

https://dspace.org/

# Apartheid and university education, 1948 - 1970

**Beale, Mary Alice**

**2016-07-15**
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/20610

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

# APARTHEID AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, 1948 - 1970

Mary Alice Beale

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Johannesburg, 1998

**Abstract**

This thesis examines Government university policy between 1948 and 1970.

University education was already segregated and discriminatory in 1948 and until the mid 1950s, Nationalists disagreed about plans for university education. Their discussions about the development of apartheid university policies helped clarify general apartheid principles.

Apartheid university education was based on the principle that university education was not universal but should serve a particular ethnic community. Divided university education was entrenched through the Extension of University Education and Fort Hare Transfer Acts of 1959, which were primarily produced by the Native Affairs Department. The ethnically segregated, state-controlled university colleges they created provided different, inferior educational opportunities to the state-aided, more autonomous, universities.

The 'open' universities complied with the compulsory closure of enrolment to black students. The University of Natal was less co-operative, but also ultimately complied. Enrolment at ethnic university colleges was not compulsory, but there were few alternatives. Enrolments at black institutions rose, despite continued opposition to ethnically-defined institutions.

In the 1960s Nationalists promoted Afrikaans enrolments and facilities for Afrikaans students. The establishment the University of Port Elizabeth and the Rand Afrikaans University was only considered once the economic boom of the 1960s made this feasible.

The Government spent more money on university education generally, resulting in huge increases in enrolments and institutional capacity. Spending on Afrikaans students was most generous. The black university colleges were expensive, but Government spending on black university education, in proportion to the black population, remained low. African school funds were depleted to pay for the

African university colleges. The divided university system produced far more white graduates, in a wider range of disciplines, than black graduates. South African universities were isolated internationally and the development of an indigenous intellectual culture and research capacity was hindered, especially at the Afrikaans-medium and black institutions.

Politically, Nationalist university policy was counterproductive. It failed to build white South Africanism, and the university colleges nurtured Black Consciousness. From the late 1960s the police increasingly acted against students at the black and English-medium institutions. In 1970 the black university colleges were granted autonomy from Unisa.

**Key words:**
South Africa, apartheid, National Party, policy, education, university, students, Saso, Nusas

## Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

.....M M Beale.....

..18th.. day of December., 1998

**Dedication**

For those who have studied at South Africa's universities,
and for those who wanted to

## Preface and Acknowledgements

Attending university transforms people socially, politically and in the way they interact with the economy. Some individuals feel included, equipped and empowered to join a social elite and advance personally, joining a new generation of leaders, while others feel excluded, alienated and deprived. Many are unable to enrol at all, some battle with part time classes or correspondence tuition.

My own experiences of university education began in 1982 at Wits, when it celebrated its diamond jubilee under the auspicious slogan 'Tomorrow begins at Wits today'. I was excited by the opportunity before to me, and I can identify with Mandela, when he wrote in his autobiography that 'Wits opened a new world to me a world of ideas and political beliefs and debates, a world where people were passionate about politics'.[1]

Two experiences prompted my interest in the politics of universities. First, Wits began to be transformed during my undergraduate years. When I was on the SRC in 1985, Wits struggled to adapt meaningfully when, for the first time, significant numbers of black students enrolled at Wits as Government restrictions on admissions were abandoned. Many of these students had previously attended Bantustan institutions, where conditions were then chaotic. Second, at the end of 1986, I was awarded the Abe Bailey Travel Scholarship, and, exactly as Bailey intended, I learned about the complex idealism and fears of Afrikaans students.

I am grateful to many people and institutions for their support and help in writing this thesis. I received financial support from the University of the Witwatersrand in the form of a Senior Bursary, and a research award from the Human Sciences Research Council, and I would like to formally acknowledge and thank them for their support. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the librarians and archivists at the Institute for Contemporary History in Bloemfontein, the Campbell Library in Durban, the Cory Library for Historical Research at Rhodes University,

1. Mandela, NR (1994) *Long Walk to Freedom*, Macdonald Purnell, Randburg, p85.

the University Archive at the University of Cape Town, the Documentation Centre at the University of Durban-Westville, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies of the University of London, the University Registry of the University of Natal, the University of South Africa Documentation Centre, the Historical and Literary Papers library at the University of the Witwatersrand as well as the University of the Witwatersrand Archive.

Many people stimulated and encouraged me in this work. I thank those who I interviewed, those who chaired and attended seminars where I presented work in progress, those who helped with access to archives and with arranging interviews, especially my father in law, George Bizos. I am very grateful to Shula Marks and Albert Grundlingh, who read drafts and chapters of the work and provided sympathetic advice.

Liz Walker has helped enormously to overcome my isolation by responding quickly to my emails with gems of insight into child care, the process of writing and completing the thesis and practical help. I cannot thank Sue Krige enough, for always being ready with encouragement, practical ideas and energetic action on my behalf. Bruce Murray has been tolerant of my silences and absences and prompt with feedback despite my propensity to submit work just before major cricket fixtures.

I've been confident that Tracey Doolan has taken good care of Lucia, making it much easier for me to get on with work. Erato and Denise Bizos and Colleen Howell also helped at critical points with childcare.

My parents have been supportive and resisted the temptation to chide me about how long this has taken - except to say that Lucia was the only major project I've ever finished ahead of schedule. My father ferried me around the country so that I could use archives and conduct interviews.

I record here my apologies to Lucia: for not being allowed to draw coloured circles on the computer whenever she wanted and for shutting the study door. I also forgive her for secretly locking the keyboard for three days.

I've been 'almost finished' since I met Kimon a long time ago. He insisted that I should take the opportunity to upgrade the completed MA to a PhD, and supported me throughout with his typically unstinting generosity and without (much) complaint when I abandoned him to spend time in South Africa. I am very grateful to him.

**Contents**


Abstract ii

Declaration iv

Dedication v

Preface and acknowledgements vi

Contents ix

List of tables xii

List of abbreviations used xv

Chapter 1 p1
Apartheid and University Education, 1948 - 1970

1.1 Aims of this thesis and relationship to the current literature
1.2 Methodology and sources
1.3 Themes and chapter structure

Chapter 2 p34
University education before apartheid reorganisation

2.1 The origins of South Africa's university education system
2.2 Division of responsibility in university governance
2.2.1 Black admissions, segregation and contests over university autonomy
2.3 Character of the student population and patterns of enrolment
2.4 Political cultures at the universities in the 1940s and early 1950s
2.4.1 Ethnic particularism and the culture of the *Volksuniversiteit*
2.4.2 'English liberal conservatism' at Rhodes and Natal
2.4.3 Fort Hare: Universal ideals, segregated reality
2.4.4 Wits and UCT: the ambiguities of academic integration and social segregation
2.5 Gender and university education in the early 1950s
2.6 Conclusion

Chapter 3 p107
A 'difficult and delicate matter': Conflicts within the National Party about apartheid at universities, 1945 - 1955

3.1 The reorganisation of Unisa, the establishment of the Natal Medical School and the Holloway Commission into university finances
3.2 NP views on universities before the 1948 election victory
3.3 Eiselen and the Native Education Commission
3.4 Viljoen and the appointment of the Holloway Commission
3.4.1 Reaction to the report of the Holloway Commission: Sabra and Verwoerd
3.5 Conclusion

Chapter 4 p152
Native Affairs Department control of University Apartheid: 1955 - 1959

4.1 Inter-departmental enquiry under HS van der Walt
4.1.1 Student numbers
4.1.2 Curriculum
4.2 Natal Medical School: Notable failure of Verwoerd's plans
4.3 The 'Hybrid' Separate University Education Bill
4.4 Second draft of the Separate University Education Bill
4.5 Delay: the referral to the Select Committee
4.5.1 Extra-Parliamentary opposition
4.5.2 Nationalist unease over the Bill
4.6 The Nel Commission
4.6.1 Department of Education and NAD submissions to the Nel Commission
4.6.2 Criticism of the Bill by Afrikaans intellectuals: Concerns about state control
4.6.3 'Conscience Clause' concerns
4.6.4 Report of the Nel Commission
4.7 Extension of University Education Act
4.8 The Fort Hare University College Transfer Bill
4.8.1 Fort Hare and Rhodes opposition to the Bills
4.9 Conclusion

Chapter 5 p218
Implementation of the 1959 Acts

5.1 Creating the state-controlled system
5.1.1 Rectors
5.1.2 Councils and Advisory Councils
5.1.3 Staff, Senates and Advisory Senates
5.1.4 Student enrolment: Ethnic segregation, viable numbers and political control
5.1.5 Buildings
5.2 Developments at UCT, Wits and the University of Natal
5.3 Resistance and Alternatives

Chapter 6 p287
The creation of the University of Port Elizabeth and the Rand Afrikaans University

6.1 Changes in the economic and political context in the 1960s
6.2 Local campaigns in Port Elizabeth and on the Witwatersrand
6.2.1 'Rhodes is not a university home for Afrikaans speakers': the campaign in Port Elizabeth
6.2.2 The campaign on the Witwatersrand: threatening Unisa for the ethnic ideal
6.2.3 Deliberations on the local investigations
6.3 Cabinet decision in favour of UPE
6.3.1 The establishment of the University of Port Elizabeth
6.4 Consequences of the UPE decision for the campaign on the Witwatersrand
6.4.1 Establishment of the Rand Afrikaans University
6.5 Conclusion

Chapter 7 p339
High Apartheid and university education in the 1960s

7.1 Financing apartheid university education
7.2 Changing character of the student population
7.2.1 Marginal status and the increase in women's enrolments
7.3 Changes to the character of academic staff
7.3.1 Increased influence of Afrikaans academics
7.4 Diversity in the role of universities and university colleges
7.4.1 Curricula
7.4.2 Educational outcomes and impact on employment patterns
7.4.3 Intellectual cultures
7.5 Political cultures at the universities in the 1960s
7.5.1 Afrikaans universities: Struggles over the ideal of the 'volksuniversiteit' in the 1960s
7.5.2 Black university colleges: Stresses in the state-controlled system
7.5.3 Uneasy compromise: the English-medium universities

Chapter 8 p459
Conclusion

8.1 Major findings
8.2 Towards a definition of university apartheid

Bibliography and Sources p468

## List of tables


Chapter 2

2.1: Membership of University Councils, 1948
2.2: Sources of revenue, 1946, and tuition costs per student
2.3: Pupils obtaining matriculation exemption and first year enrolments at university, analysed by population group, 1946-1956
2.4: Student enrolments at attendance universities, analysed by population group, 1952
2.5: Percentage of student enrolments (full time and part time), analysed by population group, 1955
2.6: Black students' term time residence, 1955
2.7: Full time and part time enrolments and enrolments and Unisa, analysed by population group, 1955
2.8: Numbers of postgraduate enrolments (full time and part time) analysed by population group, 1955
2.9: Enrolments by faculty and subject, analysed by percentage of students of each population group, 1955
2.10: Ages of students at attendance universities, 1955
2.11: Gender of students, 1955
2.12: Girls in Standard X, 1955
2.13: Percentage of women academic staff members, analysed by level of post, 1948
2.14: Women holding position of head of department, 1948

Chapter 3

3.1: Expenditure on university education as a proportion of total state expenditure, 1948-1960
3.2: Expenditure on African school education as a proportion of total state expenditure, 1953-60
3.3: African secondary school leavers, analysed by school qualification obtained and growth of the African population, 1949-1970

Chapter 4

4.1: Actual numbers of African secondary school leavers, analysed by school qualification obtained and compared to Van der Walt's projections for 'matriculants'

Chapter 5

5.1: Enrolments at Fort Hare, analysed by population group, 1959-1970
5.2: Enrolments at university colleges 1960-1970
5.3: Enrolments at the Universities of Cape Town, Natal (excluding Medical School), Rhodes and the Witwatersrand, analysed by population group, 1959-1970
5.4: Black students applying and admitted to white universities, 1960-1970
5.5: Black enrolments at attendance institutions and at Unisa, 1959-1970

Chapter 6

6.1: White South African and SWA students as a proportion of the white population and all South African and SWA students as a proportion of the total population, compared to seven other countries, 1959-61

Chapter 7

7.1: Expenditure on university education as a proportion of total state expenditure, 1948-1970
7.2: Government expenditure per student, in Rands, analysed by institutions designated for Africans, coloureds, Indians and whites, 1960-1970
7.3: Government expenditure on universities and university colleges, in Rands, analysed by expenditure per capita of designated population group, 1960-1970
7.4: Expenditure and income at African university colleges, giving shortfall drawn from funds for schools in Bantu Education Account, 1959/60-1970
7.5: Student enrolments at universities and university colleges, analysed by population group, 1960-1970
7.6: Number of students per 1 000 of the population, analysed by population group, 1960-1970
7.7: Student enrolments at universities designated white, analysed by language, 1960-1970
7.8: Total number of scholars passing the final year of school, and the number passing with matric exemption, analysed by population group, 1959-1960
7.9: Number of women students enrolled at universities and university colleges, analysed as a percentage of enrolments in each population group, 1960-1970
7.6: State expenditure on universities and university colleges, analysed by designated population group and expenditure per student, 1961-1970
7.10: Faculties at eight attendance universities, all designated white, 1961
7.11: Student distribution among faculties at attendance universities, all designated white, 1961

7.12: Courses of study offered at the university colleges, early 1960s
7.13: Degrees and diplomas awarded, analysed by population group, 1960-1970
7.14: National Manpower Commission data on employment in selected 'High Level Manpower' occupations, analysed by population group, 1965 and 1971
7.15: Proportion of total black student enrolments at attendance institutions, 1960-1970

**List of abbreviations used**

| | |
|---|---|
| ANSB | Afrikaanse Nasionale Studentebond, succeeded by the ASB in 1948 |
| ARM | African Resistance Movement |
| ASA | African Students' Association |
| ASB | Afrikaanse Studentebond |
| Asusa | African Students' Union of South Africa |
| CNE | Christian National Education, policy of the National Institute for Christian Teaching and Education, an organisation set up by the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereeniginge* |
| CSIR | Council for Scientific and Industrial Research |
| EAS | Education, Arts and Science |
| FAK | *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereeniginge* |
| Fort Hare | Name commonly used for institution established in 1916 as the South African Native College and transformed into the University College of Fort Hare in 1949. |
| HAD | House of Assembly Debates |
| HSRC | Human Sciences Research Council |
| INCH | Institute for Contemporary History |
| ISC | International Students Confederation |
| JCE | Johannesburg College of Education |
| *JRA* | *Journal of Racial Affairs* |
| KCM | Killie Campbell Manuscript (University of Natal) |
| MNO | Ministerie van Nasionale Opvoeding |
| NAD | Native Affairs Department |
| NEUM | Non-European Unity Movement |
| Nepi | National Education Policy Investigation |
| NGK | Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk |
| Ngoye | University College of Zululand |
| NHK | Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk |
| NMC | National Manpower Commission |
| NP | National Party. In 1951, the NP was formed when the Herenigde Nasionale Party and the Afrikaner Party combined. For simplicity, the name NP is used to refer to the HNP before 1951 as well. |
| Nusas | National Union of South African Students |
| Sacsa | South African Conservative Students' Association |
| SAIRR | South African Institute of Race Relations |
| Saso | South African Students Organisation |
| SCA | Students' Christian Association |
| SRC | Students' Representative Council |
| Turfloop | University College of the North |
| UAC | University Advisory Committee |
| UCT | University of Cape Town |
| UCWC | University College of the Western Cape |
| UNNE | University of Natal 'Non-European Section' |
| UP | United Party |
| Wits | University of the Witwatersrand |
| WUS | World University Service |

# Chapter 1

## Apartheid and University Education, 1948-1970

This thesis maintains that between 1948 and 1970 the National Party's (NP) governance of university education was central to the definition and working of apartheid. In 1948 it could hardly have been anticipated that black[1] university education would become an ideological and spending priority for the newly elected white government, but in the 1950s the Nationalist Government planned to extend African university education massively and, crucially, it was the Native Affairs Department (NAD) that defined this objective and piloted this expansion. More than any other government department in the 1950s, it was the NAD that practically interpreted and implemented the vague apartheid idea. As with other NAD policy, its university policies were ideologically driven by 'ethnos' theory and welfarist, modernising and bureaucratic ideas.[2] In the 1960s the NAD's plans for ethnically-designated, state-controlled and almost wholly state-funded university colleges and the closure of the 'white' universities were implemented. At the same time, strategies which concentrated on the needs and political allegiances of urban Afrikaners evolved and were realised. Both phases of the development of apartheid university policy were highly contentious, revealing the potential weaknesses in the Nationalists' hold on power, both among Afrikaners specifically and white voters in general. The Nationalists' politicisation of university education also engendered and consolidated principled, mainly liberal, opposition within South Africa and focused international opprobrium on the country. Nevertheless, as there seemed to be no alternatives, thousands of black students enrolled at the university colleges and the universities, which no longer had the right to admit black students, continued to operate and depend on government funding. Despite this superficial compliance, however, apartheid universities and university colleges were fertile

1. In this thesis the use of terms such as 'African', 'coloured', 'Indian' and 'white' is unavoidable because these are the population categories fundamental to apartheid legislation. The term black has been used throughout to refer to the first three groups. In direct quotation, other terms are used to describe different population groups. The use of these terms does not imply acceptance of 'racial' categorisation.
2. This analysis has been framed with particular reference to Kros, C (1997) 'Economic, Political and Intellectual Origins of Bantu Education, 1926-1951', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and Evans, I (1997) *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

breeding grounds for anti-apartheid sentiment and action. Ultimately, the thesis contends that the Government's attempts to manipulate university education were contradictory and that the experiences of studying and teaching in South Africa's tertiary institutions helped both to reinforce and to undermine apartheid.

In 1948 the apartheid slogan seduced a strategic minority of the electorate from a diverse range of mainly Afrikaans supporters by promising to protect white political power and further white prosperity, especially by promoting an Afrikaans ideological agenda improving the economic position of Afrikaners. Beyond these core ideas, apartheid was loosely defined and meant different things to the NP's different groups of supporters. For most Nationalists though, education was a centrally important political issue. It had been a Nationalist rallying point since Lord Milner's post-South African War reconstruction had threatened to impose English language and culture on the defeated populations of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. From the 1930s, a more elaborate view of education developed in Christian Nationalism. After the Second World War, the prospect of winning state power and using it to implement Christian National education policies must have been enticing for the school teachers and clergymen at the heart of Nationalist leadership. What a Nationalist Government would do with university education was hardly elaborated, but there were two popular ideas among Nationalist supporters: university education should be segregated so that white students could study alone, and the state should intervene more to help Afrikaners and promote Christian Nationalism at universities.

Once in power the NP Government, especially the NAD, was highly interventionist in the entire education sector. In 1949 it appointed the Native Education Commission and in its second term of office implemented its recommendations for a fundamental overhaul of African schooling, inspired by ethnos theory, by means of the Bantu Education Act of 1953. In terms of university education, by the end of the 1950s it transformed the basis of government funding, closed white universities to black students, except for a very few that needed the permission of a minister to attend, and created an entirely new sector of state-run black university colleges with different and separate systems of governance. In the 1960s it created

the University of Port Elizabeth and the Rand Afrikaans University, both primarily to meet the needs of urban Afrikaners. In 1970, confident that the black university colleges were functioning as planned, it granted them circumscribed 'autonomy' and the maturation of this university policy provides a convenient point of closure for this thesis. By 1970, the first fruits of the apartheid university policies were ripening, but the Nationalists did not yet seem aware of the blighted harvest they would reap.

The Nationalists' interventionist policies were propelled by their highly instrumentalist notions about education, their drive to modernise the delivery of education and the fundamental principle that it was the responsibility of the state to provide for the educational welfare of South Africans. Educational issues had been strategically significant in the mobilisation of the Afrikaner *volk*, had helped to define the Nationalist political agenda and were seen to be important in the material advances made by Afrikaners as individuals and as a group. Nationalists clearly believed that education could be used to support apartheid. Through its university education policies in the 1950s and 1960s, the Nationalist Government aimed to contribute to three key policy aims: first, to entrench segregation, which would also bring about the *de facto* compliance of academics and students with the ethnically segregated university system; second, to defuse political opposition by changing the political conditions within the universities and university colleges; and third, on the basis of separate institutions, to differentiate between the educational opportunities for different population groups, specifically favouring Afrikaners and disadvantaging black, and especially African, students.

However, the Nationalists' functionalist view of education did not neatly translate into reality, and their interventions did not deliver the political prizes that they sought. It has been observed that that education is 'a blunt and clumsy instrument' of 'limited capacity' for bringing about social, economic and political reform as it is dependent on 'the whole education system from the Minister of Education and the Secretary General down to the average teacher in the average school in the

provinces'.[3] These subtleties seem to have been lost on the Nationalists, and their university education plans had a very contradictory impact on apartheid in the short and long term.

There were dramatic changes in university education between 1948 and 1970, which were the result both of Government policy and other social factors.

First, segregation was entrenched in law, elaborated and far more strictly applied. In 1948 university education was already racist: about 65 per cent of white students and 77 per cent of black students were studying in segregated institutions (at Fort Hare, in the segregated classes of Natal, and by correspondence through the University of South Africa, 'Unisa'). The remainder were studying at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town, which were called the 'open' universities because they admitted black students to most faculties, but were still 94 per cent white.[4] This segregation was the result of custom rather than decree, with the racism and sexism of the country as a whole usually extending unchallenged to the campuses. Universities were also at the pinnacle of the education system, and compounded the race, class and gender inequalities of the entire education structure. Furthermore, formal and informal colour and gender bars operated in the workplace, and affected student perception of opportunity and hence their decisions about study. By 1970 the Nationalist Government had ensured that the segregation of students had been more rigorously imposed: 74 per cent of white students and 92 per cent of black students were studying in entirely segregated institutions. The formerly 'open' universities and Rhodes University (which paradoxically admitted a handful of black students

3. Beeby, CE (1978) 'Education as an instrument of social change', unpublished paper presented to seminar on 'Long-term prospects in the development of education', Unesco, Paris, p1.
4. There were ten universities in South Africa. The universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria, the Orange Free State and Potchefstroom catered for white, Afrikaans-speaking students. Rhodes University admitted white, predominantly English-speaking students. The University of Natal, with campuses at Durban and Pietermaritzburg, admitted both black and white students, but conducted segregated classes. The English-medium 'open' universities, the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, admitted students from all population groups to most faculties. The University College of Fort Hare was also open to students from all population groups, but generally only black students attended. Unisa conducted tuition via correspondence, and students from all population groups were enrolled. These figures are my calculations, based on figures for 1954 in South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (1956) *A survey of race relations in South Africa*, SAIRR, Johannesburg, p203.

during the 1960s) were 96 per cent white in 1970.[5] Excluding its black Medical School, the University of Natal's student enrolment was [illegible] per cent white in 1970.[6] Even at these institutions, therefore, there were many white students who had no contact at all with the handful of black students at the same campuses.

Second, the principles underpinning the state's management of the university sector were transformed, resulting in fractured state governance and a differentiated, unequal university system. From Union to 1948, South Africa's Governments were guided, very imperfectly and uncritically, by notions of the autonomy and universalism of university education: any student who met the entrance criteria and was accepted by an institution entered a meritocracy where the pursuit of knowledge was the object and more important than the individual's language, class, race, creed or gender. For many Afrikaner Nationalists, however, this assumed 'universalism' was experienced as Anglocentric arrogance as the 'neutrality' about issues such as language all too often translated into an ascendancy for all things English. In the 1930s, this resulted in campaigns for the *Afrikaanswording* of universities where a bilingual policy had applied.

Once in power, the Nationalists increasingly worked with a notion of the 'particularism' of universities. Universities were to be linked closely to the communities they served and they imposed ethnic definitions on those communities. The language, culture and knowledge imparted and produced in universities was to be specific to an ethnic community rather than general. For Afrikaans universities, this trend climaxed in the creation of the ultimate *volksuniversiteit*, the Rand Afrikaans University. The Nationalist Government also extended the principles of ethnic particularism to the new sector of black university colleges. Separate institutions were created for three African ethnic groups, clustered around the Zulu, Xhosa and Tswana/Sotho languages, and one each for the Indian and Coloured 'communities'. This occasioned a fracturing of the governance of university education, as white universities were controlled by the

5. These figures are my calculations, based on SAIRR (1970) *A survey of race relations in South Africa*, SAIRR, Johannesburg, p243.
6. My calculations, based on figures provided by the Registrar of the University of Natal.

Department of Education, Arts and Science, while the black university colleges were controlled by the department of the population group concerned. By 1990, this fission meant that no fewer than 19 departments were governing South Africa's university sector. Furthermore, division was accompanied by difference: separate was never equal in South African university education. Black university colleges generally taught a limited curriculum based on formative, three-year undergraduate degrees in the Arts and Sciences and Education diplomas. In contrast, the white universities offered full and diverse curriculum including professional training, applied courses and postgraduate study.

The third striking change in university education between 1948 and 1970 was the massive expansion of student numbers. In 1948 there were 20 046 university students, but enrolments more than quadrupled to reach 83 137 in 1970.[7] This expansion was part of a world wide trend towards mass rather than elite university education. The causes of this expansion, in South Africa and beyond, are complex. They relate to greater provision of secondary schooling, changing attitudes to the role of university education and the education of women, urbanisation, the expansion of the middle class and changes in the employment structure. In many parts of the world, including South Africa, the effect of demographic pressures and market forces on the expansion of university education was accelerated and augmented by deliberate government policy, but in South Africa the NP also manipulated the *character* of the expansion. As a result black student enrolment grew more rapidly than white student enrolments, rising 457 per cent from just 2 172 in 1954 to 9 933 in 1970; in the same period white student enrolments rose from 22 956 to 73 204, an increase of 319 per cent. But while the increase of black student enrolments was sharp, numbers rose from such a low base (in absolute terms and relative to the size of the population group) that the expansion favoured the access to university education of white, especially Afrikaans, students. Enrolments in white, Afrikaans-medium institutions rose 337 per cent between 1954 and 1970, compared to a 224 per cent increase in white enrolments at

7. Including Unisa. These figures are my calculations, based on figures for 1948 in Dreijmanis, J (1988) *The role of the South African Government in tertiary education*, SAIRR, Johannesburg, pp120-122, p203 and SAIRR (1970) *op cit.*, p243.

English-medium universities in the same period.[8] In the 1950s university education was largely inaccessible to potential black students, and the massive expansion in enrolments did little to change this by 1970. In 1956, for example, there were 9.5 white students per thousand of the white population, but there were only 0.2 African students per thousand of the African population.[9] By 1970 there were 19.3 white students per thousand white people, compared to 0.3 African students per thousand of the African population.[10] The expansion of enrolments therefore entrenched privileged white access to university education and favoured Afrikaans students.

These changes had a contradictory impact on apartheid.

The more politicised interventions of the Government in university education elicited more politicised responses. Relations between the Government and the English-medium universities were transformed and became tense and highly charged, but it is notable that the Government's intervention did not extend to shutting down the English-medium universities, and in many ways, business continued as usual. Student political opposition to the Government also continued. While the Government failed to crush the National Union of South African Students (Nusas), by the end of the 1960s the principle of non-racialism had been almost destroyed. The segregation of black students in the ethnic university colleges, coupled with constant Government interference in contact between black and white students, created the conditions which led to the emergence of the South African Students' Organisation (Saso) and the militant ideology of Black Consciousness.

The segregation of Afrikaans students was also counterproductive to apartheid in the long term. In the short term, Afrikaans student politics was generally uncritically loyal to the Government and its policies, but the very cocooning of future Afrikaans leaders in a complacent ethnic laager probably delayed the need of

8. These figures exclude the dual-medium University of Port Elizabeth.
9. Dreijmanis, *op cit.*, pp120-122.
10. *Ibid.*

Afrikaans leadership honestly to confront the real stresses of South African politics. On the other hand, the process of defining university apartheid led to introspective soul-searching among some Afrikaans intellectuals. The authoritarianism of the Government in closing the white universities to black students and imposing extensive state control at the new black institutions caused unease among Afrikaners who hoped that apartheid could win supporters on its merits, rather than be imposed by force. The tensions contributed to the disaffection of many intellectuals with the NP, thereby weakening the Nationalist monolith.

The separate camps in South Africa's fractured and differentiated university education system enjoyed little dialogue or exchange. At the same time, South African universities were increasingly isolated from the international university world. Both of these processes tended to impoverish the country intellectually.

Despite all of these corrosive trends, the Nationalists' university policies also contributed to their political goals. Their manipulation of the university education system was a key factor contributing to the distortion of the processes of class formation in their favour. In particular, Afrikaners were helped to break into the commercial and professional routes to settled urban prosperity. The ethnic exclusivity of the Afrikaans universities produced not only complacent politics but also an exclusively Afrikaans network of business and professional contacts. In contrast, the black university colleges stunted exactly the same processes for the black middle class. With little in the way of commercial, professional or applied study, and isolated from the economic mainstream, black graduates were seldom empowered economically by their university experiences, either as individuals or as a group. Although some black graduates scaled the occupational ladders of the homeland bureaucracies, in general, the hollow prize of black university education disempowered black graduates and diminished their threat to their white competitors. This result was a double edged sword for the Nationalists, as the frustration of black graduates was also a destructive political force.

## 1.1 Aims of this thesis and relationship to the current literature

Apartheid policies were sometimes brutally enforced by the police and military, but the peculiar character of apartheid coercion also relied on modernising, welfare strategies designed to attain compliance, a point well made by Evans in *Bureaucracy and Race*.[11] For this reason it is important to examine not only such violent features of apartheid as influx control or forced removals, which affected millions of powerless people, but also the state provision of higher education for the relatively privileged few. This is not to make grand claims about the importance of university education as an ultimate cause of key features of apartheid, but the approach taken is that understanding the processes and experiences of university education can enrich the sense of apartheid's compulsion and how it affected people's lives. The process of defining university policy also proved to be a significant means of resolving competing versions of apartheid.

The provision of education was a key function of the apartheid state and it affected the lives of millions of scholars, students and those who received no formal education at all. Education was regarded by Nationalists as an important tool in their ideological armoury, where Christian National values, which emphasised political subservience and ethnic identity, could be imparted and enhanced. The impact of education is of course not only ideological: the sector employs a vast number of teachers, lecturers and support staff. The skills and values conveyed (or not conveyed) through education are also of significance to the country's economy and to social stratification and class identification.

Obviously, far more people are involved in school than university education. But the smaller numbers involved in university education do not make the sector somehow less 'significant' for studies of apartheid: it can be argued that the very selectivity of university education emphasises and intensifies social tensions. Graduation addresses often echo the theme that universities are the crucibles of the next generation of the leadership of the country. This has become a truism, the

11. Evans, *op cit.*

significance of which is never addressed. This claim needs to be examined critically and in context, but it seems obvious that in the 1950s and 1960s university education provided an essential step on the main, if not the only, route to political and economic power. A generation of South African power brokers were moulded by their experiences at South African universities. These experiences surely require examination if the political, economic, social and cultural landscape is to be properly understood.

Despite the centrality of education, including university education, few studies of apartheid integrate an assessm... f its impact into their analyses. Discrete articles on education appear occasionally in, for example, the *Journal of Southern African Studies* or a collection such as *Apartheid's Genesis*,[12] but extended studies on apartheid seldom regard educational processes as consequential. Two typical examples are Dan O'Meara's *Forty Lost Years*[13] and William Beinart's *Twentieth Century South Africa*.[14] O'Meara masterfully blends the analysis of material conditions and political process to provide a seemingly thorough, convincing and detailed account of the NP and apartheid, informed by a sophisticated theoretical framework, but an evaluation of the education process is almost entirely absent from the book. Even the 1976 protests against conditions in Bantu Education schools are scarcely mentioned. Universities, university colleges and the affairs of students and graduates are completely ignored. Beinart deals with the significance of student protest and organisations such as Nusas and Saso, but his analysis of education is ultimately limited to ideological protest. In general, literature on apartheid *per se* either fails to integrate analysis of education, ignores it entirely or rehashes superficial assumptions about education without probing their validity or pertinence.

Paradoxically, the failure of comprehensive studies of apartheid to address both the ideological *and* the material impact of education is probably a legacy of the

---

12. Bonner, P, Delius, P and Posel, D (eds.) (1993) *Apartheid's Genesis 1935-1962*, Wits University Press and Ravan, Johannesburg.
13. O'Meara, D (1996) *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party, 1948-1994*, Ravan, Johannesburg.
14. Beinart, W (1994) *Twentieth Century South Africa*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

revisionist, materialist literature of the 1970s and 1980s. This literature was frequently marred by the portrayal of a functional, instrumental relationship between 'the state' and 'capital' and its emphasis on material causation resulted in a preoccupation with the supply and control of cheap and stable labour. A consequence of this is that only a narrow range of Government policies have been analysed in mainstream historiography. There was also a tendency to set up a dichotomy between material and ideological causation and consequences, and the relationship between the material and ideological dimensions of policies were seldom problematised or explained.

The literature on apartheid as such misses the opportunity of integrating the insights offered by education and it is an aim of this thesis to show how university education contributed to the changing form of apartheid, both in the way the policy debates contributed to the definition of apartheid and in the economic and social impact of the educational process. I also aim to begin to address another shortcoming in the literature, namely, a comprehensive analysis of the university education system during the apartheid years.

Until recently few comprehensive analyses had been published on South Africa's university education system. In the early 1990s the higher education group of the National Education Policy Investigation (Nepi, which had been established by the National Education Co-ordinating Council) commissioned a background report by Ian Bunting, later published as *A Legacy of Inequality, Higher Education in South Africa*.[15] (The activity surrounding Nepi has resulted in several articles and books, including *Changing by Degrees, Equity issues in South African tertiary education*,[16] but these generally focus on specific current problems.) Bunting's book provides a rare comprehensive overview of the South African university system, and sets it in the context of other tertiary education institutions such as technikons and teacher training colleges. As an extended background paper, the book seems to aim to synthesise government reports, and it usefully compiles and

15. Bunting, I (1994) *A Legacy of Inequality, Higher Education in South Africa*, UCT Press, Rondebosch.
16. Kaplan, D (ed) (1994) *Changing by Degrees: Equity issues in South African Tertiary Education*, UCT Press, Rondebosch.

collates the relevant published government material. However, Bunting uses little other primary or secondary material, his interpretation of the significance or consequences of government policy is cursory and he does not explore the causes or consequences of inequalities in any depth.

Bunting also seems to be unaware of an earlier, very similar work, *The role of the South African Government in tertiary education*, by John Dreijmanis.[17] Dreijmanis discusses the legal and administrative role of the Nationalist Government in all post-secondary education. Writing in the mid-1980s in the wake of concern about the national 'skills shortage' and the report of the De Lange commission, which aimed at reforming the education system, Dreijmanis' central hypothesis is that the Government's provision of education was based on the 'manpower and socio-economic needs of the country',[18] a politically neutral formulation which ignores the overt racial content of Government policy. The book was based on his Potchefstroom University doctoral thesis and published by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR). The book purports, as do other SAIRR publications, to be an 'impartial' account of the Government's involvement in tertiary education at universities, technikons, technical colleges and colleges of education, and it assembles statistical information and catalogues and describes the administrative measures of the Government. However, this is a sterile account of structural provision, which describes the racism central to the Government's policies but makes no attempt to explain or question the political underpinnings or responses elicited by Government policies.

In addition to the work of Bunting and Dreijmanis, an article by GC Moodie and an unpublished thesis by Katiya consider the role of the Government during the period covered by this thesis.

17. Dreijmanis, *op cit.*
18. *Ibid.*, p2.

Moodie's article on 'The state and liberal universities in South Africa, 1948-1990'[19] is innovative in that it explains how the relationship between the 'open' universities and the Government was co-operative as well as conflictual and that the Government allowed university capacity and student numbers to expand. Moodie defines the boundaries of state interference in academic freedoms precisely and implies that the constraints experienced by South African academics and students were generally self-imposed and self-policed.

Moodie offers some provoking new perspectives on this relationship, but there are several problems with his work. His article is based only on secondary literature and some published Government material. Another major criticism is that Moodie attempts to analyse the 'open' universities and their relationship with the Government in isolation from the university education system in South Africa and the general political context.[20] This leads to peculiar distortions and misunderstandings about the concept of academic freedom. It seems that for Moodie, academic freedom at the 'open' universities can be measured by analysing the extent to which the Government allowed academics to teach and research as they wished. He argues that no academics were repressed for the content of their teaching (although this was generally the case, there *were* exceptions, as is shown in Chapter 7) and that their extra-curricular or extra-mural activities were always the cause of state action. Similarly, he suggests that the harassment of Nusas leaders affected very few students and the activities of the classrooms and libraries not at all. In adopting this approach, it appears that Moodie regards freedoms as self-contained and divisible, as if it were possible to examine the freedom of the academic or student without consideration of their freedoms as citizens. He implies that the academic freedom to pursue 'legitimate' academic concerns was not widely affected. While he lists precisely the constraints on libraries and research, including the censorship of books and periodicals, he ignores the broader restrictions on the freedom of speech, the press and association, measures which

19. Moodie, GC (1994) 'The state and liberal universities in South Africa, 1948-1990', *Higher Education*, No 27, pp1-40.
20. While Moodie discusses South Africa's isolation from the international community of universities, he seems unconcerned about the anomalies that arose from breakdowns of communication between South African institutions.

curtailed freedom of thought for all South Africans, including those that were also scholars. Together with his lack of original research, this results in a limited and distorted portrayal of the relationship between the 'open' universities and the Government during the apartheid years.

Katiya's unpublished Fort Hare doctoral thesis on 'An analytical study of the development of higher education for the Bantu of the Republic of South Africa'[21] explains the interventions of the Nationalist Government by adopting, largely uncritically, the Government's own explanations and rationalisations. For instance, the transfer of Fort Hare is described as

> a necessary step in the implementation by the Government of its policy to provide more adequate and effective university education facilities for blacks.[22]

The entire work is marred by superficial conclusions of this type.

