

## **ARISE BLACK CHILD**

### **YOUTH DAY SPEECH:**

#### ***HOW THE YOUTH OF THIS GENERATION CAN EMULATE THE YOUTH OF 1976 TO CRIPPLE WHITE SUPREMACY.***

*By Sandile Msibi*

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#### ***Introduction***

Revolutionary greetings family. Today marks 44 years since the famous uprising that was launched in Soweto and later spread countrywide. The revolt was demonstrated by young and courageous students who undeniably changed the socio-political landscape in South Africa. I'd like us to consciously reflect on the youth of 1976 today and draw some pragmatic lessons that can be exercised by today's youth to weaken the backbone of white supremacy.

I want to begin my speech by explaining how white superiority reinforces itself and how the Bantu Education system that ultimately led to the revolt of 1976 students, solidified white supremacy.

#### ***White supremacy reinforces itself through institutions***

White people have an attitude about themselves, an attitude of superiority. They have a psychological orientation and a tendency to think that they are better than all other races, especially black people. This is a false attitude which produces false belief systems. To maintain this scam, white people have over the years set up a world that reinforces their attitude. They have created a white world, by establishing laws and institutions that preserve and strengthen their FLAWED attitude. Economies, industries, banks, schools, universities etc all mirror and echo white superiority. So, the world as it stands today, looks like it harmonizes and approves that whites are superior and that we are inferior. It is for this SAME reason that we are still inferior to this day, we are in a man-made white world that dehumanizes and suppresses everything black. The world we live in is anti-black because white people focus all their stolen power to demonize the black population and idolize themselves. That's why most black people aspire to be white, in order to feel worthy. They long to look white, walk white, talk white, behave white, associate white, even to the extent

of hating and hurting their own fellow blacks, just to feel absorbed in whiteness. It's a psychological catastrophe.

### ***An inferior education system to cement oppression & reinforce white supremacy***

Keeping this in mind, it's important to note that the Bantu Education system like all other institutions was established by the apartheid government to 'groom' Africans for their role in the apartheid society. This was a role to further the interests of white people. White people had no business in empowering and equipping black people so they can be self-sufficient, economically liberated and independent, but the education was to condition black people to be skilful slaves. **H.F Verwoerd, the architect of the Bantu Education Act (1953), once said:**

**“There is no place for [the African] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. It is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim, absorption in the European community”**

Bantu education was meant to reflect these exact sentiments, that “blacks are worthless and good for nothing except to work hard to build white economies. They should have no business in being equal with whites, the attitude was that a black man is beneath a white man and this education is inferior just like him.”

In 1975, white supremacy was further intensified, when the minister of Bantu education, MC Botha, decided to force black learners to learn half their subjects in Afrikaans. This as we know was the final stroke that led the students from Soweto to rise-up. It wasn't just being taught in Afrikaans that they challenged but the entire Bantu education system that degraded them.

Black students began mobilizing themselves. They planned to march peacefully to demonstrate and protest against the government's directive. They were standing up to white supremacy.

**The critical question that must be posed at this stage is: What made them to stand up? what influenced their courage to reject white supremacy? Why were they so daring to finally revolt??**

### ***Black consciousness, the catalyst behind the revolt***

The answer to this question is **BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS**. Between the 1960's and 1970's the Apartheid system was thriving because prominent liberation struggle movements were banned, most of its leaders were in prison and others in exile. There was a vacuum of political revolt and the enemy was terrorizing black people more than ever. During this time of hopelessness, an unexpected thing happened, a new and more radical wave of revolution swept across South Africa. A rare breed of brave, young people emerged, and they weakened the fiber of white supremacy.

I want to urge young people in this generation, that reformation and revolution in our time will equally come through young people. We can no longer wait for someone to come and save us. We must be our own heroes.

Led by Steve Biko, a black consciousness movement was instigated which was predominantly dispensed through the South African Students Association (SASO) in certain Universities. Steve Biko believed that black people had lost confidence in themselves as a result of living for generations in a white-dominated society. In order to gain freedom, Biko believed that blacks must regain their confidence and end their dependence on whites. Blackness became something to be proud of and worth fighting for. Fear of whites and government was replaced by a new courage, young black people discovered solidarity and mental power in the BC philosophy.

