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Murray, Bruce

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Title: Academic "Non-Segregation and Social Segregation": Wits as an "Open" University, 1939-1959.

by: Bruce Murray

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"Academic Non-Segregation and Social Segregation": Wits as an 'Open' University 1939-1959.

By B.K. MURRAY

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

I

In 1959 the Extension of University Education Act provided that the 'white' universities in South Africa could no longer admit black students, except in special circumstances and only with ministerial position. Prior to then two of the four English-speaking universities, the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and the University of Cape Town, operated as 'open' universities, supposedly in the sense that their criteria of admission were purely academic, and were applied without regard to considerations of race, colour, or creed. The position in 1959 was that there were 297 black students at Wits, as against 4 813 whites, and 633 black students at UCT, including 461 'Coloureds', as against 4 471 whites. Neither Natal nor Rhodes were 'open' in the sense that Wits and UCT were. From 1936 onwards the Durban branch of the Natal University College did provide separate part-time classes for blacks, and in 1951 a medical school for blacks was established in Durban under the University of Natal, but otherwise blacks were excluded from the regular classes at the university. As Edgar Brookes confessed in his History of the University of Natal, published in 1966, 'it is not possible to avoid regretting the failure of the University ever to concede real unhindered equality to non-European students'.[1] Rhodes University, for its part, made no provision for admitting black students.

While Wits and Cape Town clearly differed from the other two teaching universities in South Africa, they were never completely 'open' universities, and they certainly never granted "unhindered equality" to their black students. The official policy of the University of the Witwatersrand was one of "academic non-segregation and social segregation". In terms of that policy, black students were to be offered the maximum practicable access to the academic facilities available in the University and they were to be treated in academic matters with racial impartiality, but beyond the academic sphere social contact with white students was to be severely curtailed.[2] Outside of the classroom, blacks

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1. E.H. Brookes, A History of the University of Natal (Durban, 1966), p.

2. "Memorandum for the Commission on Separate Training Facilities for Non-Europeans", Misc. C[ouncil]/57A/54.

were excluded from the main residences, the sports fields, and social activities organised by whites. In other words, the University's policy towards black students was that they were there for academic purposes only, and were not thereafter to participate in the general social and sporting life of the University.

In 1952 the Students' Representative Council at Wits challenged the University's policy of "social segregation", but was unable to change it. The University Council, sensitive to the fact that the 'open' universities represented a target for the Nationalist Government which had come to power in 1948, was more anxious to intensify rather than relax the policy of social segregation, and there was little support in Senate for an abandonment of that policy. In the main, the liberals in the Senate were satisfied with the University's 'middle way' of "academic non-segregation and social segregation"; it allowed blacks access to the University's academic facilities without gratuitously challenging the prejudices of the wider white society. The historic role of liberals in the Senate, notably Professor R.F.A. Hoernle prior to his death in 1943, was to seek to open the University to black admissions; the liberal heirs of Hoernle never challenged the policy of social segregation at the University. Their efforts were directed rather towards obliging the errant departments, particularly Dentistry, to conform to the University's general policy of 'open' admissions. Black students, for their part, also refrained from launching any systematic campaign against the University's policy of social segregation. They sensed that for them to mount such a campaign would only prove counter-productive. Their concern throughout was to ensure access to the University's academic facilities.

The focus of this paper is on the University of the Witwatersrand's admission policies between the outbreak of World War II in 1939 and the passage of the Extension of University Education Act in 1959. In 1934 already the University Council had accepted the principle of normally admitting black students to lecture courses at Wits, but prior to 1939 only a very limited number of blacks had enrolled, largely because blacks continued to be excluded from a clinical training in both medicine and dentistry. The war itself served to accelerate the whole process by which Wits, and more especially the medical school, was opened up to blacks. By the war's end there were some 150 black students at Wits, including 82 in the medical school, out of a student population of three thousand.

Thereafter, and more particularly following the Nationalist victory in the 1948 general election, the position of blacks at Wits was constantly under threat, and subject more to erosion than advance. Wits, as a consequence, never evolved into a fully 'open' university. Certain departments, most prominently Dentistry, remained resolutely closed to black students, and after 1953 the medical school operated a quota system restricting the number of blacks.[3] On the teaching side, even the status

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of lecturer was closed to blacks; the black members of the academic staff engaged by the University were all in African languages and, to the chagrin of at least one of them, Robert Sobukwe, were described as "language assistants".

The position by 1959 was that black admissions to Wits were curbed by a host of resrictions. Blacks were excluded from the dental school; a quota system operated in the medical school, and blacks were denied entry to the courses in physiotherapy and occupational therapy; the B.A. in Fine Arts was closed to blacks as white models were often used in the life drawing studios; and no facilities existed for blacks to pursue the B.A. in Logopedics. In the Faculty of Engineering, all eight branches were supposedly open to blacks, but arrangements for vacation practical work were not possible in some branches for reasons beyond the University's control, notably in mining engineering, as by law no black could qualify for a blasting certificate.

II.

In the development of the University's admissions policy, World War II was undoubtedly of the first significance in that it led to the opening up of the medical school to black students, and medicine was rapidly to become by far the most popular course at Wits among blacks. In 1934, when the Council had decided that as the Act and Statutes of the University made no mention of colour or race, admissions to the University would not be governed by "such contingencies", the medical and dental schools had nonetheless remained closed to blacks on the grounds that facilities were not available for their clinical training.[4] As the outbreak of war in Europe made it impossible for blacks to continue to proceed overseas for their medical training, the medical school decided in 1940 to admit blacks to a clinical training in the Non-European Hospital, but the dental school remained closed. In the post-war period it was to continue to evade taking on black students.

The decision to admit blacks to a full medical training at Wits was one of the most remarkable in the evolution of the University's admissions policy in that it represented a major reversal of previous policy. Prior to 1940, while a handful of Indian students had been admitted to the pre-clinical courses for medicine, the University had postively rejected all black applicants for a full medical training on the grounds that the

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3. For a contemporary critique of the University's policy towards black students see the address, "The Open University", given by N.B. Hirson to the first annual general meeting of the Students' Fellowship Society in 1959, Hirson Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London.

4. For a detailed account see Murray, Early Years, pp. 300-11.

Transvaal Public Hospitals Ordinance of 1928 made it impossible for them to offer a clinical training for blacks. The reversal of policy in 1940 was largely a consequence of the onset of war in Europe. As overseas study was now no longer feasible, blacks had to receive their full medical training locally, or not at all. That fact provided the main lever to open up a clinical training for black medical students at Wits.

