

NATIONAL POLITICAL EDUCATION SYLLABUS

Background.

SASCO as an organisation identifies itself as an intellectual hub of the Mass Democratic Movement. Prime among its strategic duties is the grooming and development of young and progressive intelligentsia that will occupy the political and the critical intellectual space in society in advancement and defence of the progressive agenda and perspective. The crop of the cadre that we seek to develop as an organisation must be the one that understands the strategic thrust of the South African revolution in its proper historical context particularly as it relates to the terrain of education and its relationship with society in general. The logic that this duty also placed at the door of SASCO is premised from an understanding of the position that SASCO occupies as an organisation in that it is located in the education and higher education sector in particular.

The organization has on several congresses resolved to prioritize political education and this resolution has always been referred to Branch Executive Committees and Provincial Executive Committees. It is against this background that this NEC has resolved to foreground political education in its programme. The NEC therefore has resolved to provide the overall syllabus for political education in all branches for implementation at the levels of branches by BEC's with the help of PEC's and REC's. The trend of popularizing and making fashionable the concept of political education is the one that we seek to rebuild once again in this organization. There is a deliberate emphasis on the responsibility of all structures in the programme of political education because political education is a shared responsibility.

The national political syllabus will be a guide to structures as to the preferred material that must be taught and debated by the organization and its members as part of ideological training. The political syllabus will contain content of each of the important topics so as to indicate key areas that a discussion around a certain topic must cover. The syllabus will also contain the preferred structure that will deliver the political education in a branch.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SYLLABUS.

- Improvement of political education standards in branches of SASCO
- Introduction of common and systematic political education plan in SASCO
- Reduction of dependency of branches on other structures for political education programme whilst improving co-operation between BEC's, REC's and PEC' matters of political education.
- Improving the overall ideological awareness of Branches of SASCO with particular reference to leadership structures.

- To develop members' understanding of the South African revolution in its historical and international context
- To build and enhance members' organisational skills.
- To develop members' capacity to interpret and effectively participate in policy processes within the movement.
- To develop members' understanding of gender relations and emancipation of women

STRUCTURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This is not an exhaustive list of objectives of this document, but these are the points that stand out as the most significant. We however must state some of the reasons why political education has not succeeded in branches. These include the inability of leadership to harness the human resources available to it and its failure to utilize the strength of the convocats and the Mass Democratic Movement in general to its maximum advantage. We are required to strengthen our structural co-ordination as well as utilize to our full advantage the organizational machinery relation to the issue of political education. There are some necessary structures that must be set up to take charge of the process of political education in Branches, Regions and Provinces.

In each of these structures the leadership must set up Political Education Committees as a sub committee of the BEC. The structure (BEC) would then bear the responsibility of crafting clear terms of reference for these Committees. The Political Education Committee shall be responsible for rolling out the syllabus and drafting a coherent political education schedule and programme to be integrated to the general Programme Of Action of the BEC, REC or PEC. In relation to REC's and PEC's the programme must be dovetailed to the schedules of branches to facilitate capacity to participate in those of branches even though they must have their own programme related to political education.

The Political Education Committees shall be entrusted with the responsibility of leading the implementation of the political education programme in consultation with the secretary of the structure. It is the assertion of this paper that the Political Education Committee shall be comprised of five members with consideration of balance between BEC and non-BEC members to ensure that the necessary capacity and experience is included. In the case of branches, the Political Education Officer shall chair Political Education Committee. The Sub Committee shall also be entrusted with the responsibility of identifying comrades and individuals that will be responsible for delivering classes on different topics on different days and be responsible for their co-ordination both within the branch or from outside in liaison with the relevant structures.

