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1995-03-06
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INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED SOCIAL RESEARCH

SEMINAR PAPER
to be presented in RW 7003 SEMINAR ROOM
at 4.00PM **6th March 1995**

TITLE: Apartheid's goals in the 1960s: The creation of the University of Port Elizabeth and the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit.

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NO: 372

Apartheid's goals in the 1960s: The creation of the University of Port Elizabeth and the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit

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Institute for Advanced Social Research Seminar
6 March 1995

In the 1960s the National Party (NP) government established two new universities for whites. These were the dual-medium University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), which opened in 1965, and the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit (RAU), which opened in 1968. In this paper I describe these initiatives in the 1960s and argue that they form the third phase of the NP government's policies regarding university education. This phase is distinguished from the earlier two phases by the processes through which the policy emerged, and the goals of the policy. In conclusion, I question the implications of the history of the third phase of apartheid university policies for the analysis of the goals of apartheid in the 1960s more generally.

During the first phase of the NP government's administration of university education, which lasted from 1948 to the mid-1950s, the government took steps to ensure the steady and stable expansion of university provision.[1] JE Holloway composed a formula for the funding of university education by central government, which was used with only minor modifications until the 1980s, a remarkable achievement given the chaotic and insecure state of university funding when the NP took power.[2] Unisa was reorganised as a correspondence university, and the clutch of university colleges which had previously fallen under Unisa's control were granted independent university status. This marked the start of a long period of expansion of institutional capacity and student enrolments. With a few important exceptions[3] the government's actions were regarded as pragmatic, at least in Parliament, and aroused little opposition. It can even be argued that in this phase, in terms of university education, the NP government did little more than complete the unfinished business of the ousted United Party government. Although NP leaders spoke often and passionately about the need to introduce apartheid at universities, and a second commission was appointed under JE Holloway to investigate the financial implications of such a development, no proactive, ideologically-inspired interventions resulted from this talk in this phase. In the early 1950s the NP was not secure in government, having won the election in alliance with the Afrikaner Party and with a relatively slender majority. This approach to university policy echoed the energetic, pragmatic programmes of the government in other areas, such as providing mass (Bantu) education for Africans for the first time and expanding the urban housing stock in the townships.

In the second phase, which lasted from the mid-1950s to 1959, a more urgent and aggressive approach can be observed in the government's plans for university education. The negative findings of the second Holloway Commission were impatiently dismissed, and by early 1957 legislation was introduced to establish five ethnic university colleges under close government control[4] and ending black access to the

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[1] For a more detailed account of government university policy between 1948 and 1959, see Beale, MA, 1994, *Apartheid and University Education, 1948-1959*, unpublished MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

[2] Moodie comments that the Holloway formula was politically neutral, and made it difficult for the government to apply punitive sanctions to institutions that incurred its disfavour. He argues that the continued use of the Holloway formula is evidence of the government's qualified respect for university autonomy. (Moodie, GC, 1994, 'The State and Liberal Universities in South Africa, 1948-1990', in *Higher Education*, Volume 27, pp. 1-40.)

[3] For example, restricting the access to South African institutions of students from outside the Union, and interfering with the free movement of students from province to province within South Africa.

[4] This included transforming Fort Hare into a Xhosa institution under government and Unisa control instead of the control of the Rhodes University Council and Senate.

'open' universities and the segregated classes at the University of Natal. In the face of the outcry which ensued from the English-medium universities, and serious misgivings from a diverse range of Afrikaner intellectuals about the draconian nature of the bills, the passage of the legislation was delayed until 1959. The forceful leadership of key Department of Native Affairs figures, including HF Verwoerd, WWM Eiselen and MCDC De Wet Nel steamrollered even this opposition, and the bills were forced through Parliament. The Extension of University Education Act and the Fort Hare Transfer Act are typical of legislation of the late 1950s, with their more assertive ideological stance, their responsiveness to the unresolved and mounting threat of African political opposition and their half-hearted commitment to practical social and economic development in the reserves.

The third phase of university policy is distinct in several ways. First, it was the NP government's first major attempt to allocate extra resources to the needs of Afrikaans students in particular. Second, as will be shown below, the initiative for the establishment of both UPE and RAU came from outside of the government, with the Broederbond actively lobbying government to have its policies regarded favourably. Third, as they concerned provision for white students, the initiatives remained the responsibility of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, rather than the Department of Native Affairs.

Local campaigns: Background to the Department of Education investigations in Port Elizabeth and on the Witwatersrand

In late 1962, the Minister of Education, Arts and Science, Senator Jan de Klerk, dispatched commissioners to Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, to investigate local campaigns for new university facilities. The quinquennial review of university finances in terms of the Holloway formula was in progress under AC Cilliers, but its report was not expected until mid-1963. The previous report, in 1958, had made it clear that the establishment of new universities for whites was too expensive for the government to consider. The campaigns that resulted in the establishment of RAU and UPE were both launched in this period of financial restraint, and both considered expanding and adapting existing universities to meet local needs, before changing to campaign for independent universities.

In May 1957 the mayor of Port Elizabeth, Struan Robertson, formally asked Rhodes Council to ask the Minister of Education for permission to extend their activities to Port Elizabeth.[5] In 1958 RW Wilcocks and PJ du Toit investigated the proposals for the government, and they recommended that faculties and departments should be established that did not already exist in Grahamstown, but ruled out engineering, medicine and agriculture. As a result of the investigation, permission for Rhodes to establish a division in Port Elizabeth was granted in the Rhodes Act, No. 6 of 1960. The Act stipulated that if Rhodes operated in Port Elizabeth, it should do so with 'due regard should be had to the needs of Afrikaans-speaking students'.[6] Classes at the Port Elizabeth Division of Rhodes commenced in 1961.[7]

Early civic plans for the expansion of university facilities in Port Elizabeth were apparently formulated with Rhodes as the academic centre: in June 1961 the Nationalist mayor of Port Elizabeth, Monty van der Vyfer, called together members of the Port Elizabeth City Council and representatives of various

[5] Currey, RF, 1970, *Rhodes University, 1904-1970,* Rustica Press, Grahamstown, p. 145.

[6] Robbertse, PM and Erasmus, JA, 'Verslag van komitee van ondersoek na universiteitsgeriewe te Port Elizabeth', 22 November 1962, Pretoria, UOD 04/3/1, p. 4. All translations from the Afrikaans documents are mine.

[7] Rhodes had counted on receiving a more generous government subsidy for its Port Elizabeth activities, in the same way as the two sections of the University of Natal, which for subsidy purposes was regarded as two separate institutions. This extra financial assistance from the government was not forthcoming, but the City Council made up some of the shortfall.

bodies and decided to campaign for a faculty of engineering, as part of Rhodes, to be established in Port Elizabeth. But according to Wilkins and Strydom, in the same year the Broederbond became involved:

> [L]eading Broeders in the Eastern Province held a secret meeting on a Steytlerville farm. It was decided that Rhodes be closed down in Port Elizabeth and the government be asked, for tactical reasons, to establish a bilingual university there instead.[8]

In early 1962 Rhodes published its R4 million ten-year development plan, and the Port Elizabeth City Council was disappointed to learn that nothing except for a larger library was planned for the Rhodes Division in the city. At the same time Prof. NMS Immelman, who had been Dean of Studies in Port Elizabeth resigned, protesting that Grahamstown-based interests were 'sabotaging the Port Elizabeth efforts'.[9] These developments gave the Port Elizabeth campaigners the pretext to foment dissatisfaction with Rhodes and plans for expansion under its aegis. Van der Vyfer spoke of his discontent that 'Port Elizabeth has been brushed aside' and he said that the time had come to endeavour to establish a separate university in Port Elizabeth, entirely independent of Rhodes.[10]

In August 1962, Van der Vyfer put this idea to a meeting of local bodies and secured the approval of a broad cross-section of interests.[11] Van der Vyfer contacted Senator de Klerk in mid-September 1962 and asked him to investigate setting up an independent, dual-medium university in Port Elizabeth, with faculties of engineering, medicine and agriculture, faculties that would have complemented rather than reproduced those of Rhodes. The principal of Rhodes made counter-representations, and as a result, an investigation was commissioned.[12]

The campaign on the Witwatersrand had a longer history. In late 1955 the Johannesburg Afrikaanse Kultuurvereenigings had set up a sub-committee under Dr PJ Meyer, at that time deputy head and later head of the Broederbond, with the aim of establishing an Afrikaans teacher training college and Afrikaans university on the Rand. The campaigners believed that only half of the Afrikaans matriculants on the Rand intended studying further, and that each year more than 800 potential matriculants were thought to be dropping out too early in their studies. In March 1959 the committee held discussions with Transvaal Executive Committee (TEC) and Minister of Education, Arts and Science, Mr JJ Serfontein. The TEC announced itself in favour of the Teachers Training College, and the Goudstadse Onderwyserskollege opened in February 1961.

