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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

"THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE":¹

Personal reflections on the impact of the 1985 class/school boycott on a Cape Town High School community and the development of learning materials on this boycott for a history course.

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY EDUCATION

BY

BARBARA DELANEY HOUGHTON

SEPTEMBER 2000

¹ The title of this dissertation was inspired by Baruch Hirson, who wrote, "To tell the story is little enough. Events do not occur fortuitously, nor are they preordained. Real live people have made history recounted here, and... it is their actions which have to be understood". Hirson, B. 1979. *Year of Fire, Year of Ash*, London, ZED Press, 1.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is divided into two parts as required for the coursework Masters degree in History Education.

Part I is a study of a high school community's participation in a regional and nationwide class/school boycott, from July 1985 to January 1986. It analyses how this event affected the community, and how the community responded to the authoritarianism of apartheid rule at critical moments during the course of the boycott. A key factor identified, is the solidarity of the community, which was responsible for its ultimate victory, *albeit* a small one, against the minority-elected apartheid state. The account provides evidence that this solidarity was the key and most effective weapon used by the school community during the 1985/6 class/school boycott period. It was evident when school communities re-opened their schools closed by the state in September 1985, in the discussions on the postponement of the 1985 final examinations, by the parental support shown for suspended and dismissed teachers in December 1985, and finally, on the day when teachers were allowed to return to their posts in January 1986.

The primary source of data for the study is oral interviews conducted by the researcher. Questions were asked about the daily issues, events, emotive responses, ordeals experienced and decisions made when students from the oppressed community used the one weapon at their disposal, namely the boycott, to protest against the inequalities within the education system and South African society.

Interviewees included staff, students, parents and members of political and teacher organisations associated with the school, referred to as Central High, during the 1985/6 boycott period. The answers elicited provided the evidence on which to construct an historical account of how ordinary men, women and children engaged in a struggle and challenged oppression at a local, community level.

(ii)

Part II comprises learning materials for a module of history on the 1985/6 class/school boycott, developed for learners at Grade 9 level. Current learners in South African schools were not even born in 1985. They need to know this history because it is *their* history. The materials contribute to the history of resistance in South Africa which is currently being taught and learnt at school level.

The module has been constructed on the principles of source-based history teaching and the notion that learners learn history by "doing" what historians do. It provides a selection of historical skills, values and knowledge to enable a reconstruction of the history contained in Part I in the classroom. The approaches used include the search for evidence on the 1985/6 class/school boycott from source materials by understanding, critically examining, analysing, reasoning, detecting bias, interpreting and communicating answers to the questions and/or problems posed.

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I acknowledge that this dissertation is my own work and accept responsibility for the interpretations and content.

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Finally, to my mom, Agnes, and deceased dad, Bill, for inspiring in me a love of learning and teaching.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the text of this dissertation.

ANC	African National Congress
ANTI-CAD	Anti the establishment of the Coloured Affairs Department
APDUSA	The African Peoples' Democratic Union of South Africa
ASAC	Athlone Students' Action Committee
AZAPO	Azanian Peoples' Organisation
CAC	Coloured Advisory Council
CAL	Cape Action League
CATSAC	Cape Town Student Action Committee
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CTCC	Concerned Teachers' Coordinating Committee
CTPA	Cape Teachers' Professional Association
DEC	Department of Education and Culture
DET	Department of Education and Training
DEFU	Democratic Teachers' Union
EDASA	Education for an Aware South Africa
ISCC	Inter-School Coordinating Committee
HoD	House of Delegates
HoR	House of Representatives
HSS	Human and Social Sciences
IRF	Inter-Regional Forum
MIPSAC	Mitchell's Plain Student Action Committee
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement

NEUSA	National Education Union of South Africa
NF	National Forum
NUM	New Unity Movement
OBE	outcomes-based education
PTSA	Parent-Teacher-Student Association
RMC	Release Mandela Committee
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACHED	South African Committee on Higher Education
SACOS	South African Council on Sport
SADF	South African Defence Force
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAP	South African Police
SATV	South African television
SOYA	Students of Young Azania
SRC	Student Representative Council
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa
TV	television
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WECSAC	Western Cape Students Action Committee
WECSCO	Western Cape Students Congress
WECTU	Western Cape Teachers' Union
WPSSSU	Western Province Senior Schools' Sports Union
WYNSAC	Wynberg Student Action Committee

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University of Cape Town

INTRODUCTION

A victory for unity

This study tells a story about a moment in history when a microscopic high school community challenged the repressive, militarist apartheid state and won a significant victory, *albeit* a small one!

The challenge took place within the context of the class/school boycott, which began in the Western Cape on 29 July 1985 and was temporarily called off by the NECC on 18 January 1986. Students in 80 high schools under the authority of the Departments of Education and Culture in the Houses of Representatives and Delegates as well as those under the Department of Education and Training in the Western Cape¹ participated in and supported the class/school boycott. This study explores how and why one school community won a moral victory.

The events and issues during the 1985/1986 class/school boycott on a local, regional and national level impacted on the Central High School community, the name of the school chosen for the purposes of this dissertation.²

The voices of the people, namely, the pupils, staff, parents and public whose allegiances supported the community's struggle, have been captured and recounted.

¹ The Tricameral Parliamentary system of government was introduced by the National Party Government in South Africa in 1983 and elections were held in 1984. This system entrenched apartheid and separate development ideologies by introducing three different Houses to represent three "racial" groups. People classified white were represented in the House of Assembly. People classified coloured were represented in the House of Representatives. People classified Indian were represented in the House of Delegates. The low percentage poll indicated that the oppressed people outrightly rejected the tricameral system. In 1984, Central High was under the authority of the House of Representatives.

² The *nom de plume*, Central High, was used because interviewees associated with the school requested anonymity. The researcher felt that she elicited more personal, emotive recollections by agreeing to this.

Central High School, founded in January 1951, is situated in the heart of the area known as District Six. Its students came from this catchment area and it served the oppressed community classified coloured in terms of the 1950 Population Registration Act.³ It had protested against the forced removals of families from District Six from 1966 onwards.

In 1966, the apartheid government proclaimed District Six a classified white group area. The school community's resistance to these forced removals of families in the area fell on deaf ears. An ex-student, ex-teacher and ex-principal of the school recalled,

The school was an integral part of District Six which was flattened by bulldozers, protected by armed police... every day during this traumatic event in the history of our country, we stood at the fences with placards and posters, protesting at the inhumane actions of the state. All around us the homes of a number of our students were simply flattened. Bloemhof Flats became a ghost town.⁴

Davenport⁵ explained the impact that these forced removals had on the community. By the end of 1972,

44 885 Coloured and 27 694 Indian families had been moved... the Coloured people of the western Cape had seen the central area of Cape Town proclaimed for the white group in 1965, which meant that permits had to be obtained for Coloured people to attend the traditionally multi-racial occasions - concerts, receptions, public meetings and so on - in the Cape Town city hall or on the Grand Parade. District Six, Kalk Bay and Simonstown were all proclaimed white Group Areas in 1966-7, which involved the displacement of families whose ancestors had lived there since the days of the Dutch East India Company...

³ In terms of this act, all South Africans were classified into four distinct racial groups, namely, white, coloured, Indian and black.

⁴ The 50th Anniversary Brochure. 2000. *Reflections of an ex-student, ex-teacher and ex-principal*. Cape Town, 15. The name of the school, referred to as Central High, is not disclosed.

⁵ Davenport, T.R.H. 1977. *South Africa, A Modern History*, (Second Edition). Johannesburg: Macmillan, 304-5.

The families of students attending Central High were forcibly uprooted and moved to areas at least 30 kilometres away from the city centre, an area commonly referred to as the Cape Flats. However, families continued to send their children to Central High, their *Alma Mater*.

Central High School itself was threatened with forced removal. The site was earmarked to be the entrance and garden for a refurbished Bloemhof Flats. The community refused to move from its site. In retaliation, the government refused to upgrade the building. If the school wanted to be upgraded, it would have to move to another site and be rebuilt.

In 1985, the bulldozers reappeared. This time the object was not to remove the bricks in the wall, but the members of the community within those walls.

This dissertation concerns how and why the Central High School community showed solidarity at this particular moment in its history. The solidarity during the 1985 class/school boycott became a key factor in opposing the bulldozing actions of a government bent on destroying the principles and values on which the community at Central High had been built.

Oral sources quoted in this dissertation reflect the politics, ideology, emotion, suspicions, boredom, roles and tasks experienced by people teaching, learning and/or associated with Central High. Interviewees gave insight into the debates, discussions and activities which took place at the school and within the organisational structures to which they were aligned or became aligned.

Eleven interviews were conducted. Of the eleven interviewees, five were teachers, three were students and two were parents at Central High during the period being researched. Two interviewees held Executive positions in WECTU. All interviewees agreed that the interviews could be taped. Nine were interviewed at their own homes, one at a local swimming pool in District Six and one at Central High itself. This

interviewee was a student at the school in 1985 and now teaches at the school. Nine out of the eleven asked to remain anonymous and so for the purpose of continuity all interviewees remain anonymous. The interviewer/researcher respected the requests of some interviewees not to divulge certain information given in the course of an interview. In addition to the interviews, the researcher managed to record some views on the period while conversing with colleagues who taught or studied at Central High during the 1985 class/school boycott. In some instances, these comments and remarks have been included.

The status of the interviewees is given below. Ten were either parents, teachers or students at Central High School in 1985 and one was the Chairperson of WECTU in 1985:

- Interview A: The Deputy Principal suspended in 1985
- Interview B: A staff member detained in 1985
- Interview C: A Senior staff member and a parent of students at the school suspended in 1985
- Interview D: A Subject Head
- Interview E: A Subject Head
- Interview F: The SRC Treasurer and a student in 1985
- Interview G: A student
- Interview H: A student
- Interview I: The Chairperson of WECTU, who was detained in 1985
- Interview J: A parent of a student at the school
- Interview K: An executive member of WECTU and a temporary teacher in 1985

It was unfortunate that some teachers and students, for whatever reasons, did not want to be interviewed.

They willingly gave information, newsletters, booklets and so on, but refrained from answering questions .

The Chairperson of the school's SRC and leading members in WECSAC and WECTU agreed to answer questionnaires in writing. These were posted and received by them, but no response was forthcoming after many requests.⁶

The question schedule used at the interviews is included in appendix 2.

In 1985 Central High School, a public school, was under the authority of the House of Representatives, formerly the Coloured Affairs Department. The Central High community rejected the tricameral parliamentary system, which it nicknamed a puppet show because it remained obvious that the apartheid government held all the strings. The 1985 class/school boycott placed the Central High community in direct confrontation with the House of Representatives, which was in charge of education for classified coloured students.

⁶ The researcher believes that the experiences of students were traumatic and painful during the course of the boycott period and felt that it was inappropriate to ask for reasons why some were reluctant to answer questions.

CHAPTER 1

Where do we belong?

Political groupings and influences among the staff

When the initial boycott of classes commenced at Central High School on 29 July 1985, the number of staff members totalled 37. In addition to the Principal and Deputy Principal, there were five Senior Staff members and 30 secondary assistants. In 1984, the tricameral system was introduced and Central High was under the control of the Department of Education and Culture in the House of Representatives. All teachers classified white, Indian and black at the school were not entitled to permanent positions and held temporary posts, subject to 24 hours' notice. Of the 30 secondary assistants, 11 were in temporary posts.

Political groupings/affiliations did not reflect the racial or class positions of staff members at Central High. All teachers could be described as middle class. In 1985 the major extra-parliamentary political organisations or political parties, included the banned African National Congress, the banned Pan African Congress, The Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), which re-launched itself as the New Unity Movement (NUM) in 1985, The African People's Democratic Union of South Africa (APDUSA), the South African Council of Sport (SACOS), the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), The Cape Action League (CAL), which emerged out of the Disorderly Bills Action Committee of 1982-83, The Release Mandela Committee, The United Democratic Front, a front for the ANC in exile, The Call to Islam, and Let South Africa Speak.⁷

In 1985, the major teacher organizations were the Teachers' League of South Africa, an arm of the NEUM and later the NUM, the Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA), The National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA) and three progressive teacher organizations, formed during the turmoil of the 1985 boycott, namely, The Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU), The Democratic Teachers' Union

⁷ Matiwana, M. & Walters, S. 1986. *The Struggle for Democracy*. University of the Western Cape, 97.

(DETU) and Education for an Aware South Africa (EDASA). Staff members at Central High, who belonged to teacher organisations, either belonged to the TLSA or WECTU.

At Central High there was a perception that the majority of staff members was affiliated to the NUM in 1985, and its teacher arm, namely, the TLSA. In 1985, this grouping tended to work partly in an underground way, but its views were known and voiced in staff discussions and debates. The aim of the NUM was

to build a single, undivided, independent, non-racial South Africa in which the interests of the workers and the rural poor shall be paramount, to build the unity of workers and rural poor under the leadership of the working class in the struggle for national liberation and freedom from exploitation, the dismantling of the Homelands system and of Apartheid in all its forms - political, economic, social, educational and cultural, to establish a single democratic parliament and to end foreign domination... and to wage relentless battle against all local agents who serve the causes of foreign domination and exploitation

(Matiwana and Walters, 1986: 97).⁸

Interviewee A, although a member of the Cape Action League, felt that "the predominant organisation was the Teachers' League to the extent that members of staff reflected most of the views, opinions, stances of the Teachers' League and Unity Movement, but this does not mean that there were not other tendencies".⁹

Interviewee B, a TLSA member, felt that "as far as influencing or making an impression on the rest of the staff in discussions and having to solve certain problems on the staff", it was definitely "the TLSA/Unity Movement Grouping" that played this role.¹⁰

From the school's foundation years most of the teachers had been NEUM/TLSA members, but retirements and the increased number of teachers on the staff had altered this. In 1985, there were only six staff members who were actively involved in the NUM and TLSA in comparison with five staff members who were members of the CAL.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Interviewee A, the Deputy Principal of the school in 1985. Interview was conducted on 22.02.2000.

¹⁰ Interviewee B, a staff member at the school in 1985. Interview was conducted on 22.03.2000.

The teachers who joined the staff in the early 1980s, acknowledged that both the Unity Movement and CAL members had an influence. Interviewee D, a CAL member said, "There were essentially two camps at the school... the Cape Action League oriented people and... the Unity Movement, which was still pretty much an underground kind of organization. I mean they weren't out in the open so their members were largely Teachers' League, which was pretty much itself a subterranean organisation at that point".¹¹

The aim of the CAL was "to understand that the cause of all worker problems is the system of racial capitalism. The struggle of the workers is against this system and needs the unity of the organisations of the exploited and oppressed". (Matiwana & Walters, 1986: 97).¹²

Interviewee D felt that

the bulk of the people (staff) were not involved. There was a very large Teachers' League/Unity Movement grouping at the school. Then there was a smaller group associated with CAL. Half the staff were not involved. The direct involvement in ANC or ANC affiliates were not many at the time as far as I was aware. It is also crucial to make the point that there were people at the school who may have had sympathies with the more kind of Charterist¹³ lines, but they didn't have the space at the school to be able to articulate that kind of position.¹⁴

Interviewee C disagreed,

I don't know if there were any ANC people, quite honestly. Who would have been ANC? ... if there were, they didn't give an indication. I think there were many non-aligned people really... that is what one gathered from discussions and there might have been one or two Progressive Party or Nationalist Party for all we know, but people didn't make an issue of their political allegiances...¹⁵

¹¹ Interviewee D, a Subject Head at the school in 1985. Interview was conducted on 01.04.2000.

¹² Matiwana, Mizana & Walters, Shirley. 1986. *The Struggle for Democracy*. University of the Western Cape, 97.

¹³ Charterist refers to the organisations and people who subscribe to the Freedom Charter, drawn up at the Congress of the People held in Kliptown, Johannesburg in 1956. The African National Congress subscribes to this Charter.

¹⁴ Interviewee D.

¹⁵ Interviewee C, a senior staff member and a parent of students at the school in 1985. Interview was conducted on 03.04.2000.

Interviewee K recalled a recent conversation with a colleague who had taught at the school in 1985 and said, "Ag, my husband voted Nationalist, so did I, but I'm not interested in politics. I just listened to others arguing in the staff room, but I stayed in my room and did my job".¹⁶

Interviewee K knew that two staff members had voted for the Progressive Party and expressed dismay with the politics and political discussions taking place at Central High. Both staff members resigned in the course of the following year.

Eleven staff members were actively involved in extra-parliamentary, political organisations. Of the thirty-seven staff members, twenty-six joined WECTU at its official launch on 29 September 1985. Five CAL members on the staff held executive positions on WECTU's regional structures. Prior to the launch of WECTU, fifteen teachers at Central High had participated in an interim organisation called the Concerned Teachers' Coordinating Committee (CTCC), the forerunner to WECTU. Interviewee A explained why there was a need for a newer form of a progressive teachers' organisation,

There was, during this period a tendency for teachers... to form alternative teachers' organisations to the Teachers' League and Cape Teachers' Professional Association... at the time there seemed a need, politically, for a newer form of teacher organisation reflecting the needs of teachers in terms of salaries and working conditions.... WECTU reflected an alternative. Rather than going in the direction of the ANC, it was an independent body, independent of the media, independent of structures, which reflected the Congress, but very, very progressive... whilst the TLSA reflected politically and ideologically the progressive standpoint; the active involvement wasn't to the satisfaction of many of the teachers... so YES there were those teachers in the struggle who certainly played a much more active role in support of the students and found themselves gravitating towards the alternative teachers' structures.¹⁷

Interviewee B suggested another reason why the staff members joined WECTU in September 1985,

People in WECTU had been members of the Teachers' League and had left and wanted to be part of what was going on.... Now, because they saw the legitimacy of that kind of action they were prepared to lend their weight and support... But our point of distancing ourselves from this whole movement was that we could see where it was coming from. It was... orchestrated from UDF and other groupings that did not want to be part of the Unity Movement grouping.¹⁸

¹⁶ Interviewee K in conversation with a former colleague. 06.02.2000.

¹⁷ Interviewee A.

¹⁸ Interviewee B.

Interviewee C agreed with the above view.

Teachers felt that they needed to belong to a teachers' organization. Now many of them in the past couldn't be bothered, but when the heat was on they had to show where they stood. Flying your colours. You had to be able to say I belong to so and so because that is a progressive organization because people at that time were very aware of who was on the side of collaboration and who was not. And many teachers were conservative, because they were more professional than anything else, and they looked after their own interests and then it became in their interest to belong to a community organization and WECTU was seen as such an organization.... They couldn't bring themselves to join the Teachers' League because it was very underground still and they didn't want to be seen to be... on the other side.¹⁹

The school was affiliated to the Western Province Senior Schools Sports Union (WPSSSU) and six staff members held Executive positions in the Union. The WPSSSU was organised under the umbrella of The South African Council on Sport (SACOS), which was at the forefront of the struggle for non-racial sport in South Africa. Although all teachers at the school assisted with sport, including the annual inter-schools athletics competitions, five teachers participated in sporting activities organised by racial sporting bodies, but their participation was not widely known. If it was, it was never raised as an issue.

It appeared that staff members aligned or partial to the ANC/UDF remained silent in the midst of the dominant Unity Movement/CAL positions. The senior staff or those who had been at Central High for over ten years were members of the NUM/TLSA or CAL. The aims of these two active political groupings on the staff, as outlined earlier, were not ideologically opposed to each other. The difference related more to a question of how to fulfil these aims. At Central High, staff members affiliated to NUM and CAL were never openly at loggerheads. In fact, co-operation was the key to the achievement of a united staff position during the course of the boycott. Both groups were committed to the school's mission statement, namely, "to provide a non-sexist, non-racial, anti-racist education to the children of the community... to maintain a standard of academic excellence which will equip our pupils to play a meaningful and constructive role in the community..."²⁰

¹⁹ Interviewee C.

²⁰ The school's mission statement was published in the annual prospectus. In 1985, the word, non-sexist was not yet included in the statement.

The impact that staff members had on the students at Central High is of equal importance. Interviewee B said that she didn't know "if there had been continuous politicisation of all students, but certainly those who had been taught by Unity Movement/TLSA Groupings, they would have got regular political education."²¹ Interviewee H insisted that the CAL teachers had more influence because "they were more outspoken".²²

In contrast, Interviewee F, a student, argued that the teachers affiliated to the NUM were more subtle in their approach, "We had a *Tale of Two Cities* in Standard 7, which was about revolution, about change, and I think the teacher was able in the way she taught... to deal with some of the issues and say is it right and how do we challenge these issues?"²³

Interviewee C said that during the 1985 boycott period, "pupils would discuss with many teachers as to what their next course of action ought to be. How they were to interpret events and how they were to report back... so definitely teachers had an influence... inside and outside of school".²⁴

The influence of individual teachers is not underestimated by those interviewed. Teachers and students at Central High acknowledge the influence and role of individuals in the conscientisation of oppressed students during the Apartheid era.

The role of one teacher should not be minimised. Interviewee D referred to him as

A catalyser... who did far more work at the school than anybody else. Far more work... and I think that if people begin to tot up a balance sheet that he is certainly head and shoulders above anybody else in terms of deliberate politicizing... There was very much more active recruitment of young people into structures. Very much more open political address if you like.... Different students might have been frightened by particular approaches and preferred the more sedate and kind of non-intrusive approaches of people.²⁵

²¹ Interviewee B.

²² Interviewee H, a student in her matriculation year in 1985. The interview was conducted on 01.03.2000.

²³ Interviewee F, a student in his matriculation year in 1985 and the treasurer of the school's Student Representative Council in 1985. The interview was conducted on 03.04.2000.

²⁴ Interviewee C.

²⁵ Interviewee D.

Interviewee F agreed,

I cherish what he did in terms of opening my... our minds politically. I thought at times he went a bit overboard personally, but I think overall it was good, it was good for me... if I look at our political consciousness, it started in Std 7 when students were exposed to a different view because Central was predominantly a middle class school.... Parents were more professional people... 1982 was the first year that Students' Day was initiated... every class represented a country in Africa. We went through the liberation struggles of the countries and we... hey... we chose Azania.... If I look back... we used to have this word, socialism. If you had a packet of chips, we said socialism and you had to share it with us. If you had sweets, we said socialism, you had to share.... It was quite intimidating for some kids... but these ideas came out of our History class.²⁶

All interviewees were unaware of the views expressed by others on the roles of teachers during the 1985 class/school boycott and yet all three mention the significant political role played by one teacher.

Interviewee G referred to the same teacher and said,

He used his teaching post as a political platform and he was very articulate.... He came into class and he wasn't wearing a suit... he didn't tell us to open our books or even greet the class. He just said, in every society we have two groups of people, the rulers and the ruled, and we were expecting black and white... he took the class position and his position did not go unchallenged. There were people in class who were prepared to challenge... we were prepared... there were others in the class who supported his position.... He had dropped a seed in the classroom and we in the class were going to take different positions and the debate became highly polarized sometimes, often even name-calling.²⁷

Did teachers indoctrinate students? An emphatic yes from Interviewee C, who added that "it's very difficult to pinpoint exactly how it was... one didn't know what people were discussing with pupils and then how far their views held sway in different forums, unless you were a member of the Special Branch... then one would know exactly what was going on..."²⁸

Interviewee G strongly believed that teachers did not indoctrinate pupils,

I don't think teachers shaped our minds. They drew and made things clearer for us. They drew the veil away and we were able to take a critical view of life so that when I was in my first year of varsity, people were able to say that I had developed a particular type of analysis that was rare, but it wasn't rare for us.... We had come in from a different school".²⁹

²⁶ Interviewee F.

²⁷ Interviewee G, a student in his matriculation year in 1985. Interview was conducted on 25.03.2000.

²⁸ Interviewee C.

²⁹ Interviewee G.

Interviewee A concurred that there was no indoctrination, but that

there were a group of teachers at the school that... had a political agenda in terms of the struggle and that political input by teachers certainly resulted in the strengthening of the SRC. It resulted in the students being extremely involved, extremely active and able to express themselves and to play a role in the student leadership of the struggle, not only at the school itself, but in the community, and hold positions within those structures".³⁰

Some students were upset by overt politicisation,

There was a lot of tension... it was sometimes not managed properly... people were exposed to the idea that religion did not fit into a socialist model... that view hurt people... evolution... that all came into the equation. I remember Aliyah... crying and Lina because they were quite religious. But there were others who got up and said, Well, I'm a socialist and I'm an atheist. I mean people played to what the teachers wanted and I think we were too young at the time to actually make up our minds".³¹

Both the ideologies of the NUM and CAL, and the role of individuals belonging to those two organisations, impacted upon student politics at Central High and in the next chapter the political affiliations and influences that these students had in the discussions and debates on the class/school boycott will be shown.

³⁰ Interviewee A.

³¹ Interviewee F.

CHAPTER 2

Where do we belong?

Political groupings and influences among students

From 1977, Central High had an active Student Representative Council (SRC). This body was democratically elected by the students. In the course of the third quarter, the outgoing SRC would call for nominations for the position of Chairperson. Each nominee had to be proposed and seconded. They would then address the student population and outlined why students should vote for them. Under the supervision of the Class Teacher, students would vote by secret ballot and the ballot papers would be counted by members of the outgoing SRC. Each class would nominate a representative and an alternate to represent them on the SRC. The newly-elected Chairperson would arrange the first meeting and elections for executive positions would take place. Any student at the school, whether a class representative or not, could be nominated to an executive position. Generally, senior students held such positions.

In July 1985, the Chairperson and executive members on the SRC had already been in office for ten months. Most of them had started at Central in 1981 and felt that the activities in 1981 had had a profound influence on their own politicisation. Interviewee G thought that

... the school had always been politicised. We always had a strong SRC. As early as 1981, the Chairperson was speaking about the boycotts... so when I came into the school, there were already discussions on whether we should boycott again or not. In my primary school, we were also involved in the boycott... then it was the Committee of '81. I can't remember whether we boycotted in '80 or not, but I remember the issue came up. In 1981, some students refused to write a matric exam...³²

³² Interviewee G.

The above interviewee referred to a stand taken by a few students, mainly matriculants, in June 1981. The SRC planned to commemorate the tragic events of June 16, 1976. However, the date fell within the scheduled mid-year examination period. The students took their seats in the examination rooms, but when the examination papers were distributed, many simply put their heads on their desks and refused to write.

Interviewee F maintained that this was the first year that students at Central High had participated overtly in protest action and was "a shift from positions taken in 1976 and 1980" because he had heard that "Central closed its doors then".³³ This rumour was denied by senior staff who taught at the school in 1976, "In the midst of the 1976 Soweto uprising, during which the school clearly demonstrated its support by participating in relevant activities without sacrificing teaching time..."³⁴

Prior to 1985, Central High community was involved in protest action, in particular against the forced removals of members of the community from their homes in District Six, but the emphasis was to engage in protest action without the loss of teaching and learning time.

The Deputy Principal outlined this active resistance and mobilisation of the school community when the government restructured the education system and established different departments for every "racial group". "It was necessary to involve parents, teachers and students in opposing these monstrous measures".³⁵ Furthermore, as mentioned in the introduction, "... the school was an integral part of District Six, which was flattened by bulldozers protected by armed police... every day during this traumatic even in the history of our country, we stood at the fences with placards and posters, protesting at the inhumane actions of the state".³⁶

³³ Interviewee F.

³⁴ The 50th anniversary brochure. 2000:9. As the name of the school has been changed in this dissertation, details about the writer and title of the article cannot be revealed.

³⁵ The 50th anniversary brochure. 2000. *Reflections of an ex-student, ex-teacher, and ex-Principal*. Cape Town, 15.

³⁶ Ibid.

