

**national union of
south african students**

NUSAS

202 Film Centre, 17 Jamieson Street, Cape Town. Cables: NATUSAS Phone: 27831

9th August, 1973.

TO: SRC members at affiliated centres
Members of University Councils
Members of University Senates
Honorary Office-bearers
Students' Service Projects Trust

MEMORANDUM ON THE RAISING OF AFFILIATION FEES OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS.

i. Introduction

The National Union of South African Students, which was founded in 1924, is a confederation of Students' Representative Councils (SRC's). It remains the only national South African Student Organisation which is open to all South African students.

The aims and objects of NUSAS are set out in its Constitution as follows:

NUSAS believes that students as a group in society have duties and obligations to their fellow-students, the academic community, and society as a whole; these duties and obligations are understood to be 'to pursue truth through study and the acquisition of knowledge', 'to disseminate this knowledge in society', and 'to employ and act on such knowledge.'

In pursuance of these aims, NUSAS runs various programmes and projects. It has moved increasingly in recent years from being a "talking" organisation to a "doing" organisation.

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS:

The educational wing, NUSED, has been a major agency in offering aid to students in need:

Prison Education:

This programme provides study grants and text-books to people serving prison sentences, regardless of the educational standard reached, the reason for their detention, or their ethnic group. In 1972 alone, about R8,000 was disbursed in this way.

Medical Scholarships:

This programme made NUSED one of the major medical scholarship agencies in the country. Scholarships are given on the basis of need and ability without regard to ethnic group. In 1972, nearly R9,000 was distributed. The programme has recently been handed over to a Trust established by NUSAS for this purpose. (Chairman: Dr. Marius Barnard.)

General Loans and Scholarships:

This is one of the oldest programmes, offering study loans and scholarships to students in all University fields. It, too, has recently been handed over to an Independent Trust. (Chairman : Prof. D.G. Cilham, Head of Department of English, UCT). Nused remains the major fund-raising agency for both this Trust and the Medical Scholarship Trust.

NUSED is also actively engaged in researching and documenting constructive ideas concerning both schools and University education. A regular publication FUNDA, is produced - this contains new thinking on educational problems. NUSAS was instrumental in providing the background information for the 1970 Education Reform Programme - which researched present Student preferences on education, and NUSAS provided the initial impetus for the 1972 "Free Education" campaign in which students called for a more equitable provision of educational facilities for all South Africans.

The constituent SRC's are at present engaged in eliciting further facts which may be helpful with regard to the University education system, and in July, this year an Education Conference was held in Johannesburg.

CULTURAL PROJECTS:

The cultural wing, Aquarius, ran an Arts Festival in Johannesburg in July. Last year, Aquarius ran a National Drama Festival (Cape Town, June) a Winterschool (Cape Town, July), and a National Drama Workshop (Johannesburg, December). Aquarius has organised on each constituent campus an on-going campaign, questioning the present restrictive censorship practices, and has also focussed attention on issues concerning conscientious objection and pollution. Music - ranging from classical to modern - has been a further area in which Aquarius operates. Aquarius is also responsible for publications.

PUBLICATIONS:

- (a) A weekly NUSAS NEWSLETTER is published, and circulated to SRC's, local and overseas organisations, and interested individuals. It contains news and views on South Africa, education, NUSAS and students and student organisations generally.
- (b) A booklet, YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS has recently been published. This gives students (and others) information on their rights in a wide variety of circumstances.
- (c) A booklet YOU AND YOUR PASS was published last year in four languages, and widely distributed. It outlines the rights and legal duties of Africans under the "pass" regulations.
- (d) A FRESHERS' PAMPHLET is distributed each year to new students. The pamphlet provides basic details of the principles and programmes of NUSAS.
- (e) Aquarius was instrumental, in collaboration with the South African National Student Press Association in producing one issue of a national student publication, but further progress was halted owing to a lack of funds.
- (f) Various publications concerned with creative writing and social comment, have been brought out on each campus.

WELFARE AND SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS:

NUSWEL is concerned with the concept of true community development, on a self-help basis. Aside from the normal wide range of welfare activities - in which it has co-operated with organisations such as Kupugani and SHAWCO - NUSWEL has worked in other interesting spheres.

Building

In Johannesburg students are involved in helping a community to build a school. It is hoped to undertake much more work in this area, if finances permit.

Wages and Economics

NUSWEL has performed a large amount of research into the labour field. It has presented memoranda at Wage Board hearings, distributed information, and studied particular labour areas (including the Universities themselves).