Serfontein, however, was discouraging about the prospects of a new university, because 'the time for a new university was very inopportune because the government was at that precise time piloting legislation through Parliament for separate black university colleges'.[13] It was only after Goudstad opened that the committee again concentrated on campaigning for the university. In January 1962 Meyer asked De Klerk for his unofficial approval for the idea of moving Unisa from Pretoria to Johannesburg and expanding the functions of the university to include a residential Afrikaans university as well as its external university role. This, he argued, would suit the government, as it would not mean the

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[8] Wilkins, I and Strydom, H, 1978, *The Super-Afrikaners*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, p. 422.
[9] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 10.
[10] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 2.
[11] Including the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, the Midland Chamber of Industries, the Port Elizabethse Afrikaanse Sakekamer, the Port Elizabeth Divisional Council, the Port Elizabethse Skoolraad, the Port Elizabethse Mediese Vereniging and the Port Elizabethse Publisiteitsvereniging.
[12] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*
[13] Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit, (1968) 'Bekroning van `n groieproses: Historiese terugblik', in *Gedenkprogram: Amptelike Opening*, Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit, Johannesburg.

establishment of a new university, and also 'fulfil the deeply-felt desires of the Rand's Afrikaners'.[14] But in September 1962 Professor Samuel Pauw, principal of Unisa, wrote to De Klerk, saying that in terms of a Council decision taken in September 1955 the university would not be involved with the establishment of any new university institutions for whites:

> The university has done pioneering work in the area of the education through correspondence for external students ... it has offered a very great contribution to the development of our land and its people, by offering adults that already work the opportunity to receive a university education. The university wants to protect this work at all costs. No development of new functions should be allowed to damage the existing functions of the university.[15]

It was the emerging conflict between the Pretoria Broederbonders in Unisa and the senior Broederbond lobby in Johannesburg that prompted De Klerk to send a team of investigators to the Transvaal as well.

Investigations in Port Elizabeth

In Port Elizabeth, De Klerk instructed his commissioners to perform two distinct roles. The first was to convey the views of the government to the local campaigners: to ensure that Van der Vyfer and the private sector donors fully understood that they would not be able to choose the faculties established (they would not be able to have an engineering faculty, and would have to concentrate on the social sciences) and that they were clear about the extent of the financial commitment that they were undertaking.[16] Second, the commissioners were to assess the merits of establishing a new university in Port Elizabeth, by considering the population, the number of matriculants and how many would not be able to afford to go to university elsewhere. De Klerk also wanted to know why the initiative had become so conflictual. It had been suggested to him that Van der Vyfer was campaigning to break away from Rhodes without the support of the Port Elizabeth City Council or of local organised commerce and industry.[17] He was unclear about why Rhodes did not want a separate university. The third major concern was about the financial implications for the state. This linked to problems of conflict with Rhodes, as De Klerk wanted to know whether the City Council was legally and morally obliged to let Rhodes University keep a valuable 500 acre site that they had been given for developing university facilities.[18]

The commissioners visited Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown in late October 1962. Their visit was given prominent treatment in the Port Elizabeth newspapers, where anyone interested was invited to give evidence. A direct invitation was extended to Dr Thomas Alty, principal of Rhodes, who was asked to send anyone he wanted to give evidence.[19]

The thrust of Rhodes' submission was that the eastern province did not have the population to justify two separate universities.[20] They said a new university in Port Elizabeth would put a stop to development in Grahamstown and that the dual-medium approach would fail, and that it would have to become a single-medium institution. While they asserted that they could do the work better than a new

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[14] RAU, *op cit.*

[15] Quoted in a memorandum from Pauw to De Klerk, 'Die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika', UOD 4/3/1, Volume 9, 25 February 1963, p. 4.

[16] Grobbelaar, P, Acting secretary of Education, Arts and Science, 16 October 1962, 'Ondersoek na universiteitsgeriewe te Port Elizabeth', 04/3/1.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 5.

[19] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*

[20] Throughout this process both Rhodes and the government commissioners completely ignored neighbouring Fort Hare, as it had been designated for Xhosa students, and they were discussing provision for white students.

institution, this claim failed to convince the commissioners as they did not have a clear sense of how the Port Elizabeth branch would develop, and they did not anticipate that it would ever become independent. Rhodes planned to use the 500 acre Driftsands site only 'when student enrolment justifies it ... this will be a considerable operation and will involve large expenditure'. They thought this would be at least twenty years hence.[21]

Once the opposition of Rhodes became apparent, the consensus that Van der Vyfer had hastily assembled began to disintegrate. The Chamber of Commerce declared itself in favour of developing the Rhodes University branch further, with a view to independence in the long term, as they did not believe there was enough money in the region for two separate institutions. The Chamber of Industry said that it was prepared to see a moderate expansion of university facilities and were prepared to weigh up the case for having an independent university in Port Elizabeth.[22]

Opposition also increased in the City Council, which had never had the opportunity to vote on the matter. By the time it was discussed before the full Council on 30 October 1962, the proposal faced strong opposition, with some changing their minds. Again there was no vote, but the commissioners were told that most supported the idea. Initially all the City Councillors, with the exception of two who were also members of the Rhodes Council, had appeared in favour of Van der Vyfer's plan.[23]

Other support for Rhodes came from the Port Elizabeth branch of the Old Rhodian Union, the Port Elizabeth branch of the South Africa Teachers' Association, the Soroptimist Society of Port Elizabeth, the Port Elizabeth branch of South Africa Council for English Education and various individuals in their private capacities.[24] Their argument was that Rhodes had been asked to do the job, and was doing it well. They doubted that the region had the human and financial resources for another institution, they thought it unlikely that a dual-medium institution would work. They pointed out that Rhodes had invested capital in buildings in Grahamstown, and had counted on a continued flow of money and students from Port Elizabeth.[25]

An efficient lobby was organised in support of a separate university. One of the most active organisers of this lobby was a member of the executive council of the Broederbond, Mr WH Delport.[26] Delport personally presented evidence in favour of Van der Vyfer's plan on behalf of the Afrikaanse Opvoedingsfondsvereniging, the Port Elizabeth west branch of the National Party, and the school board

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[21] According to RF Currey, who wrote a semi-official history of Rhodes: 'From time to time people, and newspapers, had been asking what truth was there, if any, in the suggestion that Rhodes, an English-medium university, did not offer an acceptable home to Afrikaans-speaking young men and women ... Rhodes felt confident that the record of a half a century and more entitled it to reply that there was no shadow of truth in the suggestion. It was now to appear that there were those who felt differently. The suggestion now became tangled up with considerations of civic pride and the natural desire for civic greatness ... Then suddenly ... the bolt fell ... no one at Rhodes could imagine that Parliament was now going to be asked by the Government to undo that which it had done, with Government support, less than two years before' (Currey, *op cit.*, pp. 144 and 146).

[22] The involvement of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry is notable in the Port Elizabeth campaign: such bodies were not active either in the establishment of the black university colleges or in the campaign on the Witwatersrand. Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*

[23] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 7. A Port Elizabeth City Councillor commented that 'If any big industry wanted to come to Port Elizabeth we would grab it. This dual-medium University is one of the biggest industries we could get' (Currey, *op cit.*, p. 151).

[24] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 23.

[25] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 24.

[26] Viljoen, G, 1995, First rector of RAU and former head of the Broederbond, interviewed in Pretoria, 9 February 1995.

of Port Elizabeth, and mobilised his connections to ensure that support also came from a comprehensive range of other organisations.[27]

These promoters argued that Rhodes was not meeting its obligation to the Afrikaans people of the area and that it was unlikely in the future to make proper provision. This argument encompassed both dissatisfaction with Rhodes' language policy, and with its philosophical approach to university education:

> The medium of tuition at Rhodes University is English, and the direction that the university takes is liberalist and integrationist, and therefore Rhodes is not a university home for Afrikaans speakers and conservative English speakers, and consequently Afrikaners and conservative English speakers in the eastern Cape are without a university.[28]

The supporters reckoned that the human and financial support for a new university existed, but was 'not going to be mobilised for a university in Grahamstown that is so liberalist in orientation'.[29] They said that Rhodes' shortcomings caused a great loss of student potential.

By late November 1962, De Klerk had the report of the commissioners before him.[30] They argued that it was

> in the interest of both the population groups, not only of Port Elizabeth and the surroundings, but also of the Eastern Cape and the Republic of South Africa, that an independent, dual-medium university college in Port Elizabeth, separate from Rhodes University, should be established as quickly as possible, on a conservative basis, and makes this recommendation.[31]

They said that although Wilcocks and Du Toit had decided in 1958 against a separate university in Port Elizabeth and in favour of the expansion of Rhodes there, those commissioners did not 'desire its largely negative finding to be ... a final closing of the door to future university developments at Port Elizabeth'.[32] They also referred to comments made in 1960 by BJ Vorster, then Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Science about amendments to the Rhodes Act, when he stressed that the establishment of a branch of Rhodes at Port Elizabeth would not prevent the later establishment of an independent university and that Rhodes should not consider that it had inalienable vested interests.[33]

The commissioners had two major criticism of Rhodes: that it was failing Afrikaans students, and that it had not developed adequate plans for the development of the Port Elizabeth branch.