Besides these retrospective works, there were occasional articles published during this period by concerned academics, student leaders and liberal organisations, describing Government plans and sometimes monitoring their effect. Horrell's descriptions of developments in the annual *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa* published by the SAIRR are among the more prominent accounts, but do little more than describe the unfolding events on an annual basis.[23] Similar descriptive accounts, specifically about black higher education, can be found in the series called *Black Review* that was published in the early 1970s.[24] Various Nusas leaders, including Caldecott, Tobias, and Budlender[25] wrote about the Government's plans for university education. In the 1950s the universities of the Witwatersrand and Cape Town defended their approaches to university

---

21. Katiya, N (1977) 'An analytical study of the development of higher education for the Bantu of the Republic of South Africa', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Fort Hare.
22. *Ibid*, chapter 5.
23. SAIRR, *op cit*.
24. Mbanjwa, T (ed.) (1975) *Black Review 1974/75*, Black Community Programmes, Lovedale.
25. Caldecott, O (1944) 'Social and student democracy', *Nusas Journal*, Cape Town; Caldecott, O (1946) 'Nusas today', *Trek*, July 26 1946; Caldecott, O (1947) 'SA universities split unhealed', *Cape Times*, 11 June 1947; Tobias, PV (1951) The African in the Universities, Nusas, Cape Town; Budlender, G (1973) 'Universities and social change', unpublished mimeo, Spro-cas, Johannesburg.

education,[26] and two senior Fort Hare academics, Kerr[27] and Matthews,[28] wrote about apartheid and university education. On the whole these contemporary authors responded primarily to the most obvious, party-political character of the NP's university education plans and did not investigate the relationship between Government policy and broader changes in the role and character of university education. While they sometimes speculated on the consequences of the changes for the country as a whole, as contemporary commentators they were not in a position to assess their long-term impact.

These few general texts on university education are supplemented by literature that deals with specific institutions. It is in the nature of these works that analysis of South Africa's university education system is not undertaken, or only insofar as it affected or was affected by a single institution. But, especially given the shortage of general studies of the university system, these institutional studies can sometimes provide rich detail about how the changes in the character of university education and the impact of Government policy were experienced. This is particularly important as it is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate each institution: this remains an important area for future research. Relatively few of these works deal with the 1950s and 1960s in great depth.

Of the institutions enrolling black students, Fort Hare's history is most thoroughly surveyed. Burchell's descriptive accounts of the very early years there[29] supplement Kerr's history of his years as Principal, from 1916 to 1948.[30] Seboni's unpublished 1959 thesis examines Fort Hare from the conception of the institution to 1954.[31] Both his thesis and that of Shava[32] justify the existence of the separate

---

26. Centlivres, AvdS *et al* (eds.) (1957) *The Open Universities in South Africa*, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg.
27. Kerr, A (1957) 'University Apartheid' in *South African Outlook*, 87, Lovedale Press, Lovedale.
28. Matthews, ZK (1957) 'Ethnic Universities', in *Africa South*, Volume 14.
29. Burchell, DE (1976) 'African Higher Education and the establishment of the South African Native College, Fort Hare' in *South African Historical Journal*, 8; and Burchell, DE (1982) 'Pioneer venture in African higher education: the South African Native College, Fort Hare, during the formative years' in *South African Journal of Education*, 2(1-2).
30. Kerr, A (1968) *Fort Hare 1915-1948: The evolution of an African College*, Lovedale Press, Alice.
31. Seboni, MOM (1959) 'The South African Native College, Fort Hare, 1903-1954; an historical critical survey of its development and an assessment of its influence on the education of the non-European races of *Continued* ...

universities, as well as the political philosophy which inspired the policy. Perhaps this is because both were supervised by a prominent Broederbonder, Professor JH Cilliers of Unisa. Beard, a former politics lecturer at Fort Hare, has written specifically on the nature of student politics at the institution in the 1950s,[33] while a thesis by White, although focused on ZK Matthews, provides a broader, detailed account of developments at Fort Hare in the same period.[34] The history of the University of Durban Westville is addressed in the official, commemorative study by Oosthuizen,[35] a more probing analysis is available in Bhana's chapter on university education in Pachai's book on South Africa's Indian communities.[36] Bezuidenhout provides a dry account of administrative practices at the institution.[37] Disappointingly, no relevant material for this period on the University of the Western Cape or the University of Zululand has been identified, and while Nkondo[38] and Wolfson[39] have written about the University of the North, both deal with developments in the 1970s only.

The historiography on the 'white' universities is far more extensive but similarly uneven.

The establishment and development of the University of the Witwatersrand to 1959 is the subject of two books by Murray, the second of which, *Wits, the 'Open' Years, 1939 - 1959,* provides a detailed analysis of the response of the different sections of the university community to the Separate University Education Bill as

---

South Africa in general, but on that of the Southern Bantu in particular, together with suggestions for future development', unpublished PhD Thesis, Unisa.
32. Shava, NMDM (1960) 'Racial distinction and education with special reference to the education of the South African Native', unpublished Masters Thesis, Unisa.
33. Beard, TVR (1972) 'Background to student activity at Fort Hare', in Van der Merwe, H and Welsh, D (eds.) *Student Perspectives on South Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town.
34. White, TRH (1994) 'ZK Matthews and the politics of education in South Africa', unpublished M Phil Thesis, University of York.
35. Oosthuizen, GC (ed.) (1981) *Challenge to a South African University: The University of Durban-Westville*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town.
36. Bhana, S (1979) 'University Education' in Pachai, B (ed.) *South Africa's Indians: The evolution of a minority*, University Press of America, Washington.
37. Bezuidenhout, DP (1984) 'Die administrasie van die Universiteit van Durban-Westville', unpublished mimeo, University of Durban-Westville.
38. Nkondo, G (1978) *Turfloop Testimony*, Ravan, Johannesburg.
39. Wolfson, JGE (comp) (1976) *Turmoil at Turfloop*, SAIRR, Johannesburg.

well as a rich sense of the culture and experiences of university life.[40] An unpublished honours dissertation by Felicia Tobias focuses on women at Wits in the same period: it is notable as it provides one of the only analyses of gender and university education.[41] None of these studies deals with the 1960s and unfortunately the memoirs of GR Bozzoli, *A Vice Chancellor Remembers*, deals very sketchily with the university's relationship with the Government, although the perspective of a senior administrator and academic on student affairs in this period is unusual.[42]

The history of the University of Natal covering most of this period is authoritatively surveyed and interpreted by Brookes,[43] and Malherbe's autobiography covers the years when he was Principal there (but omits any reference to the Holloway Commission, where he was a commissioner).[44] The Dean of the Medical School, I Gordon, wrote extended pamphlets on the Government's plans and failure to remove control of the Medical School from the University.[45] Neither Brookes nor Malherbe explain the defiance of the University of Natal when faced with the implementation of the Extension of University Education Act, a story which is recorded in this thesis for the first time.

Phillips has published a book on the University of Cape Town but his study terminates in 1948.[46] Currey modestly calls his book on Rhodes University from 1904 to 1970 an anecdotal 'chronicle', rather than a 'history', but it nevertheless provides extremely useful accounts of the institution's complicated relationships with Fort Hare, Unisa and the fledgling independent university in Port Elizabeth,

---

40. Murray, BK (1982) *Wits: The Early Years*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg and (1997) *Wits: The 'Open' Years, a history of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1939-1959*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg.
41. Tobias, F (1992) 'The women of Wits, 1939-1959', unpublished Honours dissertation, Department of History, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
42. Bozzoli, GR (1995) *A Vice-Chancellor Remembers*, Alphaprint, Randburg.
43. Brookes, E (1960) *A history of the University of Natal*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg.
44. Malherbe, EG (1987) *Never a dull moment*, Howard Timmins Publishers, Landsdowne, Cape.
45. Gordon, I (1957a) *Report on the Government's intended action to remove the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Natal*, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg and Gordon, I (1957b) *Further report on the Government's intention to remove the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Natal*, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.
46. Phillips, H (1993) *The University of Cape Town 1918-1948: The formative years*, UCT Press, Cape Town.

which terminated plans for Rhodes University expansion there.[47] University of Port Elizabeth historians have long shied away from tackling the contentious origins of their institution to balance Currey's version of events. Rautenbach's recently completed doctoral thesis on the establishment and early years of the University of Port Elizabeth provides a richly detailed account, but it seems to be based very closely on the papers of key promoters of the institution.[48] Boucher's work on Unisa provides a third account of these developments and Unisa's long history and central and unique role in several other key changes.[49] Spies has recently also contributed to the literature on Unisa's history.[50] Very little has been written about the Afrikaans universities besides an anonymous compilation history of the University of Pretoria published in 1960,[51] although recent work by Grundlingh[52] and Mouton[53] provides rich and detailed analysis of the processes of Afrikanerisation in the universities in the 1930s and the philosophy of the history departments.

Another valuable contribution is the 1977 collection edited by Van der Merwe and Welsh called *The future of the university in Southern Africa.*[54] The collection was the result of a conference at which the Principals of several universities, including Bozzoli of the University of the Witwatersrand, Marais of the University of Port Elizabeth, Van der Walt of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and Viljoen of the Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit explained and defended the philosophies and principles guiding their institutions. Their articles in this collection provide unusually explicit statements about assumptions commonly left unexplored and unstated.

---

47. Currey, RF (1970) *Rhodes University 1904-1970: A chronicle*, Rustica Press, Wynberg, Cape.
48. Rautenbach, T (1995) 'Die stigting en aanvangsjare van die Universiteit van Port Elizabeth', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Port Elizabeth.
49. Boucher, M (1973) *Spes in Arduis: A history of the University of South Africa*, Unisa, Pretoria.
50. Spies, SB (1997) 'The emergence of Unisa as a teaching university', *Kleio*, Vol. XXIX, Unisa, Pretoria.
51. University of Pretoria (1960) *Ad Destinatum: Gedenkboek van die Universiteit van Pretoria*, Voortrekkerpers Beperk, Johannesburg.
52. Grundlingh, A (1990) 'Politics, principles and problems of a profession: Afrikaner historians and their discipline c. 1920 - 1965', paper presented to History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
53. Mouton, FA (1993) 'Professor Leo Fouche, the history department and the Afrikanerization of the University of Pretoria', *Historia*, Volume 38, No 1, May.
54. Van der Merwe, HW and Welsh, D, (eds.) (1977) *The future of the university in Southern Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town.

A fairly developed theme within the literature deals with student politics. Nusas leaders including Rubin,[55] Legassick[56] and Nettleton[57] all published analyses of aspects of white student politics during the 1950s and 1960s. Legassick's extended study of Nusas is especially useful. Little has been published on black student politics during the 1950s and 1960s besides Beard's account of Fort Hare mentioned above. For the 1970s, however, there is some pertinent material, especially Nkomo's book *Student culture and activism in Black South African universities: The roots of resistance*.[58] Nkomo effectively demonstrates that the African university colleges gave rise to attitudes and behaviour at odds with those intended by official policy. Nkomo tr[illegible]auses of black student rebellion, and weighs up factors including experiences outside the university environment, student perceptions that they had no prospects as well as conditions inside the institutions: in this way he builds up a textured and comprehensive picture of African student activity. Nkomo emphasises the experience of policy, providing a fresh perspective on material often treated mechanistically. He establishes that a 'culture of resistance' was created at African universities, but fails to explore the broader effects of the policy.

This focus on student resistance falls into a trap identified by Wolpe and Unterhalter (see below) about resistance by scholars, namely, the tendency to foreground the agency of resisting students and to see education as a mechanism for transforming apartheid, obscuring the extent to which educational policy does meet its desired objectives. Several other writers examine black student activity

55. Rubin, N (1960) *History of the relations between Nusas, the Afrikaanse Studentebond and the Afrikaans University Centres*, Nusas, Cape Town.
56. Legassick, M (1967) *The National Union of South African Students: Ethnic cleavage and ethnic integration in the universities*, Occasional Paper No 4, African Studies Centre, University of California, Los Angeles.
57. Nettleton, C (1972) 'Racial cleavage on the student left' in Van der Merwe, H and Welsh, D (eds.) *Student Perspectives on South Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town.
58. Nkomo, M (1984) *Student culture and activism in Black South African Universities: The roots of resistance*, Greenwood, Westport, Connecticut.

and experience: most of these, including Gwala,[59] Moodley,[60] Totemeyer[61] and Van Wyk,[62] discuss developments in specific institutions after 1976.

The educational role of the university system is scarcely addressed. Pioneering exceptions are the isolated articles on the broad theme of teaching and learning, such as those on historians by Grundlingh and Mouton identified above, by Phillip Tobias on medical education[63] and by Enslin[64] and Randall[65] on aspects of teacher education. Russell[66] and Evans[67] both analyse the impact of apartheid on intellectual work and the development of the scholarly community. The outcomes of the university education process, for example in the quality and quantity of the graduates (and drop-outs) produced has hardly been analysed, although Crankshaw's work[68] and some Human Sciences Research Council publications are tangentially relevant.[69]

In summary, there is no comprehensive analysis of the nature of South African university education during the apartheid years, although there are some interesting works of more limited scope. Given the omissions and silences in the literature both on apartheid in general and on university education, it is the aim of this thesis to provide an account of the university education system during the 1950s and 1960s which first demonstrates the contradictory and changing impact of the

---

59. Gwala, N (1988) 'State control, student politics and the crisis in black universities', in W Cobbett and R Cohen (eds) *Popular struggles in South Africa*, James Currey, London.
60. Moodley, KA (1979) 'The politicisation of ethnic universities: Experiences within South Africa's "college brews"' in Van den Berghe, PL (ed.) *The liberal dilemma in South Africa*, Croom Helm, London.
61. Totemeyer, G (1984) 'The African University in a divided society - values attitudes and expectations among black students in some Southern African universities', unpublished mimeo, University of Transkei.
62. Van Wyk, JJ (1978) 'Die nasionalisidiese houdings van studente aan die Universiteit van Zululand jeens KwaZulu', unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Pretoria.
63. Tobias, PV (1983) 'Apartheid and medical education: The training of black doctors in South Africa', in *International Journal of Health Services*, Vol 13, No 1.
64. Enslin, P (1990) 'Science and doctrine: Theoretical discourse in South African teacher education' in Nkomo, M (ed.) *Pedagogy of Domination*, Africa World Press, New Jersey.
65. Randall, P (1990) 'Historico-pedagogics and teacher education in South Africa, 1948-1985' in *Perspectives in Education*, Vol 11, No 2, University of the Witwatersrand.
66. Russell, M (1979) 'Intellectuals and Academic Apartheid, 1950-1965', in Van den Berghe, PL (ed) *The liberal dilemma in South Africa*, Croom Helm, London.
67. Evans, I (1990) 'The racial question and intellectual production in South Africa' in *Perspectives in Education*, Vol 11, No 2, University of the Witwatersrand.
68. Crankshaw, O (1989) 'African high-level employment in South Africa, 1965-1989', unpublished mimeo, NIPR, Braamfontein.
69. Faurie, KM (1981) *The wage structure of Asian, Black and Coloured graduates in 1981*, HSRC, Pretoria; Wolmarans, KM (19 ) *The wage structure of graduate non-whites in 1979*, HSRC, Pretoria.

university education system on apartheid, both during this period and in the longer term, and second, which develops an analysis of the workings of the entire sector of university education, rather than an individual institution or category of institutions.

## 1.2 Methodology and sources

In developing an approach to this research it has been helpful to refer to the general literature on apartheid education, which tends to focus on primary and secondary education.

In their review of South African education discourses, Wolpe and Unterhalter argue that 'education is accorded immense and unwarranted weight as a mechanism either of social reproduction or social transformation'.[70] This was a trend that they identified in four quite different education discourses: namely, those which saw education as entrenching racial domination, as reproducing South African capitalism, as an instrument for reforming capitalism, or as a mechanism of social transformation. In other words, whatever the political goal, activists and analysts within each of these discourses had a naively functionalist view of education. But Wolpe and Unterhalter argue that expecting education to deliver specific results is unrealistic, and argue that 'extra educational conditions may either facilitate or block the effects of the educational system'.

Wolpe and Unterhalter's characterisation helps to identify some of the pitfalls to be avoided in analysing South African education.[71] Furthermore, their conclusion that while 'education may be a necessary condition for certain social processes', it is 'not a sufficient condition, and hence cannot be analysed as an autonomous social

---

70. Wolpe, H and E Unterhalter (1991) 'Reproduction, reform and transformation: approaches to the analysis of education in South Africa', in E Unterhalter et al (eds.) *Apartheid education and popular struggles*, Ravan, Johannesburg, p3.

71. The tendency to regard education as a prop for the racism of apartheid related to liberal schemes to reform capitalism, namely, the third tendency identified by Wolpe and Unterhalter. Materialist analyses, on the other hand, linked to the fourth tendency, which suggested that the transformation of the education system could lead to the destruction of apartheid's racism and economic inequality, notably through ideas such as 'people's education for people's power'.

force'[72] suggests that education should be analysed in the context of the political economy.

The tendency to view education as designed to perpetuate racial domination is typified by the *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa.* Since the 1950s, the *Surveys* have provided an annual quantification and plain account of educational discrimination,[73] complemented by works on education by researchers associated with the Institute, such as Horrell[74] and Kane-Berman.[75] The emphasis on ideological aspects means that questions about the materiality of education are not posed or answered. The ways in which the NP Government intended education policies to secure white prosperity through economic growth are not explored.

This emphasis on ideological aspects was challenged by the second trend, which brought 'materialist' analysis to education studies to show how education policies tried to meet the requirements of the capitalist economy. A prominent example of this approach is the 1984 collection of essays edited by Kallaway, *Apartheid and Education: the Education of Black South Africans,* which stresses 'the need for a political economy of South African education'.[76] Kallaway criticises the failure in most educational research to raise questions about the role of schools, especially in terms of the labour market, and the interests they served. In contrast, the *Apartheid and Education* collection emphasises

> the 'dependent' nature of schooling systems and ... both their political (ideological and control) functions and their economic role as producers of specific types of 'manpower' relevant to the needs of the dominant systems of production in society.[77]

Christie and Collins' contribution to the collection warns that education should be seen as 'a site of struggle and contradiction, rather than a mechanistic response to

---

72. *Ibid.*
73. South African Institute of Race Relations (1951 ff) *A survey of race relations in South Africa*, SAIRR, Johannesburg.
74. Horrell, M (1963) African education: Some origins and development until 1953, SAIRR, Johannesburg; and Horrell, M (1964) *A decade of Bantu Education*, SAIRR, Johannesburg.
75. Kane-Berman, J (1978) *Soweto: Black revolt White reaction*, Ravan, Johannesburg.
76. Kallaway, P (ed.) (1984) *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, p1, Ravan, Johannesburg.

capitalist demands'.[78] Despite this caution, Christie and Collins emphasise economic needs to the exclusion of ideological imperatives:

> Apartheid was the mask and Bantu Education was [the ruling class grouping's] best means for reproducing labour in the form that they desired ... in the interests of their socio-economic need and not because they were racialist. The historically changing reproduction of labour is the thread which holds together all African schooling policies in South Africa.[79]

There are several fundamental problems with this approach. In general, the difficulties stem from the portrayal of a functional relationship between the monolithic 'state' and the undifferentiated 'capitalist' interests that it is supposed to have served, in which education is regarded as designed to reproduce the cheap labour needed for capitalist growth. But the 'state' and 'capital' were not homogenous or unchanging and the 'state' cannot necessarily be presumed to be either able or willing to identify and respond to the 'needs of capital', which were themselves diverse and liable to change over time. In implementation, state policies are diluted, distorted and sometimes subverted. Christie and Collins also set up an odd dichotomy between the ideological and economic roles of education, as if historians were called upon to choose whether it was either the political goal of consolidating white domination, or the NP's economic policies, that determined the shape of Bantu Education.

Functionalist and determinist explanation can be avoided through closer examination of the processes through which educational policies are defined and by examining the actual, as opposed to planned, effects of the policies in implementation. In contrast to the Kallaway collection, Hyslop develops the concept of struggle and conflict within policy formation and implementation, and demonstrates the way in which education policy becomes 'the outcome of social conflict' within and between differentiated capitalist interests, arms of the state and the dominated classes. If education meets the needs of capital, Hyslop argues,

---

77. *Ibid.*
78. Christie, P and Collins, C (1984) 'Bantu education: Apartheid ideology and labour reproduction', p164, in P Kallaway (ed.) *Apartheid and Education: The education of Black South Africans*, Ravan, Johannesburg.
79. *Ibid.*, p183.

it is only as the outcome of a political struggle toward this end by representatives of capital both within and outside state structures.[80]

Hyslop argues that relationship between Bantu Education and capitalist needs changed over time, and while the response of the state was sometimes complementary to capitalist needs, it was also sometimes contradictory. Hyslop employs an encompassing concept of 'social reproduction' rather than Christie and Collins' concept of labour reproduction, to imply ideological and political as well as economic goals. Bantu Education is thus seen by Hyslop as

focused on resolving the urban crisis, by providing for the social control of the urban working class and reproduction of a semi-skilled workforce.[81]

Hyslop's work develops a subtle understanding of the interplay between the state and capital and the place of school resistance in determining the outcome of educational processes. He describes ways in which education helped to reproduce apartheid and how education struggles could contribute to its demise.

Hyslop's analysis is far more sophisticated than the Kallaway approach and has been helpful in framing research questions, but it is inappropriate and inadequate simply to apply Hyslop's theoretical model to this study of university education. For example, where Hyslop is able to demonstrate the instrumentality of 'capital' in the framing and reform of Bantu Education, research for this thesis demonstrates that the 'representatives of capital' were not particularly concerned with the shape of higher education in the 1950s and 1960s. The extent to which university education was appropriate to the 'needs of capital' can be explained in other obvious ways, for example, through students choosing to follow courses that would equip them for employment.

Three main lessons emerge from this literature to inform the interrogation of primary sources for this thesis. First, in order to avoid the traps of determinism and functionalism, it is useful to identify the struggles and conflicts in the processes of

80. Hyslop, J (1986) 'State education policy and the social reproduction of the urban African working class: 1955-76', unpublished mimeo, p1.
81. Hyslop, J (1990) 'Social conflicts over African Education in South Africa from the 1940s to 1976', piv, unpublished PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

policy development. Which interests were formally represented in the policy making processes? Which were absent? Where did different policy 'models' originate, whose interests did they represent, which triumphed and why? What compromises and adaptations were introduced, and why? What were the consequences in implementation of the contests over policy making? Second, the outcomes of educational processes need to be closely examined with regard both their effects and their limitations. The implementation of contested Government policy must be analysed in the context of the broader political economy. In particular, it is useful to look both for the intended and unintended consequences in the short and long term. Finally, the overarching message of the literature is that neither the material nor the ideological aspects of university policy should be over-emphasised or neglected. For example, both the political and the socio-economic consequences of apartheid system of university education need to be identified.

These lessons have influenced the scope and definition of the subject of this thesis. This study began as an attempt to explain why the Government took control of the mission-founded Fort Hare in 1959 and how it hoped to transform the institution in support of its policy of granting self-government to the homelands. It immediately became clear that a more open-ended research approach was needed, rather than simply searching for evidence that the Government 'used' Fort Hare to support the homelands. It was also difficult to study Fort Hare alone as there was so little general literature on the history of university education. The transformation of Fort Hare can only really be explained with reference to what the Government was trying to create anew in African university education, necessitating an examination of the creation of the University College of the North and the University College of Zululand. The nature of the new system of African university colleges was highlighted by the different approach taken in the establishment of university colleges for Coloured and Indians, so the policy leading to the creation of the entire new sector of state-controlled black university colleges became the new subject of research. However, it became apparent that the design and effects of the system of black university colleges can only really be examined in the context of the university education opportunities for white students. To take two examples, the history of the changes in student politics and the distortion of the employment

structure, are quite inexplicable in relation only to black or white universities. It therefore became necessary to examine state policies regarding the white universities as well as the black university colleges.

To avoid functionalist explanation, the thesis also examines the implementation of state policy, rather than simply its design, as well as the contested development of the policies to avoid the instrumentalist view of the state that goes hand in hand with functionalism.

It has been necessary to identify, locate and research a wide range of primary sources in order to answer the questions posed by these approaches to the subject. Broadly, the thesis examines two separate, but related processes: policy design and policy implementation.

Government papers provide the main body of primary source material on the formulation of Government university education policy from 1948 to 1970. The papers of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, housed at the State Archives in Pretoria, form the foundation of much of the thesis as this was the department responsible for all university education until 1959, and for white universities and Unisa during the 1960s. It was responsible for the administration of commissions of enquiry, committees, correspondence and introducing bills to Parliament. Responsibility for African university education was officially transferred to the Department of Bantu Education after the 1959 Acts were passed, although, as the thesis shows, the Department of Native Affairs (from which the Department of Bantu Education was created) had been interested and actively involved in the formulation university policy during the 1950s. Locating these files was essential for the thesis, and proved extremely difficult, as by September 1995 none of the files of the Bantu Education Department had been transferred to the State Archives and were still being held at the Education Department buildings in Schoeman Street, Pretoria, pending rearrangement as the Department was restructured. The main sequence of files relating to the African university colleges is the '11' series, but unfortunately, these files were badly reorganised in 1970, and the current finding aid does not reliably reflect the content

of the files before this date. Further, the 1970 reorganisation involved transferring folio length pages to metric file covers, and most folio pages were simply guillotined to A4 length. The problems with the Bantu Education files, and the gaps in the research which result, have to some extent been offset by consulting other Government departmental records, such as the Treasury, Departmental Reports, Parliamentary debates, the Bills and published Government papers.

During this period the Government conducted several formal investigations, collecting the considered and carefully argued opinions of both their supporters and their many of their opponents in the process. The records of the Commissions of Enquiry provide a very clear picture of some of the parties contesting the policy. For example, the positions of the universities affected are elaborated in detail. However, the records of Fort Hare and Rhodes (in the Cory Library at Rhodes University and the ZK Matthews papers at Unisa) and the institutional archives of the universities of Cape Town, Natal and the Witwatersrand have all been consulted to confirm and add a sense of conflict internal to the institutions. (To some extent these archives also fill in some of the gaps left by the Bantu Education archive.) The record of the Commissions does not present a complete picture, for example, the views of neither the African National Congress nor any other black political organisation are explicitly represented. A broader and richer sense of the contests over policy making has been gleaned from other papers and organisational records, such as those of the provincial branches of the NP, the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings (FAK), the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs, Nusas, the Afrikaanse Studentebond, Saso and the SAIRR, as well as through interviews and the press.

The thesis is concerned not only with policy formulation but also with its reception and implementation and changes in the character of university education. Most of the sources discussed above were also of relevance to these research areas. To enrich the examination of the experience of university education, I have also interviewed former staff and students from a wide range of institutions. Former student interviewees were selected who had been active in student affairs. For graduates of the white universities, the list of former Abe Bailey scholars was used

to locate appropriate informants. The Scholarship was established in the early 1950s by Sir Abe Bailey, with the aim of bringing Afrikaans- and English-speaking student leaders together so that they could develop a sympathetic understanding of each other. Selection was made by the individual universities. The Abe Bailey scholarship thus pre-selected people who had the respect both of their peers and of their universities. However, the scholarship was closed to black students until the late 1970s, and to women until the early 1980s. Former black students from Fort Hare and the 'open' universities have been interviewed, many of whom were student leaders. I have also interviewed former senior staff, including Rectors, Vice Chancellors and Principals. A schedule of interviews conducted is given in the bibliography and references section.

There were problems with interviewing former students and staff in the early 1990s, a time of political change and uncertainty in South Africa, about their experiences in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Many of those interviewed have remained within the universities or have been prominent in national politics. Thelen warns that

> the starting place for the construction of an individual recollection is a present need or circumstance ... Since an individual's starting points change as the person grows and changes, people reshape their recollections of the past to fit their present needs ... and select from the present material that supports deeply held interpretations from the past.[82]

These factors necessitated a carefully constructed series of open-ended questions, and a close and critical interpretation of the interviews. A standardised, but flexible, interview schedule was devised to facilitate comparison of experiences of students from widely differing backgrounds. Biographical questions covered such details as schooling, family background and whether other family members had attended university. Questions were posed about finances, including how the student paid fees and covered living expenses while studying, to give an indication of the class background of the student. This led on to questions about

---

82. Thelen, D (1989) 'Memory and American History', *Journal of American History*, p1121, Volume 75, No 4.

responsibility for dependants, part-time and vacation employment and whether it was necessary to interrupt studies for financial reasons. In order to determine how academic experiences differed from campus to campus a series of questions were posed about the form of tuition and student relationships with academic staff. To determine whether educational issues ever became the focus of stude·t activity, interviewees were asked whether any attempt was made to challenge the content, style or organisation of courses. The issues and alignment of student politics was also investigated, including relevant pre-university experiences, whether women were involved, and the relations with the administration, student groups and off-campus political groups. Other aspects of university life, such as the social life, sport, community involvement, activity in support of charity such as annual 'Rag' carnivals, religious activity, as well as the impact and style of the residences, were also investigated. Finally, questions were posed about the values encouraged by the university administration. This aspect, and institutional relationships with the Government, formed the focus of interviews with former staff members.

Opinions about university education published in newspapers and journals form an important source for information about both policy making and the character and experience of university education. Three major news-cutting collections have been consulted: those of the SAIRR, the FAK and the NP's Information Service. Between these three collections, the major newspapers in both Afrikaans and English for the period under review have been comprehensively surveyed. In addition, several smaller press cutting collections have been surveyed in other archives, including in the government departments of Education and Bantu Education, the Fort Hare and Kerr papers at the Cory Library, the Matthews papers at Unisa, Malherbe's papers at the Killie Campbell Library and the papers of HF Verwoerd, Jan de Klerk, Cathy Taylor and Japie Basson at the Institute for Contemporary History. Basson's papers were a particularly rich source as they included a wide range of smaller, specialist papers. Between these collections, opinion about university education in the newspapers and journals listed in the 'Sources and Bibliography' have been covered.

## 1.3 Themes and chapter structure

This thesis analyses the relationship between apartheid and university education from 1948 to 1970. The design and implementation of Government university policy provide the core narrative of this thesis and this analysis is arranged chronologically. Key themes which are carried throughout the study include

- changes in the 'model' or philosophy of university education which informed governance of the university sector,
- the significance of debates over education for the elaboration and implementation of apartheid,
- the relationship between the policy making process, the implementation of the policy and educational outcomes, and
- changes in the role and character of university education, with particular reference to the differentiation of educational roles and the implications for class formation.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the entire university education system after World War II and into the in early 1950s. The aim is to discern the philosophical patterns of university education and the educational roles performed by South African universities and university colleges before the system was overhauled by the Nationalist Government. To this end, Department of Education assumptions about the nature and role of university education are examined closely. The governance, financing and academic control of the ten universities are surveyed, as well as who studied, who taught and what was taught, and what kinds of graduates were produced. The gender content of university education is also examined. Student experiences of pre-apartheid university education at different institutions are assessed, concentrating on student organisations and they issues they tackled. The themes of this chapter are echoed in Chapter 7, which examines similar themes in the late 1960s.

Chapter 3 examines the discordant Nationalist attitudes to apartheid at universities until late 1954. While most Nationalists agreed that black students should be

excluded from white universities, there was little agreement on how to develop a distinctively apartheid character in university education. Analysing these conflicts in policy making reveals both the origins of some of the difficulties in implementing the policy and the ideological differences and turmoil inside the supposedly monolithic NP. These conflicts are traced through attitudes expressed in Parliament when the NP was in opposition, the Sauer Report, the 1948 report on Christian National Education and the Eiselen Commission on Native Education. The cautious and pragmatic report of the Holloway Commission on the financial implications of providing separate university education for different population groups is examined in detail as it revealed that the Department of Education, Arts and Science was imposing little leadership in these matters, which eventually led to discord within the cabinet and in public.

Chapter 4 analyses how the policy encoded in the Extension of University Education Act and the Fort Hare Transfer Act, both passed in 1959, emerged from discordant Nationalist views of the early 1950s. Between 1955 and 1959, the NAD increasingly took the initiative in policy formulation, moving control over university policy away from the Department of Education, Arts and Science. A key theme of this chapter is the way in which policy was framed both in response to external influences, such as conditions on the campuses and national political conflict, and to deal with unease among Nationalists about the policy. While NAD leadership was more decisive, its authoritarianism caused doubts among some intellectuals in the Afrikaans universities and churches and in the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Sabra). In the context of these concerns, the plan to remove the Medical School from Natal University was abandoned and the 1957 Separate University Education Bill was referred to a Commission of Enquiry. The chapter examines the ensuing public criticism of NAD by loyal Nationalists. It also examines the development of a liberal response which concentrated on the issue of university autonomy by the universities affected by the proposed legislation, students and the SAIRR. The associated passage through Parliament of the Fort Hare Transfer Act elicited more attention to what was happening to university education for Africans. A second theme of this chapter is the question of the differentiation of educational roles for different sections of the university education

sector. The division of the university education system can be traced to decisions taken at this time, and these are examined in detail.

Chapter 5 examines the conflicts and compromises of the implementation of the 1959 Acts. Two aspects are considered: first, the steps taken to establish the new black colleges, and to assume control of Fort Hare, and second, the responses of Fort Hare, Rhodes and the universities of Cape Town, Natal and the Witwatersrand to the implementation of the 1959 Acts. It explores whether institutional resistance was considered to back the opposition expressed in the late 1950s, and the struggles which ensued over the interpretation of the new system. Various non-institutional initiatives to allow students to avoid enrolling in the new black institutions are also surveyed.

With the racist impulse to segregate university education provided for the in the 1959 Acts, in the 1960s Government attention and resources shifted to satisfying the demands of Afrikaner self-interest. Chapter 6 examines the establishment of new white, mainly Afrikaans universities, namely the University of Port Elizabeth in 1964 and the Rand Afrikaans University in 1966, on the initiative of the Broederbond. The establishment of the University of Port Elizabeth as an independent, dual-medium university undercut the claims of Rhodes University to establish a second campus in the eastern Cape Province, and ensured that a more conservative institution was established. The establishment of the Rand Afrikaans University meant that Afrikaans students had a third institution in the Transvaal from which to choose, and diluted the impact of the 'liberal' political culture of the University of the Witwatersrand. The processes and reasoning leading to the establishment of the new universities illuminates the Nationalist ideological and political agenda and their goals for Afrikaans economic interests. The establishment of these universities brought further differentiation to the university education system, as a result of NP and Broederbond assumptions about the nature and role of university education.

Finally, Chapter 7 examines the differentiated character of the entire university education sector in the 1960s, echoing the themes of Chapter 2. It examines the

financing of university education, the expansion of student numbers and the change in the character of the student population with relation to schooling, gender and population groups, changes in the experience and character of the academic staff and the phenomenal growth of Unisa. Differentiation in the roles of the university and university college sectors are explored through the breadth and depth of the curricula, the different educational outcomes and the intellectual cultures at different categories of institutions. The chapter then analyses the political cultures of three groups of universities, namely, Afrikaans-language universities, the state-controlled black university colleges and the English-language universities, which were designated white, through Government intervention to control the universities, and the response of the university administrators, students and staff. Government influence and control took different forms at each of these categories of universities, partly because of its 'particularist' conceptions of university education.

Chapter 7 begins to assess the contradictory effects of the Government's university education policies. For example, it shows that even during the 1960s, Government attempts to control student political activity generally stimulated rather than subdued opposition. However, student activism at this time was characterised by its focus on national political issues, rather than on the political dynamics of the campuses themselves, and the politics of what was taught and how it was taught was seldom addressed by students in this era. Segregation was almost completely successfully imposed, and the divide between the experiences of students from different population groups, already vastly different because of pre-university experiences, led black students to reject Nusas and confirmed the animosity between Afrikaans and English student organisation.

Chapter 8 draws together the major findings of the thesis. It evaluates the phrase 'university apartheid', which is popularly used but has no precise meaning. It concludes with an attempt to define the distinctive features of university education during the apartheid years.

## Chapter 2

## University education before apartheid reorganisation

When the National Party (NP) came to power in 1948 it inherited a system of university education that largely reflected the power relationships, prejudices and contradictions of South African society. Most students were white (90 per cent) and male (79 per cent). Black students were unable to study for a wide range of courses, and could enrol at very few institutions. A far higher proportion of black students than white students relied on part time and correspondence study to pursue their university education, and fewer black students proceeded to post graduate study.[1]

The aim of this chapter is to examine the organisation and character of South African university education before it was comprehensively overhauled to reflect and serve apartheid. As the NP election victory in 1948 did not introduce an immediate and radical change in government university policy, the analysis presented here of 'university education before apartheid reorganisation' covers a period which extends to the mid 1950s. In the first years of the NP Government, Parliament passed a series of Acts which altered the structure of university education, culminating in 1951 with the reorganisation of the University of South Africa (Unisa), but this was an initiative of the Smuts Government and had been recommended by the commission, chaired by Edgar Brookes, which reported in 1947.[2]

In the early 1950s the NP Government passed no legislation to enforce segregation in university education, but it extended the application of a range of existing measures to the universities, which infringed on their autonomy to determine who would be taught. In August 1949 the NP Government refused to renew the permit of Eduardo Mondlane, a Mozambican then studying Social Work at Wits.[3] In

1. See tables 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8 and 2.11 below.
2. Brookes, EH (1947) *Report of the Commission on the University of South Africa*, UG 44-1947, Pretoria.
3. Mondlane, who later led Frelimo, said that this was a radicalising experience. He was not allowed to complete the academic year, but Wits arranged for him to write his exams in Lourenco Marques. See *Continued ...*

November 1950 a ban on black students from outside the Union was announced, but it was suspended for three years in the face of opposition. The NP Government sometimes refused permits to Indian students who wanted to leave Natal for the Transvaal and the Cape Province, where they could be admitted to the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of Cape Town (UCT)[4] and in 1951 Nusas reported that the NP Government also refused passports to black students wishing to study abroad.[5] Government scholarships for African medical students were phased out from 1948.[6] Schooling for Africans was reorganised by the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which from 1954 brought African education under a central state department rather than missionary and provincial control, but the effects of this development had not yet worked their way through the education system to higher education. Apartheid also affected the members of the university in their daily lives. As citizens, students and staff faced new restrictions. These included limits on where they could live and work (the Group Areas Act of 1950) and with whom they could associate politically (the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950) and personally (the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950). The first entirely new initiative of the NP with regard to higher education came in 1953, with the introduction of the Holloway formula for university financing.

This chapter examines the relationship which had evolved by the early 1950s between the universities and the Department of Education,[7] which was then the only government department responsible for university education. First, the chapter briefly describes the establishment of the ten institutions that offered university education in the 1950s. Second, the role of the government is examined through its legal, administrative and statutory powers over the development and nature of

---

Murray, BK (1997) Murray, BK (1997) *Wits: The 'Open' Years, a history of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1939-1959*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, p114; and Tobias, PV (1978) 'A little-known chapter in the life of Eduardo Mondlane', in *Geneva-Africa*, Vol. 16, No 1.

4. Tobias, PV (1993) student leader, University of the Witwatersrand, late 1940s and early 1950s, interviewed in Johannesburg, 17 January 1993. According to Murray, EA Lockhat was refused a permit in 1950 and S Naidoo in 1951. (Murray, 1997, *op cit.*)

5. *Cape Times*, 11 July 1951.

6. Murray (1997) *op cit.*

7. The Department of Education became the Department of Education, Arts and Science in 1950, but for brevity the former name is used throughout.

university education. This legal framework is viewed in the context of the Smuts Government's policies and plans and provides the basis for an examination of the philosophy of university education informing the governance of the university sector before apartheid. Third, although there was an even-handed, undifferentiated system of governance by a single government department, the universities had circumscribed autonomy over many aspects of their functioning, and within institutions variations in administrative policy and political culture emerged. There was considerable diversity in the university sector, with complex political consequences.

