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**From Skollies to Revolutionaries: The Shift of  
Identity in a Cape Town Generation in Re-  
sponse to the Soweto Uprising of 1976**

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**From Skollies to Revolutionaries: The Shift of Identity in a Cape Town  
Generation in Response to the Soweto Uprising of 1976.**

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Candidate Number 15137

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## **Abbreviations**

ANC – African National Congress

BIA – Borthwick Institute for Archives

BPC - Black Peoples' Convention

CAD – Campaign Against Discrimination

SASO – South African Students' Organisation

SAP – South African Police

SSRC – Soweto Students Representative Council

UCT – University of Cape Town

USF – United Students Front

UWC – University of the Western Cape

## Introduction

*'We had grievances which could no longer wait. We surged forward, aiming to sweep them out of our path if they would not give way. Freedom in our lifetime as we marched on, our clenched fists held high.'*<sup>1</sup>

'Youth Day' on 16<sup>th</sup> June stands as a poignant reminder of the thousands of school children across the South African city of Soweto who came together in 1976 in defiance of the apartheid government. The steady accumulation of social, political and economic factors ranged from grievances with the education system to a fundamental objection to the ideological principles of apartheid. This brought Soweto's politically active youths out of their schools and into the firing line. Although the intent was peaceful demonstration, the panicked and heavy-handed response of overwhelmed local law enforcement exacerbated the situation through the use of teargas and bullets. Events escalated rapidly and would set the scene for months of violent confrontation between youths and authority. Yet the 'Soweto Uprising' was not a movement that was to be confined to its township. After a relative lull, unrest broke out among schoolchildren in the Cape Peninsula. From August onwards there were concurrent eruptions in Port Elizabeth, Oudtshoorn, George, Wellington, Stellenbosch, Riversdale and Paarl.<sup>2</sup> The ranks of the demonstrations held not just black protestors but also those from the Cape Coloured community. All the demonstrations were made up mostly of students. Education had been relatively neglected in South Africa and, as Brewer demonstrates, the education system for blacks and coloureds was a personal reminder of a racially divided society.<sup>3</sup> It was also a time of rising unemployment, particularly for African youth.

The focus of this study will be to examine in more depth the outbreak of student violence in Cape Town. It will address the impact that events in Soweto had on subsequent episodes of protest in Cape Town. It is Hirson who describes the situation in Cape Town as 'so significantly different' from Southern Transvaal that it is necessary to look at factors that influenced the two black

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<sup>1</sup> Mbulelo Mzamane, *The Children of Soweto* (New York, 1994) 78

<sup>2</sup> Archie Mafeje, 'Soweto and it's Aftermath' *Review of African Political Economy* 11.1 (1978) 18

<sup>3</sup> John Brewer, *After Soweto* (Clarendon Press, Oxford; 1986) 69

populations during the second half of 1976.<sup>4</sup> This work will seek to challenge the concept of *Soweto '76* by presenting the issues that were prevalent in non-white society not just in the context of one township's fight against authority, but rather as part of a greater national political awakening and embracing of Black Consciousness. It will examine the Cape Coloured student population in terms of both cooperation and comparison with Cape Town's black youths. This will answer questions about the strength and nature of the Black Consciousness movement as a binding force for change. It will identify the student movement as a generational phenomenon, at first rejected by their elders, which became empowered and won the support of their communities through passionate protest and the evocation of sympathy by violent police tactics. Brewer argues that students and police were in a conflict not of their own making, but originating long before whatever events took place.<sup>5</sup> He asserts that 'something entirely different could have ignited the spark'.<sup>6</sup> Brooks and Brickhill champion the notion that disillusionment with the education system was pivotal in the development of protest.<sup>7</sup> It is their contention that overcrowded classrooms lacking in basic resources, in combination with all the other 'shortcomings' of the Bantu Education system, caused the student demonstrations that led to violence. This essay will challenge these assertions. It will argue that the presentation of solidarity for Soweto, increasingly fractious generational conflict and the development of a feeling of national consciousness led students to question, not just the education system they found themselves a part of, but the whole apartheid state, making conflict inevitable.

To explore the dynamics of youth and protest the events at Alexander Sinton High School (hereafter Sinton) in Athlone will be used as a focal point. The school is situated in the south of Athlone, just off Belgravia Road. Belgravia being one of the most frequently named sites of demonstration during the 'explosion' of the Cape Province.<sup>8</sup> In the weeks leading up to September 3<sup>rd</sup> the pupils of Sinton has organised a number of silent, peaceful protests with little drama. It was on 3<sup>rd</sup> September that riot police twice raided the school. They penetrated the school gates and, after deploying copious amounts of teargas, indiscriminately assaulted pupils and teachers alike.<sup>9</sup> The assault left a permanent scar etched into the memory of children, staff and onlookers. Their reflections on the event are filled with feelings of victimisation and disbelief that representatives of the white minority state had instigated such wanton violence. Entitled 'A

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<sup>4</sup> Baruch Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash* (Zed Press, London; 1979) 214

<sup>5</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto 76*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, 76

<sup>7</sup> Brooks, Alan. and Brickhill, Jeremy. *Whirlwind Before The Storm* (London, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> Hirson, *Year of Fire* 215

<sup>9</sup> York, Borthwick Institute for Archives (Hereafter BIA):CSAS/CA 10.37, 10.41, 10.43, 10.44

Day To Remember'<sup>10</sup> in one protestor's account, it will be argued that this day was fundamental in rallying support from the wider community. Indeed researcher Maughan-Brown notes the importance ascribed to these events by a coloured Sinton teacher through its prevalence within his chronology of summer in the Cape (for example 'three days after Sinton', 'two days before Sinton' etc.).<sup>11</sup> It is from accounts of these events, and others like them that this essay will seek to approach Cape Town's *Soweto '76*.

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<sup>10</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.41 *A Day To Remember* (1976)

<sup>11</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.40 (MJ Maughan-Brown) *Untitled* (1976)



## 1. The Soweto Effect – A Prelude to Violence

There are three major factors that distinguish a study of Cape Town in 1976 as different to one of Soweto. Most obviously and perhaps most influentially violence in Cape Town only took root several months after the events of 16<sup>th</sup> June. It is important to understand why there was this time delay and how this affected the way in which protest was undertaken in Cape Town. In addition the geographical make-up of Cape Town is very different to that of Soweto. Studying the smaller, dispersed townships provides an insight into how a strong wider consciousness was necessary to bind the frequently differing views of geographically isolated communities. Finally, the focus of this study will lie on schools made up of a predominantly Cape Coloured population. Being more politically active than their black counterparts<sup>12</sup>, studying coloured students allows a deeper look at Black Consciousness and how it was identified with, even by Cape Coloured youths.

Historians cite myriad factors as to why rioting was initiated and maintained in Soweto. In the earliest attempt at historical analysis by Brooks and Brickhill, the focus was on the education system.<sup>13</sup> Much like the Cillie Commission<sup>14</sup>, they cite the resentment that black and coloured students harboured to being taught in Afrikaans as playing a pivotal role in sparking unrest.<sup>15</sup> Certainly Hyslop successfully demonstrates how the Bantu education system was engineered to keep Blacks in an inferior social position.<sup>16</sup> Yet Hyslop maintains from this position, like Brooks and Brickhill, that it became 'inevitable that students would rebel'.<sup>17</sup> In contrast to this opinion, it is from the reaction of Marx and Brewer that this essay will seek to root itself. Marx refutes the education argument by suggesting other factors, such as the influence of the Black Consciousness movement and the heightening of political awareness as having a more significant role to play.<sup>18</sup> Subsequent works by the likes of Brewer in *After Soweto* pursue the idea that schools issues were insufficient to 'act as precipitation for the riots' and deeper social factors laid the groundwork for unrest.<sup>19</sup> This argument can be seen from two contrasting perspectives. Either, as Brewer

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<sup>12</sup> Alex Callinicos, and John Rogers, *Southern Africa After Soweto* (Pluto Press, London; 1977) 164

<sup>13</sup> Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind*

<sup>14</sup> set up investigate why the troubles occurred

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, 35

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Hyslop, 'State Education Policy and the Social Reproduction of the Urban African Working Class' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14 (1988) 446-76

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, 463

<sup>18</sup> Anthony Marx, *Lessons of Struggle* (Oxford, 1992) 41-42

<sup>19</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto* 96

suggests, that students unleashed protest primarily to pursue educational advantage.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently the reason for its popularity and severity was due to the deep-rooted social inequality and financial woes of black township residents. Certainly prospects had changed with the new education system such that possession of higher education was no longer associated with high social status, better paid jobs or even employment.<sup>21</sup> This may be valid for Soweto but from examining actions in Cape Town, Mafeje's alternative is more appealing. This is that:

'Students were not merely protesting against the use of Afrikaans in African schools, but were challenging state power whose foundations lie well beyond their social strata'<sup>22</sup>

By the time the students of Cape Town had embraced the spirit of uprising their demands were not those of students concerned about their educational disadvantage, but rather those of a disillusioned generation seeking a political overhaul. For example the 'immediate demands' on the statement of Langa Scholars detailed the release of political prisoners, free education and 'equal jobs, equal pay'.<sup>23</sup> These demands reveal a motivation much deeper than educational dissatisfaction. As Mafeje neatly summarises, 'the defiant spirit of the students is a mark of their disillusionment with the system as a whole'.<sup>24</sup> This revolutionary spirit will become more evident through examination of the student's use of violence and the way in which protest was structured *in* the schools, but not *for* the schools, in later sections.

When searching for the causes of uprising specifically in Cape Town rather than Soweto an important consideration must be made in explaining 'the new mood of assertiveness'.<sup>25</sup> That is the effect of events in Soweto themselves. Within two months of the iconic death of Hector Pieterse on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1976, at least 80 black communities all over the country had expressed their fury.<sup>26</sup> Within four months the number had risen to 160. Students were baton charged from Cape Town to East London with placards pronouncing 'Soweto is in our blood' and the city's name is still synonymous in the minds of many with youth protest and unrest.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore important to bear in mind the effect of Soweto itself as a factor in shaping resistance in the Cape.

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<sup>20</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto* 65-106

<sup>21</sup> Clive Glaser, 'Swines, Hazels and the Dirty Dozen' *Journal of South African Studies* 24,4 (1998) 723

<sup>22</sup> Mafeje, 'Soweto' 18

<sup>23</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.32 *Statement By Langa Scholars* (1976) 3

<sup>24</sup> Mafeje, 'Soweto' 21

<sup>25</sup> John Kane-Berman, *South Africa: The Method in the Madness* (Pluto Press, London; 1978) 103

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, 2

<sup>27</sup> The Cape Times, *Student Demos Baton-Charge* (August 17<sup>th</sup> 1976)

Indeed at the Cillie Commission Mr Willem Theron, Director of Education for the Administration of Coloured Affairs was adamant the 'flashpoint was Soweto'.<sup>28</sup> He described how the activities of arsonists and vandals in the Cape had centred on the coloured educational institutions. These were the meeting points of the youth and intelligentsia reacting to violence in Soweto.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore one high school girl from Guguletu even suggested that people came to Cape Town from Soweto after the riots and that 'their accounts gave local residents a more vivid impression of what had happened there'.<sup>30</sup> These accounts, she surmised, 'appear to have been the precedent for what happened'.<sup>31</sup> Through examining inter-youth relations this essay will seek to reinforce Hirson's assertion that the actions of school students in Cape Town were primarily a result of 'news they heard of events in Soweto'.<sup>32</sup> It was a demonstration of Cape Town's youths who defined themselves as part of a national movement against the biased segregation inherent within their education system.