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[27] These included the school boards of Uitenhage, Alexandria and Humansdorp, the town councils of Uitenhage, Humansdorp, Graaff-Reinet and Queenstown, the Port Elizabeth Afrikaanse Skakelkomitee, the SA Onderwysersunie Port Elizabeth branch, two NGK communities in Port Elizabeth, Saambou, the Port Elizabethse Sakekamer, the Port Elizabeth branch of the South African Medical Association, the Citrus Co-operative of the Sundays River Valley, Boere Saamwerk Beperk, the Divisional Council of Port Elizabeth, Old Mutual, the AKTV of Port Elizabeth, various High Schools, the Rapportryers of Cradock, as well as individuals such as the MPs for Port Elizabeth West, Uitenhage, Humansdorp and the former Rhodes Dean of External Studies, Prof. Immelman. Delport was not the only individual to represent more than one organisation. Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 23 and Appendix A, p. 2.

[28] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 24.

[29] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 24.

[30] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.* At De Klerk's request, Grobbelaar subsequently drew up a summary memorandum about the commission. (Cabinet memorandum about university facilities at Port Elizabeth, UOD 04/3/1/ Volume 8, undated.)

[31] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 26.

[32] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 25.

[33] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 25.

They pointed out that although Afrikaans speakers formed the largest language group among the white population in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage area in 1960,[34] no lessons were yet being given in Afrikaans at Rhodes' Port Elizabeth Division. Furthermore, only 23 Afrikaans speakers were enrolled in 1961 and 26 in 1962, numbers which accounted for only 19% and 16% of enrolments in those years respectively.[35] In the summary of this report presented to the cabinet, this point was amplified: it was argued that Rhodes was failing the potential Afrikaans students of the area so badly, that where on average 52% of the country's white matriculants proceeded to university, some Afrikaans schools in the area were sending as few as 10% of their matriculants to university.[36]

The report linked the failure to meet the needs of Afrikaans students to a general lack of vision for the development of facilities in the city. The commissioners were of the opinion that

> it was never the intention of Rhodes University to allow any notable development to take place in Port Elizabeth: on the contrary, massive expansion was planned for Grahamstown. The Port Elizabeth branch would serve to keep the public there quiet so that Port Elizabeth capital and students could flow freely to Grahamstown, but the Port Elizabeth branch should be used as the dummy (*fopspeen*) and Prof. Immelman as the foster-mother to keep the Port Elizabeth public quiet - an obvious miscalculation on the part of Rhodes University.[37]

Having concluded that an independent university was desirable, the commissioners sought to diminish the threat that the new institution would pose to Rhodes, and to justify the heavy expense for the state. They asserted that after three or four years, an independent university in Port Elizabeth could have 700 to 800 students drawn from untapped student potential in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage area, in such a way that the future of Rhodes was not threatened. They said parents would continue to send their children to Rhodes for traditional or other reasons.[38]

The costs of establishing a new institution were substantial. Until student numbers rose above 500, the university's income from fees and the state subsidy would fall short of the running costs, but the commissioners said that there was general public support for a university in Port Elizabeth, and from trade and industry.[39] Over and above this shortfall, there would be a greater burden placed on the state as the smaller the university, the greater the state's contribution would be per student.[40] Another major financial burden for the state loomed with conflict over resources which had been given to Rhodes. With R45,000 from the state and R57,000 from the Port Elizabeth City Council, Rhodes had purchased a building in Port Elizabeth for about 300 students: this would have to be handed over to the new independent university.[41] The City Council had also given Rhodes 500 acres at Driftsands, for the nominal amount of two Rand, on the condition that university buildings had to be erected within five years. Although they paid the two Rand, this condition was not accepted by Rhodes, and when it subsequently became clear how limited were Rhodes' plans in the city, transfer was suspended.

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[34] This area had a population of 125,446 whites, of which 61,810 were Afrikaans-speaking, and 59,470 were English-speaking. The remainder were speakers of other languages.

[35] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 4.

[36] Cabinet memorandum about university facilities at Port Elizabeth, *op cit.*, p. 1.

[37] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 11.

[38] Cabinet memorandum about university facilities at Port Elizabeth, *op cit.*, p. 1, and Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 6.

[39] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 5.

[40] For example, for 500 students, the state contribution would be R560, whereas at Rhodes, in 1962 the state was contributing R412 per student in 1962, a figure which would have declined further had student numbers at Rhodes continued to increase. Cabinet memorandum about university facilities at Port Elizabeth, *op cit.*, p. 1.

[41] Cabinet memorandum about university facilities at Port Elizabeth, *op cit.*, p. 1.

Nevertheless, if at that stage Rhodes had proceeded to develop its Port Elizabeth branch and build on the land within five years, the City Council would have been legally obliged to hand over the ground.[42]

The Secretary for Education, Arts and Science, JJP Op't Hof, prepared a commentary for De Klerk on the report from Port Elizabeth. He warned that it was probable that neither the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, nor the City Council supported the idea of a separate university in Port Elizabeth.[43] He suggested that the report underestimated the costs for the first decade. He thought that the plans to move Unisa to Johannesburg and develop it had far more merit, and should be given priority over the Port Elizabeth scheme.[44] Nevertheless, he concluded that:

> If a single-medium university institution at Port Elizabeth develops, either independent or under Rhodes, there will never be a place for Afrikaners and a second university will not be justifiable for perhaps the next 50 years. It will also mean that there will be three universities in the area.[45] The only way where the needs of Afrikaans speakers can be locally provided for is through a dual-medium institution.[46]

Investigations on the Witwatersrand

While the campaign in Port Elizabeth was fuelled by civic and regional ambitions as well as the desire to meet the needs of Afrikaans students, on the Witwatersrand the campaign was motivated from the start by Afrikaans ambitions. In October 1962 De Klerk commissioned research about the 'Proposed Move of Unisa', and received a memorandum more concerned more with buildings, finances, and the need to move from the limited facilities in the centre of Pretoria, than with possible political implications or opportunities.[47] De Klerk then asked three of his top officials secretly to prepare a strictly confidential report on the possible move of Unisa to the Rand and the extension of its activities.

Because of its secret nature, there were no public announcements or calls for evidence from a range of interested parties as there had been in Port Elizabeth, which was strange, given the broad participation in the Rand campaign thus far. Few details of the campaign are available, other than that in late November 1962 the three officials discussed the matter with Pauw, principal of Unisa.

The reasons for the secrecy of this investigation are not immediately clear, but they are hinted at in the report:

> As requested, the committee treated the matter as highly confidential, and did not share the purpose of the investigation with other people. Nevertheless, other people such as Dr PJ Meyer, Chairman of the SABC, Mr PZJ van Vuuren, MEC and Mr Jack Steyl, MPC, with whom the committee had dealings, were aware of the possible move of Unisa to the Rand. They were requested to regard the matter as utterly confidential. It also appeared that the personnel of Unisa were aware of the affair.[48]

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[42] Robbertse and Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 8.

[43] Op't Hof, JJP, memorandum to minister, 'Selfstandige universiteit, Port Elizabeth', 23 January 1963, UOD 04/3/1, p. 1.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] Again, the presence of Fort Hare is ignored.

[46] Op't Hof, JJP, letter to minister, 24 January 1963, UOD 04/3/1.

[47] Memorandum from Grobbelaar, Acting Secretary for Education, Arts and Science, to De Klerk, 'Voorgestelde verskuiwing van die Universiteit van Suid Afrika', 19 October 1962, UOD 04/3/1 Volume 9.

[48] Erasmus, JA, 'Vertroulik: Verslag van komitee van ondersoek insake moontlike verskuiwing van die Universiteit van Suid Afrika na die Rand en die moontlike uitbreiding van sy funksies', 31 December 1962, Pretoria, UOD 04/3/1 Volume 9.

From this it appears that although the Johannesburg campaigners were fully aware of the investigation, it was supposed to be kept secret from Unisa personnel. Because of the letter from Pauw, De Klerk was aware that asking Unisa to move to the Rand was controversial and likely to arouse resistance, and was therefore attempting, through this secret investigation, to clarify whether such a move was feasible and necessary, before he risked alienating the Unisa staff.

In December, the committee of three reported to De Klerk, concluding that:

> The establishment of a second university on the Witwatersrand, mainly for Afrikaans-speakers, but where conservative English-speakers will also feel at home, is justified.

In order to reach this conclusion, they had to demonstrate that there was a need for a new university for whites, and particularly for Afrikaners. They also had to weigh up the implications of moving Unisa to the Rand, and the particular location of the Rand that was most desirable for a new institution.