## 2.1 The origins of South Africa's university education system

University education in South Africa originated at the South African College (SAC), which opened in 1829 in Cape Town. The SAC originally concentrated on secondary schooling, but students were also prepared for the exams of the University of London, which had been examining external students since being granted a Royal Charter in 1836. In 1873 an examining university, the University of the Cape of Good Hope, was created, incorporating the SAC and the other colleges which offered university level courses.

In terms of the Act of Union in 1910, responsibility for higher education was given to the Union Government and university education was subsequently reorganised by a series of Acts passed by Parliament in 1916. The SAC and Victoria College were granted autonomy as the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch respectively (see below). The University of the Cape of Good Hope became Unisa. Six colleges, namely Grey University College in Bloemfontein, the Huguenot University College in Wellington, the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg, Rhodes University College in Grahamstown, the Transvaal University College in Pretoria and the South African School of Mines and Technology were incorporated as constituent members of Unisa. From this time Unisa also enrolled external students. Another university college, the Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education, joined Unisa in 1921. From 1922 the university college in Johannesburg became the University of

the Witwatersrand, and ceased to be a member of Unisa, followed in 1930 by the Transvaal University College, which became the University of Pretoria.[8]

From these early years certain features of South African university education were established which persist, despite enormous political change in the broader context and often direct struggles over these features, in the 1990s. The mixture of state control and university autonomy, state and private finance and even of the provision of both distance and attendance facilities are notable among these features. Other characteristics present at this time, such as the largely uncritical acceptance of a 'universal' and secular ideal of university education soon became the subject of political struggles by Afrikaner Nationalists over language policy and the Conscience Clause.

The next phase in university development followed the 1947 report of the Brookes Commission on Unisa.[9] The university colleges had been part of Unisa on a federal basis. Unisa's Senate had been composed of members of the constituent colleges to pool skills and draw the university colleges into the academic process to ensure that standards were comparable across the entire university system. In 1948 Natal University was granted academic independence, followed by the University of the Orange Free State and Rhodes University in 1949, and Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education in 1950.[10] The Huguenot University College, which was too small to be viable, stopped university teaching at the end of 1950.

From its inception the South African Native College, commonly known from its earliest days as Fort Hare, developed on a different track. It had started teaching secondary school students and some degree-level courses in 1916, too late to be part of Unisa, and had not yet produced its first graduate when the 1923 Education Act (see below) was passed. Fort Hare was never a constituent college of Unisa, but it was recognised as an institution for higher education by this Act. Its students

8. University of South Africa (1963) *Calendar*, pp13-14, Unisa, Pretoria; Dreijmanis, J (1988) *The role of the South African government in tertiary education*, p18, SAIRR, Johannesburg.
9. Brookes (1947) *op cit.*.
10. University of Natal (1965) *Calendar*, p8, University of Natal, Durban.

were registered as external students of Unisa and were awarded Unisa degrees when they graduated and five members of Fort Hare's staff served on Unisa decision making bodies such as the Senate and faculty boards. Professors and lecturers at Fort Hare were able to act as internal examiners and Fort Hare was recognised as an approved institution for training for the University Education Diploma.[11] These elaborate arrangements came about to preclude the possibility of black professors from Fort Hare claiming membership of the Unisa Senate: Brookes reported that by a 'gentleman's agreement' with the Principal, Alexander Kerr, Fort Hare never sent black representatives to Unisa meetings. This racism was accepted by both Kerr and Brookes. As Brookes wrote in his 1947 report on Unisa:

> The University has thus made a real effort to meet the difficulties of Fort Hare in so far as it could do so without raising the question of non-European representation on the University Senate. Dr Kerr in his evidence to your commission stressed the sense of gratitude which Fort Hare felt towards the University for its help and co-operation during these formative years.[12]

The Brookes Commission's recommendations that Fort Hare should be recognised as a university college and affiliated to the newly independent Rhodes University, its nearest neighbour, were accepted by the new NP Government and effected in 1949. This meant that courses taught at Fort Hare and their examination, as well as research at Fort Hare, were defined in consultation with Rhodes University. Fort Hare graduates were awarded Rhodes University degrees, and in all academic matters the Rhodes Senate had final authority over the Fort Hare Senate.[13]

Unisa's role was reconceptualised in the late 1940s. Until then Unisa had primarily been an examining and degree-awarding body for the colleges. In 1945, on the initiative of the Unisa Council and Senate, it began to consider expanding its role in

---

11. Kerr, A (1948) *Fort Hare, 1915-1948*, Lovedale Press, Alice.
12. Brookes (1947) *op cit.*, p4.
13. Brookes (1947) *op cit.*, p5. While the NP Government allowed this scheme to be enacted in terms of the 1949 legislation which gave Rhodes its independence from Unisa, there was an undertone of doubt in a comment made during the Parliamentary debate by the Minister of Education, Dr AJ Stre s, to the effect that he could 'only hope that [Rhodes] will be successful in this experimental period'. (Union of South Africa (1949) *House of Assembly Debates*, Col 1796, 25 February, Cape Town (hereafter HAD).

terms of its external students. An investigation in 1945 by Professor AJH van der Walt, the Dean of Unisa's Faculty of Arts and Philosophy who was then also Professor of History at Potchefstroom University College, found that the numbers of external students were large and growing, counting for over one-fifth of South Africa's students in 1944. He argued that it was undesirable and failing their responsibility to their students to leave their tuition to private commercial colleges, which could be unscrupulous and of poor quality. Despite Hofmeyr's concerns that developing external studies at Unisa would divert money and students from attendance universities and would be unfair on the private sector, by Act 18 of 1946 statutory recognition was given to a Division of External Studies at Unisa to examine and provide tuition and advice to external students.[14]

The decision of 1946, recently examined by Burridge Spies, launched a hugely significant innovation in South African university education. Over the next fifty years Unisa awarded more than one hundred thousand degrees and diplomas and by the mid-1990s ranked among the world's ten largest universities.[15] The nature of the university education offered through distance learning at Unisa during the apartheid years requires thorough investigation.

Thus by 1951 there were ten institutions offering university-level tuition, nine of them independent universities created by an Act of Parliament: Fort Hare, as a university college, was the only exception. Unisa lost its function as the federal centre for university colleges, but continued to enrol external students and increasingly operated as a correspondence university.

14. For a full account of these developments see Spies, SB (1997) '1946 and all that: the emergence of the University of South Africa as a teaching university' in *Kleio*, XXIX, Department of History, University of South Africa.
15. See Sir John Daniel, Vice-Chancellor of the Open University, *The Guardian Higher Education*, 7 April 1998.

## 2.2 Division of responsibility in university governance

At Union, education at universities and university colleges in South Africa became the responsibility of the central government.[16] The nature and extent of this responsibility has been defined by two types of Acts passed by Parliament: Acts establishing individual universities,[17] and general Acts dealing with all university education.

The Higher Education Act of 1923 (Act 30 of 1923) defined the relationship between the government and institutions of higher education. The Act encodes a relationship in which the institutions have some discretion over their affairs, within a framework defined by the government. This relationship, which was often politicised and contested but generally respected by United Party (UP) Smuts Government, has been described as one of 'relative autonomy'. The Act provided for Councils and Boards of Study (Senates) at the universities. Gerrit Viljoen, first Rector of the Rand Afrikaans University and president of the Afrikaner Broederbond, observes that this arrangement was 'modelled on the British pattern' and points out that most Afrikaans institutions used this model

> even where they were founded and maintained by leaders from the Afrikaans community and with the specific purpose of providing an educational haven acceptable to their own people.[18]

The Act also regulated the financial affairs of the institutions, prohibited institutions from imposing tests of religious belief without ministerial consent and gave Councils circumscribed power to refuse admittance to students and to expel, although the implications of this in application are unclear. It also empowered the Minister of Education to pass regulations and to recognise courses of instruction.[19]

---

16. Dreijmanis, *op cit.*, p28.
17. These are: Acts 12, 13 and 14 of 1916 (University of South Africa, University of Stellenbosch and University of Cape Town); Act 15 of 1921 (University of the Witwatersrand); Act 25 of 1921 (Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education); Act 13 of 1930 (Pretoria University); Act 4 of 1948 (University of Natal); Act 15 of 1949 (Rhodes University); Act 21 of 1949 (University of the Orange Free State); Act 30 of 1951 (University of South Africa).
18. The 'Dutch continental model' was used in the Transvaal Republic's Dutch-medium gymnasium, but the plans for university development were disrupted by the Anglo-Boer War. See Viljoen, GVN (1977) 'The Afrikaans universities and particularism' in Van der Merwe, HW and Welsh, D, eds.) *The future of the university in Southern Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town.
19. Higher Education Act, Act 30 of 1923.

Although minor changes were made to this Act over the years, the principles of the legal relationship, defining accountability and autonomy, did not change until after the NP took office. The teaching staff was answerable to the Council, which was given administrative autonomy, subject to the final authority of the Minister.

This legal framework established the Councils at the interface between the government and the universities. The Act defined the powers and responsibilities of the university Councils as the legal body corporate of the institutions. Councils were to consist of between ten and 30 members. Most were 'lay' members, including at least four appointees of the Minister, but the Councils also included the Principal and at least two Senate representatives to speak for the academic staff. The remainder were to be appointed in terms of a scheme approved by the Minister laid down for each university in its establishing Act. The 1923 Act also defined the role and membership of the Senates: Senates were given responsibility for the regulation of instruction and the discipline of students. However, the composition of the Senate was determined by the Council, as the Act provided for Council to invite members of the teaching staff to form the Senate.

The composition of the Council at each institution was slightly different. Each Council had members representing the central government, as well as local or regional representatives, representatives of community organisations, or local educational institutions, as well as past students or donors. The membership of the Councils in the late 1940s is given below:

| Table 2.1: Membership of University Councils, 1948[20] | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inst. | Government nominees[21] | Representing teaching staff[22] | Nominated by local authorities | Donors and/or convocation | Other interests | Total |
| UCT | 4 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 1 Diocesan College | 20 |
| Fort Hare | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 churches; 1 'native schools'; 3 other universities | 20 |
| Natal | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 Natal Law Society; 6 local schools; 1 Natal Technikon | 24 |
| OFS | 11 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | 16 |
| Potch. | 4 | 1 | - | 6 | 2 Gereformeerde Kerk | 13 |
| Pretoria | 8 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 churches | 23 |
| Rhodes | 4 | 2 | 7 | 12 | 5 local schools; 1 National Council for Leather Industries | 31 |
| Stell. | 5 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 1 divisional council | 20 |
| Wits | 8 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 Council of Education, Wits | 23 |

Two features are consistent in each of the university Councils: first, the representatives of the staff of the institution were always outnumbered or equalled by government representatives; and second, with the exception of the University College of the Orange Free State, government-nominated members were in the minority. Once in office, the members of the Councils were powerfully placed to perpetuate the dominant trends of the Council by playing off different nominating groups and manipulating the membership of the Council. In at least two cases,

20. University of Cape Town (1948) *Calendar*, University of Cape Town, Cape Town; South African Native College (1945) *Calendar*, Lovedale Press, Alice; University College of Natal (1948) *Calendar*, University College of Natal, Durban; University College of the Orange Free State (1948) *Jaarboek*, University College of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein; Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education (1948) *Jaarboek*, Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom; University of Pretoria (1948) *Jaarboek*, University of Pretoria, Pretoria; Rhodes University College (1948) *Calendar*, Rhodes University College, Grahamstown; University of Stellenbosch (1948) *Jaarboek*, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch; University of the Witwatersrand (1948) *Calendar*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. The figures for Fort Hare are from 1945.
21. Government nominees were appointed for periods of about five years, and their terms of office usually overlapped. At the University College of the Orange Free State, for example, two of the government nominees retired annually on July 1 (University College of the Orange Free State, *op cit.*).
22. Including the Principal.

Rhodes University College and Wits, the government simply approved lists prepared by the Council.[23]

The presence of government appointees on each university Council was clearly not the only way in which the government ensured the co-operation of the universities. The universities were dependent on the government for a significant proportion of their funds and interaction over finance was fundamental to the relationship between the universities and the Department of Education. The table below gives the contribution of the Smuts Government, in real terms and relative to student fees and other university funds. It shows that in 1946 every institution was dependent on government funds to cover at least one third of gross costs. For this reason the universities and university colleges are sometimes referred to as 'state-aided' institutions.

Table 2.2: Sources of revenue, 1946, and tuition costs per student[24]

| Institution | Fees as % of gross cost | Other revenue as % of gross cost | Govt. grant as % of gross cost | Total govt. grant (£s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cape Town | 42 | 17 | 42 | 196 482 |
| Fort Hare | 24 | 23 | 53 | 17 408 |
| Huguenot | 26 | 8 | 67 | 10 235 |
| Natal | 39 | 27 | 35 | 54 551 |
| OFS | 42 | 13 | 45 | 24 832 |
| Potchefstroom | 37 | 14 | 49 | 22 434 |
| Pretoria | 50 | 6 | 44 | 105 751 |
| Rhodes[25] | 36 | 5 | 60 | 95 946 |
| Stellenbosch | 41 | 11 | 48 | 100 714 |
| Wits | 47 | 19 | 35 | 238 195 |

The disparity in contribution of government funding to costs is striking, ranging from 35 per cent at Wits and the University College of Natal, to 67 per cent at the doomed Huguenot College. The causes of this disparity are complex; in general, smaller and newer institutions were less able to supplement the government grant from other sources than the older and larger institutions.

23. See Murray, BK (1982) *Wits: The early years*, p76, Wits University Press, Johannesburg; and Currey, RF (1970) *Rhodes University 1904-1970: A chronicle*, p19, Rustica Press, Wynberg, Cape.
24. Union Education Department (1948) *Annual Report of the Union Education Department for the calendar years 1946-7*, p65, UG No 41-1948, Pretoria (hereafter UED 1946-7).
25. The disparity between tuition costs and gross costs per student can perhaps be ascribed to the ambitious building programme undertaken during the war (see Currey, *op cit.*)

The discrepancies in government funding do not necessarily reflect the political priorities of the Smuts Government, as the assessment of the universities' needs and the distribution of funds was disorganised. The 1923 Act required each Council to provide audited statements to the Department of Education at a time specified by the Minister.[26] However, before 1948, different methods of accounting and reporting were used by each institution, which made comparison and planning difficult.[27]

During the economic recession of the early 1930s the Hertzog Government altered the basis of university financing, and in so doing, gained greater control over the internal management of the universities. In 1931 and 1932 the Minister of Education, then DF Malan, had slashed government grants, for example, Wits received 25 per cent less in 1932 than in 1931. Malan also recommended, through the Higher Education Control Bill, that the Minister of Education should have the power to veto university appointments as a way of curbing expenditure. While this Bill was withdrawn, the Higher Education Financial Provisions Act of 1931 instead required universities to obtain ministerial approval for all new developments and for budget estimates. Malan used this power to impose unpopular salary cuts at Wits.[28]

There was a lack of system to funding under the Smuts Government, and dissatisfaction forced frequent revisions of the government's method of subsidising the universities. Various methods had been tried, including models based on either income or expenditure, or pegged government grants distributed between the universities at the discretion of the Minister. In 1945, after the report of a commission headed by Dr PJ du Toit, the Smuts Government adopted a new subsidy system, a modification of Du Toit's recommendations, based on fees and student enrolment. As student numbers and fee income rose, the subsidy from the government rose as well. By 1947 this new subsidy system was already inadequate. The University College of Natal, for example, had already accumulated a deficit of

---

26. Act 30 of 1923.
27. Holloway, JE (1951) *University finances, preliminary report*, p218, Union of South Africa, Pretoria.
28. Murray, BK (1982) *Wits: The Early Years*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, pp210-214.

£37 thousand (R74 thousand), while another institution reportedly showed a small surplus.

According to JE Holloway, who was appointed by the NP during its first term in office to review and revise university funding, all these systems of subsidy failed because they were 'too simplified and too inelastic'.[29] As a result, as Holloway comments,

> [A]s all complained endlessly of their financial plight, the formula for the payment of subsidies at this time fell into discredit.[30]

The University Advisory Committee (UAC) worked out an alternative formula to meet the crisis.[31] The UAC had been established on the recommendation of Du Toit in 1945 and consisted of a representative of the Committee of University Principals, two deputy secretaries from the Department of Education and various others, mostly retired senior academics or university administrators, appointed by the Government for their expert knowledge of the university system. This was accepted by the Minister of Education in July 1948, but rejected by the Treasury. For three years, from 1949 to 1951, spending was pegged at £1.1 million (R2.2 million), pending the report of the Holloway Commission on university finances.[32]

The annual subsidy was the main control exerted by the government on the universities. Government financial commitments were also limited through the exercise of the government's statutory rights over the establishment and development of universities. In terms of the 1923 Act, Councils were not permitted to establish new degrees, diplomas, or faculties without the approval of the Minister. The Minister also had the power to set up or close institutions of higher education. This clause of the Act protected the government against unmanageable expenditure, but also curbed the freedom of the universities to decide what would be taught. In the 1940s the Smuts Government used this power to sanction the

---

29. *Ibid.*, p26.
30. *Ibid.*, p13.
31. The University Advisory Committee included Alexander Kerr, to 'represent the interests of black stude . . Kerr resigned in the mid-1950s and stopped attending meetings when the Government made its plans for Fort Hare clear. (UOD 53/47 Volumes 1363 and 1364).
32. Brookes, E (1966) *A history of the University of Natal*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, *op. cit.*

establishment of a faculty of Medicine at the University of Pretoria and a faculty of Engineering at the University of Stellenbosch.[33] This was a major financial commitment to the development of Afrikaans-medium universities, and dilutes the impression, which could be drawn from Table 2.2, that the Government favoured English-medium universities.

### 2.2.1 Black admissions, segregation and contests over university autonomy

The position of black students raised difficulties for the Smuts Government, particularly the responsible minister, JH Hofmeyr, and affected several aspects of the relationship between government and the universities. Hofmeyr wore several hats: he was Smuts's deputy, as well as Minister of Education and of Finance. He was also the Wits Chancellor, where he had launched his career as the University's first Principal.

Before the war, very few black students enrolled at the universities. At UCT in 1937, for example, there were only 40 black students, all Coloured and Indian, of whom ten were enrolled in the pre-clinical years of medicine.[34] At Wits, the admission of black students was first formally endorsed by Council in 1934 and by 1939 there were still only 'a few dozen' black students at Wits, including four Indians at the Medical School.[35] These few black students were socially isolated. At UCT the attitude was that black students 'should be neither seen nor heard outside classes' and a 1937 student debate proposing that 'non-Europeans should be admitted unconditionally to this university' was defeated.[36] At Wits the Principal believed in promoting black advancement while maintaining a 'white ascendancy' and argued that Wits should 'not develop social contacts between the white and non-European races'.[37]

---

33. HAD (1946) 3 May, Col 6744. A faculty of Agriculture was established at the University of Natal in 1948.
34. Phillips, H (1993) *The University of Cape Town 1918-1948: The formative years*, UCT Press, Cape Town, p192.
35. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p28.
36. Phillips, *op cit.*, p193.
37. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p29.

In the late 1930s several black medical students were enrolled for their initial training in South Africa at Wits and UCT, the country's two Medical Schools,[38] and planned to proceed abroad for clinical training, but war disrupted this arrangement. In 1939 Dinshaw Tavaria, an Indian medical student at Wits, asked Wits to allow him to continue to the clinical years of study, but the Council did not pursue this. So, in 1940, Tavaria asked the Johannesburg Hospital Board for permission to proceed to clinical training at their facilities, and they agreed to let him do this at the Non-European Hospital. The Wits Faculty of Medicine subsequently decided to admit black students to clinical training. This development came in the wake of the 1939 report of the Botha Committee, which highlighted a crippling shortage of doctors to care for the black population. In this context, the Government encouraged Wits and UCT to accommodate black students in the clinical years. A key figure was Douglas Smit, then Secretary for Native Affairs, who further boosted black student numbers with a scheme of bursaries and a residence for African medical students at Wits.[39] Smit was, according to Murray, 'one of those remarkable civil servants who exercised a major influence on the making of public policy'.[40] By 1945 there were 82 black medical students at Wits, compared to nine in 1940.[41] The presence of black students at 'white' universities became a focus of Nationalist opposition to Hofmeyr's policies regarding the universities (see Chapter 3).

It was in this context of growing black student numbers at Wits and UCT that Hofmeyr presented a key policy speech to Parliament in 1945, in which he linked the issues of segregation and university autonomy. For the purposes of comparison with Nationalist governance, this speech clearly encapsulates the Smuts Government's policies. Hofmeyr made two main points. First, while he opposed social integration at the universities, he would not legislate to impose segregation on the universities. Second, he was willing to consider reasonable proposals for the

38. A third Medical School opened at Pretoria in 1943.
39. For a full account of these developments at Wits, see Murray, BK (1990) 'Academic 'non-segregation and social segregation': Wits as an 'open' university, 1939-1959', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 16, No 4; and Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p31.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Murray, BK (1987) 'Wits as an open university, 1922-1959', unpublished paper presented to History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand.

establishment of new black institutions.[42] Superficially it would appear that Nationalist policy differed primarily in that they passed legislation to impose segregation. However, it should be noted that there was a gap between Hofmeyr's stated policy and the conditions that he tolerated. For this reason, he was seldom cornered into making explicit statements about university policy, and it could be that he deliberately allowed the universities to depart from official policy, citing 'pragmatism' as his defence, to bring about change without confronting public opinion himself.

Hofmeyr's policies were based on the principles of white trusteeship. He believed that the government had a special responsibility to provide university education for white students because he thought they would in turn be responsible for the entire population of the country. As he said in Parliament in 1946:

> We have institutions for a European population of two million, but those institutions have to train people to serve a population of ten million ... we have to train people there, especially Europeans ... to serve the whole population of ten million ... and for that reason it is necessary ... that a larger percentage of the European population should go to the universities.[43]

With this emphasis on white students, Hofmeyr's approach to black university education tended to be *ad hoc* rather than systematic. He thought Fort Hare was unsuitable for extensive development, partly because the rural location of the university college meant that there were insufficient local clinical facilities for medical training. He was also concerned about the question of Indian students at the college: Fort Hare had applied a quota to the number of Indian students registered in order to maintain the 'Christian and native' character of the college.[44]

Beside Fort Hare, if in theory Hofmeyr was willing to consider plans to establish other new segregated institutions for black students, in practice he kept an eye on

42. HAD (1945) 17 April, Col 5533.
43. HAD ,1946) 3 May, Col 6746.
44. HAD (1945) 17 April, Col 5494.

'the practical difficulties in connection with the application of this principle'.[45] The 'practical difficulties' that he saw were the size of the country, its sparse population and uneven distribution of population groups. These factors, he said, made it difficult to provide separate facilities for four population groups.

Nevertheless, Hofmeyr was prepared to consider establishing 'a medical school for non-Europeans in general, or for natives'.[46] It is noteworthy that one of the reasons for setting up a separate medical school for black students was that under the system as it then existed, black students 'would always take the places of European students at the Wits medical school'.[47] In 1947, Hofmeyr announced that in principle the government approved the establishment of a medical school for black students in Durban, as part of the University College of Natal. According to Edgar Brookes, in his history of the University of Natal, Hofmeyr then procrastinated, still favouring Johannesburg as a site. The Natal backers appealed over Hofmeyr's head to Smuts, who gave his full endorsement, but the UP lost the election before any practical steps were taken. This commitment, however, stands as Hofmeyr's main legacy in the provision of separate university facilities for black students, as a faculty of Medicine, for black students, was established at the University of Natal in 1951.[48]

But if Hofmeyr was generally reluctant to establish separate institutions for black students, he also felt that the government had an obligation to provide the opportunity for black students to obtain a university education. This left him with no alternative but to allow black students to enrol at 'white' universities.

Hofmeyr reminded the universities that by law they were required to admit suitably qualified black applicants: no university could refuse admission to students because they were of a certain population group. Admission could be refused on other

45. *Ibid.*, Col 5493.
46. *Ibid.*, Col 5533.
47. *Ibid.*, Col 5497.
48. Brookes (1966) *op cit.* Brookes comments that 'the new government of Dr Malan was more prompt and more generous than its predecessor had been, but coupled its financial aid with the condition that the principles of apartheid should be applied', (p83).

grounds, in good faith, but refusing admission on the grounds of population group was illegal, and Hofmeyr had no plans to change this:

> The universities are autonomous institutions with freedom as far as their domestic affairs are concerned, as long as they do not contravene the law, and the universities have no power under the laws, laws which were all passed before my time, to refuse admission to any student on the ground of his race or colour.[49]

He was unwilling to grant the universities more power over who they admitted, as this ran the risk of empowering the universities to defy segregation rather than to enforce it.

> If therefore we want to apply [compulsory segregation], we shall have to amend the law ... apparently not merely in order to give the universities the power, but to prohibit them.[50]

The presence of black students at white universities was unpopular with the white electorate. Hofmeyr tried to appease this opinion by denouncing 'social', as opposed to 'academic', integration at the universities:

> I am strongly in favour of the dividing line being maintained on the sports ground and in ordinary social activities.[51]

Caught between the necessity of admitting black students to white universities, and white public opinion, Hofmeyr compromised:

> We have no other alternative than to proceed with the present system, to which I want to add that we should insist on the internal policy of the university being such as to have as much separation as possible in social activities.[52]

Hofmeyr was therefore not prepared to use his statutory power to pass regulations to intervene in the way the universities organised their affairs, and stressed that the matter should be left to the universities to regulate.

---

49. HAD (1945) 17 April, Col 5495.
50. *Ibid.*
51. HAD (1946) 3 May, Col 6744.
52. *Ibid.*, Col 6745.

> I was not prepared to initiate legislation to force the issue of separatism on the universities as long as we are not able to provide proper facilities for the non-Europeans.[53]

The issue of segregation and black students at 'white' universities was partly contained by the very low numbers of black matriculants eligible to enter university. Under the Smuts Government, the commitment to provide schooling for black scholars, especially for Africans, was limited. As a result, African school enrolments were very low. In 1948 most African pupils (50.7 per cent) were concentrated in the first two classes of primary schooling, compared to only 21.3 per cent of white pupils. As a result, in 1948 there were only 528 Africans in the most senior year of schooling, compared to 10 883 whites.[54] The school educational policies of the Smuts Government directly affected the politics of university education. Universities are dependent on the primary and secondary tiers of education to produce students ready for degree level studies.[55]

Table 2.3: Pupils obtaining matriculation exemption and first year enrolments at university, analysed by population group, 1946-1956[56]

| | 1946 | 1951 | 1956 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Africans obtaining matriculation exemption | 216[57] | 176 | 289 |
| Africans in first year at university | n/a | n/a | 316[58] |
| Coloureds obtaining matriculation exemption | n/a | 67[59] | 156 |
| Coloureds in first year at university | n/a | n/a | 142[60] |
| Indians obtaining matriculation exemption | n/a | 103 | 275 |
| Indians in first year at university | n/a | n/a | 245[61] |
| Whites obtaining matriculation exemption | 6 770 | 6 217 | 8 445 |
| Whites in first year at university | 4 536[62] | 5 212[63] | 6 913 |

53. HAD (1945) 17 April, Col 5533.
54. Bureau of Statistics, Republic of South Africa (1964) *Statistical Year Book 1964*, pE-11 and pE-16, Bureau of Statistics, Pretoria.
55. Enrolments at universities reflect the inequality of opportunity in the schools, where discrimination is compounded as students reach the higher levels of education. In 1955 only two per cent of African students enrolled in first year university courses had first class matriculation, compared to 22 per cent of white students. (My calculations, based on Union of South Africa, 1957, *Department of Education, Arts and Science: Annual report for the calendar year 1956*, pp22-40, Pretoria: hereafter EAS 1957).
56. Dreijmanis, *op cit.*, pp109-112.
57. In 1949, first data available.
58. At Fort Hare only.
59. In 1953, first data available.
60. At Unisa and white universities only.
61. Ditto.
62. At attendance universities only.
63. Ditto.

The Smuts Government thus generally allowed the university councils to exercise autonomy over their own affairs, including over the question of whether or not to admit black students. Hofmeyr's flexible use of the concept of university autonomy allowed black students to enrol at the 'open' universities, without the government needing to impose this policy on all universities or even to sanction the admissions explicitly on many occasions. This approach was made possible by the very low numbers of black matriculants. The responses of the ten institutions to the autonomy afforded by the Smuts Government differed widely and resulted in quite different political and administrative cultures.

## 2.3 Character of the student population and patterns of enrolment

By the early 1950s there were three patterns of enrolment at the universities, based on the admission of students from the four population groups. The policies adopted by each university in this regard, more than any other factor, both reflected and sustained the political culture of each institution.

Tables 2.4 to 2.9 examine the character of the student population through statistics. The first uses figures compiled by the National Union of South African Students (Nusas) in 1952, while the latter tables use government figures from 1955. Under the Smuts Government and during the first seven years of NP Government, the Department of Education did not collect or analyse university enrolment figures on the basis of population groups and so these are the earliest comprehensive figures available. The trends, if not the figures themselves, provide a reasonably accurate indication of the Smuts Government's policies, because by 1955 very little had been altered by the NP Government regarding university enrolments.

| Table 2.4: Student enrolments at attendance universities, analysed by population group, 1952[64] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution | African | Coloured | Indian | White | Total |
| Cape Town | 18 | 160 | 41 | 3 849 | 4 068 |
| Fort Hare | 350 | 34 | 15 | - | 399 |
| Natal | 55 | 7 | 162 | 1 750 | 1 974 |
| Orange Free State | - | - | - | 1 124 | 1 124 |
| Potchefstroom | - | - | - | 942 | 942 |
| Pretoria | - | - | - | 3 817 | 3 817 |
| Rhodes | - | - | - | 758 | 758 |
| Stellenbosch | - | - | - | 2 147 | 2 147 |
| Witwatersrand | 76 | 13 | 156 | 4 132 | 4 377 |
| Totals | 499 | 214 | 374 | 18 519 | 19 606 |

Six of the ten institutions were therefore entirely segregated institutions in that they enrolled only white or only black students. Of these, five enrolled white students only. These were all four Afrikaans-medium universities and Rhodes University. Fort Hare generally enrolled only black students, although a very few white students had studied at Fort Hare in its earliest years. The students of two other institutions also studied under segregated conditions. Unisa enrolled students of all population groups but students did not come into contact with each other or with staff members as tuition was by correspondence. At the campuses of the University of Natal, segregated classes were held. As the university calendar explained:

> All classes for non-Europeans are kept totally separate from those for Europeans ... although the non-European students are accommodated separately, they receive tuition from the main college staff ... to ensure that similar standards of work are maintained.[63]

Enrolments at these eight institutions, where tuition was segregated, accounted for over two thirds of student enrolments (see Table 2.5).

At Wits and UCT, students of all population groups were admitted to most faculties, with some remaining closed to black students. As these were two of the larger institutions, they accounted for just under a third of all student enrolments, and this distorts the picture given in Table 2.4. It should be noted that black student numbers at these institutions were very low, and white students accounted

64. Legassick, M (1967) *The National Union of South African Students: Ethnic cleavage and ethnic integration in the universities*, pp52-53, Occasional Paper No 4, African Studies Centre, University of California, Los Angeles.

for 94 per cent and 95 per cent of enrolments at each of these institutions respectively.[66] These two universities became known as the 'open' universities because of their admission policies. However, in line with Hofmeyr's compromise, admission of students from all population groups did not imply that the institutions were integrated: in general, a policy of 'academic non-segregation but social segregation' prevailed.[67] Even at the 'open' universities, therefore, many white students would have had little or no contact with their black colleagues.

The proportions of students of each population group, and overall, studying at academically integrated and segregated institutions is given in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Percentage of student enrolments (full time and part time), analysed by population group, 1955[68]

| Institution | African | Coloured | Indian | White | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fort Hare | 20 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Natal | 8 | 5 | 24 | 8 | 8 |
| Orange Free State | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 5 |
| Potchefstroom | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Pretoria | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 17 |
| Rhodes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Stellenbosch | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 9 |
| Unisa | 67 | 41 | 49 | 16 | 20 |
| Sub total: Segregated institutions | 94 | 54 | 76 | 67 | 69 |
| Cape Town | 2 | 44 | 10 | 16 | 15 |
| Wits | 4 | 2 | 14 | 17 | 16 |
| Sub total: Academically integrated institutions | 6 | 46 | 24 | 33 | 31 |

Table 2.5 also demonstrates that a high proportion of African students, two thirds, was studying through Unisa. There were many factors contributing to this pattern of enrolment. Studying through Unisa was generally cheaper than attending full time day classes at a university. First, fees at Unisa were far lower than at other institutions, at under £2 (R4) per subject.[69] In 1948 fees for first year registration for a Bachelor of Arts at the other institutions admitting black students ranged

65. University College of Natal, *op cit.*, p31.
66. Extrapolated from Table 2.4.
67. See Murray (1997) *op cit.* p29; and De Beer, Z (1992), student leader, University of Cape Town, late 1940s and early 1950s, interviewed in Johannesburg, 4 December 1992.
68. My calculations, based on EAS, *op cit.*
69. University of South Africa (1948) *Calendar*, Unisa, Pretoria.

from £41 (R82) per annum at the University of Natal to £84 (R168) per annum at Wits.[70] In 1945 and 1946 fees at Fort Hare were average, about £45 (R90). In those years, about 70 per cent of students at Fort Hare received bursaries, and 63 per cent of these were from the government.[71] In this way the government promoted black student enrolment at Fort Hare.

Second, by studying through Unisa, students could stay at home and not have to pay for accommodation in the university city or town. Most African students would have to move away from home to attend one of the full time universities: in 1955, 58.5 per cent of African secondary school pupils (20500) were enrolled in the reserves.[72] Fort Hare was almost entirely residential, and official residences were provided for student accommodation. Phillip Tobias, in *The African in the Universities*, comments that the reliance on residential space at Fort Hare set a rigid ceiling for student numbers in general, and for women students in particular, for whom only 43 places were available in residence.[73] At the 'white' institutions most university residences were either not open to black students, or residence places were extremely limited. There were no racially mixed residences.

Table 2.6: Black students' term time residence, 1955[74]

| Institution | University hostels | Other hostels | Private lodgings | At home |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cape Town | - | 8 | 110 | 170 |
| Natal | 96 | 5 | 54 | 188 |
| Wits | 30 | - | 58 | 104 |
| Fort Hare | 367 | - | - | 10 |

At Wits some accommodation for African students was available at Douglas Smit House, which opened in 1946 with places for 30 men and six women medical students.[75] There was no provision for Indian students at Wits, a cause of much

70. University College of Natal, *op cit.*; University of the Witwatersrand, *op cit.* UCT charged £48 (R96) per annum and Fort Hare charged £45 (R90) in 1945.
71. UED, *op cit.*, p66.
72. Unterhalter, E (1991) 'Can education overcome women's subordinate position in the occupation structure?' in E Unterhalter *et al* (eds.) *Education in a future South Africa*, p44, Heinemann, London.
73. Tobias, PV (1951) *The Afr[illegible]'s Universities*, p18, National Union of South African Students, Cape Town.
74. EAS, *op cit.*, p55.
75. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p54.

discontent.[76] At the University of Natal residential accommodation for black students was not available before the opening of the medical school in 1951.[77] Alternative accommodation was not easily found for black students. The universities were all in 'white' areas, and few students could find private accommodation close to the campuses. The cost of daily commuting between the campuses and lodgings in black areas therefore added to the financial burden of studying at white universities. Many African Wits students lived in Sophiatown or Orlando, where conditions were not conducive to study. For example Nelson Mandela, a part time law student at Wits in the 1940s and 1950s, wrote that resident in Orlando, he 'studied under very difficult and trying conditions', having to cope with the noise of the neighbourhood, evening study without electricity and long commutes.[78]

Third, all Unisa students were enrolled part time, which offered the advantage of being able to earn an income at the same time as pursuing higher qualifications. One of the reasons why such a high proportion of African students registered at Unisa was that it was difficult for African students to enrol as part time students at the 'white' universities. In the table below, it can be seen that nearly all African and Indian students who registered part time were enrolled through Unisa. Some Coloured students, who were resident close to UCT, were able to register for part time classes there.

Table 2.7: Full time and part time enrolments and enrolments and Unisa, analysed by population group, 1955[79]

| Population group | Full time | | Part time | | Unisa | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | Number |
| African | 502 | 33 | 1 019 | 67 | 1 014 | 67 | 1 521 |
| Coloured | 251 | 53 | 223 | 47 | 195 | 41 | 474 |
| Indian | 437 | 50 | 436 | 50 | 429 | 49 | 873 |
| White | 20 132 | 72 | 4 901 | 18 | 3 948 | 14 | 27 901 |

As with part time students, the proportion of postgraduate students who relied on Unisa to pursue advanced studies varied widely across the population groups, from

76. *Ibid.*, p57.
77. Brookes (1966) *op cit.*
78. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, pp54-57.

only six per cent of white postgraduates to 76 per cent of Coloured postgraduates, as is shown in the table below.

| Table 2.8: Numbers of postgraduate enrolments (full time and part time), analysed by population group, 1955[80] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institution | African | Coloured | Indian | White | All population groups |
| Number of postgraduates at Unisa | 46 | 59 | 9 | 207 | 321 |
| Unisa postgraduates as % of total postgraduates | 47% | 76% | 23% | 6% | 9% |
| Total postgraduates | 98 | 78 | 40 | 3 294 | 3 510 |
| Total enrolments | 1 521 | 474 | 873 | 25 033 | 27 901 |
| Postgraduates as % of total enrolments | 6% | 16% | 5% | 13% | 13% |

This table also indicates that the proportion of African students that proceeded to postgraduate study was less than half that of the proportion of white students.

Given the government's lack of commitment to African schooling, the problems faced by Africans wanting to proceed to university once qualified to do so and the limited career opportunities open to African graduates (see below), it is not surprising that by 1952 there were only 0.1 black students per thousand of the black population, while there were 6.8 white students per thousand of the white population.[81] The inequality in student enrolments extended to the subjects and courses pursued.

