

**NATIONAL UNION OF
GREEK AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS
(NUGAS)**

POLICY

THE POLYTECHNION UPRISING



**PREPARED BY:
ARTHUR NATSIOULAS**

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ESSENTIAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Between the years of 1967 and 1974, Greece was under the reign of a military dictatorship. As under any dictatorship, freedom of speech was nowhere to be seen or heard. Therefore publications of any uprising were difficult to document and publish. It was definitely a time of civil unrest, political constraint and limitation. Overall it was a distressing and unpleasant time for all Greeks living under the military dictatorship.

Although times were definitely tough for the people of Greece, the ideals of freedom were not lost within the student population. It took six years under the harsh reign of the Junta for any attempted revolution to become apparent.

On the 14th of February, 1973, the struggles against the Junta escalated with a student demonstration outside the Patission Campus of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA). This led to a military backlash where brutal attacks on students were executed within the campus grounds. This was followed by the arrest of several students.

Several days later there was another student gathering which led to the occupation of the Law School of the University of Athens. This first occupation on the 23rd February was followed by a second on the 20th of March and both were met by a swift and brutal attack by the military.

The final reported student protest against the Junta took place in November of 1973. This was said to have struck a severe blow to the military dictatorship and shook their authority over the people of Greece. The events of this final protest began on the 14th November. On this day students barricaded themselves within the grounds of the NTUA Patission Campus. They attracted the support of demonstrators on the outer Patission Street. After a few days on the 17th November the Junta intervened due to a fear of a major democratic uprising.

Out of fear the military dictators sent in both the army and police backed up by heavy artillery, including army tanks, to break up any peaceful demonstrations against the Junta. The clash between the demonstrators and Junta led to a fatal skirmish where it is reported between twelve and twenty-five demonstrators were killed. Apart from the deaths numerous other arrests were made. Those who were arrested faced a grim few months, as they were tortured in military prisons.

The few days from the beginning of the NTUA siege till the military intervention saw the growth of a popular uprising against the Junta from the people of Greece. This led to the fall of the military dictatorship only a few months later and power was returned back to the civilians shortly after. To commemorate the NTUA siege free elections were held on the 17th November, 1974.

TODAY:

To honour the victims of the Polytechnion Uprising NTUA erected a monument in the courtyard opposite the gate that the tanks stormed. Annual commemorative celebrations are held every 17th of November where NTUA students, high school pupils, democratic authorities, political parties and the Greek Parliament attend. The celebrations are held to recollect the ideals that united the support of the students and the people of Greece back in 1973. These ideals are based on Freedom, Democracy, Independence, Education, Social Progress, Solidarity and Resistance.

NUGAS POLYTECHNION UPRISING POLICY:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

NUGAS recognises:

- a) All people have the right to fundamental freedoms including that of self-determination;
- b) That the Polytechnion Uprising led to the downfall of the military dictatorship;
- c) That at least twelve students were murdered trying to restore their right to Greece's fundamental freedom;
- d) That the military dictators were responsible for the death and torture of indefinite number of civilians namely students; and
- e) That the events on the 14th February, 23rd February and 20th March all contributed to the Polytechnion Uprising.

NUGAS condemns:

- a) Any dictatorship that suppresses the freedom of speech;
- b) The contemptuous attitudes and blatant disregard for human dignity and morality shown by the military dictators; and
- c) Supporters of the former Junta and Right Wing extremist groups that down play the seriousness of the Polytechnion Uprising.

Instead NUGAS demands:

- a) That information be provided to both Hellenes in Greece and abroad on the harsh conditions that the people of Greece endured under the military dictatorship; and
- b) That any military dictatorship be condemned for their actions against their own people; and
- c) That education and freedom of speech of students and civilians at large be unaffected by any political regime.