

APPENDIX E.

HEAD OFFICE REPORTS

I. TAKING OF OFFICE

I took office at the beginning of March, having left Durban in a flurry after wrapping up Orientation Week there. Dave Brown, whom I succeeded after his resignation, remained in Cape Town for a few days after my arrival and was a tremendous help in briefing me on Head Office functioning (as was Mogamed Davids, Nusas part-time administrative assistant). Patrick Fitzgerald, who had by this stage resigned his post as Media Officer, was in Johannesburg at the time seeing to National Student One. Sadly, his resignation and the issues surrounding it had left a somewhat bitter taste in many mouths, and it was some time before relations between Head Office and UCT in particular, were normalised. Although I have no wish to dwell on the subject, I believe it to be important to point out that the 'Fitzgerald debacle' was symptomatic of a fear on the part of most students working in organisations, to deal honestly with personal and ideological differences. Organisations should work such that open and constructive criticism is not only possible, but an imperative...There is nothing more hideous than backstabbing amongst likeminded people.

To continue - Gerald Kra k was elected by NSA in council as Patrick's successor shortly after my arrival, and joined Head Office in April.

2. OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Both Gerald and I spent the better part of our first few months in Head Office seeing to the reorganisation of the office, the establishment of of a working routine, the filing of material, the setting right of printing equipment (or attempting to) etc. We also both attended a crash typing course, which was unfortunately interrupted by the April Seminar (my proficiency - or lack thereof - no doubt bears witness to this fact).

- i) Mogammed Davids (Nusas veteran of 17 years service) - employed half-day by Sasts and half-day by Nusas, has proved to be a gem in handling accounts, service contracts, postage, petty cash etc...Also at keeping demanding student travellers at bay. Sasts operations from Head Office have become increasingly loaded, and negotiations are to be conducted re further contributions to Nusas from Sasts for services rendered.
- ii) Bookkeeper I was responsible for finding a successor to the previous Nusas bookkeeper, during March. Mr Bloch's performance proved to be both proficient and helpful, and the two of us met regularly to discuss Nusas' financial position. Monthly income, expenditure accounts were drawn up and submitted to the executive at all National Council and Executive Meetings for ratification of expenditure. For detailed comment, see Finances, and appendix.
- iii) General Administration
I was responsible for
 - a) the finalising of the P.O. lease which was drawn up before my arrival.
 - b) general correspondence
 - c) negotiations for the buying and selling of equipment
 - d) maintenance and repairs to equipment and the car.

3. PRINTING EQUIPMENT

- i) Rank Xerox Multicopier
Nusas had this on hire for the first three months of my term of office. Although it offered a simple and speedy means of printing, the machine was not particularly economic to run and the contract was therefore not extended.
- ii) Roneo Machine
This has been in a state of disrepair until very recently when we were able to pick up a replacement for its cracked cylinder at a cost of R10 as opposed to

PRINTING EQUIPMENT CONT;

a quoted R90. Already this has been an enormous help, in that roneo is a relatively simple and cheap means of printing. Hopefully it will mean that many more regular newsletters etc can be produced with ease during 1979.

iii) Offset Litho

This machine has also been intermittently in a state of disrepair during 1978. Having been out of use for some years, the machine was serviced during April and new chemicals supplied. These were, it seems far too strong for the machine, and as a result the rollers were corroded. The full extent of the damage was only discovered very recently and new rollers installed. (This after a years battle believing the problem to be merely a matter of a lack of skill) Hopefully all will fare well from now if the machine is cared for.

iv) Photostat machine

The executive mandated me in March to replace the very poor photostat machine which was in Head Office at the time. After several companies had been consulted a reconditioned machine was purchased in July - one which could produce paper plates for the offset litho. Performance with respect to paper plates was not entirely satisfactory, and again it is only recently that all problems have been overcome. The machine has however proved invaluable in copying material for the respective SRC Resource Centres.

Hopefully with the presson the road next year, Head Office will be in a position to produce all its own material - which should cut down printing costs somewhat.

A comment in passing - It would seem that remarkably few students know how to operate even the simplest of presses. I would suggest that SRC's in particular ensure that at least a handful of their members are familiar with the workings of their press.

MOTOR VEHICLE - Another boring hard luck story.....Roll on alternativeTechnology.

