whole, trying to stop children from doing the riots and helping (20) you and then you come and accuse me of which I think it will be the best thing for Mr Ackermann to take me to court and prove this in court. Then he said to me: no, no, no, don't be too cross, you can just speak what you think. Then I said: no, I am thinking nothing, I just say well, I think it is your powers(?) I do not know, I will hear from you and then he said to me: all right, on the two committees that you were elected by the Minister of Parliament, the first committee was the Daily Report .. (intervenes)

In short you were actually worrying yourself and (30) even braving to face the rioting students, trying to quell all that/...

that and then later you were accused as an agitator. That is what you ... -- Exactly so.

Is there something you want to add to, I mean besides this point? I think we have dealt with it sufficiently.-- Yes.

Do you have something to say? -- Well, the last thing was that the committee, he demoted me out of the committee, said I must not get into the committee any more and I must see that I stay away from the committee.

In your opinion, why were the duties of this committee suspended? -- Well, I really would not say, but I should (10) think the committee failed to continue because I was the one who was demoted and my colleague was also demoted and the chairman of the committee was also a man who is not in favourable of the committee, the man who was elected as chairman.

CHAIRMAN: That is the minister of the Anglican Church. -- The minister.

He was also informed that he must not attend the meetings any more. -- Exactly.

On that day when you were there at 2,30 and he at 3,30. -- Yes. (20)

MR HLUNGWANI: M'Lord, I want to put a question to the witness to avoid a duplication of evidence. I intend not to call his colleague, but I could put it to him. The same accusations were also put to your colleague? -- Exactly.

I have no further questions, M'Lord.

CHAIRMAN: A few things I wanted to ask you because you are in feeling with at least all the members of your church and so forth, you know them and you visit them. How many ministers of religion are there in the area? -- In this Witbank?

Yes. -- Well, I wonder if I could count them well. (30)

No, I am talking of Black ministers. -- That is right, in the/...

the location.

Yes. -- It is more than 20.

More than 20? -- Yes.

So if you succeeded in getting them all to the school, there would have been, say, round about 20 ministers to speak to them that day. -- Yes, if they did come.

Yes, if they all came. -- If they all came.

Why do you think they all turned out? Why do you think they refused to come? -- Well, I really would not say, but according to them telling us that even their family - (10) the one told us that even my wife do not want me to involve in such things and the other one told me that look, I do not want to get any - I do not want to interfere in Witbank affairs with your children. I am arriving here, I am still watching what is happening. Such lot of talks.

Is this like the invitations to the feasts? -- Ja.

On this occasion you heard that - the principal told you that the students want to march into the town. Had you before this time heard of any information or had you received any information that there was unrest brewing, that something (20) was going to happen? -- No, I did not hear anything except when the principal asked me that he spoke to the children at school so he wants us to come and help him too.

What was the date more or less of that? Can you give me any idea? -- That I tried to ascertain from him?

Yes. -- (inaudible)

Was that before there had been any difficulty in Witbank at all? -- That was after the riots.

It was after the riots? -- After the riots, after the first riots. (30)

Now the riots had happened before this. Had you heard anything/...

anything about the possibility of the riots happening? -- I did not hear anything.

Perhaps there is another question I must ask you. You were accused of being an agitator. Did you ever hear anything about other people being agitators? -- Well, I haven't heard anything, but it was a surprise for the man to tell me that I am an agitator, that I had been.

Did you perhaps see people from outside coming in here and speaking to the children or agitating them? -- No.

What is the name of the location that you are in? (10)
-- Tushanang, the old location.

The old location. -- They call it Tushanang.

MR HLUNGWANI: M'Lord, it is just the township just after the Indian township.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, when we passed through the Indian portion, the one that we came to just after that.

MR HLUNGWANI: Yes, M'Lord.

CHAIRMAN: We travelled on the side of it. Who attended this meeting that you say that the Member of Parliament held here? -- Well, it was with all school teachers, principals and (20) U.B.C. members and traders which is businessmen.

