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STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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# Wits, Student Politics, and Apartheid 1948-1959

## I

In May 1948, in perhaps the greatest upset in South African electoral history, Dr D.F. Malan's National Party and its allies defeated Smuts' United Party in the first general election since the war. For only the second time in the history of the Union had the governing party been defeated at the polls; for the first time since Union was a purely Afrikaner government formed. The Nationalist campaign had been waged on a platform of apartheid, involving the fuller separation of the races, and once in office the Nationalists proceeded to enact a series of measures designed to promote both greater segregation and greater repression. In the field of education, their first major measure was the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which set up an entirely separate schooling system for Africans under the control of Dr Verwoerd's Department of Native Affairs. They dealt next with tertiary education in the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, which established university collleges for 'Non-European' students. Apart from the University of South Africa, which accepted correspondence students only, and the Natal University medical school, which was reserved for black medical students, no 'Non-European', unless already registered, might attend a university except with the written consent of the responsible minister. For the rest, universities were deemed to be 'white' institutions. The country's two previously 'open universities', the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and the University of Cape Town, were now largely 'closed' to black admissions, and the Durban branch of the University of Natal was obliged to phase out its 'Non-European' classes.

To some commentators, Nationalist legislation in the 1950s unfolded with a logical inevitability in accordance with a comprehensively worked out long-term strategy for the construction of an apartheid state. Recent research, however, has emphasised the elements of fluidity in Nationalist policy-making, particularly in the pivotal area of the place of African labour in the 'white' economy. Divisions and conflicts within the Nationalist alliance, and challenges from without, served to produce shifts and compromises that make it impossible to describe Nationalist policy on influx control as unfolding in accordance with a single 'grand plan'.[1] Higher education, arguably, was another area in which the Nationalists initially lacked a fixed design to direct them. Nationalist policy on the universities ran into a series of cul de sacs before the route that led to the Extension of University Education Act was clearly mapped out.

What was certain from the outset was that the Nationalists strongly objected to the two 'open universities'. Ever since Wits and UCT had begun admitting black students to their medical schools during World War II, they had come under Nationalist

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attack for their 'open' admissions policies and for the resulting 'social intermingling' between the races on their campuses. In Parliament the attack was initiated in 1943 by J.G. Strijdom, the party's leader in the Transvaal and future Prime Minister, and in 1945 J.H. Conradie, the Nationalist MP for Gordonia, gave notice of a motion calling for segregation in institutions of higher learning.[4] For the 1948 elections, the Nationalist manifesto included universities in their projected apartheid policy for the country, although in rather vague terms. The recommendation of the party's special commission into the 'colour question' was that "where necessary" provision should be made for the higher education of 'natives' in their own areas.[5]

In retrospect, Nationalist Government policy on the universities went through two distinct phases. During Dr Malan's premiership the 'intermingling' of the races at the 'open universities' served as the main Nationalist target, and the 'open universities' were increasingly subjected to Government threats and attack, culminating in the appointment at the end of 1953 of the Holloway Commission to "investigate and report on the practicability and financial implications of providing separate training facilities for Non-Europeans at universities". There was, nonetheless, some hesitation within the Government whether it could legitimately proceed against the 'open universities', and the Government itself lacked a firm scheme for establishing black university institutions.

Following the fiasco of the Holloway Commission report, which queried the financial feasibility of creating new separate university structures for blacks, and Strijdom's accession to the premiership at the end of 1954, Government policy entered its second, more assertive phase, acquiring its positive sense of direction from Verwoerd's Native Affairs Department, and particularly the Secretary for Native Affairs, Dr W.W.M. Eiselen. Eiselen, the son of the superintendent of the Berlin Missionary Society at Botshabelo in the Eastern Transvaal and a social anthropologist, had initially contemplated the creation of a single, large 'Bantu university', but in the evidence he gave before the Holloway Commission he produced the notion of a series of ethnically based universities. The Holloway Commission was dismissive of the proposal, but it was thereafter to provide the positive thrust in Government policy for the creation of separate university institutions. This policy was embodied in the Separate University Education Bill of 1957, and the Extension of University Education Bill which was introduced in the House of Assembly in the next year, and finally enacted in June 1959.

The opposition to the Government's legislative proposals for enforcing academic apartheid encompassed a broad front. It included all the English-medium universities; the National Union of South African Students, which was rejoined by the SRC of Fort Hare University College in the belief that it was "the most urgent need of the day...for students of different races and political beliefs to unite to fight the University Apartheid Bill"; the African National Congress; the South African Institute

of Race Relations, which gave evidence to the Commission of Inquiry in support of the 'open universities'; the parliamentary Opposition, which forced a marathon sitting for the second reading of the Extension of University Education Bill and divisions on every clause of the committee stage of the bill; and the Black Sash, which mounted a vigil outside Parliament. The two 'open universities' themselves demonstrated a high degree of solidarity. The Councils of the two universities organised a joint conference, consisting chiefly of senior academics, in Cape Town in January 1957 to produce a 'reasoned' statement on the value of the 'open universities' in South Africa, which resulted in the booklet The Open Universities in South Africa. Thereafter both Councils established standing 'open university' liaison committees to advise them and maintain contact between the two universities. To ensure a united front on the Wits campus an Open Universities Liaison Committee was likewise formed of representatives of Senate, the Lecturers' Association, Convocation, the Students' Representative Council, and the Students' Medical Council; under its auspices the first major public protest against the projected university legislation was held in the Great Hall on 7 December 1956, with the University's Chancellor, Richard Feetham, presiding. Two corporate protests were mounted by Wits against university apartheid. On 22 May 1957, in the first protest of its kind in South Africa, a procession of about 250 staff and 2000 students marched in their gowns and blazers from the University to the City Hall steps, where they were addressed by Professor I.D. MacCrone. The second protest, on 16 April 1959, took the form of a general assembly called by Council to record the University's 'solemn protest' against the imposition of university apartheid; the assembly was again addressed by Professor MacCrone.

In his address, MacCrone specifically paid tribute to the student body, and particularly the successive presidents and members of the SRC, for demonstrating "a fine fighting spirit on behalf of the University". Ever since late 1956, when ministerial statements made it clear that the Government had finally committed itself to legislating against the 'open universities', there had been a remarkable degree of co-operation between the SRC and the University authorities. Prior to then anything but a united front had prevailed on campus, and a radicalised SRC had become locked in conflict with the University's Principal and Council. The conflict came to a head in 1955 when the Council imposed a new constitution on the SRC frankly designed to clip its wings and to transfer its leadership from the radicals to the liberals. The expedient worked. With a new liberal ascendancy on the SRC, and with the prospect of legislation against the 'open universities' now imminent, the basis was provided for a closing of the ranks to deal with the Government threat.

