

South Africa: “This week we affirmed we are an African university” - “A commitment to free education now”

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Communiqué issued by students of the campus of Wits, Johannesburg

The government has addressed 0%. Let it be known that we are not satisfied with this. We are still waiting to be addressed on ending outsourcing at universities and on free education. There is a reason why we took a decision not to go up to the meeting with the president yesterday; because these issues are non negotiable; they are critical in taking back, frankly reclaiming and decolonizing our universities which are microcosms of society. Our demands were very clear, there was no reason to discuss them over tea!

Comrades for too long we have allowed a system that perpetually excludes the poorest of the poor from the gates of higher learning. For too long we have allowed lilly white councils to mercilessly dictate how we should live, how we should eat, how we should study and what we should study.

Comrades for too long we have allowed untransformed curricula and untransformed academia, we have allowed our universities to be run like those in New York and London. This week we affirmed we are an African university. Through the national shutdowns, the march to Luthuli House, the shut down of parliament in Cape Town, we have proven we are ready to truly reclaim our country and make history. 0% is not a victory without a commitment to free education now.

Comrades we have neglected our mothers and fathers being abused at the hands of outsourced companies on our watch on our campus under our gaze. Every single day Mam Deliwe, Mam Zodwa, and Comrade Matthews and many others stood firmly with us against fee increases, what do we do for them? For too long young people in our country have been marginalized and abused for being born poor. Amilcar Cabral said tell no lies and claim no easy victories. There will be many who will say this victory belongs to them, but no, this victory belongs to the students and no one else. Especially not those who sat in that meeting with the president!

Comrades when we started on Wednesday last week we were called barbarians and worse we were threatened with guns and knives and tear gas, we were told to back to the zoo, we were mowed over by privileged white students in their cars and the university cared more about those cars than the students who were driven into.

It must never be forgotten that it was us as students who remained resolute and determined in our commitment to free education. It is not just for us or for next year, it is a legacy for generations to come.

Comrades when the police came to meet us on the picket lines we must never forget they were just taking orders, we are fighting for their children too!

Comrades you can't drive a knife into a man's back 9 inches- take it out 6 inches and then call it progress. These are the words of Malcom X and this exactly how our universities operate. They have

been systematically stabbing us for far too long.

Today at 12pm in Solomon House we meet to re strategize. Aluta Continua!
