

GRAAFF-REINET

The further particulars to the indictment (p.80) allege that during 1984 COSAS, UDF, Graaff-Reinet Youth Congress (GRYCO) and Graaff-Reinet Community Organisation (GRAFCOM) organised and intimidation, violence and riots occurred.

The state and defence each called one witness. Detective warrant officer H J Stander was a good witness whereas Charmaine Sam who was a 15 year old school girl at the time of the events, was a false one. We set out our reasons in annexure Z. Her evidence is rejected where it conflicts with that of Stander.

It is common cause that during 1984 three councillors' houses were set alight, that scholars closed a school and detained teachers and that stones were thrown at vehicles and vehicles were set alight. Stones were thrown at six police vehicles and the houses of members of the South African police were stoned. So were the houses of the chairman of the community council and a member thereof. Road-blockades were set up and the flow of traffic was impeded. The big issue is whether any organisations were responsible for this violence.

In February 1984 GRAFCOM and GRYCO were formed. COSAS was formed some time later. At their meetings, which were held by the organisations jointly, banners of the UDF were displayed.

Since the end of February 1984 there were intermittent class boycotts at the Ngweba Secondary School. These lasted nearly the whole of 1984. Children attended the school but refused instruction. There were meetings, slogans, freedom songs and UDF T-shirts were worn openly by some instead of the school uniform.

On 24 April 1984 problems started at Ngweba high school as a result of the prior suspension of a scholar Spiri Pase. He was a youthful activist who was a member of GRYCO. On that day the scholars locked the gate which the police had to break open. Approximately 200 scholars met on the school premises. They shouted slogans like Viva UDF, Viva GRYCO, Viva GRAFCOM. They refused to disperse and were thereupon dispersed by the police. They thereupon set alight the vehicle of The Department of Education and Training and attacked with stones the houses of a policeman and the headmaster. The vehicle of the headmaster was set alight. Spiri Pase was arrested and convicted of public violence. Photo's found in his possession show that he had been actively involved in the UDF million signature campaign which was conducted in Graaff-Reinet by GRAFCOM and GRYCO.

In April 1984 a GRAFCOM meeting was held on community councils and local authorities at which these institutions were attacked as dummy institutions and the participants therein called puppets. The defence attempts to cast doubt on the evidence of Stander about the date GRAFCOM came into existence by referring to exhs ABA.6 and ABA.7. In our view the date 24 July 1984 in exh ABA.6 probably refers to a rally. A lot of past GRAFCOM activity is indicated, including a reference to 16 June 1984. It may be that the official launch of GRAFCOM was some time after its initial formation.

During 1984 slogans were painted on walls UDF, ANC, Mandela, Sizulu, Tambo, etc.

On 16 June 1984 there was an illegal gathering of 100-150 persons which was dispersed by the police.

Miss Sam testified that the local COSAS branch was formed in mid 1984 and was purely a local effort. We reject her evidence that there was no liaison with the COSAS regional body. The school boycott of August 1984 to December 1984 at Asherville, Spandau and Ngweba high schools, organised by COSAS, was clearly related to the elections for the Tri-cameral parliament and in response to a COSAS national call. This is borne out by GRAFCOM Nuus (exh ABA.6) and the existence of a close link with the COSAS regional structure as evidenced by exhs CA.43 and CA.44.

There were close links between GRYCO and COSAS. The president of GRYCO Peyi was a member of COSAS and the chairman of COSAS Mbotya was a member of GRYCO. Sandile Ntswayi, allegedly shot on 15 November 1984 during the attack, was a member of both organisations, and Spiri Pase while at school was a member of GRYCO. Pase's group on photo's AAY.26 and 28 involved in the million signature campaign gave the ANC salute and the GRYCO banner held aloft by its president on photo AAY.63 is also accompanied by some giving that salute. The colours of the banner are those of the ANC. (We bear in mind that we do not know when this photograph was taken). The two youth organisations of Graaff-Reinet were probably led by radical activists.