THE SYLLABUS

1. HISTORY OF SASCO AND EVOLUTION OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA.

This topic shall consider the following areas:

- ***THE FORMATION OF NUSAS***
- ***THE FORMATION OF SASO***
- ***THE RISE OF AZASO AND THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT***
- ***THE FORMATION OF SASNCO***
- ***THE MERGER OF SANSKO AND NUSAS AND THE FORMATION OF SASCO.***
- ***THE (5) POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF SASCO***
- ***THE IDEOLOGICAL CHARACTER/OUTLOOK OF SASCO.***

NOTES:

The above mentioned range of topics must be interpreted within the context of the state of resistance against the colonialist regime and general political conditions in South Africa at each of the times reflected above. The aim of this topic is to ensure that the recipient has the succinct grasp of the stages that the student movement went through to arrive at the point where SASCO was formed and the political conditions and political forces at play that informed each of the fundamental stages of both political and organizational development. As part of the expected outcome the in-depth understanding of the five guiding political principles of SASCO must be attained. The member must also grasp the political and ideological outlook of SASCO and its location on the South African Political spectrum. Variances may be applicable in approach from one person to the other but these are supreme outcomes expected.

2. ORGANISATIONAL THEORY, CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE

This topic shall have to consider the following areas:

- ***Definition and characterization of Culture in general and Congress tradition and revolutionary culture in particular.***
- ***Hierarchy and decision making process.***
- ***Status of elected leadership and duties.***
- ***Internal democracy and membership (dissent and difference)***
- ***Democratic centralism (is it truly democratic?)***
- ***Discipline and behavioral standards befitting of a cadre. (Revolutionary morality, fallacy or reality?)***

NOTES:

It must be noted here that the major objective is to acquaint the member with the general culture of the movement in relation to internal democracy, use of structures for voicing dissent and dissatisfaction, philosophical foundations of the principle of democratic centralism and its implications in as far as organizational efficiency is concerned and all that relates thereto. The member must also be acquainted with the normal discipline of a cadre or the debate if really it is scientific to speak of one at all.

3. THE STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE OF SASCO ON TRANSFORMATION (SPOT DOCUMENT)

This topic shall have to consider the following areas:

- ***The use and significance of SPOT document to SASCO. (Why SPOT?)***
- ***Characterization of the current global political conjuncture. (From imperialism to globalization, what are we talking about?)***
- ***The current global balance of forces (forces of production and power relations).***
- ***The national balance of forces and the National Democratic Revolution.***
- ***Strategy and tactics conceptualized (which is which?)***
- ***Strategy and tactics (the approach of SASCO to struggle)***
- ***The four pillars of SASCO unpacked (POLICY, CAMPUS, COMMUNITY AND INTERNATIONAL WORK)***

NOTES:

With regards to this topic it must be understood that we are dealing with the official perspective of SASCO in as far as the political situation is concerned and what we is essentially the strategy document of SASCO so proper understanding of the political context is cardinal. We feel though that we must add that demystification of some political concepts must be done throughout the process e.g. globalization. It might be fair to assert though that thorough discussion of this paper might not be done over one session and that this discussion must be understood more as an on going discussion than an one event discussion. Understanding of this paper is so cardinal to members of SASCO that it simply cannot be relegated to those who are far from the organization itself. As a policy document the SPOT document must be a working document in all structures.

4. THE GENDER STRUGGLE AND WOMEN EMANCIPATION

This topic shall have to consider the following areas:

- *The historical evolution of societal gender relations and the division of labour (Marxist conception as a key tool)*
- *The relationship between the patriarchal institution and capitalism (in whose interest?)*
- *The negative effects of patriarchy on men (African culture or smoke screen?)*
- *The Different approaches to solution (Women specific approach, gendered approach or the Liberal approach?)*
- *Approach to feminist ideas*
- *SASCO policy on gender in proper context. (Quotas and other long-term approach statements, move towards eradication?)*

NOTES:

This topic might cross over to other topics as result of the central role the gender questions have on other topics but it is wise that an attempt to get to detail on this matter is made honestly. It is important also for all of us to understand that the point of argument must be kept within the Marxist interpretation as a very important tool of analysis for the progressive movement and ourselves as an organization. The involvement of both male and female comrades in this discussion is important. We also must state outright that the official approach of SASCO is the gendered approach and we must spend a lot of effort in understanding the distinction of this approach to other approaches. Understanding of Marxist teachings on this issue is fundamental.