## II

During Malan's premiership, two very divergent strategies for contending with the Nationalist Government evolved at Wits. The strategy adopted by the Principal, Humphrey Raikes, and the University Council was essentially one of appeasement. As they perceived it, Nationalist objections to the 'open universities' were directed primarily against the social 'fraternisation' between the races that they allowed, the prospect that these universities would become increasingly black in composition, and, as opposition to the apartheid regime intensified, at the politicisation of their campuses. Not at all convinced that the Government was committed to legislating against the 'open universities', they believed that by tightening up on their policy of 'social segregation' on campus, keeping black enrolments within limits, and maintaining the University's political neutrality, they would succeed in warding off Government intervention. The student left, by contrast, working from the principle that universities could not somehow be divorced from the politics of the wider society, campaigned not simply to defend the status quo at the 'open universities' but also to extend the rights of black students on campus and to involve Wits students in the wider political struggle against the Nationalists. While Raikes and the Council accused the student left of 'rocking the boat', they were in turn accused of following a futile policy of 'appeasement', or worse, of downright 'collaboration', as when the University imposed restrictions on black admissions to its medical school in 1953. With a left-wing grouping in control of the SRC, the end result was a head-on collision between the SRC and the University authorities.

Despite Nationalist attacks on the racial 'intermingling' at the 'open universities', and their allegations that Wits and UCT were promoting social equality between the races, it was never the policy of these universities to extend social equality to their black students. The official policy at Wits was one of 'academic non-segregation and social segregation'. For formal social events, such as student dances, the University sought to uphold what was called 'the social colour bar', whereby blacks were excluded from 'white' functions. There existed, however, a considerable grey area between formal 'social' occasions, where segregation was enforced, and 'academic' activities, where the principle of non-segregation applied, and no systematic attempt was made to inhibit informal social intermingling. The initial war-time barrage of Nationalist criticism was directed at the 'disgraceful' amount of social intermingling between the races that this allowed on the 'open' campuses, and in May 1946 Jan Hofmeyr, the liberal Minister of Education in the Smuts Government, responded by urging Wits and UCT "to have as much separation as possible in social activities".[4] Thereafter, whenever pushed, Raikes and the Council were generally inclined to further restrict racial intermingling on campus in the name of

the greater good of preserving 'open' admissions to Wits. In May 1948, on the eve of the general election that brought the Nationalists to power, they sought to prohibit black students from participating in the annual Rag procession, but in this they were defied by the SRC, under the presidency of George Clayton, which resolved that Rag was not a social function but "an event in which ALL students are entitled to participate". Thereafter blacks continued to participate in Rag, but on condition that there should be "no mixing of European females and Non-European males on Rag floats".[5]

The clash over Rag in 1948 represented the beginnings of a prolonged tussle between the SRC and the University authorities over social segregation on campus. Following the Nationalist accession to power, Raikes and the Council became even more firmly convinced that the University would need to tighten up on social segregation on campus in order to preserve 'open' admissions, while the SRC, prompted by its left-wing, moved to adopt a more combative and politicised stance towards the new Government and the threat it posed to the 'open universities'.

The first attempt to organise a left-wing pressure group on the SRC was at the end of World War II when the Federation of Progressive Students (FOPS), an activist group formed on campus in 1943, endorsed candidates for the 1944/5 SRC. Although the FOPS contingent on the SRC included several members of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), among them Ruth First, J.N. Singh, and Benny Sischy, their purpose on the SRC was not so much to provide that body with a highly politicised agenda, as to ensure that it adopted a 'progressive' stand on student and university issues. This included the admission of Fort Hare Native College to NUSAS, which was finally achieved on the initiative of Wits at the July 1945 NUSAS assembly. It was with the Nationalist accession to power that the SRC became more overtly politicised, and that caucussing, particularly over the distribution of offices and control of the executive, became a feature of its proceedings.

At the time of the Nationalist victory three broad groups existed on the SRC; the left, made up of Communists, Marxists, and independent radicals, the liberals, and conservatives. Prior to the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950, the left on the SRC included a number of acknowledged members of the Communist Party of South Africa, among them Harold Wolpe, Mervyn Susser, David Holt, and Arthur Goldreich, but the large majority were independents. A good many were from the medical school, which was heavily represented on the SRC, and which since the latter years of World War II had provided much of the emerging radical leadership at Wits; in the assessment of Spore, the 'eie blad' of the Afrikaans-speaking students at Wits, it was the chief source of the ,Joodse negrofiliste' in student politcs.[6] After the war the law school provided another important source of mature students on the left; students in engineering remained the chief bastion of the right in Wits student politics.

The era of left-wing dominance on the SRC, and editorial

control of the student newspaper Wits Student , effectively got under way in 1950. In that year Lionel Forman, a member of CPSA who had moved from UCT to Wits to study law, was installed as editor of Wits Student, and in October Harold Wolpe, who had first entered Wits as a sociology student in 1945, became president of the SRC. Wolpe's predecessor, Sydney Brenner, an independent radical from the medical school, had sought to hold the left and liberals on the SRC together as a broad progressive alliance, but during Wolpe's tenure some of the fractures between them began to show up. Two issues were chiefly involved. The first was whether NUSAS should follow most other western non-communist student organisations and withdraw from the International Union of Students (IUS), which had its headquarters in Prague. The second was how 'political' the SRC and NUSAS should become in contending with the Nationalist Government. The left wanted to see NUSAS adopt an avowedly political platform by accepting Fort Hare's demand for a constitutional amendment stating that NUSAS stood "for political and social equality for all men in South Africa"; the liberals saw this as wandering far beyond the legitimate area of activity for a student organisation, and feared that it would drive the vast majority of whites out of NUSAS.[7] The careful work of Philip Tobias of Wits as President of NUSAS from 1948 to 1951 in building up NUSAS as an organisation implacably opposed to Nationalist apartheid policies in education, but at the same time encompassing a bulk membership of white conservatives, might rapidly be undone.[8] At the July 1951 assembly NUSAS decided to remain in the IUS and rejected the Fort Hare amendment, but the issues raised continued to prove divisive in left-liberal politics both within the Wits SRC and on NUSAS.[9] The conservatives, for their part, placed the need for English-Afrikaner student unity at the head of their agenda.

On the central question of the relationship of student organisations to politics and conditions in the wider society, the 1951 NUSAS Assembly ultimately adopted a compromise resoltion, proposed by Getz of Wits and D.D. Peter of Fort Hare, that:

> This Assembly declares that, since NUSAS is required, in terms of its constitution, to work for the educational and democratic rights of students, therefore NUSAS is bound to concern itself with the conditions of society and, particularly, with all forms of discrimination and inequality both inside the university, and, where they affect our educational system, our universities or our students as students, outside the universities.

This was to remain NUSAS policy for the next six years, though the left was to continue in its attempts to engage students on a wider political front. At the NUSAS Assembly Wolpe had made it abundantly clear that he believed the students of South Africa simply "could not stand aside from the fight against reactionary forces". In August 1951, in reporting to the Wits

student body on his tenure as SRC president, he repeated that the time was past "when we could restrict our attention to matters rigidly within the four walls of the University".[10] On leaving the presidency, to be succeeded by Godfrey Getz, a medical student, Wolpe continued to play an active role in seeking to politicise the student body, both as a member of the SRC and as chairman of the Students' Liberal Association (SLA). The SLA had been founded in 1948 with Michael O'Dowd, Wolpe's chief liberal critic, as chairman, for the specific purpose of defending the University's liberal tradition and resisting Nationalist attempts to impose racial or political discrimination in the academic sphere. but it had since become a more radical organisation for mounting opposition on campus to the Government.[11] In 1952 it served as the main mechanism for involving white Wits students in the Defiance Campaign, the campaign of civil disobedience organised jointly by the African National Congress and the South African Indian Council and directed particularly at the pass laws and apartheid legislation.