They pointed out that the number of white students had increased eight-fold since 1922, when the last university for white students had been established. Since 1952, in the previous decade, student numbers had increased by 75%, from 19,187 to 33,439. They considered that this was sufficient evidence to justify more universities for whites. .Further, they argued:

> As there is already a University on the Rand with English as its medium of instruction, a second university will have to make provision chiefly for the Afrikaans-speaking student, and it is the student potential of the Afrikaans-speaker that will determine if a second university should be established.

The report cited figures (probably provided by the campaigners) to show that although the entire white population of the Rand was increasing very fast, the rate of increase for Afrikaans speakers outstripped that of English speakers: it had increased by two and a half times between 1936 and 1960, as opposed to one and a half times.[49] They stressed that the greatest concentration of Afrikaans speakers in the Republic was on the Rand: there were as many Afrikaans speakers on the Rand as the combined white populations of Pretoria, Stellenbosch, Bloemfontein, Grahamstown, Potchefstroom and Pietermaritzburg (which were all university towns).

They also cited figures giving the Afrikaans 'student potential' of the Witwatersrand and Vereeniging area, based on the numbers of school leavers obtaining the matriculation exemption certificate since 1946. In 1946, Afrikaans schools had produced 247 matriculants, as opposed to 504 in English schools. By 1961, the figures were 655 and 967 respectively, reflecting a more rapid increase on the part of Afrikaans speakers. The projected figures for 1966 were 1,227 and 1,021 respectively.[50] They reckoned that by 1980 the area would be producing about 4,500 Afrikaans-speaking matriculants per annum. In trying to predict how many students the new university would need to cater for, they also reckoned that 'a reasonable number of English-speakers: 1,500 are regarded as conservative'[51] and were expected to attend RAU.

The three officials argued that the establishment of an Afrikaans university on the Rand wouldn't seriously affect the growth of other universities in the Transvaal.[52] They thought that Pretoria and Wits were too big to be affected, but they admitted that it would have an impact on the long-term growth of

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[49] In 1936 there were over 163,000 Afrikaans speakers in the Rand-Vereeniging area, as opposed to over 258,000 English speakers. These figures increased to 402,000 and 400,000 by 1960 respectively. Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 4.

[50] Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 6.

[51] Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 7.

[52] Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 30.

Potchefstroom. They thought that in the short term, Potchefstroom would be protected by its specific character.[53]

With regard to Unisa, they said that moving the correspondence section of Unisa to the Rand would not cost the university or the state anything more than moving to the Fountains site, except for a small amount for buying the ground at the Rand.

> Unisa is a dual-medium institution and it will particularly like to retain this character. If the move and the extension becomes a reality, it is its suggestion that lectures should be offered in both languages. By so doing it hopes to attract a reasonably large number of English speakers, especially those who are opposed to the liberalism of certain English universities.[54]

The officials argued that the East Rand would be the most appropriate location for a new university. The concentration of Afrikaans speakers was on the East Rand, and the point was made that the East Rand was currently delivering, and would continue to deliver, the greatest number of Afrikaans-speaking matriculants: 253 in 1961, as opposed to 218 on the Central Rand, 121 on the West Rand and 63 in Vereeniging.[55] Another factor which led the committee to favour the East Rand was land. They said that a minimum of 100 morgen was needed to build a university for 6,000 students, and they therefore recommended a Germiston site where this amount of ground was available, as opposed to the Auckland Park site, which was only 74 morgen and which they thought was too limited and would be too small within 25 years. Unisa had expressed themselves in favour of the Auckland Park site because it was in 'a good neighbourhood', because it was only one mile from the Goudstadse Onderwyserskollege (GOK) and because it supposedly had the greatest concentration of Afrikaans speakers per square mile in the whole region.[56]

The East Rand bias was supported by financial arguments. The anticipated costs for establishing a university of 2,000 students in Germiston came to R2,450,000 as opposed to R3,420,000 in Auckland Park.[57] It was commented that a new university could not be established without the help of the state, and that the university could only bear one third of the costs, and that the state should therefore provide two Rand to every one Rand but limited to R2 million.[58]

Deliberations on the local investigations

In January 1963 Op't Hof prepared a commentary for De Klerk on the two local investigations. He said that if De Klerk followed the approach of the committees, and concentrated on local considerations, he could be criticised for setting precedents that could not be followed through for other local initiatives and failing to take account of the broader question of whether extra universities for whites were reasonable at that time. Op't Hof thought that De Klerk had to be prepared to justify the establishment of new universities, and had selected excerpts to help him do this from the forthcoming AC Cilliers review of university finances, which was due out only in April or May, and therefore still strictly confidential.

Op't Hof was himself in favour of the establishment of new universities for whites and considered that the scheme on the Rand had greater priority than the Port Elizabeth scheme:

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[53] Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 26.
[54] Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 4.
[55] Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 6.
[56] Draft cabinet memorandum, 10 January 1963, *op cit.*, p. 2.
[57] Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 29.
[58] This suggestion effectively ruled out the Auckland Park site. Draft cabinet memorandum, 10 January 1963, *op cit.*, p. 3.

> The Rand, with its great population of whom the most are Afrikaans speaking, does not only have first claim but there is an urgent need for a new university, primarily for Afrikaans speakers, but also with facilities for those English speakers that will enrol there.[59]

He dismissed criticism that South Africa already had too many universities in two ways. First, he argued that

> Although after America, South Africa has the highest number of students per hundred of the white population in the western world, it must be borne in mind that, for a long time yet, whites must offer to the great mass of non-whites the services that university education delivers, and that we are developing at an unusual tempo in industrial and economic areas.[60]

This argument drew on the following figures, which were compiled by Cilliers:

[59] Op't Hof, JJP, 23 January 1963, *op cit.*, p. 1.
[60] Op't Hof, JJP, memorandum to minister, 'Selfstandige universiteit, Port Elizabeth', 23 January 1963, UOD 04/3/1, p. 1.

White South African and SWA students as a proportion of the white population and all South African and SWA students as a proportion of the total population, compared to seven other countries, 1959-61[61]			
Country	Total population	Students	Inhabitants per student
USA	179,285,000	3,619,000	50
SA inc. SWA (whites)	3,140,792	37,934	83
Canada	18,085,000	126,863	143
New Zealand	2,403,488	15,826	152
Australia	10,600,170	53,391	200
SA inc. SWA	16,366,192	41,817[62]	391
UK	52,675,094	114,935	458
India	410,000,000	827,000	500
Pakistan	91,000,000	91,404	1,000

Although the number of students relative to the size of the total population was still high by international standards, Op't Hof argued that there was a need for more universities because of the different language groups and because he worked with the assumption that 6,000 was the maximum number of enrolments for optimum efficiency. He said that the three larger universities, Pretoria, Wits and Cape Town, already had more than 5,000 students. He thought that the smaller universities and emptier faculties would fill up in less than a decade, and that in this context it was wise to plan for the establishment of new universities.[63]

He said he had no strong opinions about Unisa. He said that if the cabinet approved the idea, then

> the Unisa Council should be told in confidence that the cabinet had in principle decided in favour of moving Unisa to the Rand with extended functions, and would appreciate the Council's favourable consideration of the affair, and [ask then to] lay concrete proposals before the Department of Education, Arts and Science.[64]

It seems clear from this that Op't Hof had an idea that Unisa would need to be handled diplomatically.

On the basis of the investigations of his officials and the advice of Op't Hof, by late January De Klerk had decided to approach the cabinet with two plans: to establish a new university in Port Elizabeth and to move Unisa to the Rand and expand its functions.

Cabinet decision in favour of UPE

In early February 1963, the cabinet considered and approved 'the establishment of an independent dual-medium university institution at Port Elizabeth'.[65] The cabinet was due to consider the Rand proposals in early March.

The cabinet decision left Rhodes unclear about its future in the city. Alty told the press that:

> Rhodes University intends to maintain its Port Elizabeth Division unless rejected by those who invited the University to come to the City.[66]

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[61] My calculations, based on Op't Hof, JJP, 11 January 1963, *op cit.*, pp. 2-3.
[62] Including 3,893 black students, Op't Hof, JJP, 11 January 1963, *op cit.*, p3.
[63] Op't Hof, JJP, 11 January 1963, *op cit.*, p. 5.
[64] Op't Hof, JJP, 23 January 1963, *op cit.*, p. 2.
[65] De Klerk, J, Press release, 13 February 1963, UOD 04/3/1.