On 8 August 1984 a GRAFCOM and GRYCO meeting was held against the election for the Coloured House of Representatives. Prominent UDF leaders spoke like the reverend Alan Boesak and reverend Chris Nissen. The meeting was advertised as a GRAFCOM UDF meeting. Exh ABA.4. There were GRAFCOM, GRYCO and COSAS banners. At this meeting UDF song-sheets of August 1984 were placed on a table. Exh ABA.5. The sheet contains freedom songs praising Mandela, stating he prescribes freedom, SWAPO shall never be defeated by Botha's regime, Angena Majoni (the soldiers of Africa come in; let us go and do the work of Africa), Siphamandla Qamata Besibulala (Lord give us strength when they kill us), Thina silulutshe (we the youth will not be killed by the Boers), Unzima lumthwalo (we want freedom, we don't care if we are arrested).

On 15 November 1984 the houses of the chairman and vice-chairman of the Community Council were attacked as was the house of a constable. Immediately after the attack a pamphlet (exh ABA.7) was found in the street in front of the chairman's house. It is entitled GRAFCOM Nuus. It contains phrases such as the people shall govern; we shall have our freedom and "ons glo dat die mense moet regeer; ons soek nie leiers soos Koeberg en Mpepho (chairman of the Community Council) nie want hulle werk vir hulle eie sak, hulle word ryk en doen niks vir ons mense nie, ons regte leiers is op Robbeneiland en in die tronke ... Ons glo dat Nelson Mandela sal vry word en ons lei Amandla Ngawethu". There is further a statement that GRAFCOM led boycotts against the collaborators and a cartoon of a policeman, rifle in hand saying "skiet vrek" when confronted with people who are saying they are hungry, bearing a GRAFCOM banner. The South African Government is called Anti-Christ and the question is asked how many people still have to die before we get our freedom. An hour after the attack the Rev Chris Nissen's vehicle was stopped and searched in the Black Township. It was occupied by inter alia Kuboni the president of GRAFCOM who had signed exh ABA.7 and the used wax-sheet of that exhibit was found in the cubby-hole of the vehicle.

After the attacks on 15 November 1984 all councillors resigned. The office of the township superintendent and all Black policemen moved out of the township. A small percentage only of the inhabitants now pay the rent.

There is no evidence that GRAFCOM or GRYCO were affiliated to the UDF. There is proof of a close link between GRAFCOM, GRYCO and the UDF.

The state attempts to link the organisations to the violence on 15 November 1984 through exh ABA.7. In our view the evidence about the finding of it in the street and the wax sheets thereof in the car do not prove that GRAFCOM organised the violence. At best for the state it raises a suspicion of involvement.

Exh ABA.7 does, however, evidence that GRAFCOM intentionally sought to raise feelings of hatred in the community against the councillors and the police. GRAFCOM was according to its own showing in exh ABA.6 very active politically. It emphasised that there was exploitation and oppression, it spread UDF propaganda, it organised two conferences, held disco's and a video show, arranged the 16 June commemoration, organised a hotel boycott and conducted house to house visits. It is probable that the type of propaganda against councillors and the police contained in exh ABA.7 would have been spread on all these occasions.

As against this the defence points out the following matters in exh ABA.6, the GRAFCOM Nuus. It is stated that the school boycott emanates from AZASO and COSAS, not from the UDF and that pupils were busy with a responsible and disciplined boycott and that the anniversary of the UDF would be held in a peaceful and orderly manner.

The defence further emphasises that there is no evidence that at GRAFCOM or GRYCO meetings violence was advocated. There is very little state evidence about the contents of speeches and the defence evidence is unreliable.

We conclude as follows in respect of Graaff-Reinet:

1. During 1984 GRYCO, GRAFCOM and COSAS were active in Graaff-Reinet.
2. GRAFCOM stridently attacked the councillors calling them collaborators, self-enriching, dummies and puppets and whipped up feelings of hatred in the Black community against them and the South African police. These attacks by GRAFCOM directly contributed to the political climate against the councillors and police which led to the violence on 15 November 1984 after which the councillors resigned and the Black policemen moved out of the township. It cannot be determined who organised this attack.
3. There were close links between GRAFCOM and the UDF though there is no proof of affiliation.

DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985-1989

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers, The University of the Witwatersrand

Location:- Johannesburg

©2009

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- **AK2117-K2117-L9-7**

Document Title:- **Graaff-Reinet 571-577**