Even before the impact of the outbreak of war was felt, pressure on the University had been mounting for it to provide a full medical training for blacks. Historically, aspirant black doctors had been in the forefront of those pressing the University to open its doors to blacks, and pressure from them was intensifying, led by the three Indian students who in 1938 had been admitted to the pre-clinical study of medicine at Wits on the understanding that they would proceed overseas for the remainder of their training. In early 1939 K.J. Tavaria, the uncle of one of them, requested the University to secure the removal of the hospital ban that prevented them from obtaining their clinical training locally, but this the University Council had declined to do.[5] A second point of pressure emerged in late 1939 with the publication of the report of the Botha Committee on Medical Training in South Africa. The committee, under Professor M.C. Botha, the Secretary for Education, had been appointed in 1937 by the Minister of Education, Jan Hofmeyr, in response to the demands for the creation of an Afrikaans medical school, but had been given the directive to look into the question of medical training for all "the various sections of the Union's population". In its section on medical training for blacks, the committee strongly urged that such training should be given in South Africa rather than overseas, and it recommended that ultimately a separate medical school for blacks should be established, with Durban probably serving as the most suitable centre. Until such time as a separate medical school became feasible, the committee recommended that the Wits and UCT medical schools "be placed in a position to provide the facilities for separate instruction of these non-European students". Wits, the committee suggested, should focus on the training of Africans, and UCT on Asiatics and Coloureds.[6] As a follow up to the Botha Committee report, the Institute of Race Relations, which had its offices on campus, urged the University to re-examine the whole question of black admissions to its medical school.[7]

As a purely interim measure, the Botha Committee had suggested that, until separate facilities were available at Wits and Cape Town, a limited number of bursaries be made available to

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5. Council Minutes, 23 June 1939.

6. Report of the Committee on Medical Training in South Africa, U.G. 25 of 1939, chap. VI.

7. Hoernle to Raikes, 7 November 1939, File N5.

blacks to undertake their clinical training overseas. The outbreak of war in September 1939 rendered such temporising unfeasible and prompted Wits to agree to admit black students to a full medical training even before the question of separate facilities had been thoroughly investigated. Crucial in allowing this was the intimation volunteered by the Board of the Johannesburg Hospital in early 1940 that it was prepared to make the Non-European Hospital available to black medical students. This ensured that blacks might be admitted to a clinical training without endangering essential white preserves.

It was in response to an application from Dinshaw Tavaria, who stressed that it was no longer possible for him to proceed overseas for his clinical training, that the Board of the Johannesburg Hospital declared its willingness to admit black students to the Non-European Hospital. It would do so if the University "would be satisfied with clinical teaching at the Non-European Hospital only". At its meeting of 20 May 1940 the Board of the Faculty of Medicine resolved that it would be satisfied with such clinical teaching, and proceeded to set up a small committee to make arrangements for the provision of clinical teaching for black students.[8]

Ever since the passage of the 1928 Transvaal Public Hospitals Ordinance, the alleged non-availibility of clinical facilities had been the ground given by the Board of the Faculty of Medicine for refusing blacks admission to a clinical training at Wits. In practice, however, the Board of the Johannesburg Hospital had always been prepared to make the Non-European Hospital available for the clinical training of black medical students, as in 1932 when R.J. Xaba, who had already completed his pre-clinical training, had applied for admission to the Wits medical school. The Board of the Faculty of Medicine had nonetheless still insisted, in refusing Xaba's application, that it could not provide "an adequate medical education to Native students".[9] What changed in 1940 was not so much Hospital policy as University policy. The key consideration behind the change in policy was the realisation that nine of the University's own medical students, two in the third year, two in the second year, and five in the first year, would no longer have a chance of completing their degrees if a clinical training continued to be denied them at Wits.

A striking feature about the opening up of the medical school to blacks was the positive encouragement and assistance given by the war-time Smuts Government, notably through Douglas Smit, the deeply paternalistic Secretary for Native Affairs. Smit, who had taken up his appointment in the Native Affairs Department in 1934, was one of those remarkable civil servants who exercised a major influence on the making of public policy, and in 1940 what

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8. Faculty of Medicine Minutes, VIII, 20 May 1940.

9. Ibid., VI, 3 May 1932.

he devised was a scheme for making scholarships available to Africans to study medicine at Wits. As the outbreak of war had rendered obsolete the Botha Committee's recommendation that overseas bursaries be provided on an interim basis for African medical students, Smit, in conjunction with Senator Rheinallt Jones, since 1937 senator representating the Africans of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, moved to give effect to the committee's further recommendation that Wits be made the centre for training African doctors until such time as a separate medical school for blacks became feasible. This Smit sought to do by establishing five scholarships, funded by the South Africa Native Trust, to be awarded annually to Africans to study medicine or dentistry at Wits. Before the war's end another fi.. such scholarships had been set up by the Transkei, Ciskei, and the High Commission territories.

At the insistence of Principal Raikes, students participating in these scholarship schemes were required to undertake their first year of study at Fort Hare rather than Wits. "Our first-year classes in Medicine", he explained to Smit, "are full to overflowing and Non-European students would be very much better prepared tutorially at Fort Hare." Indian medical students were likewise encouraged to proceed to Fort Hare for their first year, until this produced what was described as an 'Indian problem' there, and Fort Hare started to limit its Indian intake.[10]

Another requirement that Raikes sought to impose on the African recipients of medical scholarships to Wits was that they undertake on qualification to "offer their services to the Native peoples". His fear was that, if left to themselves, African doctors might refuse to serve "their own people" in the rural districts, and instead would "congregate in the towns practising among the white population". As he explained to Smit in support of his proposal for compulsion: "My own feeling is that unless something of this sort is done there is grave risk of these African Medicals setting up practice in the poorer districts of the towns and thereby causing strife in the Medical profession."[11]

In his whole attitude to black students at Wits, Raikes was essentially a Tory paternalist. A former fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and Principal of Wits since 1928, Raikes was by his own description a "progressive conservative".[12] There was a progressive tinge to him in so far as he was genuinely concerned to promote the creation of a substantial black professional class

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10. Raikes to Smit, 11 December 1940, File NSa; "Medical Education for Non-Europeans in the Union", Misc. C/32A/44.

11. Raikes to Registrar, S.A. Medical Council, 20 December 1940, and Raikes to Smit, 18 June 1941, File NSa.

12. Raikes statement on the "Position of the University in relation to politics", October 1952, File P12/8.

in South Africa, if only for the simple reason that the white minority could never provide "an adequate supply of professional personnel for both the European and Non-European sections", and in so far as he had definite academic scruples against allowing blacks to be fobbed off with an inferior professional training.'[13] But basically his outlook was that of a paternalist. This was evident throughout in such private assertions that he was anxious "to improve the position of Natives" or achieve "something reall, worth while for the Non-European community", and in his campaign to ensure that the black professionals produced by Wits, and notably the black doctors, should "serve their own people".[14] The idea of blacks competing equally with whites in a free market was anathema to him. As he explained his position in 1952 to Professor J.M. Watt, he was convinced that the "middle course" the University had adopted of "academic non-segregation, coupled with social segregation" was the best way it could help the white race "maintain the ascendancy while the Non-European is encouraged to follow at such a pace as he can attain".[15]

In his attempt to impose a compulsory undertaking on African medical scholarship holders to "serve their own people", Raikes was opposed by Rheinallt Jones, but he was ultimately to get his way. In 1942 the departmental Smit Committee into the medical training of Africans recommended that scholarship holders be obliged to enter government service or work in certain designated areas for a number of years. At the conclusion of World War II, when the Union Education Department took over the trust scholarships as part of the transfer to it of African education, the requirement was laid down that graduates from the scholarship scheme enter the service of the Union Public Health Department for five years or repay the scholarship.