Literacy

NUSWEL has run several week-end literacy courses, in which students are trained by professionals to teach members of various communities to read and write. NUSWEL at present pays for a full-time literacy organiser in Durban.

STUDENT BENEFITS

The National Union provides the following benefits for students:

1. Student loans: Since the Loan Fund was established in 1959, about 1200 needy students have been provided with interest-free loans for study purposes.
2. General Scholarships: The general scholarships programme, now handled by S.A. Students' Education Trust, offers scholarships to needy students at all South African universities.
3. Medical Scholarships: Since 1965, about 200 medical students have been assisted with scholarships. The programme started in a small way, with only two scholarships - since then it has grown considerably, and is still expanding.
4. Student Travel: For nearly 50 years, NUSAS has arranged student tours overseas. The travel department has now been replaced by an independent non-profit student-controlled company, the S.A. Student Travel Service, which organises low-cost tours and charter flights. Many thousands of students have obtained low-cost travel through NUSAS, and the activity is constantly expanding.
5. International Student Identity Card: As a result of NUSAS efforts, the S.A. Students Travel Service has become the sole agent in South Africa for the International Student Identity Card. This card, issued by the international Student Travel Conference (of which SASTS is the sole South African member), enables students to obtain reduced travel and accommodation costs overseas. Other facilities are also available to bearers of this card.

GENERAL

NUSAS holds an annual National Seminar to acquaint new students with some of the problems of our society; it keeps a very extensive press-cutting library on matters of interest to students and members of the public; and in 1972 it organised the first student non-racial sport conference (this activity is to be expanded in 1974, with appointment of a full-time organiser).

As a result of some of these activities, and the strong and unequivocal stand of NUSAS with regard to civil liberties, it has been increasingly under attack from the authorities. This culminated this year in the banning without trial of eight people associated with NUSAS - including three full-time office-bearers.

2. COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

With its 30,000 students and 8 centres, the National Union is a great democratic pyramid. Students elect representative Councils (S.R.C.'s) which decide on affiliation to the National Union, and at the Annual Congress make all the policy and elect directly the Office Bearers of the National Union.

The S.R.C. are therefore central to the National Union and there is thus no individual membership of the National Union, or any compulsory or automatic membership. The S.R.C. affiliates itself only, on behalf of its student electorate. The students are thereby entitled to participate through election and representation in the making of all National Union policy, and may make use of the benefits or privileges and participate in any programmes of the National Union.

Individual students are not bound in any way to the policy of the National Union by this system of centre affiliation, and nor in fact are the individual S.R.C.'s, all of whom are free to disassociate themselves from, or disagree with all aspects of the policy of the National Union.

Centre affiliation thus carries the benefit for students of involvement in the National Union, but with no onus of association, and scope for disassociation and disagreement.

The role of the S.R.C. is then central, and it is the S.R.C. who decide to make payment of affiliation fees. The system of automatic membership was dropped seven years ago in favour of the present system, centre affiliation.

5. AFFILIATION FEES

The current affiliation fees are either :

- (i) R 250. per thousand students (for parts of one thousand R 25. per hundred students.)
- or
- (ii) Less than 2 000 students R 500.
Between 2 000 students and 4 000 students R 1 000.
Between 4 000 students and 6 000 students R 1 500.
Over 8 000 students R 2 000.

In view of the fact that the size of affiliated centres ranges from less than 500 students to over 10 000 students, it is obvious that some system of determining both voting rights at National Student Assembly, and fees, would have to be calculated essentially from the number of students at the centres.

Both voting rights (that is say in policy - making) and fees (for participation in an use of benefits and programmes) must by virtue of the democratic nature of S.R.C.'s and NUSAS be determined by the number of students.

Thus while there can be no basis for individual payment, since there is no individual membership of NUSAS, it has been the custom over the last seven years, since automatic membership was dropped, to base fees on one of the scales listed above.

Income from affiliation fees is in the region of R 7 500. per year. It will be seen from the statement of Account for 1972/3, (See Appendix I) that this represents just over 1/5 of total expenditure, and just over 1/4 of total income. The rest of income has derived from donations, local committee fundraising and commission on programmes administered by NUSAS.