The chief response of the Wits SRC, under Getz's presidency, to the outcome of the 1951 NUSAS Assembly was to follow up on the summons to eliminate all forms of discrimination and inequality within the University. After undertaking a comprehensive review of discrimination on campus, securing returns from the administration, and the different faculties, student societies and student clubs, the SRC concluded that the only discrimination of any "ascertainable importance" related to black students, and that it applied mainly to social activities and sports. The forms of segregation imposed by the University itself were detailed by the Registrar, Glyn Thomas, in a letter of 6 May 1952, and these entailed the exclusion of black students from University sports and dances, the provision of segregated seating in the Great Hall for all University functions where tickets were bookable by the general public, and a prohibition against blacks appearing in stage productions in the Great Hall unless the cast was entirely black. In their returns, none of the cultural societies gave evidence of any discrimination, but the All Sports Council made it abundantly clear that it opposed black participation in University sports clubs.[12]

The policy the SRC thereupon adopted was designed to begin the process of rolling back segregation on campus. The motion adopted by the SRC on 13 May 1952, proposed by Wolpe and carried by 16 votes to 3, declared outright that no student club or society that imposed discrimination against any student on the basis of race, colour or creed would be recognised by the SRC or allowed to function on campus. However, the problem in the first instance lay not with the student clubs and societies themselves as with the prohibitions laid down by the Principal and Council, and the motion consequently urged that the SRC could no longer "agree to or passively accept the restrictions placed by the University authorities on the full participation of Non-European students in the above mentioned activities". Where discriminatory restrictions had been imposed by the University

authorities, rather than by the clubs or students themselves, the SRC would not interfere with the continuation of these activities, but it would not tolerate the extension of segregationist practices to other spheres of University life, and pledged itself to strive for the removal of existing restrictions.[13]

Raikes took this challenge of the SRC to the system of social segregation on campus sufficiently seriously to seek the advice of a number of senior members of Senate, more specifically on his proposal that he should meet with a range of student leaders and organisations to explain the University's position to them. "I am myself", he wrote to Professors MacCrone, Watt, Underwood, and Doke, "very anxious about the position which is arising both inside and outside the University in connection with fraternisation between European and non-European students and demands made by the SRC for fuller recognition of the so-called social rights of Non-European students." The responses he received indicated a high level of hostility not only to the notion of allowing social integration on campus, but to the radical students who were seeking to promote such integration. As I.D. MacCrone, one of the leading liberals on Senate and a future Principal of the University, wrote back, "Communist or crypto-Communist sources" within the student body, including Wolpe and Getz, were deliberately seeking to embarrass the University: "Nothing would please these people more than to expose what they consider the hypocrisy and pretensions of a so-called liberal University and by so doing bring liberalism and its works into disrepute among the non-European intellectuals while at the same time enhancing the appeal of Communism." He consequently urged that while the University authorities should "unequivocally resist" attempts by the SRC to change the policy of academic non-segregation and social segregation, they should nonetheless proceed with "the greatest caution" and not allow themselves to be manoeuvred into "a false position" where they would seem to be siding "with the forces of racial reaction".[14]

What Raikes objected to particularly about the radical students were their links with the wider movement of political protest in South Africa, culminating in the Defiance Campaign of 1952. Raikes' abiding phobia was that the University would get embroiled in political controversy, and he was consequently extremely apprehensive about the political involvements of both staff and students. The added dimension in 1952 was that certain radical students were openly 'fraternising' with blacks at political meetings: "Outside the University the problem is that meetings of Non-Europeans are becoming much more frequent to make protests about all sorts of things, and certain students are making a point of attending such meetings and fraternising in public with the Non-Europeans present at the meetings."

Before Raikes could hold his proposed meeting with student leaders, his nightmare became a reality in August 1952 with a highly publicised Wits involvement in the Defiance Campaign. On 14 August two black medical students, Deliza Mji, the president

of the African National Congress Youth League, and Harrison Motlana, the secretary of the League, were arrested on campus as part of a major police swoop to break the Defiance Campaign. On 26 August they and eighteen other Defiance Campaign leaders were charged in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court under the Suppression of Communism Act, occasioning a major demonstration outside the court by over 3000 people, mostly black. As part of the demonstration about 250 Wits students, led by Wolpe, marched from the University gates to the Magistrate's Court at Marshall Square. According to newspaper accounts, about half the students were white, and many of them were wearing University blazers, a feature that outraged their student opponents. After an initial scuffle between the student demonstrators and their opponents, and a warning from the police, the Wits contingent marched into town in groups rather than in a single procession.[15]

One impact of the march was to trigger a new round of Nationalist attacks on the 'open universities', and Wits in particular. The Transvaler contended in a leader article that the demonstration again threw a spotlight on the undesirable fraternisation between white and black, and "especially between European women and Native men", that was taking place at Wits, and Tom Naude, the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, launched a series of scathing attacks on the University. In speeches at Potgietersrust and Pretoria East in early September, he alleged there was no social segregation at Wits, that white girls went about with 'kafirs', and, in a reflection of growing Nationaliist concern at the political involvement of students at the 'open universities', he attacked Wits students for their participation in the Defiance Campaign.[16] At the end of the year the Prime Minister, Dr D.F. Malan, addressing a graduation ceremony at Stellenbosch University in his capacity as Chancellor, declared that the dual policy of academic non-segregation and social segregation adopted by the 'open universities' was in the process of breaking up under the weight of its own contradictions. The 'open universities' had either to accept apartheid in the academic sphere as well as the social, or else do away with colour discrimination in both spheres.[17]

This was precisely the kind of onslaught that Raikes had been anxious to avert, and in the midst of it he held his meeting with the Students' Representative Council, the Students' Medical Council, the Students' Dental Council, and the Engineering Council to explain the "position of the University in relation to politics and the duties of students and student societies in relation thereto and to the University". In his prepared statement, which was released to the press, Raikes told the student leaders that neither he nor the Council were prepared to tolerate attempts to involve the University in politics. He advised them further that University policy was made by the Council, with the advice of Senate, and not by the SRC, and that the SRC should consequently desist from any further challenge to the University's official policy of social segregation outside the classroom. The basis of the policy of affording educational

opportunities to blacks was academic non-segregation but social segregation, and he warned that should that be undermined Council would have no option but to cease admitting blacks. As regards national politics, he insisted that the University had to maintain an unbiased position. Individual students were free to become politically active, but they were not free to suggest that their political views in any way received the support of the University, and nor were they at liberty to damage the University's reputation by anything they said or did. On all counts the student participation in the demonstration at the Magistrate's Court was "wrong and deserving of censure": "Any demonstration against the operation of the duly established laws of the country is wrong, but demonstrating in University blazers and in close association with Non-Europeans makes things worse--it brings the University into contempt." He concluded with a direct attack on the SRC. He questioned whether it was truly representative of the student body, warned it against any direct participation in national politics, and instructed it not to interfere any further with the University's policy of social segregation. In all, the SRC should cease its "undue interest in attempting to interfere in matters of University policy that are the prerogative of the Council".[16]

Raikes' statement produced a massive estrangement between himself and the SRC, which immediately responded with its own statement to the press. A cluster of other issues that arose in late 1952 and early 1953 further soured relations, with the result that the atmosphere at Wits at the beginning of the 1953 academic year was virtually intolerable. The student body itself was thrown into turmoil, with major divides manifesting themselves between the different groups, meetings in the Great Hall were reduced to brawls, and ultimately a vote of no confidence in the SRC was carried in a referendum. In the subsequent elections, the former SRC was returned largely intact, and Getz resumed his presidency.