Despite the attempt, through scholarships, to develop Wits as a centre primarily for African medical training, Indians continued to predominate among its black medical students. The position by 1945 was that the number of black medical students had leapt from the 1940 figure of nine, all of whom were Indian, to 82, of whom 46 were Indian, 33 African, and 3 Coloured. There were also five Chinese students in the medical school.

To meet the new influx of black students, and their access to clinical training, the basic arrangement developed within the medical school was for white and black students to attend the same lectures and laboratories, but with black students limited to the Non-European Hospital, later supplemented by the

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13. See "Memorandum on Non-European Medical Education", Misc. C/206/47.

14. Raikes to A.M. Keppel-Jones, 11 August 1947, Keppel-Jones Papers; Raikes to C.H. Wyndham, 31 December 1946; and Raikes to Registrar, S.A. Medical Council, 20 December 1940, File N5a.

15. Raikes to Watt, 15 September 1952, Subfile 2 to P12/8.

Coronation Hospital, for their clinical work. There were, however, some exceptions to this basic arrangement. Because of over-crowding at the Non-European Hospital, it was impossible to organise clinical classes there, and for a time black instruction blacks had to be taken, to attend classes with white students three times a week in the lecture theatre at the main hospital. When a 'European' case was demonstrated they were required to leave the lecture theatre. They were also prohibited from carrying out post-mortems on European cadavers; indeed they were excluded from the mortuary until the European cadaver had been sewn up and covered. As is evident from this, the University was very anxious not to challenge or upset white susceptibilities, and the wrath of the University authorities fell on those black medical students who infringed these prohibitions.[16]

To begin with, the University's decision to admit blacks to its medical school provoked very little by way of serious criticism or friction. In October 1941 a deputation from the three Dutch Reform Churches saw Principal Raikes to protest against the presence of blacks in the medical school, but it lacked substantial backing from within the Afrikaner community.. As Die Vaderland commented: "Ons moet of 'n aparte medies skool voorsien, of ons moet, binne die perke van ons sosiale segregasie-vereistes, die fasiliteite voorsien aan bestaande inrigtings. As ons nie die laasgenoemde nie wil doen nie, dan moet ons beried wees om eersgenoemde te doen. Ons kan nie albei weier nie."[17] In the next year an attempt by the local branch of the Afrikaanse Nasionale Studentebond to mobilise the muncipalities of the Transvaal and Orange Free State against the University likewise failed to make much headway. As was noted in the minutes for Council, "only a small minority of these bodies had taken action as a result and they included none which gave financial support to the University". Within the medical school itself some 'racial feeling' did manifest itself in response to mixing in the common rooms and the restaurant, but this problem was soon negotiated by establishing "special arrangements for Europeans who did not wish to associate with non-Europeans".[18]

It was from 1943 onwards, once the battle to establish an Afrikaans medical school at Pretoria University had been won, that the re-united National Party, or Herenigde Nasionale Party, began to attack Wits and UCT on a systematic basis for opening up their medical schools to blacks, and this was to lead ultimately into a general attack on the 'open' universities. The attack was

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16. See the circular to all Non-European students in the Faculty of Medicine, 7 November 1944, File P12/8.

17. Die Vaderland, 5 November 1941.

18. Council Minutes, 10 April 1942; "Medical Education for Non-Europeans in the Union", Misc. C/32A/44.

initiated by J.G. Strijdom, the Transvaal Nationalist leader and future Prime Minister, in the debate on the Union Education vote in the House of Assembly on 26 April 1943, and UCT rather than Wits was then the main target. UCT had allowed 'Coloured' medical students to observe white patients in the Groote Schuur Hospital, and to Strijdom this was totally outrageous. Continued developments along such lines, he warned, would lead to "an explosion in South Africa in the future".[19] In the next year Wits became the primary target of attack, largely because of its appointment of an African demonstrator in the histology laboratory of the Department of Anatomy. For Nationalist MPs this was "an unheard of state of affairs", and F.E. Mentz, the MP for Westdene, predicted it would lead to clashes. "For the sake of the Christian European civilisation of South Africa" he called upon Jan Hofmeyr, in his capacity as Minister of Education, "to do his best once and for all to draw a clear dividing line between Europeans and non-Europeans in our universities".[20]

In the event, this first attempt to install a black on the academic staff of the medical school failed. The complaints in Parliament, and a petition organised by some of the students, led to the removal of W.Z. Conco, a graduate of Fort Hare, as a demonstrator and his relegation to the status of laboratory assistant.

Even though Wits had taken black students into its medical school without having first established completely separate facilities, the University still remained attached to the idea of creating a separate college at government expense. The sense that developed at Wits during the war years was that the University had somehow been shortchanged by the Smuts Government over the training of black doctors. The University had taken on the responsibility for providing such training but, apart from funding for a black student residence, the University received no additional financial assistance from the state. The finances to create completely separate facilities had simply not been forthcoming. The sense of outrage that this promoted was captured by a committee of Council in August 1944 when it resolved that the deputation to see the Minister of Education on the issue of a separate college "impress on the Minister that the University does not approve of the way in which it is being compelled to deal with the teaching of Non-Europeans".[21] Underlying everything was the concern that if the state failed to invest in a separate college for black medical students at Wits, it might instead opt for the Botha Committee's suggestion that

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19. House of Assembly Debates, 26 April 1943, 6926-6303.

20. Ibid., 30 March 1944, 4251-2.

21. Minutes of a meeting of the committee appointed by the Council to re-draft the Principal's memorandum on medical education for Non-Europeans, 10 August 1944, Misc. C/SC/44.

Durban become the site for an entirely separate school.

The notion of a separate college within Wits for the training of black medical students had first been mooted in the University's submission to the Loram Committee on "the Training of Natives in Medicine and Public Health" in 1927, and that committee had duly recommended the creation of "a non-European branch of the medical school of the University of the Witwatersrand".[22] Nothing had then come of the proposal as the Pact Government had failed to provide the required funds. In 1939 the Botha Committee likewise recommended that Wits, and also UCT, provide for the separate instruction of black medical students until such time as a completely separate medical school for blacks became feasible, but, again, government funding to establish separate facilities was not forthcoming. In 1944 the University mounted a major campaign to extract the necessary financing from the Smuts Government, but once more it was to no avail. To the chagrin of Raikes, who worked long and hard to make Wits the chief centre for black medical education in South Africa, when the state finally did resolve to invest substantial new funds in providing for black medical education it was to establish a separate medical school in Durban in conjunction with the University of Natal.