The most significant difference between Soweto and Cape Town in any comparative study of the disturbances is the vocal presence of the coloured community within the Cape Peninsula. With their roots extending back to Dutch rule, the 'Cape Coloured' have formed a significant proportion of the Cape Town population since colonial interaction with the African continent. Prior to the 1970s Adhikari demonstrates how the identity of the coloured had been effectively handicapped by assuming colouredness to be either an in-bred quality, the inherent product of miscegenation, or an artificially constructed identity imposed by a white establishment.<sup>33</sup> In either case the coloured people were effectively denied a significant role in the assembly of their own identity. It is from this state of ethnic limbo that politicised coloured voices, or rather voices classified as 'coloured' by the state under the Population Registration Act, increasingly rejected the identity imposed on them.<sup>34</sup> Colouredness came to be viewed as an artificially constructed categorisation of society by the ruling minority as a deliberate component in a 'divide-and-rule' strategy.<sup>35</sup> This is not to suggest that the people of Cape Town no longer referred to themselves as coloured, or indeed that they altered their cultural or social practices. Yet a political rejection of the restraining concept of colouredness can be seen to have been an important factor in the eager

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<sup>28</sup> The Cape Times, *Flashpoint was Soweto – witness* (25th November 1976) 1

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, 2

<sup>30</sup> BIA: CSAS/CA 10.36 *Conversation With Guguletu High School Girl* (1976) 1

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*

<sup>32</sup> Hirson, *Year of Fire* 216

<sup>33</sup> Mohamed Adhikari, 'Hope, Fear, Shame, Frustration' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32.3 (2006) 468

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, 471

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, 474

coloured embrace of the simultaneously developing Black Consciousness movement. As stated by Hirson, the political mentality that 'Coloureds are Black, too' can be used to explain how Black Consciousness fuelled united protesting students of both black and coloured townships.<sup>36</sup>

Coinciding with the emergence of an organised black working class in the early 1970s, Black Consciousness was a reinterpretation under their own terms of the meaning of Blackness.<sup>37</sup> It developed around the assertion of taking 'pride' in being a black person. The evolution of the Black Consciousness movement created a new sense of self-confidence, which not only 'defied police bullets'<sup>38</sup> but also transcended the artificial racial divisions constructed by the white minority government.<sup>39</sup> Indeed SASO was formed in 1968 to 'serve the interests of all those South Africans who were politically, socially, economically and educationally discriminated against purely on the basis of skin colour'.<sup>40</sup> This opened the door to all those of coloured or Indian decent. Upon extensive investigation of the unrest the Cillie Commission would conclude that large numbers of coloured people had indeed 'joined up with the Black community so as to remove [their] grievances and obtain their rights through concerted action'.<sup>41</sup> Goldin shows how this change of attitude, 'to the point at which they were prepared to regard the Black man as their comrade in distress', was a concerted reaction to the weaknesses of 'divisions enforced upon them'.<sup>42</sup> It is from this viewpoint of a shared response to the imposition of ethnic categories with which this essay will examine the disturbances in Cape Town. Perhaps then it is more fitting to be described as a study of 'non-white' political activity, undertaken within the parameters of Black Consciousness, rather than solely the response of an independently cognisant coloured identity. Predominantly black areas, such as Langa and Guguletu, will be discussed in conjunction with typically coloured areas such as Athlone. Although small differences between their ideology and actions will be highlighted, they will both be presented as agents working against the white-minority state rather than in defence of their state-imposed racial category.

While the streets of Soweto were being torn up by politically empowered youths, initial displays of political violence in the Cape were sporadic and ill-received by the wider coloured and black communities. Although the first signs of revolt in the African townships in Cape Town were on

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<sup>36</sup> Hirson, *Year 220*

<sup>37</sup> Harold Wolpe, *Race, Class and the Apartheid State* (UNESCO, 1988) 11

<sup>38</sup> Here Mafeje is referring to the growth of protest whilst protestors were being killed daily.

<sup>39</sup> Mafeje, 'Soweto' 22

<sup>40</sup> Harry Mashabela. *A People on the Boil* (Jacana Media, 2006) 24

<sup>41</sup> Ian Goldin, *Making Race* (Longman, New York; 1987) 207

<sup>42</sup> David Hirshman, 'The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa' *Journal of Modern African Studies* 28.1 (1990) 5

18<sup>th</sup> June when a couple of buildings were attacked, it was not until 11<sup>th</sup> August that Guguletu, Langa and Nyanga really erupted.<sup>43</sup> Indeed it was only when the schoolchildren were preparing to return to schools that large scale boycotting and activity began in Cape Town.<sup>44</sup> The victims of this violence, mostly coloured shop-keepers and coloured people of working age, were unsurprisingly enraged with the collective urban youth or 'tsotsi' who they held responsible. There are even examples of black merchants in Langa 'who blamed the tsotsis for most of their trouble' and worked with the police to try and recover their stock.<sup>45</sup> Even teachers, those most in contact with the students who would be the driving force of protest, felt that 'when unrest in [their] schools began it was generally believed that it would be short-lived'.<sup>46</sup> So why is it that the citizens of Cape Town initially did not flare up with the same power and support as experienced in Soweto? Certainly Cape Town was under the same apartheid legislation, had experienced the same growth of secondary education and had endured the same economic downturn.

There were factors that made Soweto more rife for civil unrest. Glaser cites deteriorating public services, rent increases, poor quality mass schooling and job shortages as a far from exhaustive list of Sowetan grievances.<sup>47</sup> Yet it would be inaccurate to attribute the delay of large-scale violence in the Cape solely to the hardships of Soweto, given that Cape Town was hardly a utopia. One explanation is that the geography of Cape Town did not lend itself to the operations required for effective mass protest in the way that Soweto did. The township of Soweto was not only a highly dense area, but also much larger than the townships of Cape Town. It was a mixing bowl for those with scant prospects, those unemployed, and those who had entered urban life illegally. Where we must not forget that the Soweto Uprising was still very much the product of student activity<sup>48</sup>, it is important to note that Sowetan schools were interspersed and encircled only by poor, black urban society. By contrast in Cape Town, only one street west of the 'Black African' township of Langa lay the 'leafy garden suburb' of Pinelands.<sup>49</sup> This suburb, predominantly inhabited by whites, existed in as much contrast to Langa as the coloured township of Athlone to the south. Indeed when violence eventually did take over in the black township of Langa, the response from neighbouring Pineland schools was to drum up support for special

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<sup>43</sup> Kane-Berman, *South Africa* 5

<sup>44</sup> Hirson, *Year of Fire* 226

<sup>45</sup> The Cape Times, *Clean-up Starts in Langa Havoc* (August 17<sup>th</sup> 1976)

<sup>46</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 2.2 Professional Teachers' Association, *Proposal For A Programme of Concerted Action In The Immediate Future* (06.09.76)

<sup>47</sup> Clive Glaser, 'We Must Infiltrate The Tsotsis' *Journal of South African Studies* 24.2 (1998) 302

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, 301

<sup>49</sup> Robert Pelteret, *The Garden City of Pinelands* (1994)

[http://www.pelteret.co.za/pdf/research\\_notes/pinelands.pdf](http://www.pelteret.co.za/pdf/research_notes/pinelands.pdf) [12.04.12]

“parent guards” through local newspapers.<sup>50</sup> White journalist Madelaine van Biljon noted the surreal situation in which she found herself sat in Government Avenue watching tourists take pictures of squirrels whilst ‘three blocks away’ riot police were firing birdshot into a square densely packed with protestors.<sup>51</sup> Far from the large, homogenous black population of Soweto, Cape Town was carved into small townships of mostly coloured, black or white inhabitants. Even when united by cause or concern, each still held onto its own methods and its own identity. For example when the rioting began in Guguletu one interviewer in the southern district of Retreat recalls he was ‘told that the beginnings of the rioting in ‘coloured’ areas bears no close relationship to that of the black areas’.<sup>52</sup> Even when the city of Cape Town decided to make a stand, despite the best efforts of those involved it was not to be the cohesive action witnessed in Soweto.

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<sup>50</sup> The Cape Times, *Pinelands Parents Asked To Help Guard School* (10.09.76)

<sup>51</sup> The Cape Times, *Cloud Cockoo Land...Carnival...And Mayhem* (12.09.76)

<sup>52</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.33 (MJ Moughan-Brown) *Riots in Retreat* (08.09.76)

## 2. A Cohort of Skollies - The Role of Violence and Generation

Prior to mass police brutality, the majority of youth were preoccupied with peaceful demonstration. Yet where violence occurred it had a strong and visible impact on generational relationships. The purpose of this chapter is to firstly demonstrate how violent youths were met with disdain from the wider coloured and black societies. It will seek to argue that the *threat* of violence to enforce boycotts was more successful than the *use* of violence against government buildings in rallying support. Finally, it will be argued that it was the heavy handed response of the SAP to non-violent protest that was the driving force in fuelling prolonged protest in Cape Town. It united the coloured and black generations in solidarity with each other and with the wider Black Consciousness movement. Here the distinction must be drawn between violence and the threat of violence. Like their rebellious predecessors in Soweto, some youths were drawn into the sacking and destruction of property, especially in the earlier weeks of the Cape disturbances. Yet where Brewer argues dissenters applied logic to select targets that symbolised apartheid<sup>53</sup> in Soweto, these destructive acts in Cape Town appear to have been much less politically focused. The ‘agents of oppression’, including post offices, magistrates and Bantu Administration Board buildings were systematically razed in Soweto as an assertive statement of political dissent.<sup>54</sup> Although there is evidence of Sheebens and government vehicles being targeted in Cape Town this is by no means the result of calculated and precise targeting. Indeed newspaper reports from August describe burnt out local shops and violence that can only have been motivated by impulse or personal gain.<sup>55</sup>

In reference to Soweto Glaser identifies the difficulty of distinguishing between political and criminal activity during waves of unrest.<sup>56</sup> Although this is certainly tricky to achieve and specific examples of destruction could as well be ascribed to wanton violence as to a profound political statement; an overarching observation of the types of buildings targeted can provide us with an interesting insight into the rioters’ mentality. Where in Soweto buildings were deliberately targeted for their symbolic or material value, conversely in Cape Town it appears buildings were singled out as worth protecting from a sporadic deluge of violence. Mr Freeman, organiser of the Peninsula School Feeding Association conducted a survey of the school feeding kitchens in

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<sup>53</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto* 75

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, 75

<sup>55</sup> Cape Times, *Clean-up* (17.08.76)

<sup>56</sup> Glaser, ‘We Must Infiltrate’ 316

Guguletu and Nyanga after a spate of riots to ascertain the damage done. To his surprise he found them all untouched and 'barring a few vague amateurish attempts to burn primary schools', he found the school feeding kitchens had been 'deliberately left alone by rioting school children'.<sup>57</sup> It is interesting that parts of school buildings, themselves icons of the apartheid education system, were protected from the violence. Indeed we find later that when police assaulted Alexander Sinton High School the children rushed to barricade the doors and throw stones at the invaders not just out of fear or anger, but to 'protect' what they deemed as their territory.<sup>58</sup> A hand written note found in Guguletu entitled 'Children Please' neatly summarises the mood in Cape Town.<sup>59</sup> It accepts that some rioters attacked schools as the note urges children 'do not burn our schools'.<sup>60</sup> Yet the message is the importance of study and it reflects an embracing of schools, at least on a structural level as muster point for an awakening black consciousness, and represents a value held for education despite the wrongs of the apartheid system. By the end of the violence 95 black schools had been destroyed in Soweto compared to the twelve that had been touched by demonstrators in Cape Town.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps due to the poorer employment and standard of life prospects of Sowetan youth, but the students of Cape Town were not willing to turn their backs on their education system with as much vigour as their compatriots in Soweto.