The two campus issues that provoked conflict between the SRC and the University authorities concerned seating arrangements in the Great Hall and the selection of students for the second year in medicine along racial rather than purely academic lines. From the standpoint of the SRC, the restrictions on seating in the Great Hall that Glyn Thomas had detailed in response to the inquiry into dicrimination on campus, constituted an innovation, not a tradition, and ran counter to the established principle of academic non-segregation in so far as they applied to 'cultural' events. At its meeting of 8 October, the day before Raikes was due to meet the various student councils to explain University policy, the SRC voted by 20 to 1 to call upon the Principal to withdraw the provisions for segregated seating in the Great Hall. The motion it proposed to put before a general meeting of the student body stated that if the provisions were not withdrawn, "the student body shall decline to make any further use of the Great Hall for any function at which the authorities impose a colour bar".[17]

This marked the beginning of a prolonged and polarising tussle between the SRC and the University authorities over seating in the Great Hall. Relations between the SRC and the University authorities were further estranged at the beginning of 1953 when the SRC challenged the University's restriction on black admissions to the second year of medicine. With the opening in the previous year of a medical school for blacks at Natal University, it seemed to the SRC as if Wits was now collaborating with the Government in its plans to promote apartheid in higher education.

The development within the medical school that led to a resort to restrictions on black admissions was experimentation with its admission procedures, which had resulted in an increased black enrolment. In 1950 the decision was taken to abandon the selection of medical students for the first year, and to introduce instead selection for admission to the second year. Thus in 1951, and again in 1952, all applicants with the minimum qualification were admitted to the Faculty of Science for the first year; it was for the admission of about 95 students into the second year of medicine that the selection process operated. The furore that arose at the beginning of 1953 was due to the fact that the selection of students for the second year was determined along racial lines. All the white students who had passed the first year were admitted, but only 6 of the 23 'Non-Europeans' who had passed were allowed to proceed, even though most the remainder qualified on academic grounds. As Raikes conceded in a memorandum for Council, "Most, though not all, the Non-Europeans who failed to gain admission to the second year in 1953 would have been selected on a strictly competitive basis."

In addition to the 23 blacks who had passed the first year of medicine at Wits, out of an initial enrolment of 56, repeats, BSc graduates, and the six official scholarship holders at Fort Hare, including the recipients of awards from the African Medical Scholarship Trust Fund set up by the Wits student body after the Government's withdrawal of state scholarships, had to be taken into account, and it was this that "caused alarm" in the medical school. The number of blacks in the second year of medicine was normally around twenty, but there was now the prospect of having to cater for well over thirty in the class. The medical school contended that it could not handle such an influx, chiefly because of inadequate "Non-European maternity material in the clinical years". The selection committee of the Faculty of Medicine consequently proposed to limit the 'Non-European' enrolment in the second year to twelve, but with prodding from Raikes this figure was raised to twenty. The twenty was to be made up of 6 scholarship holders, 2 BSc graduates, 4 repeats, 2 who had passed second year science, and 6 of the 23 who had passed the first year.[20]

When this information became public there was an immediate outcry from the Students' Medical Council, the SRC, NUSAS, and Convocation as well as from the excluded students, who threatened the University with legal action. The University's bona fides in

the matter were brought seriously into question, chiefly on the grounds that white students in the clinical years were given considerable access to the obstetric facilities in black hospitals and yet no limit had been placed on white students proceeding to the second year. When the medical school reopened in February, the students carried a SMC motion supporting legal action against the University authorities, and in early March the SRC resolved on the motion of George Bizos to call a one-day protest strike of all students. At its meeting of 3 March the SRC also agreed to put before a general meeting of all students a motion protesting against the Principal's threat to take disciplinary action against those students who had participated in the Defiance Campaign during the vacation, and it instructed Wits Student to bring out a special one-page issue containing Getz's presidential address for 1953.[21]

Under the banner-headline 'Crisis at Wits', Getz's address represented a sustained and systematic attack on the policies adopted by Raikes and the Council. As a counter-blast to Raikes' statement on the University and politics, Getz urged that the very nature of South African society made it impossible for the University to remain politically neutral. While the University should certainly never be political in the party partisan sense, it was nonetheless caught up in the political arena by its own policies and the nature of South African political issues. Given the Government's policy of apartheid in education, the University's own policy of admitting black students was "decidedly a political issue", and given the Government's invasion of the fundamental liberties of freedom of speech, expression, and organisation, any true university had ipso facto a duty to stand firm in defence of those liberties wherever and whenever they were infringed. The SRC executive, he continued, anyhow believed that the University had a positive duty to the wider community, particularly with regard to the improvement of race relations. As regards the political activities of individual students, Getz firmly defended their rights to act on their own consciences, and to choose their own companions, friends and fellow demonstrators, regardless of their colour, so long as they did not seek to represent the University as such, and he held that the University's threat of disciplinary action against those students who participated in the Defiance Campaign constituted in itself a "political action". In taking the challenge to Raikes and the University authorities, Getz accused them of failing in their basic duty to protect the independence of the University. Instead, they were capitulating to Government pressure, as was evident in the introduction of segregated seating in the Great Hall and in the restrictions imposed at the beginning of 1953 on black admissions to the medical school. While the University was failing in its duty, he urged in conclusion, "let the same never be said about its students".[22]

Getz's onslaught, unprecedented in the history of Wits, immediately provoked an angry backlash among a good many liberal as well as conservative students. When he attempted to deliver

his address before a general meeting of students in the Great Hall on Monday 9 March, he was systematically howled down. According to the report in the Rand Daily Mail, about 1500 students packed into the Great Hall, with a loud phalanx at the back making it virtually impossible for Getz to be heard; a combination of bells, whistles, howls, war cries and constant heckling drowned him out. At the continuation meeting on Friday the presidential address was taken as read, and a motion of no confidence was moved in the SRC by one of its own members, Colin Didcott, on the grounds that its heavy involvement in "leftist politics" had transformed the University from a place of learning into a political battlefield. Two adjournments later, and after what the minutes described as "lengthy and rowdy discussion", the motion of no-confidence was lost by the narrow margin of 693 votes to 725. When the meeting reconvened for the fourth time on Wednesday 18 March it was unanimously agreed that the motion of no confidence should be put to a referendum. Amidst "uproar, booing and shouts of 'resign'". Getz resumed the chairmanship of the meeting, which had been taken over by Michael O'Dowd for the no-confidence debate. The uproar continued as Bizos moved his motion protesting the exclusion of suitably qualified blacks from the second year of medicine; the idea of calling for a one-day strike had long since been abandoned. After "noisy discussion", a further adjournment, and the defeat of an amendment reaffirming academic non-segregation but deploring the allegations made by the SRC against the University authorities, the motion was carried on 25 March by an overwhelming majority.[83]

The subsequent referendum on 30 March reflected the deep divide in the student body in response to the overt politicisation of the SRC and its denunciation of the University authorities. In a poll in which eighty per cent of all students paying their SRC fees participated, 1314 votes of no-confidence were cast in the SRC as against 1035 votes of confidence.[84] In the elections in late April, most of the former SRC were nonetheless again returned, and Getz resumed his presidency.