The idea of setting up a truly separate medical college for blacks under the auspices of Wits made a strong appeal to Raikes' sense of Tory paternalism. As he wrote to Dr C.H. Wyndham in London in 1946 when the prospect was raised of establishing such a college at Baragwanath: "I am sure myself that this is the right way to proceed but there will be a good deal of opposition since some people will say that we are endeavouring to put the Natives away by themselves and give them an inferior education. You can take it from me that I would never agree to any such thing, but that I feel that if we have a separate college, we may be able to develop something really worthwhile for the Non-European community." The idea of establishing a completely new medical school for blacks at Durban, he added, was completely wrong-headed: "I am very much opposed to this myself for two reasons. Firstly, because I do not think there are enough Africans qualified to enter training and to provide material for two schools. Secondly, I am convinced that if the European inhabitants of Durban find that a Medical School for Africans has been established in their midst and that it has only a handful of students and that their own sons have been rejected from either this University or Cape Town, there will be hell to pay until both Europeans and Africans are admitted to the Durban school."[23]

Reputedly, Hofmeyr himself favoured the claims of

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22. Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the Training of Natives in Medicine and Public Health, U.G. 35 of 1928.

23. Raikes to Wyndham, 3 December 1946, File N5a.

Johannesburg as against Durban, but the weight of official and professional advice was all on the side of Durban. As was to become increasingly evident to Raikes and the Wits Council, they were fighting a losing battle; their response was to become ever shriller in their demands and less scrupulous in their tactics. In the end result, they virtually threatened Hofmeyr with blackmail. Should he proceed to authorise a black medical school in Durban, they would require him to simultaneously prohibit blacks from entering the Wits medical school.

In 1944 it was chiefly as an expedient for raising more funds for the medical school that the University embarked on its campaign to persuade the Smuts Government to finance a separate college for black medical students at Wits. There was massive over-crowding in the medical school, despite the imposition in 1942 of a limitation on the first year intake, and the University's finances were in particularly parlous condition as since 1939 its state subsidy had been fixed at £100 000 (R200,000), the maximum allowed to any one university. The twenty per cent increase in fees the University resorted to in 1943 provoked the first major student protest in the history of Wits, and that protest was particularly acute in the medical school. In the Council memorandum to the Minister of Education putting the case for a separate college for black medical students at Wits, the crucial submission came at the end: "The proper provision of the necessary facilities is beyond the capacity of this University from its own financial resources. It is therefore considered that a special grant should be made by Government for the training of Non-Europeans, over and above that which is necessary for the University in general."[24]

On 19 October 1944 a Council deputation, led by Raikes, saw Hofmeyr, together with Smit and the Minister for Native Affairs, Major Piet van der Byl, to present its memorandum. The deputation was promptly hi-jacked by two of its members, Dr Bernard Price and Dr Hans Pirow, who proceeded to put the case for instituting a "less exacting course" for the training of black doctors.[25] As this proposal, running completely counter to the recommendations of both the Loram and Botha Committees, involved a major change in policy, Hofmeyr demanded time to consider it first, and it was not until January of the next year that he again saw Raikes to take up the main proposal for a separate black medical college at Wits. In the intervening months the movement to establish a medical school for blacks in Durban gathered substantial momentum. In November 1944 the Commission on National Health Services, chaired by Dr Henry Gluckman, recommended in favour of Durban as "the site of a

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24. "Medical Education for Non-Europeans in the Union", Misc. C/32A/44.

25. Deputation re training of Non-European medical students, 19 October 1944, File N5a.

medical school primarily for Non-Europeans, but also for those whose object is to serve Non-Europeans"; a large public meeting was staged in the Durban City Hall in support of the proposal, and a deputation sent to Hofmeyr.[26] When Hofmeyr saw Raikes on 3 January, he asked the Principal to prepare information on the arrangements that would be required "if there were a Non-European medical college within the Medical School, and if there were a separate Non-European Medical School".

In the subsequent memorandum sent to Hofmeyr in February, the Wits Council stated that its long-term plan was for the gradual, staged transition of the proposed 'Non-European College within the Medical School' into a separate 'Non-European Medical School', possessing its own buildings and, ultimately, its own staff. No direct reference was made to the movement to establish a black medical school in Durban, but the final paragraph of the memorandum stated most pointedly: "It is of course possible to jump over some of the intermediate stages, but whatever happens it would be inadvisable to establish a Non-European Medical School except in association with a University which already possesses a Faculty of Medicine."[27]

Hofmeyr's response to the growing competition between Wits and Durban to gain monoploy access to government funds for black medical education was simply to stall on the issue. Even if he personally favoured Wits, official advice was on the side of Durban. As Heaton Nichols, the Administrator of Natal, sought to impress upon Raikes, the great advantages of Durban were that it lay "in the heart of Native territory" and that it possessed "the largest Native Hospital in South Africa".[28]

At the end of the war this latter advantage was threatened by planning for the future of Baragwanath Military Hospital, located near the township of Orlando. In 1947 Baragwanath was handed over to the Transvaal Provincial Administration, which thereupon made it available to the Johannesburg Hospital Board for the purposes of a 'Non-European General Hospital'. It was this development that prompted Raikes and the Wits Council to make their decisive bid to persuade the Smuts Government to finance the establishment of a separate black medical college at Wits.

In the initial design, the opening of Baragwanath as a hospital for blacks was to involve the simultaneous closing down of the Non-European Hospital on Hospital Hill, on the grounds that it would be impossible to find nursing staff for both, and this meant that Baragwanath would now have to take over the role played by the old Non-European Hospital in providing clinical

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26. Report of Commission on National Health Services (U.G. 30 of 1944), 132-3;E.H. Brookes, A History of the University of Natal (Durban, 1966), p. 81.

27. "Non-European Medical Education", Misc. C/10/45.

28. Nichols to Raikes, 7 July 1944, File N5a.

material for Wits medical students. For the Wits Council this provided what seemed a heaven-sent opportunity to establish at Baragwanath the separate medical college for blacks it had always wanted.

In the lenghty submission made to Hofmeyr in October 1947, the Council put the case for creating a black medical college at Baragwanath under the University's Faculty of Medicine, sharing the same teaching staff, and bluntly told the minister to choose between it and the proposal to establish a separate medical school for blacks in Durban: "The Council submits that an urgent decision is now called for on the question of whether the University is to continue the medical training of Non-Europeans or whether the substantial subvention from public funds that this would require will be better spent on the establishment of a centre of training elsewhere. It is suggested that two training centres would not be justified at the present time." The Council concluded its submission with a summary of its ideal: "Desiring the greatest possible degree of segregation in academic as well as social relations, the Council strongly recommends that the Minister approve the course of action proposed...above and that, accordingly, facilities for pre-clinical instruction, as well as for all training in the clinical years be provided for Non-European students at Baragwanath."[29]

When the deputation from Wits, led this time by the chairman of Council, Dr P.M. Anderson, saw Hofmeyr, together with Dr Henry Gluckman, now Minister of Health, on 28 November 1947, it found the Minister of Education in an equally blunt mood. Hofmeyr advised that before he could reach the decision demanded of him, he needed to consider the full case as to why the proposal to establish a black medical school in Durban should not be proceeded with. The Botha Committee, the Gluckman Commission, and more recently the Federal Council of the Medical Association of South Africa, had all recommended in favour of Durban, and he wanted to know from the Wits delegation why he should not accept their advice. He consequently requested Wits to comment on a summary of the representations in favour of Durban prepared by the Secretary for Health, and to further enlarge on its own memorandum.[30]

The memorandum that Raikes thereupon prepared for Hofmeyr put the Wits case for not proceeding with a black medical school in Durban as diplomatically as possible, but its tone as to what might happen if the minister decided to proceed was positively belligerent. Should the University's advice be ignored, the memorandum warned that Wits would then expect Hofmeyr to defy his

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29. "The Training of Non-European Medical Students with Special Reference to Johannesburg", Misc. C/159/3/47.