Interviewee G agreed with the above sentiments, "We were politicised by the community as well, for example, there was a *Fatti's* and *Moni's* strike and for a long time we didn't eat *Fatti's* and *Moni's*; we didn't eat *Wilson Rowntrees*, we didn't eat *Simba's*... my brother was very young and stood on a table in a shop and asked the shopkeeper, Why do you sell *Wilson Rowntrees*?"³⁷

Students acknowledge that both the NUM and CAL influenced their political thinking, as mentioned in a previous chapter, but Interviewee F maintained that "... our political consciousness... started in Std 7, when students were exposed to a different view... you know from our History lessons".³⁸ Interviewee H agreed that the students studying history were more politically aware in comparison to others, "I was in the Geography class, but the political students came from his class... the History class... they were so politically orientated... They belonged to the Students of Young Azania. Baby Cal (she laughingly said)."³⁹

Students were serious about their political education as Interviewee G remembered his own experiences,

... we were warned against being adventurists and being opportunists... we got all these little words out.... None of us had read Marx or Engels at the time. We hadn't read any of Lenin or Trotsky or any Mao.... The teachers influenced our thought and we were encouraged to come to meetings and there was an osmosis of ideas... of sharing.... We read Brecht... *In praise of Learning*.... They were simple for us to look at.... Lots of our meetings were held at The South African Committee on Higher Education (SACHED). We were not reading the original texts of Marx, Engels, Lenin as it were. We would read South Africanised versions... things that would make sense in the context, so we weren't quotation mongering. The stuff we said were slogans that we ourselves had arrived at and agreed to through our own processes. I am sure that the slogans must have come from somewhere...⁴⁰

As early as 1983, the Inter-Schools Coordinating Committee (ISCC) was formed at Central High.

Interviewee F recalled,

We extended a hand of friendship to other schools... first we had a History Society and our History Society linked up with Livingstone's History Society and a few others... eventually we had so much contact, it just grew, so eventually, we were able to form the Inter-Schools Coordinating Committee... we turned our hand of friendship to predominantly middle-class coloured schools... but we also had contact in '84 with Bonteheuwel, with what's his name who got tragically killed from Bonteheuwel... um Ashley Kriel. He was part of those initial meetings.... I think the reason we actually got together was to voice our objection to the Tricameral System in '84, and I think it actually grew from that because we had demonstrations,

³⁷ Interviewee G.

³⁸ Interviewee F.

³⁹ Interviewee H.

⁴⁰ Interviewee G.

placard demonstrations.⁴¹

Jordi⁴² stated that the Inter-Schools' Co-ordinating Committee (ISCC) became the leading student movement which initially co-ordinated student resistance in July/August 1985,

The ISCC, ideologically affiliated to the Students of Young Azania and initially commanding support from twelve high schools, was formed in mid-1984 as a vehicle for mobilising DEC pupils for the anti-election campaign and for propagating the development of SRC organisation... the ISCC was the only coordinating structure for DEC SRCs to have emerged since the collapse of the Committee of 81... it succeeded in nurturing a theoretically sophisticated layer of pupil leaders.

The Chairperson and SRC Executive at Central High were all SOYA members. Interviewee F, a SOYA member recalled,

We were attracted to SOYA... there was a void in people's lives that they needed to fill... in mine there was... my parents were going through a tough time. I needed to be part of a family and SOYA provided that. It was a loving group of people. They cared about each other.⁴³

Interviewee F also maintained that student affiliation to the UDF and NUM at the school was minimal in 1985,

There weren't many UDF people at the time.... We tried to promote non-sectarianism through the democratic structures at the school... because our belief was that not one political party should own the school... the school was a democratic community... people were allowed to belong to their political organisation. There were students from COSAS, but they were in the minority... at least 65% of students that were politically active belonged to SOYA.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Interviewee F.

⁴² Jordi, Richard. 1987. *Towards "Peoples' Education": The Boycott experience in Cape Town's Department of Education and Culture High Schools from July 1985 to February 1986*. Honours Thesis. University of Cape Town, 59.

⁴³ Interviewee F.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Interviewee G agreed,

Many students joined other structures like the Kuils River Civic Association and there were people who were Unity Movement because of their parents. We had political differences, but the place where those political differences were fought were inside the classroom when we had to find out what exactly is the mandate that we have to take to the SRC, so we used to fight inside the classroom, but inside the SRC we put forward the different political positions. Non-sectarianism was practised within the SRC structure. The slogan we put forward was, MARCH SEPARATELY, BUT STRIKE TOGETHER...⁴⁵

As the class boycott reached its third and fourth weeks, the number of students at Central High attending alternative programmes and rallies diminished. When the SRC re-opened the debate on whether the boycott should continue or not, a minimal number of students made the decision. However, the SRC Executive, which as has been mentioned were predominantly SOYA members, played leadership roles in both the ISCC and WECSAC as outlined in the next chapter.

⁴⁵ Interviewee G.

CHAPTER 3

The class boycott begins...

The class/school boycotts of 1985 cannot be viewed in isolation from the turmoil which had embraced schooling and the country since 16 June 1976. An Executive member of WECTU believed that

what happened in 1985, like most other periods of South African History, was the time when there were a whole lot of influences coming... even 1976 had some bearing on 1985... what was not well-known for people involved in 1976 was that there were quite a lot of teachers involved in an organisation which didn't even have a name. It was a grouping of teachers who tried to assist students who had been arrested and so on.... A lot of these teachers were still teaching in 1985... so I think it was part of the whole process of change in South Africa.⁴⁶

Interviewee F agreed,

1985 was a culmination of two years of political behind the scenes work. 1984 was a quiet year... because there was quite a lot happening behind the scenes... meetings. Anti-tricameral... so I think ja... what caused the boycotts of '85 was a culmination of things... we were in a recession... people were having a hard time, particularly in the Vaal Triangle with the rent boycotts... the murders of Matthew Goniwe, Fort Calata and Sparrow... in the Eastern Cape... they were brutally murdered and there was a massive funeral in the Eastern Cape.⁴⁷

In the first term of 1985, over 70 000 pupils had been boycotting schools in the Eastern Cape, Pretoria, the East Rand and Pietermaritzburg. Widespread revolts and opposition to the repressive measures of the apartheid government in the Eastern Cape, South-Western districts, East Rand, West Rand, Natal Midlands and the Witwatersrand escalated in June/July 1985. The class/school boycotts in the Western Cape reflected the resistance movements countrywide.

On 21 July 1985, the government imposed a State of Emergency in 36 magisterial districts, excluding the Western Cape. Within four days, 441 people had been detained without trial.

⁴⁶ Gabru, Y, Chairperson of WECTU. Interview conducted on 29.03.2000.

⁴⁷ Interviewee F.

A student recalled,

1985 saw the country in flames, comrades in detention and bloody, ruthless murders - Langa, Uitenhage, Athlone - executed by the state as they tried to smother the growing militancy of the people with teargas. But we would not be beaten into silence, not by *sjamboks* or the imposed State of Emergency declared in July. The work continued. Consumer boycotts, strikes, stayaways and the constant recruitment and education of vibrant, searching youth.⁴⁸

On 25 July 1985, the SRC at the University of the Western Cape organised a mass rally of students from both secondary and tertiary institutions. At this rally, students demanded that the state of emergency in 36 magisterial districts be lifted immediately, that Mrs Galant, a high school teacher from Scottsdene Secondary School who had been transferred to a primary school, be reinstated, and that all South African Defence Force (SADF) troops should withdraw from all townships.

The ISCC, an initiative of the SRC of Central High, as outlined in the previous chapter, invited representatives from schools in the Western Cape to meet to discuss these demands. Fifty schools attended and agreed to boycott classes on 29 July and boycott school on 30 and 31 July 1985. A pamphlet addressed to students outlined the reasons for such a call:

- We, as students of the oppressed and exploited, have had an opportunity to make each other aware of what role we have to play in society
- We have been able to show our parents, in most cases the workers and the only people that can bring about fundamental change, that we can play a supportive role
- As oppressed students we have shown that unity is a vital weapon in our struggle
- We have shown that we will not be silent when our brothers and sisters are being brutally killed and detained all over the country

⁴⁸ Article published in the school's 40th Anniversary magazine and written by a matriculant, who repeated the academic year in 1985.

- We have shown that we only wage a successful struggle if we understand what system we are fighting - apartheid - profit-making system - capitalism
- We have shown that we reject the gutter, racist education that we receive
- We demand that our teachers not be moved around like pawns on a chessboard like Mrs Galant of Scottsdene⁴⁹

From this initial pamphlet, the students in the ISCC put forward a particular ideological point of view. The emphasis on the supportive role that students should play in the workers' struggle against oppression and exploitation clearly indicated that these students had received political education. The focus on the workers' struggle and anti-capitalist views were visible in pamphlets and literature produced.

The Chairperson of the SRC at Central High played a crucial leadership role with the ISCC and later within WECSAC. Although she was a SOYA member interviewee G believed that she was non-sectarian,

... she was able to say that people are allowed to have different political positions, but those political positions must be democratically decided by the SRC and the SRC's of other schools and not this or that political organisation.⁵⁰

On 29 July 1985, WECSAC was launched as an *ad hoc* body to co-ordinate the boycott call. The ISCC dissolved as a body and joined WECSAC. Interviewee G explained,

... then there was a rally and we went to the rally and at the rally a person called for the formation of the Western Cape Action Committee. There was an inaugural meeting and we had to discuss whether we would take the ISCC into WECSAC... eventually, we put forward the position that the ISCC should dissolve itself. WECSAC was a singular body and it was quite big.⁵¹

Individual schools formed Student Action Committees in their own areas, for example, The Cape Town Student Action Committee (CATSAC), The Wynberg Student Action Committee (WYNSAC), The Mitchell's Plain Student Action Committee (MIPSAC), The Athlone Student Action Committee (ASAC)

⁴⁹ Anonymous document, *A few facts re the 'boycott of classes' in South African schools in 1985*. See appendix 3.

⁵⁰ Interviewee G.

⁵¹ Ibid.

and five others. Representatives from each "SAC" formed part of WECSAC, where decisions were made. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) had support in MIPSAC and ASAC, whereas the National Forum position, a position held by both CAL and SOYA, was predominant in the CATSAC and WYNSAC regions.

A small SOYA grouping, which included the SRC from Central High, managed to caucus their position within WECSAC. Interviewee F recalled,

Look we worked harder and we caucused harder and we wrote and perhaps because it was our middle class background, we went to meetings prepared, we went to meetings having written the pamphlets already so we caucused a position before we went in and we were able to galvanize a lot of support. We had the entire Wynberg region, which was WYNSAC, and our leadership core from Wittebome and...also from Livingstone, which fell into part of the Wynberg region and we were part of CATSAC... but our biggest problem was Mitchell's Plain and ASAC, we had a political difference of opinion.⁵²

CATSAC and WYNSAC opposed the slogan, Liberation Now, Education Later. Interviewee G said that these two action committees knew that

... you can't separate the two... apartheid and capitalism... we put forward the need to build an alliance with the workers. We saw it as a worker-student alliance, not a student-worker alliance. The students play a supportive role in the struggle and they should support the struggle of the working class because the working class is the vanguard of the struggle. So we were able to engage in a fairly high level of debate at a very early stage in our lives.... Imagine we even used to come in school clothes to CAL meetings and we were very young. Do you remember?⁵³

The political position and views of Central High pupils who played leadership roles within CATSAC and WECSAC paralleled the positions held by both CAL and SOYA.

⁵² Interviewee F.

⁵³ Interviewee G.

Interviewee G believed that other organisations also had a political agenda,

... before representatives from schools came to WECSAC meetings, people would stand on the corner and say this is what your school must vote for... so it was a process driven from outside.... The boycott was used for political reasons. Possibly the ANC, possibly the UDF. The UDF had put forward the slogan, Liberation before Education. The idea was that they were going to make the country ungovernable and many people believed in that slogan so the boycott itself was... a process of being driven.⁵⁴

Interviewee B agreed with the above,

... the 1985 boycott/uprising was orchestrated mainly by the UDF... there was quite a degree of excitability... it was action that brought them into this excitement... being out on the street, waving, posters, *toyi-toyi-ing* being out of school... so I think the orchestration from that political grouping was part of their making the country ungovernable.⁵⁵

Interviewee D felt that the boycott started out as a solidarity gesture with the protests taking place countrywide,

They were boycotts that were founded around the need to... associate and express our solidarity with the political struggle that was going on in the country... so I think that if you take the kinds of struggles that were going on at Central ... the boycott strategy works well at a particular kind of level, but it produces a climate for making it easy for people to avoid really tough questions.... We really had tough decisions to make in 1985, if we hadn't made those decisions we would have been in the situation that many schools in Natal had to confront... were they part of the National Movement or not? and this is where I think the kind of lead offered by the CAL people at the school... is crucial in making the school part of a wider movement. If that hadn't happened, I think that the unintended consequence would have been to position the school as an outright conservative school, as a reactionary school... The positions which the students took were far more effective in giving substance to non-racialism than anything a document, or a pamphlet or a newsletter could have done.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Interviewee B.

⁵⁶ Interviewee D.

Racial barriers were not crossed. Very few classified white students participated actively in the class/school boycott of 1985. Some teachers at classified white schools formed and joined Education for an Aware South Africa (EDASA), but support was minimal. Interviewee F said that they i.e. students in classified coloured schools found it difficult to meet with students in township schools,

it was very, very difficult... the way the transport system worked in this country, the way in which we were situated... we tried. We had meetings at St Francis where we tried to get the boycott extended into Black Townships as well. We had mass rallies there, but it was one of the failures of the student uprising because we were not able to... we should have tried harder.⁵⁷

This was not the scenario at tertiary institutions, but classified white students appeared to be more interested in the Inter-Varsity Rugby match between the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch than in the turmoil which was embracing the length and breadth of the country. The source material in Part 11 provides evidence in support of the above statement.

The "black" townships in 1985 became targets for South African Defence Force manoeuvres and the townships of Crossroads, Nyanga and Guguletu were sealed off by the security forces as reported in the media in September and October 1985.

Newspaper headlines confirmed this,

ALL ROADS SEALED OFF TO CITY TOWNSHIPS

All access roads to Crossroads, Langa and Guguletu were sealed off last night as unrest continued in Guguletu yesterday.

At least 10 commercial vehicles were stoned, an unidentified driver was injured and a paraffin bearing truck was set alight. About 15 paraffin drums escaped ignition.

Security forces in Casspirs and vans fired teargas to disperse groups of stone-throwing youths and at noon sealed off an area around the smouldering truck and the corner of NY1 and Uluntu Drive.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Interviewee F.

⁵⁸ *The Cape Times*. 24.08.1985:1.

The apartheid system had succeeded in its objective to "divide and rule" South Africans. The townships were easily sealed off in order to prevent people from moving freely from area to area. Oppressed students were only able to act in solidarity in mutual venues, for example, on university campuses. The UCT campus, for example, enabled students, whether from the ruling or working class, to engage in joint protest action against the apartheid state. As individuals, students made their choice i.e. whether to support the state or resist it. Apartheid legislation made it very difficult for oppressed communities classified coloured, Indian and black to cross the racial barriers, South Africa's numerous Berlin walls.

The criticism that children were being used as "cattle fodder" was mooted at Central High. Interviewee G felt,

there was a sense of romanticism. A sense of adventurism about it. But also a sense that this is what is right. I had fought with my father in terms of you can't send other kids out. We can't say we must do these things and not be there ourselves. We've got to be part. His fear was that we could get hurt... killed in the process. I wasn't in the central core, but I understand that there was a meeting where people were actually told which one was going to be detained... when they were saying that, they were saying you'll be the front people, then the second layer, then the third layer... people were agreeing that they would be detained, they would be the public face of the organisation, but there needed to be a leadership layer behind that who were able to support this. Our Chairperson was part of that layer...⁵⁹

A few personal, traumatic experiences of the Central High community during the boycott period are recalled in the forthcoming chapter.

⁵⁹ Interviewee G.

CHAPTER 4

Reflections on experiences...

For most Central High students, attending rallies, was a new experience. At first, schools within the Cape Town Region organised and attended rallies in their own area. Central High did not have a large hall or facilities to accommodate a large number of students so rallies were held at Zonnebloem College, Trafalgar and Vista High Schools. Interviewee A remembered an incident,

... when the students had organised a mass meeting on a field... and we had to march up to Zonnebloem Fields even though the place was surrounded by cops... I felt my presence... my political presence was required in order to see to the safety and needs of students. That's where I had to be... it was more than a duty, it was a responsibility... the staff ensured that things didn't go wrong.⁶⁰

Students, particularly those on the SRC, attended as many rallies as they could from UWC to Spine Road, Mitchell's Plain. At first, students had to hand in letters from their parents stating that they had permission to attend these rallies. Teachers had agreed to act in *loco parentis*, but as the boycott continued, students went to rallies on their own.

Interviewee H vividly recalled her experience at a rally at Belgravia High School on 4 September 1985,

... a rally at Belgravia High was my first experience of protest action... whatever protest action had previously taken place took place at school... this was our first time we actually went outside and had action with the police. That was the day that we buried apartheid... you know, in the coffin. We dug a hole and put the coffin into it... when we left somebody was shot. We were walking down Belgravia Road... later we heard it was a Central High student... shot in the leg.⁶¹

Interviewee F also highlighted his experiences at the Belgravia High rally,

We took people into Athlone generally. We went to Belgravia, where we buried apartheid. We had the symbolic burying of apartheid and we were there! Afterwards we went into the streets and there were various clashes with the police... people got hurt...⁶²

⁶⁰ Interviewee A.

⁶¹ Interviewee H.

⁶² Interviewee F.

The matriculant injured in Belgravia Road had not received permission from his parents to attend the rally. His parents knew that there was a boycott in progress, but thought that Frank was attending alternative programmes at school. His mother, a factory worker, was listening to the programme, *Push up Production on Radio Good Hope*, the local Cape Town radio station. The 14h30 news broadcast announced that a student had been shot in the head at the Belgravia High School rally and announced the name of her son. She telephoned the school and the Principal and a few staff members worked tirelessly to find out information for the distraught parents. Telephone calls made to local hospitals and even the mortuary proved to be fruitless. At 19h00, he was located at Somerset Hospital in Green Point, having been shot with buckshot in his legs, not his head. The Deputy Principal of an Athlone High School had found the bleeding and injured boy in an alleyway and fearing that he would be detained by the security forces drove him to a hospital outside the area. It had been a traumatic four and a half hour wait for his parents and the school community.

The *Cape Times* report⁶³ described the rally,

Running battles in Athlone riot

... The violence erupted at 1.45 pm during a mass rally at Belgravia High School attended by at least 4 000 pupils and students from 24 high schools, the universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape, Peninsula and Cape technikons and Hewat and Sally Davis teachers' training colleges.

After a ceremonial burying of a coffin labelled "Apartheid", students massed in the school quad. Six police vans, a Casspir and a video unit watched as students sang freedom songs and chanted "Botha is a terrorist" and "Oliver Tambo".

As speakers appealed to the crowd not to provoke the police because "that will give them an excuse", a group of about 200 youths lit a barricade in Hadji Ebrahim Crescent and stoned a police lookout.

A Casspir moved in, firing teargas canisters and rubber bullets into the school grounds as the crowd fled.

Within 25 minutes, a two-kilometre stretch, covering 12 blocks from Klipfontein Road to Kromboom Road and bounded by Belgravia and Thornton roads, had become a no-go area as barricades flamed.

... Residents reported "at least five" people wounded and alleged that a woman from Hewat College had taken a shotgun blast in her face at short range.

Residents also alleged that a man in a white Mercedes Benz was patrolling the streets with a handgun firing shots at youths.

⁶³ *The Cape Times*, 5 September 1985:2.

The next day, a ministerial decree issued by the Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange, closed 465 schools under the Department of Education and Culture, House of Representatives, but the protest action in Group Areas designated for people classified coloured and Indian and in the townships continued unabated.

Students often did not inform their parents about their activities. Interviewee F explained,

Our parents thought we were at school, but we were actually on the streets of Athlone... quite a few of us were always together and we were also *toyi-toyi-ing* up and down and the SABC focused on Hugh and I... and our parents saw us on the 8 o'clock news. His mother had a fit... but, I enjoyed '85... perhaps enjoyed is the wrong word. I was stimulated by what was happening.... It was exciting. The adrenalin was pumping and I never forget one afternoon we would go to Lynn's house and from there we would go and join the demonstrations outside... one night we were chased and we knew that we could run into people's homes. But, the police had warned that if they found people harbouring students, they would confiscate people's homes... there was fear. That night we were put out of a house.... We just sat on the *stoep* as the casspirs passed... a buckshot passed Taryn... I didn't know if her life was in danger, but Hugh and I went to pick her up and help her... it was quite dangerous. *Very dangerous.*⁶⁴

Referring to the Chairperson of the SRC, who was also playing a leading role in WECSAC, Interviewee F recalled,

Oh, she suffered a lot... she wasn't as strong as she made out to be.... She was a child... she sacrificed a lot. When she didn't return in '86, a lot of people felt betrayed by her... She was a victim... she did what she did for her own personal development... she was young.⁶⁵

Interviewee H said, "I wasn't angry with her... she had done so much, but I was angry with those students who went to write examinations. They used to dictate to us and they were the very students who went to write in March".⁶⁶

Although there was a network of support from people and political organisations at the time, the brunt of the work fell on the shoulders of a few students, who worked tirelessly throughout the boycott period, often in times of uncertainty, not knowing when or if a favourable solution would be found.

⁶⁴ Interviewee F.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Interviewee H.

Interviewee D said that teachers did not "support activities that would have been life-threatening... a lot of our students did make decisions by themselves to go into those kinds of circumstances. I know... the SRC Chairperson and them were actually at Spine Road".⁶⁷ Interviewee E felt that the Chairperson "did not have all the support that she needed, particularly as the boycott dragged on... she suffered... she had to leave the country for a time".⁶⁸

The student activists at Central High were not detained without trial during this period, but had to move from their homes and live in "safer" houses. The threat or possibility of such action against them affected them personally and emotionally.

A politically uninvolved student at Central High, who simply stayed at home during the class/school boycott was adversely affected. He went to buy a cool drink at a local shop in the Bo-Kaap. Two policemen, who happened to be in the shop at the time, questioned why he was not at school. When he mentioned that there was a boycott on, he was arrested and detained without trial for the next fourteen days.

The Treasurer of the SRC at Central High in 1985 recalled an experience,

I was living in Grassy Park and it was quite a heightened political area in '85 and I remember the cops were outside my home and they were speaking on a walkie-talkie... you could hear actually... it interfered with the aerial and my mother could hear that they were looking for me... it did cause a bit of panic... but I had a very good support base, particularly from my mom and my sister and brother, because they were also political.... My brother was part of the emergent student movement of the '80s, a member of the Committee of '81, so they had an understanding It was a militarised society. I mean the troops were in the townships, shooting people with guns...⁶⁹

Interviewee G said,

It was a traumatic year for me.... It was a learning experience. People learn through struggle and that was very true of our situation at the time... and it taught me that whatever I do, even now, it gives me some sort of framework in which to think how I am acting out an historical play? To what extent am I part of a broader stream of events? Where do I fit in? But, 1985 politicised us. With my brother, politicisation started as early as Sub B.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Interviewee D.

⁶⁸ Interviewee E.

⁶⁹ Interviewee F.

⁷⁰ Interviewee G.

The psychological effect of the daily violent confrontations between security forces and the oppressed people, mostly schoolchildren, has yet to be fully investigated within the South African context.

The Concerned Social Workers Conference held on the 25 and 26 October 1985 stated,

A child welfare Social Worker and the Detainees' Parents Support Committee have records of children who have been reported missing. Parents are frantic about the whereabouts of their children. Other forms of violence include the whipping of children by the Defence Force in an attempt to force them out of their homes and into classrooms. We are concerned about the effects of children's exposure to an experience of violence in the townships. We believe that such exposure can never be conducive to the physical, mental, moral, spiritual and social development of children.⁷¹

A poem⁷² written by an impressionable 10 year old during the 1985 boycott period portrayed the reality of growing up in South Africa,

UPRISING

Bullets flew and teargas blew
 What did we innocent people do?
 Police vans look like war machines
 And shoot our people at every scene.
 Tyres burn and cars overturn,
 People suffer and children cry
 When will all the fighting die?

10 years

As the class/school boycott gained momentum, a response from teachers was overdue.

⁷¹ Alberts, P. 1986. *First Steps*. In Burman, S. & Reynolds, P. (eds). 1986. *Growing Up in a Divided Society: The contexts of childhood in South Africa*. Cape Town: Ravan Press, 335.

⁷² WECTU newsletter. January 1986. Number 3: 18.

CHAPTER 5

The birth of WECTU

During the first week of the class boycott in July/August 1985, teachers at Central High met on a daily basis to discuss what was happening on the ground. The SRC Executive consulted with certain teachers as to their next move and how to respond to the call to boycott classes and school. During the initial weeks, the response of teachers focused on the issues at Central High. The historical tradition of the school emphasised the role of the teacher in the classroom and all teachers were encouraged to continue to engage in class discussions on what was happening.

For many teachers, particularly those affiliated to progressive organisations, this task was not too difficult, and the lessons learnt from 1976, 1980 and 1981 were debated and analysed, but a few teachers attempted to continue with "normal" lessons until this situation became impossible.

All members of staff were encouraged to participate in the awareness programmes. Even if they felt that they were unable to develop a programme, they were expected to attend them. Speakers were invited to address students on issues of racism and the unequal resources allocated to each classified racial group. In line with non-sectarianism, speakers from the UDF, PAC, CAL and NUM addressed the students.

But, as mentioned earlier, when the boycott entered its second and third week, some students and teachers became frustrated. Interviewee C said, "It became sort of counter-productive... teachers also reached the end of their tether. Even teachers refused to take awareness classes. We had to hunt for people to discuss with children or to do something constructive. It was difficult... very difficult".⁷³ Interviewee B disagreed, "You know what struck me, particularly was the kind of genuine attention that we got at all

⁷³ Interviewee C.

sessions... we didn't have anyone fidgeting... they were getting information that was entirely new to them and that they found very interesting and I think that... that went a long way towards keeping the unity".⁷⁴

Interviewee H said, "No, we did not stay at home. In the first month we all came to school. We sometimes had normal school days and then we participated in the programmes... we became slightly more aware at that time".⁷⁵

However, Central High had a core of committed teachers, who despite their affiliations, were determined to engage in constructive alternative programmes with the students. At least six to eight teachers accompanied the students to rallies within the regions or discussed issues and demands with the SRC. At no time was there alienation between teachers and students. The Principal was always three-steps ahead of the authorities, ensuring that no "outsiders" gained entrance into Central High. His leadership role will be discussed in a later chapter.

As seven high schools and eleven primary schools in the Cape Town Region were affected by the class/school boycott, teachers found it important to meet and coordinate what was happening within their own region. Although primary schoolchildren did not boycott classes/schools, their environment was directly affected. The areas in which they lived and where they went to school were patrolled by security forces. The sight of *casspirs* was common.

The first meeting of teachers in the Cape Town region was held in Kensington. Similar discussions were held in other regions and this led to the formation of the Concerned Teachers' Coordinating Committee (CTCC), the forerunner to WECTU. As mentioned earlier, fifteen teachers from Central High participated in the CTCC, which eventually included teachers from primary and high schools in Kensington, Windermere, Facticeon, Maitland, Salt River, Woodstock, Walmer Estate and Cape Town. Lecturers from the University of Cape Town became members of this region.

⁷⁴ Interviewee B.

⁷⁵ Interviewee H.

On 6 September 1985, the ministerial decree closing Central High and 465 schools in the Western Cape, brought reaction from all sectors of the community, including teachers and parents. Although this will be discussed in a later chapter, it meant, in effect, that the dates of the third term had shifted. The schools were closed three weeks earlier and would be re-opened at the minister's discretion.

Although teachers and students were barred from the premises, the Principal in consultation with and with the support of the teachers, organised the production of materials for students at home. The work-guides were never intended to undermine the boycott, but related to the tradition of the school that valuable teaching and learning time should never be wasted. At this stage, there was still hope that teaching time lost through the boycott could be made up and that final examinations would still commence in November 1985. In a letter to parents and students, dated 12 September 1985, the Principal wrote, "In order to assist pupils WHO understand the importance of working on their own, we are enclosing a fortnight's WORK-GUIDES in the various subjects".⁷⁶

Some Departments produced progressive worksheets in line with the syllabus, but all teachers participated in the production of materials. Interviewee A described this as "a distance learning programme".⁷⁷

The schools had already been closed by the apartheid government and the production of these work-guides took place clandestinely, but with the full co-operation of all staff. This was one of many symbolic gestures of staff unity at Central High during the 1985 boycott.

Despite the closure of schools, teachers continued to attend workshops and meetings. The closure of schools meant that student rallies were no longer able to take place on school premises.

⁷⁶ Letter from the Principal to all parents and students at Central High, dated 12 September 1985, enclosing worksheets from all Departments. All teachers participated in this exercise and many progressive worksheets were produced in all subjects.

