

SUMMARY OF CONGRESS REPORTS AND RECOMENDATIONS FOR 1981

University and Education

Course reform has to be considered in the context of short term, medium and long term goals. Our short and medium term goals should be linked to our long term goal, democratic education in a democratic society. So short and medium victories should not be seen as ends but as means to attaining this goal.

- 1.) Course reform can thus be a medium term strategy
 - a) to change content and emphasis in courses
 - b) as a mobilising issue and learning experience.
- 2.) Students could be mobilised around
 - a) academic incompetence of many lecturers
 - b) structure of academic year eg. emphasis on exams
 - c) teaching methods.
 - d) role of HSRC
- 3.) Student representation on university bodies should be considered in the light of the dangers of co-option and thus should only occur if it can be effective and if representatives are able to report back to their student constituency.

Social Action

- 1.) Since the role of students is a supportive one, responding to various forms of resistance emerging, a "blue print" could not be discussed. Yet broad principles should be kept in mind;
 - a) Students should have a thorough understanding of the political economy of South Africa.
 - b) Students should become involved at the request of organisations or groups working towards democratic change.
 - c) Student participation may contribute to fulfilling short-term goals, these goals should be directed towards progressive and democratic long term goals.
- 2.) Suggestions for activities;
 - a) Critique of social work departments, campus organisations and outside organisations involved in social action.
 - b) Compiling a reading list or dossier.

Student Services

1.) Culture

- a) Through the medium of entertainment much awareness can be created.
- b) Students should not restrict themselves to conventional forms of promoting culture. Alternatives could be graffiti walls and guerilla theatre as well as theatre, photography etc. workshops and seminars.
- c) Suggestions;
 - i. An SRC member on each campus should be responsible for co-ordinating cultural activities
 - ii. SRC Cultural Week including a competition, theme, movies, plays etc. could be organised
 - iii. Film festivals (which are also good fund raisers)
 - iv. Social history tours
 - v. Lunch time concerts and videos
 - vi. a cultural publication including chapters on lay out, silkscreening, etc. with contributions from students and non-students.
 - vii. discounts should be sought for cultural activities.

2.) Bookshop

- a) With the abolition of Resale Price Maintenance the opportunity exists for students to push hard for better and cheaper books.
- b) Suggestions;
 - i. Wits has acquired a 10% discount for cash from Campus Books and a 'liason person' to advise on price and availability of books.
 - ii. Faculty Councils should be encouraged to examine booklists and see

that only essential books are prescribed.

c) Students should be informed that they should not buy books until lecturers tell them what is needed.

3.) Creche

- a) SRC's in conjunction with campus women's groups should be responsible for a feasibility study into the need for and the setting up of a creche.
- b) Staff and students should be included.
- c) Representations should be made to the university administration and an effective publicity and consciousness-raising campaign should be conducted.

4.) Accommodation

- a) Digs-swopping schemes especially for vacations should be co-ordinated by SRCs.
- b) The issue of accommodation for black students should be taken up by SRCs. University administrations must be required to unequivocally state their position on the issue of black accommodation.

5.) Handbook and NSDS

- a) Should be updated every 18 months
- b) SRC member responsible for student services should be responsible for extending the NSDS.
- c) A big publicity drive must be launched in Orientation Week for the handbook and cards.
- d) The handbook should be made available at other places of higher education and off-campus bookshops.
- e) University student cards should suffice for students registered at the university in that centre.

6.) Health

Existing Campus Health services should be investigated and encouraged to expand where necessary.

7.) SASTS

Campuses should ensure that SASTS is the only travel service allowed onto campuses and should try encourage academics, admin staff and students to use this non-profit making travel service.

Resource Role of Students

1.) The privileged position of students gives them access to material and intellectual resources which could be harnessed for progressive social change. These resources include;

- a) printing
- b) media; posters, display material, pamphlets.
- c) SVLO/SVLTF lectures can be used by other groups
- d) cars
- e) fundraising
- f) press publicity
- g) summer schools
- h) research

2.) Resource Centres

- a) Should be extensively advertised
- b) Contact should exist with the library
- c) National co-ordination and exchanges can be facilitated with the help of SASPU and the campus radio network.

