

GRAHAMSTOWN

The further particulars to the indictment (p.79) allege that since September 1984 Grahamstown Civic Association (GRACA), COSAS, NUSAS and SAAWU organised and intimidation, violence and riots occurred.

The following organisations in Grahamstown were affiliated to the UDF: NUSAS, BSM (Black Student's Movement), GRACA (Grahamstown Civic Assosiation) COSAS, SAAWU (South African Allied Workers Union) GCD (Grahamstown Committee of Democrats).

About the Grahamstown activities of SAAWU and GCD there is no evidence. Some BSM documents were found in possession of accused No 22. The state did not rely on them in this context and they will be referred to when the evidence against accused No 22 is discussed. There is no evidence of direct BSM involvement in the violence.

GRACA was launched on 6 November 1983 after two preparatory meetings. Its president Ndwebisa in evidence gave as reason for its formation dissatisfaction about the rent, scarcity of houses and other local problems. He said that there had been no UDF involvement in its formation. We find this hard to accept. In the same issue of Ilizwi (exh W.78) in which the formation of GRACA is described in glowing terms is a report on the formation of the border region of the UDF on 15 October 1983 in Grahamstown. Ilizwi the Grahamstown community

propaganda paper which GRACA used for its statements in the same issue (p.4) saw the formation of peoples organisations like GRACA all around the country as part of the fight against apartheid and in the context of the liberation struggle in the Eastern Cape. It stated that "repressive regimes all over the world - in Mozambique, Angola, Nicaragua, Vietnam - have been overthrown by the organised and united masses".

In an interview a year later published in Ilizwi of October 1984 (exh W.79) GRACA's president stated that the gain GRACA made in the past year was that through public meetings, house to house visits and Ilizwi it had made the people aware that apartheid was the cause of all problems. GRACA worked closely with the UDF around the million signature campaign. They gave the UDF their full support because GRACA and the UDF have a common enemy - apartheid parliaments, dummy town councils and the Bantustans. GRACA and the UDF have a common purpose to organise people to struggle for a non-racial united democratic South Africa.

In the same issue of Ilizwi appears a GRACA statement attacking the "puppet" councils as oppressors of the people. GRACA states that the rejection of Blacks in the Tri-cameral parliament was an injury to the Grahamstown students who thereupon boycotted classes and called for SRC's. The statement evidences the solidarity between the boycotting pupils (led by COSAS) and GRACA and the link between the boycott and the new constitution.

The formation of GRACA, its policy and its situation in the UDF fold conforms to the prevalent pattern - the creation of UDF supporting organisations of the people.

On 1 December 1983 elections were held for a new town council. GRACA called on the people not to vote. There was a 4.6% poll. After this election GRACA by means of pamphlets called on the councillors to resign. They boycotted the official opening of the town council. Their policy was to bypass the town council and deal directly with the Development Board. They called the Rhini council which is the town council of the Black townships of Grahamstown "sell-outs and puppets" and stated that GRACA provided "an alternative to dummy bodies like the community council".

In Ilizwi of May 1984 (exh W.56 p.8) a letter by GRACA's president was published in solidarity with CRADORA on the detention of Goniwe and others. The original sent to CRADORA on 26 April 1984 is exh CA.37. "The vicious, abominable and inhumane racist regime which will one day come to an end" is accused of having committed "an act of cowardice" and it is stated that such actions "will never stop our struggle for the total liberation of the oppressed people". It ends with "Comrades, anything worth having is worth fighting for. Aluta continua." This last phrase comes from the Mozambican revolution and means "the struggle continues" according to a postscript in Ilizwi.

In August 1984 the police came into possession of certain pamphlets. One of them was a GRACA pamphlet attacking the Rhini council. Exh AM.39. The pamphlet lists that the said council is not a people's organisation, that it lets the people pay higher rents, evicts people, arrests people for dog licences and forces people without section 10 rights out of Grahamstown. It states that the Rhini council must be opposed, kicked out and forced not to be in existence in Grahamstown. It states that the Rev Gaqa who had left the church of God had joined the devils of Rhini council. "How long will this wagon of oppression go? Are there people who had been created to be oppressed forever? But GRACA believes that to be oppressed or to be free depends on us".

The vice-chairman of GRACA was chairman of the UDF's housing commission according to exh AAZ.16 a report of that commission found in possession of the chairman of CRADORA on 21 May 1985. Its task was to determine how to utilise the issues of housing and removals for UDF ends.

We find that GRACA was not only affiliated to but wholly supported the UDF with which it had close links.

In August 1984 the BSM and NUSAS inspired a class boycott at the Rhodes University against the elections. Exh AAY.1.

COSAS were heavily involved in the affairs of scholars at Grahamstown. Executive members of the local branch attended the COSAS Eastern Cape regional council held in June 1985 at Katberg where they were on the programme to report on their activities and where a call was made to force and elect SRC's and unite in the schools and become uncontrollable and ungovernable. Exhs CA.43, CA.44 and CA.45.

In 1984 the police came into possession of the COSAS pamphlet exh AAY.7. It calls on students to unite, sets out their grievances and continues "Yesterday the trouble was at Vaal, Soweto, Sebokeng, Port Elizabeth and many other places of this country. The students had seen that there is no other time to fight than this time. Procrastination is a thief of time. We the students of Grahamstown had already started the struggle with other students of our country to get SRC. It is our right to attack at this time as we have already started fighting, let us not stop. Today the dictator government under the witchcraft wing of the Department of Education and Training is trying to give us PRC which is not wanted by us. All those things show that the government is weakening. The blood of Vaal, Thabong, Cradock, Atteridgeville calls upon us to unite with students of other places. Here in Grahamstown wolves who call themselves policemen are trying to threaten some of us, are trying to know our views ... there is only one way to do to let the authorities listen to us, that is boycott".