⁷⁷ Interviewee A.

The involvement of thousands of teachers in the CTCC showed the "need for a truly progressive and permanent teachers' organisation".⁷⁸

On 29 September 1985, two months after the commencement of the class/school boycott, the Western Cape Teachers' Union was launched. As mentioned earlier, 26 staff members at Central High joined WECTU i.e. 70,27%. All 5 CAL members and 1 NUM member formed part of this membership. Only 15 signed-up members, however, attended regional meetings or actively participated in the sub-committees. Within the Cape Town Region, the five CAL members at Central High served on the executive and/or sub-committees. From the outset, WECTU was launched as a non-sectarian organisation.

Interviewee A, a CAL member, felt that

unionization of teachers became an issue. The fact that teachers felt that there was a need for them to become more actively involved. It was the student struggle of 1981 that led to this upsurge of teacher consciousness, of teacher representation and teacher involvement, because in 1981, the students through the formation of student councils relied a lot on the input of teachers.... The nature of progress since 1981... wasn't merely a question of stayaway... but awareness programmes and conscientization of students, which required a lot of input from teachers.⁷⁹

Interviewee D emphatically stated that WECTU was a non-sectarian organisation,

WECTU was decidedly a united front of teachers. It was also a site for the contestation... of the ideological highground within an organisation and it's not unexpected that Charterist types would be trying to make pitch for the organisation as did people from the more left tradition.... So there are many people today, even UDF-type people, who would remember WECTU in far more supportive terms than they would SADTU... they might still be charterist, but they would see WECTU having stood for a phase or level of development in terms of debate and discussion which SADTU hasn't been able to achieve...⁸⁰

⁷⁸ WECTU pamphlet. 1985. *Everything you always wanted to know about (*...but were afraid to ask!)*. Crawford.

⁷⁹ Interviewee A.

⁸⁰ Interviewee D.

Interviewee E felt that teachers joined WECTU because "it had a visible, public face and was prepared to take some sort of action".⁸¹

Teachers at Central High who were members of the Teachers' League perceived WECTU as an organisation linked to the UDF/ANC.

Interviewee B said that those who joined WECTU,

would not have wanted to ally themselves with Unity Movement or Teachers' League and the only other possibility would have been the reactionary teachers' union so they had to form a sort of middle grouping. People in WECTU had been members of the Teachers' League and had left and wanted to be part of what was going on.... It was I think orchestrated from UDF and other groupings that did not want to be part of the Unity Movement grouping.⁸²

The first Chairperson of WECTU and a member of the UDF described the birth of WECTU,

I think always there are two strands with these things. I think that they meet and they are both relevant. There is a public wider historical view of what is happening... an historical moment, a struggle for change and WECTU was simply part of that change. On the other hand... the UDF did have something quite directly to do with it... In fact, there was a meeting called by what was called the UDF education group... there were two meetings at the Samaj Centre and at that time a number of UDF activists got arrested... so the UDF did call those original meetings and then the meetings took a life of their own and that is what I mean by the two strands of this historical process. Always some organisations, individuals involved and, at the same time... there is also the historical process. When WECTU was being formed, once UDF had given its initiatives, there were meetings... it wasn't WECTU. It was the Teachers' Coordinating Committee and there were groupings and people became very excited about it... It was clear that the CTPA was not responding to the needs of progressive teachers or the Teachers' League... But, there was at the time, NEUSA,⁸³ which was very clearly aligned with the ANC... there was a move amongst people, who wanted to promote NEUSA, and there was an understanding that that should have been the National Education Body to which the UDF and other ANC people could belong... In the townships, people suggested that NEUSA was the national organisation to which we could all belong. That was if we wanted a Congress position. There were people in Guguletu who later became part of the Democratic Teachers' Union or DETU. There was a position that we should try to get involved in the CTPA and try and win/take them over... that collapsed. Even in that year there was a challenge to Sonn⁸⁴... so there were several positions and then there was a position that said we should form WECTU. To form the WECTU was decidedly not a UDF position.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Interviewee E, a Senior English teacher at the school in 1985. The interview was conducted on 20.03.2000.

⁸² Interviewee B.

⁸³ The National Education Union of South Africa was an unofficial teacher organisation, which saw the problems in education as part of the socio-political climate in the country. It was ANC-aligned.

⁸⁴ Reference to Franklin Sonn, President of the Cape Teachers' Professional Association in 1985.

⁸⁵ Interviewee I, Chairperson of WECTU. Interview was conducted on 29.03.2000.

Interviewee D agreed, "The UDF tried to make NEUSA... a Trade Union. NEUSA in its earlier form had similar debates to WECTU... and what is interesting is that there is absolutely nothing written about NEUSA round about the state of teacher organisations in the early '80s, you know prior to the formation of WECTU, DETU..."⁸⁶

At the launch of WECTU, its first Chairperson, Yousuf Gabru, concluded his address with the following words,

...we believe that teachers in all apartheid schools, including "white" schools, cannot be neutral. They are either on the side of progress and liberation or they support the forces of oppression and exploitation. These teachers who profess to be neutral are on the same side as the National Party and its junior partners in oppression like the Labour Party, the National People's Party, the Solidarity Party etc.

We must translate our verbal rejection of oppressive education into reality by actively engaging in progressive activities in the schools and in the broader community. As teachers, however, our primary site of struggle should be in the school.

Teachers must not pay lip service of allegiance to the working class, when they by their very actions at school towards the children of the working class, they contradict this allegiance.⁸⁷

Fifteen WECTU members at Central High played an active role in the Cape Town Region and identified with the aims and objectives of the organisation, namely,

1. to struggle for a unitary, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and free education system on all levels, and compulsory education at primary and secondary level, as apart of the struggle for a non-racial South Africa, free of exploitation and oppression.
2. to work towards democratic control over the education system and to militate against the propagation of oppressive education.⁸⁸

The launch of WECTU and the overwhelming support it received from the teacher fraternity to some extent shifted decision-making away from an individual school like Central High to a broader forum. The very fact that teachers had not yet returned to school for the start of the fourth quarter enabled regional structures to meet on a regular basis and discuss the ongoing crisis. There were ten regional structures, namely,

⁸⁶ Interviewee D.

⁸⁷ Gabru, Y. 1985. *The Political Economy of Education in South Africa*. Cape Town, 6.

⁸⁸ WECTU pamphlet. 1985. *Everything you always wanted to know about (*... but were afraid to ask!)*. Crawford.

Athlone Central, Athlone East, Cape Town, Elsie's River, Mitchell's Plain, Northern Suburbs, Paarl, Southern Suburbs, Worcester and Wynberg.

WECTU was also able to work directly with WECSAC, the student umbrella organisation at the time. Like WECSAC, WECTU had difficulties in crossing the artificial racial barriers and remained essentially a Trade Union of teachers employed by the Departments of Education and Culture in the Houses of Representatives and Delegates. Some teachers employed by the DET joined the Athlone East branch of WECTU, but eventually formed DETU, which had close links with WECTU.

1 October 1985 was the first day of the fourth term. Students had taken a decision to return to school, but not to class until key demands were met, for example, the abolition of the age restriction law, the postponement of the final examinations, withdrawal of security forces from schools and an end to the victimization of students, teachers and principals.

WECSAC and WECTU both became involved in the campaign to postpone the final examinations, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

As alternative programmes at schools continued, the state decided to act against teachers who they accused of supporting and inciting boycott action. Obviously, WECTU, as a public organisation, had a public face. The names of the teachers on the WECTU national and regional executives were known. In the same way as WECSAC had prepared the layers of students that would be detained, so did WECTU.

With the detention of the two top layers of national and regional Executive members, the focus of WECTU was to ensure that the families of those detained were visited and assisted.

When WECSAC took the decision to postpone the final examinations, most of the WECTU executive were in detention and not party to the discussions and debates. On their release, WECTU simply endorsed the decision taken by the students.

The decisions taken at WECTU meetings dovetailed with the decisions taken by the staff at Central High.

In some ways, there was a mirror image. The decisions taken at Central High had support from the broader community.

In the next chapter, the response of parents to the crisis is discussed.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 6

Parents respond...

The Principal organised quarterly meetings with parents to discuss issues at Central High. Approximately 250 parents would attend these meetings. However, during the boycott crisis close on 600 parents attended meetings. The only formal structure at the school involving parents was the School Committee, a statutory body. The function of the School Committee at Central High was by and large to nominate and appoint teachers to their posts.

The class/school boycott interrupted and disrupted this process of teaching and learning and parents were concerned about the effect that this would have on the academic performances of their children.

Some students on the SRC of Central High had received political education from their own homes.

Interviewee B said, "Quite a number of those children... as far as their political thinking was concerned brought it from their homes... because their parents were Unity Movement... quite a heavy influence".⁸⁹

However, no parent, whether politicised or not, would support a prolonged class/school boycott.

Interviewee J said, "No, parents couldn't support such a boycott... not such an extensive boycott. Even those who were politicised. They thought okay, it's a show of strength, but it had to be very limited; but of course the thing gathered its own momentum. It ran out of control I think. It snowballed into disunity in the end".⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Interviewee B.

⁹⁰ Interviewee J. A parent. Interview was conducted on 05.04.2000.

The high-handed ministerial action in closing 465 schools in the Western Cape, including Central High, brought angry reaction from parents, even conservative ones.

Interviewee J said,

Most parents thought, What right did Carter Ebrahim have to close their children's schools? And they as parents stood up for that. Carter Ebrahim was never popular. He belonged to the old Coloured Affairs Department and he had a long history of collaboration, so except in small circles, he had no standing, and the people thought the nerve that he had to come to close the schools... I think that got them going, apart from political ideas and other factors; by and large parents were also fed-up. I still remember that quite a number of parents did not stop their children from participating because they did not want their children being victimised by the others, but they were not really in favour so they were relieved when children went back to school and the prospect of re-opening the schools, in defiance of Carter Ebrahim, seemed to them like a means of getting their children back to class, back to work, so they could do exams. That was in September and they thought that there would still be a chance of them writing at the end of the year, if teachers could make up in the last term...⁹¹

On 9 September 1985, the CTCC issued a statement calling the closure of schools "high-handed and autocratic".⁹² An immediate call was made on parents and the community to re-open all schools.

On 17 September 1985, parents arrived *en masse* to re-open Central High. However, the WECSAC decision to continue the class/school boycott dismayed parents. This brought division between some students and their parents.

Interviewee D felt that

There must have been pretty intense discussions and debates going on within families, within communities, within households about what ought to be done. I think it's the weight of this impetus... that produces the climate which makes it possible for people to be as vocal and supportive as they were. There was a lot of conflict between parents and learners, but that didn't manifest itself at our school. Many people say that it was the leadership at Central and the management team that parents stood behind. They had so much support for the Principal and that drove them to support.⁹³

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Cape Times, 9 September 1985.

⁹³ Interviewee D.

Interviewee G described the situation between himself and his parents as traumatic,

All of them were very stoic. My father was afraid that I would get shot or something would happen to me. He said that if I talk, then they, i.e. the security police, would pick me up... because I'm an easy target. They wanted to send me away to a private school...⁹⁴

Interviewee H felt that she and her mother was concerned about her future,

My mother was very concerned and we ourselves were concerned what would happen to us. There was talk that we were not going to write exams and at that time I remember that I was one of the pupils who had to vote whether to write or not and I... um, actually voted at the school that we would write exams, but because we were affiliated to the other SRCs, the decision taken by the majority of the students was not to write and we had to go along with the decision, so I think basically we were very uncertain of what our future was going to be.... My mother was a single parent and I knew that she couldn't afford to keep me at school for another year... if I could have got a job at the end of the year, I would have gone to work... it didn't happen, but at the time I knew that I wasn't going to come back to school and I knew that I would join the ranks of the unskilled workers and I knew deep down that that wasn't what... The way to go and I felt that at that point that was the only way to go... I had to grapple with a lot of things because my mother just allowed me to make decisions on my own.⁹⁵

The decision to re-open Central High brought the parents together to the forefront of the class/school boycott. This led to discussions on the formation of a Parents Support Committee, the forerunner of the Parent-Teacher-Student Alliance (PTSA) at Central High.

Interviewee D strongly believed that parents became involved because of their support for the Principal of Central High,

There were meetings at Holy Cross... where parents were persuaded by the very cautious position the Principal was taking at the time... he was articulating a position which was essentially an affirmation of the importance of education... the question of kids writing exams after having had little education in the course of the year was morally unacceptable... the defining argument... it managed to persuade parents to take a progressive position...⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Interviewee G.

⁹⁵ Interviewee H.

⁹⁶ Interviewee D.

On 25 November 1985, the Principal applied to the Regional Director, Department of Education and Culture, Wynberg, for the postponement of the final examinations in 1985. Although this issue will be discussed in a forthcoming chapter, the decision was a joint one. The following letter indicates that no parents at Central High abstained or voted against the proposal:

APPLICATION FOR POSTPONEMENT OF FINAL EXAMINATIONS TO MARCH 1986⁹⁷

On behalf of all the parents, pupils and teachers associated with our school, I am applying for the final examinations for pupils from Std SIX to TEN to take place at the beginning of March 1986. This application is in accordance with decisions taken at three meetings of parents and teachers which were recently held to discuss the matter of final examinations at our school. A total of 1 210 parents, representing 736 pupils, attended the meetings and decided without a single dissentient vote, that the final examinations should not take place this year. This decision was supported by the following main reasons:

1. Not a single pupil from Std 6 to 10 had completed the prescribed course of study
2. It would be completely anti-educational and contrary to the tradition of our school to impose on the pupils examination papers based on the full courses when pupils had covered only approximately 60% of the year's work.
3. The current conditions and atmosphere are not conducive to pupils being able to effectively prepare and write examinations.
4. The six and a half weeks at our disposal before the end of February, will enable the staff and pupils to complete the courses and ensure that the pupils are adequately prepared for a final examination at the beginning of March 1986

We thank you in anticipation of a favourable reply

Principal Teacher

The consequence of this letter will be discussed in a later chapter, but the foundation of a strong parent base at Central High had been built and in the subsequent unfolding of events, it was the Parents Support Committee which played a major role in uniting the parent populace when the Senior Staff were suspended from their positions and temporary staff denied the renewal of their contracts.

⁹⁷ Letter from The Principal of Central High to the Regional Director, Department of Education and Culture, House of Representatives, dated 25 November 1985

From 1986 onwards, parent-teacher-student alliances were formed and it was this democratic PTSA structure at Central High that would make all decisions in the future. The Soweto Parents Crisis Committee Conference conference held at the University of the Witwatersrand in December 1985 was the forerunner of this alliance and it recommended that all students return to school on 28 January 1986, the start of the academic year. It emphasised the need to continue the struggle inside and outside of the schools by using the conditions "to build mass democratic structures such as SRCs, PTSAs, students' organisations, progressive school societies and teachers' unions".⁹⁸

Central High School's PTSA was formed in January 1986 and became instrumental in forming a Federation of PTSAs in order to ensure that democratic decision-making became a process at all schools.

⁹⁸ Free Azania. 1986. *Education Crisis Document*, Leaflet No 2, statement issued by 155 organisations Southfield, 19.

CHAPTER 7

Liberation before Education! Education for Liberation!

These dominant slogans shouted during the 1985 class/school boycott were diametrically opposed.

Alexander wrote that those who supported the former felt justified

in demanding that students should be prepared to sacrifice a year or even two or three years of schooling in the interest of the liberation struggle... if it were in fact true that the National Party government is about to be toppled even if not by a revolutionary movement, even if only by some more liberal capitalist government, then, of course, there would be very little to argue about. Most people would immediately be prepared to consider such an argument.

The logic of the argument is faultless if we accept the correctness of the premises on which it is based. It leads infallibly to the slogan: Liberation Before Education (*inkululeko ngoku, idegree ngomso*). If, on the other hand, the premises of this argument are wrong, the slogan becomes a death trap for a whole generation of students. If... it is *not* true that the National Party government is about to fall, then the words Liberation Before Education are turned into a false prophecy which one can only compare with the fateful events connected with the name of Nongquase and known in South African history textbooks as the *national suicide of the amaXhosa*.⁹⁹

Alexander argues that *timing* was of key importance. In the nature of revolutionary struggle, weapons must be used effectively. If not, it could become a major setback for the revolutionary movement and its supporters.

In contrast, Education for Liberation, should

serve to liberate the oppressed and exploited from the mental shackles that are imposed on them; it must encourage the development of a sense of critical awareness and social responsibility and it must pave the way for a re-humanising of our society. If this is not the basis of education for liberation, then 'alternative education' will merely be the old system in a new language.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Alexander, Neville. 1990. *Education and the struggle for National Liberation in South Africa*. Braamfontein: Skotaville, 11. In 1857, Nongquase prophesied that if the amaXhosa killed all their cattle and destroyed their crops, the colonists would leave the land. This did not happen.

¹⁰⁰ WECTU newsletter. December 1985. *Education for Liberation*. No. 2:2.

The students at Central High propagated another slogan, namely, Study and Struggle, at all ISCC and WECSAC meetings. Although this reflected the Education for Liberation position, students felt that the two had become confused.

Interviewee G explained,

Some people put forward the view of Education before Liberation and others had put forward the view, Liberation before Education, and the two became confused. The one started to be seen as the reactionary view. I think the midway slogan was that you had to combine both Liberation and Education and that you can't separate the two. The idea that we had in mind was that one should study and struggle... and we wanted to bring in the idea of alternative education in schools. We had to re-create the schools and start teaching our education, instead of the way in which people had been indoctrinated at the schools.¹⁰¹

However, the Chairperson of WECTU felt,

... in the whole of Cape Town, including the townships, there was a strong move which said, Liberation before Education... but people were interacting with the National Education Coordinating Committee and I don't think that that was a strong position. It was blown out of all proportion, so the boycotts in the Western Cape had a momentum of their own. I think in the so-called coloured schools, there's always been a position that one's duty is in the classroom and I think that the Unity Movement didn't play such a major role after 1976, but their influence... the sense that teachers must be in the classrooms... engaged in alternative education... a lot of that impetus came from people within WECTU who were once associated with the movement.¹⁰²

The tradition of Central High reflected the slogans, Education for Liberation, Liberation through Education or Study and Struggle.

Interviewee E said that it was only

at schools where education had largely broken down and where there was no prospect of education that Education for Liberation was not on... because there was no education taking place anyway... at Central High there were attempts to run programmes ... and implicit in these attempts was the notion that people could only be liberated with education.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Interviewee G.

¹⁰² Interviewee I.

¹⁰³ Interviewee E.

During the initial stages of the boycott, the staff at Central High took a decision to organise alternative programmes at school in line with the idea of Education for Liberation or Study and Struggle. When the ministerial decree closed Central High in September 1985, each Department at the school produced learning materials which, as was mentioned in an earlier chapter, were posted to students. This clandestine production of materials united the staff as teachers combined resources in the subject areas and sought to find more relevant information. It was not the intention of the staff to countermine the class/school boycott. It was undertaken at a time when it was sincerely felt that students would return to class/school and that teachers would work very hard to ensure that the syllabi were completed.

Interviewee A described the process,

Teachers actively prepared materials and assisted with the acquisition of resources for the students.... Every single member of staff was involved. The school has records of the lessons that were prepared, of the materials that were prepared. It was actually alternative material to a large extent. Alternative to the textbooks and so on.... Yes, even alternative Mathematics.¹⁰⁴

However, some teachers felt that this could have been misinterpreted if and when students from other schools heard from friends that they had received learning materials.

Interviewee B remarked, "... there came a time when we couldn't even do this.... If it was found that there was education going on at Central High then the students would be the victims... victims from students at other schools". Interviewee E concurred, "... quite soon it was realised that if you are involved in a boycott situation, it would be extremely difficult to assist students because students know other students and you can't do that secretly. It became apparent that if you are to be true to that particular boycott, then assisting students is virtually not on".¹⁰⁵

The production of "distance learning" materials at Central High became a one-off gesture in support of the concept, Education for Liberation or Study and Struggle.

¹⁰⁴ Interviewee A.

¹⁰⁵ Interviewee E.

From 1 October 1985, the beginning of the final quarter, the absence of students at Central High became the norm. Teachers continued to attend school daily. Many of the WECTU teachers were involved in different activities, for example, coordinating what was happening in their region or producing the WECTU pamphlets and newsletters. Daily meetings were held where the staff were updated on the latest development. The increase in the number of teachers and students detained in October was a growing concern and directly affected the Central High community.

On 26 October 1985, the State of Emergency was extended to include the Western Cape. Over 100 organisations were prohibited from meeting and it became more and more difficult for student, teacher and parent structures to meet, let alone debate the nature of the struggle to be waged at this critical stage of the class/school boycott.

Interviewee K organised a regional WECTU meeting at Wynberg Park:

Teachers arrived in very casual clothes with picnic baskets, pretending to be holiday-makers in Cape Town. On reflection, it was a silly idea. Imagine sixty adults sitting on the lawns at 3 o'clock on a mid-week afternoon without having even emerged from a tourist bus. Within ten minutes, cops surrounded the Park and we simply left...¹⁰⁶

Widespread detentions without trial of political activists, teachers and students followed the imposition of the State of Emergency in the Western Cape and finally, the suspensions and dismissals of teachers throughout the Western Cape. The implications of these highhanded actions by the state will be discussed in forthcoming chapters, but a new slogan, HANDS OFF TEACHERS! emerged.

On 28-29 December 1985, a national conference on the school crisis was held in Johannesburg. At the conference the message was loud and clear, "Let us return to school and continue the struggle inside and outside the schools".¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Interviewee K.

¹⁰⁷ Free Azania. 1986. *Education Crisis Documents*. Leaflet NO. 2. Statement issued by 155 organisations. Place of Publication unknown, 17-19.

As Alexander warned, if the timing is not right, action against the ruling class could be suicidal for the oppressed people.

The conference advised students to

return to formal academic classes on 28 January 1986, organise mass regional workshops at which local problems can be resolved... (to) work towards drawing up a national programme of action for 1986,... honour martyrs and demonstrate our solidarity with all the victims of our struggle in creative and constructive ways... use the conditions to build mass democratic structures...¹⁰⁸

With the support of 155 organisations, the message was clear. Education for Liberation was the key. This had always been the position of the Central High community and was supported except for one major issue. The state had suspended the Principal, Deputy Principal, five senior staff and refused to renew the contracts of eleven temporary staff members. Central High refused to accept this.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 8

Who is next?

Detentions without trial continue...

On 26 October 1985, the State of Emergency was extended to the Western Cape. Within 19 days, 1499 people had been arrested. Political activists were separated from teachers and students detained for periods of 14 days at a time. This period could be extended to 90 days or longer.

Two teachers and a student from Central High were detained without trial. Others, who feared that they might be detained, went into hiding or moved to "safe houses". The two teachers detained were affiliated to political and teachers' organizations. One teacher was a member of the NUM and TLSA, the other was a CAL and WECTU member. The student was not politically involved or even active in the SRC, as outlined in an earlier chapter.

The detention of teachers at Central High angered the community even further and showed the vicious impact that apartheid legislation had on people who opposed this ideology. As the state tightened its noose, the community responded creatively to find loopholes in the repressive state armory. Local radio stations were used during "request times", for example, to inform those "inside" that friends and family were well and supporting them.

A colleague remembered the day one of the teachers at Central High was detained, "We were all sitting in the school hall, listening to a speaker. It was during an awareness programme. The door opened and the Principal called the teacher out. The security police had arrived at the school to detain her. She quickly handed her bag and house keys to a colleague and was taken away, only to return one month later".¹⁰⁹

Interviewee B related what subsequently happened,

¹⁰⁹ Interviewee C.

I am a very strong person. Nothing gets me down... somebody else might have collapsed into tears, but I was taken down to Caledon Street Police Station and then fingerprints were taken. One officer took my fingerprints and the other asked a question which I didn't understand at the time. He asked the other policeman whether I had been taken in for shoplifting! From there, I was taken to Pollsmoor...

Now I was picked up at about eleven o'clock... we must have got to Pollsmoor at half past three... I was hungry. Eventually, I was so hungry and I went into a single cell and pressed the bell.... When this woman came in, I asked when I was getting my food... only to learn that supper was at half past three. The staff knocks off at half past four. I was in the cell for the night. I waited until supper at half past five or six, but there wasn't even a slice of bread that they could give me until breakfast the next morning.

Breakfast was at half past six. They served bread, something that passed for jam, mealie meal and a cup of coffee or tea. There was no such thing as lunch. Supper was indescribable. You don't know what it is. You were eating it because you were hungry, but you didn't know a damn what it was... a mixture. I only remained in the single cell for one night and those teachers and students detained were apart from the other prisoners. Stalwart activists were in a different part. We had sheets, beds and showers en suite and toilets... it was a big room... more like a hospital ward... no television, but there was a radio and people were getting messages from outside, you know, request programmes, so there was tremendous camaraderie... people who had never met one another before... the children, who were in a separate section to us... looked upon us as parents... at night we could chat. Some were longing for parents and for their children... and husbands and for sweethearts, so for them it wasn't a holiday being in jail... They wouldn't allow my siblings or my mother to visit me... my mother got permission on the day I was released... she was in her late 70s.

Some kids for additional punishment were put into single cells. There were games for them to play. MONOPOLIA as it was called. Dominoes and all that... Scrabble... a lot of young people... they enjoyed each other's company. They weren't at school so I s'pose that was an extra bonus.

One day, activists in a nearby cell indicated to us that they were going to embark on a hunger strike. They wanted our support, although we were concerned about the children going on a hunger strike. We also had people who were on medication and they couldn't take tablets unless they had eaten, so we told the children that we were not going to eat for the next couple of days, but that they had to eat.... We abstained and they decided that they were not going to eat.... The prison staff were so upset... they were running around.... We could buy sweets and snacks to the value of R14. I said, don't touch whatever we have because they will come and check... and that happened. *Waar is daa'i chocolates wat jy gekoop 't?* But they didn't take them away. They sent me to see the person right on the top... head of that section of the prison... the next day we had roast chicken. We could recognise the food. Vegetables, pork, chicken... We had an hour exercise a day... we would walk around the big quad and a strange thing happened that day... the children, they didn't speak English, they spoke Xhosa,... they all walked next to me... they were saying thank you.

Two pipsqueaks were sent to interrogate me. All about Nelson Mandela and I said that not only Nelson Mandela should be released, but all the others as well.... They could see I was *haregat* and they weren't going to get anywhere with me. Everyone interrogated was asked about their attitude towards Nelson Mandela. They knew bugger all. They were given questions to ask and expected to receive stock answers and when they didn't get stock answers, they were thrown, and didn't know where to go after that.... In fact, I was more concerned about all of you outside. The irony was that all of us suffered when the decision was taken not to write the final examinations.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Interviewee B.

The male teachers and students were imprisoned at Victor Verster Prison in Paarl. Interviewee I, detained in 1985, felt that it was different from 1976,

I was detained in '76 for a long period of time and tortured and so on. Solitary confinement and all that sort of thing.... That was traumatic. We were arrested under Section 6... kept in solitary confinement for the whole period of detention and so on.... Conditions in '85 at Victor Verster were not that serious. There were a few young children who were beaten up at the time. There was no torture... certainly not in the section where I was in. The prison was divided into four units. The one unit housed the people who were arrested first. They included the top UDF leadership and there were one or two Unity Movement people there as well... they were kept in individual cells. Then there were two other sections, where there were communal cells... the fourth section also had single cells. Many were arrested every day for no reason at all. Some of them because they resembled people on the run. I was in a communal cell in the beginning and then after a hunger strike... some of us were removed and taken to individual cells. We went on a hunger strike... I can't remember for how many days. For many people it was quite traumatic to be in prison. There was a case of young children being picked up on the beach somewhere... I was only in jail for just over two weeks. We had nothing secret to hide. So there was really nothing to be afraid of. But what they did do, very deliberately, when they questioned me, was to say very loudly, Thank you very much for your co-operation. This was to sow some confusion amongst other detainees. I also think that the fact that I was released after two weeks, while other lesser WECTU officials stayed in jail for longer was done deliberately. I heard stories afterwards, why was I released after two weeks and members on regional executives had to stay five weeks?¹¹¹

Apart from the possibility of being detained, Interviewee D described being harassed by the police,

I wasn't arrested, but I was harassed. I was visited by the cops on two occasions.... The cops came to my house and they said to me that I was involved in a hit-and-run accident and they had witnesses to show that my car was seen and my number plate... and so they were coming to find out what I was doing there at that particular time... it was clearly a set-up.¹¹²

Interviewee E said,

There were a number of teachers on the staff who were involved more directly than others. We knew who the people were. Some were detained and there was an attempt to joke (it sounds like a black joke) about who's next in line. You could be the next one or you or you!! I had someone knocking at my door at three o'clock in the morning and I was very, very frightened. It turned out to be a colleague actually... but I always worked on the assumption that there would be three or four detained before me.¹¹³

Many were not overtly harassed and/or detained without trial, but there were indications that their telephone lines and mail were being intercepted.

