

**national union of south african students**  
**nasionale unie van suid-afrikaanse studente**

**NUSAS**

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P/64/69

TO: National Executive  
SRC Presidents  
Local Committee Chairmen  
Student Editors  
Overseas National Unions  
Overseas Representatives  
International Organisations  
Advisory Panel  
Honorary Officers

Dear Sir/Madam:

Further events at Turfloop

As reported in circular P/62/69, the President of NUSAS went up to Johannesburg in order to establish contact with the Rector and students at the University College of the North. The following is an account of his visit to Turfloop.

In view of the fact that 2 of the major complaints made by the students at Turfloop which resulted in their marching on the Rector's office, concerned NUSAS directly and the others concerned the welfare of students, it was decided that Mr Innes should seek an interview with the Rector which was granted.

Accompanied by the Vice President and Transvaal Regional Director, Mr Innes left Johannesburg on Wednesday May 21 for his interview with the Rector the following morning.

The day the deputation went up to Pietersburg every entrance to the campus was blockaded by police vans in the afternoon and no one was allowed on to the campus.

They arrived in the evening and attempted to meet some students. To do this at Turfloop one cannot merely walk on to the campus and ask for a student. Arrangements have to be made to meet him at an appointed place in the middle of the veld because at Turfloop the only person you may see without permission is the camp commandant - talking to the inmates is strictly forbidden.

The next day when Mr Innes arrived to see the rector there was a police van outside the building and a man in the waiting room wearing a regulation blue suit and size 9 shoes.

In the interview Prof. Engelbrecht claimed -

- (1) Mr Innes has never been invited to speak.
- (2) Students didn't want to affiliate.
- (3) Turfloop was a free university where students are treated as equals.

Mr Innes asked to speak to students, this was refused.

They were followed off the campus by the police.

In the afternoon they managed to meet some students, who confirmed -

- (1) Mr Innes had been invited.
- (2) The students want to affiliate to NUSAS.

It was then decided that Mr Innes should return to Turfloop the following day and tell Prof. Engelbrecht that either he did not know what his students felt or he had not been told the truth.

That night the hotel in which the deputation stayed was watched by 8 people - members of the Special Branch. In addition 3 tyres of the car in which they travelled were punctured.

The following morning, Mr Innes and Mr Kleinschmidt Transvaal Regional Director went back to the campus. They were followed out of the campus by 3 cars and met at the gate by the internal Superintendent who blocked their entrance with his car and asked for their permits to be in a Bantu Trust Area. In reply, Mr Innes said that they were on their way to see the Rector he said that the Rector didn't want to see them and that he had the power of arrest and would arrest him if they went on to the campus. He then told them to wait as the police were coming.

At this stage a police van drove up and blocked them in.

Innes : Will you move your car - we want to see the rector.

The Internal Superintendent, Mr van Staden said "No".

Innes : In that case we will walk onto the campus.

Van Staden told them to wait there because the police were coming to arrest them - he didn't know what the charge was.

They waited for about 5 minutes but the police didn't come. At this stage a large number of students were gathering a little way away from where Mr Innes and Mr van Staden were talking. Mr Innes said that he was sick of waiting and that he would walk on to the campus if van Staden did not drive him to see the Rector.

Noticing the students, Van Staden agrees to drive him and drove them right across the campus to a back room from which he phoned the rector. In reply to something Engelbrecht said "They're in my office". The rector said he was coming up to them and they should not be brought to him.

Engelbrecht : Can you understand Afrikaans?

Innes : No

Engelbrecht : I give you 5 minutes to be off the campus.

Innes : I want to speak to you.

Engelbrecht : You have 5 minutes to leave the campus. Whatever you have to say, we can argue through the Press.

Innes : The proper way to do it is to talk it over - I'm not satisfied with what you told me yesterday.

Engelbrecht : You have got 5 minutes to leave the campus.

Innes : You told me yesterday that I had not been invited to speak to the students but know that I had been.

Engelbrecht said that Innes had come there to cause trouble to which Innes replied that he had come to be honest. He said he was disappointed that

Engelbrecht had not told him the truth.

Engelbrecht : Are you calling me a liar.

Innes : I'm telling you that I am disappointed that you didn't tell me the truth yesterday.

Innes

Engelbrecht : You've got 5 minutes to leave the campus.

Innes : I want to speak to your students before I go.

Engelbrecht : No

Innes : You told me yesterday that you believed in freedom.

Engelbrecht : My freedom and your freedom are different.

Innes : Yes, mine is true freedom.

At this stage tea was brought in and the rector told them they had 7 minutes to leave the campus and then left.

Van Staden tried to get them into his car but Mr Innes said they would prefer to walk. Van Staden said they would never get off the campus in 5 minutes and Innes said he wanted to try.

They were then told to get back into the office and Van Staden rang the rector, who said he would come down and escort them off the campus.

Innes : You need not accompany us. We can get off the campus on our own.

Engelbrecht : I want you to go by car.

Innes : I don't want your hospitality - you will have to tell me that you are forcing me off the campus before I leave.

Engelbrecht : I am not forcing you to leave the campus.

They then got into the car and were taken to the police station where they were presented with an order banning "Mr Innes en lede van sy geselskap" (Mr Innes and the members of his party) from Bantu Trust areas in the Pietersburg District. The order was dated the day before the deputation arrived in Pietersburg. They were then told to leave the area which they did.

That is the position to date at Turfloop. Three NUSAS officials have now been effectively banned from contact with the students and it would appear likely that any further attempt to contact students there will result in action of some sort being taken against any NUSAS officials and the students involved.

The march on the rector's office described in P/62/69 was an act of great courage on the part of the students at Turfloop, when we consider the action taken against the students at Fort Hare last year when 300 students were suspended for taking part in a sit-in, and the general repressive atmosphere at the Tribal Colleges. It seems quite possible that there will be further action on the part of the students at Turfloop in the near future as the authorities have stated that they are not willing to make any concessions to the students. If there are any further developments we shall keep you informed as they occur.

Yours sincerely

CLIVE NETTLETON  
VICE PRESIDENT