And all the religious leaders. -- Ministers of religion. Was it a very big gathering? -- It was a big gathering. And you were specifically asked to try and pacify the people. -- Yes, cool down the spirit of everybody.

Did the other people also not have committees and do something about this or did nobody do anything about it? -- Nobody did anything about it except that committee.

Except the two meetings. -- Yes.

Can you think of any reason why they did not do (30) anything about it? -- I would really not say because it was also/...

also for me a surprise, it was the first time that we were elected in such a meeting by the Minister of Parliament.

Do you think the people were afraid? -- I would really actually not say they were afraid, because we were all there and he also went into the matter, when the Parliament Member is asking us, but for me to say they were afraid, then I must really know what were they afraid of. I really do not know why they did not want to take up.

Why they did not want to do anything.

NO FURTHER QUESTIONS.

(10)

ADV. JACOBS: The next witness is Mr A.H. Kona.

ANDREW HENRY KONA: sworn states:

ADV. JACOBS: You are the principal of the Elukhanyisweni High School. -- Yes, I am the principal of the Elukhanyisweni High School.

Your Lordship, this witness wants to give the first part of his evidence in his capacity as the principal of the school and the second part of his evidence is in his private capacity. Now shall we proceed with the factual evidence in your capacity as the principal of the school. Your school reopened (20) on the 20th July this year after the winter holidays. Is that correct? -- That is correct.

Did you have any problems before that day at your school? -- Before the 20th July I did not have any problems in my school at all, that is problems of this nature.

On the morning of the 20th you assembled and you read out to the students the Department Circular No. 13 of 1976. Is that correct? -- That is correct.

Can you please tell the Commission what the contents of this circular was? -- Just before the 20th July I (30) received a circular from the Department of Bantu Education

requesting/...

requesting me as principal of the high school to get the medium for my school. So I opted for English as the medium of instruction in my school.

Why? -- I did that because I knew why the other schools were rioting. It was simply because they said they were rioting because they did not want to be taught in the medium of Afrikaans. So in order to avert what took place in other schools I decided to take English as the medium of instruction.

And you conveyed this to the students on that morning? -- On that day I read the circular to the students, telling (10) them that the Department, one is free to choose either English or Afrikaans as the medium for its school. I read that to the whole student assembly on the morning of the 20th when we assembled.

Was there any other specific reaction that morning? -- That morning there was no specific reaction at all, that is during the assembly.

And after that the students had to pay their examination fee for the junior certificate. Is that correct? -- That is correct. (20)

And what happened then? -- On the day the students were supposed to pay their examination fee because I had told them prior that day that they should bring along their examination fee. When I asked the Form 3 students, that is the external students to pay their examination fee, I noticed that they were recalcitrant, unwilling to take orders from me, until I called them to the school hall.

Did you have that attitude prior to this date or not? -- I had never had it at all. It was strange to me.

Yes and then? -- So on the 20th I asked them to (30) pay the examination fee, they started mumbling, grumbling, grousing/...

grousing, showing that they did not want to pay until I had devised a means of causing them to pay. I called their names alphabetically. If a name, for instance, to make the point clear, started with an A, say Aphala or so, I would call those with A, B, until they responded individually. I did that because I knew they would not disobey me individually, but collectively it was obvious.

So they paid on that day? -- A part of the school paid on that day, the rest did not pay at all.

And what happened after school that day? -- We (10)
close school at 2,30. And when we closed I went home and then I heard a noise just behind the schoolyard. I guessed that the students were, you know, in disorder, they were running, rampart in fact. I did not go to investigate.

And that evening your school was attacked. Is that correct? -- I would like to elaborate on that.

Yes. -- On the evening of the 20th July, it was already dark. I heard a lot of noise, it was like thunder, attacking my school. Window-panes breaking, people shouting as if it was a karate game. I could not get near at all because (20)
I feared for my life and another thing, my wife would not allow me at all. So the noise, the breaking of the windows, the school being set alight went on.