¹¹¹ Interviewee I.

¹¹² Interviewee D.

¹¹³ Interviewee E.

Interviewee K admitted,

There were pressures, personal pressures ... it was difficult to know who you could trust. Even a colleague on the staff might be reporting you or whatever you say to the authorities. If you appeared to be excited or pushing a particular decision, there would be reaction in some kind of way... usually not overtly. Emotions often reached their peak... you might arrive at school one morning, without having had any sleep because of endless phone-calls throughout the night, minutes, reports or pamphlets to be written and on entering the staff room, a colleague might casually ask you the latest developments, whilst one or two sniggered or raised their eyebrows in the background. This was disconcerting when all decisions at school were made after discussions and consensus.¹¹⁴

The solidarity amongst Central High's constituent members was remarkable, but the question under investigation is the nature of this unity. This is discussed in the next chapter.

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¹¹⁴ Interviewee K.

CHAPTER 9

The leadership

Despite political groupings and differences of opinion at Central High, the solidarity shown by the school's community became its greatest strength. The reasons why solidarity was achieved and how it was achieved interested the researcher.

From the interviews and participatory observations during the boycott period, there appeared to be a recurring denominator responsible for this solidarity, namely, the role of the Principal. In 1985, leadership at Central High was rooted in the vision of one person, the Principal. His principled stance in the past had earned him the respect of the community. His team worked with him. In 1985, the Principal of Central High was synonymous with Central High. His vision was built upon the roots of predecessors and the stems fruitfully grew and continued to flower. One or two off-shoots decayed along the way, but the majority strove to achieve the vision of academic excellence.

In 1985, the Principal developed a strong team of like-minded visionaries who implemented a holistic strategy and overcame the brutal tactics of the state. The solidarity of parents, staff, students and extra-parliamentary organisations engaged in the same struggle was a strategy that he knew would win the day at that moment in history. That strategy counteracted mundane point-scoring amongst individuals and organisations.

Interviewee A felt that the

Management Team of the school, particularly in the form of the Principal... was a tremendous factor in the unification of teachers. No teacher could be left out. No teacher could afford to be left out of the general stream of this process of the school acting in concert with the parents. A strong leadership team of the school was an essential aspect of what happened subsequently.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Interviewee A.

Interviewee C agreed.

Had it not been for The Principal at Central High, the whole thing would have collapsed very early. Remember he withstood the department. They called him in on a number of occasions personally and he stuck to his guns. He insisted that the parents decided what was to happen and... when the police used to roam around, he sat outside the entrance at his table to protect the school. We didn't see it in that light, but afterwards one could realise why he was sitting there... to stop the police from entering the building and harassing the pupils because they were hounding SRC members. If they could get into the building, into the meetings, then they might have acted against pupils, so I think he played a very important role...¹¹⁶

Interviewee D concurred.

... the political differences of people were accommodated... accommodated within the aegis of the school's broad tradition... there were really differences of tactics at some levels.... The Principal's position in the 1985 boycott in the Western Cape is pivotal... if one looks at the role of individuals... he is the key person in a moment in time in the Western Cape... it is HE who holds in a sense the key to what goes on... the position in articulating to parents how important it is that their children get the very best education... that the question of making kids write exams after having had little education in the course of the year was morally unacceptable... that kind of strength with which the argument is made is the defining argument for me which manages to persuade parents to take what is a progressive position...¹¹⁷

Interviewee G viewed the Principal as

a strong character and I remember when the SRC went to speak to him, they had a strategy to take many people in with them.... Yes, he said you have to sacrifice and all of us believed we had to sacrifice, but he added to sacrifice, you have to gain. I think he was using chess. If you sacrifice something, you are going to get something in return. Interesting analogy. He respected our position to take our own decisions and then he stood by us... he was a great supporter and we respected him...¹¹⁸

The Principal addressed the community when they defiantly re-opened the school in spite of the ministerial decree. He organised three meetings to discuss the final examinations, which were attended by 1 210 parents. The democratic decision to postpone the final examinations to March 1986 brought a dictatorial response from the educational authorities in the Department of Education and Culture, House of Representatives, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The aftermath of this decision saw the suspension of the Principal, Deputy Principal and senior staff members at the school and later they were charged with misconduct.

¹¹⁶ Interviewee C.

¹¹⁷ Interviewee D.

¹¹⁸ Interviewee G.

In January 1986, Central High re-opened without him as Principal. As a teacher remarked, "Central without him at the helm was unthinkable"¹¹⁹

His presence at all meetings and demonstrations during the vacation period had brought encouragement to the suspended and temporary teachers who had not had their contracts renewed.

Interviewee C remarked,

he played a very important role and towards the end of the year when staff unity was beginning to wear thin... he held the staff together and when people were not there and had been suspended, he saw to it that we got regular feedback from the school... daily meetings after school... there was no way that Central could continue without him as Principal. And the media were very supportive... there were many articles and petitions going to parents and we knew somehow that it had to be positive.... The Principal's stature within the community also... they couldn't afford to sack us... it could have led to another school boycott.¹²⁰

On 15 January 1986, the start of the academic year, an "Acting" Principal was appointed at Central High. He remained in his post for one school morning as did the teachers appointed to replace the suspended and temporary teachers. They were labelled "scabs".

The next day the SATV news broadcast at 20h00 announced that "all teachers could return to school the next day. No mention was made of transferred, banned or dismissed teachers".¹²¹ The Principal of Central High telephoned each staff member and personally informed them that they should return to their posts the next morning.

The emotional return is described,

Central High Principal... and more than 100 teachers at schools throughout the Peninsula, have been given back their jobs following a dramatic about-face by the Department of Education and Culture. Faced with the prospect of a continuation of the boycott which has disrupted the school calendar for almost six months, the Rev Allan Hendrickse, whose Labour Party controls coloured education, announced on Tuesday night that the suspensions of all teachers would be immediately lifted.¹²²

¹¹⁹ The school's 50th anniversary brochure. *A victory for unity*. 2000: 24.

¹²⁰ Interviewee C.

¹²¹ WECTU newsletter, Number 3, January 1986: 2.

¹²² *Cape Herald*, dated 1986.01.18: 1.

Interviewee K witnessed the solidarity shown by parents, staff, pupils, past pupils and members of the community, "cars lined the street, double-parked, triple-parked. No cop would have dared to ticket that day. The school community came out *en masse* to support the triumphant return..."¹²³

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¹²³ Central High School's 50th Anniversary brochure. 2000. Cape Town,24.

CHAPTER 10

To write or not to write?

That is the question...

The victimization of teachers and the charges of misconduct laid against senior staff resulted from decisions made by certain school communities not to administer final examinations in 1985. The fourth term started with pupils still engaged in a class/school boycott. Leadership structures within WECSAC and WECTU had been severely shaken as more and more pupils and teachers were detained without trial or simply "went on the run".

Interviewee G described the origin of the idea to postpone the final school examinations from October/November 1985 to March 1986,

We actually came to school on 10 October because it was a public holiday that we rejected, but after that it became worse and worse and eventually we were a classful of people at school... then we started to say, Look, we need to get back to class. I even know where the whole idea of not writing the exam came from... Anthony¹²⁴ said in a SOYA meeting that we need to get people back into schools, but it was unrealistic.... We must go and negotiate with all the universities that exams will be written in February and that the final exams must be postponed until then.... Back to school, postpone the examinations, write the examinations when people had undergone an intense period of study. That was about March... and that was the line we pushed. The idea went horribly wrong.... That idea was then hi-jacked into saying, Let's not write exams. We are going to be liberated tomorrow.¹²⁵

Interviewee D agreed that the idea "was first mooted as a SOYA position to get children back to school to write in March and then it was hi-jacked by the UDF and then they didn't write at all."¹²⁶

Interviewee I said that the decision to postpone the final 1985 examinations was supported by WECTU:

¹²⁴ The actual identity of the person remains anonymous.

¹²⁵ Interviewee G.

¹²⁶ Interviewee D.

It was not a decision that WECTU had made. It was a decision that WECTU supported... a whole lot of us were in jail when that decision was made and so when we came out, there was that decision and given the conditions that existed, the state of emergency, we had no option but to support it... I think it was the correct position. This must not be confused with the notion of Liberation before Education. WECTU did not have an impact on that decision. It was a student initiative and we had no option but to support it. I realise that it did cause a lot of problems. Many parents... I got a lot of flack. Many parents used to phone my home and complain about that... It was quite stressful and many parents who expected their kids to go to university blamed WECTU for that and me personally.¹²⁷

As mentioned in the previous chapter, three meetings of parents, teachers and students were held at Central High to discuss the matter of the final examinations in 1985. Students had been engaged in the class/school boycott sporadically from 29 July 1985 and virtually no teaching and learning had taken place for four months. A total of 1 210 parents, representing 736 students, decided, without a single dissentient vote, that the final examinations should not take place in November/December 1985. This decision dovetailed with the idea that pupils must return to school, undergo an intensive period of study and write the final examinations in March 1986. Tertiary institutions would be approached and asked to adapt their own programmes and allow pupils to start their courses a month later than scheduled. This decision was conveyed in writing to the Regional Director of the Department of Education and Culture, Mr A.J. Arendse.¹²⁸

The persistence of the Department to proceed with the examinations created the impression that their only aim was to project the impression that all was well, and to underplay the weaknesses and injustices prevalent in the education system.

The disturbing nature of the examination was that very few students wrote, question papers were adapted to accommodate only certain parts of the syllabus, the police and/or defence force were on school premises and in the examination rooms during this time and year marks were doubled. The examination was, in fact, a mockery. From a student's perspective, it was perceived to be an easy way to be promoted to the next standard. Interviewee J said that

the decision not to administer and/or write the final examinations in 1985 was based on educational, more than political grounds, especially for matrics, as far as parents were concerned.... How could we send him to a tertiary institution knowing full well that he hadn't

¹²⁷ Interviewee I.

¹²⁸ See Appendix 4.

completed his matric work? It would have impacted negatively afterwards. It strengthened him and it was the best choice.... It did him no harm in having to repeat the year. He would have felt very insecure if he had to go on to tertiary level...¹²⁹

Documentary evidence compiled by Subject Heads and staff in the various departments at Central High supported and respected the decision made by parents that the October/November examinations were educationally unjustifiable and farcical.¹³⁰

This unanimous and united decision by Central High's community brought immediate reaction from the Department of Education and Culture, House of Representatives.

Officials were sent to the school to meet each teacher. The teachers were called to a meeting and addressed. The two officials read the names of the teachers at the school and each had to reply affirmatively that they were present. They had not even done a little homework because they even called out the names of the two teachers in detention. The officials informed all staff members that the decision not to administer final examinations was an individual and not a collective one. All staff members, excluding the two detained teachers, replied individually that they would not administer the examinations. Solidarity survived.

On 5 December 1985, the Principal, Deputy Principal and five Heads of Department were suspended from the service of the Department of Education and Culture. The seven staff members were debarred from the school premises and were not allowed to have any say in the general administration and decision-making of the school. In addition, eleven temporary teachers were informed that their applications for re-appointment would be subject to written notification from the Executive Director.

The solidarity at Central High did not reflect the position at other schools. All in all, 96 teachers from 24 schools in the Western Cape refused to administer the final 1985 examinations. Of the 96, 37 were from Central High.

¹²⁹ Interviewee J.

¹³⁰ Documentary evidence is included in Appendix 3.

The Department of Education and Culture organised the final matriculation examinations at the Goodwood Showgrounds, the Cape Corps headquarters at Faure and at Wingfield military base under the auspices of the South African Defence Force.

Of the 25 584 matriculants who registered for Standard 10 in DET schools around the country in 1985, only 10 523 wrote the examinations. Of the 25 584, only 19,1% passed in the ordinary grade; 5,2% obtained their matriculation exemption. An official DEC (HoR) statement of its own results claimed that 11 052 wrote the examinations (out of an undisclosed possible number), of which 64,4% passed and 1 381 obtained matriculation exemption. In the Wynberg, Athlone and Bellville (but excluding Mitchell's Plain) regions, 53,9% of registered students sat for their examinations.¹³¹

The question of final examinations for pupils in Standards Six to Nine differed from school to school. A few schools decided to postpone these examinations until March 1986, whereas other schools simply promoted all pupils to the next standard on the basis of the marks attained during the first two quarters of 1985.

The suspended Principal wrote a letter to all parents/guardians at the school. The letter dated 1985.12.04, read,

Dear Parent/Guardian

This is to inform you that I, together with the Deputy Principal and five Heads of Departments, have been suspended from the service of the Department of Education and Culture as from tomorrow, 5.12.85. The Department has not provided any reasons for their action. However, in effect, this action implies that we (the seven teachers) are debarred from the school premises and may not have any say in the general administration and decision-making at the school. In addition, a further eleven teachers, who are classified as temporary staff, have been informed that their applications for reappointment are subject to written confirmation from the Executive Director.

Allow me to take advantage of this opportunity to express our admiration and appreciation of the loyalty and support you have given us over many years. We have no doubt that the strength of our school is due largely to the outstanding co-operation which exists amongst parents, students, teachers and ex-students.

May this spirit of co-operation prevail at the beginning of next year and ensure that we start the new year with a strong determination to pursue and strive to attain the educational values, standards and ideals that are so dear to our school.

Lastly, I want you to know that I remain convinced that our school will emerge from the current "crisis" even stronger than it was before.¹³²

¹³¹ Kihn, Paul. 1993. *Players or Pawns: Professionalism and Teacher Disunity in the Western Cape, 1980-1990*. M Phil. University of Cape Town, 99-100.

¹³² See appendix 4. A postscript to this letter added that the school would re-open on 15 January 1986. The message was positive.

Interviewee A said,

The unity of the school was so strong that there was no possibility of them being successful. We did not receive cheques at the end of December... the staff was so strong... that those who did receive cheques pooled them, pooled their money and divided it amongst all. This was a unique point in the history of Central High because not only did we pool money, but parents went around and collected R10 per family so we were reimbursed a little bit...¹³³

Interviewee C recalled that she

was waiting for the authorities to decide. Once they decided, one way or the other, then I would look for another option... at the back of our minds we knew that he had to be reinstated.... We knew that Carter Ebrahim and company couldn't hold back after the Acting Principal was chucked out; there was no way that Central could continue without the former Principal. And the media was very supportive... there were many articles and petitions... and the parents... and the Principal's stature in the community also, they couldn't afford to sack us... it could have led to another school boycott.¹³⁴

On 15 January 1986, Central High re-opened for the start of the academic year. On the first day of term only 20 staff members were allowed to report for duty. An "acting" Principal and replacement teachers for those suspended and in temporary posts at that time, together with 19 secondary assistants and 1 temporary teacher were present. Central and Rylands High Schools were the only schools to lose their entire Senior Staff.

Interviewee B recalled,

It was horrible... the old staff sat on one side, the new on the other. No interaction. The Acting Principal called us individually into his office. But there was this creepy-crawly... a temporary teacher. A religious minister *nogal*. He went to the Department during the vacation and must have begged for his job back. When we arrived at school, we saw him showing the Acting guy around the school. We ostracised him immediately.¹³⁵

The following day WECTU organised a protest march to the Department's headquarters and over 300 teachers participated. WECTU demanded "the immediate and unconditional reinstatement of all

¹³³ Interviewee A.

¹³⁴ Interviewee C.

¹³⁵ Interviewee B.

victimised teachers, the unconditional readmission of all students" and the removal of the "SAP and SADF" from school premises.¹³⁶

That evening on the SABC TV eight o'clock news broadcast it was announced that the suspensions had been lifted with immediate effect.

The Principal on his return to Central High said, "It's great to be back with my children, my extended family".¹³⁷

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¹³⁶ WECTU newsletter. January 1986. Number 3:1.

¹³⁷ Central High School's 50th Anniversary Brochure. 2000. Cape Town, 9. *Nom de plume* used.

CHAPTER 11

Betrayals

The solidarity of the Central High School community was its strength. The teacher who chose to work hand in glove with the department bore the brunt of the community's antagonism. He was the school's librarian, a temporary teacher and a religious minister. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he had visited the Department of Education and Culture during the vacation and had his contract renewed. When schools re-opened in January 1986, he offered to assist the "Acting" Principal.

When the suspended and temporary teachers returned to school, the news of this betrayal angered the community. Interviewee A remembered that "his chair was overturned. I locked him in the library; I got him out of the way... the wrath of the community was against him".¹³⁸

He never returned to Central High.

WECTU issued a pamphlet highlighting the names of victimized teachers and the subjects which they taught at 24 schools in the Western Cape and called on teachers, particularly those looking for first-time teaching posts, not to scab on fellow teachers: Don't take a victimized teacher's job! A scab teacher is a bad teacher!¹³⁹

From the students' perspective, failure to return to Central High and repeat the academic year was a betrayal.

¹³⁸ Interviewee A.

¹³⁹ WECTU pamphlet. January 1985. Wynberg.

A Central High student wrote the final examinations at the Goodwood Showgrounds and achieved the first position amongst all students who wrote the matriculation examinations, House of Representatives in 1985. The school did not acknowledge her achievement. A few matriculants took the option to write supplementary examinations in March 1986 and to continue with their tertiary studies in that same year, as tertiary institutions had agreed to accept late applications.

Interviewee F recalled,

There was someone who wrote matric in 1985 and came first in the country and I was very, very angry with her. I think that we felt very disappointed and betrayed by her and those who boycotted and went on to write supplementaries when... the school took a collective decision that all students would go back... and we felt... resentment. Then, there were others... I don't know what the truth is. There were so many stories going around... rumours about illnesses... but, we also understood those who were forced to go to private schools because their parents insisted...¹⁴⁰

Interviewee G admitted,

I was one of the people who didn't come back. And for me that was problematic.... 1986 was a traumatic year because I was doing something that went against everything I believed in... in some ways I still blame my parents, but I have put it behind me... I should have stayed... I phoned my parents and said, Please take me out of here. I fought with the people at the private school about the values that they had which were not acceptable. In many ways, living with the sons and daughters of the ruling class showed up that we were in fact correct. We fought. There was another AZAPO chap with me as well and we beat many of them down to the conclusion, Isn't that selfishness? Yes, they would say, but I'm a selfish person and they were okay with that... I managed to find my way back to SOYA... I was convinced that I would be ostracised... in fact I was allowed in freely and when a member said Comrade Chair... I felt that this was my home... This is where I needed to be, but I didn't have the courage and conviction at the time to break free. My parents were scared what was going to happen the next year... the time when they said that the whole Central High staff was to be dismissed.... Many thought that the staff would be sacked.... This was traumatic... people didn't know where to go.¹⁴¹

Interviewee H was angry that

students went to write... particularly schools in Mitchell's Plain, the main idea of not writing came from those schools... and then they went to write... there was a lot of antagonism towards them at that time because they broke that unity. The people who went to write in March... they were like those people who went to write in November/December. We regarded them as scabs.... when we look back in '86... there was just so much unity amongst the students that we did not look at it as being a wasted year because I was not prepared to write an exam after doing six months of work... we had to join up with other matric classes... we moved in with an academic class... a Physics and Maths class... and at first we were a bit wary, whether we would mix and

¹⁴⁰ Interviewee F.

¹⁴¹ Interviewee G.

get along... but the class was so united. There was no division, as if we had spent all the years together.¹⁴²

In 1986 the unity amongst the Central High community was at its peak. Traditionally, parents applied one year in advance for the admission of their children into Standard Six at the school. It was customary that some parents queued the evening before enrolments in order to ensure that their child had a place at the school.... Skottel braais and picnics were picturesque scenes on the eve of enrolments. Admissions started at 6.00 a.m. and by 9.00 a.m. the admissions and waiting lists for the forthcoming year had reached the quota. In 1986 the Std 6 students admitted to the school were ready to commence their academic year at Central High. The boycott had not adversely affected primary schools. Central High decided to admit these "new" students. Instead of five Std 6 classes, there would be ten. This was known as the BULGE.¹⁴³

The Department of Education and Culture provided additional facilities. Interviewee A said,

They built a whole row of prefabricated classrooms, mobile prefabricated classrooms and also two or three additional rooms.... They provided extra textbooks and stationery... there were now two sets of Std 6's at the school. It was, of course, tremendous strain on the staff in that the increase in the number of teachers had to correspond with the increase in the number of children at the beginning of 1986.¹⁴⁴ The spirit was strong... the emotions were so strong among pupils, staff and parents that it seemed to be too easy... but in the final analysis we coped.... We found homes for other teachers that had been dismissed or victimised...¹⁴⁵

Interviewee H felt that she "came back with teachers supporting us... it was real support... it was sincere"¹⁴⁶

and Interviewee D reflected on the

kind of trust that emerged in that context... it was extraordinary, absolutely extraordinary. I can't think of many other schools where the sacrifice and absolute confidence in a process has happened.... In 1986 when we did return to Central, the bulge started and talking to students, there was always division and in the aftermath of the struggle it united everybody. Many say it

¹⁴² Interviewee H.

¹⁴³ As students progressed from Std 6 upwards, the numbers increased from standard to standard. In 1990, there were 300 students in Std 10.

¹⁴⁴ Additional teachers were only employed by the Department in June/July 1985.

¹⁴⁵ Interviewee A.

¹⁴⁶ Interviewee H.

was a learning experience that they would never regret. I think that people who went through that particular experience were almost ennobled by the experience. I think that the kids who came afterwards tried to understand their own membership of this special community and to really drink it all up... and the kids who actually went through it were privileged in a sense, you know, there was a sense of privilege in having to endure this kind of difficulty. One student said that his political analysis was way ahead of others and it was recognised.¹⁴⁷

Although teachers were reinstated, the Department of Education and Culture decided to press charges against those teachers who did not conduct examinations. Eighteen months later, the first trial began. Principals, Deputy Principals and teachers were charged.

WECTU defended its members.

WECTU teachers realise the value of education in the oppressed community. We worry about the tension these trials are causing. As a teachers' union we have to defend our members. We are therefore giving them the best possible legal defence and our active support. A wide range of community organisations has pledged full ongoing support. We know that the stand that they took was correct. 3 000 people agreed with us when they showed their solidarity in Wynberg at the first hearing on Monday 20 July.¹⁴⁸

The outcome of the charges of misconduct is discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁷ Interviewee D.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 12

The sequel

On 28 January 1986, a document entitled, *Let us return to formal academic classes. Let us continue the struggle inside and outside of the schools*, was endorsed by over 155 organisations in the Western Cape¹⁴⁹ and countrywide based on decisions taken at the national conference on the education crisis in December 1985, outlining the recommendation for students to return to school. The document provided guidelines for students and teachers,

Although most students have decided to 'return to school', there is much confusion about whether or not to return to formal classes. One view is that the boycott should continue until all our demands are met, even if we have to sacrifice another year, or even two or three years, of inferior education. This view is based on a completely false reading of the political situation in South Africa, since it supposes that the National Party government is about to fall and that an indefinite schools boycott will hasten this fall. Now, while it is true that the apartheid state has never been as weak and as open to internal and external pressure as at present, it is a disastrous illusion to believe that the government is on its knees. We believe, instead, that the government will be forced to make certain 'reforms' but that it will be kept in power by its imperialist supporters in the Western World until a more suitable liberal government becomes possible. If this should prove not to be possible, we should prepare ourselves for an open military government supported in deed, if not in words, by all the imperialist powers for the salvation of capitalism in South Africa...

The boycott is one of the most important weapons of an oppressed and an unarmed people. But it is not our only weapon. It is but one of a whole arsenal of weapons at the disposal of our people and of our movement. Like all weapons, if it is not used correctly, it can become a suicidal instrument...

WE SAY:

Let us return to formal academic classes on 28 January 1986!

Let us organise mass regional workshops at which local problems can be resolved.

Let us work towards drawing up a national programme of action for 1986!

Let us honour our martyrs and demonstrate our solidarity with all the victims of our struggle in creative and constructive ways...¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Document entitled, *Let us return to formal academic classes Let us continue the struggle inside and outside of the schools*. Athlone, 1986.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

In July 1987, the first charges of misconduct against the suspended teachers in 1985 were scheduled to be heard. The PTSA of Central High issued an immediate statement,

We regard the hearings as unnecessary and anti-educational. We are astounded that hearings and possible punitive action can be deemed to be necessary a full eighteen months after November 1985, and at a time when teachers and pupils should be preparing for very important final 1987 November examinations. The community would regard any action that may result from the hearings as further evidence of the high-handed and intolerant attitude that the Department has often displayed in its dealings with teachers. . . . We call upon the Department to act in the interests of education. We demand that Disciplinary Hearings NOT be held and that teachers and pupils be allowed to continue unhindered with the tasks of educating and being educated.¹⁵¹

In August 1987, WECTU sent out a letter to the community stating that,

The students were in no state to write these exams; they had done only half the year's work and many were having nightmares from the violence they were seeing in the streets. At some schools exams were held at gunpoint. According to the Child Guidance Clinic at UCT, 'In our professional opinion we would expect the results of examinations written under these circumstances to be invalid..' THE TEACHERS KNEW THIS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE.

The Department of Education and Culture decided to press charges against those teachers, who, quite correctly, did not administer exams. And now, 18 months later, the first of these cases has been heard. The verdict is still to come. Amongst the 'accused' are principals, deputy-principals and teachers of the highest standing in the community. WECTU teachers realise the value of education in the oppressed community. We worry about the tension these trials are causing. As a teachers' union we have to defend our members. We are giving them the best possible legal defence and our active support.¹⁵²

Central High teachers stood side by side with all those victimised during the boycott period and, in particular, with the 72 teachers charged with disciplinary action.

The first two cases which had been scheduled for 11 and 12 July 1987 were indefinitely postponed. Four cases, including that of the Principal of Central High, were scheduled for the following week, but lawyers acting on behalf of WECTU called for a postponement because they had not been given sufficient notice of these dates. This was granted.

¹⁵¹ Statement from Central High School's PTSA, dated 9 July 1987.

¹⁵² Extracts from a letter from WECTU to parents in the Western Cape, dated August 1987.

The Department of Education and Culture was unable to find a magistrate to hear the postponed cases "as the previous magistrate was available only until the end of July".¹⁵³

The charges were subsequently dropped.

University of Cape Town

¹⁵³ Extract from WECTU Emergency Newsletter, Number 7. Undated. Crawford.

CHAPTER 13

GAINS AND LIMITATIONS

The gains noted are within the microcosm of one school, Central High, and related to broader educational issues within the oppressed communities. Interviewee D recalled that

having gone through the experience of '85... the school tradition changed quite significantly. There is a greater respect, a recognition of student involvement, of student power, of student democracy.... Democracy... as a tradition is particularly strengthening, empowering for young people as they take control of their lives... as they begin to enter into situations where they have to make decisions about what to do with their lives. You know that if one looks at the heritage of Central... you can benchmark particular periods by looking at individuals and the role that those individuals played in shaping the kind of discussions that were taking place in schools, the atmosphere in the classrooms and so on...¹⁵⁴

Student, teacher and parent structures were built. Interviewee B said that

For quite a lot of students their lives were changed as a result of what went on. It wouldn't have been the same at other schools. There was just a disintegration of the whole student and school structures... but at Central these structures were built...¹⁵⁵

The SRC Secretary in 1985 reflected, "Many revolutionary gains were made in '85. The oppressed and exploited communities showed their strength and organisational abilities through concrete gains... SRCs, PTSAs, teacher, youth and community structures were built..."¹⁵⁶

Interviewee F thought that the formation of the National Educational Crisis Committee (NECC) enabled schools to align to broader organisational structures,

We needed to deal with educational matters in a different light.... Gone were the days that parents just listened to teachers... schools were rooted in communities and communities needed to take ownership of schools... it stems from '85... the schools should become centres of learning not from eight to three, but throughout the day.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Interviewee D.

¹⁵⁵ Interviewee B.