79. My calculations, based on EAS, *op cit.*
80. *Ibid.*
81. My calculations, based on Bureau of Statistics, *op cit.*

| Table 2.9: Enrolments by faculty and subject, analysed by percentage of students of each population group, 1955[82] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty | African | Coloured | Indian | White | Total |
| Agriculture | 0.4 | - | - | 3.5 | 3.2 |
| Architecture | - | 0.6 | 0.9 | 3.1 | 2.8 |
| Pure Arts | 71.9 | 60.3 | 61.9 | 26.5 | 30.7 |
| Commerce | 1.8 | 3.7 | 5.7 | 21.1 | 19.3 |
| Dentistry | - | - | - | 1.6 | 1.5 |
| Domestic Science | - | - | - | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Education | 4.2 | 3.7 | 2.8 | 5.8 | 5.6 |
| Engineering | - | 0.4 | 0.8 | 6.8 | 6.1 |
| Fine Arts | 0.06 | 0.2 | - | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Law | 1.5 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 3.3 | 3.0 |
| Medicine | 7.5 | 10.5 | 15 | 7.8 | 8.1 |
| Military Science | - | - | - | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Music | 0.06 | 6.6 | - | 2.4 | 2.3 |
| Pharmacology | - | - | - | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Physical education | - | - | - | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Pure Science | 9.0 | 12.0 | 11.5 | 13.1 | 12.9 |
| Social Science | 1.5 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Speech and Drama | - | - | - | 0.07 | 0.07 |
| Theology | 1.6 | 0.4 | - | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Veterinary Science | - | - | - | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Not specified | - | - | - | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Total number of enrolments | 1 521 | 474 | 873 | 25 033 | 27 901 |

Table 2.9 shows that most black students were enrolled for pure arts courses, with pure science, medicine and education attracting the next largest groupings of black students, although the numbers enrolled in these courses were very much smaller. There were no African students at all enrolled in several professional or applied fields, including architecture, dentistry, engineering, pharmacology and veterinary science.

By contrast, white student enrolments were distributed over a far wider range of courses. Less than one third of white students were enrolled in the pure arts subjects. Commerce, a faculty which grew rapidly after the Second World V. attracted over one fifth of white student enrolments.

82. My calculations, based on EAS, *op cit.*, pp25-28.

The courses of study pursued by students at university both determined the employment patterns of graduates, and was itself influenced by the employment opportunities available on graduation. Philip Tobias commented in 1951 that

> So often African graduates find the door of opportunity locked and barred against them by industrial legislation, the opposition of some trade unions, the difficulties to be surmounted by non-Europeans in entering most professions [and] the implementation of the 'civilised labour' policy in the public service.[83]

Furthermore, as has already been seen, even the supposedly liberal Hofmeyr officially sanctioned the prevailing notion of trusteeship, namely, that enough whites should be trained to serve the entire population of the country and not only the white community. Black professional graduates were allowed to serve only black clients, of whom few could afford professional services.[84] On the other hand, when Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo opened the first African legal practice in the country in August 1952, they were inundated by black clients.[85]

While it was not officially differentiated, there were wide variations in the patterns of university education that had emerged by the time the NP came to power in 1948 and the system of university education was, like the rest of South African society, deeply iniquitous. Access to university education was far more readily available to the most privileged group in South African society: relatively wealthy, white, young men. Fewer black and women students (see below) were enrolled, and having gained access to the institutions, they continued to be disadvantaged. They were under-represented on the academic staff and almost entirely absent from senior positions. Black and women students were also unevenly distributed across the faculties.

It is possible to imagine how both the government and individual institutions could have tackled this inequality in a more proactive way. The Smuts Government,

---

83. Tobias, PV (1951) *op cit.*
84. *Ibid.* SAIRR reported in 1953 that there were no posts in government service for black medical practitioners (SAIRR, 1953, *op cit.*, p71), but this is contradicted by PV Tobias's 1951 account.
85. Mandela, NR (1994) *Long Walk to Freedom*, Macdonald Purnell, Randburg, p138.

however, allowed educational inequality and racial injustice to be perpetuated at university level. The Nationalist Government which succeeded it in 1948, in contrast, actively promoted such inequality and injustice.

## 2.4 Political cultures at the universities in the 1940s and early 1950s

The political and social cultures of universities are both continuous with and distinct from those of the societies around them, and divisions in South African society have extended to the universities since their inception. In the 1940s and 1950s South African students had grown up with nearly every aspect of their lives affected by segregation, in segregated residential areas and schools. From these backgrounds, students proceeding to segregated institutions experienced continuity, whereas students proceeding to 'open' institutions were confronted by new experiences. But even the segregated universities were more than seamless extensions of the patchwork fabric of South African society, as they too had their own powerful internal cultures.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s there were four broad social and political cultures at the nine attendance institutions, which were the product of, and reinforced by, different enrolment practices. These were the Afrikaans-medium, segregated white institutions, which were imbued with the political and social conservatism of Afrikaner nationalism; the English-medium, segregated white institutions, which have been characterised as 'politically apathetic and broadly content with the status quo';[86] Fort Hare, which was a segregated black institution with a highly politicised student culture which opposed apartheid; and the predominantly white 'open' universities, both English-medium, which were more politicised than the segregated English-medium campuses and where the locus of student debate was further to the left.

Political differences between students were crisply expressed in the struggles surrounding Nusas. Nusas had been formed as an apolitical student federation in

86. Legassick (1967) *op cit.*, p8.

1924, with a founding membership of both Afrikaans-medium and English-medium universities and university colleges.[87] Fort Hare was not included. In 1933, when DF Malan broke away from the Fusion Government to form the Purified National Party and struggles over *Afrikaanswording*, literally, 'becoming Afrikaans', gripped the universities, the three predominantly Afrikaans institutions in the more conservative northern provinces, the University College of the Orange Free State, Potchefstroom University College and Pretoria University, disaffiliated and formed the Afrikaanse Nasionale Studentebond (ANSB). Legassick comments in his analysis of Nusas that this was less to do with the policies of Nusas than a 'manifestation of the general Afrikaner separatism of the period'.[88] Stellenbosch also resigned from Nusas, in 1936, after failing to secure a constitutional amendment which would have prohibited black membership of the union. This had become an issue as black students were represented by the delegations of the 'open' universities. Some local branches of Nusas continued to operate at Afrikaans campuses after these secessions.

The divergence between Afrikaans-medium and English-medium campuses accelerated during the war. By 1940, the ANSB had developed Nazi sympathies: the chairman of an ANSB meeting held that year was reported, in the *Cape Argus*, to have said that they 'were proud of being called Nazis'.[89] Between 1934 and 1945 Nusas repeatedly attempted to persuade the Afrikaans universities to return to the union. As Oliver Caldecott, Vice President of Nusas in 1947, wrote, Nusas

> even refused to admit the Native College of Fort Hare to full membership in the hope that this might appease the Afrikaans centres, but all overtures were unsuccessful.[90]

In 1945 Nusas eventually accepted Fort Hare's formal application. Phillip Tobias, who was a Wits student at the time, relates that after the assembly had been

---

87. In the 1920s the University College of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal University College were both dual-medium institutions. However, enrolments were predominantly Afrikaans and they subsequently both became fully Afrikaans-medium institutions (see below). For the sake of simplicity they have been referred to as Afrikaans institutions throughout.
88. Legassick (1967) *op cit.*, p16.
89. Rubin, N (1950) *History of the relations between Nusas, the Afrikaanse Studentebond and the Afrikaans University Centres*, Nusas, Cape Town.
90. Caldecott, O (1947) 'SA universities split unhealed', *Cape Times*, 11 June 1947.

'persuaded by the Communist, Jimmy Stewart', the delegates from the Nusas branches at Stellenbosch and Bloemfontein pushed back their chairs to signal their disapproval of this move, and their branches closed down shortly thereafter.[91]

### 2.4.1 Ethnic particularism and the culture of the *Volksuniversiteit*

The four institutions that predominantly enrolled Afrikaans-speaking students at the time of Union, at Stellenbosch, Pretoria, Potchefstroom[92] and the Orange Free State, became increasingly politicised with the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism. They struggled with the complex issues of promoting the Afrikaans language, defining Afrikaner identity and harnessing university education to Nationalist political goals.

At the time of Union, the medium of instruction was not officially defined and was generally, by default, English. Soon after Union, a bequest by Wernher Beit of £500 000 for the establishment of a single university at Groote Schuur threatened the Afrikaans intellectual community that centred on Victoria College in Stellenbosch. At Victoria College, initially most teachers were English and English was the medium of instruction, but from the start, most students and the majority of the Council were Afrikaans. In 1913 a 'public vigilance committee' was established to campaign against the Groote Schuur idea. The committee argued that

> Stellenbosch ... has for years been intimately connected with the spiritual, moral and national life of the Dutch-speaking section of the people. It is the place where the Afrikaner nation could best realise its ideals and from where it could exercise the greatest influence on South Africa. It is the best realisation the people have yet found of a deeply felt need. It embodies an ideal Therefore, for our people it has become not merely an educational institution amongst others, but a symbol and the guarantee of its own vigorous, growing national life, seeking self-expression.[93]

---

91. Tobias, PV (1993) *op cit.*
92. Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education recognised Dutch as an examining language in 1914-15.
93. Viljoen, *op cit.*, p177.

Grundlingh comments that the early recognition of the Afrikaans character of Stellenbosch gave the institution a 'serene self-confidence' in comparison to the universities where this recognition was more contested, namely Pretoria and the Orange Free State.[94] No particular process of 'Afrikanerisation' was experienced at Potchefstroom, which had a 'rigidly Calvinist character from the start'.[95]

Gerrit Viljoen comments that the idea of cre a 'single university' with the accompanying talk of 'fusion into one nation' was perceived as a 'euphemism for Anglicisation':

> It never required great perspicacity on the part of Afrikaners to realise that in the pluricultural South African context 'fusion', in so far as the white communities are concerned, provided really only three choices: all being assimilated into a dominant English culture, all being assimilated into a dominant Afrikaans culture, or the development of a theoretically new South African cultural unity in which, however, it would still have to be made out in what proportion the English and Afrikaans influences would assert themselves.

Viljoen concludes that

> The relative weakness and youthfulness of Afrikaans culture as against the rich and powerfully established English culture, and in particular the cultural 'imperialism' of the ruling English establishment, left the Afrikaners no option but to work towards universities with an Afrikaans particularism to counterbalance those with an English particularism.[96]

Opposition to policy regarding the medium of tuition provided an early rallying point. The authors of the official history of the University of Pretoria published in 1960, *Ad Destinatum,* wrote

94. Grundlingh, A (1990) 'Politics, principles and prob'ems of a profession: Afrikaner historians and their discipline, c.1920 - c. 1925' in *Perspectives in Education*, Vol. 12, No 1, University of the Witwatersrand.
95. *Ibid.*
96. Viljoen, *op cit.*, p173.

> That in the course of time the Transvaal University College would be forced to become an Afrikaans institution was historically determined and historically just.[97]

Arguing that the transformation of the institution was part of the inevitable destiny of the university disregards the importance of the intense and lengthy struggles to transform the institution. The University of Pretoria had been entirely English-medium until 1917, after Afrikaans was recognised as a medium of instruction at school level. From that year lecturers were free to choose which language to use and by 1921 a number of subjects were taught in Afrikaans. Despite this, the Senate blocked attempts to appoint a strongly pro-Afrikaans Rector until 1929. But in 1932 a French lecturer at the University of Pretoria, HP Lamont, published a novel called *War, Wine and Women* under a pseudonym, in which he caricatured Afrikaners:

> I would rather trust myself to the tender mercies of a gang of brigands than to the Dutch Reformed Church predikants. They have no mercy, no charity, no human kindness in their miserable hearts ...[98]

Sentiments along these lines caused offence throughout the Afrikaans community. When the identity of the author and his connection with Pretoria University became apparent, in May 1932 four students took the matter into their own hands and tarred and feathered Lamont and deposited him in Church Square. The four students were fined £50 each, but their fines were paid by a *Pro Patria* fund initiated by *Die Vaderland*, with the balance of funds raised destined for 'the furthering of Afrikaans interests at the University of Pretoria'.[99] The 'Lamont episode' ended the '50:50' policy at Pretoria. In September 1932 the Senate and Council decided

> that the services of the university be instituted primarily to meet the needs of the Afrikaans-speaking section of the community, and that the language of the university be Afrikaans.[100]

---

97. University of Pretoria (1960) *Ad Destinatum: Gedenkboek van die Universiteit van Pretoria*, Voortrekkerpers Beperk, Johannesburg, p48.
98. Quoted *Ibid.*, p61.
99. For a full account see the chapter on 'Voertaal en Afrikaanswording' in University of Pretoria, *op cit.*
100. Viljoen, *op cit.*, p180.

Grey University College in Bloemfontein was also originally English-medium and Cape-oriented. There demand for the use of Afrikaans first emerged in the late 1920s, and only in 1938 was a policy requiring the equal use of both official languages introduced. In 1943, under pressure from students and Afrikaner Nationalist lobbies, the Council decided that 'the instruction of the students shall take place in accordance with the religious outlook on life and the tradition of the people of the Orange Free State', which was interpreted to make Afrikaans the medium of instruction. This was confirmed in the University of the Orange Free State Act of 1950.[101]

Some may have hoped that bringing Afrikaans and English students to study together and to learn to use both official languages fluently would help to form a unified white South African nation. However, for Afrikaner Nationalists, as Viljoen argues, the '50:50' policy represented a tactical short-term compromise, an 'experiment' that was

> not merely a more or less technical one of combining two media of instruction but rather an exercise in co-existence between two cultures, two traditions, almost two nations, rendered the more difficult because of their very recent history of competition, confrontation and even conflict.[102]

Mouton confirms that the campaigns for *Afrikaanswording* entailed far more than a change in language policy, it was the creation of a *volksuniversiteit*:

> The university was now to be regarded as in the service of the *volk* and its mission was to promote the ideals of the Voortrekkers.[103]

At the newly 'Afrikanerised' institutions, Mouton argues that 'academic freedom was only permissible within the context of a university bound to the *volk*'. This was encouraged, or enforced, in a robust and brusque manner:

---

101. *Ibid.*, p181. Viljoen comments that Christian rather than National aspects were emphasised in the Orange Free State campaigns (see Chapter 6 for failed attempts to remove the 'Conscience Clause' from the University of the Orange Free State Act in the early 1960s).
102. *Ibid.*
103. Mouton, FA (1993) 'Professor Leo Fouche, the history department and the Afrikanerization of the University of Pretoria', *Historia*, Volume 38, No 1, May 1993.

> A culture of intolerance was encouraged against those who were not politically correct ... especially Afrikaners who were regarded as disloyal ... were singled out for special attention for they were to be rejected and never forgiven as they were regarded as traitors and bigger enemies than the enemy itself.[104]

Former students of Afrikaans-medium universities describe institutions with strong pressures on students to conform socially and, by extension, politically. Authoritarian family and church values extended to the campuses, where students generally deferred to the administrative and academic staff. According to Louis Heyns, who studied theology at Stellenbosch in the 1950s:

> Students were very immature in the fifties, especially among the Afrikaners, because of the whole paternalistic way of life. We were not taught to think independently as far as politics was concerned. You were taught to be a good Afrikaner ... you followed the traditions.[105]

Another former Stellenbosch student, Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, has written about his university experiences (in the late 1950s) that

> It is virtually impossible not to be transformed by student life at Stellenbosch ... the university residences of Stellenbosch are what Erving Goffman would call 'total institutions', forms of social organisation which isolate their participants from the rest of society and cater for all their needs ... the only way an inmate can beat the system is to join it, *i.e.* discover the rewards of conformity and thus ensure the continuity of tradition.[106]

Besides the pressure to conform in the residences, and the heavy emphasis on sport that swamped all other leisure activity, one of the most powerful mechanisms of creating social cohesion and flattening individual expression was initiation. At the University of the Orange Free State, for example, where students were drawn mostly from rural homes in the province and from South West Africa, and where the student body was small enough for everyone to know everyone else, initiation

---

104. *Ibid.*, p58.
105. Heyns, L (1992) student leader, Stellenbosch University, mid 1950s, interviewed in Pretoria, 10 November 1992.
106. Slabbert, F van Zyl (1987) 'Total Immersion' in *Leadership South Africa*, p96, Volume 6, No 3, Churchill Murray Publications, Cape Town.

was a harsh and inescapable torment for most of the first year.[107] According to Hennie Klerck, who studied commerce and was active on the Students' Representative Council (SRC),

> Initiation ... broke students forever. Some left varsity because of it. There were physical exercises at night, there was a doctor present to stop the seniors from killing us ... a lot couldn't take it ... You ran errands until September, then there was this Ku Klux Klan type operation called *Het Sak*. We were shit scared, but it bonded the new students ... even after formal initiation you were three degrees less than snake spit ... I don't know what happened with the girls.[108]

Initiation, *ontgroening*, was a violent feature at several Afrikaans universities, sometimes resulting in serious injury and death. At Potchefstroom University College it became such a problem that the cover of the 1947 *Calendar* prominently featured the following prohibition:

> Initiation at the Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education is forbidden. This includes the journeys of students to and from Potchefstroom. Students found guilty may be expelled.[109]

Even after first year initiation, physical punishment was a feature of the student culture. Klerck described how discipline was imposed in the residences:

> We had mock courts in residence if someone transgressed ... the house rules. There'd be a formal charge and a mock court to decide whether it needed an *oond* of ten or twenty or thirty. The guilty would put on shorts and crawl throu[illegible] your legs and you would hit him with your open hand, not a shoe [illegible] anything like that ... it was a hell of a hiding ... can you imagine an *oond* of say fifty strong young men? A *huisoond* was like the death penalty. If the administration knew, they never interfered.[110]

---

107. Du Plessis, C (1992) student leader, University of the Orange Free State, mid 1950s, interviewed in Pretoria, 10 November 1992.
108. Klerck, HP (1992) student leader, University of the Orange Free State, early 1950s, interviewed in Johannesburg, 17 November 1992.
109. Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education (1947) *Jaarboek*, Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom. My translation.
110. Klerck, *op cit*.

At other Afrikaans-medium institutions, tarring and feathering of political opponents became part of the university culture.[111]

Within this social environment, with its emphasis on conformity, there was little room for students to question the policies of the NP, or to explore other political ideas. Klerck described the change in his own political allegiance at the University of the Orange Free State:

> Most Afrikaans speaking students supported the NP ... we had very little political interference from a different persuasion. There weren't really different groups ... we were all of a kind, it didn't become an issue. My parents were UP supporters. I felt more enlightened, rightly or wrongly, because of that, but I became a strong NP follower at varsity. I suppose the varsity influence on me must have been quite severe. There was not, no I can't say not one, but there were very few UP supporters at University, so even if you were, you'd have been like a fish out of the pond altogether. Afrikaners who were not supporters of the NP became outcasts. So politics were never an issue, you can't divide among yourselves. We all felt the same.[112]

Unlike the other Afrikaans-medium universities, Stellenbosch University cultivated the idea that its students and staff were more analytical and discriminating. Legassick attributed this to the relatively high proportion of English speaking students, which he estimated at between 10 and 15 per cent in the 1950s, the moderation of Cape Afrikaner nationalism, and theological disputes.[113] Some of these assertions are borne out by both Slabbert and Heyns, who have experience of other institutions as well. They both suggest that academically, critical thinking was encouraged in some quarters at Stellenbosch, although this was circumscribed by social and political conservatism. Heyns recalls that Ben Keet and Ben Marais, theologians who had criticised apartheid from a Christian perspective in the early 1950s, both taught in the theological seminary. Although 'political issues' were not

111. Mouton, *op cit.*, p57.
112. Klerck, *op cit.*
113. Legassick (1967) *op cit.*, p8.

part of the syllabus, the students at the seminary were aware that they were critical of the NP Government.[114] Even at Stellenbosch, however, as Heyns suggested,

> The general trend in the country and therefore at the universities was not to be critical as far as politics was concerned.[115]

Nevertheless in the mid 1950s a student society was formed at Stellenbosch to bring African and Coloured speakers on to the campus. The students involved were regarded as 'a bit liberal, a bit dangerous', but were still popular enough in the mainstream to be elected to house committees and the SRC.[116]

Stellenbosch students also stood aloof from the conservatism of the 'northern universities' that they encountered at ASB conferences. The ASB had replaced the ANSB in 1948, with policies, as Legassick put it, 'formulated in the interests of a newly-sought post-war respectability for Afrikaner nationalism'.[117] The 1948 ASB Constitution, which remained unchanged until at least 1965, said that the ASB rested on a Christian-National foundation, as 'embodied in the Afrikaans people's tradition'. It was not officially linked to any political party or organisation. Its official language was Afrikaans. Its aim was to 'harness' all Afrikaans students in higher education institutions in one organisation to support the community needs of Afrikaans students, to conserve and develop 'white Christian civilisation' against communism and 'to study all matters of national political interest in an academic manner'.[118] Stellenbosch was unwilling to see the ASB, which it viewed as a cultural organisation, assume the role of a representative students union, partly because of the large numbers of English speakers at Stellenbosch.[119] Stellenbosch was also at the forefront of intermittent negotiations between Afrikaans speaking students and Nusas.

As the Afrikaans character of the universities became more firmly established, Afrikaans student politics became obsessed with an increasingly fervent opposition

---

114. Heyns, *op cit.*
115. *Ibid.*
116. *Ibid.*
117. Legassick (1967) *op cit.*, p16.
118 *Grondwette en Konstitusies en Reglemente*, 1952-1965, An/3, ASB PV 148, INCH.
119. *Ibid.*

to the *saamboerdery* of the 'open' universities, where, with the establishment of Engineering and Medical faculties at Afrikaans-medium institutions in the 1940s, ever fewer Afrikaans students were enrolled. It was this attitude that caused the breach with Nusas. Once the NP was in power, the Afrikaanse Studentebond (ASB) lobbied the government ceaselessly. In 1952 the ASB Congress passed a unanimous motion calling on the government to

> take immediate steps to create the necessary facilities for all non-white students and to make an end to mixed universities because the present position has become untenable.[120]

In 1953 the ASB passed motions concluding that 'total apartheid was the only solution to the non-white question in the Union' and that therefore a study should be undertaken into the possibility of university education for non-whites in their own areas'.[121] In 1954 the ASB repeated the call for university segregation, as it was necessary for 'matters of education as well as the state' and as it was 'not at all in conflict with matters of academic freedom'. They agreed to support a 'Bantu student for three years at a non-European institution out of ASB funds'.[122]

The *Afrikaanswording* campaigns explicitly politicised university education at all Afrikaans-medium institutions. The consequent ethnic chauvinism and 'particularism' expressed in student politics and endorsed by the universities was at odds with the Smuts Government's broad concept of white South Africanism and universal ideals for university education, and posed a direct political threat to the UP, but the official respect for university autonomy forced the Smuts Government to suffer such cultures at the Afrikaans-medium universities. The intellectual and political cultures of these institutions became increasingly isolated and uncritical as the costs of failing to conform were at best uncomfortable and at worst violent. Despite the political opposition brewed at the Afrikaans-medium universities (or perhaps to neutralise it), the Smuts Government provided them with the funding for two new professional faculties (Engineering at Stellenbosch and Medicine at

120. *Kongresnotules*, 1952-1957, Ab/2 Vol. 1, ASB PV 148, INCH, 1952.
121. *Ibid.*, 1953. In the same year Stellenbosch proposed that a colour film should be made, showing all universities and university colleges, 'black as well as white'. It was later decided that it should show 'only purely black or white institutions'.
122. *Ibid.*, 1954.

Pretoria) in the 1940s. The Smuts Government therefore allowed the Afrikaans-medium universities the autonomy to express and develop their own political cultures, as well as fair financial treatment. What more could these institutions ask of a Nationalist Government? As will be seen below, Afrikaners mobilised to campaign for more and better university opportunities for Afrikaans matriculants and for the government to impose a Christian National conformity on Afrikaans-medium institutions, but even the Nationalist Government did not deliver all these desires.

### 2.4.2 'English liberal conservatism' at Rhodes and Natal

The social cultures at the English-medium segregated white institutions shared many features with the Afrikaans universities. Legassick characterised the SRCs of Rhodes and the Pietermaritzburg and Durban campuses of the Natal University College as inspired by 'English liberal conservatism'. He argues that the provincialism of the eastern Cape and Natal, the numbers of farmers' sons and daughters at Pietermaritzburg and Rhodes, and the presence of Rhodesian students, who were not concerned with South African affairs, at Rhodes, combined to account for the political apathy and social conformism at the three campuses.

The conservatism of the university administrations of Rhodes and Natal University also undoubtedly contributed to the political conservatism of their students.

At the University of Natal segregation was endorsed and entrenched through the arrangement of classes. In 1928, the Principal of the Durban campus, John W Bews had suggested creating a college for Indians and another for Africans, but the local Indian community opposed the idea and the scheme was abandoned during the Depression.[123] In 1932, it was agreed in principle to provide separate classes for black students[124] and from 1936, largely due to the efforts of Dr Mabel Palmer,

123. Bhana, S (1979) 'University Education' in Pachai, B (ed) *South Africa's Indians. The evolution of a minority*, University Press of America, Washington, p391.
124. Murray suggests that the Natal, Rhodes and Wits decisions of 1932, 1933 and 1934 respectively (see below) were in response to enquiries from Sastri College in Natal.

part time classes were offered to black students, mostly to help teachers improve their qualifications.[125] Starting with only 19 students, by 1945 there were 173, and black students began to account for a large percentage of student enrolment. Brookes, in his history of the University of Natal, asserts that the teaching staff and students had no opposition to the presence of black students in class, and that the segregated arrangement arose at the insistence of Council. However, Brookes writes that Denison, who was Principal of the college from 1939 to 1945,

> regarded [non-European students] much as a dutiful but highly-strung dog might look on a hedgehog unaccountably adopted as a pet by his master.[126]

Denison's successor, EG Malherbe, had a reputation as 'a consistent opponent of university apartheid', but he too was a segregationist. According to Brookes,

> He himself felt that there were sound pedagogical rather than ideological reasons against complete integration. His caution in this respect disappointed some of his friends.[127]

Despite Malherbe's stance, there were substantial educational disadvantages to the system as it operated in the 1940s. Lecturers were often burdened with a duplicated teaching load, black students were offered a very restricted choice of courses and degrees, there were no laboratory facilities available and few extracurricular opportunities meant that there was very little learning in the broader sense available to the University of Natal's black students.[128]

Nevertheless Malherbe was proud that the University of Natal provided separate classes. He was obviously profoundly influenced by his experiences in the United States on a Carnegie Scholarship (see Chapter 3) and often referred to black institutions in the US as 'nigger institutions ... with nigger degrees'.[129] Malherbe incorporated the perspectives that he developed in the US into a rather eccentric and certainly original view on South African university education. With great charisma and energy, he tried to reinterpret Natal's segregation as liberal and

---

125. Palmer's chequered background included activity in the suffragette and Fabian movements in the United Kingdom. See Marks, S (1987) *Not either an experimental doll*, University of Natal Press, Durban.
126. Brookes (1966) *op cit.*, p56.
127. *Ibid.*, p61.
128. Bhana, *op cit.*, p395.
129. *Die Transvaler*, 8 July 1947.

educationally sound. He was scathing about the 'open' universities. In November 1947 Malherbe wrote in *African World* that South Africa could not have integrated universities because 'the *mores* of the people are against it' and he said there were white students at Wits and UCT 'who just barely tolerate the presence of non-Europeans there. Some definitely dislike it, and on occasion do not hesitate to show that dislike':

> I do not think that, as conditions are to-day, the game is worth the candle. I would rather reduce to a minimum the occasions when such frictions may arise, and give each group its own university campus ... It is natural too, that the non-European, when slighted, will seek consolation with other minority groups, Communists, for example, who are also 'up against' things. This is probably what Sir Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, had in mind when he said to me not very long ago: 'Malherbe, we in Rhodesia do not like to send our Natives to the Union for higher education, because your universities make agitators of them'.[130]

By the mid 1950s, with a Nationalist government in power for a second term, Malherbe softened his position slightly. Rather than simply condemning the 'open' universities, he argued that the 'overwhelming preponderance of non-Europeans' in Natal made it impossible to follow their pattern of admissions. He said that his objections were 'purely educational', arguing that if black students were allowed to outnumber white students at the university, they would 'slow down the pace' and 'lower standards in the whole university'. He said that 'the brighter European students will get bored and leave', leaving weaker white students and black students at the university. Ultimately the university would become black. Malherbe said that

> This measure of internal segregation does not imply that the non-European is necessarily inferior to the European in innate intelligence. We know too little about this factor to make any such generalisation. We are dealing here

130. Malherbe, EG (1947) 'Higher Education for non-Europeans in South Africa', *African World*, November, KCM 56990(101).

> purely with *training* and *environmental* factors and as a result of these the non-Europeans are definitely inferior on the average.[131]

Malherbe's arguments that there were educational reasons for segregating students, and in particular, his criticism of conditions in the 'open' universities, were later picked up by Nationalists, who echoed these themes to justify the establishment of entirely separate institutions.[132] It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Professor ZK Matthews, the most senior black academic in the country and the ANC's unofficial spokesperson on university matters, commented that the Natal arrangement was 'another capitulation to reactionary opinion in ... higher education - in which it ought ... to have least sway'.[133] Black students at Natal probably held similar opinions. But Malherbe's insistence that black and white students should study in the same institutions, taught by the same academic staff in preparation for the same exams, was based on the conviction that segregated institutions could not offer comparable education, and that the degrees awarded would not be recognised as holding equal currency. In this, he differed from extreme Nationalists (see Chapter 3).

Rhodes University took a different course. In 1933 the Council barred the admission of black students. After the war, attitudes nominally became more liberal, perhaps because of the huge influx of ex-servicemen, who accounted for nearly half the student body in 1946. In 1947 the Council decided in principle that 'a colour bar is the negation of the true university', rescinded the 1933 decision and agreed to the Senate's recommendation that black students should be admitted to postgraduate study. RF Currey wrote in his 'Chronicle' of Rhodes' development that in reaching this decision the Senate

> kept its feet on the ground ... aware of the danger that the throwing open of the doors of the College to non-Europeans 'might lower academic

131. University of Natal, Non European Section, (1953) 'Appeal for Funds', KCM 56990, also see BBC talk by Malherbe, July 1953, KCM 56990 (122).
132. This point is also made by Fleisch. See, for example, Fleisch, BD (1995) 'Social scientists as policy makers: EG Malherbe and the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research, 1929-1943', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 21 Number 3.
133. Matthews, ZK (1947) 'A tragic weakness', *The Forum*, November 1, KCM 56990 (113).

> standards' ... with an eye to things-as-they-are, and not merely as-they-should-be.[134]

In 1949, when the Rhodes University Bill was being discussed by the Select Committee, the Rhodes Senate insisted (by 20 votes to four) that it would not accept an Act which excluded black students. At the same time, with the plans to affiliate Fort Hare to Rhodes, the Senate agreed to exclude black students from courses available at Fort Hare but to consider those who wished to pursue courses only offered by Rhodes. In this way, wrote Currey,

> Proper consideration was shown both for the Senate's honourable and courageous stand for principle, and also for the views, and feelings, of those who saw things otherwise and were now in occupation of the corridors of power.[135]

Despite this 'courageous' stand in defence of the university autonomy and the universal ideal in university education, no black students were admitted to Rhodes in the 1940s or 1950s.

The university administrations of both Rhodes and Natal thus accepted the colour bar within their institutions. This attitude influenced student political culture at these institutions, which reflected a similar acquiescence.

The residential character of Rhodes, and to a lesser extent, of Pietermaritzburg, was also significant. Like Stellenbosch, Rhodes University had a largely residential student population in a small university-dominated town. Currey quotes the editor of *The Rhodian* who wrote of Grahamstown 'in its self-sufficient hollow, a town of some remote world' and observes that 'this air of unreality seems to have permeated the college itself'.[136] Barry Goedhals, who was SRC president in 1956, described the student culture at Rhodes University:

> We were all very young and very callow ... a terribly uncritical generation, it was like a continuation of school.[137]

---

134. Currey, *op cit.*, p101.
135. *Ibid.*, p112.
136. *Ibid.*, p96.
137. Goedhals, B (1992) student leader, Rhodes University, mid 1950s, interviewed in Pretoria, 11 November 1992.

Rhodes encouraged a very formal culture. Goedhals recalls that the academic staff was autocratic, with students like 'lambs listening to wise words'. Academic gowns were worn at every evening meal.

Both the students and the staff of Rhodes tended to see the institution as politically detached from the power relations of the country. The university calendar was proud to affirm that

> Racial feeling is quite unknown and the college is representative of the best educated opinion in South Africa.[138]

The 'race' relations to which the university administration was referring were those between English- and Afrikaans-speaking whites. (Afrikaner Nationalist perspectives on Rhodes in the 1960s are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.) The expression of this sentiment in 1948 was indicative of a general mood of conservative disinterest. This attitude extended to the Rhodes SRC, which found that 'the whole white-black issue was almost hypothetical'.[139]

Student politics was not only blinkered, it also deferred to the authority of the university administration. The SRC had little power, and was, according to Goedhals, more like a 'fourth form school committee':

> The issues concerning the SRC were piffling compared to the things that occur now ... of the order of do we allow the rowing club to use the Great Hall for its ball ... there was no big politicking.[140]

Goedhals does recall one incident of broader concern. When the ASB wanted to open a branch at Rhodes, they were allowed to call a first meeting, but no sooner had they constituted themselves than they were voted out of existence by their members. But this incident, which was, says Goedhals, the 'highlight of the chicanery' of student politics of the period, was the result of 'knee jerk support for the United Party', rather than critical and ongoing political debate.

---

138. Rhodes University College, *op cit.*
139. Goedhals, *op cit.*
140. *Ibid.*

On at least two occasions the students of Rhodes displayed gross insensitivity about the political tensions in the country. At a time of unrest in the black urban areas of Port Elizabeth, Goedhals recalls that one night a group of men students blacked their faces and stormed the women's residences whooping and calling 'war cries' in a simulated 'riot'.[141] Currey also relates how students engineered a confrontation between Grahamstown municipal workers and the local police as a Rag 'prank'.[142]

In principle, Rhodes University defended its right to admit black students, but effectively excluded them and voiced platitudes about relations between white Afrikaans and English-speaking students. The University of Natal insisted that black students were best served within the same institution as white students, if in segregated classes. In taking these differing approaches both institutions tried to reconcile the universal ideal of university education with their own racism and the racism of the Government, in so doing nurturing conservative and complacent institutional cultures.

### 2.4.3 Fort Hare: Universal ideals, segregated reality

The contrast in atmosphere between the two residential eastern Cape institutions, the white, apolitical, segregated Rhodes, and its neighbour, the black, politicised, segregated Fort Hare, was stark. Fort Hare was unlike any other contemporary university institution in South Africa, because its entire student body was oppressed by the country's racial policies. Another reason for the contrast with Rhodes was the age difference between the student populations. While most white students arrived at university straight from school at the age of 17 or 18, the black student population was considerably older.

141. *Ibid.*.
142. Currey, *op cit.*

| Table 2.10: Ages of students at attendance universities, 1955[143] | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | African | Coloured | Indian | White |
| Under 20 | 36 | 101 | 84 | 9214 |
| % under 20 | 7% | 36% | 19% | 44% |
| 20-24 | 253 | 103 | 217 | 8 275 |
| % 20 to 24 | 50% | 37% | 49% | 39% |
| Over 24 | 218 | 75 | 143 | 3 596 |
| % over 24 | 43% | 27% | 32% | 17% |
| Total | 507 | 279 | 444 | 21 085 |

Thus while 43 per cent of white students attending university were in their teens, only seven per cent of black students were that young.

Furthermore, at the segregated white institutions the staff as well as the students were white; while at Fort Hare the students were black, while the staff was drawn from all population groups, but was predominantly white. Of the Fort Hare academic staff, 69 per cent were white, and of the other categories of staff, 50 per cent were white.[144]

Assessments of the political culture of Fort Hare, made by former white academic staff and former black students, diverge widely.

One of the most important personalities in the development of Fort Hare was Alexander Kerr, who was the founding Principal and who held the office with stern paternalism until he retired 32 years later, in 1948. Kerr's vision for Fort Hare was inspired by his missionary background and had religious and moral as well as educational dimensions. Kerr imposed this vision with authoritarian conviction, which in combination with the scarce resources at Fort Hare's disposal, resulted in some uneasy relationships within the institution. For example Kerr's priority was to spend what money was available on tuition, rather than on developing amenities, believing that is was above all Fort Hare's role to provide educational opportunities for black students where none existed, even if this involved

143. My calculations, based on EAS, *op cit.*
144. Beard, TVR (1972) 'Background to student activity at Fort Hare' in Van der Merwe, H and Welsh, D (eds.) *Student Perspectives on South Africa*, p156, David Philip, Cape Town.

sacrificing personal comforts. As a result, conditions were very Spartan. Visitors to the campus commented on the

> distressing evidence of overcrowding ... in all conscience intolerable at any time ... it appeared to us to be a little hard that in many cases students were not provided with mattresses.[145]

Kerr expected his students to accept this ascetic approach, and pointed out that even though conditions at Fort Hare were harsh, they compared favourably to those at contemporary black schools and colleges. While a comparison with contemporary white universities would have been more appropriate, the object of student dissatisfaction was more often Kerr's authoritarianism than the bleak conditions.

Kerr's approach to the development of black university education in South Africa has illuminating parallels with the early development of women's education in England, where Carol Dyhouse observes that many pioneers were

> inspired by a religious sense of mission, moved by something very close to the conventual impulse. They all saw their own studies and careers very much in terms of service to God, a divine calling.[146]

Kerr's style of leadership elicited a mixed response from students. Many were irritated by the emphasis on compulsory religious observance, and this provided the focus for a wide range of other problems. The staff at Kerr's Fort Hare seem to have held different perceptions to students about the nature and extent of staff authority, and seem to have expected students to have been as deferential as their contemporaries at white universities. But the students were already older than their white student contemporaries, and by the nature of their experiences outside of the university, more politicised, and they chafed against the paternalistic constraints placed on student activity. As Nelson Mandela, a student at Fort Hare for two years before he was expelled in late 1940, recalled:

---

145. Duminy, JP, MC Botha and EH Brookes (1955) *Report of the Fort Hare Commission*, Lovedale Press, Alice.
146. Dyhouse, C (1984) 'Storming the citadel or storm in a tea cup? The entry of women into higher education 1860-1920' in Acker, S and Piper, DW (eds.) *Is higher education fair to women?* Society for Research on Higher Education, p58.

> In those days Fort Hare was little better than a high school ... the Principal was a well informed man, but of course he was white, and he had his own conception of ho· iack students should develop.[147]

Similarly, Es'kia Mphahlele observes that

> The missionary morality which informed campus life at Fort Hare is not much admired now ... and even students who were students during the forties and fifties agree the church presence in the university had its irritations. Regular church attendance was compulsory. Fort Hare derived from historical Calvinism and was run like a glorified boarding school.[148]

Mandela was also riled by the expectation that Fort Hare students were required to be humbly appreciative of the charitable efforts made 'on their behalf':

> Fort Hare ... was a missionary college. We were exhorted to obey God, respect the political authorities and be grateful for the educational opportunities afforded to us by the Church and the Government.[149]

Godfrey Pitje, a student at Fort Hare in the late forties, recalls that

> Prayers and church-going were compulsory. It was awkward, because there were Hindus and Muslims. Non-Christians were forced by the college regulations to attend: the Principal personally checked up.[150]

Kerr's visio" of a Christian universalism at Fort Hare was therefore based on notions of assimilation rather than tolerance of diversity, which was inappropriate to the mix of the student body.