It is for this same reason that the **Arise Black Child movement** calls for a change of attitude that the black child has about himself. This is the first revolution, the revolution of the mind that becomes a forerunner of all other forms of revolutions.

### ***How the uprising brought apartheid to its knees***

The influence of black consciousness was extended to high school students who formed the South African Students' Movement in 1972. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 the South African Students Movement decided to hold a mass demonstration against the implementation of Afrikaans. An action committee called the Soweto Students Representative Council was formed and a protest was planned for the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976.

On their way, they were met by heavily armed police who fired teargas and later live ammunition on demonstrating students. This resulted in a widespread revolt that turned into an uprising against the government. While the uprising began in Soweto, it spread across the country and carried on until the following year.

The aftermath of the events of June 16, 1976 had terrible consequences for the Apartheid government. Images of the police firing on peacefully demonstrating students led an international revolt against South Africa as its brutality was exposed. This action quickened the abolishment of Apartheid. So, the Soweto uprising was a catalyst that ended apartheid. Young people whose souls were set alight by black consciousness crippled white supremacy.

### ***Continuing with the struggle to cripple white supremacy***

Of course, white supremacy is still alive today, it is still reinforced through media, laws and institutions even post 1994. A perfect example of this, in the education space is the **#FEES MUST FALL** movement of 2015. This movement in more ways than one was a repeat of 1976. It plainly demonstrated to us that education is still colonized, unjust and still preserves inequality. We also saw that police brutality still suppresses blacks voices and devalues black lives more so, if they dare to stand up to white supremacy. **The Marikana massacre** is another example of the wickedness of white supremacy. Black people are still killed for demanding to be treated with value and high regard. We are in many ways still expected to be submissive, weak and pathetic, black people that unquestionably obey the rules of the white master. Family, the enemy still lives among us.

The struggle is not over, it continues! The youth of 1976 played their part and we should continue to play ours. We should never give in. I want to make it clear that the future of black people is not dependent upon how white people treat us, the future of black people is dependent upon how we treat ourselves. The first way that we can emulate the youth of

1976 is to treat ourselves with pride, to embrace ourselves and be confident in ourselves. Unfortunately, our esteem has been buried under layers of inferiority that is imposed to us by the world we live in. But I must remind you, you are not what the world says you are. You are not what white supremacy says you are. Broken mirrors don't reflect accurate reflections, a broken, anti-black society can never give you a worthy reflection of yourself. As hard as this is, love yourself black child, embrace yourself black child, respect yourself black child, challenge the inferior attitude you have about yourself black, Arise Black Child, this is the essence of **BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS**.

Another way that we can emulate the youth of 1976 is by uniting for a common cause. Our greatest strength and the biggest threat to white superiority, is united black people. When **J. Edgar Hoover from America was asked what he thinks the greatest threat to America's government was, he said Negroes Unity!** Family, black unity intimidates white supremacy. It frightens it. Standing united to advance black interests should be our greatest desire. The enemy knows this too well, that's why he spends a lot of effort, time, and even money to make sure we are divided. When we are divided, we are conquered. Our solidarity is our mightiest ammunition. With this said, let's mature enough to understand that whatever differences we may have with one another should NEVER be more compelling than our NEED to unite for a cause that is bigger than our differences. This is war, we can't waste time with meaningless squabbles.

Finally, family, white supremacy will be crippled if we are intentional, when we are deliberate about opposing its manifestation. We must refuse to be accomplices in our own oppression. Therefore, no matter how small it seems, we must NEVER normalize any idea, feeling, thought or disposition which suggests that we are inferior to white people.

Let's stand up to white supremacy and refuse to bow to its self-aggrandizing nature. Let's be ready to be called rebels and trouble-makers. **Che Guevara once said: "it is better to die standing, than to live on your knees"**. If white supremacy demands that we bow to it in order to live, then let's be prepared to die while we are standing. Standing in our love for ourselves and standing in our convictions. We can no longer just flirt with revolutionary ideas, just posting black lives matter on our social media handles is not enough we must consciously and intentionally commit to the struggle of advancing black lives, if not for ourselves, let's do it for coming generations.

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