5. THE HISTORY OF THE ANC AND THE HISTORY SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE

This topic shall consider the following areas and epochs:

- *The pre-union (pre 1910) struggles and battles against colonialism.*
- *The 1910 Union Pact and its historic implications in South Africa*
- *The founding of the ANC*
- *The 1913 land Act and the consolidation of white economy.*
- *The method of struggle in Pre-1940'S*
- *The impact of the 1917 Russian Revolution on the ANC*
- *The formation of the ANC youth league*
- *The radicalization of the mode of struggle of the ANC 1950's and The Congress of the people*
- *The formation of Armed Wing of the ANC and its activities*
- *The banning of the ANC and ANC in exile and the subsequent Morogoro Conference of the ANC.*
- *The ANC and pan-African and Black Consciousness Movement.*

- ***The ANC and the unionized workers and the working class.***
- ***The UDF as part of the broad struggle.***
- ***The unbanning of the ANC***
- ***The negotiated transition.***

NOTES:

The point of this is not only related to the telling a story about the evolution of the organization but it explains the different eras in which the ANC existed and the direct political conditions on the ground that made it to take different approaches to the struggle for liberation. The understanding of each epoch is important to facilitate ability to put into context important and strategic decisions that the ANC took at different times. Co-operation with the MDM is very important on topic like these. The exercise must be combined with the explanation of the birth of the revolutionary alliance out of these conditions of struggle with the Communist Party of South Africa.

6. THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

The major areas in this topic are as follows:

- ***What is the National democratic Revolution***
- ***The “National” in the NDR***
- ***The “Democratic” in the NDR***
- ***The “Revolution” in the NDR***
- ***The motive forces in the NDR? (Who are those and why? Can everyone and anyone be?)***
- ***The character of the NDR.***
- ***Major questions of the South African revolution***
 - a) The national question
 - b) The class question
 - c) The gender question
- ***The nature and the role of the transformative developmental state***
- ***Popular movement for transformation (which role does it play)***
- ***The role of students in the NDR and the approach of SASCO.***
- ***NDR and Socialism. (Does it take us there? Does it have to?)***

NOTES:

This document forms the gist of the logic of our revolutionary programme and is one of the most profound strategy articulating documents of our movement. There can be many important topics that can be derived from this one and there is no orthodox manner of approaching this discussion as long as the fundamentals are kept in place. Many concepts that are entailed on this topic are used as the general political slang that is found in circles of our organization and often they are used without regard to correct interpretation and understanding of their original meaning which places duty upon all of us to explain them

thoroughly in the context of this paper lest they be misunderstood and our objective be defeated. It is suggested that a wide range of sources and perspectives are consulted in dealing with this topic. Same as the SPOT document this document must be seen more as a recurring and continuous discussion than as a stale debate fit for refrigeration. Creativity is encouraged to enhance the flow of discussion at all times.

7. MARXIST PHILOSOPHY AND MARXISM BASICS

This topic shall have to consider the following areas

- ***What is Marxism? (Of what use is it to us?)***
- ***Idealism versus Materialism (why is the latter scientific)***
- ***Metaphysics versus Dialectics***
- ***Historical Materialism***
- ***The history of the nation states***
- ***Historical evolution of the world economy***
- ***State and the political economy***
- ***Colonialism and neo-colonialism***

NOTES:

The school of Marxism is important to all comrades of the organisation. Again, the understanding of the Marxist doctrine and philosophy requires a lot of personal development and personal initiative from individual members hence it is advised that Marxist literature in its widest forms should be made available to all members. The branches must extend and enrich their own syllabus on this topic with the understanding that knowledge in this field should be a life long programme as the above-mentioned topics cannot be exhaustive.

8. POWER AND HEGEMONY

This topic shall have to consider the following areas:

- ***The Marxist conception of power (working class power?)***
- ***The Marxist conception of hegemony***
- ***The differentiation between power and hegemony***
- ***The relationship between power and hegemony***
- ***The state and hegemony***
- ***The societal battle of ideas***
- ***The study of the currently hegemonic forces.***

NOTES:

The understanding of this field will help the member to relate to the issues concerned with influence of our movement on society in general and the importance of analysis of that influence from time to time. How that discourse is important to the revolution. Research on this is vital as its sources are very diverse.

SOURCES TO BE CONSULTED FOR INFORMATION.