The VW bought last year required a new engine at the beginning of this year. R374 was spent on a reconditioned engine and a further r400 odd has been spent in repairs during 1978. (including a new generator, a new set of tyres, and at least 5 services) In Sept. National Council mandated me to investigate the economics of selling the car and replacing it. The car was taken to the AA for a thorough check - The report was glowing to say the least. Considering this, and the fact that the car did four full round the country trips during the year, it would seem that the Exec. should possibly reconsider National Council's decision. The car has certainly been important in allowing the maintenance of regular personal contact between Head Office and the campuses - essential if the National Union is to function effectively.

5. HEAD OFFICE RESOURCE CENTRE

I assisted Gerald in putting together the Nusas resource Centre. We have systematically filed and catalogued all the useful material which was lying virtually inaccessible in Head Office previously. (To make a point - to see material and resources wasted always strikes me as a poor reflection of an organisation.... I can think of numerous campus groups who are guilty of the same crime) We have also continued to add to our collection of material throughout the year. Gerald will no doubt elaborate on this item in his report.

6. CENTRE (SRC) RESOURCE CENTRES

Believing interesting and efficient resource centres to be absolutely essential I have attempted all year to encourage Durban, Rhodes, Pmb, and Wits to set such centres up. There has only relatively recently been a positive response - but from all 4 campuses I am happy to say. I have supplied all 4 centres regularly with interesting articles we have come across in Head Office. Hopefully these are being put to good use.

7. PUBLICATIONS, MEDIA

I was responsible for the production of

- i) dossier on Women (April)
- ii) a detailed newsletter (May)
- iii) a booklet on Nusas' theme, functioning and activities. (This aimed at the least informed student) This proved particularly useful as a precursor to the Pmb referendum.
- iv) a slide and tape show on Women in South Africa (this together with Gerald), which was shown in Pietermaritzburg, Durban and at the National Womens Seminar. This production has recently been handed over to a group of women to work on a comprehensive commentary.
- v) Resume of 1978 Nusas events - including press cuttings, transcripts of speeches, programmes etc...This to be distributed at congress.

8. RESIDENCE REFORM

Having lived in a residence for 2 years, and having served on a res house committee, I have long since concluded that university residences are unnecessarily repressive institutions, and responsible for the perpetuation of an enormous range of abhorrent values (particularly in relation to sexism). I therefore attempted th a year to co-ordinate efforts at res reform on a national level. However, not being campus-based, my task was problematic, and I recommend the appointment of a campus-based Co-ordinator to deal with this question, during congress.

9. FACULTY COUNCILS

In order to improve the efficacy of the theme, I tried to keep in touch with numerous faculty councils around the country. - distributing articles, constitutions, ideas emanating f m other faculty councils etc.(In particular the UCT and Wits Medical Students Councils, the UCT Engineering council, and the Obn and Pmb Arts Students Councils. However, as ever, remote control liason had its drawbacks and was neither consistent nor thorough enough. SRCs and Projects Comms were on the whole not particularly innovative in drawing their respective Faculty Councils intr theme , and their lack of input exacerabated the problem. (I have noticed in particular that off-campus faculties tend to get neglected.) Hopefully 1979 will see a greater effort in this sphere of influence.

10. SEMINARS

i) April Seminar

I was responsible for the planning of the April Katberg seminar. The programme was broad - with 2 papers on women (one on feminism and one on women in South Africa) , a paper on the history of the SA student movement, one on techniques of good journalism, ~~an~~ one on publications legislation, a simulation game dealing with Worker issues, and a simulation game dealing with campus politics. (This last was introduced in an attempt to focus on specific political skills - planning, strategy-making, communication, goal definition etc.) Feedback on the seminar was overwhelmingly ositive....that, despite the fact that more than half the 70 delegates had trusted my assurances (inaccuate) that hedding would be supplied - needless to ~~say~~ say the weather was bitterly cold.)

It was decided to adopt a self catering system at this seminar - a principle which worked extremely well, both in fascilitating a spirit of comoradia, and in reducing costs. (The principle was repeated in July)

ii) Education for Africa July Seminar

I will not report on this in detail as Auret is to do so in his report, except to say that I travelled to Wits 2 weeks in advance of the seminar to assist in the planning and organisation of the event.