In Cape Town youths were quickly branded with the disdainful nickname of 'Skollie', used by disapproving white and black alike, yet only ever by those of an older generation. The etymology of 'Skollie' lies in the language of Afrikaans, probably from the Dutch *schoelje* or 'rogue' and is said to define a petty criminal of mixed ethnic origin.<sup>62</sup> Skollies were not a new concept, being used to describe 'mulatto hoodlums' in Time Magazine in 1944<sup>63</sup> and their origins in Cape Town are not dissimilar to the development of the Tsotsi gangs of 1940s Soweto.<sup>64</sup> Derived from Sotho, Glaser's image of the Tsotsis as 'almost exclusively male and fiercely territorial' is a cultural variation upon a theme as the Skollie in Cape Town can seen to synonymise the 'boisterous rebellious' nature of the Sowetan Tsotsis.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The Cape Times *Kitchens Not Damaged in Riots* (17.08.76)

<sup>58</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.40,10.41,10.43

<sup>59</sup> Appendix 1

<sup>60</sup> *ibid*

<sup>61</sup> Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, "I Saw a Nightmare..." *History and Theory* 39 (2000) 26

<sup>62</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. (OUP, 2006) 1163

<sup>63</sup> Time Magazine, *Foreign News: Skollies* [13.02.2012]

<<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,803230,00.html>> (17.03.44)

<sup>64</sup> Don Pinnock, *The Brotherhoods* (Dave Philip, Calremont; 1984) 31-43

<sup>65</sup> Glaser, 'Swines' 722



The generational divide amongst black and coloured urban society was a major source of friction, and Glaser would argue even a cause of violence.<sup>66</sup> On the streets of Rondebosch, one domestic servant (50) reported ‘intimidation and assault by “skollies” who had taken some bread and cigarettes off her’.<sup>67</sup> Interestingly this is followed by the assertion that ‘she appeared to be put out, but not surprised’.<sup>68</sup> Another coloured woman (40) was appalled by sight of two police-vans smashed outside her house.<sup>69</sup> She discovered rioters had razed a local Indian/Malay general dealer’s shop and house. This upset her particularly as ‘he was such a nice man’ and she could not understand why such action had been taken against him.<sup>70</sup> She felt that the rioters made things ‘worse for us’.<sup>71</sup> A coloured caretaker (40) described how “skollies” enjoy stoning and looting. She harboured feelings of considerable hostility to their destruction, saying that ‘tiny children (6/7) have ideas of shooting or stoning planted in their minds now – make as if they are going to throw stones at cars – drivers react instinctively by jerking away’.<sup>72</sup> During the early days of violence the residents of coloured and black areas saw politically active students as pests.

Like the skollies who stole from local shops, youths were viewed as untrustworthy, rebellious and as one coloured maid neatly concluded, ‘extremely naughty’.<sup>73</sup> Despite the occurrence of some negative incidents such as the angered shopkeepers mentioned earlier or the robbed woman, it was the lack of communication between most youths and the elder generation that led to them being disliked and feared. A coloured man interviewed in a public lounge explained how:

‘the children now question everything. They question everything the teacher tells them. They’re not like we were at school. We accepted everything. These troubles won’t stop’.<sup>74</sup>

Not only was it their proactive and overtly political attitude that frightened a demoralised older generation but also their secrecy. One elderly woman described how children, including her grandchildren, stormed her local church hall and evicted the elders.<sup>75</sup> They then held a meeting where a mysterious man who spoke of “revolution” addressed them.<sup>76</sup> She concluded her statement by saying that ‘at the moment’ her grandchildren would not speak about anything to her

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, 723

<sup>67</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.5 (JBQ) *Conversation with Four Rondebosch Domestic Servants* (16.09.76) 1

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*, 1

<sup>69</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.20 (H Philips) *Coloured Domestic* (17.09.76) 1

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*, 2

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*, 2

<sup>72</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.20 *Interview with Senior Coloured Caretaker* (1976) 1

<sup>73</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.11 (Graham Finlayson) *Interview with Coloured Maid* (16.09.76)

<sup>74</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.18 *Comments on Cape Town Disturbances* (1976)

<sup>75</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.3 *Interview with Elderly Coloured Woman Living in Bonteheuwel* (29.09.76) 1

<sup>76</sup> *ibid*, 1

or any other adult.<sup>77</sup> It would be from this position of distrust that politically aware schoolchildren would seek to persuade their elders to join their boycotts and protests through the threat of violence.

Following 16<sup>th</sup> June, the objective of youths in touch with the student movement was to pressurise the older generations into political activism against the authority.<sup>78</sup> In Soweto student militants had initially been more concerned with preventing workers from getting to work rather than recruiting them as conscious and willing partners in the struggle.<sup>79</sup> Naturally these tactics did not appeal to the workers. In Cape Town too, the working generation were encouraged to boycott their jobs by youths.<sup>80</sup> Throughout the summer months posters appeared across coloured townships in Cape Town imploring parent-workers to ‘heed our call and stay away from work like in Soweto’ and stating that ‘the Black Society have nothing to lose from STAYING AWAY FROM WORK but our chains’.<sup>81</sup> The rhetoric of Black Consciousness is prevalent throughout these leaflets despite the fact the leaflet is targeting a coloured area; and it draws on events in Soweto and Alexandra as justification for a boycotting campaign in Cape Town.<sup>82</sup>

Most of the flyers supporting boycotting were distributed in September. This compliments Mafeje’s assertion that students took the workers for granted when mounting their campaign and ‘it was only when faced with state power in its nakedness that they turned to the workers’.<sup>83</sup> And faced with state power they were. Pamphlets printed in English and Xhosa were distributed over Langa by unlit helicopter proclaiming:

‘Workers! Prepare Yourselves! Pamphlets have been spread threatening you not to go to work on 15 and 16 Sept. ‘Let us fight these Tsotsies, Skollies and Robbers.’’<sup>84</sup>

Certainly Cape Town’s youth groups realised they were engaged in an ideological battle and disseminated propaganda to create a ‘student-worker alliance’<sup>85</sup> and declaring ‘our fight is not against our parents’.<sup>86</sup> While all the students were implementing the boycott weapon, it was only the coloured students from Cape Town who backed it up with a political explanation, as is shown

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<sup>77</sup> *ibid*,2

<sup>78</sup> Hirson, *Year of Fire* 229

<sup>79</sup> Mafeje, ‘Soweto’ 19

<sup>80</sup> Appendix 2

<sup>81</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.11 *Azikwelwa E Thembisa* (September 1976) 1

<sup>82</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.17 *Strike*, 1.20 *Hand Written Flyer*, 1.20 *Beware of False Friends*

<sup>83</sup> Mafeje, ‘Soweto’ 22

<sup>84</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.19 *Workers’ Association Cape Town Pamphlet* (September 1976)

<sup>85</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.11 *Azikwelwa E Thembisa* (September 1976)

<sup>86</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.20 *Beware False Friends* (September 1976)

in the leaflets they were distributing in Athlone. Mafeje explains this with the influence of the Anti-CAD and Teacher's League of South Africa.<sup>87</sup> The generational gap as defined from the older perspective earlier is also prevalent in the words of the protesting youths. A hand written flyer by 'we, the students' insisted 'let us also make it clear: our fight is not against our parents...our struggle for freedom is also their struggle'.<sup>88</sup> This sentiment is echoed in similar comments, 'parents, cooperate with us... NO VIOLENCE! NO BLOODSHED'.<sup>89</sup> Despite Mafeje's assertion that 'the urban youth from Langa assumed they could dictate to workers'<sup>90</sup> it is evident that the support of parents and workers was still acknowledged as important if the protest were to succeed. The leaflets by Cape Town students make apparent the lack of support they had from the wider community prior to incidents of police brutality.

Persuasive literature was not the only weapon in the arsenal of protesting youths. If rhetoric was the carrot, violence provided the stick. It must be remembered that whilst non-violent protest was always advocated, Cape Town demonstrators often found that motor car tyres with a couple of pints of petrol in the rim produced a dramatic effect when set alight and rolled downhill onto the police ranks.<sup>91</sup> Where stated: 'we reject all collaborators who have made themselves tools of the system', those deemed 'sell-outs' were punished by youths.<sup>92</sup> One African woman, a restaurant worker from Langa, described how the police had said they would provide protection if they went to work, but many people got stabbed.<sup>93</sup> Just as the SSRC included in *Azikelwa* nota bene 'your sons and daughters and all Black leaders shall be on the watch-out for sell-outs and traitors of the Black struggle'<sup>94</sup> the same message was conveyed in the threats and actions of Cape youths.<sup>95</sup> In another demonstration of violence, Athlone was subjected to an intense 'Kill A White' campaign that saw stickers appear on lampposts advocating the assault of whites.<sup>96</sup> Indeed it is clear that such attacks did take place<sup>97</sup> and, not only was it 'no longer safe for a white man to walk in the

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<sup>87</sup> Mafeje, 'Soweto' 23

<sup>88</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.20 *Beware False Friends* (1976) 1

<sup>89</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.25 *Azi Shwelwa* (1976) 1

<sup>90</sup> Mafeje, 'Soweto' 23

<sup>91</sup> Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind*

<sup>92</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.20 *Beware False Friends* (1976) 1

<sup>93</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA10.1 *Interview with African Woman, Langa* (26.09.76) 1

<sup>94</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.10 *To All Fathers and Mothers* (1976) 2

<sup>95</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 1.17, 1.20, 9.8A(ii)

<sup>96</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.4 (MJ Moughan-Brown) *Rumours* (17.09.76)

<sup>97</sup> Appendix 3

coloured township'<sup>98</sup>, but any coloured residents considering 'selling-out' was fully aware that the protestors were willing to act on their threats.<sup>99</sup>

The question this violence raises is how youths were able to dictate their agenda and enforce it with the threat of violence in the townships. This was due to an emasculation that had slowly worn away at the elder generations. In the calm before the storm *The Cape Times* noted 'there is a whole generation of young Africans growing up who have never known a father or a proper home environment and, in times of unemployment, are easily drawn into a life of tsotsism'.<sup>100</sup> Although attacking the tsotsi image, the sentiment that the young generation were out of touch with their home environment is an important one in understanding the motivation behind youth protest. The imposition of authority was not just missing at home but also in the schools:

'No teacher or principle dares order the students around anymore. One principle started telling kids off. They heard him and then told him, 'you know, we've always known you were a sell-out. They beat him up and kicked him around and then put him in his car and told him he must not come back.'<sup>101</sup>

This brazened attitude did not go unnoticed by the women of Cape Town who released hand-written flyers exclaiming, 'What has become of our men?' and 'ARE OUR MEN STILL MEN? They are dictated to by children'.<sup>102</sup> This is not to suggest that just because they were empowered, youths were destructive. Indeed in Nyanga East there had been no stay-away call from the students who later became involved in the unrest 'to protect the residents from attacks on them and their property'.<sup>103</sup> The attack resulted in students coming to the aid of the residents and a counter-attack was launched on the bachelor quarters, the main target being the premises of the shebeener'.<sup>104</sup> Here we see students intervening both in protection of their township and also against the immoral shebeens. Their actions therefore not only manipulated a position of influence over an emasculated older generation for political purposes but also came with a moral responsibility to protect those they overpowered. For the youths themselves this strength was

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<sup>98</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.18 *Comments on Cape Town Disturbances* para.3

<sup>99</sup> Appendix 4

<sup>100</sup> The Cape Times, 'Cape Africans', (17.08.76)

<sup>101</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.21 JH5 *Nimrod 4* (1976)

<sup>102</sup> Appendix 5

<sup>103</sup> The Cape Times *Sheebeeners Behind The Unrest* (12.12.76)

<sup>104</sup> *ibid*

empowering. They believed 'the children of today are taking over where their parents had failed'.<sup>105</sup>

Certainly there is an argument against the emasculation of older society in the opinion held by some, such as one coloured schoolteacher that 'children were being incited to riot'.<sup>106</sup> He recounted that people arrived at schools in cars and spoke to the children, resulting in more aggressive tactics. These people, he believed, belonged to the BPC and thus could be seen as controlling the youths. However he later confesses his consideration of Black Power to be 'totally irrelevant to South Africa' and saw no direction in the riots, only 'chaos and anarchy'.<sup>107</sup> This demonstrates that, even if older Black Power members were giving direction, it was neither the view of a generation nor a controlling message; it was facilitating not directing youth consciousness. This empowerment can be seen both stemming from and used to endorse Black Consciousness. Black Consciousness had endorsed violent action long before 1976 (indeed Mandela himself was convicted of sabotage in 1962) and was increasingly prevalent amongst the young in coloured townships.<sup>108</sup> Protestors demanded that motorists raise clenched fists so that their cars were exempted from the selective destruction.<sup>109</sup> In Rondebosch, youths chanting and saluting with clenched fists forced nearby older women into giving a similar salute.<sup>110</sup> This was, according to her 'the way to avoid trouble with the crowds'.<sup>111</sup> Before police intervention the relationship between generations was such that empowered violent youth were feared by and dominant over their natural role models.