So you are still under the law. -- Yes.

LAUGHTER

So I held off until they left. Immediately after their departure I went to the school and I must say in this Commission I have got very good neighbours. The neighbours came to my assistance to extinguish the fire that had started at seven different places in the school. (30)

CHAIRMAN: Seven different places? -- Yes.

ADV. JACOBS: Can you describe to the Commission the kind of damage?

CHAIRMAN: Could you tell me, how did they start the fire? -- I do not know how they started the fire because the fires were already on when I arrived at my school.

Was there a smell of paraffin or petrol? -- Yes, fuel must have been used, particularly in my office and in the school hall because there was a splash of some oily stuff.

The question was could you describe the damage. -- In the school cellar a fire was formed and we extinguished (10) that. In there very little damage was done. In the school hall I think more than 10 desks were destroyed.

ADV. JACOBS: You do not have to go into detail. -- The damage was at different places. The windows were broken, over 650 window-panes were damaged. Four steel doorframes - I beg your pardon, window-frames were damaged to such an extent that they had to be straightened before a window-pane could be fitted. In the library, in the laboratory I have got two jars, gas jars. One of the tubes leading into the laboratory was cut and it was - in fact the fire was on because the (20) gas jar had been opened. The laboratory door was hacked but they could not get in. Half the windows in the library were destroyed. In my office a curtain was burned out, the cupboard in my office was also damaged, part of the school documents were also destroyed, including the junior certificates from the Department which had just arrived. In short that is the damage in my school.

Then you heard rumours that the students wanted to march to Witbank on the 6th August this year. -- That is right.

And what did you then do on the 5th August, the (30) previous day? -- To make that point clear, after the 20th July

we had classes sporadically because the attendance was poor. On the 5th August I heard that the students were intending to march to Witbank to lay their grievances. To avert tragedy I decided to call them to the school hall. I felt that I could not do such a gigantic task alone. So as an African I thought of the fathers of the location, I thought of the ministers of religion, I thought of the principal of another school.

So it was the previous witness and his colleagues. -- That is right. I thought of the ministers of religion. I told them that they could please come to my school on the Thursday (10) preceding the Friday during which the students were intending to come to Witbank.

To try and dissuade the students not to do it. -- Yes.

Did you succeed? -- I think we succeeded because they did not carry out their intention.

And you also succeeded in convincing the students to lay their grievances to you. Is that correct? -- Yes.

What were the grievances given by the students to you? The first one is the permit system. Is that correct? -- Correct

Can you just elaborate on that? -- The first grievance (20) that the students gave me is the permit system prevalent in the Highveld Administration Board. 10 years before I came here, a student, that is a female student that had fallen pregnant by my predecessor was not allowed to come to school again. I felt that was uneducational and could not uplift the community in any way. So on my own I decided to re-admit such students. You are admitted, there is no difficulty. They attended, until this year the students came to me and said: Mr Principal, we have come to your school as students, you know our condition, the office of the location (30) manager wants each of us to pay R1,40 per month regardless of

the fact that we are students. That is the grievance the students mentioned to me.

Why do you think they have those grievances? -- I think they have this grievance because according to African custom as long as a child is in your house, it is your dependant, your liability. You are supposed to cater for the child yourself and these students do not work at all. They have to pay school fees in my office, I should call it maintenance fees in my office, to keep school affairs going, sports and so on, but now they do not like the fact that they being students should (10) pay R1,40 per month to the office of the location manager, they do not like that.

CHAIRMAN: That is the lodger's fee, is it? -- That is the lodger's fee.