4. FEES OF OTHER NATIONAL UNIONS

That the affiliation fees are disproportionately low, is strongly suggested by the following comparative figures supplied by other national unions which function in a similar manner to NUSAS, and have similar structure:

(figures assessed on 100 students)

National Union South Africa	- -	R25.00
National Union USA	- -	\$100.00 (sliding scale)
National Union Australia	- -	\$(A) 50.00 (1970)
National Union Israel	- -	R50.00
National Union Norway	- -	R175.00

5. BUDGET FOR 1973/4

At July Congress this year, a decision was taken to budget strictly to guaranteed income. Whereas in the past, NUSAS has tended towards deficit budgetting, this year our budgetted expenditure lies strictly within expected income.

The result is that, while we spent R34 000.00 last year, this year we expect to spend only R16 000.00 - a decrease of R18 000.00. The effects on the National Union are likely to be disastrous, as can easily be deduced from the budget.

Since we hope to have raised considerable sums by the end of November, we have budgetted at this decreased rate only until then. Should large sums of money have been raised, we will be able to increase expenditure in some areas. Should the money not become available, however, we will be able to continue till the end of the financial year in April 30th on the same austerity basis.

Should unexpected income become available, it will initially have to pay off an accumulated deficit of R7 000.

6. CONSEQUENCES OF CUT-BACK

The consequences of the cut-back in expenditure from R34 000.00 to R16 000.00 will be serious for the effective functioning of the National Union, and these effects have already made themselves felt in Head Office and on the Campuses.

For instance, executive members are now almost unable to communicate effectively with campuses, since long-distance telephone calls, and executive tours are out of the question. Even circulars will be produced less frequently.

Almost every function of the National Union, as a trade union for students, will suffer the most serious consequences should this cut-back become a permanent reality. The ultimate result can only be the death of NUSAS as we know it today, and its replacement by an emaciated form of secretariat.

Existing student benefits may possibly survive, but at the present rate of income, there is absolutely no growth potential here.

7. PROJECT AND GENERAL FINANCES

Certain NUSAS projects are, to an extent, financially independent, as a result of generous donations from overseas. Examples here are the scholarships programmes, literacy training, and the wages and economics programmes.

Most of our other activities are largely dependent on the regular income that NUSAS derives from affiliation fees. It is unlikely that they will continue to function effectively for any appreciable length of time on existing regular income.

The ideal situation, for which we are striving, is that our affiliation fees and local campus fund-raising should cover the general administrative costs -

salaries, rent, postage, telephones, stationery, travel, and other normal administrative expenses. On our present level of operation, these costs come to R25,000 per annum.

We should also be able to cover certain other expenses - particularly publications, educational research, and legal fees - from student sources. This would enable us to raise funds from non-university sources for most of our projects, and would ensure the efficient functioning of the National Union.

8. OVERSEAS FUNDS

Most of NUSAS' project income, as opposed to general administration income, is derived from overseas sources. NUSAS submits fund-raising requests regularly to overseas bodies for the financing of NUSAS projects. An administration fee of 15% is deducted from all such income, which is then used to help cover the cost of administering these projects.

NUSAS is grateful for the support it has received from its overseas donors, support which has enabled many of its projects to function effectively. We are unhappy about our dependence on overseas donors, however, and believe that our activities should primarily and predominantly be financed from within South Africa.

The current fundraising campaign (see paragraph 9) is an attempt to replace foreign income with local income. It is likely that certain projects will be supported by South African individuals and bodies, but the problem of general administrative expenses will certainly not be solved by this method.

9. FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN

The NUSAS National Council (consisting of two representatives from each SRC, and the NUSAS executive) decided earlier this year to launch a major fund-raising campaign among South African individuals and organisations. Already, R4 000 per year (for the next five years) has been pledged, and this campaign continues. It is hoped that we will be able to replace our overseas financing, which appears to be in serious jeopardy.

NUSAS has also recently set up an independent Trust Fund, the Students' Service Projects Trust, to ensure the continued safe and capable administration of funds. The Trustees are:

- Sir Richard Luyt Principal and Vice-Chancellor, UCT,
- Mr. J. Hamilton Russel Former MP, Chairman J. Walter Thompson (SA)
- Mr. C.E.W. Henderson Director, UCT Foundation
- Adv. E. L. King Cape Town advocate.

We are presently approaching individuals in various centres to act as "patrons" of this Trust. Thus far, Prof. G. R. Bozzoli (Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Wits) and Mr. Gordon Bond (Chairman of Convocation Executive, University of Natal) have accepted this position.