30. Afvaardiging van die Witwatersrandse Universiteit na Minister in verband met mediese opleiding vir Nie-Blankes, 28 November 1947, U[nie] O[nderwys] D[epartement] E5/21.

own liberal principles and carry legislation prohibiting blacks from attending the Wits medical school:

> Under the existing Act and Statutes of the University there is no Colour Bar, so that the University is not in a position to refuse admission to qualified candidates on the ground of race. While the University is prepared, if the Minister so desires, to develop a Non-European Medical School at Baragwanath, it would be impossible, on account of the labour and cost involved, for it to make arrangements for a small number of Non-European students who might prefer to come to it instead of going to Durban. If therefore the Minister desires to establish the School at Durban he must take whatever legislative steps may be necessary to prevent access of Non-Europeans, even to the first three (non-clinical) years of the Faculty of Medicine of this University. Administrative action, involving making Native scholarships available only at Durban, would be insufficient since it would not divert from Witwatersrand Coloured Persons, Indians, Chinese and others who might be prepared to pay their own fees.

For good measure, Raikes added that the Natal University College charter contained "a facultative Colour Bar", and that the proposed legislation to transform Natal into a fully-fledged university would need to ensure that this was discontinued.[31]

Raikes concluded the memorandum with the demand for a decision as "a matter of urgency". The decision that was communicated to him on 2 January 1948 was that Wits could not expect state financing for "the development of what is conceived, in effect, as a fourth medical school at Baragwanath". Instead, the Government had reached the conclusion "that it is in principle in favour of steps being taken without undue delay for the initiation of such a fourth medical school for non-Europeans at Durban". In the meantime, Wits could assume that after 1948 no new bursaries would be awarded to African medical students to study there. Transitional arrangements to cater for the African medical students already at Wits, or to be admitted in 1948, could be discussed with the minister.[32] In February 1948, at a meeting of the Federal Council of the Medical Association of South Africa, the Government publicly announced its decision in principle to proceed with the establishment of a medical school in Durban in conjunction with the University of Natal.

The Government's decision in favour of Durban not only meant that Wits would not be able to finance a separate medical college for blacks, but it also helped to ensure that no provision would be made for the training of black dentists at Wits. In response

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31. "Memorandum on Non-European Medical Education", Misc. C/206/47.

32. Acting Secretary for Education to Registrar, 2 January 1948, UOD E5/21.

to an approach from the Institute of Race Relations, Raikes wrote to Hofmeyr in April 1948 to inquire whether he wanted Wits to contemplate any plans for the training of black dentists in Johannesburg. Hofmeyr's reply was that, in view of the probable developments in Durban, he did not consider it necessary to ask Wits to make provision for the training of black dentists.[33]

After the outbreak of war, pressure had also been brought to bear on the dental school to open its doors to black students, but while it indicated its preparedness to admit blacks to a pre-clinical training, it refused to accept them in the clinical years on the grounds, generally accepted within the University, that it lacked separate facilities for them. The real issue was whether the Faculty of Dentistry was ever seriously concerned to provide separate clinical facilities for black dental students. The record suggests that it was not. The Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, Middleton Shaw, a powerfully prejudiced man and a tyrant, was generally opposed to the presence of blacks at Wits, and was determined never to allow them into the University's dental hospital. The Faculty accepted his lead in the matter.

In 1937, when the Faculty of Medicine agreed to admit blacks to its pre-clinical courses, the Faculty of Dentistry had adopted the first of a series of evasive resolutions on the training of black dentists. At its meeting of 4 November 1937 "The Board expressed its willingness to accept Non-Europeans for Dental training, but at the same time it felt that with the present facilities and accommodation an appreciable increase in the number of students would result in a great deal of over-crowding and no publication should be given to the matter until such time as adequate facilities are available." The provision of such facilities was raised in 1940 in conjunction with the planning for the new Bok Street Dental Hospital. In his capacity as President of the Institute of Race Relations, Professor Hoernle urged the University to include provisions in the building plans for the "necessary accommodation" for black dental students, and this was agreed to by the Faculty of Dentistry, the Senate, and the Council.[34] The expectation was that in dentistry, as in medicine, Wits would now offer a complete training to blacks, and the Native Trust scholarships were consequently made available for dentistry as well as medicine. In the event, the Bok Street Dental Hospital included no special facilities for black students, and the Faculty of Dentistry declared itself unwilling to admit blacks to a clinical training as separate facilities for them did not exist.

In 1944 the question of clinical facilities for black dental students became distinctly more urgent with the admission of the first black, a returned soldier, to the pre-clinical years and

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33. Raikes to Secretary for Education, 22 April 1948, and Secretary for Education to Raikes, 12 May 1948, UOD E68/6/2.

34. Faculty of Dentistry Minutes, 8 August 1940.

the University's approach to Pretoria for financing for a separate black medical college. Raikes, evidently, was anxious to include dentistry in his submission to the government, and to this end personally attended the meeting on 15 May 1944 of the committee set up by the Faculty of Dentistry to consider the admission of blacks to a clinical training. The committee proceeded to recommend that the Faculty agree in principle to the provision of facilities for the training of black dental students, and that it make every endeavour to provide such facilities. The committee also recommended that Raikes raise the question of black dental training as a matter of urgency in his discussions with Pretoria, and that the Faculty prepare a memorandum to assist him in those discussions.[35] At its meeting of 11 August 1944, the Board of the Faculty of Dentistry accepted these recommendations.

As the memoranda prepared for Raikes made evident, the Faculty of Dentistry was positively opposed to opening up the Bok Street Hospital to blacks, and was not particularly earnest about developing alternative facilities. The first memorandum, prepared by Dr C. Cochran, who had chaired the Faculty's committee on the admission of blacks, was so negative in tone as to quite disturb Raikes. To its claim that the training of black students would require "an almost complete duplication of staff", Raikes wrote back: "One of the principal reasons for teaching non-Europeans alongside Europeans is that it allows of a larger, and therefore a more specialised staff, to teach both Europeans and non-Europeans, but I cannot agree that the teaching of non-Europeans would require duplication of our staff."[36] The second memorandum, prepared by Professor Staz in his capacity as Acting Dean, detailed the reasons why a clinical training could not be offered to blacks in the existing dental hospital, and put forward the Faculty recommendation "that every endeavour be made to arrange somewhere in South Africa for facilities for the training of Non-European Dental Students".