He also wrote to De Klerk in March:

> It is with great regret and much indignation that we learn of your intention to set up in Port Elizabeth ... a new and independent university college ... Rhodes University is empowered by Parliament to operate in Port Elizabeth, and in the two years that the Port Elizabeth Division has been open, it has made excellent progress ... at no time has any complaint been made to the University either by the minister or by the City Council of Port Elizabeth. The University has honourably carried out its contract and we are entirely at a loss to understand the complete neglect of our interests which seems inherent in the course you propose.[67]

These protests were impatiently dismissed by De Klerk, who pencilled a note for his assistants on the letter: 'This is our chance to bring our policy home to the writer and to shake him out of several dreams.'[68] To Alty, he wrote:

> Allow me in all sincerity to say that the establishment of the new dual-medium university college should be regarded by all as the greatest opportunity yet to prove that the English and Afrikaans speaking sections of our nation can indeed work, study live and play together. If they cannot find each other at university level, respecting each other's language, culture and traditions, it will be indeed a sorry day for South Africa ... I wish to make it quite clear that your university will not be allowed to continue its academic activities at Port Elizabeth. It is unthinkable that the government would allow two university institutions in Port Elizabeth competing for the same students. Your Act will, if necessary, have to be amended.[69]

De Klerk was still concerned to wrest control of the Port Elizabeth assets from Rhodes without a public fight, and confidentially requested Dr AH Jonker, MP, and Rhodes Council member, to attend all the Rhodes Council meetings where these matters were discussed. He was hoping that Rhodes would 'deal intelligently with the matter ... and hand over the relevant assets to the new institution' in order to retain the goodwill of Port Elizabeth.[70] He asked Jonker to discuss the matter with 'other like-minded people' on the Rhodes Council.[71]

In January 1964 the University of Port Elizabeth Bill was read in Parliament. The Bill made Parliamentary history because it was the first university Bill to be introduced by the government rather than as a Private Bill.[72] After the acrimonious processes leading to the introduction of the Bill, the debate was remarkably cordial. The Opposition congratulated De Klerk on introducing the Bill, and De Klerk thanked Rhodes for their support.[73] While the United Party did not oppose the Bill in principle, it raised objections to certain points. These included the government's right to approve the appointment of the Chancellor and Principal, a form of state control that only existed at the black university colleges.[74] The minister also had the right to appoint half the members of the university Senate, which as not the case at any other university.[75] They feared that the dual-medium 'experiment' would fail, and that it

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[66] Currey, *op cit.*, p. 151.

[67] Alty, T to De Klerk, letter, 2 March 1963, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

[68] De Klerk, comment on letter from Alty, 7 March 1963.

[69] De Klerk, J to Alty, T, letter, 'University facilities at Port Elizabeth', 14 March 1963, p. 2.

[70] A municipal election was fought in Port Elizabeth shortly after the cabinet decision, and some of the main campaigners for the new university, including Van der Vyfer, lost their seats. *The Star*, 28 January 1964, and Currey, *op cit.*, p. 152.

[71] De Klerk, J to Jonker, AH, letter, 'Universiteitsfasiliteite te Port Elizabeth', 14 March 1963. Dr Abraham Jonker, the NP MP for Fort Beaufort, who was also a member of the Rhodes Council, said that 'agitation against the Bill' had originated from left wingers at Rhodes, led by Alty, who wanted to 'liberalise Port Elizabeth' (*Rand Daily Mail*, 28 January 1964). Rhodes denied that the university had acted for political reasons, and said it was 'inspired solely by higher educational motives' (*Eastern Province Herald*, 30 January 1964).

[72] *The Star*, 21 January 1964.

[73] *The Star*, 28 January 1964.

[74] *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 January 1964, *The Star*, 28 January 1964.

[75] *Sunday Times*, 26 January 1964.

would become an Afrikaans institution.[76] They strongly suggested that the Bill should be sent to a Parliamentary Select Committee to allay suspicions in Port Elizabeth, but it was put straight to the vote and on 31 January 1964 the University of Port Elizabeth Act, No. 1 of 1964, was unanimously passed by Parliament.[77]

Consequences of the UPE decision for the campaign on the Witwatersrand

The cabinet decision in February 1963 to establish a new university at Port Elizabeth had an immediate effect on the plans for moving and developing Unisa. Until this decision, both the Rand campaigners and Unisa had worked with the principle that it was government policy that 'existing white universities must be developed to provide for growing needs rather than establishing new universities'.[78] The change meant that Unisa, which had harboured serious reservations about the transformation that it was being asked to undertake in the interests of the Afrikaner, now had a way out.

Pauw immediately withdrew his support for the plan. When De Klerk met Pauw on 14 February to discuss the principles that Unisa should move to Johannesburg and that it should become a teaching university in addition to its examining and correspondence functions, Pauw appeared greatly disconcerted. De Klerk was no doubt taken aback by this reaction, as his three officials had discussed the matter in detail with Pauw, and given him no indication that he would receive such a reaction. (According to *Spes in Arduis*, the official history of Unisa, De Klerk implied that the cabinet had already discussed the matter at the same time that the UPE decision was taken.[79]) De Klerk asked Pauw to treat the whole matter as strictly confidential until they met again on 25 February, when Pauw would have composed his response in a memorandum.[80]

But on 21 February, the first day of the new academic year, the chairman of the university Council, Prof. SPE Boshoff, addressed the university and put out a press release with a very critical position about the 'rumours' about possible changes to Unisa's seat and functions.[81] He thought that it was premature to consider these 'rumours' before an official proposal was made by the government, which, he said would

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[76] In March 1966 UPE published statistics to show that it was fulfilling its obligations to both English and Afrikaans speaking students. Afrikaans speakers constituted 52% of the first enrolment, English speakers 45% and bilingual students another 2%. Afrikaans was the medium of tuition for 25 subjects, and English for 18 subjects (*Eastern Province Herald*, 14 March 1966).

[77] UPE, 1966, *Calendar*, UPE, Port Elizabeth, p. 15. As steps were taken to bring the new university into being, the political flavour of the new institution became apparent. Because of the unusual measures for state control, the *Sunday Times* said the new institution would be 'the Turfloop of Algoa Bay' and 'a factory for indoctrinating students in political and ideological attitudes' (*Sunday Times*, 26 January 1964). In May 1964 the Rhodes and Stellenbosch members of the university Senate were announced. They included the conservative Rhodes Professor of Education, Prof. JJ Gerber (*Cape Times*, 19 May 1964). In May 1966 Gerber corresponded with the Commissioner of Police in Pretoria about Nusas activities at Rhodes, identifying leading figures and recommending that two Rhodesians, Sprack and Lock, should be deported. See correspondence from Gerber in BJ Vorster's files on Nusas when he was Minister of Justice, MJU J21/ 22/1 Vol. 137: 5/66 SAP. The cabinet also considered the status of four Chinese students who were studying at the Port Elizabeth Division of Rhodes, which was about to close. They decided that the University of Port Elizabeth would not be 'open', and that the students would have to continue their studies elsewhere (*Eastern Province Herald*, 26 May 1964).

[78] RAU, *op cit.*, p. 21.

[79] Boucher, M, 1973, *Spes in Arduis: a history of the University of South Africa*, Unisa, Pretoria, p. 335.

[80] De Klerk, 5 March 1963, 'Kabinetsmemorie: Voorgestelde oorplasing van universiteit van Suid-Afrika', UOD, 04/3/1, Volume 9.

[81] Boshoff, SPE, 'Clarification by the chairman of the Council, on behalf of the executive of the Council, on the occasion of the official opening of Unisa, Thursday, 21 February 1963', UOD 4/3/1 Volume 9.

naturally 'enjoy serious and favourable consideration'.[82] As for the university, however, Boshoff said that

> No plans or desires on the part of the Council or any representative university body exist to move the university out of Pretoria, or to modify the functions of the university.[83]

Boshoff said that because of the expansion of the university, the plan was to move as quickly as possible to the new grounds provided by the City Council of Pretoria. He said that the University of South Africa Act of 1959 defined Pretoria as the administrative seat of Unisa, and gave executive power to the Council. Boshoff said that any major change to the 1959 Act would have to be made by another Act of Parliament. In the context of mistrustful relations with the government, he publicly defined the appropriate protocols and underlying principles:

> The Council will not propose any drastic changes to the purpose of the university without the approval of the government and believes that the government will also not do this without the university's co-operation. The university is happy to be able to witness that its freedom has always been respected by the government.[84]

Boshoff asserted that the prime responsibility of the university was to its external students, and said that 'the university will thus only take on a residential function if it means no disruption to the work for its external students'.[85] He concluded that

> Any government proposal for a greater task elsewhere, without disruption to the great work that the university now does shall enjoy the serious attention of the Council.[86]

Both the Rand campaigners and De Klerk were taken by surprise by Boshoff's highly public, carefully worded announcement, which asserted Unisa's powers and right to be consulted about matters affecting it. When, as planned, De Klerk met Pauw three days later, he expressed that he was 'discontented to hear of these events'. He asked Pauw to prepare a memo, to present to the cabinet on 5 March, where the matter was to be discussed.[87]

In this memo Pauw mounted a strong defence of Unisa's dual role, as a bilingual teaching institution for external, mainly adult, students and as an examining university.[88] Pauw said that by 1962 student numbers were growing at about 1,000 each year: in 1962 they had 13,158 students enrolled, 12,000 of whom were external students and 1,158 of whom were students at the black university colleges.

