

IN THE NAME OF UNITY

We of the Society of Young Africa, who are part of the All African Convention and the Non European Unity Movement, are taking this opportunity to inform you of the tragic and sorry incident which took place at the Ohlange Institute. The Authorities of this Institute have done everything in their power to muffle the news of this incident. It now becomes our duty, in the interests of true education and unity, to let you know that there was a clash between students based on tribal lines and to give you an understanding of the implications of this clash,

On Monday the 14th May 1956, a certain section of tribalistic minded students launched an attack on a group of students who did not belong to the tribe of the former. The fighting raged from 11:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. The attacked had to seek refuge in the bushes.

We agree that it is not a nice thing for students to fight amongst themselves. But the scandalous part of the whole affair is that the Authorities knew of the impending clash. How else can we explain the fact that before the incident some teachers moved with their wives and children a safe distance away from the expected scene of trouble? How else can we explain the fact that the Principal, Dr. Mtimkulu, also found it convenient to absent himself from the Institute during the fight and returned with the police at 2 a.m.?

The Authorities, grossly neglectful in preventing this outbreak have now been lax in dealing with the matter. The atmosphere for some students has become unbearable that a few have already left for their homes in the Transvaal and others are on the point of leaving.

It is of importance to know as to why should there be such a fight between those who call themselves "Zulu Students" and those who are regarded as foreigners. In our opinion, the initial reason i.e. the suspension of the son of a Zulu Chief was but a spark that set the whole fire. The real reason is that Ohlange has been a hot-bed of tribalism where every "Non Zulu" African was looked upon as a stranger.

The English section of the rulers, long before the Bantu Authorities Act have been building up the myth of the "Zulu Nation". Their intention was to wrench Zulus away from the rest of the Africans and to turn them against those who are striving for the liberation of the oppressed people. Likewise at the Ohlange Institute the Zulu Students are made to feel proud, different and even arrogant. This ugly head of tribalism has also spread to other institutions and even at Fort Hare we have "The Sons of the Zulu Nation".

The Ohlange Institute has been used to poison the minds of the youth and the intellectuals. The Rulers appointed the late Dr. Dube as the first principal of Ohlange; the same Dr. Dube who disrupted the unity of the Africans by withdrawing Natal from the All African Convention on in the late 1930s. It was the same disease of tribalism that got rid of a "non Zulu" head teacher because that teacher was not a Zulu. Things did not stop there. Early this year there was a row between girls on a tribal basis. And now this recent clash. We ask - Where will this monster of tribalism end?

We point an accusing finger not only at the Authorities but also to the Natal African Teachers Union. This organisation has been so steeped in collaboration with the government, so bent in leading deputations to Verwoerd, that it has done nothing to educate the teachers that the Bantu Education Act means tribal division in education. In fact it continues to tolerate Dr Mtimkulu as its President when he shamelessly declares that he SEES GOOD POINTS in the Bantu Education Act! On the other hand we have the case of the members of the Cape African Teachers Association who for educating the teachers against the Bantu Education Act and taking a firm stand against tribalism have met with the wrath of the Rulers. They withstood the onslaught like brave fighters.

Equal responsibilities of the clash must be placed on the doorsteps of the Congresses. The African National Congress and its Youth League, far from fighting Verwoerd's poison of racialism have allowed their ranks to be riddled with racialists and tribalists. "Africanists", i.e. tribalists are to be found occupying important official positions in the African National Congress Youth League. They, far from spreading the healthy ideas of unity are bringing about nothing but division.

We, of the Society of Young Africa who stand for the policy of principled unity of the oppressed and who are struggling for nothing less than the Full Franchise, warn the people that this tragic incident will not be the last. As long as we have within our ranks people who see good points in the Bantu Education Act, people who fanatically follow the slogan "Africa for the Africans", people who proudly declare themselves the "Sons of the Zulu Nation" etc, so long will this monster of tribalism thrive and flourish.

Let this incident serve as a warning to us so that we may be forever vigilant against this vicious tribal mentality.

To the Students of the Ohlange Institute we say - By your action you have made the heart of Verwoerd happy; but you have filled with sorrow the hearts of all true democrats. IN THE NAME OF UNITY we appeal to you to put an end to this bickering. You have every reason in the world to be firmly united for you suffer a common oppression. Allow nothing or nobody to divide you for you are brothers. Clasp the hands of your fellow students and you will make the people happy. You are bound together by the greatest common ties that exist - the struggle for the happiness of the oppressed millions.

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