¹⁵⁶ Article written by the Secretary of the SRC at Central High in 1990 and printed in the 40th anniversary publication, Cape Town, 1990.

¹⁵⁷ Interviewee F. He believed that schools should be open to community organisations in the afternoons and evenings. Schools had the infra-structure to provide adult education programmes/courses.

Interviewee G felt that the gains made in 1985 have now been lost and referred to what is happening in the country today,

All the gains made ideologically have been pushed backwards. The things we would have thrown out in 1985. If the apartheid government had brought these things in, they would have been thrown out. What the present government had done is to give legitimacy to almost all what the apartheid state wanted to do. Now we vote, we vote for this... The working class itself is weak, ideologies grow on conditions, on the balance of forces, and the balance of forces are now against us. We are in retreat. After 1985, the workers have been on retreat...¹⁵⁸

This sentiment was reiterated by Interviewee H, who repeated the academic year in 1986,

...South Africa became free and the ANC came into power and we think that those were the people we gave our life for and now we see that there is an onslaught on Education... so although we fought for the liberation of students at the time we feel that education has been enslaved once again and that the people who fought on the streets and who fought to have organisations unbanned are now doing this...¹⁵⁹

Interviewee A felt that a major limitation was insufficient contacts between the struggle of the students and workers in 1985,

... the street struggles were struggles of the lumpen proletariat more than the workers... one aspect was the lack of resources, the lack of transport, the lack of communication with schools in Langa, Nyanga, Athlone and so on and taking the struggle out of the townships into the white areas and into the centre of the city. There were attempts made, for example, at the Golden Acre... I remember our students went down... but there was lack of experience, tactics, planning of strategies but this was not a limitation on youngsters... literature had been banned and this was lacking... ideas could only be carried by word of mouth...¹⁶⁰

Interviewee K expressed the views of a colleague,

The boycott dragged on and on and lost momentum. Here you have to blame the adults who were orchestrating/controlling it. They were giving bloody children hopes that

¹⁵⁸ Interviewee G. He believes that the working class have not made gains in the post-apartheid period.

¹⁵⁹ Interviewee H. She believes that the advances made in the education struggle in 1985 have suffered a setback as the situation within schooling has worsened. Both views must be seen in the context of rationalisation and redeployment of teachers from 1996 onwards. The position in schools under the former House of Representatives appears to have worsened in terms of teacher-pupil ratios and the allocation of resources.

¹⁶⁰ Interviewee A.

made them go on. They used the children... not everybody, but there were definitely some who were using the kids... giving kids money to go and buy petrol bombs... today, the ease with which people shoot and kill each other has its roots in that period.... There was a thing that you could kill each other. Kill the bastards that aren't with you, so quite a number of people engaging in this taxi violence were students in '85.... If you can kill once, you can kill any number of times after that...¹⁶¹

Interviewee B referred to the many children who simply left school during the boycott period,

If you were poor, you just left school or lost the inclination... who wants to go back to school after all this excitement? And of course, there wasn't change.... Quite a few did leave school because their parents couldn't afford to keep them at school for another year.¹⁶²

The 1985 boycott, in comparison with 1976 and 1980 in the Western Cape tended to focus on schools under the Departments of Education and Culture, House of Representatives and House of Delegates. Schools under the Department of Education and Training had been involved in ongoing boycotts and disruptions from 1976. The 1985 students felt that one limitation was that racial barriers were not crossed.

Interviewee F said,

We tried. It was very, very difficult... the way the transport system worked in this country, the way in which we were situated... we tried. We had meetings at St Francis, Langa, where we tried to get the boycott extended into black townships as well. We had mass rallies there, but it was one of the failures of the student uprisings because we were not able to... we should have tried harder. I think that we didn't know what our end product was. If you achieve something, it's a long term goal, but... it lost people along the way. We lost people to pregnancies and who just went to work.... I think boycotts are not meant to be protracted. They're meant to be short-term. In the end, the schools were empty...¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Interviewee K.

¹⁶² Interviewee B.

¹⁶³ Interviewee F.

In terms of unionization of teachers, the gains surpassed the limitations in 1985. Interviewee I said,

WECTU became the respected teachers' union... that was a plus. There were progressive teacher organisations which had taken on the government and won... but it showed that to a large extent we could stand up to the Department and fight...¹⁶⁴

In looking at the gains and limitations of the 1985 class/school boycott, the following statistics speak for themselves, "The total deaths in that year's political violence numbered 879. Officially, 201 children died at the hands of police. Information gathered in this regard caused the Lawyers for Human Rights in New York to decry state action as a 'war against children!'"¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Interviewee I.

¹⁶⁵ Kihn, Paul. 1993. *Players or Pawns? Professionalism and Teacher Disunity in the Western Cape, 1980 - 1990*. M.Phil. University of Cape Town, 94.

CHAPTER 14

In conclusion

I envy those people whose children jump and play. Our children are no longer children: They have become adults. And we adults who still want pleasure, who would like to go to Sun City for the weekend, have become the children... my 10 year old says there's no time for play. The games she acts out are what to do when the police come. She says 'Is the cupboard big enough for me to hide in? No, I'll rather hide in the laundry basket. I must remember to take some clothes out of the basket before I go to sleep so there is a space for me'.¹⁶⁶

In this 'war against children', childhood was lost.

From July 1985 to January 1986, children at Central High experienced and responded to the brutality of the ruling class government and its appendages, the security forces and their military weapons. Circumstances forced children into adulthood at very young ages. As cited in an earlier chapter, a Sub B child asked a shopkeeper not to sell *Wilson Rowntree* sweets because of a consumer boycott against the company.

Solidarity was this community's greatest and sometimes only weapon. This dissertation has traced its presence at critical moments during the 1985 class/school boycott. Solidarity was visible when the state highhandedly closed 465 schools in the Western Cape, when the decision was taken not to administer or write final examinations in November 1985, by the moral and financial support shown by teachers and parents when senior staff were suspended without pay and finally, by the emotional support for the Principal, senior and temporary teachers who returned to their place of work, their site of struggle, in January 1986.

Fifteen years later, the community tells its story. They wanted the present and future generations to know about and learn from this experience. Sometimes, only the most exciting and positive moments were

¹⁶⁶ Harries A, Diski R & Brown A. 1986. *The Child is Not Dead*, London: ILEA/BDAF, 17.

spontaneously recalled, and the researcher probed to learn about the more difficult experiences, particularly in the relationships between parents and their children.

The learning materials developed in Part II of this dissertation attempt to ensure that the history of resistance in South Africa is not forgotten. The 1985 class/school boycott at Central High reflected what was happening in schooling throughout South Africa. Generations of learners were denied the right to learn. Educators, learners and parents of learners worked in solidarity to demand the right to teach and learn. The 1985 class/school boycott highlighted the conditions and inadequacies of schooling for the oppressed during the apartheid era. In Part II learners are challenged to learn about this past.

University of Cape Town

PART II

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 15

Background to the module

The development of learning materials for Grade 9 history learners on the class/school boycott in the Western Cape in 1985 in terms of the requirements for this dissertation in History Education is an attempt to ensure that the *voice and history of resistance* of marginalised, oppressed communities in South Africa during the apartheid era is taught and learnt at secondary school level.¹⁶⁷

The South African school curriculum is currently in a period of transition. The principles of outcomes-based education (OBE) are entrenched in a curriculum referred to as Curriculum 2005, which is currently under review and subject to amendments. This module is developed on the premise that history, whether taught and learnt as a separate or integrated subject within the Human and Social Sciences (HSS) learning area, has an individual identity.¹⁶⁸

Learners studying history at both primary and secondary school level should do what historians do.

¹⁶⁷ This is in line with the view expressed by Donald F. Molteno, *The schooling of Black South Africans and the 1980 Cape Town Students' Boycott: A Sociological Interpretation*. University of Cape Town: 1983. Molteno writes, "the story I had told... did not belong to me. It needed to be put back into the hands of people who could make something of it in practice".

¹⁶⁸ The Curriculum 2005 Review Committee submitted a report to the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal on 31 May 2000, suggesting amendments to Curriculum 2005. The report aims to make the OBE curriculum more accessible and practicable for implementation. It recommends that Social Sciences be studied as history and geography. In a Discussion Document entitled, *A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa*, Committee of Heads of Education Departments, 1991:31, the implications of integrating history and geography into a learning area were clearly spelt out and emphasised that they will "... retain their individual identities and will be recognisable as such". The view that the subject, history, actually lost its identity in most of the specific outcomes, excluding SO9, in the Human and Social Sciences (HSS) learning area was and remains an area of concern in the implementation of Curriculum 2005 or a revised curriculum which does not take cognisance of these concerns.

Learners are

... proto-historians, who carry out their own independent historical work as historians

(Nichol, J. 1980:27)¹⁶⁹

For learners to "do history",¹⁷⁰ five elements are identified, namely to examine a topic from the past and raise questions, search for many relevant sources in order to find evidence to support answers to questions, understand sources, reason and argue the answers to the questions and support them with well-chosen evidence and, finally, to communicate the answers.¹⁷¹

Historians use sources, whether written, oral, pictorial or artefacts, to find evidence about the past.

Sources include oral accounts, poems, songs, maps, diaries, letters, minutes of meetings, pictures, posters, pamphlets, cartoons, graffiti, official documents, newspaper and magazine articles, newsletters and secondary texts. The more sources found, the more evidence an historian has on which to construct an historical account.

We create history from processing the available sources - what Jack Hexter calls history's "first record" The "first record" covers both the raw materials, the original, firsthand sources, and the later interpretations. We bring to bear upon the "first record" our own wealth of experience, what Hexter defines as "the second record."... It contains knowledge, expertise, judgements, interests, intuitions and values nurtured through many years.... Hexter argues that in historical thinking you use your "second record" to create a history from the "first record".

(Fines & Nichol, 1997:2)¹⁷²

Historians need and must learn skills which enable them to interpret, analyse, examine, investigate and critically evaluate sources and construct an historical account of a past happening.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Nichol, J. *Developments in History Teaching*, Exeter: University of Exeter, 1980: 27.

¹⁷⁰ The phrase, "doing history", was introduced by Professor Jack Hexter. 1971. *The History Primer*. New York: Basic Books.

¹⁷¹ Fines J & Nichol J, *Teaching Primary History*, Oxford, Heineman, 1997:1.

¹⁷² Fines J & Nichol J, *Teaching Primary History*, Oxford, Heineman, 1997:1.

¹⁷³ The learning materials developed are in line with the skills-based approach to the teaching and learning of history at secondary school level and influenced by the book, *What is evidence? South Africa During the Years of Apartheid*, by Rob Sieborger, Gail Weldon and Chris Hinton, Francolin Publishers, Cape Town, 1996.

At school level, history learners should learn both content and the skills required to do what historians do.

Skills and content should be seen as inseparable. The history curriculum should be based on awareness of how knowledge is produced. History is not a set of given facts. The process of history production should be made clear to students

(Siebörger 1994:3)¹⁷⁴

The Californian History Social Science Project stated,

In the doing of the discipline, content becomes pedagogy and vice versa.... The notion of history as a constructed account of the past is central to examining the discipline, because the construction is the process that historian, teacher and student have in common

(Seixas, 1999:330)¹⁷⁵

The development of history materials on the 1985 class/school boycott in the Western Cape is based on what learners must know i.e. propositional knowledge, how learners are to know it i.e. procedural knowledge and the concepts that inform the study of history.¹⁷⁶

The key concepts concerned with the nature of history include the understanding of time and chronology, cause and consequence, change and continuity, historical empathy and imaginative inferences. Skills required to understand these concepts must be learnt.

The teaching-learning environs *changed* in the aftermath of the 1985 student boycott. The fight for *democracy* to be practised within South African classrooms and schools had won its first round. The principles of democracy include freedom from all forms of oppression, freedom to share cultural resources, equal access to curricular knowledge and equal worth of curricular knowledge.¹⁷⁷ It is hoped that history is taught and learnt within a class/school environment which encapsulates these democratic principles.

¹⁷⁴ Siebörger, R. *New History Textbooks for South Africa*, Swaziland: Macmillan Boleswa 1994:3.

¹⁷⁵ Seixas, Peter, *Beyond "content" and "pedagogy": in search of a way to talk about history education*, in the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3. 1999:330.

¹⁷⁶ This view is based on the research into the theory and practice of history undertaken in Britain by P.J. Rogers. For Rogers, the structures of history are the propositions ("know that"), procedures ("know how") and concepts with which it is concerned. Rogers, P.J. *The New History: theory into practice*, London: Historical Association, 1979: 5-16.

¹⁷⁷ These principles are discussed in Coetzee, M, *The relationship between the School Curriculum and the struggle for power: a study in the Philosophy of Education*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Stellenbosch. July 1995.

CHAPTER 16

A module for Grade 9 history learners

Topic: The 1985 class/school boycott in the Western Cape

In this module, you are introduced to a variety of source materials on the class/school boycott by learners at primary, secondary and tertiary level which affected schooling and tertiary institutions in the Western Cape from July 1985 to January/February 1986. Although resistance was *not* confined to the Western Cape and affected oppressed students throughout South Africa, the source materials in this module relate to the Western Cape only.

You will learn about the class/school boycott in the Western Cape in 1985 by learning and applying the skills used by historians in their field. You will be your own historians.

You will learn skills that will enable you to find *evidence* from the available sources and answer questions on the school/class boycott in 1985, for example, *What happened? How did it happen? Why did it happen?* In "doing history", you should ask your own question/s on this period of student resistance in South Africa and find evidence from available sources and others in order to answer your questions.

The selected source materials on the 1985 class/school boycotts are labelled A - Z. You will use these sources in order to find evidence on the class/school boycott. The individual and group activities and questions will enable you to learn and apply the skills used by historians to understand, analyse and find out more about the past.

Historians are like detectives. Detectives search for clues at the site of a crime in order to find who was responsible for it. Often, clues mislead detectives or are taken at face value. Detectives know that only evidence will support their case in a court of law. The more thorough their investigation, often through the line of questioning, the greater their chances of solving the crime. Likewise, an historian relies on sources

in order to find evidence. Some sources are overt, others hidden. As an historian your work is to find, investigate, examine, analyse, understand, question and interrogate the evidence from these sources.

1. What are sources?

Sources provide you with evidence about the past. Draw a timeline, 1 cm equals 1 year, from 1980 until the present. On this timeline, plot your date of birth and other significant events, for example, when you first started to crawl, cut your first tooth, said your first word, started school and so on.

How many years after 1985 were you born?

1.1. Now, interview your parents or an older relative, who was at school in 1985. Record their answers on cassette or write them down in your notebook. Draw up your own interview questions, but here are some suggestions,

- How old were you in 1985?
- In which standard/grade were you?
- Do you remember the class/school boycott of 1985?
- If yes, what do you remember? If not, why not?
- Did you see any violent clashes between the police and students?

Your family and friends are sources of information about life in the past. These interviews provide oral evidence about the past. Oral histories help historians to find out the experiences and feelings of people who lived at the actual time of an event.

An historian starts with sources in order to find clues to assist him/her in understanding and investigating what happened in the past. The more sources you find do not necessarily mean that you have more evidence. An in depth analysis or investigation into one source might provide you with greater insight on which to write or build an historical account or image of a past happening.

1.2. Sources may be written, unwritten/oral, pictorial/visual or artefacts/objects. Now look at

and/or read sources A - Z. They provide you with evidence on the 1985 class/school boycott period. At first, you might find it time-consuming to read and look at all the sources, but eventually, these will become familiar. Write the answers in your notebooks.

- Identify whether the sources labelled A - Z are written, oral, visual or objects.
- Describe the type of source in more detail, for example, is it a car-sticker, pamphlet, newspaper article, photograph, cartoon, oral testimony, letter, diary, or object?
- Some of the sources are dated. Place the following sources B, C, D, H, I, J, K, L, M, O, Q, R, S, V, W, X, Y and Z in chronological order i.e. from the first event to the last. Simply write the letters in chronological order.
- Some of the sources include objects that provide evidence on the weapons used in the clashes between the police and students, for example, a tyre in Source Z. Examine the sources and find five weapons which you could use as evidence in describing what each side used in the confrontations.

2. Sources and evidence

Divide into groups of 4 -5 learners. Each group appoints a facilitator and a scribe. Each group selects and examines 5 sources included in this module and discusses the following question, What evidence are you able to find from the source about the causes, events and consequences of the 1985 class/school boycott? The scribe writes the evidence elicited from each source on the available newsprint. Pin the newsprint on the available boards and each scribe reports back to the class. Argue the points of agreement or disagreement.

CAUSES	EVENTS	CONSEQUENCES

2.1. As an individual task, write the source/s which provide evidence on the following issues. Simply write the number and appropriate letter/s in your notebooks.

- 2.1.1. Teachers belonged to a teachers' union.
- 2.1.2. Slogans captivated people.
- 2.1.3. There was a civil war in Cape Town.
- 2.1.4. The apartheid government allocated resources unequally amongst its people.
- 2.1.5. People opposed the boycott action.
- 2.1.6. The 1985 final examinations were boycotted.
- 2.1.7. Teachers and students were detained without trial.
- 2.1.8. There was no press or media freedom.
- 2.1.9. People supported the boycott action.
- 2.1.10. The state tried to prevent protest action in ruling-class areas.

3. Authenticity

Before trying to find evidence from sources, historians need to find out whether the sources are authentic or not i.e. appear to be what they are! There are many examples cited in historical works when sources have been produced to hide or distort what actually happened. Anne Frank, a young girl who escaped with her family from Nazi Germany to Holland during World War Two, wrote a diary about her experiences. In 1947, the diary was first published under the title of *Het Achterhuis*. From 1950 many people insisted that the diary was a fake. Historians re-examined the diary because people argued that entries had been made in ballpoint pen, and these pens were only produced after the war when Anne Frank was already dead. Each page of the diary was scientifically examined and the diary was found to be authentic. Reasons were ascertained as to why certain entries were changed or omitted.¹⁷⁸ Historians, like detectives, examine sources for clues and those that have been planted! Similarly, in 1938 King Dingane, leader of the amaZulu, was said to have signed a land treaty with Piet Retief, leader of an Afrikaans-farming community, who

¹⁷⁸ Anne Frank Centre. 1994. *Anne Frank in the World*. Amsterdam.

wanted to settle in present-day KwaZulu-Natal. In their investigations, historians proved that this land treaty was fraudulent. Historians, however, remain interested in the treaty/document and question the purpose behind a fraudulent document being produced. This is of as much interest to an historian as finding authentic documents, but authenticity must be established. The process of determining whether sources are what they appear to be is called *external criticism*.

3.1. Divide into groups of 4 - 5 learners and ask the following questions on sources A - Z in order to find out about their authenticity. Each group subsequently reports back to the class.

Key questions to be asked are,

- When did the source come into being? (time or date)
- Who wrote/said/saw it? (authors)
- Why was it written/said or seen? (purpose)
- Where was it written/said or seen? (place)
- To/by whom was it written/said/seen? (audience)
- Under what conditions was it written/said/seen? (mood)

In order to assist you in learning this skill, an example from the source K is given.

- When did the source come into being? (time or date)

The newspaper was distributed on Friday morning, August 9, 1985. The article was written in time for this publication.

- Who wrote/said/saw it?

A Staff Reporter from *The Cape Times* newspaper wrote the article on the confrontation between the police and students in Main Road, Rondebosch, on Thursday, August 08, 1985.

It would have been read by people who bought the newspaper. The interviewee was a primary schoolchild from Rustenberg Junior School situated in Main Road, Rondebosch.

- Why was it written/said or seen? (purpose)

The Cape Times published news about the previous day's events in Rondebosch when a student protest march from the UCT campus was stopped by police and security forces.

The reporter highlighted that the event happened near a primary school and that the schoolchildren had been affected as his/her interviews with one schoolchild elicited. The purpose was linked to the fact that violence was taking place in areas where classified whites lived.

- Where was it written/said/seen? (place)

The report was written in the daily morning newspaper, *The Cape Times*, which is published in Cape Town.

- To/by whom was it written/said/seen? (audience)

It was written by the staff reporter and approved by an Editor for its readers.

- Under which conditions was it written/said/seen? (mood)

The reporter does not indicate whether s/he actually saw the event about which s/he was reporting. The report appears to be based on a primary schoolchild's description of what she allegedly saw taking place during her school interval.

4. Hermeneutics or Internal Criticism

Once the authenticity of sources is determined, historians engage in hermeneutics or internal criticism of sources. In this process, you need to learn the skill of examining the content of sources. Like a detective, you should cross-examine content in order to determine whether the clue/s is/are reliable or whether they disguise, distort or ignore what actually took place. The more sources you have, the more information you might find, but you are also able to find evidence if you analyse and investigate a few sources or documents in depth.

4.1. Refer to sources C and D and answer the questions that follow. This is an individual task.

- What does Source C tell you about student life at the University of Cape Town?
- What does Source D tell you about student life at the University of Cape Town?
- If you see Sources C and D together, does your impression of Source C change?
- How does it change?

- What evidence are you able to find in source D that indicates that students at the University of Cape Town were not united?
- From the sources are you able to determine whether the staff reporter for *The Cape Times* wrote in favour of the classified black students' demonstrations or not? Cite examples from the report to support your opinion.
- From the sources is there evidence that the SRC at UCT did not represent all the students? Cite an example.
- Do Sources K and L add anything to your understanding of Source D?
- Whom did the reporter consult as spokespeople on the protest situation in Source D? What does this indicate?

4.2. In pairs, examine sources I, K, L and M.

- What were the experiences of primary school pupils in Source H?
- What were the experiences of primary school pupils in source K?
- What evidence suggests that schoolchildren witnessed the confrontation between the police and students in Main Road, Rondebosch?
- Whose evidence suggests that the incident was exaggerated?
- Whose evidence do you find more reliable? Why do you say so?
- What evidence suggests that primary schoolchildren were involved in the class/school boycotts?
- Is there evidence from the sources which suggest why parents were concerned about their children witnessing violent confrontation between police and students?
- Are you able to determine whether the callers were from the ruling or oppressed classes? If so, do their viewpoints concur or differ? Cite examples.
Are you able to determine whether the callers were supporters or opponents of the apartheid state? If so, how did you determine this?
- Suggest reasons why a report on what primary schoolchildren might have seen in the

Main Road, Rondebosch was placed on the front page of *The Cape Times* and the report on the arrest of primary schoolchildren from Zwelethemba, which took place a few days before was placed on page 2?

- 4.3. In groups of 4 -5 learners examine the content of sources B, E, F, P, T and Y in order to find evidence on the 1985 class/school boycott. On newsprint, highlight 5 reasons why students decided to boycott classes/schools in 1985. Do any of the other sources provide you with evidence on the reasons for the class/school boycott? If so, add them to your list.

5. Primary or secondary sources

Historians want to know which sources were written at the actual time of the event and those written after the event. All sources are useful, but primary sources, written or produced during the actual period, capture the mood, experiences and emotions of the period. Secondary sources provide an understanding, examination and analysis of these primary sources.

- 5.1. Historians need to identify primary from secondary sources. As proto-historians, examine sources A - Z and simply state whether they are primary or secondary. Often, the questions that you ask change the nature of the source material. Divide into pairs and discuss your answers with each other. Attempt to reach an agreement. Compare your answers with the class and debate the identities of the sources on which there are disagreements.
- 5.2. How could a secondary source, for example, a Grade 9 History textbook, be used as a primary source? Brainstorm ideas in class.
- 5.3. Source A is a primary source and Source G is a secondary source. Why? Write your answers in your notebooks.

6. Oral sources

Oral sources depend on the memory of people. Oral sources from the actual period being investigated are usually more reliable than interviews that take place long after the event. People confuse and often romanticise about the past.

6.1. Interview an older person and ask him or her questions about his or her childhood. Record the interview and share it with the class. Discuss whether the person remembered mostly the pleasant moments from his/her history or not.

6.2. Now, refer to sources F1-7, N and Z, and answer the questions that follow:

- What emotions are recognisable in these sources?
- Is there evidence to suggest that the protest action was dangerous?
- How do sources F1, F5, F6 and Z compare or contrast?
- Which source indicates that parents were not happy about their children attending rallies?
- From these sources are you able to tell whether students were politically active in the resistance movements and actions against the apartheid state? If so, how? If not, why not?
- From the sources are you able to deduce the name/s of organisations engaged in the class/school boycott? If so, what perceptions do the interviewees have about such organisations?
- Cite examples from the sources to show that individuals played significant roles in the 1985 class/school boycott.
- Is there evidence that parents, teachers and students were united in resisting the apartheid state in 1985? Cite examples from the sources.
- Which source/s provide evidence that some teachers were not involved in the political debates at school level?
- Which interviewees in sources F and N actually experienced the happening that they were describing?

- What evidence are you able to deduce from source N about the experiences of people detained without trial during the class/school boycott? Do you think this evidence is reliable? Why do you say so?
- Source Z includes a quotation by a police officer in charge during a demonstration in Adderley Street, Cape Town. Find another source and explain the context of that quotation.

6.3. In groups, find evidence from all the sources to indicate that the class/school boycott was perceived by some to be:

6.3.1. against racism

6.3.2. against capitalism

6.4. Read the comments from the given sources. What is your immediate response to such comments?

6.4.1. HANDS OFF OUR TEACHERS! (Source A)

6.4.2. "Al die mamas en die papas, die boeties en die sussies, die oumas en die oupas, die hondjies en die katjies - almal is saam in die struggle". (Source F2)

6.4.3. The little girl said she thought students "should get on with their work and not come down and disturb Rondebosch". (Source K)

6.4.4. The current conditions and atmosphere are not conducive to pupils being able to effectively prepare and write examinations. (Source Q)

6.4.5. "You are going to give me laryngitis, my throat won't take it, please people, disperse, otherwise we will have to take action". (Sources V and Z)

6.4.6. "You will notice the lady with the lovely blonde hair now sports a mane of purple. Please people disperse". (Source V)

6.4.7. "There's nothing wrong with the set, dear. That's the picture of the unrest we're getting from the SATV". (Source W)

6.4.8. "... there was quite a degree of excitability... being out on the street, waving posters,

toyi-toyi-ing being out of school..." (Source F5)

7. Visual sources

All sources are thoroughly examined, investigated and criticised in order to find out whether they are authentic or not. Photographs or video material taken at an actual incident or event are of great value to an historian because they capture the mood of the people and the period. However, visual sources may also be manipulated or distorted. A photographer, like a reporter, is not an objective bystander. Where s/he stands, the lens used, the shutter speed and how the photographs are developed determine the outcome of the photograph.

The following example indicates that photographs may also be manipulated.

During Nelson Mandela's first public appearance on the balcony of the Cape Town City Hall after he was elected president on May 9, 1994, he released a white dove in front of a crowd of thousands assembled on the Grand Parade. A photographer for *Die Burger*, the Cape Town daily, missed the moment, but careful picture editing brought it back down close to his hands.

(Nel 1998:286)¹⁷⁹

7.1. This exercise will be done in terms of a JIGSAW. Divide into four groups. Each group examines two different visual sources. Group 1 examines sources C and K, Group 2 examines sources L and P, Group 3 examines sources R and V and Group 4 examines sources X and Z. This is called your "home group". If there are four learners per group, each one is given a number from 1 - 4. Each group examines their sources in order to determine the mood of the period, whether people in the same photographs appear to have the same or different moods, why the photographer took the photograph, what was the motive for publishing it, and what the visual tells you about 1985. After engaging in this discussion, learners in each group are called "experts"

¹⁷⁹ Nel, F. 1998. *Writing for the media in South Africa*. Johannesburg: International Thomson Publishers, 286.

on their sources. Now, you divide into four different groups. All the number 1 "experts" form a group, all the Number 2 "experts" form a group and so on. Each "expert" informs the others about their group's analysis of their visual sources. Finally, members return to their "home groups" and share the findings on all eight visual sources.

7.2. Now, together, let's examine Source R.

- Is there any evidence from this picture to prove that the crowd is protesting? Why do you say so?
- Are you able to deduce where they are standing?
- Will this evidence enable you to find out why the crowd is standing outside?
- Why did the publication "black out" the eyes of the people in the photograph?
- Are you able to tell the ages of the people in the crowd?
- How are they dressed?
- Is there evidence to determine the type of work the crowd does or whether they do the same work?
- Was it a large gathering?
- Describe the mood of the crowd in the picture?
- What other evidence are you able to derive from this source?