But Kerr's Fort Hare also had its successes and earned the quali"ed respect of the same students who resented its authoritarianism. Oliver Tambo recalled that the philosophy imparted by the institution was

> Good conduct and honour ... all of us did get the message that we were expected to leave Fort Hare and serve the people. No-one was told merely to satisfy oneself.[151]

---

147. Mandela, NR (1993) student leader, Fort Hare, 1939-40, interviewed in Johannesburg, 15 January 1993.
148. Mphahlele, E (1987) 'African Mission' in *Leadership South Africa*, p132, Volume 6, No 3, Churchill Murray Publications, Cape Town.
149. Mandela (1994) *op cit.*, p42.
150. Pitje, G (1992) student leader, Fort Hare, 1940s, interviewed in Johannesburg, 13 October 1992.
151. Tambo, *op*

Similarly, Mandela commented that for all its problems, the university college

> empowered black students to serve their community ... Fort Hare was able to groom us for the task of serving society.[152]

These comments again echo those of Dyhouse, who wrote that the early approach to women's education was that

> Learning was *not* to be seen as a form of self-development, let alone a route to personal liberation, it was an act of discipline or a form of service.[153]

Mphahlele captures the way in which Fort Hare also simultaneously empowered and disempowered its students: he writes that 'the old Fort Hare' was

> an institution of great value because students could create their own learning environment. The humanistic atmosphere gave students a sense of self. Admittedly its educational accent was not on research or enquiry but on training - for teaching, law, medicine, agriculture, theology. It produced well-groomed functionaries in the moralistic Christian tradition.[154]

Kerr's political hopes for the institution were summed up on his retirement:

> If we can learn here respect for communal gifts, mutual tolerance for group peculiarities, and safe methods of draining off the racial lightning which seems to play about the heads of most mortals in these days, we may confidently expect that the danger of racial conflict in the crude world outside will be by so much lessened.[155]

In the assessment of a former lecturer in politics at Fort Hare, Terence Beard, Kerr's ambitions for the institution were partially achieved. Beard describes Fort Hare as

> a relatively successful non-racial society, for such conflict as there was, was generated by events and conditions outside rather than inside the campus.[156]

Beard qualifies this assertion:

---

152. Mandela (1993) *op cit.*
153. *Ibid.*
154. Mphahlele *op cit.*
155. Kerr, *op cit.*
156. Beard, *op cit.*

> In so far as the community as a whole included white staff members and thus members of every racial group, and in so far as racial and ethnic discrimination was rejected by the council, whatever racism did intrude was of an individual character and not institutional.[157]

With the election of the Nationalist Government in 1948, however, Kerr felt that the time was right for him to resign. His successor was CP Dent, described by TRH White as 'benignly conservative, dull and uninspiring' and by ZK Matthews as 'temperamentally unsuited' for the job.[158] Dent's main qualification seems to have been that he had been teaching at Fort Hare for a long time: in fact, it seems that he was incapable of leading the institution in new directions in changed and rapidly changing times. With Kerr a looming presence never far away in the Hogsback, Dent continued to observe and uphold the former Principal's traditions. For example, compulsory morning prayers continued as part of 'a bracing-up process which develops character and a sense of responsibility'.[159]

Long before his departure Kerr's style resulted in mounting rebellion about domestic issues among the students. Oliver Tambo, who was the head student at Beda Hall, the Anglican hostel, recalled how a strike was organised in the hostel after the warden refused to allow students to play tennis on Sundays.[160] In 1942 another strike was organised in the hostel after the boarding master hit a hostel servant.[161] Godfrey Pitje described what happened thereafter:

> The Beda Hall students passed a resolution not to co-operate with the warden ... it took the form of not co-operating with the priest in church, with the congregation not responding. At evensong we packed the chapel. The service started but when there was no response, he cut the service.[162]

---

157. *Ibid.*
158. White, TRH (1997) 'Student disturbances at Fort Hare in 1955' in *Kleio*, XXIX, Department of History, University of South Africa, p116 and p128.
159. Quoted *Ibid.*, p132.
160. Tambo, OR (1992) student leader, Fort Hare, 1940s, interviewed in Johannesburg, 15 October 1992.
161. *Ibid.*
162. Pitje, *op cit.*

But 1948, the year of Kerr's resignation, Dent's appointment and the election of the Nationalist Government also saw the establishment of a branch of the ANC Youth League at Fort Hare under the leadership of Godfrey Pitje.[163] These three factors combined to make relationships at the campus more unpredictable and volatile. Initially, Mphahlele argues that Fort Hare was not 'a hotbed of revolt'. He points out that in 1949 Robert Sobukwe, an active founder member of the ANC Youth League branch, who had been SRC president in 1945 and who later formed the Pan Africanist Congress,

> praised the success of the elected SRC at Fort Hare and commended the patience with which the then principle, Dr Dent, always listened to its opinions.[164]

But in 1950 the college authorities were embarrassed when three quarters of the students boycotted a gathering held to honour the visit of the Governor General, Brand van Zyl. In 1952, students held a meeting to criticise Dent, Kerr's successor as Principal, for praising the Government's politically sensitive soil conservation and land reclamation schemes. When Dent refused to allow two ANC Youth Leaguers permission to attend a meeting in King Williams Town at the height of the Defiance Campaign students responded by boycotting morning prayers, only to be told by the Principal that this indicated their 'attitude of unreasonableness'.[165] Visiting preachers, both black and white, whose sermons did not meet with student approval, sometimes 'later found that their tyres have been deflated under cover of darkness'.[166]

From May to November 1954 Dent was absent from the campus on sick leave. During this period, the college was run by a triumvirate including ZK Matthews and Kerr, who had a far more tactful approach to student demands. When Dent returned, matters spiralled out of control. In 1955, there was a serious breakdown in relations between staff and students. Early in the year students had been angered

---

163. Mphahlele, *op cit.*
164. *Ibid.* Sobukwe called for the establishment of a strong department of African Studies 'if Fort Hare truly intended to be an African institution'.
165. White, *op cit.*, p117.
166. Confidential report to Fort Hare Council (1955) 'Not for publication: The Fort Hare Trouble: A narrative of events', MS 4717, Kerr Collection, Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University (hereafter MS 4717).

when the 'dour' Presbyterian warden of Iona House, James Rodger, had suggested cancelling all student entertainment as a response to an incident where a student had been injured. Iona House students compiled a list of their grievances and sent it to the churches responsible for the hostel. It concluded:

> Until and only when our grievances are all redressed, we resolve to take the offensive and to declare and maintain a permanent struggle against [the Warden's] despotism . . *we demand the immediate resignation of [the Warden] of this hostel.*[167]

When the churches demanded that the students individually retract the 'threats', the students complied, but 'the boycott of Hostel prayers and sports activities, and other forms of non-co-operation', went on as before.[168] Later in the year students boycotted the graduation ceremony. The Principal, offended and panicked, responded by closing the university for several weeks. This focused national attention on Fort Hare. When the university reopened, the Council appointed an independent Commission to investigate the functioning of the college.

The Commissioners wrote that they were

> shocked on arriving at the college to realise how bad the atmosphere really was ... an unhappy frame of mind has existed among the students for some considerable time ... A noticeable feature of student life is suspicion: suspicion of the college authorities, suspicion of many (not all) Europeans, suspicion of one another ...[169]

Godfrey Pitje also observed that there was constant mistrust, and remarked that

> Students were sensitive ... suspicious of white people including the Rector ... there was racism ... teachers were not different from whites outside the college.[170]

At the heart of the conflict between students and staff was the staff's refusal to countenance the legitimacy of student demands and their concern for national

---

167. *Ibid.*
168. *Ibid.*
169. Duminy, *op cit.*
170. Pitje, *op cit.*

political issues. First, they were simply dismissed, as contemporary white students had not yet flexed their political muscle. The attitude of the college administration can be deduced from the opinion of the commissioners, who were rather more flexible in their approach than were the Fort Hare staff:

> We feel that the students have some strange misconceptions of university freedom, demanding not that equality of treatment with European university students which we should desire to see them enjoy, but a license far in excess of anything prevailing at the European universities. This comes out particularly in the relationship between the SRC and the Senate. The humourless correspondence between these two bodies ... reads like negotiations conducted between two 'High Contracting Parties' of equal standing in an atmosphere of cold war.[171]

Second, there was little sympathy or understanding of the students' political activism:

> The exaggerated sense of self-importance of the students ... is perhaps due to the feeling that the college must be looked on as being in the vanguard of the political and racial struggle ... Those who claim freedom of speech should ... learn not to obtrude political and racial speeches into any and every kind of discussion.[172]

The commissioners, and the staff, seemed to want students to divorce their experiences within the university from those outside. In his examination of the closure of Fort Hare in 1955, TRH White argues that the

> issues of missionary paternalism, administrative and residential controls and personalities were largely unimportant when confronted with the much bigger issue of political frustration.[173]

Fort Hare's official philosophy of university education emphasised a type of Christian universalism, linked to notions of the civilising mission and assimilation into Western culture. Balintulo comments that at Fort Hare

---

171. Duminy, *op cit.*
172. *Ibid.*
173. White *op cit.*, p138.

> the overall pedagogy was essentially a domesticating one in line with the wider liberal illusions of peaceful persuasion and passive resistance in the political arena.[174]

The Fort Hare hierarchy under Kerr and Dent seems to have imposed these attitudes in a somewhat imperious way, allowing no dissent, insisting that this approach offered the only passage through dangerous waters. But students perceived that this as intolerant and insensitive, rather than an inclusive, multicultural universalism.

Beside the hostile relationship between staff and students, there were also tensions among the students. Like other small, isolated, residential universities in South Africa in the 1940s and 1950s, the student culture at Fort Hare was permeated by social pressures for political conformism. There was, at times, an element of Xhosa dominance, which calls for deeper analysis. Xhosa students accounted for the largest single ethnic group among the students at Fort Hare, generally accounting for approximately one third of the students, but rising in some years to nearly 40 per cent.[175] Godfrey Pitje, who grew up in Sekhukuneland, recalls that

> Among students the Xhosa element looked at Fort Hare as 'our college'. At mass meetings, provocative speeches were shouted down by Xhosas.[176]

There was also pressure to be politically active, and to participate in the various types of mass protest that were organised at the college:

> There is much intolerance among students, and unfortunately a considerable lack of moral courage on the part of the students generally; for many students come to Fort Hare quite ready to study and leave agitation alone, but they are easily swayed or intimidated by the ardent politicians who tend to lead the student body.[177]

But despite these tendencies and the intensity of the political debate, Fort Hare's student political culture in this period demonstrably accommodated a diversity of

---

174. Balintulo, M (1979) 'The Black universities in South Africa' in Rex, J (ed.) *Apartheid and Social Research*, Unesco Press, p146.
175. University College of Fort Hare, memorandum s/29/5/58/225, Fort Hare Collection MS PR 4118, Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University.
176. Pitje, *op cit.*
177. Duminy, *op cit.*

political opinion. While the branch of the African National Congress Youth League was active from 1948,[178] the Non European Unity Movement (NEUM) and the youth wing of the All Africa Convention, the Sons of Young Africa (Soya) were also active, but not as widely supported.

As one of the few institutions offering university education to Africans in southern Africa in this period, it is perhaps not surprising that Fort Hare, despite its paternalistic administration, produced senior leaders of African political movements, of a wide range of political persuasions, throughout the sub continent. The political philosophy of the institution was contradictory, and had complex effects.

In October 1953, Hugh Latimer, a journalist for *The Observer* visited Fort Hare and wrote that

> Today the university college is a monument at once to the valiant endeavour of unofficial South Africans to help forward their native population - and to their prodigious failure in human relationships with it. The fruit has turned sour. Fort Hare is, or should be, an awful lesson ... of what can happen when you civilise a man and then refuse a place for him in your civilised society.[179]

### 2.4 Wits and UCT: the ambiguities of academic integration and social segregation

As has been seen above, the Smuts Government sanctioned the admission of black students to the Medical Schools of Wits and UCT, but urged them to maintain segregation in non-academic aspects of university life. Because they admitted black students they became known as the 'open' universities, although at both institutions certain faculties, such as Dentistry or Fine Arts, remained closed to black students. In essence, the universities therefore became 'open' not so much

178. Pilje, *op cit.*
179. Quoted in White, *op cit.*, p119.

because of any particularly liberal tendencies on their part but because at the start of the war Wits and UCT were the only institutions in the country offering medical training. The same considerations meant that the Medical Schools (and also the Engineering Faculties) also enrolled large numbers of students whose home language was Afrikaans. These features of student enrolment, together with the greater size of the institutions and their locations in cities meant that the experiences of students at Wits and UCT in the 1940s and early 1950s were very different from students at the institutions already described.

For the few black students in the institutions, the experience was not particularly welcoming. As Mandela recalls:

> In those days to have a black student was something very rare. In my class, for example, there were only four of us, one African and three Indians. Although the students were nice, some of them were not so sympathetic. I remember one day I came to class, I found students already sitting. I sat next to one, and he immediately collected his things and went and sat elsewhere. We had a lot of such incidents, and some of them said openly, 'we don't want to have Bantus in this class' ... but the majority of students were very good, and made me feel comfortable.[180]

As a result of experiences such as these, Mandela wrote in his autobiography that

> Despite the university's liberal values, I never felt entirely comfortable there. Always to be the only African, except for menial workers, to be regarded at best as a curiosity and at worst as an interloper, is not a congenial experience. My manner was always guarded, and I met both generosity and animosity.[181]

The discriminatory attitudes of individual students reflected and sustained the social colour bar, which Hofmeyr expected the universities to uphold, which prevented black students from participating fully in the extra mural activities of the institutions. Black students at Wits were precluded, by an official Council policy of

180. Mandela (1993) *op cit.* Also see comments by Professor Hahlo, below.
181. Mandela (1994) *op cit.*, p83.

'social segregation', from participation in social activity such as dances and all sport, except the use of one tennis court. Participation in cultural and scientific societies was permitted.[182] While there were no written rules on the subject at UCT, a similar policy was in force there.[183] Zach de Beer, then UCT SRC president, recalls composing a polemic for the student newspaper entitled 'Can I defend the right of a black student to swim in the swimming pool? The answer is No.' De Beer explained the thinking that lay behind this position:

> In those days we said in principle we recognise that there should be no social segregation either, but in the South African community if we identified ourselves with social integration we would lose the battle on a academic freedom ... so this was a matter of tactics.[184]

Although Afrikaans-speaking students were not subject to the overt discrimination faced by black students, neither institution really tried to meet their needs and many also felt alienated from the mainstream of university life. These universities were not explicitly created as English-medium institutions. The Acts establishing Wits and UCT, as with those establishing, for example, Pretoria and Stellenbosch Universities, did not specify that the universities should use a particular language as a medium of instruction or for examining, or that they should serve a particular section of the population. Nevertheless, Stellenbosch was simply claimed from the start as a home of Afrikaans intellectuals and Pretoria underwent a particular struggle of *Afrikaanswording*. The processes whereby Wits and UCT became acknowledged as English-medium institutions were more subtle. At UCT they seem to have been based on assumptions comparable to those made at Stellenbosch rather than an overt struggle as in the case of Pretoria, while Murray points out that *Afrikaanswording* at Pretoria and the Orange Free State left Wits as the only attendance university in the hinterland where tuition was available in English.

182. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p29 and pp47-48.
183. Legassick (1967) *op cit*, p12.
184. De Beer, *op cit.*

As the Afrikaans-medium universities took on a more overtly Afrikaner Nationalist character, Afrikaans students at the other attendance universities often expressed dissatisfaction with their position and the use of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction and tuition. According to Gerrit Viljoen, early experiments in bilingual tuition were resented in English circles and 'no English-medium university cared to promote real fusion and unity by seriously offering tuition in Afrikaans',[185] even though, from the start, both Wits and UCT expressed an explicit commitment to resolving 'racial' tension between English- and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans through a universal, inclusive and encompassing vision of university education. Neither institution was prepared to be particularly accommodating to their Afrikaans minorities. The historians of both Wits and UCT conclude that the universities failed in their avowed intention to reconcile English and Afrikaans students and so help to create a unified white South African nation. The first Principal of Wits, Jan Hofmeyr, hoped that Wits would help create a 'healthy national spirit',[186] but Murray points out that although Wits aspired to resolve tension between the English and Afrikaans sections of the white population, over the years it did little practical to support these ideals. 'There was little that was far-sighted in the University's policy towards its Afrikaans students', Murray writes,

> it wanted to promote national unity among white South Africans ... but it never really appreciated that this might mean making special provisions for Afrikaans students.[187]

Murray contrasts this failure to be proactive and develop a long term plan with the clear goals and tactic of Afrikaner Nationalists.

At Wits in the 1920s, students were able to write their exams in either official language, but otherwise the business of the university was conducted in English, and this does not seem to have aroused a reaction from Afrikaners on or off the campus. By the 1930s, however, the context changed, partly because the Hertzog Government tried to bring about complete equality between the two official

185. Viljoen, *op cit.*, p173.
186. Murray (1982) *op cit.*, p322.
187. *Ibid.*, p326

languages. The Minister of Education, DF Malan, tried to insist that tuition in the 'restricted' faculties, notably Medicine and Engineering, that were not yet available at the predominantly Afrikaans-medium institutions, should be available in both languages. Wits would not agree to this as many lecturers and students could not speak Afrikaans. (Most Afrikaans-speakers arrived at Wits having received their secondary schooling in Afrikaans but competent in English.) Wits therefore responded that it could not introduce a bilingual teaching policy. It also pointed out that a 1931 survey had found that fewer than a third of Wits Afrikaans students wanted bilingualism. Nevertheless, Wits did try to be more sensitive to the needs of Afrikaans students, by appointing Afrikaans tutors in the 'restricted' faculties and ensuring that administrative staff that had to deal with the public should be bilingual. These efforts were warmly commended by *Die Vaderland* in 1934.[188]

At UCT Afrikaans students constituted a larger minority than at Wits. In 1917, with many English-speakers away fighting the war, there may have been as many as 55 per cent Afrikaans students at UCT.[189] By 1924, the proportion of Afrikaners had dropped to about 36 per cent and settled at about 30 per cent for most of the 1930s.[190] (In comparison, at outbreak of war about quarter of Wits students were Afrikaans.[191]) During World War II the proportion of Afrikaners at UCT again rose as high as 40 per cent, but by 1947 it was down to about 23 per cent, remaining more or less constant until 1957, when Stellenbosch opened a Faculty of Medicine.[192]

From the time of its establishment as a University, UCT students campaigned for the right to answer exams in Afrikaans, for courses on the Afrikaans language and for tuition in Afrikaans. This last goal was denied, as Phillips puts it, as it would

---

188. *Ibid.*, p324.
189. Phillips (1993) *op cit.*, p116.
190. *Ibid.*, p113 and p187.
191. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p24. There were very few Afrikaans-speaking women at Wits. Until after the war there was only one Afrikaans girls high School in Johannesburg, Helpmekaar. (Tobias, F, 1992, 'The Women of Wits, 1939-1959', unpublished Honours dissertation, Department of History, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, p5.)
192. Phillips (1993) *op cit.*, p225. These figures are far higher than Legassick's estimates that between seven and ten per cent of students at the two universities in the 1950s were Afrikaans speakers.

have 'threatened the unspoken English orientation of UCT'.[193] In 1920 students set up the Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurveniging to 'further Afrikaans culture' at UCT but by the late 1920s Phillips writes that

> UCT's character as an English-medium institution was no longer in any doubt ... Afrikaners might enrol at UCT - indeed they would be welcomed - but the ethos there would remain English.[194]

With Afrikaner Nationalists campaigning for a separate Afrikaans-medium Medical School, Wits and UCT agreed to offer parallel classes for Afrikaans students on the condition that the Government bore the cost of this commitment. These were never introduced, as in 1939 the Botha Committee recommended the opening of a Medical School in Pretoria, which subsequently opened in 1943.

Phillips writes that in the 1930s and 1940s Afrikaans students did not feel at home at UCT and that they were alienated by the Smuts war policy, which gave them a 'sense of being a separate element divorced from the main Anglophile stream of student life'.[195] Phillips argues that

> Many Afrikaners at UCT felt strangers on a campus which commemorated Rhodes and Jameson in a very concrete way, a campus where they felt tolerated but not welcomed unless they spoke English.[196]

During the war, the proportion of Afrikaans students increased, as most volunteers were English-speaking. (At this time Afrikaans numbers rose so high at UCT that separate lectures were given in Afrikaans for the first two years of Engineering.[197]) This heightened ethnic tension on the campus. He says Afrikaans students were increasingly 'attracted to Stellenbosch for cultural and political reasons' and argues that

> The disaffection among Afrikaners signalled the growing failure of UCT-style 'broad South Africanism' to win the hearts and minds of that section of its students who increasingly judged the training the University provided

193. *Ibid.*, p116.
194. *Ibid.*, p117.
195. *Ibid.*, p231.
196. *Ibid.*, p192.
197. *Ibid.*, p298.

as vitiated by the putatively liberal, Anglocentric ethos within which it was offered.[198]

Although the ANSB and Afrikaner Nationalists suggested they had the support of all Afrikaans students at Wits and UCT, many of these Afrikaans students did not support the groups who claimed to speak on their behalf. Murray contests that the Wits ANSB was more Nationalist than Ossewa Brandwag, but that it did not successfully mobilise Afrikaans students. It never had much presence on the SRC and a 1943 estimate by the student newspaper *WU's Views* said it only had the support of about 120 of the 750 or so Afrikaans students at Wits.[199] Some Wits ANSB campaigns assumed too much about their support and backfired. When they objected to black students in the Medical School and campaigned for complete segregation, they encouraged Pretoria and Potchefstroom to break sporting contact with Wits, which alienated many Afrikaans Wits students.[200] During the war the ANSB was explicitly anti-Semitic. It picked up on an observation by the Botha Committee that 42 per cent of the Wits Medical School was Jewish, and called for quotas on Jewish students. ANSB members also sometimes taunted Jewish students and Allied supporters at the time of Allied setbacks.

Wits students were markedly more liberal and left wing than UCT students during the war. While at UCT black students were treated as 'social pariahs' and there was overt racism to black SRC members, at Wits at this time an organised student left became a feature of campus political life. At the same time the Wits SRC became more politicised, and there was more student involvement in mass meetings. Murray claims that 'Wits was something of a liberal flag-bearer within Nusas', for example, leading for the admission of Fort Hare and in conflict with the ANSB on campus and in Pretoria. This is confirmed by Zach de Beer, who recalls that while UCT was 'certainly pro-Nusas', he said that 'the outspoken Communists were from Wits [and] even then Nusas leaned further to the left than we did'.[201]

198. *Ibid.*, p368.
199. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p90.
200. *Ibid.*, p102.
201. De Beer, *op cit.*

After the war student life at both campuses was transformed by the massive enrolments of ex-volunteers, who were not only older and more experienced than the average student, but who had also consciously chosen to fight against fascism. The Wits Principal, Humphrey Raikes, went to north Africa on behalf of all South African universities to recruit prospective students in the camps. Over half of the ex-volunteers who took up studies proceeded to Wits.[202] The ex-volunteers brought a more serious tone to the university. Rachanis describes how

> The ex-servicemen were much older than us. Some had been prisoners of war. A lot just wanted to get in and get out [and were] not involved in politics. When they left the university reverted to being a sort of super high school.[203]

Like the students of Fort Hare, the relative maturity of the student population led to more assertive dealings with the administration.

By the late 1940s, at both of the 'open' universities control of the SRCs was generally in the hands of a carefully maintained left-liberal alliance, with a more left wing emphasis at Wits. Many factors combined to foster the greater liberalism of the 'open' universities: the presence of black and older students, the urban, cosmopolitan context and feeder populations and the bigger student population, which allowed greater space for non-conforming behaviour. Legassick points out that in a larger student group, left and liberal students were at an organisational advantage, and would have experienced greater support and solidarity than isolated individuals at the smaller campuses. Legassick also implies that the considerable numbers of Jewish students, especially at Wits, was an important influence on politics there. He asserts that many of the politically active students were Jewish, but he fails to explore the reasons of this trend or its implications for student politics.[204]

---

202. Tobias, PV (1993) *op cit.*
203. Rachanis, *op cit.*
204. Legassick (1967) *op cit.*, p12.

In the late 1940s, however, left wing and liberal student politicians sometimes found themselves at odds with the administrations of the 'open' universities, which were in a contradictory and ambiguous position. On the one hand, they went against the grain of most white opinion, and later, against the express wishes of the Nationalist Government, by admitting black students. On the other hand, they would not extend full rights to all their students. The ambiguous politics of the 'open' universities engendered robust debate and a diversity of political opinion. At both universities there were outspoken supporters of positions ranging from the NP, the UP (led at Wits, for a period, by Harry Schwarz), to members of the South African Communist Party, Trotskyists and members of the Non European Unity Movement.[205]

The social and political diversity of these institutions provided a stimulating environment for student politicians. Zach de Beer, a medical student at UCT in the late 1940s, described his experience:

> Coming out of a community in those days where there was no mixing, really, at any level at all, and suddenly stepping into the university where you had these students who were treated as your equals and you knew you were expected to treat them as such ... it was quite an exciting experience simply to talk on terms of equal dignity and equal intellectuality with people of colour.[206]

Phillip Tobias, who was a Wits medical student at about the same time, expressed similar recollections:

> Their presence [black students] created an image of equality in the minds of students without speeches ... just living non-segregation or non-racism ... was more of a converting factor in the minds of people than any other possible campaign or programme ... friendships with black students were a remarkable revelation for blue-eyed white South Africans.[207]

It is notable that both De Beer and Tobias were medical students. The Medical Schools were particularly cosmopolitan sections of the 'open' universities, as they

---

205. De Beer, *op cit.*
206. *Ibid.*
207. Tobias, PV (1993) *op cit.*

had denser concentrations of black and Afrikaans students and brought students together for intensive, close work over years of professional training.

Mandela commented on the effect of this diversity on his own political consciousness:

> My ideas were enriched by contact with other students ... The Communist students made a great impact because on all questions which affected black students they were the most progressive, they were the most supportive, very consistently. And that is why I have had this respect for the Communist Party right through. Because at a time of need, when very few students wanted to come close to us, people like Joe Slovo were very good, and Tony O'Dowd, Harold Wolpe, Arthur Goldreich, Ruth First, they were first class. They really protected you, befriended you, and made you think that you're a human being.[208]

At neither institution was there a separate black student organisation. Black students participated on faculty councils and on the SRC, and took part in delegations representing their campuses at Nusas congresses. For many black students, their primary identification was with other black people rather than with their fellow students, who were mostly white, and some were active in national political organisations such as the ANC and issues such as the Defiance Campaign.[209]

The 'liberal' position of the administrations of the 'open' universities seems therefore to have developed almost by default. There is no doubt, however, that as the Nationalist Government began to infringe the accepted rights of the universities, the administrations clarified and concretised their positions, often moving in a more liberal direction. Student leaders therefore recall that the universities projected an image of liberal leadership. Zach de Beer recalls that the guiding philosophy imparted by UCT was that

---

208. Mandela (1993) *op cit.*
209. De Beer, *op cit.*; Tobias, PV (1993) *op cit.*

> White people in South Africa must be conscious of their very great privilege and they must give of their talents to less fortunate members of the community: it was slightly paternalistic perhaps, but none the less genuinely liberal and generous, tolerant ... The university was a citadel of enlightenment. There was a sense of excitement about being there, and you felt that you were privileged to be there.[210]

Similarly Chris Rachanis, who was Wits SRC president in 1956, said that

> The university wanted to impart ... that there should be freedom of speech on the campus, and no colour bar in education. They gave the lead in standing up against the government ... within the confines of the law.[211]

In the late 1940s the 'liberalism' of the administrations of the 'open' universities was distorted by paternalism and subservience to racist law. As RF Hoernlé, the Wits philosopher who later headed the Institute of Race Relations, wrote in 1943, UCT and Wits remained

> the organs of a dominant white group content with the place which it has built for itself at the top of the Union's racial-caste structure.[212]

## 2.5 Gender and university education in the early 1950s

Another aspect of the relations of power in the cultures and practices of the universities was that of gender. Hardly any data is available from official or published university sources that could illuminate the subject, and the resulting vacuum has not been addressed with original research. An exception is the 1992 Honours dissertation by Felicia Tobias on women at Wits between 1939 and 1959.[213] In a background chapter of this nature, it is possible only to indicate some of the data that is available, which are rich in avenues for future research.

---

210. *Ibid.*
211. Rachanis, C (1992) student leader, University of the Witwatersrand, 1950s, interviewed in Johannesburg, 12 November 1992.
212. Phillips (1993) *op cit.*, p369.
213. Tobias, F, *op cit.*

In the period under review the numbers of women enrolled at university were low, constituting about one fifth of the student population. A breakdown of this figure is given in Table 2.11.

| Table 2.11: Gender of students, 1955[214] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Population group | Total student registrations | Total women students | % women students |
| African | 1 521 | 124 | 8 |
| Coloured | 474 | 61 | 13 |
| Indian | 873 | 80 | 9 |
| White | 25 033 | 5 577 | 22 |
| Total | 27 901 | 5 842 | 21 |

The causes of low women's enrolments at university are complex, originating both on and off the campuses, and reflecting sexual divisions in the society as a whole. The proportion of girl pupils who reached the most senior level of schooling (given in Table 2.11) was an important determinant on the proportion of women students at university.

| Table 2.12: Girls in Standard X, 1955[215] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | African | Coloured and Indian | White |
| Number of girls | 142 | 193 | 6017 |
| % girls | 21 | 18 | 55 |
| Total pupils in Std. X | 674 | 1 094 | 10 883 |

Table 2.11 shows that African women constituted less than ten per cent of African student enrolments and that white women constituted over 20 per cent of white student enrolments. Table 2.12 shows that the comparable categories of school leavers accounted for 21 per cent and 55 per cent respectively. Thus while a far higher proportion of white girls than African girls completed schooling to university entrance level, the proportions of women students of both population groups at university was half that of school leaving levels. (One of the reasons for the lower proportion of African girls, as compared with white girls, in Standard X could be the policy, in the 1940s and 1950s, that made education for white school children compulsory, but not for black school children.[216])

214. My calculations, based on EAS, *op cit.*
215. My calculations, based on Bureau of Statistics, *op cit.*
216. Unterhalter, *op cit.*

The halving of the rate of women's enrolments between school and university is the result of a complex web of causes, all influenced by, and in turn reinforcing, the generally subordinate position of women of all population groups in these times. It is possible that a higher proportion of women than men eligible for admission chose not to proceed to university. Family, peer group, school and church pressures may have discouraged prospective women students, and as a result, eligible women students may have chosen not to study at university, preferring to pursue other options, perhaps perceiving the benefits of university education differently to prospective men students. Financial support from these sources may have been less forthcoming for women. Educating women at university was often seen as a 'waste' of both time and money, as women were generally expected to spend their adult lives in unpaid employment in the home. General analysis of the position of women in higher education suggests that when fewer qualified women than men enrol it is because women place a low value on the education offered, or on themselves and their ab" .s. It is also suggested that the education offered may be perceived to be unsuitable for women, or that it is perceived that it would not lead to particular advantage.[217]

On the other hand, given the gender bias in patterns of employment at this time, especially the poor representation of women in the professions, why did so many women choose to pursue university study? Until detailed research is conducted, it can be contended that in many cases women students, and those who paid their fees and maintained them, believed that the education they received at university had a value not only related to improved employment prospects.

Women were also treated differently by the universities themselves. There is little evidence either to support or refute the contention that a lower proportion of women applicants were accepted than men applicants by South African universities in general, although Felicia Tobias argues that no quota was applied to women students' enrolments at Wits. Felicia Tobias affirms that as early as the 1880s

217. Piper, DW (1984) 'The question of fairness', in Acker and Piper, *op cit.*

women students had been accepted at all the university colleges then in existence, and colleges which were founded subsequently also admitted women.[218] But while women were not specifically excluded, the universities were generally seen as part of the world of men: Alexander Kerr, the first Principal of Fort Hare, was surprised when a few women arrived in the first small group of students, and they were obliged to share cramped quarters with the matron as a need for boarding facilities for women had not been anticipated.[219] In general, far fewer residential places were available for women than for men students, for example, in 1946 there were 5 691 official university residence places available at South Africa's universities. Only 35 per cent of these were for women.[220] An exception to this masculine orientation of the universities was the Huguenot University College, which was established in 1898 'to provide women with a Christian educati... ...elds like teaching and domestic science',[221] but which was no longer vi... the late 1940s.

The universities themselves also contributed to the patterns of women's enrolments. In the 1940s and 1950s over two thirds of women at Wits were enrolled in the Faculty of Arts. This pattern of enrolment was perpetuated, if not entirely created, by staff attitude. Chris Rachanis recalled that 'there were few women in dentistry ... some members of staff really did not think that women should be dentists'.[222] Felicia Tobias relates that there were similar attitudes in Law:

> Professor Hahlo, the Dean of the Law Faculty, is remembered by his students as a rather distant, cold personage who did not encourage an increase of women in the faculty. He claimed that they were unsuited to law and held the opinion that law was better left to white men.[223]

From 1949 Felicia Tobias argues that a selection committee decided to restrict the entry of women to medical training at Wits to between 20 and 22 per cent of

218. Tobias, F, *op cit.*
219. Kerr, *op cit.*
220. My calculations, based on UED, *op cit.*
221. Quoted in Tobias, F, *op cit.*, p4.
222. Rachanis, *op cit.*
223. Tobias, F, *op cit.*, p69.

overall enrolments, but she provides no references for this point, and this is contradicted elsewhere in her work.[224]

University practices which restricted women in their choice of courses and staff attitudes which dissuaded women from following courses nominally open to them have not been examined at all at other universities. The same applies to the progress of women to advanced study.

The universities may also have favoured men students when financial assistance was dispensed.[225] Felicia Tobias comments that

> It would seem that women were not denied educational opportunities at Wits but that academically strong women had to fight the belief that they were destined to short-lived academic careers when they applied for scholarships.[226]

In addition, Felicia Tobias points out that some scholarships were closed to women, such as the Rhodes scholarships, or were tenable only in fields where few women were enrolled, such as engineering and mining.

As has been seen above, in the 1940s and 1950s the relations between staff and students were often formal and conservative. The implications differed for men and women students. Intolerance of non-conformist behaviour and the insistence on social conservatism limited the extent to which women students could adapt to and thrive in the universities. There were dress codes restricting women from wearing trousers,[227] residence rules limiting the free movement and association of women students, and even rules, at Fort Hare, which prevented men and women from dining together.[228] Women arriving at Sunnyside Women's Residence at Wits in 1947 were reminded by the Dean that

---

224. *Ibid.*, pp68-69.
225. Murray (1982) *op cit.*
226. Tobias, F, *op cit.*, p15.
227. Rachanis, *op cit.*
228. Pitje, *op cit.*

> The public sets different standards for men and women. Men may sow their wild oats and be forgiven and forgotten. In these modern times a girl who does the same may be forgiven but not forgotten.[229]

Felicia Tobias suggests that the context of this address was the increase in sexual activity among students that accompanied the influx of ex-volunteers. Currey relates that the administrators of Rhodes University College were similarly concerned about the effect of the presence of ex-volunteers on the young women they saw as being in their charge.[230]

Phillips' history of UCT provides rich detail about the women's involvement in student politics. He writes that although the number of women at UCT increased during the war, this

> raised few eyebrows, for most offered no challenge to the social or academic status quo as such, as they carefully observed society's prevailing code of female subordination.[231]

Phillips says that women students were characterised as 'apathetic, empty-headed and passive, with little interest in topical issues or the SRC', although there was a handful of 'avowed feminists' who tried to buck the trend.[232] As more women were elected to the SRC during the war, in 1943 position of 'Senior Women Student' on the UCT SRC was abolished, with women hoping that the 'previous and false distinction between student affairs and women's affairs' would be removed:

> Women's conviction that they had no need of minority rights and that their interests would be attended to by the SRC is indicative of their optimistic attitude during the war.[233]

But the proportion of women students, and their representation on the SRC, dropped with the influx of the ex-volunteers. In 1943-44 there were seven women on the SRC, but this dropped to five in 1945-46 and three in 1949-50.[234] This trend

---

229. Quoted in Tobias, F, *op cit.*, p45.
230. Currey, *op cit.*
231. Phillips *op cit.*, p235.
232. *Ibid.*, p235.
233. *Ibid.*, pp32-33.
234. *Ibid.*, p38.

was indicative of a 'period of slow but certain retreat' for women students and staff. 'It appears that every year, women lost a little more of the ground they had gained'. By the early 1950s, Phillips observes that although women were still active on the newspaper and in political structures, they never held the top positions of Editor or SRC President. Felicia Tobias also observes that women at Wits took advantage of the changing attitudes during the war to promote women on campus, but she concludes, like Phillips, that they 'did not make any lasting gains'.[235]

Phillips also points out that while the rise of the left on campus did not inhibit any progress women wished to make, it was not especially concerned to promote their status.[236] This attitude is summed up in a statement by Ruth First, who was probably the most prominent woman student politician of any political persuasion of her day, that 'on a South African campus the student issues that matter are national issues'.[237] The status of women was simply not an issue of pressing relevance for student activists.

In the absence of consistent student pressure, the university administrations also failed to take the lead with regard to the status of women on the campuses. They set a discriminatory example by treating women staff members differently: terms of employment changed when they married (married women at Wits were refused permanent posts until 1966[238]). They were obliged to retire at 55 instead of 60. Margaret Ballinger (formerly Hodgson, see Chapter 4 for her involvement as a Native Representative in the Commission on the Separate University Education Bill) was forced to retire from her position as history lecturer when she married in 1934. Murray points out that the Wits Principal, Raikes, 'did not bother' to refer Ballinger's request for exemption from being forced to retire to the Wits Council.[239]

---

235. *Ibid.*, p30.
236. *Ibid.*, p41.
237. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p85.
238. Tobias, F, *op cit.*, p54.
239. Murray (1982) *op cit.*, p330.