Pauw argued that Unisa 'has never striven to be a residential university, neither is it in the process of developing in that direction'.[89] He denied that Unisa competed with other universities for students: he said that every student applying had to give good reasons why they were not registering at another university. As a result, the number of students under 20 was declining. Pauw attributed the overall growth in student numbers to older students or people who decided to study further. The average age of Unisa students was 27 years, six or seven years higher than at any other university, and students over 40 accounted for 11.5%. Well over a quarter of the 12,000 external students were teachers improving their

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[82] Boshoff, *op cit.*, p. 1.
[83] Boshoff, *op cit.*, p. 1.
[84] Boshoff, *op cit.*, p. 2.
[85] Boshoff, *op cit.*, p. 2.
[86] Boshoff, *op cit.*, p. 3.
[87] De Klerk, 5 March 1963, *op cit.*
[88] Memorandum from Pauw to De Klerk, 'Die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika', UOD 4/3/1, Volume 9, 25 February 1963.
[89] Memorandum from Pauw to De Klerk, *op cit.*, p. 1.

academic and professional qualifications.[90] The university, he wrote, wanted to be an institution for adults, who 'must have the opportunity to develop further intellectually with the current system'.[91]

Pauw defended Unisa's bilingual character. Students chose to be taught in either Afrikaans or English. Teachers and officials had to be bilingual, and study material was available in both languages. In 1962, the home language of 50% of the students was Afrikaans, and 49% chose to study in Afrikaans.[92] Pauw cited these figures, not only to reassure the government that Unisa was serving Afrikaans students, but also to highlight the diverse role of Unisa over and beyond the needs of Afrikaans students.

Pauw also reminded the cabinet that Unisa was an examining university, and had been 'a very great asset for the government' over the struggle to establish the credentials of the black university colleges. He said he was aware that the African university colleges would eventually become independent (although he thought that this was a distant prospect for all except Fort Hare), and that this role of Unisa would fall away. In this context he pointed out how complicated the examination for external students was, and argued that it would be very difficult to transfer this function to any of the other universities.

These arguments were obviously assembled in response to a perceived threat, which had perhaps been expressed by De Klerk in his anger over Boshoff's public comments, to the continued existence of the university. (In discussions with De Klerk in September 1963, he certainly implied that Unisa's future was uncertain).[93]

Pauw then addressed the embarrassing public conflict that had arisen between Unisa and the government. He said that the university had never been officially represented at any dealings, and that all dealings with the Department's committee had been highly confidential and personal in nature. Pauw had also been asked by the minister to treat the plans as utterly confidential. As a result, the executive was never aware of the plans of the government. This had placed him in a difficult position:

> When the executive became aware that the undersigned [Pauw] carried out personal, confidential discussions, they were dissatisfied. They politely request that in the future all dealings should be carried out on an official basis. Therefore, if the government has reasons to be dissatisfied with what has happened so far from the side of the university, it should please consider this as the personal responsibility of the undersigned [Pauw] and not of the chairman of the Council, the executive, or the university.[94]

At its meeting on March 5, with this memorandum from Pauw laid before them, De Klerk asked the cabinet to consider the following points:

> The establishment of a second university at a suitable site on the Witwatersrand, primarily for Afrikaans speakers but that would also be taught through the medium of English for English speakers. If this was approved, the cabinet should consider whether Unisa should be moved to make this provision.[95]

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[90] Other details of the 1962 enrolment were that 1,134 were registered for PG degrees and diplomas, 1,267 were state officials, 50 were staff members of other universities, including staff members from every other university in the country, 293 were engineers, 261 were qualified accountants, 205 were ministers and missionaries and 1,190 were accountancy clerks.

[91] Memorandum from Pauw to De Klerk, *op cit.*, p. 2.

[92] Memorandum from Pauw to De Klerk, *op cit.*, pp. 2-3.

[93] Boucher, *op cit.*, p. 338.

[94] Memorandum from Pauw to De Klerk, *op cit.*, p. 5.

[95] Draft cabinet memorandum, 10 January 1963, *op cit.*, p. 5.

Not surprisingly, in the context of the conflict with Unisa, the cabinet did not approve De Klerk's plan, and the Rand campaign, which had been viewed by both the Department officials and the Broederbond as more urgent than UPE, suffered a serious setback, as neither the principle of setting up and Afrikaans university on the Rand nor the idea of moving Unisa was accepted. Furthermore, the frustrated De Klerk had to tell Pauw that

> The cabinet has now decided totally to abandon the idea that your university should move to the Witwatersrand, and also take on a lecturing function. Your university *status quo* is thus maintained with the intelligent understanding that its examining function in terms of the non-white university colleges will gradually decline.[96]

Later in March De Klerk wrote to Professor Pauw to express his

> Deep disappointment ... about the course of events of the university's side in this affair that is of so much concern to a great number of Afrikaans speakers on the Witwatersrand.[97]

De Klerk said that he had expected Pauw to understand that this was merely the beginning stage of a thorny and confidential process, and that they had wanted to involve as few people as possible. He had assumed that Pauw was in the best position to give the advice that the Department needed. He said that Boshoff's declaration 'greatly disconcerted me ... I am strongly under the impression that I am dealing here with an unfavourable spirit'.[98] De Klerk said that Pauw should have persuaded Boshoff to wait until after February 25 to make his announcement, and that Pauw's failure to do so had caused him particular embarrassment. He concluded with the slur that

> To come across such a spirit at a university which professes also to have the concerns to Afrikaans speakers close to the heart is astonishing.[99]

The Rand campaigners regrouped and retained the support of De Klerk. In November 1963 the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteitskommittee was set up under leadership of Meyer and obtained the support of all Afrikaans communities on the Witwatersrand.[100] Once again, they approached De Klerk with 'a detailed and strong memorandum', but in 1964 and 1965, a second attempt to deal with Unisa to establish new university failed.

In late January 1964, when the University of Port Elizabeth Bill was in Parliament, De Klerk said that the government was not currently considering plans for the establishment of a second university on the Witwatersrand.[101] The Rand campaigners told the press that they would 'mark time' on the issue because

> it was felt that the government could not tackle the establishment of two universities at the same time and that the University of Port Elizabeth should first get off to a good start.[102]

In July 1964 Unisa appointed two investigating committees to look into the principles and practical implications of moving to the Rand. Pauw said:

> The university has agreed in principle to undertake a new service for the people of the Rand, but 101 problems lie between the decision and its implementation ... Before we could move it would

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[96] De Klerk to Pauw, *op cit.*

[97] De Klerk to Pauw, UOD 4/3/1 Volume 9, March 1963 (exact date unclear).

[98] De Klerk to Pauw, *op cit.*

[99] De Klerk to Pauw, *op cit.*

[100] Including a group promoting Germiston as the seat for the new university. Dr IJ van der Walt said that the university 'must have a Christian National basis to counteract the liberal character of the existing university on the Rand' (Wilkins and Strydom, *op cit.*, p. 423.)

[101] *Rand Daily Mail*, 29 January 1964.

[102] *The Star*, 1 February 1964.

> require land, money, Government approval, legislation in Parliament - and the agreement of our own staff.[103]

By mid-1965 the Rand campaigners had developed three clear demands about the future of Unisa. First, they wanted Unisa to move to the Rand. Second, they wanted the residential section to be purely Afrikaans-medium.[104] Third, they wanted the black university colleges to take over responsibility for correspondence tuition for black students, so that the correspondence section would be white.[105] (At the old Pretoria offices of Unisa, no separate provision had been made for black students, and the 1962 Departmental report had concluded that separate facilities would be needed at any new Unisa premises.[106])

In June 1965 a meeting of all the heads of department at Unisa rejected the demands of the Rand campaigners by an overwhelming majority. They said they would consider the first demand, moving to Johannesburg, but they insisted that

> the university should remain bilingual, that there should be no interference with its correspondence courses, and that non-white students should be retained.[107]

A few days later the decision of the staff was endorsed by the Senate, and subsequently by the Council, and these views were put to the cabinet.[108]

The drawn-out campaign gave the press the opportunity to speculate that the government would accede to the demands of the powerful Rand campaigners. *The Star* wrote in an editorial in December 1964 that

> the Nationalists are not going to be satisfied with anything as South African as a genuinely bilingual university which also has more non-European students than all the other 'white' universities combined.[109]

The *Sunday Times* summed up De Klerk's dilemma:

> What is wanted from Mr De Klerk is a little more action and a little less dithering. He must at once give the green light to the Afrikaans university and resolve the dispute about where it should be sited ... His trouble has been that a decision would antagonise either the Broeders of Johannesburg or those of Pretoria ... Unhappily, Big Broeder is in Johannesburg ... on the merits of the case the Minister must give judgement against Big Broeder and keep the University of South Africa in Pretoria. Hence a certain ministerial reluctance to say anything at all.[110]

Finally, in August 1965 De Klerk announced that Unisa would stay in Pretoria and a new Afrikaans university would be established for the Witwatersrand, with its seat in Johannesburg.[111] Attempts by the

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[103] *The Star,* 21 July 1964. At about the same time the *Rand Daily Mail* was reported that there was opposition to establishing a new Afrikaans university in Johannesburg from the universities in Potchefstroom and Pretoria, which, it was said, drew between a third and half of their students from the Rand (*Rand Daily Mail,* 24 July 1964). *Die Transvaler* responded to the controversy in the press by reaffirming its support for the idea of a new Afrikaans university on the Rand, but said that no official decisions had yet been taken by the government or anyone else, and that it wasn't yet possible to say whether Unisa would move (*Die Transvaler,* 23 July 1964).