Socialisation

This committee discussed particular areas of socialisation i.e. militarism, sexism, religion, race and class and came up with a few recommendations;

- a) When Project Comms focus on militarisation they could look at the role of

of ex-servicemen, Namibia and point out what social conditions necessitate an army.

b) "Counter-socialisation" must be facilitated by the style of presentation of publications etc.

c) A focus week on socialisation which could include a study of school text books, a discussion on the family etc.

Contact

a) Contact should not be for contacts' sake but for facilitating the communication of ideas among groups which are committed to the same principles as NUSAS.

b) Contact should be improved with;

i. progressive thinking students at other institutions of higher learning eg. JCE and Stellenbosch

ii. school students

iii. sympathetic professionals and organisations.

c) To improve contact between NUSAS campuses, it was suggested that a group of NUSAS students from one centre spend a weekend at a different centre.

Political Action

1.) The 1980 theme was reviewed and political considerations for 1981 were discussed i.e.

a) The balance between stimulating 'emotionalism' and awareness and analysis.

b) The differences between big and small campuses.

c) The educative role of students and their supportive role.

d) The need to maintain one's campus base whilst giving support to worker and community struggles.

e) The balance between short and long term goals.

2.) The 1981 political programme should include;

a) a focus on education because;

i. it was broad enough to encompass numerous issues.

ii. educational and national issues are highly interlinked

iii. there is a need to expose the 'victories' of the new educational policies of the state.

b) incorporating the Exposing Total Strategy theme.

c) focussing on democracy;

i. to highlight the contradictions and inadequacies of democratic elitism and present the struggle as one for participatory democracy.

ii. to publicize the call by thousands of South Africans for a democratic society.

iii. to emphasize the need for democracy at the workplace, in education, in the family etc.

3.) Various areas were considered for focussing on in 1981;

a) Community eg. housing and boycott issues,

b) Education - where much political activity is expected in the new year.

c) Presidents Council - a UCT academic is on the PC.

d) Militarisation -

e) Namibia.

Health Committee

1.) The links between health and society were discussed. In the struggle for a democratic society, health issues can serve as a focus for mobilisation and organisation. Students have a part to play in raising these issues and in support of progressive action.

2.) Activities envisaged include;

a) A Health Focus week

b) Research eg into the structure of present services and recommendations for future services.

c) writing articles for SASPU etc. and Critical Health.

d) contact with progressive staff

e) establishment of resource centres etc etc...

A motion at Congress called on the Directive to publicize the Congress' condemnation of MASA and actively involve itself in setting up an alternative organisation.

Law Committee

The committee recommended the establishment of a National Law Directive which would

- a) co-ordinate the holding of a National Conference
- b) focus on contextualising law
- c) provide resources and legal advice

etc. etc.

Womens Committee

- 1.) Problems and weaknesses were discussed.
- 2.) A structure and definite programme should be worked out before Orientation Week.
- 3.) High profile activities focussing on women's issues should be followed up by seminars, discussion, reading and study groups.
- 4.) The struggle for women's liberation should be seen in the context of the broader struggle.
- 5.) A definite stand against the sexist practices in Rag could be made but each campus should do what was within their capabilities without jeopardising their own progress.

Religious Action

- 1.) The relationship between NUSAS and religious (particularly Christian) groupings on campuses was discussed.
- 2.) It was recommended that NUSAS and religious groups could co-operate on focuses such as socialisation, militarism, social action, church and the state etc.
- 3.) Religious societies should co-ordinate their activities with other NUSAS and SRC groups and help fundraise during strikes, boycotts etc.

Labour Committee

- 1.) Labour as an issue should not only be dealt with by groups such as Wages Comm but should be presented to campuses in more accessible ways by bodies such as Project Comms
- 2.) National co-ordination was regarded as essential and could take the form of
 - a) national labour weeks taking place simultaneously on each campus
 - b) weekend labour seminar
 - c) constant contact and exchange of material
- 3.) Research could cover the following areas
 - a) for off-campus struggles
 - b) to add to Social History tours
 - c) on contemporary labour law and legislation
 - d) on industrial health.

