

No to strikes

ON Monday morning, the first day of the strike, when I drove around Katutura, in all quarters I found the township calm and quiet. People were on the way to work, others was undecided. I noticed no activities to indicate the strike. Small groups of police were standing around fires at bus stops to get warm in the cold.

From chats I had with people this morning and the days before I learned that all agree that there was reason for concern and that something had to be done. I also learned that many people had complaints about what was done and how the actions were exercised. They complained about being intimidated to obey the call for a stay-away from schools and work mainly by means of what they termed strong propaganda and agitation to stir up mass hysteria and unrest and sometimes direct threats or force.

There were too many disadvantages: Instead of more, much-needed education for our pupils according to the slogans of NANSO, there was less education and less tests. Instead of more pay and a livable salary for workers there was less pay and a loss of jobs. Instead of better relations between people and between groups there was a disturbance of relations. The economy lost millions of Rand. The State lost taxes from which schools, streets, houses, etc. are built and teachers paid....

South Africa will laugh that stupid Namibians cut themselves off from the opportunities to learn more and to earn more. In this way we subjugate ourselves voluntarily to the principle of South Africa's divide and rule.

Are we Namibians not able to think of more reasonable and wiser actions which do not disturb relations between us? Must we harm ourselves? Why not actions after classes and work? Or short stay-aways of fifteen minutes at certain time and day throughout the country as a demonstration of sympathy for a certain matter?

Or let the workers work and earn money (and not strike on certain dates), and then ask the workers to donate a part of those earnings into a funds for financing community development projects or others. We are in need of a private trade school to give the lot of half-skilled workers the opportunity to learn more in their trade than they can learn during service. The State has failed to provide the necessary educational facilities. I am convinced that employers will support such a project. That is in the line of the slogans of NANSO and the Unions for more education and more pay.

We can do nothing against the will of South Africa. Demonstrations and strikes will bring us nowhere. But if we think cleverly we can do a lot to the advantage of the country and its people which South Africa cannot prevent.

K R SIEVERS
POSTFACH 5597
WINDHOEK