

A CALL FOR SOLIDARITY WITH THE STUDENTS AND PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA FIGHTING AGAINST RACISM.

FROM: NEVILLE CURTIS, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL UNION OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS.

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I greet you on behalf of NUSAS - the National Union of South African Students as fellow students and members of the International community of young people which knows no barriers of race, religion or nationality.

I wish that I could greet you personally, but this has been made impossible, and while I greet you on behalf of my union, I am painfully aware that I cannot greet you on behalf of a union which enjoys the support of the Government, or of all the students, of South Africa.

The Government policy of apartheid is responsible for the maintenance of the oppression of the majority of the people in South Africa; for the white domination, discrimination and inequality and for the deep division of the people of South Africa.

The scourge of racism and racial oppression is entrenched by law and reaches into all aspects of life in South Africa. The student community in South Africa is deeply divided into those who support apartheid and those who oppose it.

Over the years NUSAS has registered its unyielding and irrecoverable opposition to apartheid and to the ideology of superiority and oppression on which it is based, and for this NUSAS has not only lost the support of the South African Government, but incurred its wrath and virulent opposition. Opposition which has been manifested by attacks on NUSAS and its leaders and supporters; by bannings and exile; by the frustration and crippling of the programs and projects of NUSAS, and by the surveillance and intimidation of the student community.

NUSAS and the South African Government are irrevocably opposed.

Within the student community, division and oppression have made their mark. White Afrikaans speaking students have chosen to support apartheid, and have withdrawn from NUSAS - and NUSAS rejects their ideology. Black students have been isolated in separate universities and their participation in NUSAS has been crippled and attacked, but the majority of black students remain in NUSAS, and NUSAS is proud to struggle with them.

But the struggle of the black people in South Africa must be led by them, and NUSAS is proud to ally itself with SASO - the South African Students Organisation - a new national alliance of black students which counts in its ranks black students both within and outside of NUSAS.

Under the pressure of apartheid and the government, NUSAS had been nearly brought to its knees, but in July this year a new NUSAS was formulated which has emerged even more committed to the struggle against racism and oppression, and more committed to working for an egalitarian society.

The new NUSAS does not claim to represent all South African students, but it does represent the majority of those who are committed to working for a just society, and the ending of apartheid and racism.

Those black and white students who have for a quarter of a century made up the supporters of NUSAS and have striven to make a living example of the principle of non-racialism, and to change a society which they believed to be headed on a course of national suicide.

But the greetings I bring you are more than an exchange of fellowship and a forging of new alliances - for just as we are committed to the struggle against racism so too we believe that you must commit yourselves and your unions to the

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struggle against racism in our own countries and in Southern Africa. The representative of NUSAS at this meeting will outline in detail for you the many activities and programs which NUSAS operates within South Africa, and will seek to enlist your solidarity and co-operation where this is possible. But the struggle against racism is more than just that of NUSAS or any one organisation - it is the struggle of all the people and students inside and outside South Africa - who are committed against apartheid - and it is in this struggle that we wish to enlist your active support, and for which we ask your solidarity.

If there is one single task to which we at this Conference can dedicate ourselves it is to the resolution of the crisis of racism. It is a concern which transcends national boundaries, and which can unite us all in a common fellowship and a common striving.

For this reason we draw to your attention a number of matters on which you can act both here, and on your return to your country.

We believe that the question of arms sales to South Africa is an urgent matter to which you must apply your attention and reach resolution before the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference. We believe that this Conference must resolve itself against arms sales, as the supply of instruments of violence is not in the best interest of the majority of the people of South Africa.

We believe that the economic exploitation of black South African workers by foreign investors is despicable and must cease, and that the members of this meeting must adopt an attitude and initiate action to stop this exploitation, often by the very countries represented here today.

We believe that those sporting and other ties which support and entrench racism and discrimination within South Africa and which are maintained by countries represented here, must be broken. Racism in sport is intolerable and the recent action against white teams from South Africa has greatly cheered many South Africans - not because it is anti-South African, but because it is anti-apartheid.

We believe that those unions who have not actively committed themselves to combatting racism and discrimination in all its forms, must do so, and that those unions who are already involved must work unceasingly to make their visions reality.

We call on you to make every effort to combat racism particularly in this year 1971 - the International Year against Racism.

We call on you to make your voices heard, and to make your actions felt on the side of the real South African patriots and the majority of the people of South Africa, who stand against apartheid, and white racist domination.

We call on this conference to convene an International Day of Protest against Apartheid and Solidarity with the people and students of a South Africa fighting against racism.

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