[104] *The Star,* 4 December 1964.

[105] *The Star,* 3 June 1965.

[106] Erasmus, *op cit.*, p. 31.

[107] *Sunday Times,* 20 June 1965.

[108] *Sunday Times,* 27 June 1965.

[109] *The Star,* 4 December 1964.

[110] *Sunday Times,* 11 July 1965.

[111] In April 1966 the cabinet decided on the Auckland Park site 'and thereby ended the point of dispute'. The government would also provide the capital to buy the site, which included land expropriated from the Johannesburg Country Club and private householders (SAIRR, 1966 Survey, p. 269).

Rand campaigners and the government to link the establishment of the new Afrikaans university with reinventing Unisa had cost the campaign three years: it was two and a half years after the UPE decision was approved by cabinet that the equivalent decision was taken for the Rand, and RAU therefore opened three years after UPE. It is not clear why the Rand campaigners were so committed to the option of co-operation of Unisa, although the *Sunday Times* speculated that 'for political reasons they want a strong and big university immediately to combat "the unhealthy influence of Wits".'[112]

A new source of conflict now emerged over the new institution's attitude to religious freedom. UPE's establishing legislation contained the Conscience Clause, but Meyer was adamant that the RAU legislation would omit it, although he said that the university would respect religious freedom.[113] In November 1965 the Johannesburg City Council granted R500,000 to the organising committee, on the condition that the new university would allow religious freedom. The campaigners held talks with the Jewish Board of Deputies, and a compromise was reached. Instead of the Conscience Clause, the RAU establishing legislation contains a clause based on the preamble to the country's constitution:

> a student, research worker, lecturer, or member of the administrative or library staff shall be admitted to the University on the grounds of his academic and administrative qualifications and abilities and on the ground that he subscribes to the principles set out in the preamble to the Constitution of the Republic.[114]

By June 1966 R2 million in gifts and pledges had been collected, which was enough to allow the RAU enabling legislation to be introduced in Parliament.[115] The Act was passed in October 1966.

Interpretation of the significance the establishment of RAU and UPE

The difference between the two institutions' interpretations of their own histories is striking. Several speeches and articles document the history of RAU, and *Spes in Arduis* gives details of Unisa's perspective. In contrast, there is a great silence about the history of UPE: the institution has made no attempt to counteract the partisan history recorded in Currey's unofficial *Chronicle* of Rhodes.

After the contorted, contested campaign that resulted in its establishment, RAU's official view is that it emerged as the 'natural crowning of an organic process of growth'.[116] The address by Nico Diederichs, Minister of Finance and RAU's first chancellor on the occasion of the opening of the university, provides a thorough explication of how the government, and the Broederbond, viewed the significance of the establishment of RAU.[117]

Diederichs spoke about knowledge being power, and a weapon for embattled Afrikanerdom:

> In a tense restless world ... more and more knowledge is sought ... that must serve as an instrument of economic and military power, whereby nations that feel themselves to be threatened can materially arm themselves with the purpose of ensuring their safety and continued

[112] *Sunday Times*, 20 June 1965.
[113] *The Star*, 5 and 8 November 1965.
[114] Viljoen, *op cit.*, and SAIRR, 1966 Survey, p. 269. The significance of the Conscience Clause controversy will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 of my PhD.
[115] Act No. 51 of 1966.
[116] RAU, *op cit.*, p. 19.
[117] Diederichs extended a special greeting to all other chancellors, and especially singled out those who were also cabinet colleagues. He said that their presence was proof 'not only of our official alliance, but also of the sincere bonds of friendship that exist between us'. This reference to both official and friendship bonds can perhaps be read as a heavy-handed hint about the Broederbond connections between the men.

> existence ... our survival at white, western people and the place that we will take in the world, will be determined to a large measure by the extent of the knowledge that we acquire and apply.[118]

It was obvious that RAU was intended to create an Afrikaner foothold in Johannesburg. Diederichs thought that the establishment of RAU was 'the greatest breakthrough in an area where apparently everything was loaded against the Afrikaner':

> Through the pressure of circumstance Afrikaners of earlier generations fled to the Witwatersrand in their tens of thousands to search for their daily bread. So strange and so strong were the forces against which they came up that many predicted that it would only be a short time before they lost their identity and would be swallowed up in the maelstrom of the strange.[119]
>
> Will the Witwatersrand, and especially Johannesburg, that is the centre of the Witwatersrand simply remain an large cosmopolitan city that is in many ways un-South African, or will it be a metropolis that is a true reflection of the people and country of South Africa?[120]

The urban location of RAU was also significant in that RAU was also expected to contribute to the creation of a new Afrikaans identity. Diederichs said the new university would not only use the Afrikaans language, but that it would also 'serve as the bearer and interpreter of Afrikaans thoughts'[121]:

> It was here on the Witwatersrand where [the Afrikaner] had to make a place for himself in the economy ... and still remain true to himself and his character as an Afrikaner ...RAU must attempt to facilitate the extremely difficult task of the second Great Trek of the Afrikaner from the land to the city, from farming to business.[122]

For the Rand campaigners, the establishment of RAU was therefore not simply about the founding of a new university. It represented both the attempt to claim the Witwatersrand for Afrikaners and to save Afrikaners from the alien culture of the Witwatersrand.

Although the campaign to establish RAU was conflictual and drawn out, the institution that was established came close to embodying the unfettered ideal of what the Nationalist government and the Broederbond could achieve. The power and appeal of the university lay in the clarity of the ideals that inspired its foundation, which has been reflected in the institution's proud presentation of its history.

Although UPE was created for similar reasons and through similar processes, in Port Elizabeth the Broederbond ideal was diluted by regional conditions, which made it imperative to establish a dual-medium institution if the needs of Afrikaans students were to be served at all.[123] As a result, the institution has never been able to rally to the call of 'serving Afrikanerdom' without explanation. The current Registrar of UPE, Mr Joe Coetzee, says that although the university has tried repeatedly to commission an official history, because of the controversy surrounding the establishment of the institution, 'we haven't found anyone who's prepared to say who's to blame for this place'.[124] The

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[118] Diederichs, *op cit.*, p. 8.
[119] Diederichs, *op cit.*, pp. 15-16.
[120] Diederichs, *op cit.*, p. 24.
[121] Diederichs, *op cit.*, p. 13.
[122] Diederichs, *op cit.*, pp. 26-27.
[123] Wilkins and Strydom describe how 'the Broederbond made strenuous efforts to ensure that the bias of the campus was towards Afrikaans. It launched a campaign to fill the university as far as possible with Afrikaners. An instruction was sent to members in the monthly circular letter number 4/64/65 dated June 2 1964: "With the establishment of a university in Port Elizabeth in mind, it is cordially requested that in particular friends (members) in the area will use their influence to ensure that as many Afrikaner students as possible register there".' *Op cit.*, p. 266.
[124] Coetzee, J, Registrar of UPE, interviewed telephonically, February 1995. A doctoral thesis has just been completed by a member of the UPE History Department.