Despite the actions of skollies and violently political students, the greatest element in persuading the elder generation to join in boycotts and marches was the extremely violent and heavy-handed approach to quell non-violent protest taken by the police. Kane-Berman asserts that 'the destruction that spread like wildfire in Soweto...was a reaction to actions of the police'.<sup>112</sup> Even before the mass protests began in Cape Town, police took advantage of generational friction and systematically promoted internecine fights between students and township residents.<sup>113</sup> Indeed one coloured student at UCT recounted how in Athlone coloured police dressed up as Skollies.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.30 *Essays Written By Children (7a) In A Coloured High School* (September 1976) 2

<sup>106</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.40 (MJ Maughan-Brown) *Informal Talk with Coloured School Teacher* (1976) 1

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*, 1-2

<sup>108</sup> Appendix 6

<sup>109</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.36b *Account Of Demonstration In Langa* (11.08.76) 6

<sup>110</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.5 *Conversation with Rondebosch Domestic Servants* (16.09.76) para.3

<sup>111</sup> *ibid*

<sup>112</sup> Kane-Berman, *South Africa* 11

<sup>113</sup> Mafeje, 'Soweto' 21

<sup>114</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.7 *Interview with a Forth Year Coloured Student at UCT* (September 1976) 2

They wore woollen hats and ragged clothes and hid behind the doors of Camberwell motors. 'When demonstrators came down the road they started shooting'.<sup>115</sup> It is with a similar lust for violence that police stormed coloured schools at the beginning of September and drastically changed the mood of the protests. What happened at Sinton and other schools at this time can be viewed as a catalyst for a greater change, taking place amongst the black and coloured Cape communities.

SAP action was aggressive, substantial and for the most part indiscriminate in responding to protests.<sup>116</sup> Police brutality was the single greatest factor in transforming the image of the annoying skollie into a victim of the apartheid state. In Soweto the 'major precipitating factor' in transforming student protests from a few hundred to ten thousand was 'the provocative action the massively-outnumbered police took', utilising tear gas and firing live rounds.<sup>117</sup> Children retaliated and the situation escalated. As Sinton was stormed on 3<sup>rd</sup> September phrases including 'Skiet die vuilgoed vrek'<sup>118</sup> and 'Hotnots gaan vrek'<sup>119</sup> were shouted by baton wielding SAP.<sup>120</sup> Witnessing the assault on a procession of children one onlooker's reaction 'was one of horror, disgust and anger'.<sup>121</sup> If there was any doubt in their mind about allegations of police brutality, they said, 'there is none now'.<sup>122</sup> 16-year-old Miriam Gafoor, a pupil at Salt River High School stated at the Cillie Commission that 'we, the students, came in peaceful protest and it would have remained peaceful but the system taught us violence because we were met with violence'.<sup>123</sup> Each attack by the police left students not just 'more resolute',<sup>124</sup> as suggested by Hirson, but more united, more opinionated and more supported by the older generation.

It is over these few days at the start of September that a fundamental shift in the mentality of the older generation to supporting the uprising can be observed. Just as Brewer noted the 'spontaneous eruption of opposition' arising from the first deaths in Soweto, it is perhaps even more prevalent in Cape Town given the generational divide.<sup>125</sup> As one coloured schoolteacher noted, from the date of Sinton 'the children had the almost total support of their parents and

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<sup>115</sup> *ibid*,2

<sup>116</sup> Appendix 7

<sup>117</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto* 77

<sup>118</sup> *Shoot the (dirty) scum dead*

<sup>119</sup> *Hottentots (Afrikaans for Khoikhoi) will die*

<sup>120</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.44 *Account of Alexander Sinton Aftermath* (1976) 4

<sup>121</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.28 *Riot Information Service* (SRC Press, 14.09.76)

<sup>122</sup> *ibid*

<sup>123</sup> *The Cape Times Schoolgirl Witness at Inquiry* (24.11.76)

<sup>124</sup> Hirson, *Year of Fire* 227

<sup>125</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto* 79

teachers'.<sup>126</sup> Expressing the sentiment of the average coloured man, one spectator noted, 'the schoolchildren were wrong to demonstrate but it was unnecessary of the police to fire teargas'.<sup>127</sup> Another onlooker described witnessing the assault of Langa High School children as 'the most poignant single event' in his life<sup>128</sup>:

'It was like a revelation of what naked brutality is, the students weeping but still defying teargas in a vain bid to pick up their fallen colleagues. The events surfered three townships like a tornado, swift and thorough in destruction'<sup>129</sup>

Suddenly the protest was transcending the barriers of both township and generation in a way it had failed to do before this point.

It is after this week that middle-aged women stop referring to unleashed skollies and the trivia of vandalism and started supporting their coloured compatriots with robust statements about the value of human life. For example interviewers started recording: 'the disturbances must stop. Innocent mother's sons must not be killed'<sup>130</sup> and 'if my son is killed, then he will be dying for a good cause'.<sup>131</sup> Both represent how discussion of the violence amongst the elder generation changed from sweeping generalisations about a troublesome generation to referring specifically to a 'son', a personal and emotional bond across the generational gap. One interviewer (recorded as R.O.) noted two separate conversations with 'Mrs B' a coloured mother of seven. In the first she said 'It's terrible what these bad people are doing, burning schools and going mad'.<sup>132</sup> Yet a month later, following the assaults on local schools, the mother 'wholly identified with the grievances of her people' stating 'the children are going to change everything. Shooting them doesn't make them scared'.<sup>133</sup> Indeed 'the big Cape stay-at-home of 15/16<sup>th</sup> September' is argued by Brooks and Brickhill to have represented the peak of Coloured-African solidarity.<sup>134</sup> This unsurprisingly follows the violence inflicted on school children in the preceding weeks. Whilst the involvement of teachers and parents in the students' cause would add considerable weight to the boycotting and protests,<sup>135</sup> it simultaneously politicised the older generation in the African and coloured communities of the Western Cape. Following the school assaults by the SAP,

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<sup>126</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.40 (MJ Maughan-Brown) *Informal Talk with Coloured School Teacher* (1976) 1

<sup>127</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.18 Coloured Man in Adderly Street (Ed. K.D.), *Comments on CT Disturbances* (1976)

<sup>128</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.36b Account Of Demonstration In Langa (11.09.76) 5

<sup>129</sup> *ibid* 6

<sup>130</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.7 *Interview with 4<sup>th</sup> Year Coloured Student* (12.09.76) 1

<sup>131</sup> *ibid* 2

<sup>132</sup> BIA: CSAS/CA 10.26 Mrs. B [Coloured mother of 7] (Interviewer, R.O.) *Untitled* (1976) 2

<sup>133</sup> *ibid*, 3

<sup>134</sup> Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind* (Londo120)

<sup>135</sup> Goldin, *Making Race* 209

coloured nurses at Somerset Hospital protested one lunchtime with banners expressing sympathy with people in riot-torn areas.<sup>136</sup> Suddenly support for protesting and boycotting had spread across the townships in a way it had failed to do through the threat and use of violence by children alone. It was the victimisation of Cape Town's youth by violent SAP officers that won the youth the widespread sympathy and support of their townships and would fuel sporadic yet persistent violence in Cape Town well into the new year.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> "We nurse ill patients, not baton-charged or shotgunned ones" in *The Cape Times Nurses, Doctors Stage Lunchtime Demo* (10.09.76)

<sup>137</sup> *The Cape Times Police Campaign Continues* (04.12.76) 7



### 3. Comrades Must Unite - Dynamics of Youth and Protest

All too often in accounts of the student uprisings of 1976 opposition to police authority is described using the collective term of ‘youth’ or ‘students’. Brooks and Brickhill talk of protest by the ‘Soweto generation – a wholly new and distinctive phenomenon’ in their chapter on *Youth Ferment*.<sup>138</sup> Brewer states that it was a ‘shared social image’ amongst students that apartheid was unjust which resonated with the structural conduciveness of South Africa’s racially divided society.<sup>139</sup> Indeed in examining the role of violence *this* work has contrast the collective mentality of the younger generation against that of Cape elders. In the study of both Soweto and Cape Town it is easy to be overwhelmed by the strengthening cohesion of young and old generation, of Sowetan and Cape Towner, held together against the oppression of apartheid. Yet the representation of protest is too simplistic to be portrayed solely as a cohesive ethnically bound body or consciousness. Rather the attitude towards protest varied considerably between townships, and even between schools. Despite shared ideas protestors still faced the barrier of geographical division. They often failed to achieve cooperative displays of their grievances due to a lack of communication and logistical preparation. This chapter will look at discrepancies amongst youth protest. Despite the amateur and separate nature of protest in Cape Town, it will establish how ‘the youth’ as a collective body would come to be represented as such a strong identity in secondary literature.

In early August pupils collectively decided that demonstration in sympathy with Soweto was necessary. The pupils of Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu were in communication and decided to march together on 11<sup>th</sup> August. Reports from several sources seem to indicate that the decision had not been widely circulated and that plans were vague.<sup>140</sup> Cooperation between schools in the Cape was not uncommon during the violence. Hirson describes action in this period as ‘separate, yet together’ as each community reacted sympathetically to events in other townships.<sup>141</sup> From the outbreak of violence in Soweto the different schools of Cape Town ‘came together’ to discuss the situation and attempted to coordinate their responses.<sup>142</sup> Schools demonstrated solidarity for

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<sup>138</sup> Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind* 67

<sup>139</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto* 66

<sup>140</sup> Hirson, *Year* 227

<sup>141</sup> *ibid*, 229

<sup>142</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.30 *Essays Written By Children (7a) In A Coloured High School* (September 1976) 1

their comrades in Soweto and sought to position themselves within the national struggle being undertaken. On one of the blackboards in Rosebank College a crude map had been drawn:

‘At specific points...were written Cape Town Comrades, Mdantsene Comrades (Eastern Cape), Soweto Comrades, Maput Comrades. Underneath was written the words, ‘all these comrades must unite, no racism, no Colonialism “equality”’.<sup>143</sup>

It is in a similar vein, but on a local level, the students of Sinton organised a protest. This was in reaction to the news of the police tear-gassing demonstrators from Langa High School.<sup>144</sup> Indeed the demonstration by Langa High School itself was to ‘demand the release of prisoners’ from Guguletu police station imprisoned after an earlier demonstration.<sup>145</sup> Thus the purpose of demonstration across schools as a display of solidarity for both local as well as national events.

The participants of the demonstration in Langa exhibit the spontaneous cooperation achieved by Cape Town’s schools. Not only were ‘the entire student body of Langa High’ allegedly marching against the police station, but pupils from other schools also joined them.<sup>146</sup> Accounts of the procession from Langa High School to Guguletu police station document how the demonstrators made their way from school to school drumming up support for their cause. They marched into Sizemile Secondary School and even Walter Teka Primary School with ‘the intention of persuading the school children to join the demonstration’.<sup>147</sup> Fezeka<sup>148</sup> students who had tried to march towards Langa to link up ‘decided to march to Nyanga after they had been dispersed with a volley of tear gas canisters’.<sup>149</sup> Similarly Oaklands High School students attempted to enter Sinton to join their march of solidarity. An account by a student at Sinton recalls ‘never having witnessed such brutality’ as was dealt by SAP to keep Oaklands students out.<sup>150</sup> Following police involvement protesting had the effect of uniting students and recruiting support across schools and even districts.