Sobered by the challenge to their own authority from within the student body, Getz's SRC thereafter abandoned its confrontational stance towards the University authorities. Raikes, for his part, was likewise anxious to end "the estrangement between the S.R.C. and myself", and the two were consequently able to work out a compromise arrangement over seating in the Great Hall for the 1953 Arts Festival.[85] The compromise allowed for booking in price-blocks, rather than individual seats, thereby permitting people to sit next to whom they chose.

The controversy that continued to smoulder was over black admissions to the medical school. At an extraordinary meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine on 30 March the motion of Professor Gillman that the black students who had passed the first year examination in 1952 be immediately admitted to the second year of medicince was carried, despite Professor Dart's insistence that the motion was incapable of implementation as it

was now too late in the academic year to accept further students, and that to allow the overcrowding of clinical facilities would create injustice.[26] Senate, however, upheld Professor Dart, and by 27 votes to 14 adopted his amendment that "subject to the future policy of this University relative to the training of Non-Europeans in Medicine", the students concerned be admitted to the second year of study "as soon as possible". Senate also endorsed the medical faculty's motion calling on the Government to set up a clinical training at the Durban Medical School as rapidly as possible.[27] Thereafter, with the decision of the medical school to revert to selection for the first year, the thrust in the Faculty of Medicine and Senate was to work out a permanent quota system for black admissions to the medical school "in accordance with the clinical facilities available". The recommendation made by the Board of the Faculty of Medicine, and adopted by Senate, was that a maximum of 8 blacks should be admitted to the first year, with another 12 places available in the second year for holders of recognised scholarships and BSc graduates.[28] This formula was accepted by Council at its meeting on 4 December 1953.

At this meeting Council reviewed its whole policy with regard to black admissions to Wits. The fact of the matter was that important members of Council, led by the chairman, P.M. Anderson, had become uneasy about the 'influx' of black students into Wits. In 1952 there had been a thirty per cent increase in the first year enrolment of 'Non-White' students, from 70 to 101, and for Anderson this was a disturbing development. A product of the South African School of Mines, managing director of the Union Corporation, and chairman of Council since 1939, Anderson feared that the 'white' character of Wits might one day be endangered unless an overall quota system was installed. As he told Raikes in February 1953, he was alarmed by evidence which suggested that there was a steady increase in the ratio of "Non-Europeans to the total enrolment", and he saw this as being "entirely due to Asiatics". He consequently wanted to prohibit Indians from outside the Transvaal from attending Wits, and to impose a quota of fifty from within the province.[29] The idea of establishing separate universities for blacks seems to have caused him few qualms. At the end of 1952 his response to Malan's attack on the University's dual policy of academic non-segregation and social segregation was that Wits was providing a necessary service which would have to continue until the Government made adequate provision for blacks elsewhere.[30]

In early 1953 a Council committee, under Anderson's chairmanship, was set up to review the University's admissions policy, and it finally met on 20 November, after the Minister of Education, Arts and Science, J.H. Viljoen, had told the House of Assembly that the Cabinet would soon be looking into the question of separate universities for blacks.[31] In addition to Anderson, the committee comprised of Raikes, Sutton, MacCrone, and Dr Winifred Hoernle, all members of Senate, A.J. Limebeer and W. van Heerden. The main document before the committee was a memorandum

prepared by Raikes, in which the Principal recommended no change in the general policy of the University and the continued admission of blacks to the medical school, though with the imposition of a strict quota as determined by the Faculty of Medicine and Senate. As was clear, Raikes submitted, the demand among blacks for a medical training was greater than could be met by Natal University, and Wits should therefore continue to train a certain number of blacks.[32]

This formula for the medical school was accepted by the committee, but there was no unanimity that the current policy on black admissions should remain "a permanent feature" of the University. One of the state appointees on the Council, Mr W. van Heerden, proposed that the University's policy be regarded instead "as a temporary one until such time as the Council is satisfied that sufficient facilities have been established for Bantu university education on a separate basis, and that thereafter admission of Bantu students to this University be limited to advanced study". The minutes record that this proposal "was not acceptable to all members of the committee, some of whom rejected the proviso in principle". The outcome was a compromise in which the committee recommended that Council should retain but not consider itself bound to the existing arrangements, and allow for changes in accordance with changing circumstances. One such circumstance would be "any appreciable increase in the number of Non-European students".[33] In the event, there was no such increase. The majority of black students at Wits were in the medical school, and with the introduction of a quota system there an effective check was placed on overall black enrolments. Total black enrolments at Wits declined from a high of 245 in 1952 to 195 by 1955; thereafter a major increase in Indian admissions pushed the total up to 297 by 1959.[34]

At its meeting of 4 December 1953 Council adopted the recommendations of its admissions committee. Shortly thereafter the Government announced that it had established, under the chairmanship of J.E. Holloway, a commission to inquire into the feasibility of providing separate training facilities for blacks at universities.

III.

The appointment of the Holloway Commission coincided with a major change-over in the leadership of Wits. After 26 years as Principal, Raikes announced in late 1953 that he was retiring through ill-health; as his successor Council opted for the engineer, Professor W.G. Sutton, who had served as Acting Principal on a number of occasions. The post of Principal was never advertised and no candidates other than Sutton were seriously considered.[35] A remarkably efficient administrator, Sutton saw it as his main task to put some order into the University's administration and finances, which had grown

increasingly chaotic in Raikes' last years. Politically conservative, he also saw it as his duty to crack down on the 'leftists' in control of student politics. As he perceived it, they had got quite out of hand in Raikes' last years, attacking the authority of the Principal, the Council, and the University as a whole; to him this was an "utter cheek".[36] Sutton's appointment consequently produced a new bout of confrontation between the University authorities and the SRC, culminating in the imposition of a new constitution on the SRC in 1955 and an end to the era of left-wing dominance.

