What Price Unity?

SWAPO

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Unity is the great slogan in Africa today. It has given birth to the epoch Addis Ababa Conference which resulted in the Organisation of African Unity. Greater things are still to come. The remaining walls of white supremacy in Southern Africa will soon be smashed. And colonialism will be a thing of the ugly past.

It is small wonder, then, that there are strong urgings from many quarters that African freedom fighters, particularly those still in the thick of the struggle, must come together. This, without question, is essential. There is precious little time to lose. And to face formidable foes in the form of Verwoerd, Salazar and Smith, victory would be elusive if there are dissensions and eternal squabbling within the African front.

But one must draw a line. Unity must never be for the sake of the word. There must never be false fronts, shrouded in deceit and opportunism. Just imagine the course of Ghana, and Africa for that matter, if Kwame Nkrumah had made ‘fronts’ with those pseudo-intellectuals during Ghana’s most trying days. But Dr Nkrumah was wise. He forged ahead against violent odds, and Ghana’s victory became Africa’s.

Zambia would still be in the revolting grip of Welensky’s Federation if Kaunda and his men did not take their people out of the African National Congress morass. It would have been lunacy to form a united front with Nkumbula’s despotism.

Roberto Holden has firmly resisted diluting the struggle of the Angolan people with dissenting rabble, consequently the revolutionary forces are moving from strength to strength.

Examples of this type are unending in the recent history of the African struggle, and we have drawn fruitful lessons from them.

We in SWAPO, after a long and careful assessment of the situation in our country, have come to the definite conclusion that all alternatives to an early liberation from the wretched South African administration are closed. We are now irrevocably committed to a course of armed revolution. And to a movement firmly dedicated to this path, a united front with tribal groupings, non-existent parties and collaborators could be nothing but sacrilege. We are
determined to resist any blackmail or aid conditions which would make us succumb to a unity in pawn for what we hold dear.

Open Letter to the ISC
Emil Appolus

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The letter was addressed to the International Students Conference and signed by the SWAPO Chief Publicity and Information Secretary.

Thank you very much for the interest you have shown towards the situation in South West Africa. Your South West Africa Report submitted to the 11th International Conference, Christchurch, New Zealand, is another indication that this interest continues.

I must, however, draw your attention to one of the things that came to our notice when we read the mimeographed version of the above-mentioned Report. In the chapter dealing with political organizations the Report asserts that SWAPO accused SWANU of pro-Eastern tendencies.

But nowhere in any written or verbal statements made by SWAPO leadership at home or abroad can we find a record or trace of an ‘accusation’, even implied of this type. We therefore reached the conclusion that your contention that we have labelled SWANU as ‘pro-Eastern’ (we can only deduce that this phrase means ‘pro-Communist’) is decidedly false and misleading.

We shall be grateful if, then, for the sake of accuracy and principle, you produce concrete evidence that this particular assertion in your Report in fact emanated from SWAPO. Failing which, it then, in our view, would be your honourable duty to give this rebuttal the same wide public circulation and distribution the South West Africa Report of the ISC of June 22nd/July 1st, 1964, enjoys.

We must also, in very brief, set the record straight on ‘bitter’ relations between SWAPO and SWANU mentioned in the same Report. We in SWAPO recognise, without condoning, that in some instances of political awakening in any one people, the unfortunate tendencies of proliferation of ‘parties’ rears its head. Some of these ‘parties’ are still-born; some are unable to attain any significant mass-following. Others are only founded to further the narrow ambitions of their leaders. It cannot, however, be said that all of them are not well-intentioned for the furtherance of the independence cause.

In recent years we have witnessed the appearance of names like SWANIO, VOLKSWA, SWANU, UNIPP, NUDO, Chief Councils, Baster Road, etc., on the South West African political scene. But I must at once very categorically state that SWAPO harbours no bitterness towards any one of these minority groupings and factions. Our basic belief has been, and will always remain that