Teacher Training committee

- 1.) This committee discussed teacher training at university and at teacher training colleges.
- 2.) They hoped to make student teachers aware of the role they are fulfilling by focussing on issues such as membership to TASA, disparities between black and white education and by constantly questioning government education.

Student/Staff Liason

1.) SVLTF/SVLO

- a) Students should have greater control of SVLTF/SVLO resources.
- b) Overseas visiting lectures should be shared.
- c) SVLTF/SVLO should continually add to the NUSAS lecture resource list.

2.) Staff/student Contact

- a) There should be increased contact between students and progressive staff to mobilise progressive staff on the HSRC programme, financing of research etc. and to develop co-operative networks of students and staff.
- b) Progressive academics should be encouraged to visit smaller campuses and lecture courses, seminars etc. should be arranged for them.
- c) To lobby appointment committees to employ progressive lecturers.

Republic Day Festival

- 1.) The Republic of South Africa Constitution Act is designed to maintain the subordination of the majority of South Africans. The festival is thus a blatant denial of the legitimacy of their struggle.
- 2.) Anti-Republic Day Festival committees should be formed on each campus.
- 3.) Pressure should be applied to the University administrations to withdraw from the CUP exhibition in Durban.
- 4.) There should be an intensive 'focus-period' leading up to May 31st.

Fundraising Committee

- 1.) Fundraising has become an extremely important aspect of student politics and where students can play a valuable support role.
- 2.) FONS, an organisation whereby non-student supporters of NUSAS can keep in contact with the Union, will also allow for people to contribute financially to NUSAS.
- 3.) Ideas of fundraising include;
 - a) films and videos; possibly organising premiers
 - b) food eg. cake sales
 - c) items eg. second hand record sales
 - d) concerts, parties
 - e) competitions
 - f) sale of publications
 - g) T-shirts, buttons and stickers

Technology Committee

- 1.) The committee realized the need to question the use and application of technological methods towards the long term goal of transforming society.
- 2.) Technology societies should be encouraged on each campus to
 - a) develop a theoretical understanding of the nature of technology
 - b) use SVLTF to bring out lecturers who could lecture on 3rd world technology, etc.
 - c) produce articles and a publication
- 3.) Contact between different technology groups was stressed.

Orientation/Communication

- 1.) Orientation Comms must play leadership role and attempt to awaken critical thought.
- 2.) New people recruited in Orientation Week should be incorporated into activities as soon as possible.
- 3.) A weekend seminar for new recruits is useful.
- 4.) Alternative and original ideas for media and social activities should be considered.
- 5.) Functions such as cocktail parties for more informal meetings with first years could be held.

Sport Committee

- 1.) Sport occupies a central place in the 'South African way of life' and therefore becomes a crucially important area for political struggle.

- 2.) Suggestions by the committee included;
 - a) to encourage the formation of non-racial sporting sides on campuses and to suggest that they affiliate to SACOS leagues.
 - b) to use the student press to expose State moves in sport and to publicise SACOS
 - c) to run a National Focus Week on sport

Political Arts

- 1.) Concepts of 'art' and 'culture' need to be critically re-evaluated. Art can be a very powerful medium for the transmission of ideas
- 2.) Literature
Possibilities for student action in this field were discussed and include;
 - a) attempting course reform in all language depts.
 - b) setting up informal reading groups.
 - c) reviewing relevant literature in student publications
 - d) writing stories, poems etc which could be used during boycotts etc.
- 3.) Film
Films as well as photographs, videos and slides can be used to put across political messages through festivals, exhibitions etc.
- 4.) Art
 - a) Real political art should be accessible .
 - b) Silkscreening, printing and photography workshops could be held.
 - c) Art students should set up seminar groups on political art
 - d) Liason should be set up between different faculties i.e. ballet, drama, music and art.
 - e) Posters could be used not only to publicise events but also as political statements.
- 5.) Drama/Theatre
 - a) The importance of guerilla theatre to offer information and analysis was discussed.
- 6.) Music
 - a) Music could be used at political meetings
 - b) Writing on music on campus publications as well as seminars and lectures could bring students in contact with socially relevant themes via contemporary music.