

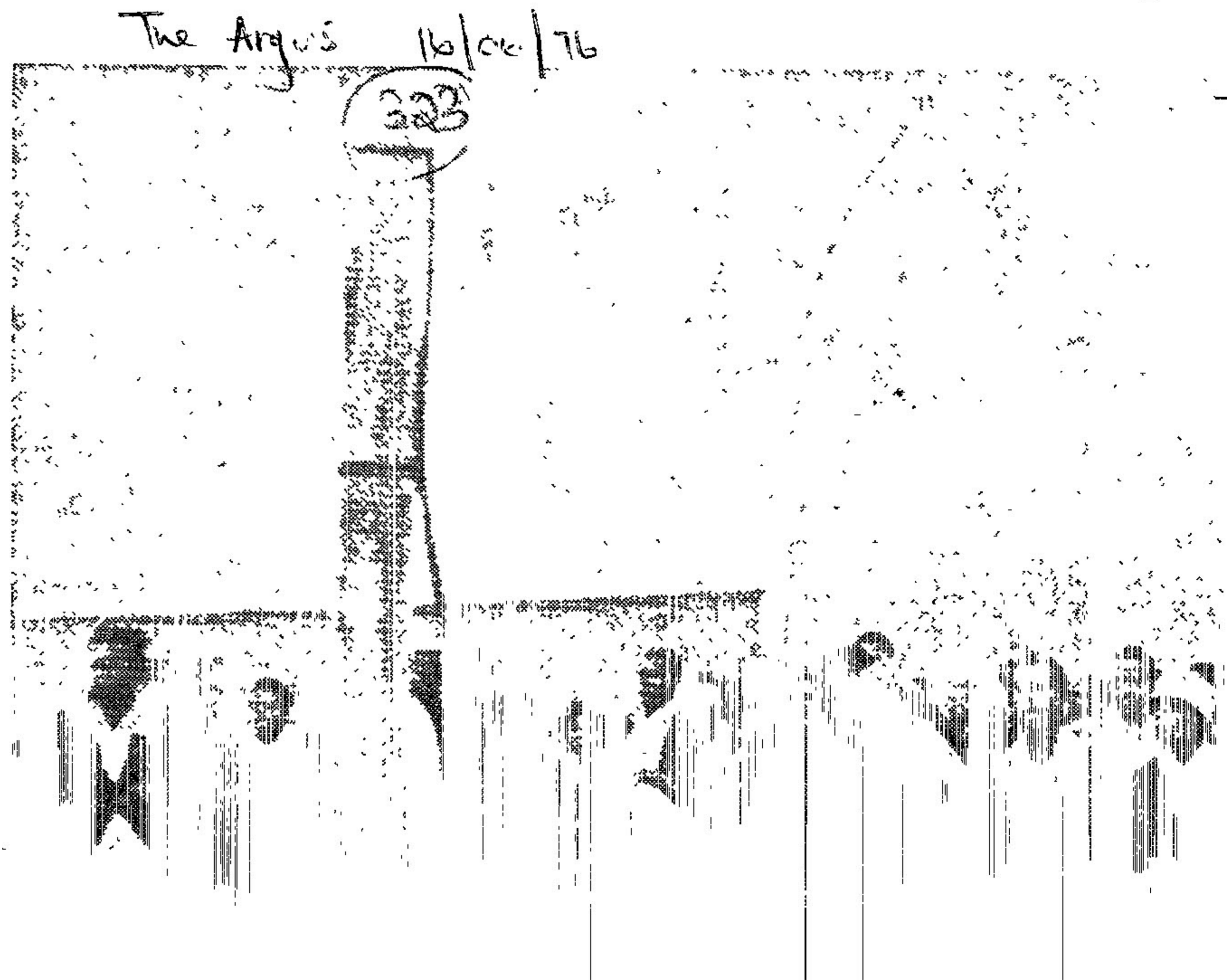
'Situation is very bad' says chief

SOWETO PUPILS — SIX DEAD

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — At least six people — including one White — are reported dead and at least 17 injured in a riot in Soweto today following a demonstration by more than 10 000 Soweto high school pupils against the use of Afrikaans in the schools.

About 300 armed police equipped with teargas fired into the air when the rampaging pupils congregated around the Phefeni Junior Secondary School in Orlando West, Soweto, early today.



Soweto riots

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A high police official said the situation was 'very bad'. The railways halted train services to Soweto this afternoon. The known dead are a young child, an old man, a Black policeman and, reportedly, a White employee of the West Rand administration board, who was dragged from his car.