8. Sources and Bias

Historians themselves are biased. They examine sources and select from the sources information to support their particular ideology or hypothesis. Historians are influenced by their place of birth, the language they speak, their class position, sex, age, ideologies and interests. If you were on the side of the state, your historical account will be different from someone who was on the side of the people fighting for liberation.

From the available sources, determine whether the sources are biased and if so, why are they biased?

- 8.1. Divide into groups of 4-5 learners and state whether and why sources B, D, F1, J, K, L, M, N, T, U, V, W and X are biased.
- 8.2. Discuss in class whether the source material selected for this module is biased? If so, why? How and where will you find more evidence on the class/school boycott in 1985?

9. Sources and interpretation

- 9.1. Like bias, people interpret what happened in the past from their own perspectives or ideological viewpoints. From the available sources, state whether and to what extent they represent the views of:

- WECTU
- Parents
- Teachers
- Students
- University rectors
- School Principals
- Historians
- Reporters
- Eye-witnesses
- Cartoonists
- Government
- Security forces and police

10. Communication

In "doing history", historians must finally write, construct or reconstruct an account of what happened in the past. From these sources and others which you have probably collected in the course of this module, you must write or communicate in some way, the answer to the question that you raised in

the beginning about the 1985 class/school boycott.

10.1. Here are a few questions students might ask on this period of resistance in South African history:

- Why did students boycott classes/schools in 1985?
- Why did some teachers become involved in the protest action?
- How were people's lives affected by the boycott in 1985?
- Why was there so little support within the Western Cape for the writing of the final examinations?
- How did the state respond to this protest action?
- Why did the state respond to this protest action?
- Was solidarity the key to the success of this boycott? Cite examples from the sources to support your view?
- Was the boycott successful or not? Cite examples from the sources to support your view?

There are probably many, many questions that you are asking yourselves having looked at and investigated the above sources and found some of your own.

10.2. Write a two page answer to your question on the class/school boycott in 1985.

In this module, you learnt about the class/student boycotts in 1985 by using historical skills to find evidence on that period. Certain sources were selected to enable you to learn the necessary skills in finding the evidence or clues and answer a question/s on this period of resistance in South African history.

You learnt about aspects of the 1985 class/school boycott by "doing history".

SOURCE MATERIALS

University of Cape Town

SOURCE A

HANDS OFF OUR TEACHERS!

Issued by: WECTU, P.O.Box 18306, Wynberg, 7800

Printed by: Allies Printing Services, College Road, Athlone, 7704

SOURCE B



Number 2 December 1985

EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION

Education throughout history has involved socialisation of young people and the continuing socialisation of adults. By socialisation, one generally means the learning of beliefs, values, norms and ideals of a particular society.

Education is the formal, institutionalised component of socialisation which takes place in pre-primary schools, schools, colleges and universities.

EDUCATION FOR CERTIFICATION

In a capitalist society, education serves different functions for different classes. The ruling class defines what education will be - its curricula, methodology and content - and the learning process is generally regarded as the internalization of capitalist values, which relies on the consumption of a predetermined selection of so-called facts which serve to create and reinforce capitalist ideology.

The successful passage of students through such a system relies on the degree to which they internalise those values; their final certification depends on their ability to regurgitate those facts to the satisfaction of various examiners upholding the interests of the capitalist state.

NO WORTHWHILE HISTORY

In South Africa, education is racist and sexist, teaches individualism, selfishness and competitiveness, and is generally anti-social and dehumanising. It causes disunity and makes people regard themselves as inferiors.

It teaches the oppressed and exploited that they have no worthwhile history and were ...

"uncivilised" when the "white man" arrived in South Africa, that those whose skin is less than pale are generally lazy and without dignity, and that everything that is good and worthwhile results from "white western capitalist" culture.

EDUCATION FOR DOMINATION

Education for members of the ruling class is a training in leadership, in decision-making and in the exercise of authority.

For the children of the working class, education is about acceptance of their society, obedience, hard work and an understanding of routine.

They are taught to unthinkingly and unquestioningly accept what is handed down to them by the ruling elite.

THE CULTURE OF SILENCE

When a working-class student is defined as a passive object into which knowledge is deposited, a context is created wherein s/he is perceived not only as dependent, but also as "mute" in the face of "superior" knowledge and power.

Freire calls this "the culture of silence" in which people become trapped in an ignorance defined and imposed by others, and lose their capacity for a critical response to their situation.

PERPETUATING CONTROL

The passive consumption of selected knowledge prepares students for an adult society in which they have little control over their own lives, and function as a source of labour for the profit of the capitalist state.

SOURCE C:

From, *The Cape Times*, 30.07.1985.



University of Cape Town students had a singing practice on the campus last night in preparation for the annual inter-varsity clash with Stellenbosch University at Coetzenburg on Saturday.

SOURCE D:

From, *The Cape Times*, 31.07.1985.

UCT students in anti-rugby march

Staff Reporters
ABOUT 400 black students at the University of Cape Town yesterday marched to the UCT administration building and SRC offices, demanding that today's intervarsity rugby match with Stellenbosch University be cancelled in view of the state of emergency.

The students, bearing placards, marched on the campus singing and chanting slogans.

They invaded two lecture theatres to demand that students leave lectures to "show solidarity with the oppressed" before marching to the Bremner Building.

An attempt by a security guard to roll down a security gate was thwarted when students stormed forward and occupied the lobby.

The Chancellor, Dr Stuart Saunders, arrived to talk to the students, who demanded cancellation of the intervarsity, recognition of the Workers' Committee at UCT and cancellation of all lectures next week.

Students jeered loudly when Dr Saunders said the intervarsity had been arranged by the SRC.

He said negotiations were taking place with the Workers' Committee

and students who had paid their fees had a right to attend lectures.

The group then marched towards Main Road, Rondebosch, formed a procession and proceeded towards the university along Wool-sack Drive. Traffic was disrupted when students spread across the road.

The group then stormed SRC offices and demanded the rugby match be cancelled.

In a statement yesterday afternoon the UCT Intersvarsity Committee said it had decided to continue with the intervarsity "because the majority of students would want it to".

"A negative action such as cancelling the match could only promote bad feeling between supporters of the game in general.

However as the UCT intersvarsity committee we wish to express our opposition to the present state of emergency in this country. The vote was 27 in favour and three abstentions."

● The Registrar of the University of the Western Cape, Professor Richard van der Ross, warned yesterday in a memorandum to students that the university would close down if students continued to stone cars and interfere with students wanting to continue their studies.

SOURCE E:

From, *WECTU NEWS*, No. 11, February 1985.

The most recent figures available are for 1986, from the SAIRR Annual Report published in November 1987:-

	"white"	"indian"	"coloured"	"black"
teacher:pupil ratio	1:13	1:18	1:18	1:35
classroom shortage	excess	587	5400	38 641
expenditure/pupil	2746	1952	1330	395
% teachers with no SC or matric	no figures available			56

SOURCE F:

F1

... a rally at Belgravia High was my first impression of protest action... whatever protest action had previously taken place at school... this was our first time we actually went outside and had action with the police. That was the day that we buried apartheid... you know, in the coffin. We dug a hole and put the coffin into it.... When we left somebody was shot. We were walking Down Belgravia Road... later we heard it was a Central High student... shot in the leg.

(Interviewee H, a student at Central High in 1985. Interview was conducted on 01.03.2000.)

F2

At times, indeed, the words of a ditty sung at the rallies sounded almost literally true: 'Al die mamas en die papas, die boeties en die sussies, die oumas en die oupas, die hondjies en die katjies - almal is saam in die struggle.'

(Bundy, Colin. 1985. *Street Sociology and Pavement Politics: Aspects of Youth and Student Resistance in Cape Town* in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1987. Vol.13:3, 320.)

F3

The bulk of the people (staff) were not involved. There was a very large Teachers' League/Unity Movement grouping at the school. Then there was a smaller group associated with CAL. Half the staff were not involved. The direct involvement in ANC or ANC affiliates were not many at the time as far as I was aware. It is also crucial to make the point that there were people at the school who may have had sympathies with the more kind of Charterist lines, but they didn't have the space at the school to be able to articulate that kind of position.

(Interviewee D, a teacher at Central High in 1985. Interview was conducted on 01.04.2000.)

F4

He used his teaching position as a political platform and he was very articulate... He came into class and he wasn't wearing a suit... he didn't tell us to open our books or even greet the class. He just said, in every society we have two groups of people, the rulers and the ruled, and we were expecting black and white... he took the class position and his position did not go unchallenged. There were people in class who were prepared to challenge... we were prepared... there were others in the class who supported his position.... He had dropped a seed in the classroom and we in the class were going to take different positions and the debate became highly polarized sometimes, often even name-calling.

Interviewee G, a student at the school in 1985, was interviewed on 25.03.2000.

F5

... the 1985 boycott/uprising was orchestrated mainly by the UDF... there was quite a degree of excitability... it was action that brought them into this excitement... being out on the street, waving, posters, toyi-toyi-ing, being out of school... so I think the orchestration from that political grouping was part of their making the country ungovernable.

Interviewee B, a teacher at the school in 1985, was interviewed on 22.03.2000.

F6

Our parents thought we were at school, but we were actually on the streets of Athlone... Quite a few of us were always together and we were also toyi-toyi-ing up and down and the SABC focused on Hugh and I... and our parents saw us on the 8 o'clock news. His mother had a fit... but, I enjoyed '85... perhaps enjoyed is the wrong word. I was stimulated by what was happening... It was exciting. The adrenalin was pumping and I never forget one afternoon we would go to Lynn's house and from there we would go and join the demonstration outside... one night we were chased and we knew that we could run into people's homes. But, the police had warned that if they found people harbouring students, they would confiscate people's homes... there was fear. That night we were put out of a house... We just sat on the *stoep* as the casspirs passed... a buckshot passed Taryn... I didn't know if her life was in danger, but Hugh and I went to pick her up and help her... it was quite dangerous. *Very dangerous.*

Interviewee F, a student at Central High in 1985, was interviewed on 03.04.2000.

F7

There was no way that Central could continue without him as Principal. And the media were very supportive... there were many articles and petitions going to parents and we knew somehow that it had to be positive... The Principal's stature within the community also... they couldn't afford to sack us... it could have led to another school boycott.

Interviewee C, a teacher and parent at the school in 1985, was interviewed on 03.04.2000.

SOURCE G:

(Alexander, Neville. 1990. *Education and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa*. Braamfontein: Skotaville)

SOURCE H:

From, *The Cape Times*,
06.08.1985.

'Primary school pupils held'

Staff Reporter

IN a house-to-house search lasting several hours in Zwelethemba near Worcester on Friday, police arrested 85 people, most of whom residents claim were primary school pupils.

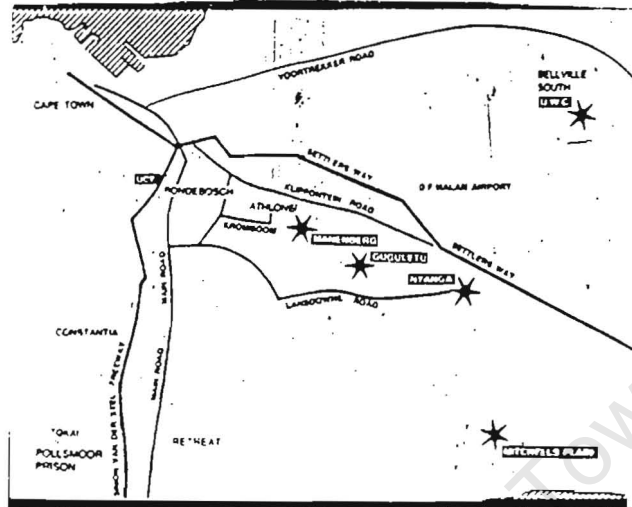
A spokesman for the police public relations division in Pretoria has confirmed the arrests but declined to reveal the ages of those held because of "possible public violence charges" being brought against them.

The residents, who would not be named, estimated that more than 60 vehicles, including Casspirs and Hippos, containing soldiers, police and railway police, moved into the township about 11.30am on Friday and searched until 5pm.



SOURCE I

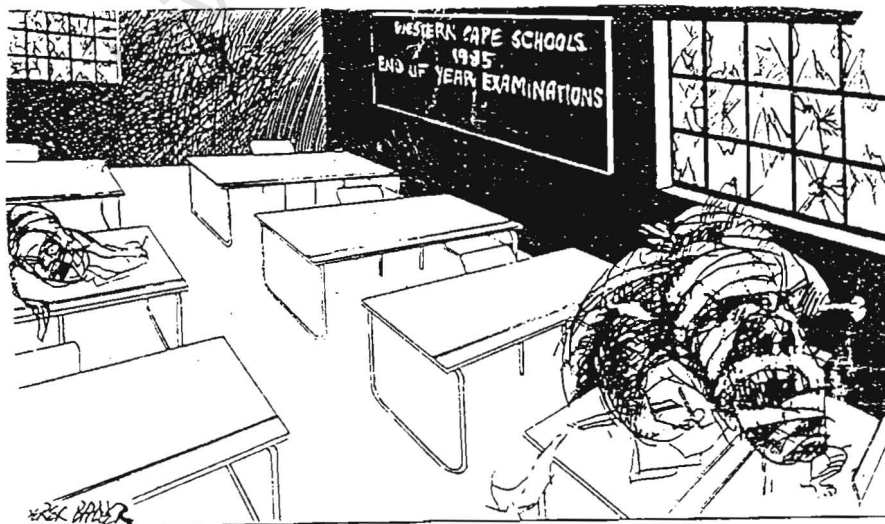
From, *The Cape Times*, 30.08.1985.



A diagram of yesterday's main trouble spots in the Peninsula.

SOURCE J

From, *The Weekly Mail*, 15 - 21 November 1985



SOURCE K:

Cape Times

Funfinder Inside

FOUNDED 1876 ★

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 1985

40c (36c plus 4c GST)

What the children saw

Staff Reporter

THE clash between students and police in Rondebosch yesterday was mysterious and frightening to the little girls of Rustenburg Junior School in Main Road.

One, an eight-year-old, described events like this:

"It was break about one. I'm not really sure. Students came running and shouting and swearing down the road.

"They came past the school and started being rude to us,

saying we must join in, and throwing stones at us and scaring us and some girls were in tears.

"One girl was in tears because a man said she must join or he'll shoot her.

"One girl got hit by a stone on her leg. She got a huge bruise.

"Then everyone started screaming and running and then the bell rang and everyone ran to their classrooms.

"By then police were chas-

ing students up the road. There were police vans, huge ones and small ones, and policemen, millions of them running up with guns ready, holding them in position.

"I didn't know what the students were doing. Then I realized they were doing a march."

Asked if she knew what the march was about, the pupil said: "About the president and things."

Another small witness, a 12-

year-old boy who lives near the school, said students ran past saying: "Come join us or we'll hurt you."

"Then they started stoning this kombi which looked like an ordinary, innocent kombi but they were actually videotaping the whole thing."

The little Rustenburg pupil said her teacher had told them afterwards that the students were cross about things the government was doing and things they didn't want to hap-

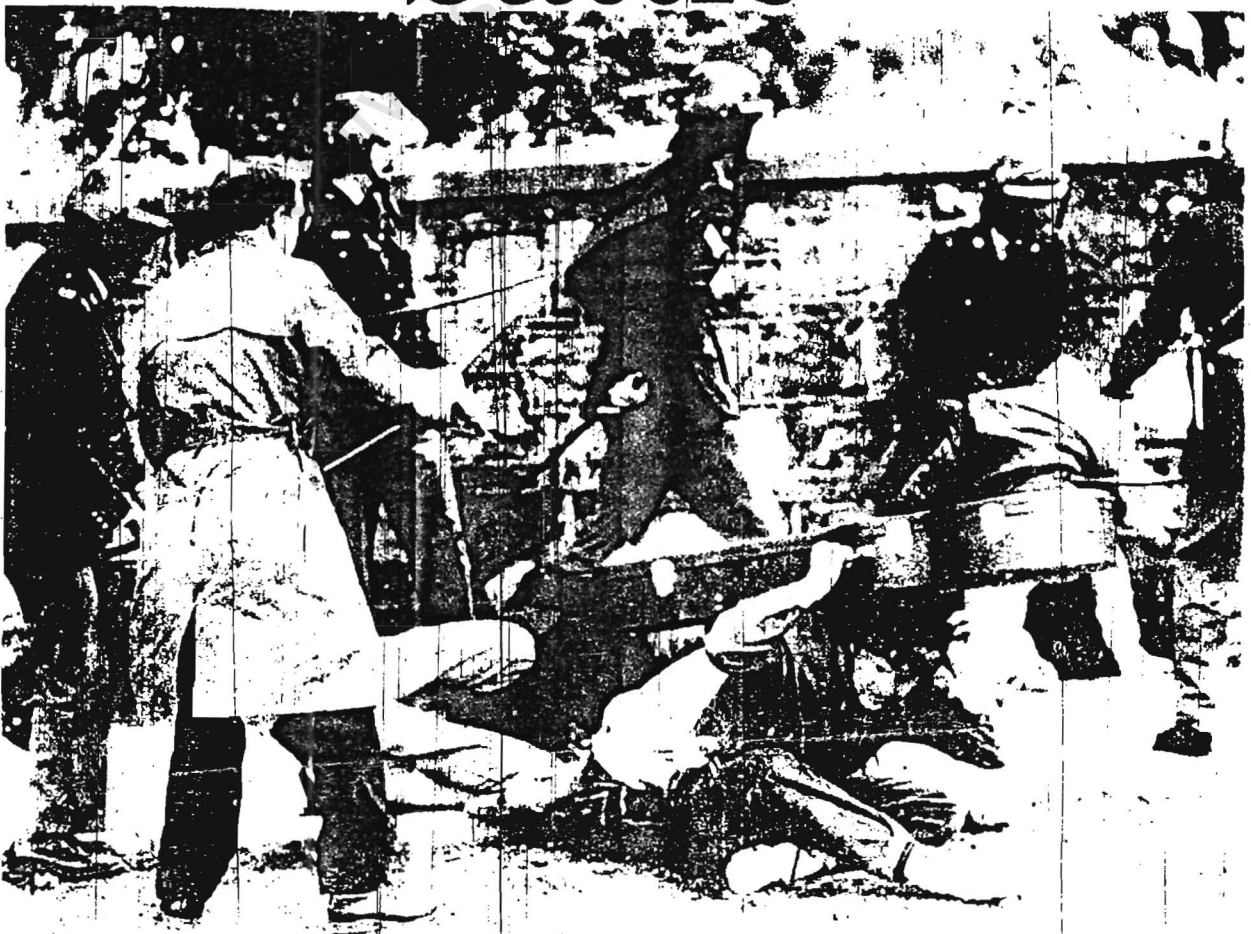
pen "and all that stuff".

The students had meetings and called together lots of people "to do a march and shout what they want".

She said her teacher told them that the police were just chasing the students back to the campus and wouldn't really do them any harm. They would only arrest a few.

The little girl said she thought students "should get on with their work and not come down and disturb Rondebosch".

Rondebosch street battle



UCT students try to protect themselves as police move in with quirts to stop the march in Main Road, Rondebosch, yesterday. © Another picture...

SOURCE L:

From, *The Cape Times*, 10.08.1985.



Police fire teargas across Rhodes Drive at students on the UCT campus yesterday.

Storm over school 'terror'

Staff Reporter

WHILE mothers of pupils at Rustenburg Junior School in Rondebosch objected yesterday to the "terror" they said their children were subjected to by UCT students on Thursday, student bodies denied allegations by some pupils in a report in the *Cape Times* headed "What the children saw".

And the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of UCT, Dr Stuart Saunders, called on students to "act within the law at all times", and for the police to use "maximum restraint in these difficult times".

SOURCE M

(The Cape Times, 10.08.1985)

Rondebosch march:

THE student/police clashes, in Rondebosch and the new Groote Schuur buildings were among subjects of Teleletters' calls yesterday.

Mr B Avery, Pinelands: "Company bursaries should be withdrawn from boycotting students."

Mr G O Becker, Gordon's Bay: "Now we know why the champions of the march wear balaclavas — so they can't be recognized when they terrorize little girls."

Mr Anton Richman, Observatory: "Yesterday's Cape Times report on the UCT students stoning and threatening schoolchildren is completely inaccurate. Students were urging the little girls to go inside so

that they wouldn't get hurt."

Mr Eric Oettle, Ladismith: "Are we so close to nazism that the State cannot tolerate peaceful protest?"

Mrs S Soal, Rondebosch: "I was watching the march and have spoken to people — no stones were thrown at the children. The irresponsible manner in which the incident was reported in the Cape Times detracts from the real issue of police brutality."

Mr R Paulse, Mitchells Plain: "What the children saw is only the tip of the iceberg. The Chief of Police should write a book called 'OOOO — for police eyes only'."

Mr Ian Koenigsfest, Kenilworth: "The sensa-

tionalist Cape Times article on the student march is unacceptable. The Burger's account was much more accurate. The value of interviewing an eight-year-old is detrimental to the cause which South Africans are struggling towards — a free and democratic SA. Considering recent police action, our days of non-violent struggle seem to be diminishing very quickly."

Mrs E Baker, Somerset West: "I am deeply distressed by children being forced by UCT students to take part in violence. A children protection society should be formed. Anyone interested in forming such a society can contact me at PO Box 1279, Somerset

West 7130."

Mr M L Wilson, Gardens: "The excellent TV coverage of police action against the UCT students gives the lie to Mr Kahanovitz's alleged statement that the students had been charged by police without warning."

Mr J Shapiro, Rondebosch: "The brutal police beatings meted out to students on Thursday are merely a continuation of their proud tradition of violence and thuggery in upholding 'law and order.'"



SOURCE N

Now I was picked up at about 11 o'clock... we must have got to Pollsmoor at half past 3... I was hungry. Eventually, I was so hungry and I went into a single cell and pressed the bell. When the woman came in, I asked when I was getting my food... only to learn that supper was at half past 3. The staff knocks off at half past 4. I was in the cell for the night. I waited for supper at half past 5 or 6, but there wasn't even a slice of bread that they could give me until breakfast the next morning.

Breakfast was at half past 6. They served bread, something that passed for jam, mielie meal and a cup of coffee or tea. There was no such thing as lunch. Supper was indescribable...

Interviewee B, a teacher at Central High in 1985, was interviewed on 22.02.2000.

SOURCE O:

From, *The Weekly Mail*, 15-21 November 1985:5).



Gagged press ... Cape Town journalists took to the streets last week to protest the government's latest press restrictions. Shortly after this photograph was taken one of the Argus reporters, Pippa Green, was arrested and subsequently charged with unauthorised picketing.

Picture: GIDEON MEYDEL, AFP

WEEKLY MAIL, October 25 to October 31, 1985

Is the border in Angola?



The local bottle-store owner's van turns into an Athlone barricade Right: Tongue-in-cheek addition to a barricade

Pictures: DAVE HARTMAN

Or in Athlone?

THE WORDS OF A BUMPER STICKER SEEN IN

1985

REMEMBER LAST YEAR? MANY CHILDREN WERE SHOT DEAD BY CRUEL POLICE AND ARMY! THE GOVERNMENT DIDN'T LIKE CHILDREN COMPLAINING ABOUT SCHOOLWORK AND WORKERS COMPLAINING ABOUT LOW WAGES PAY.

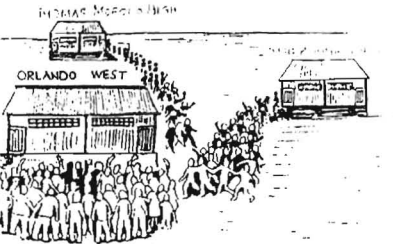
BUT! WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR IS NOTHING NEW!!
IN SOWETO ON JUNE 16TH 1976

1976

PEACEFUL MARCH



AND SO KILLING THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE STUDENT PROTEST - HECTOR PETERSEN, 14 YEARS OLD. THREE DIED AT THE HANDS OF THE POLICE AND ARMY.



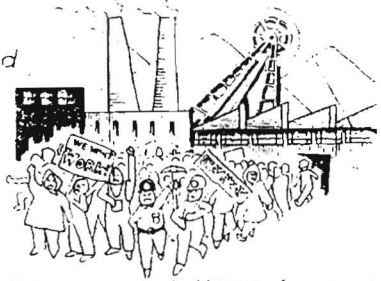
PARENTS OF SOWETO CAME TOGETHER TO FORM THE SOWETO STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL.



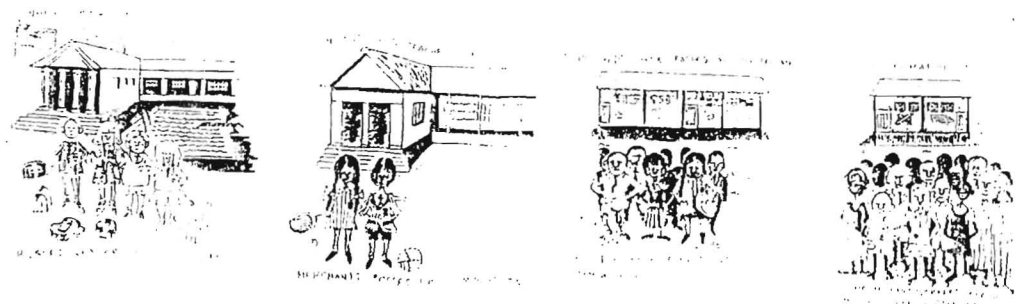
1976 STARTED WITH ANGE OF THE EASTERN WESTERN CAPE, JATAL, NAMIBIA + EASTERN CAPE WERE ALSO ANGRY!



People organised in the mines, churches... mosques in our communities



PARENTS, who are also WORKERS, refused to work.



1980

Students made demands because no changes were made to the schooling.



AGAIN!



1986 June 16TH

TEN YEARS LATER THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!

SOURCE Q

25 November 1985

My Reference:

Your Reference:

The Regional Director
Department of Education and Culture
WYNBERG

APPLICATION FOR POSTPONEMENT OF FINAL EXAMINATIONS TO MARCH, 1986

On behalf of all the parents, pupils and teachers associated with our school, I am applying for the final examinations for pupils from Std SIX to TEN to take place at the beginning of March, 1986.

This application is in accordance with decisions taken at three meetings of parents and teachers which were recently held to discuss the matter of final examinations at our school. A total of 1210 parents, representing 736 pupils, attended the meetings and decided, without a single dissentient vote, that the final examinations should not take place this year. This decision was supported by the following main reasons :

1. Not a single pupil from Std 6 to 10 had completed the prescribed course of study
2. It would be completely anti-educational and contrary to the tradition of our school to impose on the pupils examination papers based on the full courses when pupils had covered only approximately 60% of the year's work
3. The current conditions and atmosphere are not conducive to pupils being able to effectively prepare and write examinations
4. The 6½ weeks at our disposal before the end of February, will enable the staff and pupils to complete the courses and ensure that the pupils are adequately prepared for a final examination at the beginning of March 1986

We thank you in anticipation of a favourable reply

.....
PRINCIPAL TEACHER.



Number 3 January 1986



A VICTORY FOR UNITY

A contingent of WECTU teachers recently put into practice the old saying "Unity is Strength". After some temporary defeats at the end of 1985, the 1986 school year in the Western Cape started officially in an atmosphere positively charged as a result of events at a number of schools: at Rylands High, the community, via the P.T.S.A., had resoundingly rejected and ejected 14 scab teachers; at Harold Cressy, the principal, staff and students were holding firm on the reinstatement of teachers on the principle of all-or-none.

On Tuesday 14 January, about 300 members of WECTU arrived at the Roeland Street offices of the Department of Education and Culture with a list of demands signed by some 500 teachers. These signatures had been collected within a few hours that morning.

LIST OF DEMANDS

- the immediate and unconditional reinstatement of all victimised teachers, i.e. those suspended, transferred, dismissed or banned.

SOURCE S:

Letter addressed to parents at Central High from the Principal, dated 4 December 1985.

Dear Parent/Guardian

This is to inform you that I, together with the Deputy Principal and five Heads of Departments, have been suspended from the service of the Department of Education and Culture as from tomorrow, 5. 12. 85. The Department has not provided any reasons for their action. However, in effect, this action implies that we (the seven teachers) are debarred from the school premises and may not have any say in the general administration and decision - making of the school. In addition, a further eleven teachers, who are classified as temporary staff, have been informed that their applications for reappointment are subject to written confirmation from the Executive Director.

