

Black Power—Students Forced to Leave Meeting

Four students of UND walked out of a student body meeting at Alan Taylor Residence last Thursday. The tension had been apparent from the moment they entered the Students' Common Room.

The students, Halton Cheadle (NUSAS) Local Chairman, Dave Hemson, Jennifer Brown and Veronica Vorster were greeted at the door by a 'Hello Baas, Hello Missus!' Instead of standing at the back of the room, the students took a seat, but their presence evidently caused great suspicion.

The meeting began without further antagonism, but during the discussion of SASO (South African Student Organization) queries were increasingly made about the 'foreigners', 'strangers' or 'intruders' at the meeting.

'This meeting is called to discuss the formation of SASO, which is a non-white body, and yet we have intruders here. Who invited them?', asked one student.

Mr. Mokono again repeated his ironical 'Baas' in reference to the white students and laughed. He was immediately called to order by the Chairman, SRC President, Ben Ngubane, who had arrived by this time.

Mr. Ngubane demanded that Mokono leave the meeting, which he refused to do. Mr. Ngubane then insisted he had no rights at the meeting, and that he could not participate further.

Many African students reacted vehemently to the ruling, and disruptions continued to rock the meeting.

'Mr. Chairman, Point of Order.'

'Yes.'

'You are out of order!' (General laughter and further objections).

After a lengthy discussion of the duty of the President to introduce visitors, the white students were allowed to introduce themselves. 'Will all

Caucasians stand up?' asked Mr. Ngubane. This they did and introduced themselves and were listened to in silence. A tape-recorder was discovered at the back of the hall. Despite the fact that a woman student claimed the tape-recorder back, it was placed on the table, and the Chairman said he would confiscate any tape.

This still did not satisfy the African students who mainly stood at the back of the hall. One student linked the presence of the tape-recorder and the white students, and mentioned the Security Branch.

'Let's go; we have to go.' The whites left amongst sporadic clapping.

The students were invited to have tea at one student's room, and stayed as the tension lapsed.

CHEADLE: 'I felt we should have stayed and countered the objections raised by our presence, and confront their racialism. I think that the tension at the meeting is a result of the emergence of a new black consciousness.'

HEMSON: 'We had to leave the meeting, as it was obvious discussion could not continue if we stayed. It was a very frustrating experience to be discussed as a stranger and foreigner, and not to be able to reply. The atmosphere of nihilism and rage directed at us as symbols of white oppression, was explicable but misplaced.'

VERONICA VORSTER: 'As one of the U.N.D. students at the U.N.N.E Student Body Meeting, I was shocked by the hostility of the students, many of whom I consider as friends. There were loud objections to the presence of members of the 'Special Branch.'

SASO and other affairs

At a student body meeting of UNNE students, the most important topic was not discussed. SASO, a non-white student organization, was mentioned, but no decision about its future was made.

The President, Mr. Ben Ngubane, was absent at the beginning of the meeting, which produced an atmosphere of disorder that prevailed that evening.

The student body discovered that the SRC had failed to bring the minutes of the meeting in December that had sanctioned the Marianhill Conference to discuss non-White Union. The dissidents maneuvered, and produced a motion to abandon the debate until the SRC was competent enough to produce the minutes of that meeting.

SASO is potentially, a non-white equivalent of NUSAS. The National Union has over the last few years been

charged with taking no interest in non-white students; that NUSAS has constantly espoused multiracialism, but never taken an effective stand on racialism.

It was proposed at a caucus of non-white students at the UCM (University Christian Movement) conference at Stutterheim, that a conference take place to discuss the desirability of a black student union.

The Marianhill conference, which was ill-attended, came forward with the idea of SASO. A committee has already drafted a constitution which was to be discussed that night.

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Whites walk out

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First of all there was an attempt to evade the issue on the grounds that it was poorly attended an unrepresentative. It was discovered that Bellville, the Coloured University College had withdrawn, since the Rector had barred the delegation from attending.

Salisbury Island students nominated nobody, since they have no student organization whatever, Fort Hare had only produced one man for whom UNNE paid.

Miss Mashabla, the Vice-President of the UNNE SRC, replying to a question on Indian representation said: 'Yes, there was Mr. Abrams, and he's an Indian'.

One student protested against the racial implications of the questions.

'Let us not make distinctions within the non-European section: we are non-Whites, whether Indian, Coloured, or African.

The absence of the minutes meant the SASO issue was not able to be discussed. When the SRC President, delayed by a dinner engagement, arrived only to find the student body meeting in a state of disruption, he had trouble in enforcing order.

His frequent rulings from the Chair were challenged on the grounds of partiality.

A subject which caused anger, was the exclusion of African students by Shiraz's Cinema. The cinema had claimed it is illegal to allow African students in, but this was refuted by many speakers.

It was decided if UNNE was to take part in Rag, it must have equal status with UND and UNP. In the past

there were complaints of inequality and these were repeated; one student censured UND Rag Committee for implicitly alleging that UNNE students stole money.

'It would be too embarrassing for UNNE if the allegations were proved to be true', said Mr. Steve Biko.

DOME contacted Mr. Ben Ngubane after the meeting.

'It was my feeling that one segment of opinion was very anti-NUSAS, and they saw the visitors as representing NUSAS, and the SRC as lackeys of NUSAS', he said.

'Students shouted "Kick out the SRC, kick out NUSAS —Most of the students were terribly disappointed by the intolerance of this segment and I am quite sure this is not the general feeling.'

'The opposition to SASO was claimed to be on a technical point. It seems to me that the basic opposition was because most of the students attending the Marianhill Conference were active in NUSAS'.

'One student even claimed that SASO had been infiltrated by NUSAS'.

Mr. Mike MacNab, Rag Chairman, said that there had been a discrepancy of R300 last year, from student at UNNE.

'This year the matter of control will be remedied by handing over the administration of Rag fund-raising to the UNNE Rag Committee as was suggested at the meeting'.

THE ORGANISATION

Some students have not heard about the third section of our University. UNNE (University of Natal, Non-European) is composed, now almost completely of Medical students, after the Minister has refused to allow non-white students to study at the University of Natal and at other white universities. Many of the students stay at Alan Taylor Residence at Wentworth, opposite the oil Refinery.

POWER SURVEY#1

Relations between UND, UNP and UNNE have been strained over conflicts on Rag organization, but more spectacularly after non-White students had been excluded from the Graduation Ball last year. The SRC President last year, Mr. John Mosendane, was not allowed to sit with other SRC Presidents at a Conference photograph sitting. The present SRC President, Mr. Ben Ngubane, has been insulted at a student body meeting at UND when he observed the proceedings. Reaction against white students has never been greater, and DOME will be publishing a survey of black power movements in the next edition.

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