During the week-end of 29 to 30 September 1984 the launch of the Education Charter Campaign in the Eastern Cape was held in Grahamstown. Committees were elected and rallies held. The campaign was by COSAS, NUSAS, AZASO and NEUSA. Exh AAY.6. After this week-end captain Meister received from an informer exhs AAY.9, AAY.10 and AAY.12. These were song-sheets of which one had the UDF logo on it and contained freedom songs in praise of Mandela; the boers are dogs they must leave our land alone; we are the youth we shall not be killed; we are not going to be killed by the boers; Angena Majoni; Mandela wants soldiers, soldiers for freedom.

The publication of these song-sheets evidences a concerted drive to spread the revolutionary freedom songs. The defence argues that it was not proved where these sheets were found. That is correct. At most one can say that it is likely that they related to the launch. They do evidence, however, the type of songs prevalent.

In view of the type of rallies in so-called progressive circles at the time and the contents of the song-sheets it is probable that during this launch in Grahamstown feelings were aroused. This explains what followed.

On 30 September 1984 at 17h30 a policeman was attacked by a passing group of youths approximately 150 strong led by three wearing COSAS T-shirts. Thereafter this group attacked passing motorists and fourteen cars were seriously damaged. Two persons had to be taken to hospital. The age of the leaders was approximately 18 to 24 years.

It is common cause that since September 1984 there was unrest in Grahamstown. A group threw stones at the police, stones were thrown at vehicles which were damaged, a beerhall and church were burnt down, stones were thrown at houses which were set alight. Business vehicles were set alight, road-blockades were established which impeded the flow of traffic and stones were thrown at the houses of police officials.

COSAS organised the school boycott in Grahamstown. It was politically motivated - in protest against the new constitution according to Ndwebisa. The boycott started on 1 October 1984.

According to a statement by COSAS published in the October 1984 issue of Ilizwi - the community propaganda paper of which it made use - (exh W.79 p.1) the boycott was part of the country-wide boycott against Bantu education. On 1 October 1984 students from Ntsika, Nombulelo and Nyalusa schools walked out of classes, striking for a SRC. On 2 October 1984 the scholars decided to meet at Nombulelo to discuss the boycott. Those of Ntsika and Nyalusa who were on their way there were dispersed by the police. On 3 October 1984 some 3 000 scholars met at Ntsika. They were joined by five primary schools. The police dispersed them. The government closed the schools. The confrontation between scholars and police continued. COSAS saw the closing of the schools as a way of stopping them from demanding their rights. They were not attending classes and this statement can only refer to the demonstrations held illegally at the schools. COSAS further appealed

to the parents and the community in general for assistance, to unite with it in the struggle for a free South Africa, non-racial where the people shall govern.

As we have seen GRACA simultaneously published a statement of solidarity with the scholars.

On 3 October 1984 in Joza Black township at Ntsika Junior Secondary School approximately 300 scholars rioted, armed with sticks, rakes and shovels. They shouted Viva Mandela, Tambo, UDF, COSAS and footsack Botha. A COSAS placard was displayed: "Please go away. We don't need you." Stones were thrown at the police who had to use sjamboks and tear-gas. Sixteen were arrested. Ten were convicted of public violence.

At a meeting at Rhodes University in the first week of October 1984 which was called by the SRC after a student had been injured during the stone-throwing in Raglan Road and feelings on the campus were running high, COSAS and BSM representatives condemned the violence. These seem to have been empty words directed at academics and university students as the violence flared again.

On 9 November 1984 in Tentyi Black township at the funeral of a youth Patrick Ndyogolo an illegal procession on foot was held by about 3 000 persons. There were banners of the UDF and COSAS. Freedom songs were sung and slogans were shouted like Viva Mandela, UDF, COSAS.

Approximately 200 to 300 of these persons were wearing UDF and COSAS T-shirts. After the funeral approximately 100 youths, mostly wearing COSAS and UDF T-shirts broke away and ran towards the main East London/Grahamstown road followed by the crowd. Vehicles were stoned on the main road and a beerhall was set alight and the police were stoned there. That evening a Methodist Church was burnt down. The police only used tear-smoke after the beerhall had been set alight.

After the burning of the Methodist Church caused an outcry COSAS regional organiser issued a press statement on 15 November 1984 dissociating it from the violence and stating the police and army presence were provocative. Exh DA.192. It was not suggested in this court that the police and army had provoked the violence in Grahamstown. In our view this press statement is merely an attempt to exonerate COSAS in the eyes of responsible people in order to achieve an end to the detention of its leadership. No COSAS member was called to refute the state evidence.

COSAS initiated a parents committee to help it in its struggle. As late as 6 January 1985 COSAS refused to end the boycott whereas parents wanted the children to return to school. COSAS demanded that all detained scholars be released first and the children shouted that they did not want to write exams. In the end this school-boycott lasted till 1987.

The violence which occurred does not appear to have been directed at the Rhini town council or its members. It was riotous conduct not directed at targets of a particular nature as we have found elsewhere. It is violence related to the schools boycott and there is no indication that it was related to or caused by any campaign against Black local authorities.

We conclude as follows in respect of Grahamstown:

1. There were links between GRACA and the UDF over and above the affiliation.

2. GRACA repeatedly attacked the Rhini town council verbally in uncomplimentary language and saw itself as part of the liberation struggle.

3. There is no evidence that GRACA advocated violent conduct.

4. The violence was not directed at councillors or their property and was not proved to have been related to any campaign against Black local authorities.

5. The violence was mostly related to the COSAS directed schools boycott and in this violence activists of COSAS played an important role.

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