As with the medical school, the Wits dental school, then the only one in South Africa, included a significant number of Afrikaners, and what both the Staz and Cochran memoranda sought to suggest was that the Afrikaner 'section' would be particularly outraged by the admission of blacks to the clinical years. Both memoranda stressed that the presence of blacks might produce political as well as racial tensions and clashes. "The admission of Non-European students", Staz submitted, "may cause a serious rupture between sections of European students holding different political views based largely on the Colour question." Staz also

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35. Misc. FDS/169/44.

36. "Memorandum on the clinical training of Non-European dental students, at the present University of the Witwatersrand Dental Hospital", 29 May 1944, and Raikes to Cochran, 2 June 1944, File N5a.

contended that the dental school would soon be facing the prospect of over-crowding in the clinical years, and that politically it would become very difficult if blacks were to be admitted to the exclusion of whites, especially once the war was over: "There will be a large number of ex-service men returning to their studies in addition to those commencing a University career. A very strong case would have to be made to accept Non-Europeans at the expense of Europeans." The resentments that might arise among whites compelled to work alongside blacks, the absence of separate common room and toilet facilities, and the large increase that would be required in staffing, were presented as the other major obstacles to the admission of black students to the dental hospital.

While Staz, unlike Cochran, conceded that there was now an urgent need to train black dentists, as "with the adoption of diets based on a civilised mode of living, the teeth of the Non-Europeans are deteriorating rapidly", his memorandum did not urge the case for Wits, in particular, to undertake that training. It simply urged that provision be made within South Africa for the training of black dentists, and that this training "should be organised in a Non-European Clinic to be established at a convenient centre, bearing in mind the needs not only of staff and students, but also of prospective patients".[37]

When the Wits deputation saw Hofmeyr and van der Byl on 19 October 1944 on the question of a separate medical school for blacks at Wits, Raikes urged that dentistry would need to constitute an integral part of any "complete scheme", but thereafter dentistry was lost sight of in the negotiations with Pretoria. Neither the Faculty of Dentistry nor Pretoria regarded a follow through as a matter of urgency. Indeed, when the Government appointed a committee in 1946 to inquire into the provision of additional facilities for the training of dentists in South Africa, it recommended that "the training of non-European dentists be not regarded as a matter of urgency since, for some years to come, very few non-Europeans are likely to present themselves for training and consequently it will be necessary, and probably best, that the dental health of the non-European be catered for through the medium of European dentists".[38]

The only source of continuing concern and pressure was the Institute of Race Relations, which again took up the issue of facilities for black dental students when the University planned for its next new dental hospital in 1948. The closing of the Bok Street Dental Hospital to make way for the new Johannesburg

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37. "Memorandum concerning dental education for Non-Europeans in the Union", October 1944, File N5a.

38. "Statement requested by the Senate at its meeting of 14 June 1954 in regard to the admission of Non-European students to the Faculty of Dentistry", Misc. S/394/54.

railway station, meant that the University now had the opportunity to provide for facilities for black students in constructing the new hospital on campus. Despite the urgings of the Institute of Race Relations, it was an opportunity the University declined to take.

At no stage did the Faculty of Dentistry or the University Council have any intention of including facilities for black students in the new Dental and Oral Hospital that was opened in 1952. As Raikes made clear to Hofmeyr in his letter of 22 April 1948, "it is the opinion of my Council that while Non-European patients should be treated in the New Hospital, provision should not be made there for the training of Non-European dentists, since the Non-European patients coming forward there are not entirely suitable for a complete training in dentistry". What the University was prepared to consider, should the minister so direct, was the development of the Orlando Dental Clinic as a training centre for black dentists. At the beginning of the year the Orlando clinic had been opened to Wits dental students to alleviate the over-crowding in the Bok Street Hospital, and once the new hospital was in operation the clinic could then be made available for the training of black dentists. Already smarting over the Government's decision to approve a medical school for blacks in Durban, Raikes insisted that he and the University Council would not contemplate providing for the training of black dentists "without an expressed wish from the Minister". In his reply of 12 May 1948, Hofmeyr declined to give any such mandate.[39] When approached later in the year by the Students' Representative Council on the whole issue of dental training for blacks, Raikes advised that the University had been informed by the minister "that it would be contrary to the policy of the Union Government for us to make provision for the training of non-European dental students".[40]

Following the opening of the new dental hospital in 1952 without any facilities for the training of blacks, the Faculty of Dentistry became a major target of liberal criticism within the University, chiefly through Convocation and the SRC, but sometimes even through Senate. Ironically, it was after the passage of the Extension of University Education Act that the Faculty of Dentistry finally made provision for training black dentists at Wits.

Inter-twined in the discussions and negotiations of the mid-forties over the training of black doctors and dentists was the whole question of the professional needs and opportunities among blacks in South Africa. One of the key points that was consistently made in regard to the training of black dentists was that the demand from blacks for access to a dental training was

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39. Raikes to Secretary for Education, 22 April 1948, and Secretary of Education to Raikes, 12 May 1948, UOD E68/6/2.

40. Misc. S/394/54.

still inconsiderable; in that respect, the matter was regarded as one of no urgency. However, as Staz pointed out in his memorandum, black communities were in urgent need of dentists, and white dentists would be unable to meet that need. In sharp contrast with what happened in medicine, government and business circles remained seemingly unperturbed.

If part of the case for not providing facilities for the training of black dentists was that there was no real demand, a large part of Raikes' case against opening a medical school for blacks in Durban was that it would accentuate an already skewed demand among black matriculants to undertake a medical training. As matters stood, the Wits medical school absorbed "not only the cream of the African intellectual class but...a large fraction of the small number who are adequately qualified for University training". What South Africa needed, as Raikes saw it, were black professionals in all fields, but the existing pool of black matriculants was simply too small to provide them. The pool itself needed to be dramatically enlarged, and for that to happen current matriculants should be given every encouragement to enter the teaching profession. To open a black medical school in these circumstances would be counter-productive: "There is every reason to suppose that even at present there is an undue drain into Medicine and the opening of a predominantly Non-European Medical School will almost certainly accentuate this to the extent of causing a break-down in the supply of High School Teachers and all that that entails in the provision of Non-European professional personnel."[41]

Raikes was correct that a remarkably high proportion of black university students in South Africa were studying medicine, and this was especially the case at Wits. According to the figures collected by the Institute of Race Relations in 1945, 80 of the 127 'Non-European' students at Wits were in medicine, as were 27 of the 107 students at UCT. Some 21 of the 280 students at Fort Hare were in first year medicine.[42] The fact of the matter was that medicine was the one paying profession blacks could now gain access to. As Quintin Whyte, the assistant director of the Institute of Race Relations, made clear in a letter on careers for Africans to W. Dale in Grahamstown in June 1946, for Africans, certainly, it was extremely difficult to get any entry into the other paying professions:

Dentistry - There is a great need for African dentists but at this present moment there are no facilities available for teaching. Actually it is possible for an African to obtain a Native Affairs Department scholarship for dentistry but at the present moment, I believe, the University of the Witwatersrand is unable to offer the course.

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41. "Memorandum on Non-European Medical Education", Misc. C/206/47.

