

1963 DAY OF AFFIRMATION — SPEECHES BY ARCHBISHOP DENNIS HURLEY AND JONTY DRIVER

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND HUMAN FREEDOM



FOREWORD

Ever since 1959, when the Extension of University Education Act and the Fort Hare University College Transfer Act became law, NUSAS has looked for ways in which to continue its public witness of the belief in academic freedom. Although the long struggle of NUSAS, and of staff and students of Universities and University Colleges in NUSAS to preserve what academic freedom did exist in South Africa came to nothing we felt that our struggle was not a short term one it must go on as long as NUSAS existed.

However, in our public witness, we did not wish to mourn merely the lost remnants of academic freedom, for we knew the full academic freedom could never exist in an undemocratic country and we knew too that to mourn something that had never really existed was pointless.

We decided instead to affirm our belief in academic freedom in anticipation of its achievement but at the same time we knew that it was not enough to affirm our belief in academic freedom without affirming our belief in human freedom because we realised that without human freedom we could not have academic freedom.

On 16th May 1963 the first Day of Affirmation of Academic Freedom and Human Freedom was organised. During the days preceding the national event centres affiliated to NUSAS held individual events on each campus. Then on the 16th the President of all University Student Representative Councils affiliated to NUSAS, the President of Student Representative Council of the Johannesburg College of Education and a representative of the students of the Fort Hare University College, together with the the NUSAS President assembled at a mass rally the Durban city hall.

The guest speaker that evening was Archbishop Dennis Hurley, chosen by us to speak because he represented so much more than political commitment or intellectual involvement. The chairman of the meeting was Mr W.T.Mhlambiso, then Chairman of the Joint Board of the Student Representative Councils of Natal University and sometime Vice-President of NUSAS. The other speaker was the President of NUSAS.

In this booklet we publish the speeches made by the Archbishop and by the NUSAS President as well as the Declaration signed by the student representatives.

The organisation of such a national event was perhaps only a minor step towards the achievement of a South African in which academic freedom could exist. It was however public witness by a few people where too many have lost their courage even to say in public what they believe.

NUSAS is resolved that it will continue its public witness, this year, next year and the years after, until we in South Africa have gained what we must fight for continually; a democratic society in which we can have true education.

MAEDER OSLER
Vice-President

JONTY DRIVER
President

DECLARATION
OF ACADEMIC AND HUMAN FREEDOM
IN SOUTH AFRICA

WE, meeting here as representatives of students of universities, university colleges and teacher training colleges throughout South Africa, wish to affirm our belief in academic freedom and human freedom.

WE believe that academic freedom is the right of students and of the institutions at which they study. We believe that it is the right of a university to decide for itself whom it will teach, who will teach, what will be taught and how the teaching will be done; that it is the responsibility of a university to ensure that no unjust discrimination is practised in academic life on the grounds of race, religion or politics; that it is the duty of a university to guarantee the rights of unconditional participation in the opportunities and privileges made available by belonging to the university,

that the responsibility of the university to the academic world, and through the unprejudiced pursuit of truth, has a value far more important than the transitory aims of party-politicians, or temporary fears of electorates.

WE pledge ourselves to work for the attainment of this ideal, within the realms of all freedoms, of association, of speech and of movement, for we realise that true academic freedom can exist only in a democratic South Africa; whose society is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and on the highest regard for the integrity of educational and human freedom.

SIGNATORIES :

ARCHBISHOP DENNIS HURLEY

THAMI MHLAMBISO

President of Students' Representative Council, University of Natal (Non-European Section)

JONTY DRIVER

President of NUSAS

HUGH KOWARSKY

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