

ST. GEORGESSTRAAT 148 ST. GEORGE'S STREET
KAAPSTAD CAPE TOWN
2-7831 NATUSAS

NUSAS

NUSAS PRESS RELEASE - 14-5-1970 -- EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT SATURDAY 16-5-1970

Behind the scenes activity over the last three months have made it very likely that NUSAS will emerge from its special congress in July much stronger, and much more active than ever before. In recent weeks:

- * The President, Neville Curtis, and the Vice-President Horst Kleinschmidt have both completed separate six week tours of all the campuses in NUSAS.
- * Seven new members have joined the NUSAS Executive and 4 new portfolios have been created. Two new full-time Deputy Vice-Presidents have been appointed.
- * A nation wide protest, including over 6,000 staff and students, against the Terrorism Act and continued detention of 22 detainees has been completed.
- * Over 10,000 has been awarded to students studying by correspondence; and over R3,000 has been awarded to 18 medical students.
- * A new National Student discount scheme has been launched.
- * A successful National Seminar on reassessment involving 90 delegates from 20 centres has been completed.
- * Contact has been made with several new centres and the number of students in NUSAS has passed the 30,000 mark.

The NUSAS President, Neville Curtis, commented "In recent months, NUSAS has shown itself to be a dynamic and growing organisation. In the fields of education, culture, Social action, welfare and benefits, activity has increased greatly; and there has been a clear demonstration that NUSAS is the most dynamic and powerful student organisation in South Africa"

The next few months will see NUSAS activity increasing further, by leaps and bounds. Some of the projects for the next months include:

- * A unique cultural and educational happening involving 100's of students and the top creative artists, writers and dramatists in S.A.
- * A nation wide work camp to build and equip an African High School which caters for some 400 pupils.
- * In co-operation with UCM and SASO a campaign to literary trainers, and get them into the field.
- * The setting up of a 'Free University' planned organised and run by students with the aid of a few invited university staff.



- * A continued campaign to educate students and the public - black and white - to the real issues in South Africa; which will follow-up the successful pre-election awareness campaign.

Mr Curtis said that plans for the 'new NUSAS' are in an advanced state of preparation. "I cannot reveal yet exactly what form the 'new NUSAS' will take, as this will only be finalised at the Special Congress. But detailed plans are being circulated to SRC's shortly, for discussion and comment.

"Some broad directions have emerged however and these show trends towards greatly increased cultural and educational activity on the campuses; much increased contact between all South African students - English and Afrikaans and Black and White; and a firm commitment to basic human principles and non-racialism, both in theory and practice.

"Two other suggestions are that we should become a Southern African union embracing students from Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, Malawi and Rhodesia; and second that we should open our ranks to students above the J.C. (Std 8) level, and not just post-metrics as at present. These must of course still be discussed in detail.

Mr Curtis also confirmed that the special congress to complete the reassessment of NUSAS would take place from the 28th June to the 9th July: "The Congress will last 11 days and will combine our 46th Annual Congress with the Special Congress. Programmes and agendas are being drafted now, and over 100 observers from all S.A. institutions of higher learning, all South African student organisations, and African and overseas National Unions have been invited."

The Congress will be preceded by an intensive action campaign on the campuses over the next 6 weeks focusing on NUSAS reassessment, and by a 100 point questionnaire distributed on a nation wide basis to all the 30,000 students in NUSAS.

"The questionnaire will be the most comprehensive sociological survey of student opinion ever attempted in South Africa, as well as sounding out student attitudes on a variety of topics related to NUSAS and its activities." Mr Curtis said.

"All in all rumours that NUSAS will be disbanded in July can be discounted. We are moving from strength to strength in every field, and after July we may call referendums on every campus to prove that our support is stronger than ever.

"For 45 years NUSAS and the English language universities have defended Western democratic traditions in education and in society, and fought for the rights of students and citizens. We have kept the flame of freedom burning, and now we are going to set the country, and particularly the country's youth, alight, with that flame of freedom"

Issued by Neville Curtis, President,
National Union of South African Students,
301 Welroy House, 37 Buitenkant Street,
Cape Town. Phone 27831.