42. SAIRR 321.

Pharmacists - There is a great need for these, but it is difficult to find a chemist to apprentice the Non-European, and secondly no Institution is prepared to offer courses and examination for such apprentices. The Institute has been in touch with Fort Hare in this matter but it will be some time before anything can be arranged.

Law - There is also a great need for African lawyers but again there is a certain difficulty in finding lawyers who will article Africans. The Bantu Welfare Trust has helped in one or two cases, but the premium demanded is often far beyond the means of Africans.

Engineering was not even mentioned by Whyte. Apart from medicine, teaching and the Church were the only other professions open to Africans."[43]

In 1953, after the opening of a separate medical school for blacks at Natal in the previous year, the University resorted to the contoversial step of limiting the entry of black students into its medical school, and Council reviewed its whole policy of admitting blacks to the University. The conclusion Council reached was that it was "not desirable to make any changes in its general policy for the present" but that it might review that policy "in the event of any change in the related circumstances". One such circumstance would be "any appreciable increase in the number of Non-European students".[44] The notion of 'quotas' had arrived at Wits.

It arrived at a juncture when the University's policy on black students was coming under increasing attack from both right and left, chiefly from the Nationalist Government on the right and liberal and radical students on the left.

Prior to 1948 the University's policy towards the admission and treatment of black students had been determined by the Council, Senate, and respective faculty boards without serious interference from other bodies, either within or without the University. The return of the Nationalists to power in 1948 was to change all that, and the issue of black students at Wits became distinctly more politicised. From the outset, the Nationalist Government made it clear that it objected to the two 'open' universities in South Africa, and that it intended to impose apartheid structures on university education in the country. At the same time, segments of the student body were drawn into the wider campaign against apartheid, and this was to help produce a series of onslaughts against segregationist practices on campus from liberal and radical students. It was after the first major such onslaught in 1952, the warning by the Prime Minister, Dr D.F. Malan, that the dual policy of "academic non-segregation and social segregation" had become untenable, and

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43. Whyte to Dale, 7 June 1946, SAIRR 321.

44. Council Minutes, 4 December 1953.

a major controversy over limitations on black admissions to the medical school, that the Council undertook a review of the University's admissions policy.[45]

The immediate development within the medical school that led to the introduction of a quota system for black admissions had been experimentation with its admission procedures. 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 that the selection of students to proceed to the second year was guided by racial considerations, and not simply academic qualifications, thereby marking a distinct breach from previous practice in the medical school. All the white medical students who had passed the first year were admitted to the second year, but only 6 of the 23 'Non-Europeans' who had passed were allowed to proceed. "Most, though not all, the Non-Europeans who failed to gain admission to the second year in 1953", Raikes conceded in a memorandum for Council, "would have been selected on a strictly competitive basis".

In 1952 the position was that 56 'Non-Europeans' were admitted to the first year of medicine, and 26 to the second year. The latter figure was made up of the holders of the 6 official scholarships, including the awards from the African Medical Scholarship Trust Fund set up by the Wits student body after the Nationalist Government had withdrawn the state scholarships for African medical students at Wits, 5 B.Sc. graduates, 4 repeats, and 11 candidates selected from the 16 who had passed the first year. At the end of 1952 some 23 'Non-Europeans' passed the first year, and it was this figure that "caused alarm" in the medical school. The supply of "Non-European maternity material in the clinical years", it was alleged, would be quite inadequate to cope with such an influx. The selection committee consequently proposed to limit the 'Non-European' enrolment in the second year to twelve, but with some prodding from Raikes this figure was raised to twenty. The twenty was to be made up of 6 scholarship holders, 2 B.Sc. graduates, 4 repeats, 2 who had passed second year science, and 6 of the 23 who had passed the first year.[46]

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

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45. For Dr Malan's warning see the Star, 11 & 12 December 1952.

46. "Memorandum for committee on admission of non-Europeans", H.R. Raikes, May 1953, Misc. C/82/53.

in the matter were brought seriously into question, chiefly on the grounds that white students in the clinical 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. As Michael O'Dowd, the Vice-President of NUSAS, wrote to Raikes on 7 March 1953:

> In view of these facts we are most reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the University has in fact discriminated against non-European students without any justification, and we accordingly wish to convey to you our solemn protest against this action, which constitutes a betrayal of the principles on which the University of the Witwatersrand was founded and which it has followed from its inception, principles which have been followed by all true Universities since such situations came into existence.

Raikes responded, "While of course I accept your right to make up your own minds, this decision on your part must close this correspondence."[47]

The controversy continued to fester even after Raikes' departure as Principal at the beginning of 1954. His successor, Professor W.G. Sutton, moved to finally close it with the blunt admission to the SRC 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".[48]

In the midst of the furore over the medical school, the Council decided to review its general policy over black admissions. 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. Anderson, a product of the South African School of Mines and managing director of the Union Corporation, served as chairman of Council from 1939 until the Holloway Commission hearings in 1954, and was never himself entirely committed to the notion of the 'open' university. The apprehension that disturbed him was that the 'white' character of Wits might one day be endangered, with the result that by the end of his tenure he had become a firm advocate of quotas. What alarmed him by 1953 was that the statistics indicated to him that "there is a steady increase going on in the ratio of Non-Europeans to the total enrolment, and that this is 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.[49] The notion of establishing separate universities for

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47. O'Dowd to Raikes, 7 March 1953, and Raikes to O'Dowd, 12 March 1953, NUSAS files.

48. Sutton to SRC President, 8 March 1954, File 819/3.

blacks caused him few philosophic qualms. In 1952 his response to Nationalist criticism of 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.[50]

In 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 had told the House of Assembly that the Cabinet would soon be looking into the question of separate universities for blacks.[51] 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 stict quota. As was clear, Raikes submitted, the demand among blacks for a medical training was greater than could be coped with by the University of Natal, and Wits should therefore continue to train blacks. However, it was the opinion of the clinical professors that about 12 blacks out of a total of 100 students in all was the optimum figure in the clinical years. With the decision of the medical school to revert to selection for the first year, Senate recommended that black admissions be limited to 8 in the first year, with another 12 places available in the second year for the holders of recognised scholarships and B.Sc. graduates.[52]

The 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 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 the proposal "was not acceptable to all members of the committee, some of whom rejected the proviso in principle". The upshot was a compromise in which the committee recommended that Council should retain its general policy for the moment but that it should not consider itself commmitted to the present arrangements, allowing for changes in accordance with changing circumstances.[53]

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49. Anderson to Raikes, 4 February 1953, File B19/3.

50. Star, 12 December 1952.

51. For Viljoen's statement see the Star, 1 September 1953.

52. Misc. C/82/53.

53. "Draft report of the committee appointed by the Council to

At its meeting of 4 December 1953 Council adopted these recommendations. Shortly thereafter the Government announced that it had established a commission, under the chairmanship of J.E. Holloway, into separate training facilities for blacks at universities, thereby initiating the process that would lead to the Extension of University Education Act in 1959 and an end to the status of Wits and UCT as 'open' universities.