Allow me to take advantage of this opportunity to express our admiration and appreciation of the loyalty and support you have given us over many years. We have no doubt that the strength of our school is due largely to the outstanding co-operation which exists amongst parents, students, teachers and ex-students. May this spirit of co-operation prevail at the beginning of next year and ensure that we start the new year with a strong determination to pursue and strive to attain the educational values, standards and ideals that are so dear to our school.

Lastly, I want you to know that I remain convinced that our school will emerge from the current "crisis" even stronger than it was before.

SOURCE T

(Anonymous pamphlet addressed to students, 1985)

- . We, as students of the oppressed and exploited, have had an opportunity to make each other aware of what role we have to play in society
- . We have been able to show our parents, in most cases the workers and the only people that can bring about fundamental change, that we can play a supportive role
- . As oppressed students we have shown that unity is a vital weapon in our struggle
- . We have shown that we will not be silent when our brothers and sisters are being brutally killed and detained all over the country
- . We have shown that we only wage a successful struggle if we understand what system we are fighting - apartheid - profit-making system - capitalism

DON'T BE A SCAB

The following teachers have been victimized.

They have either been suspended, transferred, sacked or banned.

Some are still in detention whilst other teachers now need permission to teach.

ALEXANDER SINTON

N. Swart (Biology 9,10)
D. Swart (Gen. Science, Maths - 6,7)
N. Appolis (Afrikaans - 10)
B. Liknaitsky (English - 9,10)
C. Narshi (English - 7,8)
N. Jainoodien (English, Geography - 6,7)
Z. Adams (English, Afrikaans - 6,7,8)
M. Arendse (Geography - 9,10)
A. Allie (Accounting - 7,8)

ALOE

S. Prins (Maths - 8)

I. Moses

Y. Lien

BELGRAVIA

R. Raubenheimer (English - 9,10)

BONTEHEUWEL

S. Ismail (Biology, Maths, Science - 6,9,10)
J. Wenman (English, History - 7,8,10)
J. Theron (English, Biology, Science - 7,8)
C. Cornielse (English - 8,9)
K. Everett (English - 7,8)

CATHKIN

Y. Abrahams (Physics - 10)
I. Saban (Maths, Science, English - 7,9)
A. Rawoot (Biology - 10)
M. Abass (Geography - 10)
A. Heslop (Econ., Bus. Econ. - 9,10)
A. J. Smith (Physics, Maths - 9,10)
T. Theys (Acc., Bus. Econ. - 8,9)
M. Hassan (Woodwork - 7-10)
S. Lewis (English - 8,9)
C. Noemdoe (Afrikaans - 9,10)
H. Boughwan (Biology - 9)
I. Hill (English - 7,9)

CRESTWAY

A. Kroneberg (Xhosa, History - 9,10)
J. se. (Biology, Science - 6-10)
P. Joias (Physics - 9,10)
Z. Harneker (History - 6,7)
L. Garwen (English - 6,7,8)
Margot Lynn (Physics - 6,8,9)
K. Jaffer (English - 7,8)

CRYSTAL

S. Manuel (English - 8)

ELSIES RIVER

A. Kleinhans (Needlework - 6-10)

ELSWOOD

J. Thompson (English - 6,7)
J. Cloete (Gen. Science - 6)

GROENVLEI

G. Prodehl (English - 8,9)
A. Osman (English - 7,10)
R. Simpson (Acc., Bus. Econ. - 6,9)
R. Omar (English, Library - 7,8)
M. Deeb (Acc., Guidance - 6-10)

GLENDALE

T. Oosterwyk
R. Hendricks

WESTRIDGE

S. Hartley (Physics - 8,9)
Z. Desai (English - 6-10)

HAROLD CRESSY

V. Ritchie (Principal, Maths - 10)
P. Meyer (Dep. Princ., Maths - 9,10)
L. Adriaan (Biology 8-10)
M. Adriaan (Afrikaans - 9,10)
C. Soudien (Economics - 8-10)
E. MacKay (Accounts - 7-10)
N. George (Woodwork - 6-10)
B. Gunning (English, Latin - 6-10)
P. Morton (English, History - 6-10)
V. Shaw (Maths - 6-8)
B. Houghton (History, Econ. - 7-10)
D. Coetzee (English, Afrikaans - 7,8)
R. Rimer (Geography - 8-10)
F. Daniels (Afrikaans, Guidance - 6-8)
M.F. Abrahams (Biology, Gen. Science - 7-10)
N. Harry (Typing - 7-10)
J. Grove (Account, Geog. - 6,7)
D. Naidoo (History, Guidance - 7-10)

KENSINGTON

M. Mohammed (Gen. Science, Biology - 6,8,9)

LENTEGEUR

M. Samsodien
B. Hoorn (Geography)
K. Khan (Afrikaans - 6)

MARION

P. Arendse (Maths - 7-10)
Sister Catriona (English, Maths, Bib. St. - 6)

MONDALE

M. De Goede (Maths - 6-7)

MOUNTVIEW

J. Coombe (English, Maths - 6,8,9,10)

NED DOMAN

L. McDaid (Biology, Gen. Science - 6,8,9)
J. Fester (English, History - 7-9)

PORTLANDS

J. Jagers

RYLANDS

T. Moodley (English, History - 5,6)
L. Jayalall (Gen. Science - 6,7)
R. Konar (Art, English - 6,7)
M-T. Naidoo (Phys. Ed. - 5-10)
K. Dilraj (Science, Biology - 7,8)
E. Jacob (History - 6,7,8)
M. Allen (Maths - 5,6)
O. Sadeck (Woodwork - 5,6,7)
T. Paliathan (Afrikaans - 5,7)
S. David (English - 7)
T. Pillay (Geography, English - 5,6)

SPINE ROAD

E. Rasool (English - 8)

STRAND

L. Pretorious
G. Hayward
H. Tisseker

VALHALLA

J. Veary (English - 6,7)
C. Jaftha (Econ. - 9,10/ Acc. - 6,9)

DON'T SCAB ON YOUR FELLOW TEACHERS!
DON'T TAKE A VICTIMIZED TEACHER'S JOB!
"A SCAB TEACHER IS A BAD TEACHER!"

SOURCE V:

From *The Weekly Mail*, 25 - 31 October 1985.

THE WEEKLY MAIL

PRICES: REEF: R1,00 (plus 12c GST) CAPE: R1,12 (plus 13c GST)

Volume 1, Number 20. Friday October 25 to Thursday October 31

Confess
a highbrow
graffiti dauber.
There's more to defacing
street walls than spray
cans and sheer cheek
PAGE 20

'Purple rain' quells Cape riot

By MOIRA LEVY and SAPA

THE VIOLENCE SPILLS INTO WHITE AREAS: Page 12

now sports a mane of purple. Please people disperse."

HEAVILY-ARMED police used sjamboks and their new water cannon — immediately dubbed "purple rain" because of the dye in the water — to disperse crowds in Adderley Street, Cape Town, yesterday afternoon.

This was the third time in a week that unrest had spilled out of the townships and into white areas.

Rioting allegedly started earlier yesterday in Schotche Kloof, the Malay section adjacent to central Cape Town.

According to an eye-witness, about 50 women wearing "Troops out of the Townships" T-shirts arrived in Adderley Street.

Sapa reports that the women arrived in a bus

from Peninsula townships to protest against the presence of Security Forces in the townships.

The bus was stopped and redirected to the fringe of the city centre, but witnesses said about 20 women wearing "troops out" T-shirts congregated in the street ululating.

A police helicopter hovered overhead as policemen asked inquisitive people to go back to their offices.

Armoured vehicles moved into the city as lunchtime crowds started to gather. Policemen, wearing riot helmets and armed with teargas canisters, shotguns and rubber bullet weapons, dismantled from vehicles and took up positions

at intersections.

Minutes later the helicopter swooped over Adderley Street, broadcasting a message over loudspeakers for people to go about their normal business. Much of the request to disperse was lost in the noise of the helicopter's engine.

A policeman repeatedly asked the crowd to disperse. "You are going to give me laryngitis, my throat won't take it, please people, disperse, otherwise we will have to take action."

But even more people gathered and the water cannon, spouting a purple dye, was used.

The policeman on the loudhailer said: "You will notice the lady with the lovely blonde hair

A group of youths were stopped from attending the trial of three men charged with the murder of a policeman.

They ran into the Golden Acre shopping centre and police sealed off all entrances.

A crowd then moved up Hout Street, where youths overturned two delivery vehicles and pelted another with tomatoes.

An hour later, it was reported that the sjambok-wielding police raced through the city centre, whipping pedestrians.

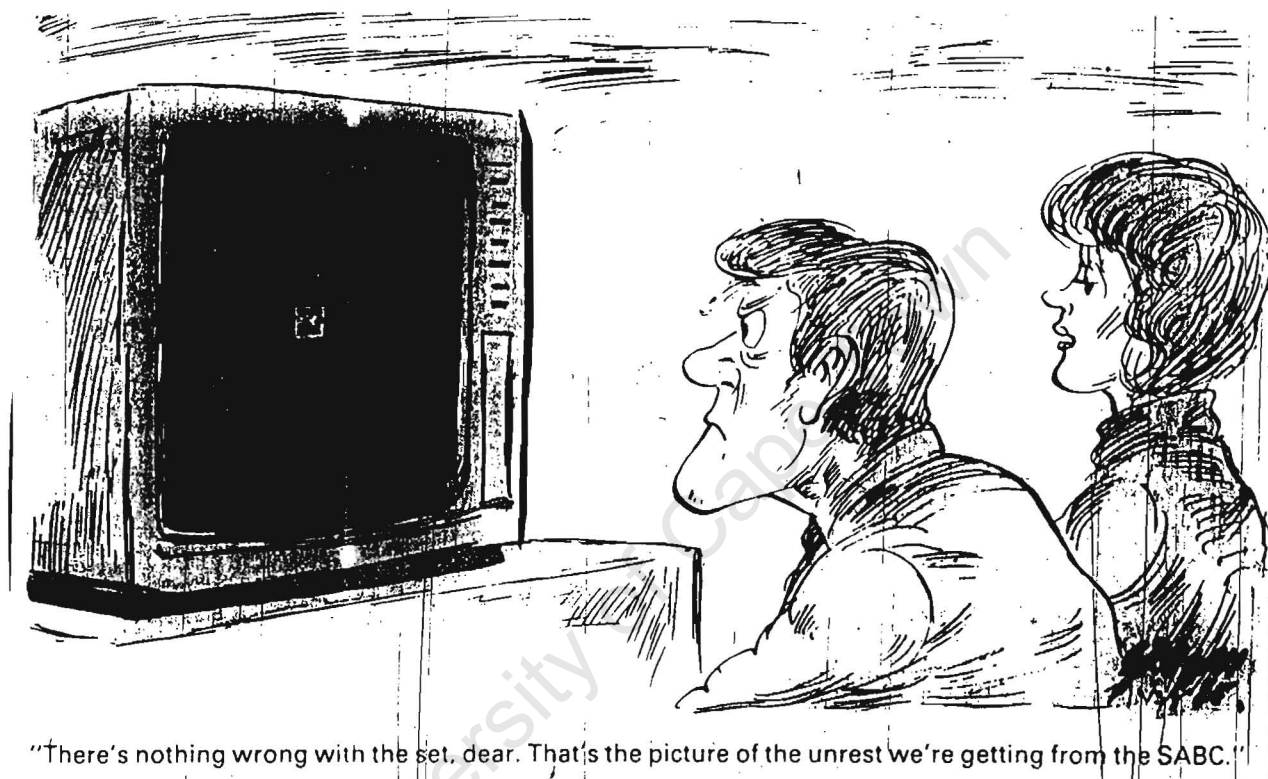
By about 3.30pm a policeman in a Casspir, with a rifle slung over his back, announced over a loudhailer in Afrikaans "You can have a cup of tea now and carry on shopping".



Cape Town today: A blazing barricade in Belgravia Road. The man on the left is well-equipped — with his own gas-mask
Picture: DAVE HARTMAN, Afrapix

SOURCE W:

From *The Cape Times*, 13.08.1985.



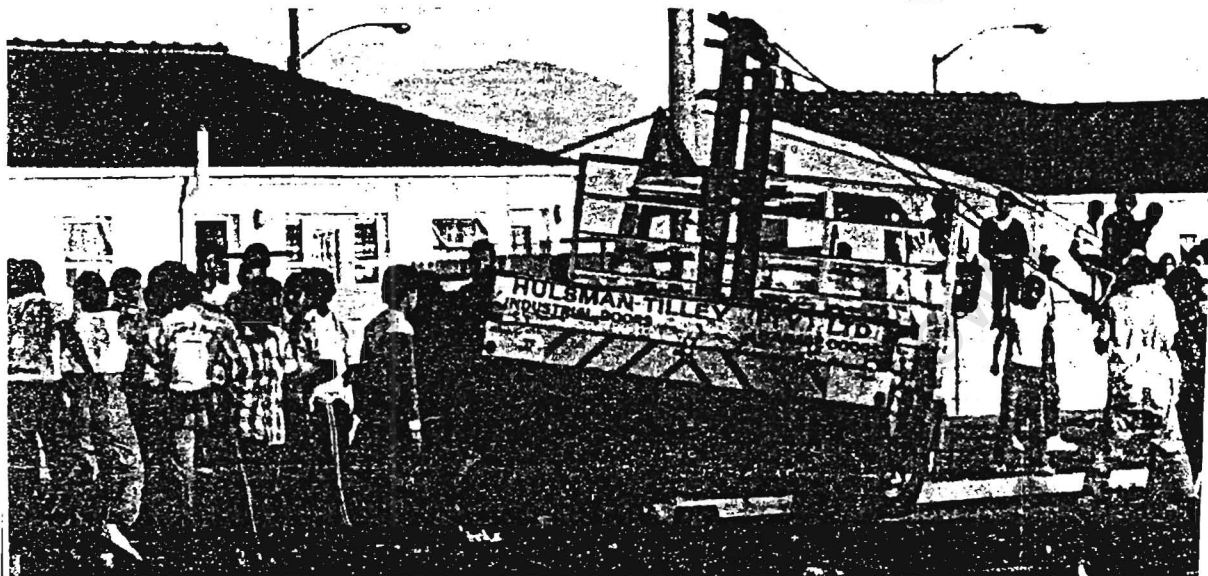
"There's nothing wrong with the set, dear. That's the picture of the unrest we're getting from the SABC."

SOURCE X:

WEEKLY MAIL

Volume 1, Number 22, Friday, November 8, to Thursday, November 14, 1993

The last unrest picture



HOURS BEFORE THE BAN: Crowds overturn a truck in Mitchell's Plain. This may still be happening ... but you may

from the last moment



HOURS BEFORE THE BAN: A routine police road block in Kraaifontein last Friday. But it depicts policemen would be illegal if it were taken today

before the blackout

THESE are the last lawfully photographed unrest pictures. They were taken in both Cape Town and Johannesburg, just hours before the government imposed the new press curbs last weekend.

Chances are they'll be the last such pictures we'll see. Which should not lead us to imagine that what we no longer see no longer happens.

The government has said that the new restrictions were intended to curb alleged abuses by foreign correspondents.

We don't believe them.

the outside world — and from white South Africans — the events that are taking place in our townships.

We won't let them.

Despite all the restrictions, we will continue to tell you as much as we can about events in the townships and to penetrate the barriers the authorities are trying to erect around these areas.

They have stopped us from using pictures. They have not stopped us from using words. We can still find new ways to tell you what is happening in our country.



THE CLAMP BEGINS: Colonel Fred I

SOURCE Y:

From *The Cape Times*, 07.09.1985.

465

W Cape schools closed

By DI MEEK

A TOTAL of 464 coloured schools and colleges in the Western Cape, attended by almost 500 000 children and students, were closed indefinitely yesterday by ministerial decree.

All 60 primary and secondary schools in the Mitchells Plain school district and all 118 pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the Athlone school district are affected.

The Athlone district includes Bonteheuwel, Ebie's River, Crawford, Lavistown, Valhalla Park, Matroosfontein, Uitzig, Kalksteenveld, Ravensmead, Bridgetown, Heideveld, Manenberg, Belthorn, Silvertown, Lansdowne and Philippi.

In the Wynberg school district, 108 institutions are affected, in an area stretching from Cape Town, Sail River, Woodstock and Maitland to Claremont, Southfield, Grassy Park, Constantia, Hout Bay and Ocean View near Kommetjie.

Out of bounds

In the Bellville school district, which includes Durbanville, Parow and Stellenbosch, 89 institutions are affected. In the Paarl district, which includes Atlantis, Malmesbury and Wellington, 63 institutions are affected. In the Worcester district, which includes Greyton, Caledon, Genadendal and Ceres, 26 institutions are affected.

The teachers' training colleges affected are Hewat in Athlone, Zornbloem, and Wesley in Salt River. The Paarl and Worcester Training Colleges have also been closed.

It was announced in Durban yesterday that the Rylands Secondary School would also be shut for the rest of the month.

The premises of all the listed educational institutions will be out of bounds to all staff and pupils from today.

The drastic measure — which is unprecedented in South Africa — follows an almost six-week-long boycott of classes by many Western Cape senior schools and colleges in protest against

- List of schools, page 4
- Unrest map, page 2
- Relative calm returns, page 2
- Police kill boy, girl in Ciskei clashes, page 2

the state of emergency imposed by the government on July 21.

The closure was announced in a statement issued by the Minister of Education and Culture for the House of Representatives, Mr Carter Ebrahim.

Mr Ebrahim said the current riot situation involving coloured schools and colleges in the Western Cape had led to an investigation to ascertain the effects of the riots on education.

The investigation had confirmed that the education authorities could "unfortunately no longer ensure the physical safety" of the students.

"It has become clear that as a result of the disruptive actions and intimidation of pupils and students by an organized minority, the usual school programme can not be proceeded with in an uninterrupted manner," he said.

Mr Ebrahim said it had also become obvious that certain schools were no longer serving an educational function.

He said parents and teachers who were concerned about pupils' examinations this year were welcome to discuss the matter with him and education authorities.

The leader of the Labour Party, the Rev Alan Hendrickse, yesterday told UPI that the schools "will remain closed until we have ridden the wave of unrest".

"The sort of cliché on

which the kids are being fed is liberation before education," he said. "I believe it should be education for liberation."

The closure has been condemned by teacher and student organizations and trade unions.

The chairman of the Athlone and District Principals' Association, Mr Joubert, said headmasters were not consulted about the decision which in no way addressed the grievances of pupils, parents and teachers.

"It is a high-handed action, particularly in view of the deafening silence of the department in the five weeks when pupils were indiscriminately teargassed and sjambokked on school premises."

Cape Action League media convenor Mr Armin Abrahams said: "Carter Ebrahim spoke with his master's voice when he arbitrarily closed schools. Contrary to his claim that the educational process has broken down, we believe that real education has only begun."

Fosatu

The president of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu), Mr Joe Foster, said the closure proved once again that the government was not able to handle the situation.

"It is surprising they say they can no longer ensure the safety of students. Can this mean that they no longer have control over the police and army in the townships?" Mr Foster asked.

Mr Ken Andrew, a Progressive Federal Party spokesman on education, said the closure was a clear indication that the situation was out of hand.

He said the government should realize that normality would not return for as long as the real leaders of local communities were detained.



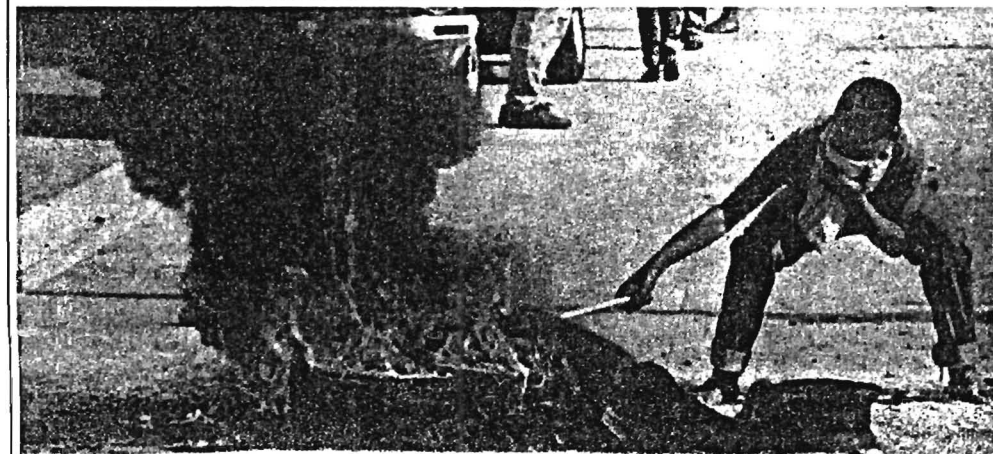
Year of flames: Policemen watch as a delivery truck carrying frozen chickens goes up in flames at the height of the Cape Town unrest. Burnt chickens lay strewn all over the road

Picture: JUDA NGWENYA (Reuters)



A youth runs from a barricade he has just set ablaze

Pictures: TREVOR SAMSON, AFP



'You are going to give me laryngitis. My throat won't take it, please people, disperse, otherwise we will have to take action'

(Police officer with loudhailer urging Adderley Street crowd to disperse)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

Chronological account of the 1985 class/school boycott from 20.07.85. to 18.01.86.

APPENDIX 2:

Question Schedule

APPENDIX 3:

Copies of a few reports compiled by teachers at Central High in 1985.

APPENDIX 4:

Copies of letters send by The Principal at Central High in 1985.

APPENDIX 1

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX 1

CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF THE 1985 CLASS/SCHOOL BOYCOTT FROM 20 JULY

1985 TO 18 JANUARY 1986

1985

JULY

20 A truck is stoned and set alight in Crossroads, a "township" in the Western Cape. Strikes, boycotts, stay aways and protest actions, which have been prominent throughout South Africa spread to the Western Cape.

The Release Mandela Committee (RMC), assisted by the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), issue pamphlets in Soweto commemorating the 67th birthday of the ANC leader on Robben Island, Nelson Mandela.

21 The National Party Government declares a State of Emergency in 36 magisterial districts. This excludes the Western Cape.

22 In terms of the new state of emergency regulations, the South African Security Forces detain 113 people.

23 The emergency regulations prevent the media in the 36 magisterial districts from publishing the names of people detained without trial.

24 441 people are detained under the new emergency regulations. Offices of the Western Cape Development Board in Worcester are gutted. 200 pupils from Vusisizwe High School and residents march to the local rent office, but are forced to disperse.

- 25 The SRC at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) organises a mass rally of students from both tertiary and secondary institutions. It demands the lifting of the State of Emergency in 36 magisterial districts, the reinstatement of Mrs Galant, a teacher from Scottsdene High School, who had been transferred to a Primary School and the withdrawal of South African Defence Force (SADF) troops from all "townships". This meeting is attended by over 4 000 students. They decide to boycott classes until the following Friday. Classes at Bellville Teachers' College are suspended. 300 student-teachers join the protest.
- 27 A rally is held at the University of the Western Cape. The SADF seal off Nyanga and Guguletu. A delivery truck is set on fire, but the driver is unhurt.
- Pupils from Spine Road, Mitchell's Plain, en route to the UWC Rally, are stopped by police. The police use *sjamboks* and chase pupils back to their school.
- 29 1 166 people detained without trial under the emergency regulations.
- 30 4 000 students at UWC boycott lectures until key demands are met, namely, the immediate dismissal of three staff members, who they alleged are racist.
- Community organisations propose a consumer boycott of all "white-owned" businesses in Cape Town.
- Students at the University of Cape Town hold a singing practice on campus in preparation for the annual Inter-Varsity Rugby Match against Stellenbosch University.
- 31 Police fire teargas canisters onto the UWC campus. Students continue to boycott classes.
- On the return from a rally at Peninsula Technikon, students hi-jack a furniture truck and remove the contents. Stones are thrown at vehicles on Modderdam Road. The Rector of UWC, Professor Richard Van der Ross, demands that the police do not enter the campus.

The stay away at both secondary and a few primary schools continues. Over 90% of students attending schools in the townships boycott classes.

Lectures are suspended at Hewat Teachers' Training College.

The state decrees that the number of people attending funerals must be limited.

AUGUST

- 1 Dr Allan Boesak organises a prayer service at St George's Cathedral.
1 286 people are arrested under the State of Emergency regulations.
Medical students at Durban-Westville University demonstrate against the United States policy of constructive engagement with South Africa.
- 3 Students at UCT organise an anti-rugby march. 400 "black" students march to the administration building and SRC offices and demand that the Inter-Varsity Match against Stellenbosch University be cancelled in the light of the emergency regulations. They demand that the Workers' Committee at UCT be recognised and that lectures are cancelled.
UCT's Inter-Varsity Committee decides to continue with the match and simply expresses opposition to the State of Emergency regulations.
Professor Richard Van der Ross warns students that UWC will be closed to students who continue to stone cars or interfere with other students who wish to continue their studies.
The Senior Rabbi of the largest Hebrew congregation in Cape Town joins other religious leaders in calling for negotiations between the government and political leaders in the community.
- 5 The murder of Mrs Victoria Mxenge, a lawyer and civil rights campaigner of the United Democratic Front (UDF), in Umlazi, Durban, is reported.
- 6 UWC students vote to extend the boycott of lectures.
A petrol bomb ignites in the SRC Offices at UWC.

WECSAC (The Western Cape Student Action Committee) monitors the boycott.

7 1 428 people detained since the declaration of the State of Emergency.

8 Five pupils from Bonteheuwel are detained.

UCT is called upon to award a degree to Nelson Mandela.

9 A memorial service for Mrs Victoria Mxenge is held at UCT. After this, a protest march by 800 UCT students ends in a street battle against security forces in Main Road, Rondebosch.

Parents, whose children attend Rustenberg Primary School in Rondebosch react for the first time to the situation in the Western Cape, arguing that their children were traumatised by the "battle" between students and security forces in Rondebosch.

10 The Vice-Chancellor of UCT, Dr Stuart Saunders, calls on UCT students to behave responsibly. Twenty-two UCT students appear in court after being arrested in Rondebosch.

12 Dr Allen Boesak is released from prison.

Fourteen organizations announce that a Consumer Boycott will commence. All shops owned by "whites" and government "collaborators" should be boycotted.

13 Protesting pupils at Glendale High, Mitchell's Plain are dispersed by police. Quirts are used against the children.

UWC students vote to return to lectures.

20 Students at the Peninsula Technikon demand that lecturers "down tools" for two days to show solidarity with students on boycott throughout the country.

Teachers in Mitchell's Plain boycott lessons in solidarity with those pupils injured and arrested in the area.

- 20 Teachers hold a mass meeting at the Samaj Centre, Athlone. A policeman allegedly infiltrates the meeting. He is disarmed and his notes destroyed.
- 21 51 students arrested at Cape College. 4 000 pupils from eight schools in Mitchell's Plain march and hold a rally at Spine Road Senior Secondary School. Their demands include the release of all detained students, guarantees that no student will be victimised, recognition of democratically-elected SRCs, the abolition of the age limit of pupils at schools, supply of adequate textbooks, equipping of laboratories, the reduction of examination fees for matriculants, subsidizing of school transport, abolition of the quota system, opposition to all forms of sexual harassment, the building of more schools and technikons.
- 23 The Mxenge brothers are detained.
The District Principals' Association asks pupils to end the boycott.
- 24 All access roads into Crossroads, Langa and Guguletu are sealed off after 10 commercial vehicles are stoned. Casspirs and police vans surround the areas.
Police detain 13 UDF members in Cape Town and 8 in Durban.
Thousands of pupils attend rallies at schools throughout the Peninsula.
- 26 The Teachers' Interim Coordinating Committee, which claims support from teachers and lecturers in 70 primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, meets to discuss a response to the current situation.
- 27 Police arrest a teacher and two pupils in Mitchell's Plain.
- 28 Planned march to Pollsmoor stopped by police action
- 29 Nine journalists are arrested in Athlone.
A school pupil from Soweto dies in police custody.

Wide, angry reaction to the banning of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS).

31 The official death toll from violence in the Cape Town area is 28.

SEPTEMBER

03 Conflict and violence in Black Townships and "Coloured" Group Areas throughout the Peninsula, particularly in Ottery and Elsies River.