Funds donated in our present fund-raising campaign will be deposited in the Trust for safe-keeping and administration

10. LOCAL CAMPUS FUND-RAISING

The new austerity budget places far more reliance on campus fundraising. SRC's and Local Committees have pledged themselves to raise higher quotas for the coming year. These amounts are included in the budgeted income.

11. POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH

NUSAS is a unique organisation. Very few other organisations, if any, can match the wide range of activities undertaken in the educational, cultural, and welfare and social action fields. Several of the projects are unique in themselves.

We believe that students have an important contribution to make, in helping to solve the problems of our society. Over the past few years, NUSAS, their democratically chosen channel for activities, has moved increasingly from being a "talking" organisation to a "doing" organisation.

We believe that the result is that students have been of real service to their country - but a by-product is that expenses have soared.

What distinguishes NUSAS from so many organisations, is its vast potential manpower resources. The direction of student energies into constructive activities can only be of service to our society. The major factor limiting our mobilisation of these energies is the number of projects, which is simply not adequate to cope with the possible student involvement.

In turn, the major factor limiting the number of projects undertaken, is finance.

Thus it is seen that NUSAS as a whole, and its SRC's, are unable to expand and make their maximum possible contribution. It is clearly crucial that the strength and credibility of NUSAS and the SRC's be consolidated on the campus and that we respond more efficiently to the needs of students. At the moment, we are held back from performing some vital functions, because we cannot afford it.

The 50th Congress resolved to employ two students, on a half-time basis, as Regional Directors. This would bring the national activities of NUSAS into more direct contact with students, and ensure close communication and co-operation. Unless funds are forthcoming very soon, we shall be unable to pay these students, and a major opportunity will be lost.

We also wish to improve the range of student benefits we provide. Again, a student has been appointed to this post, but he will not be able to operate unless and until funds are found.

The potential value of student involvement through NUSAS is enormous. At this particular time, with the universities and student organisations under threat of government action, it is vital that the only body representative of students and English Medium universities, and the only national student organisation open to all South African students, be provided with the resources necessary for it to fulfil its functions.

In the long run, it must be the responsibility of students and the universities to provide these resources.

12. PROPOSALS OF 50th CONGRESS

At the 50th Congress held at Wits this year, it was resolved unanimously to raise affiliation fees to the following levels.

Either (i) R1 000 per 1000 students (for parts of one thousand, R100 per 100 students)

or (ii) less than 1 000 students R1 000
between 1 000 and 2 000 students R2 000
between 2 000 and 3 000 students R3 000
between 3 000 and 4 000 students R4 000
between 5 000 and 6 000 students R6 000
between 6 000 and 7 000 students R7 000
between 7 000 and 8 000 students R8 000
between 8 000 and 9 000 students R9 000
between 9 000 and 10 000 students R10 000

13. SUMMARISED REASONS FOR INCREASE TO AFFILIATION FEES.

* The move from "talking" to "doing" (i.e. projects), and the general rise in costs, have made the efficient functioning of NUSAS more expensive.

* General administrative expenses should be met by the student contribution. It is also necessary that some of the project costs should be covered in this way.

* Our dependence on overseas income should be sharply reduced.

* The present level is unrealistically low by comparative standards.

* NUSAS has the potential to play an important role in serving students and society. On its present income, it can neither operate its present activities as efficiently as is desirable, nor expand and grow as it should.

14. BENEFITS OF RAISING AFFILIATION FEES

* NUSAS reliance on non-student sources of income will be reduced. Ultimately, it is students who should pay for their trade union.

* If general administrative costs are covered by affiliation fees, funds raised off campus (inside and outside South Africa) will be freed for use in project work.

* An expansion in projects will be possible.

* Students and SRC's will derive better service and benefits from NUSAS.

* A stable general income will allow for better long-term planning, and thus more efficient use of available funds.

* The whole financial basis of the National Union will be more secure. This is essential if the organisation is to continue to exist in the face of consistent attempts to cripple it.

15. CONCLUSION

The raising of affiliation fees is both inevitable and desirable. National Student Assembly (consisting of delegates selected by each SRC) and National Council have both agreed unanimously that the proposed increase is absolutely essential, and fully justifiable.

We trust that this information will be of use to you.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Young
FINANCE OFFICER : NATIONAL COUNCIL

Geoff Budlender
CHAIRMAN : NATIONAL COUNCIL

Appendix 1: Statement of Accounts 1972/3
Appendix 2: Budget 1973/4