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PRESS STATEMENT

O.R.T 106

ISSUED BY THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF  
THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

6/5/55

The Executive Committee of the Fort Hare University College, having found that there is an "influential caucus" within the student body, has decided, as a first step, to take disciplinary action against all the students by sending them to their respective homes with the intention thereafter of inviting them to apply individually for re-admission. It can safely be assured that when applications are considered, some of the applicants will be refused re-admission.

The College authorities have thus adopted a procedure which will enable them to expel students without laying any particular charge against them, and without bringing any evidence of misconduct on the part of any student. The inference is in fact inescapable that this procedure is expressly intended to deny the individual student the opportunity of proving his innocence and protecting his good name and reputation.

This method of sentencing without a trial has been resorted to by unscrupulous rulers in this country as a political expedient aimed at suppressing freedom of expression and victimising outspoken and effective critics of a despotic and unpopular policy. The use of such a method by an educational institution vested with the status of a university must unavoidably shock the conscience of a right-minded public and will do incalculable harm to the prestige of Fort Hare as a university college, unless the College authorities take immediate steps to demonstrate and re-affirm their belief in the universally accepted principles of natural justice which it is the traditional duty and task of every university to uphold.

The Working Committee of the African National Congress accordingly calls upon the Governing Council of the College to re-admit unconditionally all the dismissed students, and if, as is claimed, there is any evidence <sup>of</sup> indiscipline or misconduct on the part of any student or group of students, to set the recognised disciplinary/.....

disciplinary machinery of the College in motion and take appropriate action against proved offenders.

While the temporary expulsion of nearly 400 students has the effect of saving the College hundreds of pounds and swelling the funds of the Railway Administration at the expense of poverty-stricken African parents, its recurrence would be fatal to the continued existence of Fort Hare as a leading centre for higher education. Realising this, the Working Committee of the A. N. C. calls upon the Governing Council to appoint an impartial commission of enquiry, consisting of all interested parties, including present and former students of the College, to investigate into the circumstances and basic causes of the situation which has arisen, and make recommendations which will enable Fort Hare College to cultivate and maintain a proper university atmosphere and play its true role in the building of a free and happy South Africa.

(Sgd.) O. R. TAMBO.

for WORKING COMMITTEE  
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

6/5/55.

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**RECORDS RELATING TO THE 'TREASON TRIAL' (REGINA vs F. ADAMS AND OTHERS ON CHARGE OF HIGH TREASON, ETC.), 1956 1961**

**TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961**

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