

BIG-SCALE A.N.C. SPLIT

Armed clash at hall narrowly averted

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STAFF REPORTER

SAND DAILY MAIL

AFTER tense and angry scenes that threatened at any moment to break out into open violence, a section of the African National Congress, known as "the Africanists," yesterday broke away from the parent body to start what they called "a political battle against White domination."

For several hours on Saturday and again yesterday, while the annual congress of the Transvaal African National Congress was in progress at Orlando, outside Johannesburg, efforts were made by the Africanists to take over the leadership.

Both factions included men armed with heavy sticks and other weapons.

The Africanists, whose slogan is: "Africa for the Africans," have been outspoken opponents of the A.N.C. leadership policy of multi-racialism, and have also opposed the Freedom Charter.

They have claimed that nationalism is the only way to unite the African people. They have consistently rejected co-operation with other racial groups.

In a letter addressed to the chairman of the conference, the Africanists stated:

"Ours is a political battle aimed at White domination. We are not a para-military clique engaged in the murder of fellow-Africans."

WAITED FOR

VIOLENCE

"We have come to the parting of the ways. We are launching out on our own as the custodians of A.N.C. policy as formulated originally and pursued up to the time of the Congress alliances."

Throughout the two-day conference, the atmosphere was tense. Delegates openly stated their anticipation of violence. Everybody waited for an all-out clash.

On Saturday, the Africanists attended in strength. Over 100 supporters sat and stood in a group. Many of them carried heavy sticks and batons.

A speech by one of their members was the signal for them to stamp their feet and to scream: "Africa!"

Yesterday, however, the tables were turned. Overnight, the leadership had organized their own supporters.

GUARDS AT

THE DOORS

In the morning a group of about 150 men gathered behind the hall. They all carried weapons of one kind or another. Some had sticks, others truncheons. A few had lengths of iron.

Armed guards were posted at all the doors of the hall. No one except delegates was allowed to enter.

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