This urban cooperation was however limited in effectiveness due to geographical and logistical constraints. When ‘hundreds of school children went on the rampage in Pearl East in an attempt to reach the white areas of town’ they were foiled not just by various police roadblocks but also

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<sup>143</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.36b *Account Of Demonstration In Langa* (11.08.76) 7

<sup>144</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.41 *A Day To Remember* (1976) 1

<sup>145</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.36b *Account Of Demonstration In Langa* (11.08.76) 4

<sup>146</sup> Hirson, *Year* 228

<sup>147</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.36b *Account Of Demonstration In Langa* (11.08.76) 3-6

<sup>148</sup> A High School in Guguletu

<sup>149</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.36b *Account Of Demonstration In Langa* (11.08.76)

<sup>150</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.44 *Account of Alexander Sinton Aftermath* (1976) 2

by the uncoordinated nature of the protest.<sup>151</sup> Indeed even where limited cooperation was able to take place, for example between Langa and Guguletu, this did not extend across black-coloured townships. As Hirson demonstrates the African townships of Nyanga, Guguletu and Langa failed to work together with coloured townships such as Bonteheuvall.<sup>152</sup> Although there can be no doubt that each community was aware of what was happening in the other townships, and certainly events in one centre evoked sympathetic action in the other, they were not coordinated by any one person or body in either purpose or action.

In times of direct response to police brutality school communities jumped at the chance to help one another. Yet it is in the preceding calculated response to Soweto and events in Cape Town where underlying division between school communities becomes evident. Brooks and Brickhill discuss the USF, made up of about 100 African, Coloured and Indian schools.<sup>153</sup> Cited in *The Cape Times* (25.10.76) it had no committee or leadership and kept no membership lists.<sup>154</sup> Their list of demands ranged from abolition of job reservations, release of political prisoners, end to police raids and free and an equal educational system for all South Africans.<sup>155</sup> Despite this attempt at pan-township cooperation we can see that, on a practical level, each cohort of schoolchildren set their own agenda and planned their own action. For example Bridgetown High School students 'immediately announced their solidarity with their fellow pupils and organised demonstrations of their own accord with no outside suggestion or influence'.<sup>156</sup> Overwhelmed with support for Black Consciousness 'some went across to help at Alexander Sinton' when violence erupted there in September.<sup>157</sup> In stark contrast, at the coloured Trafalgar High School students did not 'display any organised solidarity with the students in the rest of the country'.<sup>158</sup> Although this was a 'bitter and contentious issue' amongst school representatives, the members of each respective school community evidently adhered to their own 'school policy'. For example, at Trafalgar 'there had been no protest, no marches, no slogans' before SAP intervention.<sup>159</sup> While most schools as a collective sought to present a united front against police brutality in both

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<sup>151</sup> *The Cape Times Heavy Riot Toll* (10.09.76) 2

<sup>152</sup> Mafeje, 'Soweto' 21

<sup>153</sup> Brooks and Brickhill, *Whirlwind* 121

<sup>154</sup> Cited in *ibid*, 123

<sup>155</sup> *ibid*

<sup>156</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.25 Anonymous Teacher, *Eye Witness Accounts From A School Teacher at Bridgetown High School* (1976) 1

<sup>157</sup> *ibid*, 2

<sup>158</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.24 Anonymous Teacher, *Incident At Trafalgar High School* (03.09.76) 1

<sup>159</sup> *ibid*, 3-4

Soweto and Cape Town, questions can readily be asked of whether this was the view of all their members.

When viewing the leaflets distributed across the townships some emphasised the immediate economic importance of the strike and others focused more on the destruction of all racial institutions appeared in Cape Town. As demonstrated by 3 youths caught distributing leaflets in Athlone the later type of leaflets came from the coloured community, whereas the former were said to have been distributed by African students from Langa High School.<sup>160</sup> Despite discrepancies in motive, the words and actions of students make it hard to escape a sense of unity. When viewing accounts of police intervention in schools the purpose of 'protesting in solidarity with Soweto' is inescapable.<sup>161</sup> In addition it was not just on the streets that the influence of Black Power can be seen as a cohesive force. In a statement by the students of Langa High School it was identified that, 'we are proud of our Black colour but at times we cursed God for giving us this colour in S.A. because we are suffering because of it'.<sup>162</sup> Indeed when a crowd of Hofmeyr school pupils marched through Atteridgeville, collecting students from five other schools en route they sang "Nkosi sikele Afrika and clenched their fists in the Black Power sign."<sup>163</sup> Yet as students boycotted classes, schools came to represent muster points for political action rather than pillars of the Bantu education system. For example the opening sentence of Statement by Langa Scholars exclaims 'we are no longer students of the Bantu Education, we are now 'Students of the Struggle''.<sup>164</sup> Students began to define themselves as a united body, not as an educational cohort, but rather a political force.

The focus of newspapers, verbal accounts and even the work of historians have been on this vocal, driven majority of students. Nonetheless, compelling and thorough as their argument is, there exists little reference to those amongst the schooling populations who did not subscribe to the revolutionary rhetoric of Fanon being espoused by their peers. The Professional Teachers' Association stated: 'the role of the principle in the circumstances' was to protect pupils against:

- a) The police
- b) Thugs
- c) Pupils who favour protest

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<sup>160</sup> Mafeje, 'Soweto' 20

<sup>161</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.30, 10.37, 10.43

<sup>162</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.32 *Statement By Langa Scholars* (1976) 3

<sup>163</sup> The Cape Times, *Youth Makes Black Power Oath at Riot Commission* (08.10.76) 2

<sup>164</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.32 *Statement by Langa Scholars* (1976) 1

d) Protesting pupils from other schools<sup>165</sup>

Naturally this raises the question as to why teachers needed to specify protection for pupils from ‘pupils who favour protest’, an indication that recriminatory action was taken on those students not feeling particularly revolutionary. This would appear confirmed by statements, such as that by Mrs B (coloured mother of 7) suggesting:

‘When two of her children were among those who had refused to go on a protest march (Athlone School) a fire hose had been turned on them by fellow students’.<sup>166</sup>

There are always going to have been those who did not agree with the movement. The fact that punishment, indeed not dissimilar to that for a *sell-out*, was dealt to those not triumphing black consciousness and solidarity with Soweto is worth noting. A coloured schoolteacher at Sinton suggested that ‘most of the leaders among the demonstrators were the drop outs and habitual truants’ before adding ‘but they were joined by responsible students’.<sup>167</sup> Perhaps then this great awakening of black consciousness and uniting of the student body was not as free from coercion, fear of retribution or even simple peer pressure as many of the eye-witness accounts would suggest.

Even accepting that there were most likely those endorsing protest amongst their fellow students out of persuasion rather than choice, this becomes almost superfluous following SAP action. From accounts of the raid on Trafalgar High School, whilst there were those ‘pelting the police with rocks from the upstairs classrooms’ it was the two ‘little girls hysterical with fear’ and those calling out ‘It’s not fair Miss’ to their teacher that were ‘kicked and beaten all over’.<sup>168</sup> SAP action during the raid was indiscriminate even though most of the youths had not been the ones at the school gates booing passing policemen, which was thought to have instigated the impromptu raid.<sup>169</sup> It would appear that this sense of collective victimisation, undertaken on purely ethnic criteria, united all those at the school whether they had been engaged in protest about the education system themselves or not. Indeed even their teachers described the ‘bravery, strength

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<sup>165</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 2.2 Professional Teachers’ Association, *Proposal For A Programme of Concerted Action In The Immediate Future* (06.09.76)

<sup>166</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.26 Mrs. B (Interviewer, R.O.) *Untitled* (1976) 1

<sup>167</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.40 (MJ Maughan-Brown) *Informal Talk with Coloured School Teacher* (1976) 3

<sup>168</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.24 *Incident at Trafalgar High School* (03.09.76) 3

<sup>169</sup> *ibid*, 1

and love that the children showed' to each other and the staff as 'a love that bound us together'.<sup>170</sup> Similarly on the morning that Sinton was assaulted, some pupils had assembled in the school hall 'on their own accord' in solidarity with occurrences in Soweto.<sup>171</sup> It had been specifically agreed by students that 'this was a serious matter and that each individual had to make his own choice or decision on matters'.<sup>172</sup> Yet when riot police entered with thunder flashes and teargas those for and against displays of protest were indiscriminately beaten and forced into a collective identity, angered and empowered in their cause.

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<sup>170</sup> *ibid*, 5

<sup>171</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 10.43 *Friday* (03.09.76) 1-3

<sup>172</sup> *ibid* 2-3

## Conclusion

It is the assertion of Kane-Berman that the Soweto uprising achieved nothing.<sup>173</sup> In Soweto protest resulted in the implementation of a police state enforced by military personnel. For the rest of South Africa protest slowly fizzled out. It is not fair to condemn the events of 1976 to the wastelands of failure. As demonstrated through this study of Cape Town, Black Consciousness inspired protest and was integral to changing generational relationships. The older generation found sympathy with their passionately political youth. By the time action had spread to Cape Town, what may have started as grievances with the education system in Soweto had broadened to become an attack on the whole apartheid system.<sup>174</sup> Inspired by events in the Eastern Cape (Port Elizabeth and East London) as well as in Soweto, Cape Town students were different because they looked outwards.<sup>175</sup> For Sowetans, 1976 was a time of community struggle, to stand up against what the apartheid system was doing to the people of Soweto. For coloured and black students in Cape Town it was about showing solidarity for their comrades across South Africa and fighting against the inherently failed system of apartheid anywhere and everywhere that it existed.

In his analysis of race Goldin describes the generation gap, which in 1976 had strained black communities.<sup>176</sup> Through their protest the students overcame not just geographical and cultural divisions between African and coloured youth<sup>177</sup>, but were successful in bridging the generational divide and winning the sympathy of their elders. Their reward was a reinvigorated national interest in political activity and a rejuvenated purpose in the campaign against the apartheid system. Schlemmer and Welsh had noted in 1972 that *apathy* was the dominant characteristic in African thinking.<sup>178</sup> Following 1976, popular opposition to apartheid became more widespread and more assertive. It became not only a cause that township communities were willing to fight for, but that many of their comrades would die for. Despite numerous inquiries and initiatives the Bantu Education Department would fail to usher the children of Cape Town back into the classroom.<sup>179</sup> Instead it is this generation, so instrumental in changing the apathetic attitude of

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<sup>173</sup> Kane-Berman, *Method* 232

<sup>174</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto* 416

<sup>175</sup> Hirson, *Year* 228

<sup>176</sup> Goldin, *Making Race* 209

<sup>177</sup> Goldin, *Making Race* 170

<sup>178</sup> Brewer, *After Soweto* 413

<sup>179</sup> BIA:CSAS/CA 9B2 *Cape's Bid To End School Deadlock*

South Africa's people, which would come to be known as the 'lost generation'.<sup>180</sup> The township children who once relinquished their education under the motto 'no education before liberation' would later take the blame for South Africa's violent reputation and become an easy scapegoat for anyone looking to fault South African society.<sup>181</sup> These children sacrificed their education for what they believed in and in so doing, dragged the apartheid state one step closer to its demise.

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<sup>180</sup> Michael Radu, *Dilemmas of Democracy and Dictatorship* (Transaction, 2006) 400

<sup>181</sup> *ibid*, 401-402



## Chronology

Borthwick Institute of Archives: CSAS/CA 11.2 *Preliminary Chronology of Events in Cape Town in the Unrest Following the Soweto Riots*

In the period August 11 to September 7 at least 36 people have been killed, many hundreds injured, many arrested and extensive damage done to property. There is a conflict of evidence on more detailed figures. For the first time large-scale rioting and defiance of the law occurred in the centre of a major city.

The Coloured people involved come from the numerous Group Areas Act suburbs in and around Cape Town: Bonteheuwel, Athlone, Hanover Park, Tiervlei, Crawford, Kensington, ~~Wainx~~ Windermere, Grassy Park, Kewtown, Mannenberg, Heideveld . . . The Africans live in the three African townships of Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu. Coloured students are members of the University of the Western Cape.

Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga house about 110 000 men, women and children in the sandy scrubland of the Cape Flats on the edge of White Cape Town. There are about 7 000 squatters in places like Crossroads. There could be another 40 000 who are illegally in Cape Town.

Langa with a population of 29 000 has 23 000 living in hostels. Of an adult population of about 25 000, 2 350 are women. The proportions are similar for Nyanga. Of the total African population about one in five qualifies for permanent residence in terms of the Urban Areas Act (section 10). The Africans living in Cape Town are a more homogeneous urban community than most elsewhere in South Africa as they are nearly all Xhosa-speaking.

A factor common to both communities is the part played by schoolchildren in initiating and heading the demonstrations. The Coloured protest was largely against apartheid in general and ~~xxx~~ in principle. The Africans protested against things like insecurity of tenure, inadequate housing, splitting of families and grievances arising from the Western Cape being declared a Colour-preference labour area. Both communities declared solidarity and sympathy with the victims of the Soweto rioting.

Both Coloured and African spokesmen allege that unnecessary police violence, interference with peaceful demonstrations and entry into school premises exacerbated resentments and contributed to disorder. African and Coloured spokesmen, school principals, community leaders, clergymen, and



page two

parents unanimously and categorically declare that they and their generation have lost all control or influence over the younger generation of school- and university-going boys and girls and young men and young women.

June/July

Principal's office at Hlargisi Primary School in Nyanga burnt out <sup>on</sup> June 24. Police riot squad move into Langa when two officials of Bantu Administration threatened by crowd. Two days later attempts to burn down the Langa post-office and the Zimosa school. Police station commander states that these incidents had nothing to do with 'politically inspired rioting after Soweto'.

During July three men and two youths charged with arson arising from the Langa post-office attempt. Bantu Education Department and Bantu Administration spokesmen describe the situation in the African townships as 'normal' and 'peaceful' and no trouble expected.

17/6. August 2. A mass meeting attended by 1 000 students of the University of the Western Cape decide to boycott classes for a week. The Rector, Dr Van der Ross, suspends lectures. 21/7

August 3. UWC students protest against 'irresponsible and hostile behaviour' of the UWC Staff Association (Whites). Ben Palmer Louw, member of the SRC, detained under security laws. Students of the University of Cape Town at a mass meeting call for 'a day of solidarity'.

August 4. Police riot squad called to the University of the Western Cape campus after continuing boycott of lectures. Demonstration by 800 students blocks Modderdam Road in front of the campus and police vehicles are stoned. Posters include 'Identify with Soweto' and 'Silence gives consent'.

August 5. Administration building at the University of the Western Cape burnt down. Damage estimated at R70 000.

August 6. Unsuccessful attempt to burn down the gymnasium at the neighbouring Hewat Training College. UWC boycott continues.

August 9. 300 UWC students attempt to persuade others to join the boycott, march on the offices and present a list of grievances to the Rector. Police riot squad moves on to the campus and is asked by the Rector to leave.



page three

The students' document begins 'Students are no longer prepared to be rational' and lists among the demands  
 equal salaries  
 an 'open' university  
 a fair trial for the detained Ben Palmer Louw  
 revision of the list of banned books  
 student representation on the Council and Senate  
 equal pay for the Xhosa lecturer

and among the grievances

payment of an 'inconvenience subsidy' to White lecturers.

(The existence of this subsidy was later denied).

After explosions, two classrooms destroyed by fire at the Goie Hoop Primary School at Bellville.

August 10. A prefabricated building, part of the Peninsula College for Advanced Technical Education (for Coloured people) near the University of the Western Cape in Bellville South, destroyed by fire.

Two unsuccessful attempts at arson at Hewat Training College in Crawford.

Students of the Representative Council of the University of Cape Town vote for an expression of solidarity with political detainees and with Black students.

August 11. During the morning police move to disperse hundreds of schoolchildren demonstrating at the Langa High School. Crowds gather <sup>AND</sup> teargas fired as stones and bottles begin to rain down. Students at schools throughout the Black townships leave their desks. Teargas used at Guguletu and Nyanga. Crowds of schoolchildren march from school to school calling on all students to join the 'peaceful protest'.

As night fell mobs went on the rampage, rioting in the streets, looting liquor outlets, burning down buildings and mobbing vehicles. Pitched battle fought between police and rioters in all three townships. By midnight 16 were reported dead and 51 serious injured.

Many buildings burnt down:  
 post-offices at Guguletu and Langa  
 single quarters block at Langa  
 six liquor outlets  
 a large hall in Guguletu  
 three shops in Guguletu and Langa  
 library in Guguletu

Rioting spreads to Philippi and mob storms into Lansdowne Road from the direction of Nyanga.



page four

August 12. Rioting, looting and confrontatin # in the township continue for a total of 36 hours. The official death roll has been put at 30 with an estimated 100 people seriously injured.

At Langa and Guguletu violence flared early in the morning as workers tried to leave for work in the City. Riot squad cars were attacked and damaged and police fired through the mesh. Schools, post-offices, shops, offices and bottle stores looted, damaged or gutted by fire. Police reinforcements flown in from the Rand. Rioters set up road-blocks to halt returning workers.

University of Cape Town students march along Klipfontein Road, Moybray, carrying banners, singing and giving the Black Power salute to passing Africans and Coloured people. 73 students arrested.

A protest march by 600 Coloured students from the Bellville Training College leads to police armed with batons and shotguns moving to the University of the Western Cape campus. Arrests after a baton charge and teargas.

UWC posters proclaim:

'Sorry Soweto'  
'Kruger is a pig'  
'The revolution is coming'.

Classrooms at Macassar Primary School at Somerset E West and a storeroom at Modderdam High School in Bonteheuwel set on fire. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Demonstration by 700 students at Esselen Park High School at Worcester.

August 13. Large sections of roads sealed off. Cost of week's rioting is estimated at R2 000 000

Ten men, including eight UWC students arrested after yesterday's baton charge in the magistrate's court under the Riotous Assemblies ACT and with arson. 23 people, including five Univerity of Cape T own students, detained for questioning under the security laws.

August 14. Five prefabricated classrooms of primary school at Kraaifontein destroyed. Municipal offices at Hanover Park housing scheme damaged.

U W C students Pieter Gelderbloem and Russel Bothman detained.

August 16. Riot squad called out when 500 students of UWC march to the Bellville Magistrate's Court where 15 students appear on various charges.

Pupils at Grassyk Park Sinton High School joined by Belgravia High School in boycott of classes.



page five

August 17. Fire damages classrooms at Arcadia High School at Bonteheuwel.

August 18. Rector of UWC threatens to close the university if campus violence flares up again.

August 19. Pupils of Gordons High School at Somerset West refuse to go to classes when refused permission to hold a prayer meeting to show sympathy with 'Blacks who have died'. Some stone-throwing.

Another eight UWC students expelled for disrupting classes.

August 22. Magistrate's order restricts to parents and close relatives attendance at the funeral in Langa of Xolile Mosi, the 18-year-old schoolboy who was one of the 30 fatalities. Police waiting when large group of schoolchildren appeared and moved towards the grave. Teargas used and the children chased away. They go to the Langa High School where more teargas used.

August 23. Pupils from Bonteheuwel's three high schools demonstrate in sympathy with people of Soweto. Dispersed by teargas.

August 24. Mobs of ~~children~~ children and adults take to the Bonteheuwel streets, stone ambulances and police vehicles and attempt to set fire to the municipal offices. Riot squad summoned and teargas used. At midnight Bonteheuwel was reported by the police to be 'in a bad state'.

In Guguletu police fire teargas and mount a baton charge after schoolchildren stone a bus. The trouble sparked off by a demonstration at Intshing Higher Primary School of sympathy in the death of a fellow pupil, Mvuseleli Tleko, aged 13.

August 25. Violence spreads from Arcadia High School in Bonteheuwel after police fire teargas to disperse hundreds of pupils demonstrating in the school grounds. Children <sup>stone</sup> police and pistols fired and teargas used. (A boy who was shot died five days later). Shopwindow smashed, shops set alight and Bonteheuwel sealed off.

Stoning, arson and violence worsen at nightfall, sounds of gun-fire heard and police spokesman describes Bonteheuwel as a 'battlefield' (slagveld). Police confirm that one person has been killed and five seriously injured. Unrest spreads through Bonteheuwel and spills into Klipfontein Road in Athlone and to the Settlers Way freeway. Motorists are injured in stoning at Vanguard Drive in Epping.



page six

Incidents of unrest at Langa and Gugulethu. Demonstrators at Idkimize High, ~~Sokanyo~~ Sokanyo Primary and Vuyani High Primary Schools dispersed with teargas.

August 26 Stoning of police vehicles and private cars continues in Bonteheuwel. Police use teargas and batons to break up large crowds throughout the township. Crowds stone cars on Vanguard Drive. Groups of youths pelt passing vehicles with bottles and large rocks from bridge across Settlers War. Area cordoned off by police ~~and~~ who open fire with bird-shot. Police open fire with shot-guns from a decoy car on Settlers Way.

Headmasters of Coloured high schools ascribe the unrest to 'extreme dissatisfaction that goes very deep' and 'to the whole apartheid system'.

Executive Committee of the Cape Town City Council given full powers to attempt to deal with the situation after councillors had condemned violence and warned 'We are set on a collision course'.

August 27. Principal of Bonteheuwel High school in a letter to parents declares that the police riot squad was not called in by the school at the demonstrations last week and appeals to the police to keep out of schools.

Students disrupt classes at the UNIVERSITY of the Western Cape.

August 28 Announced that 70 Africans who worked in liquor outlets and beerhalls destroyed in the African township rioting are to be paid off and dismissed.

August 30. Attempt to burn down the womens' hostel at the University of the Western Cape.

Students of three Bonteheuwel high schools issue a statement of their ~~grievances~~ grievances:

- the system of apartheid and Coloured education
- lack of compulsory education
- lack of sports ground facilities
- general behaviour of the police during the unrest in Black areas
- police interference with demonstrations in school grounds
- the taking into custody of fellow students
- the attitude of the White teachers on the staff
- the 'inconvenience allowance' paid to White teachers ~~is~~ seen as an insult

(The following day the headmasters of the three schools dissociated themselves from this statement, challenging the reference to White teachers as 'racialistic', paying tribute to the ~~contribution~~ contribution by White teachers and saying they know nothing of



page seven

any 'inconvenience allowance'). The Deputy Director of Coloured Education also declares that there is no such thing as an inconvenience allowance.

August 31. Shop gutted and others damaged in petrol-bomb attack in Rondebosch East.

Teargas used on large crowd of schoolchildren demonstrating in Klipfontein Road Athlone.

Protests and posters in demonstrations at Oaklands High, Lansdowne; Alexander Sinto High, Crawford; Belgravia High; and Emil Weder High at Genadendal near Caledon.

September 1. Police open fire at Athlone when stone-throwing crowd converges on a riot squad vehicle. Stone-throwing youths go on the rampage. Guns, batons and teargas used to drive off large crowds near Athlone stadium and dozens of cars stoned. Clashes between police and rioters on Klipfontein Road.

Number of reports allege indiscriminate hitting and unnecessary violence by the police.

September 2. 600 schoolchildren arrive in centre of Cape Town and start to march. Joined by a second group of 400 in Adderley Street and dispersed by riot police with batons. Teargas used in central Cape Town and thunder-flashes set off. Shops and offices close after lunch.

March by students in Athlone and Hanover Park broken up. Rioters rush Hanover Lounge in Civic Centre and begin looting. Looting and rioting in Hanover Park continue into the night.

Police open fire with shotguns on rampaging mob in Hanover Park that stoned cars, set fire to the municipal rent office, shattered shop windows. Police confirm one fatality. Two other reported deaths could not be confirmed.

Sonny Leon, leader of the Labour Party, says the violence was the result of the decision of the authorities to lock up the leaders of the people. 'The time will come when Coloured leaders will be unable to control their people'. Resentment widely expressed at the <sup>PRIME</sup> Minister's statement that there was 'no crisis'.