According to reports, a White motorist was dragged from his car by rioting pupils and stabbed to death. Another White in a car was assaulted before escaping.

All available police in the Soweto area, and a large number of reinforcements from Johannesburg police, including the flying squad, have been sent to Soweto.

Very bad

Brigadier R. le Roux, who is directing operations in Soweto, said the situation was 'very bad. Everything is in such an upheaval here, I don't really know what is going on.'

He was unable to confirm reports of people killed, but said houses, cars and other property were being burnt and stoned.

The police are equipped with teargas and firearms, although Brigadier le Roux denied that they had machine guns, or similar weapons.

Injured

Several police have apparently been injured in the rioting, but the extent of injuries is not known.

A group of about 100 or more schoolchildren were standing on a rocky ridge overlooking Orlando High School at 12.15 pm and were reported to be refusing to give up the bodies of at least two dead killed earlier in the day.

Ambulances and fire brigades in Johannesburg have been put on standby, ready to be called to Soweto.

A spokesman for the Johannesburg ambulance department said their ambulances

ambulances for Africans had already been sent out.

At least four cars belonging either to police or West Rand administration board officials are reported to have been burnt and many of the police vehicles in the area of the riot had broken wind-screens and windows.

Policeman held

Some of the students were reported to have captured a policeman who they were using as a hostage to bargain with the police, who, before mid-day withdrew from the immediate riot area.

The riot started early today when high school pupils began congregating at several points in Soweto to march on Phefeni Junior Secondary School focus of the protest by Soweto pupils against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in school.

The White motorist reported to have been dragged from his car by rioting pupils and stabbed to death was said to be an employee of the West Rand Administration Board. His body was still seen lying on the side of the road some time later.

Black smoke

Thick black smoke was blowing over Orlando from a van which was reportedly overturned and burnt by the angry crowd.

Facing Orlando high across the Klipspruit a detachment of police with riot sticks and basket work shields were marshalling to go into the troubled area.

About 2 km away at Orlando police station a platoon of men in army fatigue uniforms, carrying teargas canisters and stenguns, marched off down the hill to reinforce those at the Klipspruit.

Brigadier le Roux, Divisional Commissioner of Police ordered the Press to leave Orlando immediately and said he had 'no information'.

Road blocks

Meanwhile officials of the Johannesburg Traffic Department were setting up roadblocks all around the township after being instructed, by the brigadier to stop all Whites entering Orlando.

Most of the 800 pupils at Phefeni Junior Secondary School are in the fifth week of their boycott of classes as a demonstration of their refusal to study through Afrikaans.

The march of several thousand pupils from Naledi on the west of Soweto started peacefully, although the mood of the marchers was very tense.

two policemen and at least 17 Africans to hospital.

Mobs in Soweto have also apparently got hold of one of the Johannesburg fire engines. It is not yet known where it is.

The South African Railways police have sent reinforcements to the scene. They are heavily guarding railway property and assisting the SAP.

Two members of The Star's editorial had frightening experiences.

Photographer Alf Chapman saw a mass of pupils approaching his car. He got out of the vehicle to take photographs.

'Suddenly I realised they were in an ugly mood. As they ran towards me I grabbed a quick shot and drove off just in time.'

Reporter Harry Mashabela was telephoning the office from the house of Dr Aaron Mathlare, head of the Parents Action Committee set up to help to solve the language crisis.

House burning

As he was describing the scene he shouted into the telephone: 'They are burning the house down. I have to go.'

He left the receiver dangling, and shouts and cries could be heard at the other end. Later he reported back that a car belonging to The World parked outside had been set alight, and the flames had spread into the yard of the house. The car was damaged but not destroyed.

Trouble appeared to centre on an area of about 1 km square with the Orlando High School at the centre. This is overlooked by a rock ridge where a motionless crowd stood watching police reinforcements arriving across the valley.

The roadblock near the main road bridge crossing the Klipspruit was being manned by Black uniformed township police, and by Whites in military camouflage-type fatigue outfits.

According to eyewitnesses leaving the troubled area, the mood of the crowd who were ranging the streets was ugly.

● In Parliament today, news of the riots triggered urgent efforts to have the matter raised in debate. Questions seeking information on the riots were believed likely to be asked in the Assembly this afternoon and a call for a snap debate tomorrow was expected. Notice of intention to hold a snap debate was expected this afternoon.

Ministers were at a Cabinet meeting today and

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