04 Community leaders and teachers detained.

The funeral of an 18 year old pupil from Kasselsvlei in Bellville South , who was shot by police, is attended by over 5 000 people.

The New Unity Movement holds a mass meeting in Bellville South to oppose the current state of emergency and condemns police action in the Peninsula.

05 Street battles in Thornton and Belgravia Roads in Athlone.

Police whip students at a peaceful protest demonstration in Darling Street, Cape Town.

Pupils and teachers "picket" along De Waal Drive.

06 The Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange, closes 465 schools in the Western Cape by ministerial decree. Over 500 000 pupils are affected.

07 An anonymous pamphlet calls on workers to stay away from work for two days.

09 Teachers' organisations condemn the closure of schools and call on the community to re-open them.

17 Parents, teachers and students return to their schools and re-open them in spite of the ministerial decree. Moves afoot to start PTSAs i.e. Parent-Teacher-Student Associations.

29 The Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU) is launched.

OCTOBER

- 15 The "Trojan Horse" incident in Athlone. Three schoolchildren killed.
- 16 The Director of Education and Culture, House of Representatives for the Western Cape, Mr A.J. Arendse, announces that final examinations will not be postponed.
- 22 The Minister of Education and Culture, House of Representatives, Mr Carter Ebrahim, investigates 42 Principals and teachers "suspected" of assisting pupils who are on boycott.
- 26 The State of Emergency is extended to include the Western Cape.
- 29 The Inter-Regional Forum supports the call to boycott the final matriculation examinations. WECTU supports this call.

NOVEMBER

- 13 The Inter-Regional Forum reduces its list of demands to three, namely, the postponement of examinations to early 1986, the removal of police and soldiers from schools and the release of all detained teachers.
- 25 The Principal of Central High informs the Department that the PTSA had taken a democratic decision to postpone the final examinations until March 1986.
- 30 The Department withholds the November salaries of certain teachers, but when WECTU threatens court action, the salaries are paid.

DECEMBER

- 05 72 teachers in the Western Cape are suspended or informed that their contracts will not be renewed for the following year. The Principal, Deputy Principal and 5 Heads of

Department at Central High are suspended and 11 temporary teachers are informed that their applications for reappointment are subject to written confirmation from the Executive Director of Education. They do not receive their December salaries.

JANUARY 1986

- 14 300 WECTU teachers march to the Department of Education and Culture, House of Representatives' Head office and demand that all suspended and temporary teachers be reinstated.
- 15 Schools re-open for the start of the academic year. At Central High an "Acting" Principal and additional teachers report for duty, together with the Post Level 1 permanent teachers, who had not been suspended. These teachers, with the exception of one, refuse to co-operate with the "Acting" Principal.
- 17 Allan Hendrickse, leader of the Labour Party in the House of Representatives, announces that the suspensions of all teachers have been lifted.
- 18 A triumphant return of all suspended teachers to their schools. The National Educational Crisis Committee (NECC) calls on pupils to return to school, while the boycott of classes is being reviewed.

APPENDIX 2

University of Cape Town

APPENDIX 2:

QUESTION SCHEDULE

The researcher/interviewee adapted the questions during the course of the interviews because it was sometimes necessary to ask different questions to parents, teachers and students associated with the school, various political and teacher organisations.

1. Were you a student/teacher/parent at the time of the class/school boycott in July 1985?
2. Were you a member of the Central High School community?
3. Were you a member of any political, community, teacher or student organisation? If so, please state?
4. What were the major political groupings among the staff at Central High at the time of the 1985 class/school boycott?
5. What were the major political groupings among the students at Central High at the time of the 1985 class/school boycott?
6. Was the leadership at Central High aligned to any political grouping?
7. Were the students on the School's Representative Council at Central High aligned to any political grouping/s?
8. Were the majority of students at Central High actively involved during the class/school boycott?
9. What do you think caused the 1985 class/school boycott in the Western Cape?
10. What was your interpretation of the slogans which emerged during the boycott crisis, namely, Education for Liberation or Liberation before Education? Were there any other slogans?
11. Which view, if any, did the students at Central High support?
12. Why did they support it?
13. Did students at Central High attend mass meetings, rallies and/or participate in protest action during the boycott period?
14. What role did teachers at Central High play during the boycott period?
15. What role did parents of students at Central High play during the boycott period?

16. How did the class/school boycott personally affect you?
17. Were you detained without trial during this period? If so, describe this experience.
18. How was the decision to postpone the final examinations at Central High made?
19. Did you support this decision? If so, why? If not, why not?
21. The majority of teachers at Central High were not affiliated to any political organisation and yet the entire staff agreed not to administer the final examinations. How do you account for this solidarity?
20. Why was a progressive teachers' organisation, namely, the Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU) formed in 1985?
21. Why did 15 Central High staff members join WECTU? Were there other teacher organisations at the time? If so, are you able to name and state their aims?
22. How did the community respond to the closure of schools by Mr Carter Ebrahim, the Minister of Education in the House of Representatives?
23. How did the community support the dismissed and victimised teachers at the school in 1985?
24. A boycott is usually a short-term weapon to achieve an objective. Was the boycott weapon used effectively in 1985? If so, why? If not, why not?
25. What pressures did the Central High community face during the boycott period?
26. What were the gains of the 1985 class/school boycott?
27. What were the limitations of the 1985 class/school boycott?
28. Why and how did students return to classes in January 1986?
29. What was the fate of staff members who had been suspended or dismissed at the end of 1985?
30. Would you like to comment on any other issues or aspects of the class/school boycott in 1985?

APPENDIX 3

University of Cape Town

WHY THE PRESENT EXAMINATIONS (NOV. 1985) ARE CONTRARY TO THE
UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION.

A.1. The basic principles which were undermined and affected by the Departmental demand that examinations should be conducted at all costs are:-

- (a) that education involves the total development of the child (mental, physical, aesthetic, moral, political) so that he can take his rightful place as a contributing citizen in the field(s) of his choice,
- (b) that the child be allowed to develop from one stage of maturation to the next with no limits being placed on this development;
- (c) that he be permitted to develop in different directions suited to his aptitude and interest i.e. technically, artistically, academically, inter alia);
- (d) that he be taught to think and thus attain independence in pursuit of knowledge wherever he can find it;
- (e) that the teacher inculcate certain values which lead to the development of sound character, and a striving for excellence. Values such as honesty, perseverance, dedication, loyalty, enthusiasm and courage should be held in high esteem;
- (f) that the pupil be taught to communicate confidently and effectively and to treasure freedom of expression.

THE TEACHER IS UNDER OBLIGATION TO THE PUPIL AND TO THE COMMUNITY TO SEE TO IT THAT THESE AIMS ARE ATTAINED.

B. The impact of the boycotts and unrest in their primary stages already dislocated and dismantled school organisation. No effective teaching or formal learning could therefore have occurred during the boycott period. It is self - evident that pupils were completely unprepared, and a proposed final examination in November for these inadequately prepared pupils was therefore vicious, unfair and cruel.

The persistence of the Department to proceed with the examinations created the impression that their only aim was to project the impression that all was well, and to underplay the weaknesses and injustices prevalent in the "educational" system.

The disturbing nature of the examination (small numbers of candidates; watered down question papers to suit the small area of work covered; repeatedly revised time-tables; the presence of police on school premises and in the examination rooms; the doubling of year marks; etc.) has made a mockery of, and diminished the pupils' belief in the values mentioned earlier (honesty, dedication, etc.)

The pupils are given the impression that the Department will go to any length to accommodate them and ensure a pass, so many pupils are really merely going through the motions of an examination.

Have we not adversely affected the development of the characters of our children with this mockery of an examination?

Have we not diminished the confidence of the pupils in the administrators of the present examinations, and in the whole concept of schooling and education?

THE CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

1. Examinations are essential components of the pedagogical or educational process and are designed to evaluate:
 - a) The success of the curriculum and;
 - b) The attainment of the students.

They form the bases on which improvements are made both to teaching and subject matter and on which the progress of students through school and their exit from the school are decided.

2. What criteria can be applied to decide whether an examination is educationally valid or not?
 - a) It must be properly set so as to provide a representative and an adequate coverage of the syllabus (knowledge) covered in the course.
 - b) It must be fairly administered so as not to favour one student as against another (or one group of students against another), if comparisons are to be made.
 - c) All students should have had adequate and equal opportunity to prepare for the examination.
 - d) The student's performance must be impartially assessed by the examiners.
 - e) Just as the process of teaching implies the willing and conscious participation of both teachers and students, so does the process of examining.

PERCENTAGE OF SYLLABI

COMPLETED BY 29 JULY 1985

STANDARDS	ENGLISH	AFRIKAANS	MATHS	GEOGRAPHY	HISTORY	BIOLOGY	GENERAL SCIENCE	PHYSICAL SCIENCE	ECONOMICS	ACCOUNTING	LATIN	WOODWORK	NEEDLEWORK	TYPING	MUSIC	GENERAL HANDWORK
Std 6	70%	60%	55%	50%	65%	-	80%	-	-	35%	60%	-	50%	-	65%	65%
Std 7	70%	65%	40%	70%	50%	-	60%	-	-	60%	60%	65%	50%	60%	65%	-
Std 8	60%	60%	65%	50%	50%	70%	-	60%	50%	*50%	-	65%	70%	60%	65%	-
Std 9	60%	60%	55%	55%	65%	60%	-	60%	50%	65%	-	65%	65%	60%	65%	-
Std 10	70%	80%	85%	75%	75%	85%	-	80%	70%	80%	80%	66%	90%	70%	65%	-

*FIRST HALF YEAR, NEW SYLLABUS STD 7 WORK HAD TO BE COMPLETED.

• Statement of Conditions for any successful examination

Pupils should be examined at the end of a completed course of study.

Before any major examination, revision of the work covered is essential.

Study methods and examination techniques must receive attention before pupils attempt an examination.

External conditions i.e. at home and in the environment must be conducive to concentration and intensive preparation.

• Conditions Pertaining to 1985 Final Examination

Formal tuition stopped on 26 July 1985. Courses of study not completed.

No revision done under expert guidance of teachers.

Pupils were not informed of effective study methods and examination techniques.

General atmosphere was such that it was difficult for pupils to study e.g. stonings, barricades, shootings, detentions.

3. PARENT RESPONSE

Because conditions set out in 1 could not be met, parents of pupils in standard 6 to 10 found that final examinations in November 1985 would be impossible since no pupil would be adequately prepared to write.

• STAFF RESPONSE

The staff, in accordance with the parents' decision, felt that it would be educationally unjustifiable and morally indefensible to set examination paper and administer such examination as the conditions under 1 had not been met.

The staff decided to respect the wishes of parents and therefore did not comply with the farcical examination requirements which would reaffirm "gutter education".

PSYCHOLOGICAL REPORT

IDEAL SITUATION

The results of an examination should be commensurate with candidates' capabilities:

- . in order to attain this the social climate should be ideal
- . at Harold Cressy High School the practice has always been:
 - to administer fortnightly tests in order to assess progress and need for remediation
 - to administer June and September examinations to prepare pupils for November promotion examinations
 - to hold meetings with parents to involve them in the educational process viz to complement the work of the teacher by supervision at home
 - to complete the syllabi as early as possible to give adequate revision time
 - to encourage pupils to work out old question papers to give them the necessary confidence to write final examinations
 - to conduct extra remedial classes in the afternoons and on Saturdays to help the weaker students
 - for the principal teacher to hold regular meetings with the pupils to re-inforce the idea that each pupil achieves the best possible result.

All the above factors are essential to prepare pupils both psychologically and academically to sit for the final examinations, the seriousness of which has always been imposed on them.

REAL SITUATION

Conditions in our school

Victimization and intimidation at school through:

- . detention of pupils, parents, teachers, community leaders
- . constant surveillance by security police which exacerbated the siege complex and resulted in emotional stress and feelings of anxiety and panic.

Environmental conditions

- . heavy police and SADF presence in the streets
- . harassment of pupils on the way to and from school resulting in large scale stayaways
- . shootings and killings of pupils, friends and family members contributed to the already existing psychological trauma.

The Examinations

- . Pupils lost touch with formal school situation and thereby lost touch with the reality and purpose of 'normal' schooling
- . No statement regarding the examination issue was forthcoming from the Department
- . The subsequent refusal of a postponement of the examination heightened the confusion and anxiety
- . The sense of hopelessness (apathy? despair?) made it impossible to approach any examination with a sense of confidence and equanimity

) Fear of splitting student unity

- . Pupils at this school correctly anticipated that to write the examinations in the present climate would have given rise to violence and chaos at the school
- . This feeling would have spilt over into 1986 as it now threatens to dooming the boycott none of the ideal conditions as outlined on page 1 prevailed it would therefore be ludicrous to expect pupils to prepare for and perform an examination to the best of their ability.

University of Cape Town

MATHEMATICS: GENERAL REPORT - STANDARDS SIX TO TEN

1. Class tests, assignments, worksheets are all an indispensable part of the teaching of Mathematics, but because these could not be completed it has been impossible to ascertain whether pupils had a thorough understanding of the basic concepts of Mathematics.
2. Annual marks could therefore not be calculated fairly, since only marks achieved in tests written in the first two terms could be used.
3. The pupils did not write the September examination, and would therefore have been at a disadvantage in any final examination since they would have no means of assessing their ability in the subject, or the areas in which they would require extra tuition.
4. An average of 55 - 60% of the syllabi had been completed in all standards. It was vital that the remainder of the work be covered in detail by the teacher, and the pupils guided progressively through the entire syllabus in the form of revision. It was impossible to expect the pupils to cover the remainder of the syllabus with sufficient detail to write an examination with any confidence.
5. There was no opportunity for consolidation and revision of work already done, or for remedial work and effective preparation.
6. Since the understanding of the more difficult aspects of the subject depends on the assimilation and consolidation of basic concepts, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible and unfair, to test pupils properly.
7. The pupils themselves were completely unprepared for the exacting demands of any final examination.
8. The performance of pupils in the June examination has been included to indicate the amount of remedial work, guidance and revision required by the pupils before they are expected to sit for a final examination.
9. The pupils have received no formal instruction in Mathematics since 29.07.1985.

STANDARD SIX

40% of the syllabus was still to be taught at the time the boycott started.

STANDARD SEVEN

40% of the syllabus was still to be taught at the time the boycott started.

Pupils in all classes were given controlled tests as required until the boycott started.

Neither September nor November examinations were written by the pupils at our school. No tests were written after the commencement of the boycott on July 29 1985, so that no year marks are available.

Generally with regard to Standard Six and Seven Latin the study of a third language involves insight into the structure and meaning of what is in fact a spectator language - something the pupils would not have been able to accomplish without classroom drill, the guidance of the teacher, and regular written tests.

Median percentages attained by classes in June :

Standard Six : 94,70%

Standard Seven : 80,50%

I attach copies of June results in 1985 to give a broader perspective.

EVIDENCE THAT PUPILS AT HIGH SCHOOL WERE NOT ADEQUATELY
PREPARED TO WRITE FINAL EXAMINATIONS IN NOVEMBER 1985 AS THEY DID NOT
COVER THE REQUIRED WORK TO BE TESTED IN THESE EXAMINATIONS

REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, HIGH SCHOOL

1. The course was not completed

On Monday, 29 July, 1985 High School responded to the call, together with pupils from 50 High Schools in the Western Cape, to boycott classes until certain demands had been obtained.

The school term for 1985 consists of approximately 40 weeks and academic work was taught for 23 of those weeks, whilst pupils were on class and school boycotts, whilst simultaneously having Awareness Programmes, for approximately 17 weeks.

Pupils were not able to complete the syllabus in History from Standard Six to Eight. This also applies to Standard 9 and 10 History classes at our school but the teacher responsible for the Senior History classes is presently in detention and cannot make a statement.

The course work to be completed before a final examination can be written is outlined in the following Education Bulletins:

Education Bulletin, Special Edition, JS 16/85, Vol. 7. Cape Town, January 1985 for the Junior Secondary Course in History.

Education Bulletin, Special Edition, SS 13/85, Vol. 9. Cape Town, January 1985 for the Senior Secondary Course in History.

Specific examples, listed below, clearly show that teachers did not teach the full syllabus for 1985 and pupils were not prepared for a final examination, based on the full syllabus, in November 1985.

2. Specific examples of course material not taught

Standard Six History:

Ms. Morton, Ms. Marais and Mr. Kieswetter teach History to four Standard Six classes. By 29 July 1985 the three teachers had only begun Section 8: South African History, 1806 to 1854 and were unable to complete the following sections:

Section 8:

1. The Mfecane and its aftermath
 - 1.1 The origin and settlement of the Black peoples
 - 1.2 The rise of the Zulu kingdom
 - 1.3 Changes on the Highveld
2. The Second British Occupation of the Cape
 - 2.1 Brief introduction
 - 2.2 The Cape under Lord Charles Somerset
 - 2.3 British policy towards
 - 2.3.1. Eastern Frontier up to 1834
 - 2.3.2. Slaves
 - 2.3.3. Khoi-khoi
3. The Great Trek
 - 3.1. Causes
 - 3.2 Routes followed by the Trekkers (mapwork)
 - 3.3 Settlement and experiences of the Trekkers in Natal, Transvaal and the Free State up to 1854.

Standard Seven History

Ms. Houghton teaches History to one Standard Seven History class and Mr. Naidoo (presently in detention) to two Standard Seven History classes. By the 29 July, 1985 the two teachers had not been able to complete the following sections:

Section B: SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY FROM 1854

3. FROM UNION TO REPUBLIC

3.1 The establishment of the Union of South Africa

3.2 The constitutional development until the founding of the Republic of South Africa

5. THE SOUTH WEST AFRICAN QUESTION FROM 1945.

Standard Eight History

Ms Houghton teaches History to two Standard Eight History classes (37 pupils) and Mr. Naidoo (presently in detention) to one class. By 29 July, 1985 the following sections were not completed:

Section A: General History

1.3.3 (b) Revolt in France as an example of liberal revolts, 1830 and 1848

2. The ECONOMIC REVOLUTION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIALISM, CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM 1789 TO 1850

2.1 Industrialisation and urbanisation in Britain and Europe

2.2 The economic and social consequences of industrialism

2.3 The growth of socialist thought in Europe

Section B: SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY

2. BRITISH IMPERIAL INTERVENTION AND REACTIONS TO IT

2.1 British reactions to the Great Trek

2.1.1 Problems created by emigration to the interior

2.1.2 The Treaty States system

2.1.3 The establishment and annexation of the Republic of Natal

2.1.4 The Sand River and Bloemfontein Conventions: the British conventions policy

2.2 Britain and Transorangia

2.2.1 Grey's federation attempts

2.2.2 The annexation of Basutoland

2.4 Carnarvon's federation policy and its aftermath (to 1864)

3. POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF A COMMUNITY SOUTH OF THE LIMPOPO DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

3. CONTROLLED TESTS:

Standard Six: The syllabus states that "The year mark will consist of marks obtained in FIVE comprehensive tests, reduced to a mark out of 10".

The three teachers state that no controlled/comprehensive tests were written in the third quarter, which meant that the year mark for the final examination would not have been a true reflection of the pupils' ability.

Standard Seven: The syllabus states that "The year mark will consist of marks obtained in FIVE comprehensive tests reduced to a mark out of 30 marks".

No comprehensive test was written in the third quarter so the year mark for the final examination would not have been a true reflection of the pupils' ability.

Standard Eight: The syllabus states that "The year mark will consist of marks obtained in THREE comprehensive controlled tests reduced to a mark out of 60." Only TWO comprehensive tests were conducted.

4. QUARTERLY EXAMINATION MARKS:

The syllabus states that "Quarterly examination marks will consist of marks obtained in the June examination reduced to a mark out of 70 and marks obtained in the September examination reduced to a mark out of 70.

No September examinations were written.

5. Textbooks:

The new syllabus for Standard Six to Eight History came into effect from January 1985 and not, as incorrectly stated on the cover of the Bulletin JS 16/85, January 1986. No textbooks were available for History pupils as textbooks had not yet been published. Pupils relied on their research material and from worksheets/information and historical material presented to them by the teacher. From 29 July, 1985 no formal academic work was done and pupils were therefore not able to complete the course on their own and be able to write a final examination.

6. Additional motivation to support the invalidity of the final examinations WRITTEN in November 1985

Standard Six: The three History teachers stress that a great deal of the syllabus was new to pupils and they felt it was crucial that revision be done before these pupils could be expected to cope with a final examination. They are far too young to teach themselves the syllabus and therefore, need the tuition and guidance before having to cope with a final (promotion) examination.

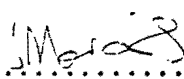
Standard Seven and Eight: The syllabus was not completed and the general and specific aims of the course were not fulfilled. The teacher believed that she must assist pupils, as stated in the syllabus, to develop skills on enquiry into the past, investigating the past and understanding of the present which is necessary to understand the past. As no lessons were given from 29 July, 1985, except for a few sporadic lessons on the 12th and 13th August, the aims of the course and the course work were not completed and pupils could not prepare themselves for a final, promotion examination.

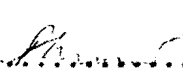
Signed by the History teachers at

High School.


.....
MS BARBARA HOUGHTON


.....
MR. A. KIESWETTER


.....
MS. L. MARAIS


.....
MS P. MORTON

NEEDLEWORK STD 6 - 10

THEORY AND PRACTICAL

Needlework has an entirely new dimension for Std 6. We have to lay the foundation for the next 4 years and for the rest of their lives.

It was impossible to complete the work in six months (actually 4 months - $\frac{1}{2}$ January and April as well as 1 month for June Examination).

All the theory has to be done before the practical work can commence. It is unfair to set an exam. in a practical subject if they have not been intensively prepared.

In Std 10 the pressure is much higher in all subjects and the practical part is particularly time consuming under normal circumstances and even then the girls spend hours and hours after school and during weekends under my supervision to complete their suits.

I feel it would have been grossly unfair to expect them to attempt a final exam. when there has been no time for revision nor for completing the syllabus adequately.

CONTROLLED TESTS

Pupils have completed required controlled tests for first and second quarters.

SEPTEMBER EXAMINATION

September exams were not written

YEAR MARKS

Year marks are available for March and July

A FEW REASONS FOR THE 'BOYCOTT OF CLASSES' IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS: 1985

The 1985 school year opened with serious school boycotts in the Western Cape, Pretoria, the East Rand and Pietermaritzburg. By March 1985, 70 000 pupils were involved. Stayaways were prevalent at 17 schools in Cradock, Witenhage and Port Beaufort, six schools were closed in Imbali near Pietermaritzburg, 7 in Cradock and one each in Mamelodi and KwaPhema on the East Rand. (Reference: School Boycotts 1984: The Crisis in African Education, Monica Bot)

A few reasons for the boycott included:

1. support of one teacher at a school in Cradock who was transferred
2. the so-called coloured and Indian elections for the tricameral parliament in August 1984 stimulated a boycott of 30 000 African pupils.
3. rent increases in the Vaal Triangle and East Rand led to the boycott of schools by 140 000 African pupils.
4. The Declaration of the State of Emergency in 36 magisterial districts led to students in the Western Cape boycotting in solidarity with pupils in those areas.

THE WESTERN CAPE

The Inter-School Co-ordinating Committee (ISCC) called for a class boycott on MONDAY, 29 JULY, 1985 and a school boycott on 30 and 31 July, 1985. About 50 schools responded to this call. The reasons for this call included:

- . We as students of the oppressed and exploited, have had an opportunity to make each other aware of what role we have to play in society
- . We have been able to show our parents, in most cases the workers and the only people that can bring about fundamental change, that we can play a supportive role
- . As oppressed students we have shown that unity is a vital weapon in our struggle
- . We have shown that we will not be silent when our brothers and sisters are being brutally killed and detained all over the country.
- . We have shown that we only wage a successful struggle if we understand what system we are fighting - apartheid-profit-making system - capitalism.
- . We have shown that we reject the gutter, racist education that we receive
- . We demand that our teachers not be moved around like pawns on a chessboard like Mrs. Galant of Scottsdene.

Monday 29 July 1985: Birth of WECCAC (Western Cape Student Action Committee): an ad hoc body formed to co-ordinate the boycott. Individual schools were represented by their SRC's on WECCAC.

By 20 August, 1985, 63 Cape Town education institutions had joined the boycott.

On 5 September: Carter Ibrahim closed all schools throughout the Western Cape.

When the fourth term commenced on 1 October pupils returned to school but decided not to return to normal classes until the following demands had been met:

- . an end to the prefect system and corporal punishment
- . abolition of age restriction law
- . reinstatement of exams

- . withdrawal of security guards at schools
- . the right to organize in democratic structures like SRC's and PTSA's
- . state bursaries must be paid out
- . charges to be dropped against all students and teachers
- . an end to the victimization of teachers, principals and students
- . students be allowed to meet on school premises
- . compulsory alternative education periods at all schools, the curriculum to be decided by PTSA's.

The Education authorities failed to meet any demands and have acted autocratically throughout the 15 weeks of Boycott by using the police and CADF to solve the education crisis by infiltrating schools, detaining thousands of teachers and students and their presence on school grounds has made the situation worse.

At present we believe that the proposed solution to postpone the examinations to March 1986 is the only solution and if this is publicized and supported by thousands of people throughout the Western Cape, the Education authorities might be forced to agree.

APPENDIX 4

University of Cape Town

25 November 1985

My Reference:

Your Reference:

The Regional Director
Department of Education and Culture
WYNBERG

APPLICATION FOR POSTPONEMENT OF FINAL EXAMINATIONS TO MARCH, 1986

On behalf of all the parents, pupils and teachers associated with our school, I am applying for the final examinations for pupils from Std SIX to TEN to take place at the beginning of March, 1986.

This application is in accordance with decisions taken at three meetings of parents and teachers which were recently held to discuss the matter of final examinations at our school. A total of 1210 parents, representing 736 pupils, attended the meetings and decided, without a single dissentient vote, that the final examinations should not take place this year. This decision was supported by the following main reasons :

1. Not a single pupil from Std 6 to 10 had completed the prescribed course of study
2. It would be completely anti-educational and contrary to the tradition of our school to impose on the pupils examination papers based on the full courses when pupils had covered only approximately 60% of the year's work
3. The current conditions and atmosphere are not conducive to pupils being able to effectively prepare and write examinations
4. The 6½ weeks at our disposal before the end of February, will enable the staff and pupils to complete the courses and ensure that the pupils are adequately prepared for a final examination at the beginning of March 1986

We thank you in anticipation of a favourable reply

.....
PRINCIPAL TEACHER.

Dear Parent/Guardian

This is to inform you that I, together with the Deputy Principal and five Heads of Departments, have been suspended from the service of the Department of Education and Culture as from tomorrow, 5. 12. 85. The Department has not provided any reasons for their action. However, in effect, this action implies that we (the seven teachers) are debarred from the school premises and may not have any say in the general administration and decision - making of the school. In addition, a further eleven teachers, who are classified as temporary staff, have been informed that their applications for reappointment are subject to written confirmation from the Executive Director.

Allow me to take advantage of this opportunity to express our admiration and appreciation of the loyalty and support you have given us over many years. We have no doubt that the strength of our school is due largely to the outstanding co-operation which exists amongst parents, students, teachers and ex-students. May this spirit of co-operation prevail at the beginning of next year and ensure that we start the new year with a strong determination to pursue and strive to attain the educational values, standards and ideals that are so dear to our school.

Lastly, I want you to know that I remain convinced that our school will emerge from the current "crisis" even stronger than it was before.

I remain

Yours respectfully

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6. INTERVIEWS

Interviewee A: The Deputy Principal of Central High in 1985. 22 February 2000.

Interviewee B: A teacher at Central High in 1985. 22 March 2000.

Interviewee C: A Senior staff member and parent of students at Central High in 1985. 3 April 2000.

Interviewee D: A Subject Head at Central High in 1985. 1 April 2000.

Interviewee E: A Subject Head at Central High in 1985. 20 March 2000.

Interviewee F: A student at Central High in 1985. 3 April 2000.

Interviewee G: A student at Central High in 1985. 25 March 2000.

Interviewee H: A student at Central High in 1985. 1 April 2000.

Interviewee I: The Chairperson of WECTU in 1985. 29 March 2000.

Interviewee J: A parent of a student at Central High in 1985. 5 April 2000.

Interviewee K: A temporary teacher at Central High in 1985 and an executive WECTU member.
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