On the surface, the University appeared to close ranks in response to the appointment of the Holloway Commission; all the major constituencies within Wits rallied to the defence of the 'open university'. Senate, following a memorable series of debates in March 1954, gave a decisive endorsement to the maintenance of 'open' admissions to Wits, though not without first facing a major challenge from the right. In Senate there had always been a substantial minority who either believed there was inadequate segregation on campus, particularly in the classrooms, or who were opposed to the very notion of blacks at Wits. Professor Pierre de Villiers Pienaar, from 1944 head of the new Department of Phonetics and Logopedics, and Abel Coetzee, from 1947 Professor of Afrikaans Taalkunde en Volkskunde, were the only two self-acknowledged Nationalists in the Senate, but there were several other 'gloomy reactionaries', as one contemporary described them, who were basically hostile to the presence of black students at Wits. The most powerful was Professor J.C. Middleton Shaw, the long-standing Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, who had successfuly resisted all attempts to open up the dental school to blacks. With the appointment of the Holloway Commission, Pienaar and Shaw took the lead in mobilising opposition in Senate to the continued presence of blacks at Wits. As they wrote to Sutton in February 1954, they were convinced that "the continued admission to the University of non-European students is not in the interests of either the white or the non-European members of the community".[37]

For two days in early March Senate debated its position on 'academic non-segregation'; not since 1927, when Senate had discussed whether and on what terms blacks should have access to a medical training at Wits, had it engaged in a fundamental debate on policy towards the admission of black students. For the Senate meeting of 5 March Professors Errol Harris of Philosophy and Etienne Marais of History presented a motion condemning discrimination in academic matters of racial grounds, and requesting the Principal to convey Senate's views to the Council. The counter motion put forward by Shaw and Pienaar asserted that Senate was not in the position to advise Council or anyone else until so asked; in introducing the motion Shaw proclaimed it was time for the Senate to come down to earth, "good, South African earth". For the next meeting of 12 March Harris and Marais amended their motion to read that Senate held "that the policy so far followed by the Council has been in

keeping with academic principles, has promoted racial harmony and understanding and has won international prestige for the University". Over the two days, twenty four members of Senate, almost half the total, spoke their minds, with the proponents of the two motions evenly balanced; no one knew how the Senate as a whole would vote. In the end, Senate showed itself to be more liberal than generally anticipated; the Harris/Marais motion was adopted and that of Shaw and Pienaar was defeated by 24 votes to 10.[38]

The executive of Convocation, which included a strong liberal contingent, and the SRC, under the presidency of Dan Goldstein, yet another medical student, likewise took decided stands against the threat to Wits' status as an 'open university'. The Convocation executive formed a University Apartheid Sub-Committee, with Dr Philip Tobias as convener, to prepare evidence for the Holloway Commission in defence of the 'open university' and a special general meeting of Convocation was staged on 23 February to protest the appointment of the commission.[39] For its part, the SRC, at a special meeting on 24 February, resolved not to submit "technical evidence" to the Holloway Commission on the ground that the commission was simply "part of the machinery being assembled by the Government for the abolition of the open Universities". It did, however, agree to submit a detailed statement of its attitude to the commission, and committed itself to co-operating with other universities and NUSAS "in fighting for academic freedom".[40] Only the executive of the Lecturers' Association appeared to drag its feet, failing to hold its projected 'discussion meeting' on 'academic non-segregation' and effectively declining the SRC's request for a joint meeting.[41]

Responsibility for preparing the University's submissions to the Holloway Commission was handed by Council to the committee it had appointed in the previous year to consider its policy on black admissions. The memorandum it produced, and which Council accepted at its meeting of 23 April 1954, treaded through a series of minefields to produce a full endorsement of the University's overall policy of 'academic non-segregation and social segregation'. As the memorandum argued it, the exclusion of black students from the formal sporting and social life of the University was a necessary concession to "the special circumstances which prevail, in the field of social relationships, in South Africa", but that this did not detract from the ability of black students to make the informal and extra-mural contacts with their white counter-parts that were all-important for their development as educated persons. In all, the memorandum contended, Wits, while successfully maintaining its predominantly 'European' character, was able to offer its black students a range and standard of facilities that could not be paralleled in a system of separate facilities, whether within the University or in separate institutions:

> In order to provide such range and standard, the essential requirement is that a well-established University shall, without losing its predominantly

> European character, admit such Non-Europeans as in its judgment meet the requirements for entry, controlling their numbers in faculties wherein the overall number of students has in any case to be controlled but otherwise offering them the maximum possible access to the facilities availaible in the University, treating them in academic matters with racial impartiality and providing the maximum of academic non-segregation, while restricting social contact outside the academic sphere. It is submitted that the policy so followed by this University has fulfilled its academic purposes with great success and the minimum of social difficulties, and that there is no reason for the University to depart from this policy.[42]

While Council, Senate, Convocation, and the SRC, all moved to defend the 'open university' in response to the appointment of the Holloway Commission, there was no real closing of the ranks. Each acted on its own, with Council making it quite clear that it alone was responsible for policy. The consensus that existed was for Wits to continue to admit black students; thereafter the questions of quotas, social segregation on campus, and the overall strategy to be adopted towards the Government remained divisive issues as between Council and the Principal on the one hand and the SRC, supported in some measure by the executive of Convocation, on the other.

Sutton's blunt, uncompromising approach in dealing with the SRC accentuated the divisions. In response to the SRC's own investigations into clinical facilities available to the medical school, which indicated that many more blacks could be admitted than the new quota system allowed, Sutton bluntly asserted that "the University could not face a situation, under present conditions, where a considerable number of European applicants of desirable quality would have to be turned away, to allow of places being allotted to an increasing number of Non-Europeans".[43] For the SRC, Sutton's standpoint represented a "radical change in University policy", but this the Principal simply denied.[44] More damaging to relations was when Sutton revoked the compromise arrangement worked out by the SRC and Raikes over seating in the Great Hall. When approached by the SRC to continue the arrangement in 1954, Sutton made it clear that while the SRC might have found the compromise "eminently satisfactory", its permanent adoption by the University was not "a mere formality". It was for Council, not the SRC to decide, and Council decided otherwise. At its meeting of 26 February 1954, the very meeting at which it endorsed the University's statement to the Holloway Commission in defence of 'academic non-segregation', Council indicated that it had not been consulted over the compromise, which it would never have authorised, and resolved that its policy remained "one of social segregation at functions open to the public" with the exception of Graduation.[45]

The situation was now polarised. In response to Council's decision, the SRC called a general meeting of the student body at

the end of March which passed, by 368 votes to 288, a motion calling on Council to revert to the compromise scheme that Raikes had allowed and instructing all student societies and clubs not to make use of the Great Hall for segregated functions.[46] Not all societies were willing to comply. The Choral Society, scheduled to put on a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Ruddigore" in the Great Hall, decided to proceed in defiance of the motion and the SRC's threat to withdraw recognition and financial support from the society. The threat, Sutton advised the SRC, was ultra vires as the SRC was not entitled to discriminate against any university organisation for exercising rights it had derived from the University Council, and for accepting conditions prescribed by Council. At its meeting of 23 April 1954 Council endorsed the Principal's view.[47] In the face of legal threats, the SRC retreated, "Ruddigore" was performed in a half-empty Great Hall devoid of students and blacks in the audience, and the question of seating at such events was subsumed in a wider struggle over the constitutional position and rights of the SRC.