III.

It is the documentation prepared for the Holloway Commission that provides some of the best material for a study of the University's overall policy towards black students. The position in 1953 was that out of a total student population of 4272, some 220 students were classified as 'Non-European'. They were made up of 131 Asiatics, 75 Africans, and 14 'Coloureds'. Nearly half the 'Non-European' students, some 105, were in the Faculty of Medicine, followed by 54 in Science, 35 in Arts, 11 in Commerce, and 10 in Law. There were no Africans or 'Coloureds' in the Faculties of Architecture and Engineering, but they did possess a handful of Asiatic students. Within the classroom, the University's general policy was one of non-segregation. No segregation was practised in respect of lecture, laboratory, and library facilities, and while all clinical training for black students was confined to the black hospitals, these hospitals were also used for the training of white students."[54]

Outside of the classroom, black students at Wits were free to participate in the actiovities of most cultural and scientific societies, but they were excluded from participation in sport, University dances, and other forms of recreation and social enjoyment engaged in by whites at the University. In this respect, the University's official policy was described as one of "social segregation". As the University explained its position to the Holloway Commission: "The exclusion of Non-Europeans from this kind of social contact outside the academic sphere indicates the University's recognition of the special circumstances which prevail, in the field of social relationships, in South Africa."[55]

In so far as the maintenance of "social segregation" at

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consider the Council's policy in respect of the admission of Non-Europeans to the University, 20.11.53", Misc. C/215/53.

54. "Comission on University Facilities for Non-Europeans--Reply to Questionnaire on Non-European Students", February 1954, Misc. C/24/54.

55. "Memorandum for the Commission on Separate Training Facilities for Non-Europeans", April 1954, Misc. C/57A/54.

Wits was designed to ward off attacks from without on the 'open' universities, the Holloway Commission report made it evident that, if anything, such a tactic proved counter-productive. While the University contended that the extra-curricular contact with whites that the 'open' universities offered to black students was crucial for the development among them of some of the "attributes of an educated person and a trained mind", the Holloway Commission was able to point out that extra-curricular contact was so limited as to be of marginal benefit to black students: "There are admittedly groups of European students who have extra-curricular associations with non-European students, but for the greater part the two groups, namely Europeans and non-Europeans, do not have much to do with each other extra-curricularly."[56]

Even before the appointment of the Holloway Commission the position of black students at Wits had been seriously eroded, notably with the introduction of a quota system in the medical school. Following the appointment of the commission, their position was almost entirely defensive. No new doors were to be opened to them, though no more of the existing doors were to be closed by the University itself, despite pressure to do so from those members of Council and Senate hostile to the presence of black students at Wits.

In the Senate there had always been a distinct, but generally not very vocal, 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 acknowledged Nationalists in the Senate, but there were several others who were basically hostile to the presence of black students at Wits. The most powerful among them 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. Following the appointment of the Holloway Commission, Pienaar and Shaw took the lead in seeking to mobilise opposition in the Senate to the continued presence of blacks at Wits. As they wrote to W.G. Sutton, the new Principal, 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".[57]

In the event, in its memorable debates of March 1954 in response to the appointment of the Holloway Commission, the Senate defeated by 24 votes to 10 the motion of Shaw and Pienaar

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56. Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Separate Training Facilities for Non-Europeans at Universities 1953-1954, 20.

57. Shaw and Pienaar to Sutton, 17 February 1954, File P12/8.

refusing to endorse the University's policy of academic non-segregation. Instead, the Senate approved the motion proposed by Professor Errol Harris of Philosophy and seconded by Professor Etienne Marais of History, which rejected the principle of "discrimination in academic matters on racial grounds" and resolved that "This Senate therefore holds that the policy so fa 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".[58]

Thereafter Professor Marais took the lead in Senate in attempting to force the dental school to open its doors to black students, but Shaw held out until his retirement in 1957. The real power of men like Shaw and Pienaar lay not in their capacity to shape the general policy of the University in regard to black students as in their ability to frustrate the application of that policy to their own departments. Neither Dentistry nor Logopedics made provision for black students.

IV.

To the extent that Wits, during the lifespan of the Union of South Africa, ever became an 'open' university it was in the period between the outbreak of World War II in 1939 and the passage of the Extension of University Education Act in 1959. In practice, the University was never fully 'open', and the spread of black students on campus was always very thin. The proportion of black students at Wits never exceeded about six per cent. Their profile on campus, moreover, tended to be low, as a consequence of the University's general policy of "social segregation" and their own unwillingness to challenge that policy. While from time to time in the 1950s the Students' Representative Council challenged segregationist practices on campus, black students themselves did not wage a war against such practices; from their standpoint it could only prove counter-productive.

What irked black students at Wits were not so much the specific practices of social segregation, as the general sense of being marginalised and discriminated against. In the medical school they sensed that, with some notable exceptions, the clinical teachers in the first rank preferred to do their ward rounds in the white rather than the black hospitals, and the exclusion of black students from post-mortems on whites positively rankled. In the law school, again, black students sensed a general lack of sympathy. The Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor H.R. Hahlo, while a brilliant lecturer, was remote and even hard as a person, and black students sometimes felt he was particularly hard on them. He certainly never went out of his way to assist them.

Among the black students who found the Faculty of Law

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58. Senate Minutes, 5 & 12 March 1954.

unsympathetic to their plight was Nelson Mandela, perhaps the University's most famous non-graduate. He sat the final examinations for the LL.B. on three occasions, and failed each time. After his third failure, in 1949, he wrote to the Dean of the Faculty of Law requesting that he be credited with all the subjects he had passed, and that he be allowed to write supplementary exams in the remaining subjects. The request was turned down, and Mandela as a consequence never qualified for the LL.B. at Wits.

What Mandela's apllication highlighted were the difficulties that most black students at Wits worked under. After detailing the expenses he had incurred to study at Wits, amounting to nearly £500 over seven years, he went on:

> I should also add that during the whole of this period I studied under very difficult and trying conditions. I was a part-time student and resided (as I still do) at Orlando Native Location in a noisy neighbourhood. In the absence of electric light I was compelled to study in the evenings with a paraffin lamp and sometimes with a candle light. I wasted a lot of time travelling between Orlando and city and returned home after 8p.m. feeling tired and hungry and unfit to concentrate on my studies. Even during the examinations I was compelled to work in order to maintain the only source of livelihood that I had. It is my candid opinion that if I could have done my work under more suitable conditions, I could have produced better results.[59]

After 1946 the more fortunate black students were able to secure accommodation in the residence that was built specifically for blacks at Wits, Douglas Smit House. Located near the south-west corner of the campus, on a site donated by the Johannesburg City Council, the residence provided accommodation for some forty students. As a small black enclave in the white suburbs, Douglas Smit House was subject to a host of legal restrictions, but despite these, and the food, black students generally enjoyed living there. The residence was closed down in 1963. By then the supply of black students had dried up as a consequence of the establishment of separate universities for blacks.

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59. Mandela to the Dean of Law, 9 December 1949, Faculty of Law S/403/49.