1. THE HISTORY AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT, sources are as follows:

- a) The ABC of SASCO (THE 2004 EDITION). Drafted by the national executive committee of SASCO 2004. *(Attached to this syllabus)*
- b) STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA
(A study of three student movements illustrating student problems and the Government's response) *(Attached to this syllabus)*

2. ORGANISATIONAL THEORY, CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE, sources are as follows:

- a) SASCO Organizational theory and discipline (2004 NEC political literature)
(This document will be attached to this syllabus.)
- b) Members are encouraged to make use of

3. STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE ON TRANSFORMATION (SPOT DOCUMENT), sources are as follows.

- a) The Strategic perspective on transformation document of SASCO (5th series 2004 A political guide to action) *(to be attached to this syllabus)*
- b) The National Democratic Revolution. By Jeremy Cronin 1996
- c) The Strategy and tactics of the ANC Post Polokwane addition.

4. GENDER STRUGGLE AND WOMEN EMANCIPATION sources are as follows:

- a) The Gender policy of SASCO (As adopted by successive national congresses of SASCO) *(attached to this syllabus)*
- b) The Need for a Gendered Perspective from the ANC and its Cadres (ANC document on gender) *(attached to this syllabus)*

5. THE HISTORY OF THE ANC AND THE HISTORY SOUTH AFRICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE, sources are as follows:

- a) 95 YEARS OF STRUGGLE- A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ANC HISTORY – WHERE DO WE COME FROM (ANC YL DOCUMENT 2008) *(attached to this syllabus)*
- b) THE HISTORY OF THE ANC BY Govan Mbeki

6. THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION, sources are as follows:

- a) Thinking About The Concept "National Democratic Revolution"
By Jeremy Cronin 1996. (Attached to this syllabus)
- b) The National Democratic Revolution - Is It Still On Track?
By Joel Netshitenzhe 1996. (Attached to this syllabus)
- c) The South African road to Socialism: Build Working Class Hegemony, For Socialist Oriented National Democratic Revolution. (SACP CC 2008) **(To be attached to this syllabus)**

7. MARXIST PHILOSOPHY AND MARXISM BASICS

The approach to this topic is that members are access the material on www.newyouth.com as well as www.marxist.com utilizing the portal of MARXISM FAQ. We recommend a gradual ascendance from simple to more complicated topics. The order of these must take serious regard of the suggested topics in this syllabus in the different areas that are reflected above.

8. POWER AND HEGEMONY

Same as above the approach to this topic is that members are access the material on www.newyouth.com as well as www.marxist.com utilizing the portal of MARXISM FAQ. We recommend a gradual ascendance from simple to more complicated topics. The order of these must take serious regard of the suggested topics in this syllabus.

CONCLUSION

We must state that the archiving of political material in the organization in dire state and the implications are that the organization struggles to keep record of the intellectual productions and publications. It is advised that we take full advantage of the electronic medium (**the internet**), as it is in it that we can find most of the information. It as a result of this fact hat there are several web sites that we are going to recommend for use by the branches to down load most of the information on several ideological issues. The webs sites of SASCO (www.sasco.org.za) the ANC (www.anc.org.za) the SACP (www.sacp.org.za) COSATU (www.cosatu.org.za) are the most primary ones. We must further add that the Umrhabulo portal contains vast knowledge in relation to the general South African struggle and the international struggle for justice. Branches are encouraged to utilize these recourses with sufficient attention to necessary detail. The members of branches are encouraged to write discussion documents in each branch.

The NEC in collaboration with lower structures of the organization shall put monitoring systems in place to monitor the implementation of this syllabus by the relevant committees and this monitoring will assist the organization to evaluate on its own if the programmes of political education are making the required impact. The members of the branch are encouraged to read and write and account for such, as each branch must produce at least three discussion documents per term of office. Communication inn this

regard will be forwarded by the National Executive Committee of the South African Students Congress.

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***NATIONAL POLITICAL EDUCATION SYLLABUS OF
THE SOUTH AFRICAN STUDEN'S CONGRESS (SASCO)***

2008-2009



**ISSUED BY: THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
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