Very few women occupied senior academic positions. Table 2.13 gives the numbers of women occupying different levels of posts in the university hierarchies in 1948.

| Table 2.13: Percentage of women academic staff members, analysed by level of post, 1948[240] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men | | Women | | Total |
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number |
| Professors | 286 | 97 | 10 | 3 | 296 |
| Senior and other lecturers | 1 021 | 82 | 222 | 18 | 1 243 |
| Other | 567 | 59 | 390 | 41 | 957 |

Ellen Hellman's 1944 survey of the position of women academics found that the bar to women's academic progress was not stipulated in the letter of university rules and regulations, but was applied consistently in practice.[241] Table 2.14 shows that very little variation across the institutions can be observed: in the matter of women staff, the 'open' universities did not pursue a less discriminatory policy. Felicia Tobias contends that at Wits both the Principal and the majority of the Council 'simply did not believe that women could successfully combine marriage and a chair'.[242]

| Table 2.14: Women holding position of head of department, 1948[243] | | |
|---|---|---|
| Institution | Numbers of Departments | Number of women holding position |
| Cape Town | 56 | 1 |
| Fort Hare | 16 | 0 |
| Natal | 29 | 3 |
| Orange Free State | 51 | 4 |
| Potchefstroom | 56 | 3 |
| Pretoria | 123 | 1 |
| Rhodes | 28 | 1 |
| Stellenbosch | 56 | 5 |
| Witwatersrand | 87 | 1 |

Where women were the head of department, the department was often lightweight academically: at the University College of the Orange Free State, for example,

240. My calculations, based on Bureau of Statistics, *op cit.*
241. Tobias, F, *op cit.*, p10.
242. *Ibid.*
243. My calculations, based on University of Cape Town (1948) *op cit.*; South African Native College (1945) *op cit.*; University College of Natal (1948) *op cit.*; University College of the Orange Free State (1948) *op cit.*; Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education (1948) *op cit.*; University of Pretoria (1948) *op cit.*; Rhodes University College (1948) *op cit.*; University of Stellenbosch (1948) *op cit.*; University of the Witwatersrand (1948) *op cit.*

women headed the Departments of Typewriting, Needlework, Elocution and Drawing. The absence of women in senior posts meant that the example of academic success was seldom available as a role model for young women students. Felicia Tobias points out that in the 1940s a cluster of senior women students collected around senior women staff members in the Department of Botany at Wits.

Felicia Tobias concludes her study with the contention that

> Women were never really discriminated against in the academic sphere until they reached the stage of applying for academic posts or for the prestigious scholarships which some men felt would have been wasted on a future wife and mother.[244]

This assertion is based on the presumption that discrimination stems only from the letter of university rules and regulations. But women students were also discriminated against and discouraged with a repertoire of other less formal practices, in particular the sexist assumptions of staff members, as Felicia Tobias herself demonstrates in some detail.

This discussion has provided only a superficial indication of the gender inequality in university education in the 1940s and 1950s. Until more thorough research has been conducted, it will not be possible to assess the role of gender within the different social and political cultures of the universities.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Although the 'model' of university education assumed by the Smuts Government was one of undifferentiated universalism, their policy of respecting university autonomy over internal affairs allowed for a wide range of institutional cultures. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the position of black and women students in the universities and the broader political and social cultures of the universities reflected the variants of political and social cultures current in South Africa. Although these

244. Tobias, F, *op cit.*, p42.

cultures were in many cases extensions of national trends, the campus environment seems to have intensified and sharpened political difference. On the other hand, the universities were not completely porous to every social current in the country. They were distinct, generating their own momentum of tradition and political cultures, and in turn they influenced the broader political climate of the country. Within some of the universities, assumptions about universalism, inadequately expressed and imperfectly applied, seem to have engendered resentment among those who felt excluded and alienated from a supposedly inclusive philosophy. This created political flashpoints among Afrikaans students at the formerly dual medium institutions and also among the minority of Afrikaners at the English-medium universities, as well as among the black students at Fort Hare, at the 'open' universities and the University of Natal.

The policy of the Smuts Government was to yield to the universities the autonomy to diverge from the main current of white political power while failing to accommodate the claims of black students to university education. The response of the Nationalists was a far more interventionist policy for the universities. The requirements of black students were central to their plans for the reorganisation of university education, rather than evaded. In the same sweep, the concession of political autonomy to the 'open' universities was to be retracted.

## Chapter 3

## A 'difficult and delicate matter': Conflicts within the National Party about apartheid at universities, 1945 - 1955[1]

When the National Party (NP),[2] in alliance with the Afrikaner Party, won the general election in 1948, it had two areas of work with regard to university education. One was the outstanding agenda of the Smuts Government: to reorganise the University of South Africa, provide facilities for black medical training, and to untangle the problems of university finances. The second task was to harness university education within the yoke of apartheid. In this chapter it is argued that in its first term of office, the apartheid Cabinet of Prime Minister Dr DF Malan worked briskly through the unfinished work of the Smuts Government, but that progress towards the implementation of the second goal, which was arguably more politically urgent for the NP with its slender electoral majority, was more complex and less streamlined.

The apartheid overhaul of university education in the early years of NP rule was hindered by a lack of a hegemonic concept in the Cabinet and among apartheid intellectuals about how and why to extend apartheid to university education. 'Apartheid' as a concept was also loosely defined and meant different things to different groups of Nationalists. This was compounded by an absence of leadership from the Minister of Education, JH Viljoen. This chapter examines the early views of NP intellectuals, including those of Nationalist MPs while in opposition, the authors of the Sauer Report, academic staff based at the University of South Africa (Unisa) and in the Afrikaans-medium universities, members of the South African Bureau for Racial Affairs (Sabra, a research group established by the Broederbond in 1947 to propagate apartheid) and officials in the Native Affairs Department (NAD). In the early 1950s their views were widely divergent and were aired in their attempts to find a common interpretation of university apartheid, but as late

1. The Minister of Education, Arts and Science, JH Viljoen, spoke in Parliament in August 1953 about 'the difficult and delicate matter ... of non-Europeans in our universities'. See below.
2. In 1951, the National Party (NP) was formed when the Herenigde Nasionale Party and the Afrikaner Party combined. In this chapter, for simplicity, the name NP is used to refer to the HNP before 1951 as well.

as mid 1955, their efforts resulted in no concrete achievements. With the NP in government, the inclusion of intellectuals in 'amateur' Nationalist policy making generally waned, but university policy was clearly a legitimate area for academic involvement. Indeed, the intense debates among Nationalist intellectuals about university policy also provided a vehicle for a broader debate, about the nature of apartheid itself. This period of diffuse ideas ended abruptly in 1955, when Verwoerd effectively put himself and the NAD at the helm of the policy, to adapt it to changing circumstances and to steer it through the legislative process.

### 3.1 The reorganisation of Unisa, the establishment of the Natal Medical School and the Holloway Commission into university finances

In line with recommendations made by the Brookes Commission on the future of Unisa, four of the remaining constituent colleges of Unisa, namely the University Colleges of Natal, Rhodes, the Orange Free State and Potchefstroom, were granted independence between 1948 and 1950. The Huguenot College closed. As it no longer had any constituent colleges, Unisa became a correspondence university. The University had for some time enrolled 'external' students; these now became the only students enrolled through Unisa.

The granting of independence to the four new universities was not, however, simply an administrative change. Two of the universities were responsible for the university education of black students, and their approach needed to harmonise with the apartheid policies of the new Nationalist Government. The University of Natal enrolled both black and white students, but in segregated classes, and would be the home of the new segregated Medical School where only black students could enrol. The terms of the Rhodes University Act included transfer of responsibility for Fort Hare from Unisa to Rhodes. By the time Rhodes was granted independence it had not admitted any black students, but in 1949 the Rhodes Senate refused to accept an Act which specifically excluded black students. A compromise was found that was acceptable to the Rhodes Senate, which was

that it would not admit black students to courses that were available at Fort Hare.[3] Thus both of the institutions were prepared to practice segregation, and not openly defy apartheid ideals in the way that the 'open' universities were, but neither university was enthusiastic about apartheid. Within a decade, the Nationalist Government sought to remove responsibility for black students from these institutions, but in the late 1940s, Malan's Cabinet and the NP were prepared to assent to both of these arrangements.

The change of government was also significant for the granting of independence to the two Afrikaans-medium university colleges, the Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education and the University College of the Orange Free State. Unlike all other universities in South Africa, Potchefstroom had a declared Christian character. The institution had been established as an initiative of the Afrikaans churches, and Christian support, both institutional and personal, had been important in providing financial assistance to the University College over the years. When it came to granting the institution independence, the college wanted its Christian character to be reflected in its founding Act, by the omission of the 'Conscience Clause'. However, the application of religious tests to staff or students had been prohibited since 1916 when the first university legislation for the Union was passed, a principle which was confirmed in the Higher Education Act (No 30 of 1923) and by the inclusion of the Conscience Clause in every other university founding Act passed in South Africa. However, the removal of the Conscience Clause from educational legislation was a cornerstone of the policy of Christian National Education (CNE, see below).[4] When legislation was presented in 1949 for granting independence to the University College of the Orange Free State, the Conscience Clause was omitted, but the 'mistake' was rectified by the NP without a fight as soon as objections were raised by the United Party (UP) members.[5] The circumstances surrounding the introduction of the Potchefstroom legislation were different. The Bill was introduced by the Afrikaner Party Member

3. Currey, RF (1970) *Rhodes University 1904-1970*, p112, Rustica Press, Wynberg, Cape.
4. See discussion of CNE below.
5. Union of South Africa (1950) *House of Assembly Debates*, Col 1946, 24 February, Cape Town (hereafter HAD).

of Parliament for Potchefstroom, Dr JH Steyn. Steyn presented a powerful and subtle argument for the right for Potchefstroom to be different, and to maintain its Christian tradition. Potchefstroom did not want to discriminate between students, but it wanted the right to employ only Christian staff members, although no denominational test would be applied. Several UP members, including Smuts, supported Steyn's approach.[6] However Steyn was fiercely opposed by another UP member, Dr Abraham Jonker, who argued that where an institution drew on state funds, it should be blind to denomination and creed.[7] (Jonker later became a Nationalist MP and his role in the closure of the Rhodes University branch in Port Elizabeth is discussed in Chapter 6.) It is not clear from this debate, which split the UP, whether a UP-dominated Parliament would have allowed the legislation to pass without the Conscience Clause, but it is clear that the NP majority made its passage certain, if controversial.

In 1950, after three decades of attempts to organise medical training for black students, the Nationalist Government sanctioned the establishment of a Medical School for black students at Natal University. In 1922 the medical missionary, Dr JB McCord, had tried to set up a medical school to train Zulus, not as fully qualified doctors, but as practitioners with lower qualifications. In 1928 a committee appointed by the NAD under CT Loram, a former Chief Inspector of Native Education in Natal and a member of the Union Native Affairs Committee, recommended that Africans should be offered full medical training to become doctors by the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) Medical School staff, but in a separate institution.[8] When this failed to materialise, training for Medical Aides was organised and some qualified after training at Fort Hare, at Lovedale's Victoria Hospital and at McCord Hospital in Durban. The scheme failed badly because graduates were tied to working for the government only.[9] In 1938 the Government set up a committee to investigate medical training for Africans, and by

---

6. *The Star*, 18 March 1950.
7. *Ibid.*
8. See Murray, BK (1982) *Wits: The Early Years*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 302-303.
9 See Shapiro, K (1987) 'Doctors or Medical Aides: The debates over the training of black medical personnel for the rural black population in South Africa in the 1920s and 1930s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No 2.

the mid 1940s the Natal Council was officially promoting the foundation of a medical school for Africans under its administration. When this plan was put before Hofmeyr, the Minister of Education, he repeatedly prevaricated, preferring Johannesburg over Durban as the location for the Medical School. In 1947 Smuts asked Hofmeyr to provide the necessary financial support for Durban, but the UP Government was ousted before this could be acted upon.

The NP Government provided a special subsidy for Natal University to set up the Medical School and it opened in 1951, but it applied stringent conditions of segregation. The University had wanted to admit white undergraduates with the Minister's permission, and it wanted the right to admit white postgraduates without first seeking special permission. The Government refused both of these requests.[10] The University recognised that its role was primarily to train black doctors and did not wish to compete with established Medical Schools elsewhere in the country for white students. However, the Council thought that in 'exceptional cases' (such as preparing to become missionary doctors) white students would need to learn to work 'with and among Africans', or they might wish to conduct research on tropical diseases. They also expected that there would be a demand by white doctors for postgraduate training in the Durban area. Furthermore, the Council thought that it was a breach of the right entrenched in its University Act, which granted the University alone the power to decide who should be admitted.[11] The Department of Education replied that the University was

> not expected to abrogate its right entrenched in the University Act by which it alone has the power to decide who shall be admitted to the University but merely to exercise this right in a spirit of co-operation as far as admission to the Medical Faculty is concerned.

However, they insisted that the state had the right to make these demands as it was providing the funding.[12] Eventually it was agreed that white students could be

---

10. Brookes, EH (1966) *A history of the University of Natal*, p83, Natal University Press, Pietermaritzburg.
11. Malherbe to Secretary of Education, Natal University, 26 August 1950, in Gordon, I (1957a) *Report on the government's intended action to remove the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Natal*, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg..
12. Op't Hof, J, Acting Secretary for Education, to Malherbe, 12 September 1950, in Gordon (1957a) *op cit.*

admitted to the MD degree with ministerial permission, although before 1957 none were admitted.[13]

In the area of university finances, after an uncertain start the new Government resolved the problems by adopting a stable and workable formula.[14] By the middle of 1948, the subsidy formula adopted three years earlier was failing. The University Advisory Committee developed a new formula which was accepted by the Minister of Education but rejected by the Treasury, which took the further step of pegging government funding to the universities at £1.1 million (R2.2 million) for 1949, 1950 and 1951, although various *ad hoc* grants were made as well.[15] The NP Government demonstrated its commitment to university education by allocating a larger portion of the budget to the sector each year, as is demonstrated in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Expenditure on university education as a proportion of total state expenditure, 1948-1960[16]

| Financial year, ending March | Total estimated expenditure, pounds | Expenditure on universities, pounds | % of total expenditure spent on universities |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1948 | 122 938 981 | 770 000 | 0.63 |
| 1949 | 133 132 266 | 887 750 | 0.67 |
| 1950 | 144 415 737 | 1 030 620 | 0.71 |
| 1951 | 158 531 533 | 1 254 830 | 0.79 |
| 1952 | 194 324 216 | 1 374 145 | 0.71 |
| 1953 | 215 612 313 | 1 825 665 | 0.85 |
| 1954 | 234 272 540 | 2 324 065 | 0.99 |
| 1955 | 259 132 823 | 2 642 456 | 1.02 |
| 1956 | 254 847 730 | 2 686 470 | 1.05 |
| 1957 | 271 498 000 | 2 870 450 | 1.06 |
| 1958 | 282 849 300 | 3 163 000 | 1.12 |
| 1959 | 297 204 400 | 3 947 500 | 1.33 |
| 1960 | 313 760 350 | 4 466 600 | 1.42 |

Besides increasing the funds available, the NP Government also radically reworked the formula for university subsidies. In 1951 Dr JE Holloway (see below), who had

13. Gordon (1957a) *op cit.* The observance of apartheid was strictly enforced at the Medical School. White sister-tutors were trained in hospital premises directly adjacent to the Medical School as Medical School accommodation was closed to them. Viljoen is reported to have agreed that this was an absurd formality, but by way of explanation confided that 'jy moet onthou dat ek onder druk werk'. Brookes (1966) *op cit.*, p84.
14. This discussion of university finance is primarily based on Brookes (1966) *op cit.*
15. See Chapter 2 for discussion of university financing before the Holloway formula was adopted.

recently retired after thirteen years as Secretary of Finance,[17] was appointed to lead an investigation into university finances. Holloway was asked to examine several components that affected financing, including staffing, accommodation and equipment, research, student numbers, fees, accommodation charges and bursaries. All of these aspects were to be considered in the light of

> the freedom and autonomy of the universities as statutory bodies, and ... the necessity of safeguarding the state against unrestricted financial obligations.[18]

The Holloway formula was based on three components: a basic subsidy, a standard provision and a 'standard fee' income. It is not the place here to discuss the details of this scheme; a comprehensive account is provided in Edgar Brookes' *History of the University of Natal*. The Nationalist Government adopted the formula in May 1953, effective from the beginning of that year, and was used with only minor modifications until the mid 1980s. The Holloway subsidy formula thus brought a long period of stability to university finances after decades of turmoil, a considerable achievement in the NP's first term in office.

The record of the NP Government in dispatching the unfinished business of the Smuts Government was decisive and efficient, providing an early indication of how interventionist they would be in education. In formulating and pursuing its own agenda, the incorporation of the universities into apartheid planning, the NP was less decisive.

### 3.2 NP views on universities before the 1948 election victory

The NP ideologues concerned with university apartheid were united by their commitment to the NP and to the general idea of apartheid. Although the content of the apartheid slogan was not defined by 1948 and evolved flexibly over the following four decades of NP rule, in general it can be argued that Afrikaner

---

16. My calculations, based on Department of Finance (1947-1960) *Estimates of the expenditure to be defrayed from revenue funds, second and final print*, Union of South Africa, Cape Town.
17. Beyers, CJ (ed.) (1981) *Dictionary of South African Biography*, p357, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria.
18. Brookes (1966) *op cit* , p83.

Nationalists aimed to bring about white, particularly Afrikaner, prosperity and political power, and to refine and entrench the segregation of population groups by political and social programmes. These were powerful ideas, that glued together the alliance even though the economic implications of these aims, particularly for the position of the urban African working class, were subject to different interpretations and pressures by diverse Afrikaner Nationalist interests throughout the period examined in this thesis.

With regard to university education, Nationalists were opposed to the *saamboerdery*[19] of the 'open' universities. There was less clarity about whether the government had a responsibility to provide university education for black students, and if so, how it should be organised. Some Nationalists thought that any black education beyond the most basic was neither a political priority nor in the country's economic interests: for example, JN le Roux, later NP Minister of Agriculture, questioned the wisdom of educating Africans beyond the level required to perform manual labour:

> We should not give the natives an academic education, as some people are too prone to do. If we do this, we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labour in the country? ... we should so conduct our schools that the native who attends these schools will know that to a great extent he will be the labourer in the country.[20]

Similarly, another MP, SA Cilliers, said

> I am very anxious about the position unless we lay down a very sound policy regarding native education. The reason is this: if we go a little too far in respect of the suggestion made here that some of the children on the *platteland* should attend school, the future of South African agriculture may in my opinion drift into a very precarious position.[21]

19. Literally 'mixed farming', a derogatory reference to integration.
20. HAD (1945) 2 April, col. 4528.
21. *Ibid.*, col. 4518.

Had the views of Cilliers and Le Roux been dominant in the NP, it is conceivable that an education policy which denied even secondary, let alone tertiary, education to black students would have been the result.

Most Nationalists, however, accepted that the government had a responsibility to provide education, including university education, for black students, on the basis of the responsibilities of 'white trusteeship'. Trusteeship, an idea closely linked to segregation, originated in the inter-war English-speaking tradition of liberal thought and was based on the premise that a 'more advanced' white group was responsible for the welfare of a 'less civilised' black population group. White 'trustees' were to take a benevolent lead in meeting the needs of their black 'wards'. In his study of the intellectual underpinnings of apartheid, Saul Dubow argues that the political connotations of the concept shifted when George Heaton Nicholls, 'a radical anti-liberal segregationist', advocated trusteeship as an alternative to calls in the Cape for a common franchise and broader Parliamentary democracy. For Nicholls, trusteeship envisaged

> areas where native interests will be paramount, where native institution will have liberty to evolve in consonance with the growth of the native people.[22]

Nicholls' ideas, particularly those concerning 'native areas', appealed to Nationalists while causing difficulties between Nicholls and Smuts.[23] For the UP in 1948, trusteeship implied that the government should educate more white students, so that they could take up professional, leadership and managerial positions, with responsibility for the country's entire population. The emphasis for Nationalists was different because their stated aim was to scale down white responsibility in the 'native areas', and to supervise the development of black professionals, leaders and managers to take their place.[24]

---

22. Quoted in Dubow, S (1991) *Racial segregation and the origins of apartheid in South Africa, 1919-1936*, p145, Macmillan and St Antony's College, London, Oxford.
23. *Ibid.*
24. In the development of the ideas of university apartheid, the question of wh assumed the role of trustee in the matter of the provision of university education was addressed. Ultimately the notion was overhauled to exclude the churches, leaving the state, in particular the NAD, in the role of trustee. This entailed removing responsibility for bl university education from the Department of Education. Another aspect of the question of trusteeship co governance of the institutions, and the circumscribed role of black leadership within the institut ganisation of the univers ties, and whether they should be arranged on a federal basis, linked t supervised by a parent white institution, were all considered.

This was typical of the Nationalists' extraordinarily instrumentalist view of education. A Nationalist member of Parliament and member of the NP Native Affairs caucus, MDC de Wet Nel, who chaired the Commission of Enquiry on the Separate University Education Bill two decades later, told Parliament in 1945 that

> Education is the key to the creation of the proper relationship between European and non-European in South Africa ... put native education on a sound basis and half the racial questions are solved.[25]

Rank and file Nationalists were, however, more concerned about the 'scandalous' conditions in the 'open' universities than the detail of party policy on African education. In 1945 there were 98 and 156 black students at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Wits respectively, accounting for four per cent and six per cent of enrolments. The records of the NP's annual provincial congresses show that from the late 1930s there was a constant pressure on the NP leadership from the party branches to segregate university education. In 1937 the Jeppe branch proposed a motion 'that no natives or coloureds should be admitted to universities or colleges intended for whites'.[26] The Women's Pretoria East branch in 1941 protested against 'the unAfrikaans activities of certain universities in terms of the breaching of the colour line'.[27] In 1951 the Transvaal Congress 'requested the Government to bring about apartheid at our universities by law'[28] and the same request was made in the Cape by the Paarl branch.[29] In 1952 the Natal NP asked the Government to withhold state assistance from 'universities that refuse to honour and uphold the colour bar'.[30] In 1952 the Orange Free State NP said that 'Apartheid must be strictly observed at universities'[31] and in 1954 added that 'the

---

25. HAD (1945) 2 April, cols. 4494-4495, quoted in Tabata, IB (1960) *Education for barbarism in South Africa*, pp9-10, Pall Mall Press, London.
26. NP van die Transvaal, *Program van die 24ste Kongres*, Johannesburg, 6 and 7 October 1937, NP Transvaal, PV2, INCH.
27. *Ibid.*, *Agenda en beskrywingspunte van die tweede kongres van die Herenigde Nasionale Party of Volksparty van die Trans* Pretoria, 12 and 13 August 1941.
28. *Ibid.*, Die HNP van Tvl, *Agenda en beskrywingspunte vir die 1951 kongres*, Pretoria, 17-19 September 1951.
29. NP Congress, East London, 1951, NP Information Service, INCH, PV59.
30. Pinetown and Newcastle, PV 55 NP Natal, INCH, 1/2/1/2/2/1, Congresses, 1918-1957.
31. Verslag van die Jaarkongres van die HNP (OVS), 1952, 1/III, INCH PV21, NP OVS.

universities which do not observe it must not be subsidised.[32] In 1955 they said that the subsidy should be frozen for universities that did not acknowledge the colour bar.[33] In 1954 the Nasionale Jeugbond delegation to the Transvaal NP Congress said it was 'strongly against mixed universities'.[34] Nationalist MPs launched a concerted effort to respond to this pressure.

The major problem for these Nationalists with the 'open' universities seemed to be social interaction between black and white students. In 1945 MP JH Conradie was concerned that black students were 'trying to penetrate into the social life of students' at the 'open' universities:

> They placed themselves on the footing where they wanted absolute equality in the social sphere. They wanted to go to the university dances. They wanted to be enrolled in the boarding houses.[35]

As an example of the conditions he deplored, Conradie cited an incident at UCT:

> [Non-Europeans] wanted to be students who could live their lives to the fullest extent just as any other student ... there is a large swimming bath at the University of Cape Town, and the non-Europeans insisted that they should be able to go and bathe in the same bath when the Europeans were there ... on one occasion, when all the Europeans were there, a non-European went and swam among them, with the result that the Europeans left the swimming bath. We cannot lose sight of that state of affairs.[36]

JH Hofmeyr, Smuts's Minister of Education, was quick to reassure him that 'it never happened again', but Conradie pressed his point:

> We must remember that there are parents in the country who are obliged to send their children to this University ... those parents demand that there should be a separate institution for non-Europeans ... much anxiety is felt by parents over the fact that their children must go to an institution where the non-Europeans demand equality with them.[37]

---

32. *Ibid.*, 1954, File 125.
33. *Ibid.*, Boshof, 1955, 2/III.
34. Die NP van Tvl, *Agenda en beskrywingspunte, 1954 kongres*, Pretoria, 14-16 September 1954, NP Transvaal, PV2, INCH.
35. HAD (1945) 17 April, col. 5481.
36. *Ibid.*, col. 5480.
37. *Ibid.*, col. 5483.

White student sensibilities at the campus were also offended by the incident, and Conradie was eager to tell Parliament about the students' response:

> Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking students stood together as one man, and said that they were going to stand for the preservation of the old traditional principle, and that is the principle of segregation and above all the principle of guardianship which we have practised for so many years in this country.[38]

Besides the incident itself, however, Conradie was distressed by the political activity that it provoked, where a mass meeting was held and 'challenging speeches were delivered by those who demanded equality for the non-Europeans'. Conradie pleaded that 'We cannot allow that [in] the universities where the youth of our nation must be educated, that racial friction of this nature should occur':[39]

> If we want to preserve our race, if we want to preserve our European civilisation, it is our duty to enforce this discrimination.[40]

In 1945 De Wet Nel planned to introduce a Bill to segregate the universities.[41] A student meeting at Wits concluded, by a majority of 583 votes to 344, that segregation was 'a violation of the university tradition and ideals'. Nationalist MPs were distressed by the 'rowdiness' of the student meeting, almost as much as

> the liberal outlook in connection with the colour question, namely that non-European students should be treated on an equal footing with Europeans.[42]

Nationalist MPs were also incensed by another incident at UCT, where a black member of the SRC

> had the audacity to introduce a motion in which he asked for social equality between European and non-European students.[43]

For Nationalists, the liberal approach posed grave risks:

---

38. *Ibid.*, col. 5481; see also comment by Zach de Beer, Chapter 2.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, col. 5486.
41. The Bill was never introduced, but it was mentioned on a Parliamentary order paper.
42. HAD (1945) 17 April, col. 5427.
43. *Ibid.*

> We feel that this liberal attitude is a violation of the racial pride of the Afrikaner, and what is more, it is dangerous not only to Europeans but also to non-Europeans.[44]

The objections of the Nationalists in opposition to the conditions in the 'open' universities can be summarised as dissatisfaction with social interaction between students of different population groups, and political ferment, which they saw as consequent on the former. The solution proposed by some Nationalists was not to deny all university education to Africans, as would perhaps have been the preferred policy of Cilliers or Le Roux, but to call for more thorough segregation.

The differences between the Nationalists, prior to 1948, and the policies expounded by Hofmeyr at the same time seem to be of style and degree as well as principle. As has already been seen Hofmeyr called for the universities to achieve social segregation, but he would not infringe university autonomy to impose this. Mindful of Hofmeyr's stated policies, Conradie suggested a plan to segregate UCT, based on developing a black teacher training facility, Sonnebloem, under the authority of the UCT Council. Conradie considered that the institution could be 'the foundation for the future development of a university institution for non-Europeans in the Western Province'.[45]

In marked contrast to Hofmeyr, the Nationalists also intimated that they considered it appropriate to use government powers to coerce the 'open' universities to apply segregation by disregarding university autonomy. Potgieter pointed out that UCT and Wits received the largest financial grants from the government, and 'just at these two universities ... we have had the most difficulty between European and non-European'. He asked the Minister of Education to force separation 'consistently' at these universities. De Wet Nel's bullying encompassed anti-Semitism:

---

44. *Ibid.*, col. 5428.
45. *Ibid.*, col. 5486.

> I want to warn the Jewish students at those universities especially to discontinue the propaganda of racial equality which they are preaching ... they are not rendering the cause of harmonious racial relationship in this country any service ... our Jewish students at the universities are making that propaganda of racial equality from morning till night. They must remember that they are fairly sheltered as far as their religion is concerned ... the people who will have to pay the price are the Afrikaans and English-speaking people.[46]

De Wet Nel was scathing about Hofmeyr's hedging on developing a policy to bring about greater segregation in the universities and then failing to carry it through:

> It is very striking that this Government is apparently powerless in connection with every matter affecting this vital question of separateness ... the smoke-screen of practical difficulties is again being set up.[47]

By the time of the 1948 election Hofmeyr had taken only tentative steps to set up the new segregated Medical School. As has been seen above, it was left to his Nationalist successor to bring the project to fruition.

In 1947 the NP published the Sauer Report, which was a comprehensive statement on its policies regarding 'the colour question'. Because of its explicit ideological tone and its broad range, and because it provided the manifesto for the first election victory of over four decades of consecutive NP rule, the Sauer Report has been extensively analysed by historians seeking to explain the NP's policies.

The Sauer Report played an important role as a rallying point for the different components of the alliance that brought the NP to power in 1948. The members of the alliance, who were, in O'Meara's analysis,[48] the farmers of the Transvaal, Cape and Orange Free State, some white workers and the Afrikaans petit bourgeoisie, had divergent interests but were welded together by their common commitment to

---

46. *Ibid.*, col. 5500.
47. *Ibid.*
48. O'Meara, D (1984) *Volkskapitalisme: Class, capital and ideology in the development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948*, p243, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

white political domination, secured through the political disenfranchisement of Africans. Some of these differences of approach were explicit in the opinions voiced by Le Roux, whose immediate concern was to secure farm labour, and De Wet Nel, whose approach was to secure long-term political stability through education. The Sauer Report's focus on racial policies therefore emphasised the common ground rather than the potentially irreconcilable differences between the components of the alliance. Nevertheless, Posel argues that the Sauer Report 'reproduced rather than resolved'[49] divergent opinion within the NP, and

> did not bear the imprints of a single hegemonic concept of apartheid. It was rather an internally contradictory and ambiguous document - contradictory, because it wove together strands from mutually exclusive conceptions of apartheid, and ambiguous, because it did not finally choose between them.[50]

Posel therefore warns that it is misleading to view the Report as the NP's 'blueprint' for policy-making after 1948. Besides, the Nationalists political goals were far broader than 'the colour question' and that the Sauer Report did not directly address key Nationalist aims such as the protection and promotion of Afrikaners.

The Sauer Report's general approach to education was that 'whites, as trustees of the natives' held the responsibility to provide education

> to build character and to allow the native to fit into his own environment on the basis of his own community and native social structure ... cultivating national pride and self respect.[51]

A separate section of the NAD was seen as an appropriate locus of state control over both African education policy and syllabus. (As early as 1936 De Wet Nel had argued for African education to be centralised, from the provinces, under the NAD. This would have ensured the segregation of school education.[52]) Sauer neither explicitly encompassed nor excluded university education from these

---

49. Posel, D (1991) *The making of apartheid 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise*, p5, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
50. *Ibid.*, p60.
51. Sauer, P (1947) 'Verslag van die Kleurvraagstuk-kommissie van die Herenigde Nasionale Party' p13, unpublished mimeo, National Party.
52. See Atkinson, ND (1978) 'Teaching South Africans: A history of educational policy in South Africa', p218, unpublished mimeo, Faculty of Education, University of Rhodesia.

approaches to African education. Furthermore, the Sauer Report's specific handling of university education was scant rather than contradictory and ambiguous. Sauer specified that 'where necessary higher education and university training should be provided for Natives in their own areas' and that 'special provision must be made for the training of Natives who can give leadership and exert influence in the native areas'. This treatment is too cursory to be regarded as a practical starting point for policy planning, and there is nothing to indicate that everyone in the NP agreed about every issue and approach in the Sauer Report. However, the ideas about the provision of education in black areas, and the development of black leadership for those areas were debated and eventually incorporated as central elements of the 1959 university apartheid Acts. This also applied to the general approach to education, which was to confirm segregation as a consequence of NAD control of African education. Although the Sauer Report contained rudimentary versions of some elements of the 1959 acts, there are significant silences, including any reference to the educational role of black university education: this was despite the fact that De Wet Nel was a key member of the Sauer Commission.[53]

The subject of the Sauer Report was 'the native question' and as such, it had parallels with the 'grand tradition' of South African Commissions of Enquiry identified by Adam Ashforth. Ashforth argues that

> To speak of a social 'question' ... or to view some peoples' lives as a 'problem' is to name those people as a subject of power.[54]

Through this process, the subject, African people of South Africa were perceived as different from the subjecting, white population. This process of differentiation and objectification was well established by 1948. Ashforth's study begins with the South African Native Affairs Commission report of the Milner reconstruction, but the process predated that. Sauer, therefore, merely perpetuated this approach, but under Nationalist Government, the conceptual division was given real expression in the actual division of governance of higher education. It should also be pointed out

53. Davenport, TRH (1991) *South Africa: a modern history*, p323, Macmillan, London.
54. Ashforth, A (1990) *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth Century South Africa*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p5.

that another antecedent was the division of governance of primary and secondary education, which was already well established prior to Nationalist rule.

In February 1948 the National Institute for Christian Teaching and Education, an organisation set up by the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereeniginge* (FAK) in 1939, issued a statement on CNE. The document was not official NP policy, but it had weighty approval. It was prefaced by Professor JC van Rooy, then leader of the Broederbond and chairman of the [illegible], who wrote that 'the whole of Afrikanerdom, insofar as it is represented by its organised branches in the FAK' had approved the document.[55]

CNE was a philosophy of education that had arisen to counteract 'the anglicising of our children' and had, in the early years after Union, campaigned for Afrikaans to be recognised as a medium of instruction in schools. After this was achieved in 1920, the campaign broadened. By 1948, the basic principle was that

> Our culture must be brought into the schools, and this cannot be done merely by using our language as a medium of instruction ... our Afrikaans schools ... must be places where our children are soaked and nourished in the Christian-National spiritual cultural 'stuff' of our nation.[56]

While the thrust of CNE was to manipulate Afrikaans-medium school education politically, the document also dealt with 'the teaching and education of natives'. For the authors of the CNE document, 'white culture' was more advanced than black culture. This placed the responsibility of trusteeship on whites. It also implied that segregation was necessary so that there would be 'no placing of the native on the level of the white', in other words, white and black education should not be of the same type, and did not have to be of the same quality. The ideas must have fed into the later differentiation of education for black and white scholars and students.

---

55. Vatcher, WH (1965) *White laager: the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism*, p100, Pall Mall, London; Atkinson, *op cit.*, p220.
56. Quoted *ibid.*, p289.

CNE asserted that Afrikaans and Christian values needed to be imposed on African people. For the CNE authors, the

> task of white South Africa with respect to the native is to Christianise him and to help him along culturally ... we believe that the teaching and education of the native must be based on the European's attitude to life and to the world, more particularly that the Boer nation is the senior European trustee of the native and that the native should be led ... to an acceptance of the Christian and National principles in education.[57]

This approach contrasts sharply with Eiselen's in the Native Education Commission (see below), which employed concepts of ethnic culture to justify segregation.

CNE asserted that 'the mother tongue is the basis for instruction and education', but that black students should learn to speak and understand English and Afrikaans because they 'constitute for the native the keys for that adoption of culture which is necessary for his own cultural advancement'.[58] The struggle for Afrikaans instruction for pupils from Afrikaans backgrounds had been important in the creation of Afrikaans identity, and the concept of mother tongue instruction became a principle to be defended and extended to other groups. In addition, at the time most black students were taught in English-medium mission schools, and CNE aimed to broaden the teaching of Afrikaans.

Under the 'controlling guidance' of the state, black education was to be given two areas of partial autonomy. First, 'the actual teaching and education of natives and the training of native teachers should be undertaken by the natives themselves as soon as possible'. Second, black education was to be financed in ways that 'it is not provided at the cost of European education'.[59] The Smuts Government had recently transferred the financing of African education to the General Revenue Account.[60]

---

57. Quoted *ibid.*, pp300-301.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. Unterhalter, E (1991) 'Changing aspects of reformism in Bantu education, 1953-89', pp 55-56, in Unterhalter, E et al (eds.) *Apartheid education and popular struggles*, Ravan, Johannesburg.

The CNE document addressed the question of how the philosophy should affect the universities. The authors were primarily concerned with white university education, and the implications of the policies for black higher education were not elaborated. The CNE authors wrote that

> Higher education should be so controlled that the Christian-Nationalist view of life may come into its own ... the Christian doctrine and philosophy should be taught and practised. But we desire still more. The secular sciences should be taught according to the Christian Nationalist view of life. In no single science may the light of God's truth be absent ... it is all important, therefore, that the teaching staff (of universities) should be convinced Christian National scientists.[61]

In other words, universities should discriminate on the basis of religion as to whom they employed. As has been seen above, to enable discrimination in the appointment of staff, the Conscience Clause was omitted in the founding Act of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, passed in 1950, but not from the University of the Orange Free State Act, passed in 1949.

In *Ideologies and Schooling in South Africa* Michael Ashley argues that CNE had two main features, that education should be based on the Christian Gospel and that education should reflect the differences between the nations that divided people. He also points out CNE conceptualised black education as part of a 'civilising mission'. While these points are not controversial, his sweeping conclusion that 'CNE ... has been the educational expression of apartheid'[62] implies that he regards *all* educational policy of the apartheid era as an expression of CNE policy. This explanation is too simplistic, as it ascribes such significant policy developments as the Bantu Education Act to the ideological decisions of a relatively small group of Nationalists. The broader ideological and material context from which apartheid educational policy emerged is not probed in any depth. Explaining all Nationalist education decisions in terms of CNE is inadequate: how,

---

61. Tabata, *op cit.*, p44.
62. Ashley, M (1989) *Ideologies and Schooling in South Africa*, South African Teachers' Association, Rondebosch.

for example, can it explain the decision to leave the 'Conscience Clause' in the University of Orange Free State legislation in both the early 1950s and early 1960s?

In summary, by the time the NP won power at the polls in 1948, its members were united in their disapproval of the 'open' universities, and had generally accepted the responsibility of the state to provide some education, including higher education, for black South Africans. The Sauer Report recommended that a specifically African type of education, including university education, should be developed, that was appropriate to 'the native social structure' in the 'native areas'. The FAK's policy of CNE, in contrast, emphasised the imposition of Afrikaans and Christian values on Africans, mother-tongue instruction and a Christian National philosophy of all university education.

