

The 2011 Convention of the National Students Federation (Punjab, Pakistan)

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Convention, 2011

Faisalabad, 26th November 2011 - The National Students Federation (NSF) concluded its historic Punjab convention in Faisalabad on Saturday with a vow to revive progressive politics in Pakistan and empower young people with the tools to initiate a process of genuine political and social change in an increasingly divided polity. The second day of the two-day event featured a massive Student-Worker-Peasant rally from Dhobi Ghat to the district courts in the morning, followed by a public jalsa at the Quaid-e-Azam Hall in which other progressive student groups, political parties, trade unions and intellectuals also participated.

Speaking on the occasion, new office bearers Irfan Chaudhry (president), Alia Amirali (general secretary), Muhammad Babar (senior vice president), Nasir Sohail (vice president), Ali Hasan Fatemi (information secretary), Ali Raza (joint secretary) and Usman Chaudhry (finance secretary) said that the NSF seeks to revive progressive politics, which in its heyday of the 1960s and 1970s brought together all working people, including students, to resist the dictates of imperialism, and Pakistan's propertied classes and military establishment. They pointed out that this alliance of students and working people was definitely crushed under the Zia dictatorship and replaced by a culture of violence and mediocrity, both on the campuses of educational institutions and in the politics of the country more generally. The NSF convention is the first step towards a repeal of this destructive, reactionary politics by a regenerated progressive political alternative.

The NSF leaders said that in today's Pakistan too NSF and other progressives seek to bring an end to the three-tiered class system of education, oppose the commercialization and privatization of education, struggle for a lifting of the ban on student unions, build a genuine welfare state based on the equality of all nationalities, and to end imperialist control over the economy and polity. The NSF criticized the contemporary discourse and politics of 'change' championed by organisations such as the Tehrik-e-Insaf, noting that these new contenders for power are simply trying to dupe working people into believing that real change is imminent when in fact the emphasis is on a change of faces rather than a change in the oppressive system that exists across the country.

Issuing the oath to new office bearers, Worker's Party Pakistan president Abid Hasan Minto said that it is essential for the young people of today's Pakistan to come together under the guise of a progressive student organization to arrest the process of fragmentation that is quickly affecting more and more regions. He noted that Baloch youth are disaffected, Punjabi youth are indifferent, Pashtun youth are under the grip of extremism, and the list could go on. Only an organization like the NSF can bring all of these young people together and build a popular movement for justice, peace and genuine freedom.

The convention ended with performances by local musicians and poets as well as well-known 'Sufi' rocker Arieab Azhar.

Student rally pictures:

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.275249972521461.62829.247826218597170&type=1>

Convention Pictures

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.275254515854340.62831.247826218597170&type=1>

Arieb Azhar performing at NSF Convention

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.275525135827278.62887.247826218597170&type=1>

Pictures on Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nsfonline/sets/72157628170181267/>

News Coverage

NSF brings 'national' back into national reconciliation: Ahmed Yousuf , *Pakistan Today*

See on ESSF (article 23589), [Pakistan: National Students Federation brings 'national' back into national reconciliation](#)

This is what politics looks like: Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, *The News*, 27 Nov,2011

<http://jang.com.pk/thenews/nov2011-weekly/nos-27-11-2011/pol1.htm#8>

NSF convention: 'Progressive' students of Pakistan unite!: Umair Rasheed, *Express Tribune*

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/298178/nsf-convention-progressive-students-of-pakistan-unite/>

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* <http://nsfonline.wordpress.com/convention2011/>