ADV. JACOBS: And then the next grievance? -- The next grievance is that they mentioned .. (inaudible). In this school I have students who come from other locations other than the three that we have here. Let us say for instance Ogies, Bronkhorstspuit and so on. Now each of the students have to pay R16,80 per year to attend. (20)

CHAIRMAN: Students from other places? -- From places that are under the jurisdiction of the Highveld Administration Board. That they mentioned as one of their grievances. They do not understand that because they argue that their parents who are resident in the area falling under the jurisdiction of this Administration, pay rent like anybody else; now why should they pay.

ADV. JACOBS: Did they feel strong about these two grievances? -- They feel very strong about these grievances.

Would you think that that was the cause of the students' (30) riots or not? -- I think it was partly the causes because you

know it made them a ready target for whatever agitator was available.

Would you say that agitators in fact played a role in this? -- I think they played their role because in the past I did not have such difficulties at all. I think outside influence must have played a part here at Witbank.

Would you say the students were ready targets because of the grievances? -- Yes.

And the agitators used this. -- Yes.

That is your view. Can you tell the Commission what (10) the relations are between the police and the students - let us first say before the riots. -- The relations between the police and the students before the riots, I think it was healthy, because they could come into my school and there was no reaction at all, nothing wrong; in fact the relation, in short, was healthy, before the riots.

And the relationship after the riots? -- The relationship after the riots is not healthy I think.

Why do you think that is the position? -- I think it is not healthy because immediately after the riots police (20) time and again came to my school to collect suspects.

And what was the reaction of the students to that? -- The reaction was not healthy, they were - you know, in fact they accused me as the person who picks them out.

CHAIRMAN: What did the police come to collect? -- To collect suspects, the students who were suspected to have played a part in the rioting.

ADV. JACOBS: And the events elsewhere in the country, do you think that contributed to the relationship between the police and the students at the moment? -- Yes, I think so, (30) because of sympathy.

Sympathy. -- Yes, I think so.

Now we come to the last part of the evidence, your personal view. Do you have any grievances? Are there any grievances between your people that you are aware of? -- I have been made to understand that I may give my views without any prejudice and I take the Commission to ..(inaudible). I have my personal grievances. In the first instance I am a university graduate of the University of South Africa. I was educated at some expense by my parents, by my benefactors and by anybody else that wanted me to become an educated (10) man. I paid the same fees, bought the same books to do my assignment at the university. Now what makes me rather unhappy is when I have to render my service to the country, I am paid less than a White man who has similar qualifications as me, who received the same certificate, who satisfied the same examiners. To mention a point, I majored in criminology and my professor told me that I got a very meritorious mark.

CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, what did you say about a corrupt mind? -- I said I majored in criminology. Now I am trying to elaborate on that. But now when it comes to the (20) rendering of my services to the country as the principal of a high school I am not paid as the next man.

ADV. JACOBS: But you said that your professor said that you had a what? -- A meritorious mark.

CHAIRMAN: Oh, I see. Sorry, that is where I misunderstood you.

ADV. JACOBS: You have made your mark now. You can go on. -- Now, it worried me that I am not paid as a White man who has similar qualifications. That is my personal view.

And you also mentioned in consultation the question of home ownership. Is that correct? -- Correct. (30)

Can you just elaborate on that please? -- I have a family

and/...

and I would like to own a home under the scheme that the government has just made public to us. I would be very happy if I could have a home. Even if I depart to the hereafter, I must know at least that my dependants have a place to hide themselves.

And the last point you mentioned. This heading is the day to day relationship between the Black and the White people. What is your view on that? -- I have been here for the past 10 years and I think personally, as the principal of a high school, I go into shops purchasing stuff for my school and what not. I think the relation is improving. It is not what it was when I came to Witbank and I think there is still room for improvement. (10)

Do you think .. (intervenes)

CHAIRMAN: Is it better than it was when you came here? -- I think it is better than it was when I came here. I do not know with the other people; this is as far as I am concerned.