### 3.3 The NP's first term: Eiselen and the Native Education Commission

In May 1948 the NP waged its electoral campaign using the Sauer Report as its ideological manifesto. Under the leadership of Dr DF Malan, who was 74 at the time, the NP thought that it had little prospect of defeating the UP, which had a Parliamentary majority of over 50.[63] Although the NP was victorious, it failed to capture the majority of the votes, and in its first term the NP was regarded as having a tenuous hold on power. The NP, in alliance with the Afrikaner Party, won only 40 per cent of the vote, compared to 50 per cent on the part of the UP. However, the heavier weighting of rural seats favoured the NP, and they won 70 seats, and the Afrikaner Party nine seats, compared to the UP's 65.[64]

The response of the NP to its surprising and tenuous victory was bold and confrontational rather than tentative and conciliatory. For the first time the Cabinet consisted only of Afrikaners, and the new Government set out to work out how to govern using the ideas of apartheid.[65] O'Meara describes how the NP acted very

63. O'Meara (1984) *op cit.*, p225.
64. Vatcher, *op cit.*, p140.
65. Davenport, *op cit.*, p327.

quickly in its first term of office to shore up its hold on white political power. It created six new parliamentary seats in South West Africa, which all returned NP candidates in their first elections. It tried to remove Coloureds from the common voter's roll in the Cape, but this was a drawn-out process which only concluded in 1956. The military, police, NAD and other branches of the civil service were purged of those critical of the NP and the Broederbond was active in ensuring that senior positions were occupied by loyal Nationalists: O'Meara comments that the NP 'jettisoned the Westminster-derived culture of civil service neutrality in party politics'.[66] Extra-parliamentary opposition was also tackled, through the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950.

Nationalists also had to find a way, in the early years of NP rule, to transform apartheid from a 'generalised impulse for radical racial segregation'[67] to a fully developed programme of government. Four months after the NP came to power, the Broederbond formed the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Sabra), an academic policy group that aimed to apply expert knowledge to the problems of governing. Two long-term studies were soon initiated by the NAD (while EG Jansen was the responsible minister) under the leadership of Tomlinson and Eiselen, both Sabra members, but the grand restructuring of South African society envisaged by these reports was not a feature of the NP's first term in power. Instead, the initial trend was to impose racial segregation more rigidly, through stricter application of existing regulation[68] and through new measures such as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act in 1949, and the Population Registration Act, the Immorality Act ... Group Areas Act in 1950. The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 and the abolition of the Natives Representative Councils were a mere shadow of the ideas of Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act, that was passed in 1959 to deal with similar issues.

66. O'Meara (1996) *op cit.*, p62.
67. *Ibid*, p64.
68. Evans, I (1997) *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p17.

In terms of university policy specifically, in his first speech to Parliament Malan said he regarded the introduction of apartheid at the universities as an 'essential measure'. Malan was concerned about the presence of black students at 'white' universities, which he regarded as

> an intolerable state of affairs ... which gives rise to friction, to an unpleasant relationship between Europeans and non-Europeans.[69]

Nevertheless Malan assured Parliament that

> we do not want to withhold higher education from the non-Europeans, and we will take every possible step to give ... sufficient university training as soon as we can, but in their own spheres ... in separate institutions.[70]

Malan did not elaborate on this last point, and deferred further discussion.[71]

In its first term of office the NP Government took some steps to meet the expectations of its supporters for change in university policy. Although no general laws to enforce segregation in university education were passed, it banned black students from outside South Africa, interfered with the free movement between the provinces of Natal Indian students, phased out government scholarships tenable at Wits for African medical students and insisted that the Natal Medical School should be conducted on a segregated basis. No new faculties were established at Afrikaans universities during the NP's first term in office, but Potchefstroom was allowed to omit the Conscience Clause from its founding Act.[72]

Beyond measures of this order, the question of how the universities would be affected by apartheid policies was a matter of public debate at this time. In August 1948 the Afrikaanse Studentebond (ASB, which succeeded the defunct Afrikaanse Nasionale Studentebond) was formed to represent the interests of Afrikaans students at all South African universities. The new organisation declared its support for segregation in academic matters and called on the Government to end the 'prevailing conditions' in the 'open' universities. The organisation believed that

---

69. HAD (1948) 16 August, col. 219.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. See above and in Chapter 2.

there should be separate facilities for black students.[73] In the provincial elections in early 1949 university apartheid also emerged as an issue: the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr EG Jansen, responded to public interest by saying that steps would be taken 'to bring the universities into line'.[74]

In 1949 the NAD established a Commission of Enquiry on 'Native Education' under the chairmanship of Werner Eiselen. Eiselen was the youngest child of the superintendent of the Berlin Missionary Society mission at Botshabelo near Middelburg. He obtained a BA at the Transvaal University College in 1919 and an MA in classical languages at the University of Stellenbosch in 1920. He then went to Germany to do research in preparation for a doctorate in African Studies, which he obtained from the University of Hamburg in 1924. In 1926 he was appointed to the University of Stellenbosch to establish a Department of Bantu Studies and he became a professor there in 1933. In 1936 he became Chief Inspector of Native Education in the Transvaal Education Department. He briefly returned to academia as the chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pretoria in 1947, and was a founder member of Sabra in 1948. From 1949 he was chairman of the Native Education Commission and was appointed Secretary for Native Affairs in October 1949.[75]

In her recent study of Eiselen, Cynthia Kros argues that despite his missionary background, Eiselen was essentially a 'secular ideologue' who learned at Botshabelo to abhor 'the crass racism of the Dutch Reformed Church'. Shunning crude racism, Eiselen was regarded as an educationalist and researcher of integrity by both the NP and the UP as well as African intellectuals. His appointment to head the Commission was, Kros argues, designed to lend legitimacy to the process of restructuring African schooling as part of the NP's need to create a 'social consensus'. Confirming the approach of Brahm Fleisch, Kros argues that Eiselen was part of a tendency within the NP Government that was invigorated by the idea that there scientific methods could be applied to modernise the state and the

73. *The Star*, 16 August 1948.
74. *The Star*, 2 March 1949.
75. Beyers *op cit.*, Vol. V, pp233-34.

services it delivered, especially in the field of education.[76] Eiselen's commission, she argues, 'sought and believed it had found a way of reconciling modernisation with racial differentiation'.[77] Evans points out that Eiselen regarded language as the most significant ethnic difference and that until his retirement in 1959, Eiselen consistently argued that segregation could only be justified if Africans had equal opportunity.[78] Evans concludes that Eiselen was 'perhaps the most liberal ideologue within the apartheid state in the 1950s' and that he considered

> the virtues of racial domination were of secondary importance to the Afrikaner's more noble mission of preserving ethnic diversity among Africans.[79]

Eiselen developed Sauer's ideas about the role of university education in producing African 'leadership' by establishing a broader link between university apartheid and 'development'. For Eiselen, the development of African university education was bound up with the development of schooling. Eiselen thought the provision of university education for Africans was inadequate, taking into account both the African population and the numbers of African scholars. He linked the limited numbers of students to the shortage of properly trained teachers at high schools, and argued that the improvement of schooling and university education were interrelated.

There were shortages of university-educated teachers in African schools despite the trend for most black university students to be taking general arts and science degrees in preparation for a postgraduate teaching diploma. The employment options for black graduates were very limited in the early 1950s (see Chapter 2). Eiselen considered that while the universities were crucial to improving the academic standard of black high schooling, problems would arise if the relationship between university education and teacher training became too close:

---

76. Kros, C (1996) 'Economic, Political and Intellectual Origins of Bantu Education, 1926-1951', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Chapter 1.
77. *Ibid.*
78. Evans, *op cit.*, p228.
79. *Ibid.*, p230.

> An undoubted weakness of the present state of affairs is that there are so few openings for the employment of the Bantu in professional fields. Consequently students who would far rather do something else are forced into the teaching profession and are not always happy in their work, tending to be resentful of authority in some cases.[80]

Beside teacher training, Eiselen emphasised that African university education should develop leadership and provide the technical training for economic development. In this context he recommended that the state should plan for 'the eventual founding of an independent Bantu University'. Eiselen did not consider that Fort Hare was in a position to perform this function:

> To speak of a Bantu University at Fort Hare is still premature, for an institution which lacks adequate research facilities and also a number of Bantu professors with sufficient standing in the world of learning can hardly be reckoned as a Bantu University.[81]

In Eiselen's report the concept of 'Bantu' education and institutions was global in its approach to the African population groups. The ethnic division and differentiation that emerged in apartheid thinking later in the decade did not feature. This global approach was also apparent in the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951. In terms of this Act identical administrative structures were established in all the rural regions where there was a substantial African population. The division of the country as a whole into smaller units was based on location and administrative need rather than on political manipulation of ethnic identity.

Eiselen's approach to African university education is remarkable in the thinking in the NP at this time because of two features: first, it entirely omits any reference to black students at the 'open' universities, and second, it takes seriously the need to develop thinking about the educational roles to be played by these universities, even if his own handling of the topic is rudimentary. Eiselen declined to make concrete recommendations because he thought that the development of university

---

80. Eiselen, WWM (1951) *Commission on Native Education, 1949-1951*, Chapter 10, Government Printer, Pretoria.
81. *Ibid.*

education had to be linked to 'a well-thought out plan for Bantu development'.[82] This was a reference to the work of the 'Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa', otherwise known as the Tomlinson Commission.[83]

In its second term in office after the April 1953 election, the NP Government was in a position to embark on a more ambitious programme of social restructuring. The NP had consolidated its position in Parliament, taking seats compared to the UP's 61. With all the alliances considered, the NP could count on a Parliamentary majority of 25.[84] There was also a phase of strong economic growth from April 1953 to April 1955,[85] and the newly confident Government thus had the resources to address the social instability consequent on rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. By this stage, the NAD was under the leadership of HF Verwoerd, who as minister displayed a brilliant strategic sense and administrative ability. Evans describes Verwoerd as a 'martinet' whose authoritarian management style demanded central planning, internal co-ordination and ideological conformity.[86] Together with Eiselen as Secretary, whose ethnos theory brought a 'moral rationale' to early apartheid,[87] and in the context of the favourable political and ideological conditions after the 1953 election, the NAD became the engine driving apartheid and choosing its course. The NAD devised elaborate and expensive programmes aimed primarily at stabilising the urban African population. Through welfare programmes such as mass housing and mass education, Hyslop considers that Bantu Education responded to the political pressures of urbanisation and industrialisation in two ways: first, by providing for the social control of the urban working class, and second, it was a way to secure the 'reproduction of a

82. *Ibid.*
83. Posel, *op cit.*, p71.
84. Heard, KA (1974) *General elections in South Africa 1943-1970*, p59, Oxford University Press, London.
85. Dreijmanis, J (1988) *The role of the South African Government in tertiary education*, p131, SAIRR, Johannesburg.
86. Evans, *op cit.*, p57.
87. *Ibid.*, p228.

semi-skilled workforce'.[88] Both Kros and Evans also argue that Bantu Education was an important means of winning compliance from urban Africans.[89]

The report of the Eiselen Commission formed the basis of the Bantu Education Act, which was passed in September 1953. Kros argues that Eiselen's ideas were 'mangled' by Verwoerd, who presented the Bantu Education Bill in terms of restriction rather than opportunity, and 'subverted' by shortcomings in material provision. She identifies key differences in approach between Eiselen and Verwoerd, who are often presented as an ideological team, that can also be discerned in their approaches to university policy.[90] Evans agrees that Verwoerd's conviction that the 'humanitarian response to those less fortunate' was 'undoubtedly of a lower calibre that Eiselen's' and that

> In Verwoerd's hands, ethnos theory quickly drifted far from the moral moorings to which Eiselen hoped to anchor it. By the mid 1950s, it had become little more than an artifice to fracture black nationalism.[91]

The introduction of Bantu Education from 1954 fundamentally altered the conditions in African schooling, with profound implications for the design and experience of university education. Bantu Education centralised African education under the NAD, destroying provincial control of African education and independent church schools. Mother-tongue instruction was to be used throughout primary schooling, with English and Afrikaans taught as subjects and used as the media of instruction from lower secondary school. This meant that black matriculants were less fluent than formerly in English, which was generally the medium of instruction at university. The syllabus taught in Bantu Education schools was to be different from that taught in other schools, with a greater emphasis on practical subjects. Under the supervision of the NAD, African school boards and committees and African teachers were to have responsibility for the schools. Perhaps most significant, the finances of Bantu Education were removed

88. Hyslop, J (1990) 'Social conflicts over African Education in South Africa from the 1940s to 1976', piv, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
89. Evans, *op cit.*, p228 and Kros, *op cit.*
90. Kros, *op cit.*, Chapter 9.
91. Evans, *op cit.*, p232.

from the General Revenue Account and failed to keep up with demand, as is shown in Table 3.2:

| Table 3.2: Expenditure on African school education as a proportion of total state expenditure, 1953-60[92] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Financial Year, ending March | Total estimated expenditure, pounds | Expenditure on African school education, pounds | % of total spent on African schooling |
| 1953 | 215 612 313 | 7 852 665 | 3,64 |
| 1954 | 234 272 540 | 8 232 000 | 3,51 |
| 1955 | 259 132 823 | 8 498 000 | 3,28 |
| 1956 | 254 847 730 | 6 500 000 | 2,55 |
| 1957 | 271 498 000 | 6 500 000 | 2,39 |
| 1958 | 282 849 300 | 6 500 000 | 2,30 |
| 1959 | 297 204 400 | 6 500 000 | 2,19 |
| 1960 | 313 760 350 | 6 500 000 | 2,07 |

Thus while the Government increased spending on the universities, as is shown in Table 3.1, the falling levels of funding shown in Table 3.2 undermined the capacity of African schools to deliver matriculants to university education. This trend is revealed in Table 3.3.

92. My calculations, based on Department of Finance (1944-1960) *Estimates of the expenditure to be defrayed from revenue funds, Second and Final Print*, Union of South Africa, Cape Town.

| Table 3.3: African secondary school leavers, analysed by school qualification obtained and growth of the African population, 1949-1970[93] | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Senior Certificate | Matriculation Exemption | School leavers with Matriculation Exemption (%) | African population (thousands) |
| 1949 | 354 | 216 | 37.9 | 9 084 |
| 1950 | 356 | 202 | 36.2 | 9 282 |
| 1951 | 328 | 176 | 34.9 | 9 487 |
| 1952 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 9 700 |
| 1953 | 175 | 157 | 47.2 | 9 920 |
| 1954 | 311 | 243 | 43.9 | 10 148 |
| 1955 | 274 | 191 | 41.1 | 10 386 |
| 1956 | 352 | 289 | 45.1 | 10 633 |
| 1957 | 352 | 232 | 39.7 | 10 890 |
| 1958 | 354 | 254 | 41.8 | 11 158 |
| 1959 | 293 | 137 | 31.9 | 11 437 |
| 1960 | 279 | 118 | 29.7 | 12 077 |
| 1961 | 338 | 115 | 25.4 | 12 416 |
| 1962 | 426 | 221 | 34.2 | 12 764 |
| 1963 | 441 | 284 | 39.2 | 13 123 |
| 1964 | 663 | 391 | 37.1 | 13 491 |
| 1965 | 722 | 423 | 36.9 | 13 869 |
| 1966 | 743 | 546 | 42.4 | 14 259 |
| 1967 | 1 000 | 583 | 36.8 | 14 659 |
| 1968 | 817 | 803 | 49.6 | 15 070 |
| 1969 | 1 524 | 985 | 39.3 | 15 493 |
| 1970 | 1 741 | 1 104 | 38.8 | 15 918 |

While the Bantu Education Act reorganised African schooling, it resulted in no practical steps towards the implementation of university apartheid. In the two years that elapsed between the report of the Eiselen Commission and the next time that university apartheid was raised in Parliament, the NP failed to establish a unified and uniform approach to issues of apartheid planning within its own Cabinet. There had still been little development in the ideas about what apartheid would mean at universities. No further work had been undertaken to develop a model for university apartheid, or to integrate it into wider apartheid planning.

Perhaps one of the reasons that the Bantu Education Act did not cover the universities was that while powerful NP figures had come to accept that the management of black school education was incontrovertibly in the domain of the NAD, separate from white education, university education for all population groups was still handled by the Union Department of Education. At tertiary level,

93. My calculations, based on Dreijmanis, *op cit*, p112 and p122.

these ideas clashed directly with concepts of universalism and its implications for a single system of governance.

### 3.4 Viljoen and the appointment of the Holloway Commission

Nevertheless, after the NP's second electoral victory in April 1953, progress towards apartheid university legislation was revived. When the Minister of Education, JH Viljoen, spoke in Parliament in August 1953 about 'the difficult and delicate matter ... of non-Europeans at our universities', he used terms which, like Malan, seemed chiefly, perhaps solely, inspired by the desire to segregate students. Viljoen voiced fears of the threat of black and white students studying together at the 'open' universities:

> [I]f this state of affairs is to continue the will and the wishes of the community as a whole are not being taken into consideration ... we dare not campaign against the traditional view which we have always maintained in the Union of South Africa so as eventually to alter the whole structure of our country's traditions.[94]

Viljoen noted with approval the

> large measure of apartheid at the Natal University in the sense that they have apartheid in academic accommodation, classrooms, laboratories and class attendance, while this form of apartheid is complete at Fort Hare.[95]

It is clear that for Viljoen university apartheid meant little more than segregation. Eiselen's ideas, which linked African education to the socio-economic development of African areas and the development of African leadership, were not integrated.

Viljoen was never an NP ideologue. His background not only illuminates his own approach, it also became important in subsequent developments in university policy. Born in the Orange Free State in 1893, his family had evaded the British Army during the war. He took an honours degree in ethics and politics at Grey University College. Years later he spoke of how his time at the University had been

94. HAD (1953) 31 August, Cols. 2592-4.
95. *Ibid.*

> a strange experience, in a strange environment, with strange customs and professors and lecturers that were strange and terrifying. The language was thoroughly English for lessons, with a few exceptions, and everything combined in the first month to make me feel the unhappiest being under the sun.[96]

Viljoen entered politics in 1933 when he became MP for Hoopstad. He was closely associated with Havenga, becoming Chief Whip of the Afrikaner Party.[97] With Havenga, Viljoen had entered Malan's Cabinet as a member of the Afrikaner Party, not a Nationalist.[98] Immediately after the 1948 election the Afrikaner Party was in a powerful position to demand political office for its MPs and other political concessions. As late as early 1951 there was talk of the Afrikaner Party joining the UP instead of the NP, an idea advanced by EG Malherbe (see below), but Smuts thought that he could no longer trust the Afrikaner Party members, most of whom had left the UP with Hertzog in 1939. For its part the Afrikaner Party was highly critical of the liberal tendencies of Smuts' deputy, JH Hofmeyr. In 1949 the NP's position was strengthened when six seats were created in South West Africa, and all were won by the NP. With its political leverage undermined and rebuffed by the UP, the Afrikaner Party combined with the Herenigde Nasionale Party in 1951 to form the National Party.[99] Prominent Nationalists in the Cabinet, including Verwoerd and Strijdom, had never been in favour of forming an electoral pact with the Afrikaner Party, and it can be speculated that the working relationship between Verwoerd and Viljoen was not entirely easy.[100]

In Pretoria in 1951 Viljoen said that the enforcement of apartheid in universities would violate university independence and that the Government could not enforce apartheid because it would infringe that autonomy.[101] In 1952 Viljoen reassured the Orange Free State NP that it was the Government's intention to introduce

---

96. *Boodskap*, 9 September 1957, *Toesprake en Verklarings*, JH Viljoen Papers, INCH, PV 508, 3/2/5.
97. Curriculum Vitae, JH Viljoen Papers, INCH, PV 508, 6/3/1. An active maize farmer with an interest in breeding Afrikaner cattle, he was a life member of the Empire Parliamentary Association.
98. Olivier, NJJ (1990) former member of Sabra, telephonic interview, May 1990.
99. Vatcher, *op cit.*, p140.
100. Davenport, *op cit.*, p321.
101. Reported in *Cape Argus*, 5 May 1956.

apartheid at universities, and that 'a great backlog' had been cleared with the opening of the Medical School for black students in Natal. However, he said that

> Vigorous prosecution of universities that do not observe apartheid, will at the present stage be detrimental to Afrikaans students studying in such institutions.[102]

In October 1953, soon after Viljoen addressed Parliament on the matter he addressed a memorandum to the Cabinet on '*Apartheid* at Universities' which said that the Government had been brought under increasing public pressure 'to provide separate educational facilities for non-whites at universities'. Viljoen's ideas on university apartheid were vague and non-committal. He wrote that

> separate provision, in whatever form, will involve considerable additional expenditure and whether such a step can be justified under present financial conditions is a question that demands thorough investigation.[103]

He asked for the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry, to ascertain whether 'separate provision for non-whites under current circumstances falls within the bounds of practicability'. In December 1953 a Commission was appointed, chaired by Dr JE Holloway, formerly Secretary of the Treasury,

> to investigate and report on the practicability and financial implications of providing separate training facilities for non-Europeans at universities.[104]

This brief was tentative: there was no clarity as to whether Viljoen had segregated classes or entirely separate institutions in mind. Again, it is obvious that Viljoen clearly had no appreciation of the ideas about the separate development of African areas.

Viljoen's choice of the three Commissioners reflected his Afrikaner Party orientation. On technical grounds Holloway was an obvious choice as his handling of the Commission on University Finances had been so successful. Despite his English name, he came from an Afrikaans family. As an economics lecturer at the Transvaal University College in 1919 he delivered his lectures only in Afrikaans,

---

102. *Verslag van die Jaarkongres van die HNP* (OVS), 1952, I/III, INCH PV21, NP OVS and *Die Burger*, 11 September 1952.
103. Viljoen, memorandum to Cabinet, 22 October 1953, Pretoria; in the archives of the Department of Education, Arts and Science (Unie Onderwys Departement) UOD E53/94 File 1397.
104. Government Notice No 2789; 18 December 1953.

the first academic outside the Department of Nederlands to use the language as a medium of instruction. In 1920 he played a leading role in a Senate Committee investigating extending the use of Afrikaans.[105] On one level Holloway therefore had sound credentials to investigate university apartheid for the Government; on another level he has been described as 'confidant of and adviser to Havenga',[106] the former leader of the Afrikaner Party.

The other two members of the Commission were Dr RW Wilcocks and Dr EG Malherbe.

Wilcocks was Rector of the Pretoria University from 1934 to 1954. He had also been a pioneer in the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at university level, as he had given his Psychology lectures in Afrikaans as early as 1918. With Malherbe he had served on the Carnegie Commission of Enquiry into the Poor White Problem from 1929 to 1932. Later he was part of the Commission of Enquiry into the Cape Coloured Population in 1938, and the South African Broadcasting Corporation from 1939 to 1940: these latter appointments suggest that he had an easy working relationship with the 'smelter' Hertzogites, who were no friends of the Nationalists.[107]

Malherbe was perhaps the most surprising of the three commissioners.[108] Principal of the University of Natal, where segregated classes were conducted within the institution, Malherbe's appointment underscores Viljoen's tacit approval of the system of parallel classes. But Malherbe also had a history of opposition to the National Party, particularly on two scores. First, during the war, Malherbe's work

105. University of Pretoria (1960) *Ad Destinatum: Gedenkboek van die Universiteit van Pretoria*, Voortrekkerpers Beperk, Johannesburg, pp52-53.
106. Beyers, *op cit.*, p357.
107. In the late 1950s Wilcocks also headed the University Advisory Committee.
108. Malherbe's memoirs are entirely silent on his involvement in this enquiry. Later in the 1950s he successfully opposed attempts to remove the black Medical School from the University of Natal, but his willingness, throughout the 1950s, to maintain the system of segregated classes at his university frustrated liberal colleagues. Perhaps by the time that he wrote his memoirs, in the late 1960s, he was concerned to omit references to his involvement with the enquiry as it could have clouded his liberal credentials. (Malherbe, EG, 1987, *Never a dull moment*, Howard Timmens Publishers, Landsdowne, Cape.) Malherbe's background in the South African National Bureau for Educational and Social Research is examined in Fleisch, BD (1995) 'Social scientists as policy makers: EG Malherbe and the National Bureau for Educational and Social Research, 1929-1943', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 21 Number 3.

in military intelligence included investigating and exposing the Broederbond, an activity that would hardly have endeared him to the NP.[109] Second, both before and after the 1948 electi ., Malherbe had tried to convince Smuts that the UP would do well to enter into an electoral alliance with the Afrikaner Party.[110]

Malherbe's decision to participate in the Commission was criticised by Humphrey Raikes, who wrote to Malherbe that as an active Principal he was

> giving some countenance to the Government's *first* effort to tell the universities what they must do. Other directions will follow in due course and I feel that you may find yourself in an invidious position vis a vis your colleagues if you have participated in the first destruction of university autonomy.

Raikes also correctly predicted that that the Commission would be forced to conclude that the Natal system would need to be expanded, which could embarrass Malherbe if he was seen as recommending additional assistance for his own university.[111] Malherbe replied that he had been unwilling to serve on the Commission for the very reasons Raikes mentioned, but that the University Council had argued 'that I would be failing in my duty if I did not serve on the Commiss. .' as they thought he would be well placed to influence the Government not to interfere with university autonomy and to make adequate financial provision for black higher education.[112]

The three commissioners chosen were thus far from dogmatic .ly committed to the NP and apartheid and for this reason they were obviously the wrong people to help the NP clarify its own position on apartheid at universities, if indeed that was what Viljoen intended. Malherbe wrote that Viljoen

> approached me a second time and even came to see me personally in Pietermaritzburg in order to obtain my co-operation on this Commission. He is in a real dilemma and almost begged me to help him out of it without

109. Davenport, *op cit.*, p290.
110. *Ibid.*, p321; also Wilkins, I and Strydom, H (1978) *The Super. frikaners*, p93, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg.
111. HR Raike EG Malherbe, Bramley, 20 March 1954, KCM 56990 (172).
112. EG Malhe. to HR Raikes, Pietermaritzburg, 30 March 1954, KCM 56990 (172).

in any way bringing his Department into direct conflict with the Universities in respect of their autonomy as laid down in their respective charters.[113]

It is thus not surprising that from the start the commissioners considered that they had they had the latitude to make their prime concern 'organisational problems' and not 'the desirability of the provision of separate facilities for non-Europeans'. However they did investigate 'whether universities in South Africa had the right to refuse admittance to non-European students'.[114] This approach provides further evidence of the critical independence of the commissioners.

In early 1954 the Holloway Commission considered nineteen submissions, which encompassed a range of views on university education and apartheid. Many of these were opposed in principle to segregation.[115] Those who supported the principle of segregation, including the Pretoria-based college management of the *Kolege ya Bana ba Afrika*, Unisa, the University of Pretoria, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Sabra and the NAD, presented different models and concepts of how to arrange university education. Some of the differences among these can be attributed to attempts by those already concerned with providing African university education to secure their own interests, others were differences of principle.

Three of these recommendations concerned the future of the *Kolege ya Bana ba Afrika*, which had been founded by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1946 with 27 students. By 1953 there were 76 students. The academic staff were employed in the first instance by Unisa and the University of Pretoria, and worked part-time at the college. Unisa and the college management advocated 'the establishment of a Bantu University in the Transvaal which can take over the work of the College'. Unisa recommended the development of the college so that contact with Unisa was maintained, the students writing Unisa exams and receiving Unisa degrees. In this way instruction at the college would continue to be segregated. The University of

113. *Ibid.*
114. Minutes of the first meeting of the Commission on University Facilities for non-Europeans, Pretoria, 14 December 1953; UOD E53/94 File 1397 *op cit.*
115. Including the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, the SRC of the University of Cape Town, Nusas and the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Pretoria also advocated the development of a university in the Transvaal, but under the control of the University of Pretoria, not Unisa. The benefit of this arrangement was that the university could be 'Afrikaans in its orientation'. Unlike Unisa, the institution conceptualised by the University of Pretoria was based on an ethnic division of the African population, and not just on a regional division: Pretoria envisaged that the institution would serve 'the Sotho-Bantu group'. It further proposed three other developments: a university for Coloureds under the guardianship of the University of Stellenbosch; that Fort Hare be 'reconstituted for assignment to the Nguni Bantu group' under Rhodes; and that the non-European section at the University of Natal be allocated to the Indian group. Each of the four institutions should develop to the point where they could be granted their independence. There was no sense of incongruity in coupling ethnic segregation with notions about the 'Afrikaans orientation of the universities'. Potchefstroom University made similar proposals to those of Pretoria.[116]

Having no direct involvement in teaching and institutional development, Sabra was more disinterested in its approach to the issue. Sabra considered three different ways in which separate university education could be provided: parallel classes, separate facilities in non-white areas integrally linked to a white university, and separate institutions. Sabra regarded the third system as the most satisfactory; and was of the opinion that this system should be regarded as the ultimate goal, even if other temporary measures had to be adopted. Sabra regarded it as

> essential that such institutions should be established ... in accordance with the general plan for the development of the separate non-white groups and their areas.[117]

Like the University of Pretoria, institutional organisation was envisaged on an ethnic basis, but Sabra only planned for three: there would be one for Nguni people, another for Sotho people, and a third for Coloured students. For Sabra, the location of the institutions was important: the first two university colleges should be situated 'in those places where they can further the interests of the group

116. Holloway, JE (1954) *Provision for separate training facilities for non-Europeans at universities*, Government Printer, Pretoria.
117. *Ibid.*

concerned in the broadest sense and in the best manner', but no specific places were mentioned.

Eiselen attended as Secretary for Native Affairs to make recommendations on behalf of the NAD. Eiselen envisaged three 'Bantu university institutions' divided along ethno-linguistic lines as 'an ultimate ideal': Fort Hare 'should become a Xhosa institution', there would be 'a Zulu institution in Natal to serve the Northern Nguni and a Sotho institution in the Transvaal to serve the whole Sotho community'. No mention was made of provision for Coloured or Indian students, but these population groups were not the direct concern of the NAD.

Eiselen recommended assigning control over new black institutions to Unisa. Although Eiselen did not elaborate, this arrangement held several potential advantages for the NAD. First, if Unisa, rather than several white attendance universities, controlled the black campuses, the political direction of the black campuses would be centralised under a Senate and council sympathetic to apartheid; Unisa was firmly in the service of the Broederbond at this time. The control of Fort Hare could be removed from Rhodes. Second, Unisa had experience of operating at a distance from the campuses it controlled. This meant that institutions for black students could be under white control, but sited wherever the NAD felt it to be appropriate. By siting the new campuses in the reserves, the new institutions could dilute the threat of African political organisation in urban areas by physically removing some of the most highly educated people from the urban areas. They could also be used to build up the black reserves. Third, by completely separating black university education from white attendance universities and into its own management structure under Unisa, the opportunities for direct comparison between the quality of education offered to white and black students would be decreased.

Eiselen's planned locations were more specifically conceptualised than Sabra's: he submitted that 'university institutions for the Bantu should be situated in the Native reserves'. He also suggested that the control of Unisa over the institutions should be circumscribed. He argued that

> their expansion and growth towards independence must be determined by the increasing productivity of the Bantu population. The ultimate objective is that the staff of these institutions should be non-European.[118]

These elements, although presented as ideals and long-term goals, are the first clear statement of the shape of the policy towards African university education that was enacted in 1959.

The idea that university education could be organised along ethnic lines was new at the time that evidence was submitted to the Hollo way Commission, and it introduced some important notions that later developed into apartheid policy regarding African political status as well as university governance. First, Eiselen's emphasis on mother-tongue instruction practically required organisation based on linguistic difference. Second, the NAD suggested an increasingly central role of the reserves as a channel for African political aspirations. As has been seen above, the Bantu Authorities Act did not conceive of the reserves as ethnically defined, but in formulating and implementing education polices for Africans, these two notions began to be woven together. In a study of the introduction of ethno-linguistic zoning in Johannesburg townships, Pirie has determined that the organisation of schools on a mother-tongue basis was cited by the Government in July 1954 as the main reason for the zoning policy. Pirie also points out that Verwoerd was quick to seize on the political opportunities presented by the ethno-linguistic organisation of schools: he soon attempted to use school committees to involve black township residents in 'location control' as part of plans for a 'new style of urban black administration to replace the advisory boards'.[119]

The extension of the ideas of ethno-linguistic division to university education followed. In 1951, Eiselen had talked of the establishment of a single 'Bantu University'. In recommending three ethnically designated institutions, Eiselen set in motion a trend that led, inexorably and expensively, to the establishment of universities for Africans in the Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana and a separate

---

118. *Ibid.*
119. Pirie, GH (1984) 'Ethno-linguistic zoning in South African black townships', p292, in *Area*, Volume 6, No 4.

branch of the University of the North in QwaQwa, as well as the original three, in addition to the institutions for Coloured and Indian students and the shattering of the unified system of university governance (see Chapters 5 and 7).

Holloway thus received submissions regarding a number of different models of university apartheid. But while the models had common elements, there were also wide differences on the numbers of institutions envisaged, the question of siting, relationship to the existing universities, staffing, and the composition of the student body and its relation to 'ethnic groups'. As has been seen above, the Department of Education not only failed to specify to its Commission the form that separate provision should take, it had also been particularly vague. The model presented by NAD, although it had the authority of originating within a government department, had been presented as a long-term plan, and was only one of several submissions. These differences were not merely technical. They resulted from a range of positions on the nature of university education and the fluidity of the concept of apartheid.

The response of the commissioners to these competing models, in line with their brief, was to assume that the commissioning department took the desirability of segregation as given, and to recommend a feasible scheme to achieve this goal, taking financial considerations into account. On these grounds Holloway's major recommendation was that 'Bantu' students should be concentrated in the parallel classes at the University of Natal in Durban, and at Fort Hare but that for courses of study where few African students registered, they should be admitted to study alongside white students. Holloway also suggested that Coloured students

> should be allowed as at present to continue their non-separate studies at the universities, especially at the university of Cape Town, which is prepared to admit them.[120]

There was no specific recommendation about Indian students. In other words, Holloway ignored the calls to establish new separate institutions, by taking seriously the impediments of cost and practicality.

---

120. Holloway (1954) *op cit.*, p58.

### 3.4.1 Reaction to the report of the Holloway Commission: Sabra and Verwoerd

Holloway's Report was complete by late June 1954, but only released in February 1955.[121] During the intervening months the balance of power in the Cabinet changed from those with moderate to those with hard-line interpretations of apartheid, and in this context, the political fortunes of Viljoen and Verwoerd, the two key Cabinet members concerned with the policy, changed dramatically. In late 1954 the NP was in the midst of a leadership struggle. Malan retired in October 1954. Against his wishes he was succeeded by JG Strijdom, who became the new Prime Minister with considerable support from Verwoerd. Malan had wanted NC Havenga, the former leader of the Afrikaner Party, to succeed him,[122] but when Strijdom was appointed Havenga followed Malan into retirement. The defeat of Viljoen's former leader and the retirement of Malan, his powerful sponsor, probably undermined his own standing in the Cabinet. On the other hand, Strijdom and Verwoerd had worked closely since the 1930s, and Strijdom's new position greatly aided Verwoerd's ascendancy. Verwoerd had not been part of the first NP Cabinet, but under pressure from Nationalist MPs concerned with native affairs, including De Wet Nel and WA Maree, Malan had eventually appointed Verwoerd to the Cabinet in October 1950.[123] The range of Verwoerd's influence was consolidated and extended by Strijdom's appointment, with direct repercussions on the response of the Cabinet to the report of the Holloway Commission.

The Holloway Commission's disregard for the NAD proposal exposed the struggles that were taking place over the shaping of new policies, prompted by differences in priorities and strategies. As the department responsible for everything concerning the African population, the NAD was directly confronted with the social and political problems facing the majority of South Africans. The empire of the NAD colonised the work of other departments that dealt with the

121. Letter from Secretary of Education, Arts and Science to Secretary of Treasury, 29 June 1954, UOD, *op cit.*
122. Vatcher, *op cit.*, p125.
123. Davenport, *op cit.*, pp336-7.

African population. In this way, the NAD assumed entire responsibility for complex national problems such as stabilising the mushrooming urban centres and dealing with the impoverished reserves. Apportioning responsibility for these issues to the NAD because they were 'African' problems made it difficult for other departments to engage with these problems. Ashforth describes the growth and influence of the NAD as the creation of a 'state within a state'.[124]

The NAD made no public response to the report of the Holloway Commission when it was eventually published in February 1955, but immediately after the publication of the report, Sabra issued a press release which denounced it as 'a repudiation of Government policy'.[125] The criticism was unfounded; as has been seen above, there was no uniform vision, let alone defined policy, and there was no clear policy from the Department of Education. Sabra's press release condemning the report established a public climate for pressure on the Department of Education out of the public eye.[126] The response of elements of the Afrikaans press to the Holloway Report had initially been favourable: *Die Burger*, notably a Nasionale Pers paper, not one of Verwoerd's, ran an editorial in February 1955 acknowledging the pragmatism of Holloway's views.[127] Sabra then addressed a memorandum to the Department of Education, which did not simply restate the same position that they had earlier presented to Holloway, but developed its ideas about the university college for Coloureds, and specified that the new institutions for Africans should be sited in the 'Bantu homelands'. Sabra 'pleaded for the immediate planning for the establishment of a number of university colleges for the Bantu':

> In terms of our revised opinion three such colleges will be needed, namely one for the Xhosa-speakers in the Eastern Cape Province, one for Zulu-speakers in Natal and one for Sotho-speakers in the Free State and Transvaal, preferably situated in the Transvaal.[128]

---

124. Ashforth, *op cit.*
125. 'Persverklaring uitgereik deur Sabra i.v.m. die verslag van die Komissie van Ondersoek na die verskaffing van afsonderlike universiteitsopleidingsgeriewe vir nie-blankes', UOD E53/94, *op cit.*
126. 'Memorandum van Sabra i.v.m. die verslag van die kommissie van ondersoek oor afsonderlike universiteitsgeriewe vir nie-blankes', 14 April 1954, UOD E53/94, *op cit.*
127. *Die Burger*, 3 February 1955.
128. 'Memorandum van Sabra', *op cit.*

These three university colleges, Sabra said, could be organised on a federal basis to form a Bantu University of South Africa.[129]

It is significant that over the period that elapsed between the submission of their initial memorandum to Holloway in early 1954, and their second memorandum in April 1955, Sabra's views came to coincide much more closely with those of the NAD. At this stage the working relationship between Sabra and the NAD was very close. Verwoerd was using Sabra to conduct policy research for the NAD,[130] and it seems likely that the task of publicly criticising the Holloway Report, and by extension Department of Education, was assigned to Sabra.[131]

Behind the closed doors of the Cabinet, Verwoerd acted forcefully to carry the issue forward. After the report of the Holloway Commission Verwoerd told the Cabinet that

> where the Bantu are concerned I find the whole approach of the Commission is wrong, and as a consequence I cannot identify myself with its recommendations.[132]

More specifically, like the authors of the CNE document, Verwoerd rejected 'the Commission's demand for education of the essentially equivalent quality'. (This point was never made, certainly not in such crude terms, by Eiselen, and this echoes the differences observed by Kros and Evans referred to earlier.) In its place Verwoerd demanded 'educational opportunities for a sufficient number of deserving Bantu for posts in service of their community that are essential to fill'. Verwoerd had defined ideas on the form that 'service' should take under apartheid:

> I contend that the Bantu that obtain their education at the open universities are in most instances rendered unserviceable in furnishing social services because they no longer regard themselves as Bantu but as members of an

129. *Ibid.*
130. Posel, *op cit.*, p70.
131. Lazar, J (1987) 'Conformity and Conflict: Afrikaner Nationalist Politics in South Africa, 1948-1961', unpublished DPhil Thesis, Oxford.
132. 'Kabinetsmemorandum. Mening van Minister van Naturellesake oor Verslag van die Kommissie insake Afsonderlike Universiteitsopleidingsgeriewe. (Gesirkuleer aan Kabinetslede op versoek by vorige vergadering.)' UOD, *op cit.*, undated, probably early 1955.