The SRC's attempted action against the Choral Society brought to a head the whole issue of its powers and legal standing in the University. As perceived by Council, that action represented a direct challenge to "the authority which the Council and Principal are empowered to exercise in the University". Council was consequently anxious to have the position of the SRC statutorily defined, and instructed its constitution committee to "proceed forthwith" to frame a statutory constitution for the SRC. In the meantime, the SRC was to function by Council's sufferance, and was subjected to the "unimpeded authority" of the Principal, who, as the SRC was informed, was empowered to veto any of its decisions and suspend any provision of its constitution.[48]

Tracing its origins back to 1905, and the old Transvaal University College, the SRC had never been provided for in the University of the Witwatersrand Private Act of 1921, which had established Wits as a fully-fledged university, and consequently had no legal standing in the University. This was a factor which troubled successive SRCs from 1939 onwards, following a series of clashes with Raikes over the exercise of his authority, and by the end of World War II the SRC had committed itself to obtaining statutory recognition, despite warnings that statutory recognition might well be employed to impose statutory limitations on its powers and activities. When the University's Private Act was amended by Parliament in 1952 the SRC was finally given statutory recognition. The Act now provided for an SRC, elected by the students of the University; its composition, mode of election, powers, duties, and privileges were to be prescribed in the University's statutes. The procedure for statutes was that they were drawn up by Council and submitted to the Minister for approval; thereafter they were tabled in Parliament, and if not vetoed within thirty days became binding. Following the fracas with the SRC over its attempts to discipline the Choral

Society, Council proceeded on its own accord to prepare the relevant statute for the SRC; it went into operation in 1955 despite the concerted efforts of the SRC to have it blocked at both the ministerial and parliamentary levels. Under the headline "SRC Strangled!", Wits Student declared that the new statute provided for a 'puppet' SRC "subservient in every way to the University authorities".**

In campaigning for statutory recognition the SRC had seen it as a device for enhancing its status within the University, and as a necessary preliminary for gaining student representation on Senate and Council; in the hands of Council statutory recognition became an instrument for curbing and controlling the SRC. As drafted by the constitution committee of Council, the statute laid it down that the SRC was to discharge its functions in conformity with the policy and decisions of Council; the actual constitution for the SRC, which was drafted by Professor G.H.L. le May, head of the Department of Local Government, provided for the election of the SRC through a system of proportional representation in a single university-wide constituency. The latter represented a direct threat to continued radical control of the SRC.

Under its existing constitution, which had been streamlined in 1950 by Michael O'Dowd with a view to statutory adoption, the SRC was elected on a faculty basis, with one representative for each faculty for every 160 students or major part thereof, as against 250 students previously. Each voter had as many votes as there were representatives for a faculty, and with the development, in effect, of a party system the general practice was to vote for particular tickets. For the 1950 elections, Medicine, as by far the largest faculty with over 1100 students, was entitled to 7 representatives, Engineering, the most conservative faculty, to 5, Arts 4, Dentistry, Commerce, and Architecture 2 each, and Law 1. In addition, the Johannesburg Teachers Training College, the Cultural Societies, the All Sports Council, and each of the four residences, College for men, Dalrymple for women, Cottesloe for ex-servicemen, and Douglas Smit for blacks, possessed a representative on the SRC. In 1952 Raikes queried the representativeness of an SRC returned by these fragmented constituencies, and following the referendum of no confidence in the SRC in 1953 the whole system of election was brought seriously into question. As the SRC's constitutions sub-committee, chaired by George Bizos, commented: "In that referendum in the Engineering faculty, of 550 students entitled to vote 400 voted against the SRC, and 50 in favour. In the Medical faculty, of 750 students entitled to vote 450 did so, 250 in favour of the SRC, and 200 against. Thus in these two faculties 600 students voted against the SRC, and 300 in favour. But if at an SRC election, there had been a clear-cut division between two tickets, representing the policies on the SRC at the time of the referendum and of its opponents, and exactly the same votes had been cast, the pro-SRC party would have won all the seats in the Medical School, 5 in number, while the anti-SRC

party would have received all the Engineering seats 3 in number. Thus 600 students would have been represented by three members, and 300 by five."[50] To contend with this anomoly, O'Dowd drafted a scheme for proportional representation in a single constituency, but the motions in the SRC to recommend or propose the scheme to a general student meeting were lost.[51] It was to a similar scheme that Le May resorted in order to break what he saw as the dominance of the SRC by a small group of medical school radicals. His proposal was for the election of an SRC, which according to the statute was to consist of 20 to 25 members, by a system of preferential voting in a single constituency. Following protests by the SRC, Le May agreed to each faculty, irrespective of size, possessing one representative on the SRC, but the remaining members were all to be elected by proportional representation in a university-wide contest.[52]

Under the presidency of Bob Hepple, an arts student and later a Rivonia trialist, the 1954/5 SRC, the last elected under the old system, waged a sustained campaign to block the adoption of the new statute and constitution for the SRC. A three-man deputation under Hepple was sent to the Council meeting of 3 December 1954 to present the SRC's objections, but Council nonetheless proceeded to adopt the statute and constitution for the SRC; thereafter the SRC appealed to the Minister of Education, Arts and Science not to endorse the statute; on failing to persuade him, the SRC and SMC executives briefly contemplated not supporting the University Towns Festival and University Appeal, the University's biggest fund-raising effort since its foundation, should the student body not be assured that Wits was "to remain a University worth supporting". After backing down from that threat, the SRC organised an anti-statute petition, which was signed by over two thousand students, and approached local United Party MPs, including Jack Cope (Parktown) and Helen Suzman (Houghton), in the effort to force a debate in Parliament. On 19 March the matter was ultimately raised in the Senate by Senator J. Duthie of the Labour Party, but the Minister made it quite clear that he regarded the dispute at Wits as a purely domestic issue in which he was not prepared to interfere.[53] The statute thereupon acquired the force of law. In a final effort to block the statute, the SRC secured legal opinion challenging its validity, but Council's own legal opinion held that the statute was completely valid. At its meeting of 1 July 1955 Concil duly resolved that "the body hitherto known as the SRC" would be dissolved on 15 August, that its members would continue to administer the funds and affairs standing in its name until 30 September, and that Professor Le May would take responsibility for organising elections for the statutory SRC. As a final gesture of defiance, Hepple's SRC declined to assist at its own execution, and Council consequently appointed a committee of the Principal, Vice-Principal, and Professors MacCrone and Richards to administer the affairs of the old SRC.[54]

The SRC denounced the new statute and constitution as 'undemocratic', in so far as they were imposed from above,

without due consultation and discussion with the student body, and in so far as they made the SRC answerable to Council rather than the student body, thereby depriving Wits students of the considerable degree of autonomy they had previously enjoyed, and still required, in the management of their own affairs. As summed up by the Manifesto of Student Rights adopted by the SRC and faculty councils, "In the past, the SRC has been under the direct control of the student body, which had never failed to remove the SRC when the latter failed in its duties. The Statute deprives the students of this control, and makes the SRC subject only to Council, on which students are not represented."[55] Council, for its part, insisted that the status of the SRC had now been enhanced, in that it was now responsible for its own actions and decisions rather than bounden to resolutions passed at general meetings of students, and that the new electoral system was likely to make it more 'democratic' in that it would now be "more representative of the various shades of student opinion than is possible under the previous system".[56]

Despite denouncing the new statutory SRC as a 'puppet' designed to administer student affairs on behalf of the authorities, an inter-faculty meeting of councils called by the SRC decided to participate in the elections for faculty representatives on the SRC on 15 August "on the strict understanding that by doing so they were in no way condoning the new SRC". At the same time it was decided that "at all times there should be some organisation of students capable of fully representing students"; at a general meeting of students on 11 August it was consequently resolved to establish a Witwatersrand University Students' Association to uphold, defend, and advance the rights of students at Wits.[57] The upshot was three sets of elections; faculty elections for the SRC on 15 August, off-campus elections, as a consequence of a University ban, for the new association on 8 September, and single constituency elections for the SRC on 28 September. Although several radical stalwarts, including Bob Hepple and Ismail Mohammed, were returned in elections in which 40 per cent of the student body participated, leadership of the SRC now passed to the liberals, with the formation of a liberal executive under the presidency of Chris Rachanis, a dental student. As the first number of Wits Student for 1956, edited by Magnus Gunther and Johnathan Suzman, trumpeted, the SRC had "escaped from the Marxist morass": "For the first time in some years the left wing has lost its majority in the council. The present executive is a liberal one, and the balance of power lies with the forces of moderation and good sense, in an uneasy coalition with a few members of rightist persuasion."[58] The University Students' Association, prohibited from using the designation Witwatersrand, was banned from the campus by Council.