You think it is better but there is still room for improvement. -- Yes, I think there is still room for improvement. (20)

I wonder if you could give me an indication. Is your relationship, well, perhaps it is not quite a fair question, but is your relationship with English-speaking Whites better than with Afrikaans-speaking Whites or is it better with Afrikaans-speaking Whites or is there no difference. -- It is better with the Afrikaans and the English, I would say that, you know, there is, if I am allowed to mention that, there is an organisation, I think they call it the Rapportryers, iets van die aard, elke jaar skenk hulle 'n boek vir die beste leerling in my skool. In die toekoms het hulle dit nie gedoen nie en as ek mag sê, hulle aarsel nie om te sê aan my: (30)

mnr. Kona, en ek voel bly daaroor.

ADV. JACOBS: U bedoel hulle het in die verlede nie hierdie skenking gedoen nie, maar hulle doen dit nou vandat u daar is? -- Ja. Dit is nie al nie. Partykeer word Bybels aan my skool ook aan kinders geskenk en so aan.

Nou, net om dan finale duidelikheid daaroor te kry, sou u dan sê dat die verhouding tussen die Afrikaans-sprekendes en die Swartes is beter as tussen die Engels-sprekendes en die Swartes of sou u sê daar is geen onderskeid nie? -- Daar is geen verskil nie. (10)

Geen verskil nie.

VOORSITTER: Ja, dit is ook eintlik nie heeltemal 'n regverdige vraag nie, maar hoekom het u dan gekies dat Engels die voertaal moet wees? -- Ek sal dit so stel. Ek het verkies dat Engels moet die voertaal wees want in Soweto het studente teen die outoriteit baklei and to make sure that I do not have riots in my school, I had to take English - that is the first reason. And the second reason is my staff, the majority, are at home, more at home in English than in Afrikaans, they impart the knowledge that they have, better in the medium (20) of English than in the medium of Afrikaans. They do not have the language difficulty when it comes to the delivering of a lesson.

I suppose when it comes to mediums in which subjects are taught, would you consider it better to have more mediums or better to have one only or what would you say? -- It is my personal view.

Your personal view. -- I think it is better if one knows more languages than the language that one speaks, because it stands one in good stead when one has to do advance (30) studies. For instance if you have to do, say, your Honours Degree/...

Degree, in my case for instance, I had to have a working knowledge of German, a working knowledge of Hollands. Now if then I had refused the opportunity of meeting another European language in my schooldays I would not have had the difficulty that I had when I was doing my studies. So it would be advisable to have more languages at school than ever, but it should not be pushed down people's throats as a medium. It could be had as perhaps a subject.

You also gave me your personal views of the causes which gave rise to the riots here locally. Can you just (10) mention that to the Commission? -- My personal views are as follows: I think lack of sporting facilities played a contributory part.

Why do you say so? -- Because if you have sports you have something to do.

To occupy yourself. -- Yes, occupy yourself and if you have nothing to do at all, then the devil will have some work for you.

And then you mentioned also the lack of compulsory education in this regard. What do you mean by that? -- By (20) compulsory education I mean that as soon as a child reaches the age of 7 the parents must be forced to send that child to school in order to acquire literacy, because if he is literate he will be in a better position to take his place in the community, he will be in a position to read newspapers, to read novels, to read whatever literature is in his - that is available and yet if he cannot read, some of his time might be used inadvisably, but if he can read the better it is and the world for him, I think, would be richer, particularly the world of ideas. (30)

And you also mentioned under this heading the outside influences/...

influences that you already elaborated on under the heading of the causes of the student riots. No further questions to this witness, Your Lordship.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Dit is nou die laaste getuie. Kan ek u vra om te sorg dat oorgedra word aan almal wat hier gehelp het om die sitting van die Kommissie hier te hou, te bedank vir alles wat hulle gedoen het, dit sluit in ook die amptenare wat hier hulle kantore en hierdie saal tot ons beskikking gestel het, asook enige ander mense, veral die polisie wat ook gehelp het en as daar van die getuies is, (10) vir die feit dat hulle ook hier was.

DIE KOMMISSIE VERDAAG.
