

LEANDRA

The further particulars to the indictment as amended (p.80) allege that during 1984 Leandra Action Committee organised and violence and riots occurred.

The Black community of Leandra had certain grievances. There had been a threat that they would be removed to Kwa Ndebele and there was a serious housing shortage. To alleviate the shortage a new township was under construction in January 1984 with accommodation for approximately 700 families and more to come. The spectre of removal continued to haunt Leandra by means of press reports.

The community council was elected in October 1983. At the time the notice calling the election had mistakenly stated that the term of office of the councillors would be one year, whereas in law it was three years. Exh AAQ.42.

The Leandra Action Committee which existed in Leandra put up candidates in the election of 1983. Some were elected. Abel Nkabinde was defeated. Within the next few months the Leandra Action Committee established a working relationship with the UDF. Its relationship with the community council deteriorated.

In January 1984 a press report stated that the chief director of the Highveld Development Board had said that over 18 000 residents of Leandra would be resettled in Kwa Ndebele. A public meeting was held and the Leandra Action Committee approached its lawyers to write a letter to the Development Board and the councillors approached the board. The report had been false, it seems.

On 8 June 1984 a report appeared in the Rand Daily Mail that 116 families were in limbo as they might be moved to Kwa Ndebele. The Leandra Action Committee opposed the threats according to the report. Nkabinde is ex facie the report the informant. Exh AAQ.45. This report caused uncertainty in Leandra. More than three meetings were held. Lawyers wrote a letter. On 20 June 1984 the chief commissioner informed the community council at a meeting in Leandra that there was no removal intended and that these 116 families who were resident in the old township could stay. (It is significant that this furore started just after the UDF officers had on 1 June 1984 told the NEC that more systematic intervention in Leandra was required - as we discuss later.)

In July/August 1984 Nkabinde called the councillors "sell-outs to the boere".

People who in May/June 1984 were temporarily located pending the building of new houses in the old location were told by the Leandra Action Committee that they would be moved to Kwa Ndebele. This was false.

At a meeting held by the community council in August/September 1984 the ratio behind the temporary relocation of inhabitants was explained and accepted by the public. Yet the Action Committee thereafter continued to say that the people were being removed to Kwa Ndebele.

The next issue in which Nkabinde and the Leandra Action Committee had a hand was the call for resignation of the councillors and re-election on the basis of their alleged one year tenure of office. Despite the fact that the councillors told them what the magistrate had advised in respect of the legal position and despite the magistrate's letter to that effect of 12 September 1984 (exh AAQ.43) the Leandra Action Committee persisted and called a meeting on 21 October 1984 which resolved that the community councillors resign as they were only elected for a year. Exh. AAQ.44.

When informed of the magistrate's advice Nkabinde refused to listen and told the witness ic.19 that the councillors would get an accident should they not move out of office. Mayisa of the Leandra Action Committee told the witness ic.19 on another occasion that should he not resign as a councillor they would set his house alight.

We have carefully considered the defence submission that this evidence should be rejected but find that this argument is without substance. We refer in this respect to annexure Z. Though it was put that Nkabinde would testify, he was not called by the defence.

It will be noted that Nkabinde only wrote the letter (exh AAQ.44) informing the councillors of the meeting's resolutions on 15 November 1984.

There was no violence till 28 October 1984. On that day a second meeting was held by the community council to explain the situation. Nkabinde and his cohorts attempted to prevent the people from entering the hall. When the meeting started the Action Committee entered singing freedom songs and shouted slogans. The meeting was disrupted. Nkabinde was dressed in a UDF T-shirt. Thereafter the Action Committee singing freedom songs marched away in the direction of the house of the witness ic.19, a councillor, and shortly thereafter his house and truck were set alight. The damage amounted to R12 800. On that same day the shop and house of councillor Maretsjane were attacked.

On 19 November 1985 there was a further attack on the house of councillor ic.19. It was again set alight causing damage of R1 300. The houses of councillors Maretsjane and Skosana were also attacked.

In November 1985 the witness ic.20, a councillor, resigned from the council. The reason was the attempted arson of his house and threats to do so by school children.

There is no evidence that the Leandra Action Committee was affiliated to the UDF. There were however close links between these two bodies.

On 31 December 1983 members of the REC Transvaal attended and addressed a public meeting in Leandra. A working relationship was established with the Leandra Action Committee. Exh 0.2.

On 21 January 1984 the UDF Transvaal reported to the NEC that a very close working relationship existed between the powerful Leandra Action Committee and the UDF Transvaal. Exh T.3.

The million signature campaign of the UDF was also launched in Leandra. There is however no evidence of Leandra Action Committee involvement. Exh AAC.47 p.2.

On the issue of removals the UDF offices reported to the NEC on 1 June 1984 that the UDF has a limited presence in Leandra but has not done enough. "We must begin to intervene in a more systematic way." Exh G.2 p.4.

Exh C.99, a report on a civic workshop found in the Johannesburg offices of the UDF on 23 July 1985, indicates that the Leandra Action Committee attended this workshop which was held in 1984 or 1985. The other groups who are set out as participants are UDF affiliates and it was probably a UDF workshop. The Leandra Action Committee is reported as dependent on Johannesburg which might indicate a close link with the Johannesburg office of the UDF.

This workshop was not the same as the UDF Daleside workshop for civics held in April 1984 where the Leandra Action Committee was a speaker on the programme and where it was stated that the aim was to destroy all Black local authorities. Exh U.4(a).

The Transvaal UDF Occurrence Book (exh AM.15 pp.2 and 27) records that on 13 September 1984 Abel Nkabinde of Leandra telephoned. He wanted a speaker for the funeral of Johas Maselela on Saturday as well as a reporter of the Sowetan, Dr Kismer, accused No 16 and a bishop to officiate at the service.

On 29 October 1984 there is an entry in this book that comrade Abel Nkabinde and another comrade from Leandra are detained following the disturbances in that area. The Leandra Action Committee needed advice as it was planning a mass meeting on Saturday.

The REC of the UDF Transvaal on 1 November 1984 agreed that Pat Lephunya should go to Leandra for a general discussion with people interested in the UDF. Exh S.14.

We conclude as follows in respect of Leandra:

1. There were close links between the Leandra Action Committee and the UDF.
2. Leandra Action Committee office-bearers campaigned against and threatened the community councillors and the Leandra Action Committee disrupted their meeting on 28 October 1984. It thereafter had a hand in the attack on the house of the witness ic.19.

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