SEMINARS CONT,1) SRC Seminars

- a) I attended a one day Wits SRC seminar in Sept
- b) I forwarded material and made suggestions re the planning of a Durban Leadership seminar.
- c) continually pressed all SRCs and other groups to hold seminars in an attempt to facilitate a continual process of assessment etc.
- iv) National Womens Seminar

I liaised with Emily Fairbairn (Womens co-ordinator before she left university in May) re the National Womens Seminar, planned at 1977 Congress. It was agreed that this should be left in the hands of the respective Womens Movements. The National Seminar was eventually held during September in Cape Town. At 1977 Congress Nusas had undertaken to partially sponsor the seminar if need be. By September, Nusas' financial position was pretty tight, and our contribution had to be minimised. It is probably necessary at this stage to make one point clear - when the seminar was planned at 1977 Congress by the Womens Movements present, one of the terms of reference was that it be for both men and women. On learning that the seminar was to be segregated, Auret and I in particular, were somewhat unhappy. However the autonomy of the Womens Movements was respected and at no stage was an attempt made at 'blackmailing' the organisers into changing their plans, as has apparently been alleged.

II. TOURSi) April Tour

After the Rhodes referendum (reported elsewhere) I travelled with Auret to Natal. Auret is to report in detail on this visit, so in brief - my part

a) Durban

met with SRC (President addressed Council)
 Arts Faculty Council (IMC)
 Projects Comm (2 meetings - one a joint one, together with Pmb)
 a number of archi students keen on Appropriate Technology
 a group of res students
 Prof. Newman (past Nusas President)
 Paddy Kearney (Hon vice pres)
 Paul Pretorius (Past Nusas president)

planned extensively with SRC and PC.
 showed slide and tape show on women in South Africa

b) Pietermaritzburg

met with SRC

projects comm
 individuals interested in setting up study groups and counter courses
 a group of women interested in setting up a Womens Movement...I
 here described the activities of the other WM's, detailed useful
 reading etc. I also showed the slide and tape show to the same
 group.

was party to the defeat of a group of WOB heavies in a game of soccer
 (slight exaggeration - we drew)

c) Rhodes (II hour return visit)

met with newly formed Nusas local comm.

d) Cape Town

'toured' my home campus, with Auret, meeting with Projects Comm
 Medical Students Council
 Arts Students Council
 SRC

TOURS CONTii) July

I travelled to Johannesburg before the July seminar. At the same time as preparing for the seminar, I

a) met with various SRC and Sam members

b) met with MSC

c) lead a discussion on 'Women and Relationships' at a JCE residence.

d) met twice with projects comm, and attended a seminar, cocktail party of theirs.

During this period Auret and I also made a four day trip to Natal. We met informally with Projects Comm and SRC members (it was vacation) at both centres, and Auret met with the Durban and Pmb groups working on the IT 'Rural Development Handbook'. The pending referendum was also discussed at this stage.

iii) September

I spent a few days at Wits on my way through to Pmb for the referendum (This after a journey claiming 3 punctures, two generator pack-ups (one final), a night in the car in a Parys garage with three others, and four sets of frayed nerves) I attended a 1 day SRC seminar during this time.

While in Natal I was able to spend only one day on Durban, when I met informally with new SRC members. Later, after Auret's arrival, we spent an evening in Dbn at a student government cocktail party.

I shall report on the Pmb referendum elsewhere.

On my way back to Cape Town, I spent a day in Rhodes, meeting with the Nusas local people and new SRC members (including the President elect) It would seem that there is a fair chance of receiving far wider support next year if Nusas is to conduct another referendum.

Impressions Gained

Campus tours always provide the most valuable insight into student political functioning - both local and national. I would recommend that student politicians in fact make it a greater effort at 'discovering' their sister campuses. A greater degree of interchange should go a long way in breaking down the parochialism which creeps into student activity so easily....The sharing of experiences and ideas should not be confined to two national seminars a year.

At this point I would like to isolate briefly, a number of common failings which I noted on the campuses.

a) a general lack of recruitment to groups

b) a tendency to act with very little conscious planning having taken place - particularly during periods of crisis.

c) minimal reflection and assessment of direction, achievements etc.

d) seldom the identification of 'potential audience' and consequently the adoption of inappropriate tactics.

d) very little communication between groups - even those of similar leanings.

None of the above problems are endemic to student politics, but then neither are they likely to disappear overnight. Students will have to work consciously at the internalisation of certain organisational and political principles if they are to prove effective.