Police uncover 12 petrol bombs hidden in the ceiling of a hostel at the University of the Western Cape.



page eight

erupt  
 September 3. Rioting and violence ~~erupted simultaneously~~ simultaneously in White, Coloured and African areas. Police <sup>state</sup> ~~one~~ has been killed and eight injured during the day. Sandra Peters, 11-year-old girl wounded by police fire in Klipfontein Road two days ago, dies in Groote Schuur Hospital. Police reinforcements flown in from the Rand.

Police in camouflage uniforms march down Adderley Street and open fire with shot-guns on large racially mixed lunch-time crowd. A running battle in the sealed-off centre portion of the city, with mobs moving from one side to the other. Milling crowds whistle, jeer and boo the police. People in shops and offices and in the underground concourse in Strand Street are overcome by teargas. Teargas used on the Parade and in Plein and Darling streets.

Trouble spreads to Woodstock and cars on De Waal Drive stoned. Rioters in Maitland dispersed as they attempt to march on to the national road. Heavy stoning in Voortrekker Road. Teargas and baton charge at Claremont railway station and demonstrators run into Lansdowne Road.

This was one of the bloodiest days of violence in the Coloured townships.

A youth was shot dead in police action during a disturbance near the Trafalgar High School. The worst pupil-police clash was at the Alexander Sinton High School in Athlone where police twice charged the grounds to disperse the children. At Hewat Training College near by jeering students turned fire hoses on the teargas canisters. Demonstrations dispersed with force ~~also~~ at the Bishop Lavis High, the Harold Cressy High in Roeland Street. Teargas fired at a crowd of 200 at the Gordons High School at Somerset West after they had refused to leave the school grounds. At Maitland several schoolchildren hurt when police break up a march by 300 pupils of the Kensington and Windermere High Schools.

A crowded bus stopped by mob and bombarded with petrol & bombs in Grassy Park. Library in Kewtown near Athlone severely damaged by arson. Car and shop windows smashed in Athlone, Bonteheuvel and Mannenberg. More arson attempts at Hanover Civic Centre and the primary school at Heideveld.

Tension and ~~\*\*\*~~ violence at Lang^a when teargas used and buck-shot fired. In the afternoon police raced to disperse hundreds who gathered in a school at Lang^a. Arson, looting and rioting in many African areas and townships.

Administrator of the Cape says he will arrange for Coloured representatives to see the Prime Minister. The Minister



page nine

of Coloured Relations is to have an early meeting with the leaders of the Coloured community.

An African, Luke Mazwembe, one of the five detained members of the Western Cape Workers' Advice Bureau (a trade union organization) found dead in his cell. Reported that he had hanged himself.

September 4. Fire at Delta Primary School at Retreat. Arson attempts at Hanover Park High School, and Hanover Park public library. Most of the administrative block at Lavistown High School destroyed.

September 6 Sir De Villiers Graaff for the United Party, Mr Colin Eglin for the Progressive-Reform Party and Mr Sonny Leon for the Labour Party have all called for radical changes. Owen Cardinal McCann and the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town call for the abandonment of the apartheid philosophy.

A multiracial meeting of 'concerned individuals' set up an interim committee. The meeting attended by city councillors, business men, religious leaders, politicians, academics and community leaders, and representatives ~~of various~~ from the African townships, the Coloured suburbs and the Crossroads squatters camp.

Mr Sonny Leon and many others protest against 'unnecessary' and 'provocative' police violence.

Coloured schools are closed down for a ~~week~~ week.

September 7. Four men shot dead and a 'considerable' number injured in rioting and violence over wide areas of the Peninsula. Three fatalities confirmed by the police.

In the Coloured area of Ravensmead in Tiervlei police open fire with shotguns, rifles and service revolvers. Roadblocks of blazing tyres set up by rioters. Violence and rioting reported from Athlone, Crawford, ~~at~~ Heideveld, Kommetjie, Stellenbosch, Guguletu, District Six and Woodstock.

Shotgun fire and teargas used in centre of Cape Town to clear the crowds that thronged the city streets. Milling, jeering crowds surround the riot police who pursue demonstrators from Plein Street to the Castle and from Adderley Street down Darling Street. Police cordon off the Grand Parade. The Black section of the Cape Town railway station sealed off.



page ten

Cars stoned outside Guguletu and in Crawford and Athlone. Rioting children from Cloetesville township outside Stellenbosch dispersed as they try to march up the main street of Stellenbosch. Arson attempts at Gordon High School at Somerset West. Motorists stoned at Hewat Training College and birdshot fired at children who marched from Heideveld to Guguletu.

100 students at University of Western Cape hurl stones through windows of lecture rooms. Students of the South Peninsula High School at Diep River express 'solidarity' with other Black students.

The Athlone Principals' Association, representing 50 schools, issues a statement calling on the police to 'act with restraint when dealing with schoolchildren' and on the authorities to release or to try detainees.

Victor Norton

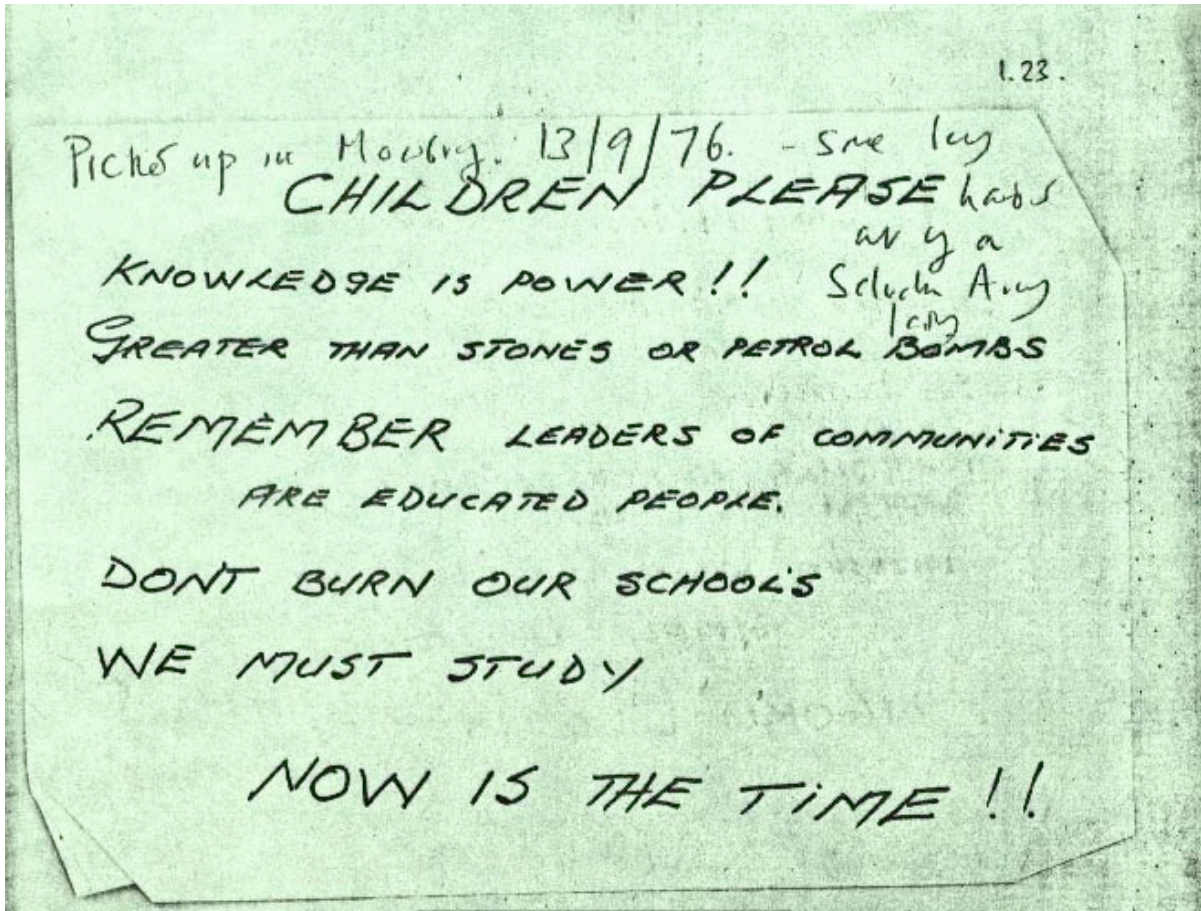
Cape Town  
September 8 1976



## Appendices

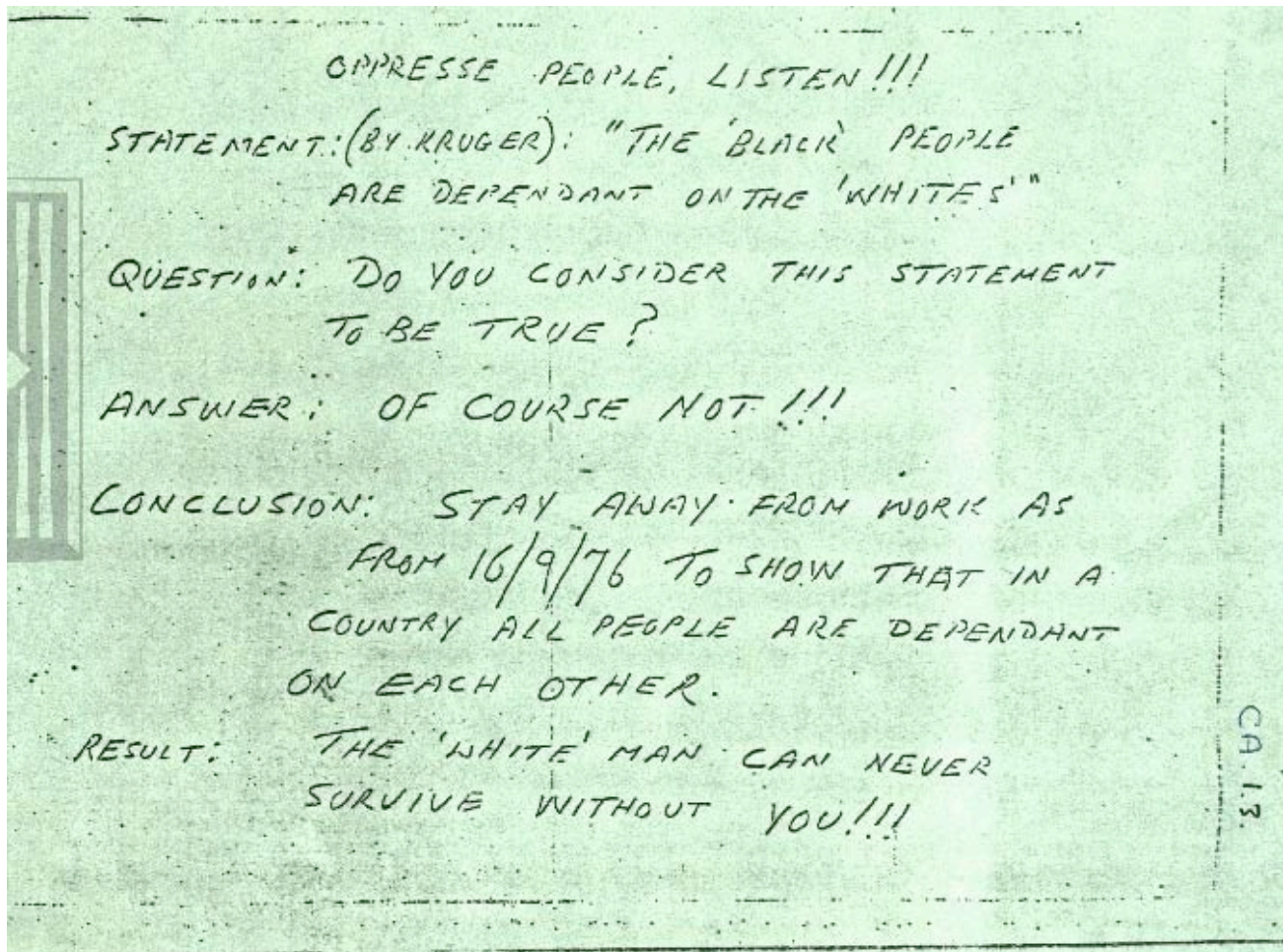
### Appendix 1

Borthwick Institute of Archives: CSAS/CA 1.23 *Children Please* (13.09.76)



**Appendix 2**

Borthwick Institute of Archives: CSAS/CA 1.3 *Oppressed People, Listen!!!*  
(1976)



OPPRESSE PEOPLE, LISTEN!!!

