

THE STRUGGLE HISTORY – FROM THE 1950s

Introduction

The Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 and began implementing their policy of apartheid. Opposition to the measures were unceasing for the next 40 years and many lost their lives during the struggle. The existence of excellent educational institutions such as Lovedale, St Matthews, Healdtown etc meant that many black people were highly educated and it is no surprise that most of the leaders of the struggle were from the Eastern Cape, including the former Transkei. The Eastern Cape had been a frontier zone since 1810, so the black peoples inherited a tradition of fighting for their rights.

Sites suggested

Fort Glamorgan Prison, Lock Street gaol, Massacres – Bisho, Egerton and Duncan Village Memorials, Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge's graves, Steve Biko's house, grave and statue, Steve Tshwete's grave. The Tour of the Dove.

FORT GLAMORGAN PRISON:

Many activists were imprisoned here, some prior to being sent to Robben Island.

Location

Entrance is off the road into West Bank.

Access

Arrangements would have to be made with the Area Commander, Correctional Services.

LOCK STREET GAOL

This complex was built in 1880 and closed in 1880. It was a women's prison during the struggle years and many women activists were held there, including Winnie Madikizela Mandela. It is a shopping complex at present.

Description

A high stone wall surrounds the building complex, with the original administrative building forming one part of it. This is a very fine building, Georgian in design. Renovations were done in 1981, and some of the original cells have been retained. The old gallows block has been restored and there is a brief history of the gaol on display there. The two central cell blocks and the old kitchen have been turned into small shops.

Location

Lock Street off Fleet Street.

Access

Free with good parking.

Recommendations

Cells of well-known activists should be marked.

BISHO MASSACRE:

A march by people demanding that the Ciskei 'Homeland' be abolished was intercepted by a combined unit of Ciskei and SADF soldiers, who fired on the crowd and killed 28. This signalled the end of the Ciskei.

Location

There is a memorial situated next to the Bisho Stadium.

Access

Free

EGERTON MASSACRE:

The Ciskei Police and the Mdantsane residents clashed during the bus boycotts in 1983. The police tried to prevent people from using trains, taxis and private transport and widespread unrest resulted. Arrests were made and 11 were killed.

Location

A monument has been erected at Egerton Station, Zone 9, Mdantsane.

Access

This is fenced and locked. The key is available from a shack owner, who lives next door.

DUNCAN VILLAGE MASSACRE:

A public meeting was held in Duncan Village in 1987, with Steve Tshwete as guest speaker. This was declared an illegal gathering and the SA Police fired on the crowd, killing 28 people.

Location

A monument is situated at the bridge near Duncan Village cemetery.

STEVE BIKO:

One of the most famous figures of the Struggle, was Steve Biko. He became a leader of the Black Consciousness Movement and was instrumental in raising awareness of injustices and promoting a sense of pride in themselves among Blacks. He addressed meetings and travelled extensively sharing his ideas. A book of his work was published. Inevitably he came up against the Government and was banned. He was arrested and killed while in detention in 1977. He came from Ginsberg Location near King Williams Town. The Steve Biko Foundation has been established.

STEVE BIKO'S GRAVE:

This is situated in the King William's Town cemetery, next to the Garden of Remembrance.

STEVE BIKO'S HOME:

Situated in Ginsberg. This has been proposed to be a National Heritage site. His office was in an old church, 15 Leopold Street, King Williams Town.

STEVE BIKO'S STATUE:

This stands in front of the City Hall, East London.

The bridge over the Buffalo River in East London has been named the **STEVE BIKO BRIDGE**.

STEVE TSHWETE'S GRAVE:

Steve Tshwete was a well known activist during the Struggle. He was Head Boy of Welsh High School, East London and imprisoned on Robben Island for some years. When released, he went into exile, returning after the release of Mandela. He had a very successful career in government and at his death was Minister of Safety and Security.

He died in 2002 and his grave is at Peelton Mission. The unveiling of his memorial stone will take place later this year.

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE.

GRIFFITHS AND VICTORIA MXENGE'S GRAVES:

Location: Rhayi Location, near Ginsberg.

THE TOUR OF THE DOVE:

A group of Veterans of the Struggle have planned a tour of the sites relevant to the struggle. They also include interviews with the veterans themselves and visits to homes of people in Mdantsane.

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