12. Projects Comms and the efficacy of Theme:

The theme as laid down at congress last year presented a number of problems. Despite its detailed nature, the programme never quite flowed and the projects comms appeared to have some difficulty in developing the theme cohesively. However, the projects comms were in the hands of innovative people and respectively worked their own courses according to campus exigencies e.g. PMB focused on course reform, while Wits concentrated on high-profile issues. Efficacy would no doubt have improved had there been a thorough integration of strategies and approaches to the theme, and this should surely be taken into account in planning 1979's programmes at this congress - (confusion of roles) .

In many senses, 1978 was an experimental year: with a down-play of the old 'popular' issues as well as for the first time introducing the imperative of improved campus communication networks (particularly between projects comms, SRC's and faculty councils). While projects comms were working in the dark for much of the time, they in fact achieved a substantial amount in establishing the debate as regards our education; (I do not want to pre-empt the centre reports here). The studentpress could have, at times, been more explorative with the theme.

If the theme is to be extended into 1979, then hopefully the experience (both positive and negative) of 1978 will be drawn upon. To conclude, a number of points needing to be borne in mind if the theme is to be further explored :

- (i) The importance of building into the theme a rigorous analysis of the South African situation, in order to avoid falling into the trap of 'reformism' e.g. where community medicine students encouraged to jump on the bandwagon do so without considering the whys and wherefores of doing so.
- (ii) The possibility of a self-righteousness creeping into student activity - 'we're doing relevant stuff' - which needs to be avoided. I must add here that communications between projects comms and H.O. was particularly good. Responses to requests, ideas forwarded etc; were usually immediate. This certainly made things easier for all concerned - there is nothing worse than nagging from a distance of 1000 miles away !

13. Exec and National Council Meetings

There have been 6 Exec meetings, and 3 National Council meetings since 1977 Congress. I was responsible for drawing up agendas, and taking and circulating minutes.

14. Co-Ordinators

At 1977 Congress, the following co-ordinators were appointed:

Education - Rory Gogarty (UCT)
 Law - Hugh Corder (UCT)
 Labour - Robert Barge (Wits)
 Womens Action - Emily Fairbairn (UCT)

Unfortunately the relationship between the co-ordinators and Head Office was ill-defined and all but Hugh Corder were virtually inactive. (Emily in fact left university in April). There is an enormous potential for campus based co-ordination (particularly as Head cannot be expected to carry the entire load of national co-ordination - and in fact should not, for the sake of a degree of decentralisation). Hopefully those committees this which decide

to appoint co-ordinators for 1979 will define their objectives more clearly, and will ensure that innovative and energetic persons are appointed. I recommend that the Finances and Structures committee refer at some stage to the role of the co-ordinators.

15. Referenda

I was actively involved in both the Rhodes and Pietermaritzburg referenda.

The Rhodes experience was a very difficult one - having been out of the National Union for so long even these campaigners at Rhodes were from the start relatively ignorant about Nusas. This set us back considerably, as we had very few confident campaigners and only ten days in which to work. As a result we had to rely heavily on media - which after a while simply didn't get read. Auret is to report on the referendum in greater detail, so suffice it to say that we lost by a small margin on a very high poll.

Pietermaritzburg: with the Rhodes experience behind us, our task in PMB was made much easier. I travelled to PMB four days in advance of Auret, and two weeks before the referendum. PMB had done a lot of groundwork and we started off from the start with a relatively knowledgeable, and very enthusiastic committee of fifty people. In this case we relied more heavily on personal campaigning - this was clearly not only more productive in terms of winning votes, also in terms of the learning experience the campaign provided. Campaigners. Memoranda detailing Nusas activities, stock referendum issues etc. were drawn up and distributed to campaigners which made their inclusion in the entire process even easier. It is no doubt pertinent at this point to make some comment about the Rag Queen debacle...Despite the fact that planning was far more detailed and conscious than before previous referenda (by all accounts) the fact that there was no careful consideration of whether or not the Rag Queen's offer to have her face and name together with 7 other students on a "we support" pamphlet no doubt indicates that this planning did not go far enough in that it did not take into account sufficiently all the political exigencies of a referendum. All those involved in the referendum have conceded quite sincerely that the slip was not only a serious one, but an easily avoidable one. It has certainly, however, given rise to constructive (on the whole) debate within Nusas...What I think those involved in the planning of the referendum would appreciate is a recognition of the fact that referenda tend to be extraordinarily tense-making and difficult - particularly when, as in this case, the situation appears touch and go. I would prefer not to dwell on this issue any longer at present, as I believe the question is to be formally debated at a later stage.