STATEMENT: (BY KRUGER): "THE 'BLACK' PEOPLE  
ARE DEPENDANT ON THE 'WHITES'"

QUESTION: DO YOU CONSIDER THIS STATEMENT  
TO BE TRUE?

ANSWER: OF COURSE NOT!!!

CONCLUSION: STAY AWAY FROM WORK AS  
FROM 16/9/76 TO SHOW THAT IN A  
COUNTRY ALL PEOPLE ARE DEPENDANT  
ON EACH OTHER.

RESULT: THE 'WHITE' MAN CAN NEVER  
SURVIVE WITHOUT YOU!!!

CA. 1.3.

**Appendix 3**

Borthwick Institute of Archives: CSAS/CA 10.42 *Mr M Shain is an English Speaking South African* (Tuesday 7th September 1976)

Returning from D F Malan airport at approx 9.45pm, I was confronted by a group of black or coloured (difficult to be sure) males who ran into the road and pelted my car with stones of various sizes. I accelerated only to confront another group about a mile from the original incident. Once again my car was showered with stones. No windows were hit which was remarkable considering each group was made up of at least ten people who certainly did not give the impression that they were only aiming for the chassis. Judging by the damage done to the car some of the stones must have been small while at least one caused a dent which may have been the result of a brick. As far the strategy of the stonethrowers was concerned, they did not make use of the island (by a two-sided attack) dividing the dual carriageway to the airport and only threw from the passenger seat side.

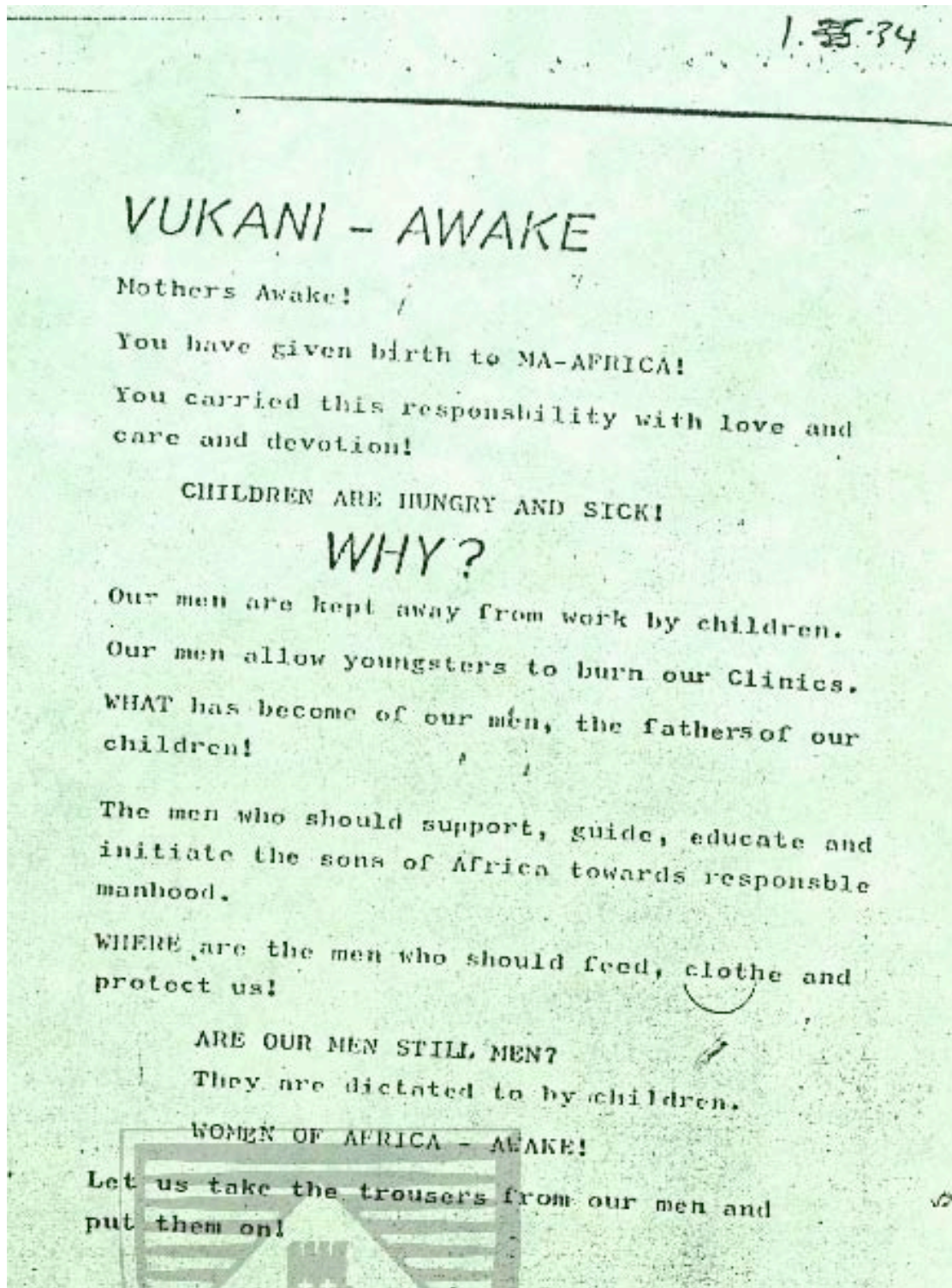


## Appendix 4

The Cape Times, *Workers Face Riot Dilemma* (11.09.76)

**Appendix 5**

Borthwick Institute of Archives: CSAS/CA 1.34 *Vukani - Awake* (1976)

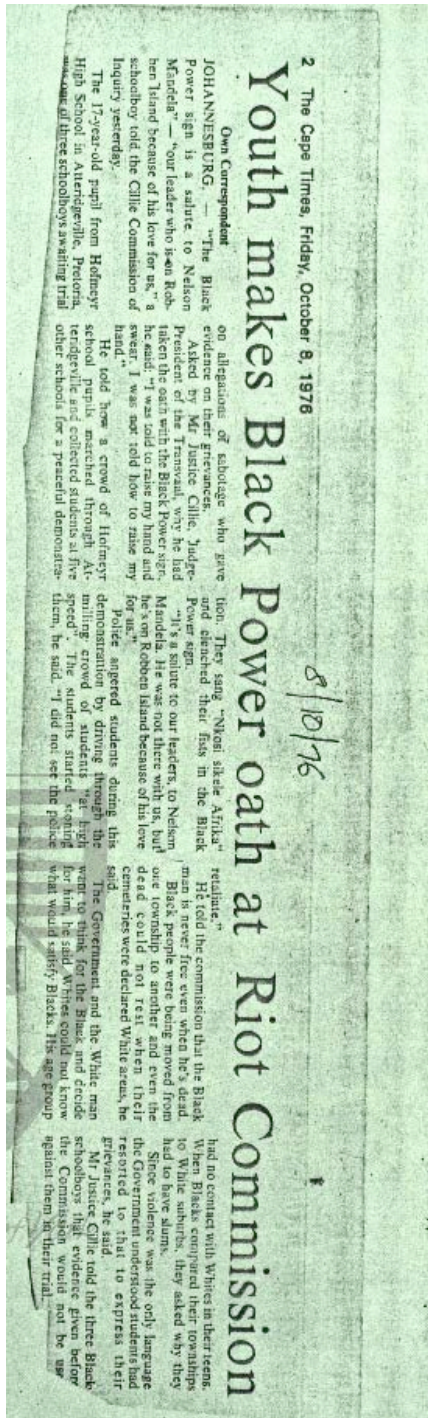




Appendix 6

The Cape Times, Youth Makes Black Power Oath at Riot Commission (Friday 8th October 1976)

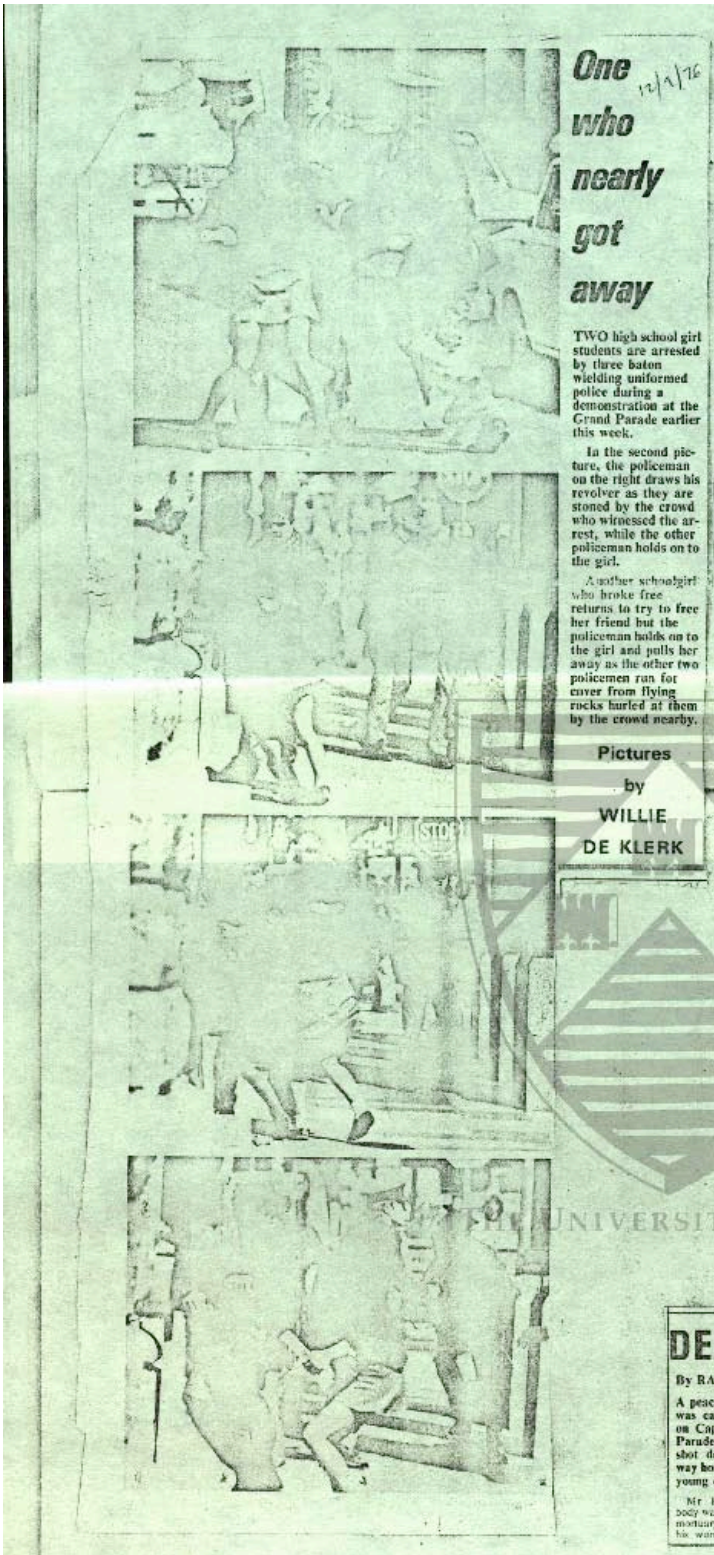
2





**Appendix 7**

The Cape Times, *One Who Nearly Got Away* (September 12th 1976)



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