'Historical Note' in UPE's 1966 *Calendar* provides one of the institution's only attempts to present its own version of its history, and this attempt is both sketchy and inaccurate.[125]

The first years of UPE's operation were also conflictual. The management style of the conservative Council and administration was heavy-handed, which caused continual friction with the academic staff.[126] UPE was also 'the target of sustained attack from the English newspapers of the eastern province',[127] perhaps because, as EJ Marais, the Vice Chancellor and Principal of UPE wrote:

> The English cultural community is effectively and fully served by Rhodes University. I saw it as natural that the character of UPE should therefore consider the reasonable claims of the Afrikaner community on the University and that the character of the University should be acceptable to the broad Afrikaner community.[128]

More than a decade after the opening of the university, Marais was asked to write an article on 'The special role of a dual-medium university' in 1977. In contrast to the confident and self-congratulatory tone of the RAU documents, which use accessible language for a public audience to invent and sustain a positive public image, Marais' article is dry and dense, written for scholarly rather than popular consumption. For example, in trying to present UPE's underlying philosophy, Marais wrote:

> It stands to reason that the educational and especially the academic realms provide a promising environment for creating and stimulating the kind of forces which will assist a nation-in-birth to find its common cultural base; but these realms equally provide a venue for fostering and nurturing those intrinsic and distinctive cultural patterns inherited from a strong and virile culture and, more specifically in the South African context, from a young and virile culture of rich and varied extraction. Dr HF Verwoerd ... had this vision in mind when he agreed to the establishment of the dual medium UPE ... this venture in socio-cultural development in our country.[129]

Conclusion: policy-making in the 1960s

Recent studies of apartheid have generated the theory that in 1961 apartheid entered a 'second phase'.[130] The authors of the introduction to *Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962,* for example, argue that

> [A]partheid underwent a rupture in the early 1960s. This period was marked by a second phase of policy-making where the apartheid state attempted to manage the contradictions of industrialisation and urbanisation more comprehensively and rigorously.[131]

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[125] It says that 'During the course of 1962 it became apparent that financial considerations would impede the future development of the UPE branch of Rhodes university, and in consequence the Mayor, Mr M van der Vyfer, applied to the government for the establishment of an independent dual-medium University in Port Elizabeth.' (UPE, 1966, *Calendar,* UPE, Port Elizabeth, p. 15.) It continues to imply that there was never any controversy about the Rhodes assets in the city, and that they were given to UPE in the first instance by the City Council. In 1967 and in subsequent years, even this detail was omitted from the 'Historical Note' in the *Calendar,* which was half the length of 1966. (UPE, 1967, *Calendar,* UPE, Port Elizabeth, p. 15.)

[126] Viljoen, *op cit.* Viljoen said that RAU benefited because the conflicts prompted many staff members to abandon UPE for RAU.

[127] Welsh, D, p. 28.

[128] Marais, EJ, 1977, 'The special role of a dual-medium university', in Van der Merwe, HW and Welsh, D, (eds.) *The future of the university in Southern Africa,* David Philip, Cape Town, p. 202.

[129] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[130] See, in particular, Lazar, J, 1987, 'Conformity and Conflict: Afrikaner Nationalist Politics in South Africa, 1948-1961', unpublished DPhil, Oxford University, and Posel, D, 1991, *The making of apartheid 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise,* Clarendon Press, Oxford.

[131] Bonner, P, Delius, P and Posel, D, 1993, 'The shaping of apartheid: Contradiction, continuity and popular struggle' in *Apartheid's Genesis 1935-1962,* Wits University Press, Johannesburg, p. 7.

One of the shifts that they identify as marking the closure of the first phase and the commencement of the second is the change in the role of the Broederbond and its relationship with government:

> By the late 1950s, executive power within the state was lodged firmly within the inner circles of the Broederbond ... which successfully inserted its members into the leadership of virtually every state department.[132]

and

> By the late 1950s, Verwoerd had manoeuvred the Broederbond into a leading role in the policy-making process as a *quid pro quo* for its support of his bid for the leadership of the NP in 1958.[133]

These statements impute a role for the Broederbond in the state that the authors warn against elsewhere. They argue, on the basis of numerous studies of policy-making in the 1950s, that the state should not be viewed as an instrument of capital or Afrikaner nationalists:

> Attention has been focused on these interests rather than on political processes and institutions within the state itself, as if apartheid laws were simple and direct transcriptions of the interests motivating them.[134]

The history of apartheid university policies does reflect a significant shift in goals from the 1950s to the 1960s. In the latter half of the 1950s legislation was framed and passed to establish black institutions and make others white. In the 1960s the government was concerned both to implement this legislation, and to endorse schemes to further white, especially Afrikaans interests. However, the examination of the two 1960s university policies presented in this paper suggest that it may be premature to overstate the role and influence of the Broederbond.

The Broederbond was certainly active in campaigning for the two new universities. Pelzer's official history of the organisation bluntly states that:

> In 1962 and again in 1963 the Executive Council in principle lent its support to the establishment of two universities - respectively in Port Elizabeth and on the Rand.[135]

Several commentators have remarked on the Broederbond's interest in education: in *The Super-Afrikaners* Wilkins and Strydom argue that

> The Broederbond has an abiding passion for control of education because of the obvious advantages this holds for any organisation wishing to influence the lives and minds of young people.[136]

Serfontein, similarly, points out that 'no field in South Africa is more completely dominated by the Broederbond than education'.[137]

With education a major interest of the Broederbond, and with Piet Meyer, the organisation's leader, co-ordinating the campaign on the Rand, if an instrumentalist interpretation of the Broederbond's influence over state policy-making is ever valid, it should hold for the history of this policy. But while the establishment of UPE slots neatly into the model, it simply does not apply to the campaign on the Rand,

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[132] Bonner *et al, op cit.*, p. 30.
[133] Bonner *et al, op cit.*, p. 33.
[134] Bonner *et al, op cit.*, p. 23.
[135] Pelzer, AN, 1979, *Die Afrikaner-Broederbond: Eerste 50 Jaar,* Executive Council of the Afrikaner Broederbond, Tafelberg, Cape Town, p. 136, my translation.
[136] Wilkins and Strydom, *op cit.*, p. 14.
[137] Serfontein, AJP, 1979, *Brotherhood of power: An expose of the secret Afrikaner Broederbond,* Rex Collings Ltd, London, p. 159. Both books suggest that the membership provides another reason for the interest in education: 'Of the organisation's total membership of nearly 12,000, [in 1977] the largest single group by profession is teachers and lecturers. They number 2,424 or 20.36% of the total' (Wilkins and Strydom, *op cit.*, p. 264).

and it appears that to characterise the Broederbond as a caucus that defined state policy is misleading. The fight put up by Unisa shows that neither the Broederbond nor the government could simply get its way with powerful local interests.[138]

Gerrit Viljoen argues that although the Broederbond's Executive Council endorsed policies, it did not impose them on its membership, or demand that well-placed, powerful Broeders, such as Pauw and De Klerk, harness the organisations under their control to a Broederbond-defined yoke. Rather, he says, they were expected to manage their responsibilities well, and where possible, bring them into line with the aims of the organisation.[139]

Viljoen's views must be handled cautiously. As a former head of the organisation, closely involved with matters of university policy as rector of RAU, he is in an unparalleled position to offer detailed information and insight. On the other hand, in 1995, as a retired Nationalist politician, he may be interested to recast the relationship to serve current political purposes. However, his characterisation of the relationship between the Broederbond and the state has proved accurate and useful in helping to explain the events both on the Rand and in Port Elizabeth.

Another assumption about the decade is that it was a period when ideological fervour rather than pragmatism drove state policy. Ideological and political imperatives were certainly important in the establishment of UPE as an independent university, which undercut the claims of Rhodes University to establish a second campus in the eastern Cape Province, and ensured that a more conservative, Afrikaans-oriented institution was established. The establishment of RAU aimed to dilute the political impact of Wits on both Afrikaans and English students. But although Wits was reviled as a liberal institution, and it was thought that students needed to be protected from its influence, the National Party government seldom took the course of attacking it directly. The establishment of RAU was a means to dilute Wits' influence and divert students from the institution. This policy indicates a grudging acceptance on the part of the government of the 'liberalism' of Wits, rather than a policy of head-on interference. However, both Unisa and Rhodes faced government threats to their autonomy: both were affected by government decisions taken without proper notification or consultation.

It is also a mistake to view the establishment of the new universities in purely ideological terms, as this was a time when the numbers and capacities of universities were expanding rapidly around the world. The elite character of universities was changing: the expectation that students would leave home to reside at university was being supplemented and supplanted by the conception that more students would study while resident in their parents' homes, or while working part-time, facilitating access for poorer students.

Other features of the history presented in this paper that cannot be explored here but which are suggestive of broader trends include a concern with meeting the needs and claiming the support of the urban, Afrikaans electorate; inventing an urban Afrikaans identity, as well as a new, National Party-supporting white South African identity and the creation of an Afrikaner enclave in Johannesburg, the heartland of Anglophone capital.[140] There are also indications that the struggles of the Broederbond

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[138] More generally, although Diederichs may have spoken of all Afrikaans people in the third person singular, for example, 'the Afrikaner came to the Rand ... he struggled', in the 1960s 'Afrikanerdom' did not act with such unity of purpose.

[139] Viljoen, *op cit.*

[140] 'The Auckland Park-Melville-Westdene complex in Johannesburg is now dominated by Broederbond-controlled institutions. Within a five-mile radius from the Broederbond headquarters, Die Eike, can be found: SABC, Goudstadse Onderwyskollege, Perskor, RAU, JG Strijdom Hospital and Vorentoe Hoerskool' (Wilkins and Strydom, *op cit.*, p. 424).

leadership to impose its will on Unisa and Pretoria-based Broeders resulted similar tensions to those that led to the Afrikaner-Orde crisis of the later 1960s and the establishment of the HNP.

However, until more detailed investigations into 1960s policy-making have been conducted, it is probably premature to generalise about the period.