IV.

For radicals on campus, the imposition of Council's

constitution on the SRC represented yet another instalment in the University's capitulation to Government pressure. "Submitting completely to Government pressure", the Wits Student, edited by Hepple, Stanley Trapido, and R.W. Harvey, commented on 8 September 1955, "the authorities have made it their declared intention to supress all attempts to retain inner-University democracy." Growing Nationalist criticism of the 'open universities', and Wits in particular, as 'hotbeds' of political subversion undoubtedly intensified the traditional aversion of the University's Principal and Council to atttempts to politicise the University, and breaking radical control of the SRC fitted in with their overall strategy of pacifying the Government in the effort to maintain Wits as an 'open university'. When the Government nonetheless announced that it was proceeding with legislation for separate universities, the University found itself obliged to take a political stand, and all constituencies within it worked together in making that stand. "Wits", the Wits Student commented in March 1957, "is today a completely united front against apartheid." The withdrawal of Sutton, who was temperamentally unsuited to protest politics, into the background, allowing MacCrone to emerge as the University's spokesman, and the fact that the SRC was now in the hands of liberals rather than radicals, facilitated the new spirit of co-operation in contending with the Government.

Notes

1. See D. Posel, "Influx Control and the Construction of Apartheid, 1948-1961" (unpublished Oxford University D. Phil. thesis, 1987).
2. House of Assembly Debates, vol. 46, 6926-6303, & vol. 53, 5478.
3. „Waar nodig moet gesorg word vir hoer onderwys en Universitere opleiding vir Naturelle in sy eie gebiede", Verslag van die Kleurvraagstuk-Kommissie van die Herenigde Nasionale Party, 1947, p. 13.
4. House of Assembly Debates, vol. 57, 6744-5.
5. SRC Minutes, 14 May & 1 June 1948.
6. ‚Die Toenemende Rasse-Vraagstuk aan Wits', Spore, August 1945.
7. SRC minutes of special general meeting, 28 June 1951.
8. M. Legassick, The National Union of South African Students: Ethnic Cleavage and Ethnic Integration in the Universities (Los Angeles, 1967), 18-23.
9. On the motion of Wolpe and Getz of Wits, the NUSAS Assembly voted by 18-14 to remain in the IUS; the Fort Hare motion was defeated by 19-2. Minutes of 27th Annual NUSAS Student Assembly, 4-14 July 1951, UCT Library Archives BC 586.
10. President's report on the activities of the SRC, August 1951, SRC minutes.

11. For the founding of the SLA see Witwatersrand Student, 6 October 1948.
12. Thomas to SRC correspondence secretary, 6 May 1952, Subfile 2 to P12/8. What the ASC was prepared to accept was black membership of University clubs without participation in league sport, and the use of the University grounds by blacks when they were not being used by whites, but even these concessions were to be subject to the law of the land and municipal regulations, the parent bodies of the individual clubs, the decision of the University Council, and "the conventions of our land". Report of SRC executive to SRC meeting, 6 May 1952, SRC Minutes.
13. SRC Minutes, 13 May 1952.
14. Raikes to MacCrone et al, 1 July 1952, and MacCrone to Raikes, 26 July 1952, Subfile 2 to P12/8.
15. Star, 26 August 1952; Rand Daily Mail, 27 August 1952.
16. Rand Daily Mail, 1 September 1952; Pretoria News, 4 September 1952.
17. Star, 12 December 1952.
18. "Position of the University in relation to politics and the duties of students and student societies in relation thereto and to the University", 8 October 1952, File P12/8.
19. SRC Minutes, 8 October 1952.
20. "Memorandum for committee on admission of non-Europeans", H.R. Raikes, May 1953, Misc. C/82/53.
21. SRC minutes, 3 March 1954.
22. Wits Student, 6 March 1953.
23. SRC minutes, 3-25 March 1953; Wits Student, 6 & 30 March 1953; Rand Daily Mail, 10, 14 & 18 March 1953.
24. Rand Daily Mail, 31 March 1953.
25. Raikes to the SRC correspondence secretary, 11 June 1952 and 7 June 1953, Subfile 2 to P12/8.
26. Board of Faculty of Medicine minutes, 9 & 30 March 1953.
27. Senate minutes, 13 April 1953.
28. "Memorandum on selection of medical students for first year and second year courses in and after 1954", 16 September 1953, Misc. FMS 152A/53.
29. Anderson to Raikes, 4 February 1953, File B19/3.
30. Star, 12 December 1952.
31. For Viljoen's statement see the Star, 1 September 1953.
32. "Memorandum for committee on admission of Non-Europeans", 2 May 1953, Misc. C/82/53.
33. "Draft report of the committee appointed by the Council to consider the Council's policy in respect of the admission of Non-Europeans to the University, 20.11.53", Misc. C/215/53.
34. Statistics 211.
35. Executive committee of Council minutes, 26 October 1953.
36. Interview with Professor Sutton, November 1982.
37. Shaw and Pienaar to Sutton, 17 February 1954, File P12/8.
38. Senate minutes, 5 & 12 March 1954; interview with Professor G.H.L. le May.
39. Convocation executive minutes, 19 January & 16 February 1954.

40. SRC minutes, 24 February 1954.
41. Lecturers' Association executive minutes, 9 February and 13 March 1954.
42. "Memorandum for the Commission on Separate Training Facilities for Non-Europeans", Misc C/57A/54.
43. Sutton to SRC President, 8 March 1954, File B19/3.
44. SRC minutes, 9 March 1954.
45. Council minutes, 26 February 1954.
46. SRC minutes, 25 & 30 March 1954.
47. Sutton to SRC president, 14 April 1954, File P12/8; Council minutes, 23 April 1954.
48. Ibid.
49. Wits Student, 11 August 1955.
50. Report of SRC Constitutions Sub-Committee, 9 June 1953, SRC minutes.
51. SRC minutes.
52. Executive Report to SRC meeting 23 November 1954, SRC minutes: interview with Le May.
53. Executive report to SRC meeting 1 March & 12 April 1955, SRC minutes.
54. Council minutes, 15 August 1955.
55. Wits Student, 20 May 1955.
56. Vice-Principal to Secretary for Education, Arts and Science, 13 January 1955, Misc. C/7/55.
57. Wits Student, 11 August 1955.
58. Wits Student, April 1955.