To conclude this item the eventual win was exhilarating to say the least...The enthusiasm with which the Pietermaritzburg people were fired, certainly made the slog worthwhile.

CONGRESS PLANNING

Head Office and a UCT organising committee under Steve Bowey, have been working solidly on Congress for the past 5 weeks. It has proved to be an enormous administrative task, but hopefully will run as smoothly as last year's Pietermaritzburg Congress. With regard to the planning of the programme and the terms of reference of committees, we have been working in a group of 7 or 8. The advantages of working with such a group have been enormous...A method of planning which should be adopted more often.

MISCELLANEOUS

- 1) Extra Mural Studies I was consulted re the planning of a focus on women in South Africa at the beginning of the year. Plans for the inclusion of a programme on this topic in the UCT Summer School are now well under way (I am no longer part of the organising committee however)
- i) Honorary Office Bearers I have attempted to keep hon. office bearers well informed of Nusas' activities this year. The Birleys (Sir Robert and Lady Eleanor) were recently out from England and visited Head Office. Others have sent us letters of support from time to time.
- ii) Stellenbosch Aaret is to report on contact with Stellenbosch students, but suffice it to say that H.O. has forwarded all publications, and news to Stellenbosch, and fairly regular contact has been maintained with those sympathetic to Nusas.

CONCLUSION

1978 I believe has been a great year for Nusas. We must not however allow ourselves to lapse into a state of euphoria and complacency. The task ahead of us is great, and constitutes not only a worthwhile challenge, but a necessary one.

May the next few days prove productive, and exciting.

Jane Barrett

(General Secretary)

November 1978

1. Some points on ideology, strategy and organisation

Before dealing with the substance of this report I want to make an attempt at stating some general conclusions about the state of the student movement in South Africa today.

Here my view is a relatively pessimistic one. The student movement, while it has survived in a relatively progressive form, is flawed by failures at numerous levels. The inappropriate reactions to prevailing political situations, organisational inefficiency, elitism, opportunism, lack of recruitment, and a profound alienation from the real struggle for liberation taking place 'out there'.

While these failures certainly relate to the lifestyle, lack of commitment and discipline of students, it also has to do with the way in which we choose to organise ourselves. Above all students have been and are 'reactionary'. Armed with a liberal to leftish ideology students seize upon issues spontaneously as they arise. Modderdam Road is demolished, a mass meeting is organised, a publication slapped together, speeches are made and a motion is passed; students have now been 'educated' as to the issue in hand. The meeting was either a failure or a success. Students then retire until the state perpetrates its next brutality or until exams mark the end of the political calendar. The latter point also raises the question of how students see political activity.

It is seen as distinct from social activity on the one hand and academic work on the other,, it takes place between vacs.

At no stage is student political activity truly assessed against the background of the broader liberation struggle, except in a fairly superficial way ,e.g., we have skills which we contribute in relieving underdevelopment, we can become community doctors or alternative technologists. The latter, while obviously conclusions derived from a critical consciousness, are far removed from concrete political strategies.

If one looks at the other struggles in the Third World one will see that historically students/intellectuals have made significant contributions to their progress. They have contributed to its ideological framework, they have provided resources to vanguard groups, they have contributed skills appropriately.

While such a study in no way reflects our very limited position it does point out the possibilities for a student movement in social change.

While as students our position is presently constrained by our class positions, our conflicting ideologies, repression, etc., this is by no means a static state of affairs. If students are to be integrated into the larger movement for change, the student movement has a duty to reflect a progressive profile. To do this the student movement's first and major task must be to assess and relate itself to the broader society and processes of liberation, and thus in a situation of conflict, an identification of and with those groups which play a progressive role. The ideological exploration and strategies of the student movement can then become directed to complement the roles of these groups.

The political activity of students must of necessity then be constantly assessed against these roles. Logically then, student activity must become a process of strategizing and planning in the long term. The final - not the immediate - goals of the student movement must be defined and all activity planned towards that point. Activity must not be spontaneous but a progression based on a continuing analysis of past failures and successes.