> exclusive international brotherhood of intellectuals with no particular responsibilities to their own people.[133]

Verwoerd's approach, which renewed the attack on black enrolments at the 'open' universities, coupled with the dismissal of the idea that black university education should be of the equivalent standard and scope of white university education, protected white privilege and white training. It also aimed to prevent competition between black and white graduates by limiting African graduates to working for 'their own community'.

Verwoerd, however, focused on the broad political problems which he perceived the 'open' universities as generating, not the petty breaches of social apartheid which other Nationalists had railed against:

> The integrated education of white and Bantu creates astonishingly big problems because it defines the nature of the moulding that Bantu leaders receive. Thus ... the price of separation also buys a guarantee against corrupting influences on Bantu leaders with all the attendant implications.[134]

This introduced the notion that the universities could be manipulated to control political socialisation.

Verwoerd said that the Commission had been required to find out whether separate university education was practicable, and if so, what it would cost. He said that the Commission had concluded that separate education would be expensive, and that as a consequence it was not practicable except in limited ways. But Verwoerd considered that the metaphorical 'costs' to the country were too high to balk at the monetary 'price'. Verwoerd's irritation with practical constraints echoes De Wet Nel's frustration with Hofmeyr when the NP had been in opposition.

In brief, Verwoerd recommended the establishment of two new university colleges, one for 'the Sotho' in the Transvaal or Orange Free State, and one for 'the Zulu' in

---

133. *Ibid.*
134. *Ibid.*

Natal; both 'on modest terms with facilities for an ordinary BA course (aimed at teacher training) and an ordinary BSc course'. They would be 'founded in or near native areas' and

> Fort Hare should be declared a Bantu institution for the Xhosa and church trusteeship should be exchanged for State trusteeship. (Indian and Coloured students must be removed from here.)[135]

He also recommended separate institutions for Coloured students (in the Western Cape) and Indian students (in Durban).

The model of university apartheid described by Verwoerd is an elaboration and reassertion of Eiselen's recommendations to the Holloway Commission and Sabra's position in the memorandum. But voiced by Verwoerd, with his newly consolidated standing in the Cabinet, the idea of the policy for the first time seemed likely to be implemented, as indeed it was in the 1959 Acts.

Verwoerd's intention to use university education for political and economic control is also strongly suggested, ideas not apparent in the approach of Eiselen or Sabra. This chimes with Evans' comments that Verwoerd's approach to science and learning was 'entirely utilitarian' and that he 'displayed no interest in knowledge as an ennobling commodity'.[136] It is not clear whether Verwoerd's interpretation represented a 'travesty' of the notions of idealists, as Kros suggests is the case for Bantu Education at school level, or whether Verwoerd, speaking in a private forum, was able to speak more freely than Sabra and Eiselen had thought appropriate for public consumption.

### 3.5 Conclusion

Following Verwoerd's Cabinet intervention and Sabra's public campaign, Viljoen returned to the House of Assembly in May 1955 to report that the Government had for some time been reviewing the report of the Holloway Commission. He

---

135. *Ibid.*
136. Evans, *op cit.* p167.

reaffirmed that it was Government policy to extend apartheid to the universities, and that Holloway had not provided the Government with a breakdown of the financial implications of such development. Viljoen also unfairly criticised Holloway of failing to consider the needs of the different ethnic groups and for speaking only in 'general terms of the Bantu'. Revealing his imperfect grasp of a set of ideas that were clearly not his own, Viljoen said that a new enquiry would

> have to consider whether it is practical to provide such an institution for the Xhosa population, and one for the Basutos, and another for the Coloureds. These are all matters which require careful investigation.[137]

Viljoen's statements reveal the increasing strength of the NAD in shaping the policy. By 1955 the NP had consolidated its position in white politics. The Party had been returned to office for a second term with an increased majority and was invigorated under its new leader. At the same time, black political opposition was becoming increasingly mass-based and articulate: in 1952, for example, the ANC launched its Defiance Campaign against 'unjust laws' and saw its membership soar from 7 000 to over 100 000. In this context, the NAD brought a far sharper definition to the application of apartheid to university education, articulating three policy goals: segregation, political control and differentiated education. The NAD supervised the next era of the development of the policy and in the political heat of the late 1950s, these policy goals were in 1959 made law through the Extension of University Education Act and the Fort Hare Transfer Act.

137. HAD (1955) 13 May, Col 5608.

# Chapter 4

# Native Affairs Department control of University Apartheid: 1955-1959

Verwoerd's Cabinet rejection of the pragmatic recommendations of the Holloway Commission marked the start of a new mood of urgency in the drive to define and implement university apartheid. Practical steps to establish separate new universities raced ahead of policy investigation and legislation: a draft Bill was prepared before an internal enquiry had concluded its investigations in March 1957, and the building of new campuses in Natal and the northern Transvaal started before legislation had been passed by Parliament in 1959.

Over the next four years, the Native Affairs Department (NAD) took the initiative in policy formulation. Progress towards the passage of the Acts was more decisive, but Verwoerd's authoritarianism alienated more ponderous and reflective apartheid intellectuals in some Afrikaans universities and churches and in the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Sabra). Communication between ministers and government departments was also ineffective. Mainly because of these doubts and problems, the plan to remove the Medical School from Natal University was abandoned and on the brink of the passage of the 1957 Separate University Education legislation, the Bill was referred to a time-consuming Select Committee and Commission of Enquiry. NAD plans then came in for stinging public criticism from supposedly loyal Nationalist quarters as well as, among others, the universities affected by the proposed legislation, students and the South African Institute of Race Relations.

## 4.1 Inter-departmental enquiry under HS van der Walt

In late 1955 another Government investigation was launched in the form of an inter-departmental committee, chaired by the Secretary for Education, HS van der Walt. The other members of the Committee were the Secretary for Finance, then DH Steyn, the Commissioner for Coloured Affairs, ID du Plessis and Eiselen. It

became clear that Eiselen, who represented the NAD, provided the ideological direction by ensuring that NAD policy was pursued.[1]

The Van der Walt Committee differed from its predecessor, the Holloway Commission, in two significant ways. First, as an inter-departmental Committee, sole responsibility for the policy had been removed from the Department of Education, Arts and Science.[2] Second, there was a shift from relatively open-minded investigation to more driven, ideological decision-making, that ignored dissenting views and warning voices. The activities of the Committee were entirely internal, with no public contributions at all, either sympathetic to the goal of university apartheid, or opposed to it. According to a contemporary observer, Verwoerd had become scornful of the tradition of public commissions of enquiry and favoured internal and inter-departmental committees.[3] This comment about Verwoerd's style contrasts sharply with Kros's description of the subtly inclusive, co-opting approach employed by Eiselen in the Native Education Commission.

The Committee's brief was 'to investigate and report on the provision of separate university facilities'.[4] Even at this stage the model to be investigated had not yet been officially fixed: as the Van der Walt report to Viljoen states, 'you have indicated that the Government has not yet come to a final decision'. However, Verwoerd's intervention to the Cabinet (see Chapter 3) provided the NAD's model for the Committee's deliberations. Van der Walt was instructed by Viljoen that 'in order to assist the Committee in its research ... the following can serve as a guideline ...' and Verwoerd's scheme of two new African university colleges, state control of Fort Hare as a Xhosa institution and separate institutions for Coloured and Indian students had then been described.[5] A senior official in the NAD later

1. Van der Walt, HS (1957) 'Short summary of the findings of the interdepartmental fact-finding Committee on the financial implications in connection with the establishment of separate university colleges for non-Europeans', *White Paper C-'57*, Government Printer, Pretoria.
2. Hereafter abbreviated to Department of Education.
3. Olivier, NJJ (1990) former Sabra member, 1950s, interviewed telephonically, April 1990.
4. Van der Walt, *op cit.*
5. *Ibid.*

said that Van der Walt's White Paper 'expresses the intentions of the Department'.[6]

Although they adopted the policy model proposed by Verwoerd, the work of the Van der Walt Committee was far from purely technical. The Committee made major policy decisions, including determining how many students should be provided for, opting for residential universities and defining a preliminary curriculum. In some instances, they uncritically adopted the established patterns of South African university education, in others, they deliberately deviated from this tradition.

### 4.1.1 Student numbers

The Committee attempted to estimate student numbers for the next ten years by examining past patterns in school and first year university enrolment. They were aware that this was an extremely difficult task. Changes in school education consequent on the passage of the Bantu Education Act, including the introduction of mother-tongue instruction, as well as making more university facilities available, were variables that skewed projections.

It is not possible to determine exactly how the Van der Walt Committee arrived at its projections as there is no full explanation, but it appears that they vastly overestimated the numbers of matriculants because of a basic logical flaw. The Committee examined the numbers of African, Coloured and Indian pupils at each level of schooling for the period 1944 to 1954. The data was obtained from the provinces and amalgamated to provide a national picture. They then worked out the annual percentage increase at each level of schooling to estimate the numbers of 'matriculants' from 1955 to 1965. They did not explain the relationship between their actual annual percentage increase figures and their projected numbers of matriculants. More critically, they did not define what they meant by 'matriculant'

6. 'Transcript of oral evidence', Commission K106 (the Nel Commission), in the archives of the Union Department of Education (hereafter UDD), volumes 1407-1409, reference E53/115 (hereafter Nel Commission archive).

and this is where their projected figures are flawed. The relevant figure for those eligible to enter university is not how many *enrol* for the last year of schooling, but how many *pass* the 'matriculation exemption' examination, thereby qualifying to enrol for degree level study. It seems, however, that the Van der Walt Committee used the former definition. From 1955, the first year of their projection, their numbers are therefore far too high. They estimated that there would be 671 'Bantu matriculants' in that year, while in fact only 191 Africans obtained matriculation exemption in 1955. Table 4.1 reveals that actual numbers of matriculants from 1949 could have alerted the Committee to their mistake, and also how this error was compounded over the years.

Table 4.1: Actual numbers of African secondary school leavers, analysed by school qualification obtained and compared to Van der Walt's projections for 'matriculants'[7]

| Year | Total African school graduates | Senior Certificate | Matriculation Exemption | Van der Walt's projections for 'matriculants' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1949 | 570 | 354 | 216 | n/a |
| 1950 | 558 | 356 | 202 | n/a |
| 1951 | 504 | 328 | 176 | n/a |
| 1952 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 1953 | 332 | 175 | 157 | n/a |
| 1954 | 554 | 311 | 243 | n/a |
| 1955 | 465 | 274 | 191 | 671 |
| 1956 | 641 | 352 | 289 | 706 |
| 1957 | 584 | 352 | 232 | 740 |
| 1958 | 608 | 354 | 254 | 776 |
| 1959 | 430 | 293 | 137 | 811 |
| 1960 | 397 | 279 | 118 | 845 |
| 1961 | 453 | 338 | 115 | 879 |
| 1962 | 647 | 426 | 221 | 913 |
| 1963 | 725 | 441 | 284 | 948 |
| 1964 | 1 054 | 663 | 391 | 984 |
| 1965 | 1 145 | 722 | 423 | 1 018 |

Using these figures for 'matriculants', the Van der Walt Committee reckoned that after four years, the three African institutions would each be enrolling about 370 students. The Coloured and Indian institutions were expected to have 300 students each after three years.

7. Van der Walt, *op cit.*, and my calculations, based on Dreijmanis, J (1988) *The role of the South African government in tertiary education*, SAIRR, Johannesburg, p112 and p122.

Because of the problems with the data, it is difficult to determine the effect that the Committee was anticipating that legislative changes would have on the proportion of black matriculants proceeding to university. It is not clear whether they intended to provide merely for those students diverted from the 'open' universities, or whether it was planned to increase the proportion of black students attending university relative to black matriculants.

The White Paper anticipated that the institutions created would enrol matriculated students, who would follow degree-level courses. This assumed that the pattern of university entrance requirements already established would be extended to the new institutions, in keeping with its concern that the education provided should be of the same standard as that at the established institutions. However, because the Committee's estimates of student numbers were so exaggerated, for most of the 1960s large numbers of non-matriculated students were enrolled for diploma courses in order to fill the new institutions (see Chapter 5).

The Committee strongly favoured 'internal' over 'external' enrolment. They were concerned that so many black students (well over half) were enrolled for correspondence tuition through Unisa:

> Underdeveloped societies are particularly prone to suffer from a certificate complex and are inclined to neglect the development of personality. The Committee is of the opinion that, in order to restrain this evil tendency, there ought to be a great preponderance of internally trained scholars ...[8]

This reveals that the Committee believed that knowledge is not neutral and that its transmission and acquisition is not disinterested. In keeping with the Christian-National assumptions about education popular among some elements at Afrikaans universities (see Chapter 2), they considered that education should be invested with moral content.

Although it is not clear from the White Paper whether the Committee intended to expand black university education, they realised that if students were to be

8. Van der Walt, *op cit.*, p4.

encouraged to enrol as internal students of attendance universities, the government would have to provide bursaries and loans to enable this. As Verwoerd also wanted to found the African institutions 'in or near native areas',[9] very few African students would be able to find part-time work to support themselves during their studies. Although all universities in South Africa were financed through a combination of state and private funds, in making this recommendation the Committee recognised that because the African community was less able to afford to pay fees, there was a need to depart from established practice and to transfer a far greater proportion of the burden to the state.

In other areas, the Committee tried to cut costs. They thought it appropriate that new residences, a very expensive item of expenditure, should be built to the standard of those at Fort Hare, rather than those at Pretoria University, and that more than two students should occupy each room. Furthermore, they did not think it necessary to provide a student hall or similar accommodation for social and cultural activities: a recommendation which sits uneasily with the benefits of having 'internal' students and which would prove politically expensive in the years ahead (see Chapter 7).

Altogether, they thought that capital expenditure would amount to £3.026 million (R6.052 million), and that current costs would rise from £198 070 (R396 140) in 1958 to £319 372 (R638 744) in 1967. These proved to be vast underestimates (see Chapter 8).

### 4.1.2 Curriculum

In the case of the curriculum, the Committee was able to work very much along the lines recommended by Verwoerd to the Cabinet, namely, a 'modest' choice of subjects and 'facilities for an ordinary BA course (aimed at teacher training) and an ordinary BSc course'.[10] The Committee 'limited itself to the most essential and

9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*

important subjects for the immediate future'.[11] These were considered to be, in Arts, 'a relevant Bantu language with a comparative study of the Bantu language', Afrikaans, English, Latin, History, Geography, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy, Public Administration, Political Science, Native Law, Roman Dutch Law and Ethnology. In the Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology would be taught. Both a postgraduate and a lower secondary teachers' diploma would be offered. For reasons which are not explained in the report, at the Coloured and Indian university colleges the courses planned were slightly different: commercial subjects, Domestic Science and Music were to be offered instead of African languages and Ethnology.

The way in which the Committee chose these particular subjects shaped the university education of a generation of students and is of central importance. The White Paper indicated that it would only offer courses for which there was a proven demand:

> In determining the choice of subjects which must be taught at the contemplated university colleges, the Committee was largely influenced by the courses which non-Europeans follow at existing universities ... the subjects taken by non-Europeans at present are an important indication of their needs in this connection.[12]

This echoed a point made by Eiselen in his report five years earlier, that the courses of study followed by students were rigidly determined by the employment opportunities available after graduation.[13]

In choosing these subjects on this basis, two contradictory approaches were left unresolved. Were the university colleges designed to serve society or the individual? The first approach emphasised the social and political role of the university colleges: they could train skilled and politically malleable leadership for the Bantu Authorities.[14] Another variant of this approach, expressed by Tomlinson,

---

11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. Eiselen, WWH (1951) *Commission on Native Education, 1949-1951*, Government Printer, Pretoria.
14. The Bantu Authorities Act was passed in 1951. It abolished the Native Representative Council, and created a pyramid of tribal, regional and territorial authorities, under white supervision. The Act treated *Continued ...*

was that the university colleges should equip its graduates with the agricultural and engineering skills to develop the Bantu Authorities.[15] This first approach can be seen as interventionist on the part of the Government. The second approach, emphasising personal rather than social needs, can be described as *laissez-faire*, leaving student enrolment and subject choice to the individual.

This contradiction was not resolved by assertions on the part of the Committee that as 'nation-building and social development' progressed, other subjects would have to be included.[16] The financial burden of providing a broader curriculum was naturally also a consideration. Medical education was to continue to be provided at the Natal Medical School, which was to be expanded to cater for students barred from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) (see below). They were unable to 'judge what the demand for dental training of non-Europeans is at present' as such provision was not then made, but they thought that if a need was proved, the establishment of a Dental School for black students would have to be considered. Similar considerations were applied to engineering, but they said that

> as the proposed development of the Native territories increases in momentum, the need for Native engineers will arise.[17]

Perhaps because the policy was generally surrounded by such heightened political tension, the educational role and curriculum of the university colleges was never part of the public debate over the policy. Beside this treatment in the White Paper, the topic was never considered directly in the 1950s. This had serious repercussions for the implementation of the policy, which are discussed in Chapter 7.

---

'the Bantu' in a universal manner, rather than resting on ethnic differences. Introducing the Bill in Parliament, Verwoerd said that 'the fundamental idea throughout is Bantu control over Bantu areas as and when it becomes possible for them to exercise that control efficiently for the benefit of their own people'. (Union of South Africa (1951) *House of Assembly Debates*, 18 June, col. 9808, Cape Town (hereafter HAD).

15. Tomlinson, F (1955) *Summary of the report of the commission for the socio-economic development of the Bantu areas within the Union of South Africa*, Native Affairs Department, Pretoria.

16. Van der Walt, *op cit.*

17. *Ibid.*, p6.

Another implication of the restricted curriculum was that the limited employment opportunities open to black graduates were frozen in place. Black students would be unable to train in a wide range of professions, including dentistry, engineering and veterinary science, as well as applied scientific fields, and at the African institutions there would be no training in commercial subjects such as accounting or management.[18] The way in which the courses were chosen thus not only reflected the employment options open to black graduates in the mid 1950s, but as black students were only to be admitted to 'white' universities in exceptional cases, with the permission of the Minister, it also locked future graduates into the same narrow paths of personal advancement. This has had profound implications for the patterns of black class formation, contributing to the stunting of a professional and managerial middle class. It has also prevented black graduates from competing with white graduates in those areas.

The Van der Walt Committee wrote up these recommendations in a White Paper, 'Short summary of the findings of the interdepartmental fact-finding Committee on the financial implications in connection with establishment of separate university colleges for non-Europeans', which was submitted to Viljoen in September 1956. While the business of the Van der Walt Committee was in progress, the Separate University Education Bill was drafted and in October 1956 Viljoen formally announced that legislation would be introduced in 1957 to establish five non-white university colleges and to prohibit the 'open' universities from admitting non-white students.[19] At the Natal Medical School, the Government's plans did not go smoothly.

18. A limited range of law courses were planned for all the university colleges. Unisa also taught law.
19. This announcement was pre-empted by Verwoerd, who embarrassed Viljoen and the Cabinet by making the same announcement in September, before Viljoen or the Cabinet had digested the contents of the report. (*The Star*, 18 September 1956.)

## 4.2 Natal Medical School: Notable failure of Verwoerd's plans

Viljoen's October 1956 announcement made no mention of Government plans to remove the governance of the Medical School from Natal University, perhaps because they were not recommended by the White Paper: Van der Walt's only point regarding medical training was that as it was an expensive course of study to provide, facilities should not be duplicated unnecessarily. Where the White Paper did specifically discuss the Natal Medical School, it was simply to state that

> as far as immediate needs are concerned, this Medical School is adequate for the training of non-European doctors, provided of course that additional provision is made to absorb the medical students who otherwise would go the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand.[20]

It was only six years since the National Party (NP) Government had sanctioned the establishment of a Medical School for black students at Natal University, forcing the Natal University Council to agree reluctantly to the condition that it would register only black students (see Chapter 3). A few years later this was endorsed by the Holloway report, which recommended that the Medical School should continue to function on a segregated basis (not a surprising finding, given Malherbe's participation in the commission).[21] Staff at the Medical School recalled that at the official opening of the new Medical School buildings in July 1955, Viljoen himself had 'emphasised that the Government would not interfere with the University's development of this faculty'.[22] As the President of Convocation, Mr EQ Kewney, later observed:

> Despite this questionable piece of bargaining involving the tampering with the universally-accepted principle that a University had the sole right to determine the students it would admit, the University conceded the point and has scrupulously observed this condition ... it could not be alleged that

20. Van der Walt, *op cit.*, p6.
21. Gordon, I (1957a) *Report on the Government's intended action to remove the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Natal*, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.
22. *Ibid.*, p40.

> the Medical School had at any time violated the racial policy embraced by the present Government.[23]

The effect of this history, as the Dean of the Medical School, Professor I Gordon, wrote in 1957, was that Natal University was reassured into

> believing on the basis of the compromise which had been reached and on the basis of ... Ministerial Statements, that it would retain control of its Faculty of Medicine.[24]

This sense of security proved to be false, because despite the silences in Van der Walt's White Paper and Viljoen's announcements, the governance of the Medical School was being reconsidered in other Nationalist circles.

As early as March 1956 rumours reached Gordon that the Cabinet had decided to transfer the Medical School to Unisa. Malherbe and the Chair of the Natal Council tried to find out more from Van der Walt but they were told that the Government regarded the matter as *sub judice* pending the publication of the White Paper. Malherbe asked Viljoen to consult Natal University before reaching any decisions about the Medical School (and the 'Non-European Section') and offered to visit Pretoria, but these requests were ignored.

Van der Walt did not present these plans in his White Paper, but in November 1956 he told Malherbe that control of the Medical School would be transferred to the Department of Native Affairs, although when the Separate University Education Bill was published it became clear that what was intended was the Department of Education. This slip indicates that the Secretary of the Department of Education and author of the White Paper was vague on the precise details of plans for university development. In the absence of the firm grasp on detail that comes from being party to decision making, he presumed that the powers of the Department of Native Affairs would be augmented by any changes that were made.

---

23. *Ibid.*, p23.
24. Gordon, I (1957b) *Further report on the Government's intention to remove the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Natal*, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

The first official confirmation of the Government's transfer plan eventually reached the Natal Council in a very roundabout way in January 1957, when, as a member of the Unisa Council, Malherbe received notice of a special meeting of that body to consider the transfer of Natal's 'Non-European Section' and Medical School to Unisa. Malherbe protested to the Department of Education, whereupon Van der Walt confirmed that administrative control of the Medical School would be vested in a state department and that the role of Unisa would be to act only as the examining body (to which majority votes of the Unisa Senate and Council agreed in early February 1957). He said that beside these plans 'no radical changes' were envisaged and hoped that the Natal Council could 'see its way clear to co-operate with the Department'.[25]

The Natal Council formally opposed the Government's plans on 12 February 1957.[26] They objected because they thought the plan was 'a grave breach of university autonomy'. The Council was also no doubt concerned about the threat to student numbers and thus university revenue.[27] Nevertheless, Viljoen flatly told Malherbe that 'the Government was not prepared to make an exception in the case of the Medical School to its policy of separate university institutions for non-Europeans'.[28]

But if the Government had the power simply to bully the Council into submission, it could not succeed with the same tactics with other groups whose co-operation was essential to the functioning of the Medical School. In particular, the Government had failed to learn or consider the views of the full time staff of the Medical School, the part-time staff employed jointly by the university (for their teaching responsibilities) and the Provincial Administration (for their clinical work).

---

25. Van der Walt to Malherbe, 24 January 1957, in Gordon (1957a) *op cit.*, p39.
26. Gordon (1957a) *op cit.*, p39.
27. *Ibid.* Medical students argued that it was 'yet another method to subject the non-European people of South Africa to perpetual servitude ... in line with the intentions of the Bantu Education Act' and because it was an 'inroad into the freedom of the University'.
28. Brookes, EH (1966) *A History of the University of Natal*, pp85-92, Natal University Press, Pietermaritzburg.

Both the full-time and part-time academics threatened to withdraw from teaching at the Medical School because they objected to the proposals on educational and professional grounds. The full-time, mostly senior academics at the Medical School voted by 29 to two to resign if the Bill was implemented, objecting that the changes would threaten public and student confidence in the standard of medical education and that it was not in the interest of the profession or the students to sever the connection with Natal University. The Dean and senior staff were concerned that changing the medical faculty of Natal University, with its connections to the faculties of Arts, Science, Social Science and Education, into a free-standing 'Medical School' would mean a departure from a broad-based medical education and its substitution with 'a narrow, predominantly technical training'. The Medical School had tried hard in its short history to avoid this type of medical education and their students took courses in history, sociology, psychology and English in their pre-medical years.

Gordon also protested that it was inaccurate to regard Unisa's projected role only as a degree-awarding and examining body, as one of Unisa's major functions was 'the elaboration of a curriculum by inter-departmental discussion in a properly constituted and effectively functioning University Senate, of which the board of a faculty is but a sub-committee'.[29] He worried that the Unisa Senate would not be given these responsibilities and that the Department of Education would in some way take direct control, although this was all speculation and the Government's intentions were very unclear. There were concerns that the Government wanted to restrict the admission to other medical schools in the country to white students only, which would mean that black students would be forced to attend the government-controlled Natal Medical School, regardless of its standards.

In February 1957 the part-time lecturers opposed it as 'an act of piracy' at the largest meeting ever held of the Natal Coastal Branch of the Medical Association of South Africa. They told Viljoen that they would decline to 'co-operate in any

29. Gordon (1957a) *op cit.*, p26.

way with any authority other than the University of Natal over the staffing of the Medical School', in other words, they would resign and deprive the Medical School of most of its part-time lecturers.[30] They also said that it was important for the Medical School to function as part of a university, so that medical education was not divorced from other forms of education.[31]

The opposition of the Administrator of the Natal Provincial Council, Mr DG Shepstone, was also significant because in terms of an agreement entered into in 1954, the Provincial Administration made available hospitals and other medical facilities under its control to the Medical School for the training of medical students. The agreement also provided for teaching staff to be employed jointly by the Province and the university and for the Provincial Administration to contribute to the Medical School's capital and running costs. In early January 1957 Shepstone warned that there would be 'serious repercussions' if the Medical School were removed from Natal University and asked Viljoen to let the Provincial Administration submit its views before the Government made any decisions. In February Shepstone informed the Minister that the provincial administration would not co-operate with any educational authority other than the University of Natal about the joint maintenance of the Medical School.[32] Mr GN Oldfield, a member of the Natal Provincial Council, threatened that if the Government took control of the Medical School he would ask the Provincial Council to withdraw the 50 per cent subsidy and deny the use of the King Edward VIII Hospital to state-appointed staff.[33] From 1 March 1957 the Provincial Administration froze all dual appointments at the King Edward VIII Hospital and the Natal Medical School, pending official advice from the Government to the Natal Provincial Council about whether it intended to take over the Medical School.[34]

30. *Cape Argus*, 1 February 1957.
31. *Natal Mercury*, 15 February 1957.
32. Brookes (1966) *op cit.*, p91.
33. *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 February 1957.
34. *Evening Post*, 1 March 1957.

Most of this public discussion took place before the Bill was debated.[35] Viljoen protested that there was no need to 'stir up opposition' as the matter would be discussed in detail in Parliament.[36] Nevertheless, before the debate the determined opposition of the staff and the Province together exposed the transfer proposals as unworkable and obviously helped to force the Government to retract the clauses relating to the Medical School.

The Government plans also unsettled its supreme advisory medical authority. After extensive lobbying by Gordon,[37] when the South African Medical and Dental Council met on 15 March 1957 it expressed 'concern' about the possible risks in deviating from the established pattern of medical education in the country. As a statutory body it believed it had the 'grave responsibility' to ask the Minister of Education to investigate and report on the possible consequences of these changes before the legislation before Parliament was enacted.[38] Gordon later pointed out that the Council's major worry was about the possible embarrassment to the Government and Council if medical standards dropped at the Medical School.[39]

All of this agitation and unease seems to have caused divisions at Cabinet level. A Transvaal weekly associated with Prime Minister Strijdom, *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus*, ran an editorial in early February 1957 in which they queried the benefits of removing control of the Medical School from Natal University:

> [We] confess to a degree of doubt about whether the process of separate development will be significantly advanced by transferring the administration of this Medical School from a white university to a white

35. Over the next months, the move was also opposed by the Council of the Medical Graduates Association of South Africa (*Rand Daily Mail*, 19 March 1957), the Federal Council of the Medical Association of South Africa and Wits (Brookes, 1966, *op cit.*).
36. *Die Transvaler*, 14 March 1957.
37. Gordon (1957a) *op cit.*, p20. Gordon had sought the support of the President of the South African Medical and Dental Council, Prof. SF Oosthuizen, and the Dean of the Pretoria Medical School, Prof. HW Snyman in December 1956. Gordon wanted them to remind the Government that Natal University was internally segregated and that government policy had been strictly observed and to warn that there would be problems staffing the hospital if it were under state control instead of 'the control of a true University'.
38. Gordon (1957b), *op cit.*, p6.
39. *Natal Daily News*, 14 March 1957.

state department, and by transferring the supervision of examinations from one white university to another white university.[40]

These concerns were roundly rebutted by an editorial in *Die Transvaler*, Verwoerd's former paper:

> As long as non-white students study together with whites in the same institution, or *as long as a non-white institution is an integral part of a white institution*, there is in principle and in fact a community [*gemeenskaplikheid*] between the two groups and thus no apartheid.[41]

### 4.3 The 'Hybrid' Separate University Education Bill

In the context of this opposition and Cabinet division, Viljoen introduced the first draft of the Separate University Education Bill on 11 March 1957.[42] The Bill had three main aims: to establish university colleges for black students, to transfer control of the University College of Fort Hare and the Natal Medical School to the Government and to limit the admission of black students to universities designated for whites. This Bill was challenged by Albert van der Sandt Centlivres, the Chancellor of UCT who had served as Chief Justice from 1955 to 1957 and therefore had a thorough knowledge of Statute Law.[43] Centlivres identified a technical fault with the Bill: it was a 'hybrid' Bill, dealing with matters of public policy as well as 'private interests', namely Fort Hare and the Natal Medical School, and it was subsequently withdrawn. After this, legislation concerning Fort Hare proceeded through Parliamentary channels independently, but as the aim of the policy was to bring Fort Hare into line with the newly established institutions, the legislation dealing with Fort Hare exactly reflected the legislation establishing the new African university colleges.

---

40. *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus*, 'Akademiese apartheid', 15 February 1957.
41. *Die Transvaler*, 'Aparte Hoer Onderwys', 19 February 1957, in Gordon (1957a) *op cit.*, pp48-9 (Gordon's emphasis).
42. HAD (1957) 11 March, cols. 2493-2495.
43. Beyers, CJ (ed.) (1977) *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, p77.

For the Medical School, however, this blunder created a strategic gap which allowed the institution to continue under Natal's control. After the first Bill was withdrawn, Viljoen said that as with Fort Hare, legislation for the Medical School would be handled separately, but this never happened. In his history of Natal University, Brookes argues that it was the opposition of the staff that was decisive in ending the transfer plans. However, it seems probable that it was the combined opposition of the staff, the medical establishment and the province that persuaded a divided Cabinet that the plan was unworkable.

The scheme to transfer the Medical School was quietly abandoned. Although it made no formal retraction, the Nel Commission (see below) agreed to withdraw the Medical School clauses from the Bill, and the Extension of University Education Act specifically excluded the Medical School from the prohibition on black students enrolling at a white university.[44]

### 4.4 Second draft of the Separate University Education Bill

Otherwise, the technical objection to the Bill did not cause a serious delay as Viljoen introduced an amended Bill that excluded the 'private' aspects in May 1957.[45] This second draft of the Separate University Education Bill therefore provided the founding legislation for four new institutions for black students and for the segregation of university education.

First, the Bill established management structures for the four new institutions. In brief (the creation of these institutions is discussed in detail in Chapter 5), this part of the Bill:

- assigned control of the two new African university colleges to the Minister of Native Affairs and to the Minister of Education for the other two institutions 'for non-white persons other than Bantu persons';

44. Brookes (1966) *op cit.*, Ch 16.
45. HAD (1957) 8 April, Cols. 4227-33.

- delegated academic control to Unisa, which would be the examining and degree-awarding authority for all of the new university colleges;
- provided for the Governor General to appoint the Councils of the university colleges;
- accorded extensive powers to the responsible Minister, including the power to appoint the Senate, any other bodies he deemed desirable, the Principal and the staff, and to prescribe which faculties and departments should be established;
- granted the Minister extensive powers over the Principal, the staff and the students, limited only by the Conscience Clause, as no religious test could be imposed;
- barred white students from attending these university colleges; and
- specified that the African institutions would be financed from the Bantu Education Account, the other two from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Second Admission to the established universities, apart from Unisa, would henceforth be segregated on the basis of population groups. Black students would be required to attend the university college allocated to their particular population group. Except for those who had already commenced courses of study at a university, no black student could in future be admitted to a university without Ministerial consent.[46]

Here an important change, with far-reaching consequences (discussed in Chapter 5), was introduced in the second draft of the Bill. In the Hybrid Bill, it had been specified that if a student was registered without the consent of the Minister, both the student and the university would be deemed to have committed an offence. In the second draft of the Bill, however, the liability of the universities to prosecution was removed, with liability remaining solely with the student. It is not clear what prompted this change in the legislation.[47]

46. Separate University Education Bill.
47. *Ibid.*, and Gordon (1957b), *op cit.*

On 27 May 1957 the debate on the Separate University Education Bill began in the House of Assembly. Introducing the Bill, Viljoen explained why the Government wanted to close the existing universities to black students and the rationale behind the establishment of the new institutions. But although this was the overt agenda for his speech, Viljoen voiced the Government's preoccupation with mounting African political opposition, 'the numerous defiance campaigns ... amongst the non-white population groups', as the context for the policy.[48]

Despite the widespread use of the Suppression of Communism Act, which had been passed in 1950, and other repressive measures, high-profile African political activity was a feature of the mid 1950s and at this time membership of the ANC rose from under ten thousand to over one hundred thousand. The Defiance Campaign, launched in June 1952, led to over 8 400 arrests by the end of that year. Organisation of the Congress of the People led to the adoption of the Freedom Charter at Kliptown in June 1955. From September 1955 the Government responded with police raids on the homes of political activists and organisational leadership was disrupted by numerous banning and restriction orders. In December 1956, 156 activists were arrested for the 'Treason Trial', which was actively proceeding during the 1957 debate but which eventually collapsed in 1961. Despite the arrest of the leadership, popular protest continued. From January 1957 bus fare increases led to boycotts in Johannesburg and Pretoria. For several months crowds thousands strong walked to work rather than take the buses. In August 1956 the Federation of South African Women organised a march of 20 000 women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the extension of passes to women. The same issue prompted widely-supported protest in Zeerust from April 1957. This highly charged political atmosphere attracted student participation in protest and spilled over onto the campuses themselves. For example, Wits students participated in the 'Torch Commando' protests against the removal of Coloured voters in the Cape from the common electoral register and the Defiance Campaign

48. HAD (1957) 27 May, cols. 6765ff.

against 'unjust laws'. The 1955 student protest at Fort Hare responded to the general political context as well as conditions on the campus.[49]

In his speech to Parliament Viljoen blamed the development of this 'national consciousness' on the 'open' universities:

> The leaders of those non-whites are often trained in an area and in an atmosphere which is totally foreign to the section of the population they have to serve, and when [they] have completed their training ... they have to go back to a society where they are frustrated, a society with which they are out of touch ... is it to be wondered then that such a person becomes an agitator and takes part in disturbances such as we have seen in this country in the past? ... instead of becoming a leader and a social asset, he becomes a traitor and a social evil.[50]

Conditions in the 'open' universities were therefore styled as a significant threat to the security of the state: this was a development on the earlier Nationalist denunciation of *saamboerdery* solely because it was seen as an affront to the 'traditional way'.

It is very unlikely that this new line of argument was conceived by Viljoen, indeed, when he delivered his speech, he is reported to have 'clung tightly to his typewritten brief' with 'a grim Dr Verwoerd sitting immediately behind him'.[51] It appears that this approach can be traced to the NAD, which had taken a similar line in November 1956 in its journal *Bantu*, in an article written by Piet Koornhof, then a research officer at the NAD. Koornhof had argued that at the 'open' universities

> the Native comes into contact in an intimate manner with Leftist Whites who promote the crooked development of the non-European to the detriment of all.[52]

---

49. See Murray, BK (1997) *Wits: The 'Open' Years, a history of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1939-1959*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, p118 and White, TRH (1997) 'Student disturbances at Fort Hare in 1955' in *Kleio*, XXIX, Department of History, University of South Africa.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Rand Daily Mail*, 29 May 1957.
52. Quoted in *Cape Argus*, 28 November 1956; and *The Star*, 26 November 1956.

Black students had been members of the Students' Representative Councils at both of the 'open' universities, and had attended Nusas congresses in this capacity. Black students did not have separate organisations at either of the 'open' universities, and according to Mandela, Wits was not significant as an area for organisation for the African National Congress at the time that he was a student there.[53]

Nationalists found several reasons, some of them contradictory, to blame the 'open' universities for political unrest. While Koornhof wrote of the undesirable influence of white activists on black students, Viljoen said that black students resented the 'hypocrisy' of the 'open' universities which did not allow them to participate fully in all aspects of university life. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, both Wits and UCT admitted black students on the basis of a code of 'academic non-segregation and social segregation'. These arrangements, adopted at least in part to accommodate the racism of the Government, enabled Viljoen to argue that socially black students were actively disadvantaged by being excluded from important aspects of university life:

> At present there is no particular advantage for the non-white students in maintaining the status quo ... what we find at present at the open universities is this: it is true that there is academic intercourse ... for the rest there is little contact between them ... these contacts which are supposed to be so broad and on which so much emphasis is laid virtually do not exist in practice.[54]

This was obviously a controversial point, because it was precisely the political and social interaction between white and black students outside of the lecture theatres that the Nationalists were most concerned to terminate. Underlying both of these points, however, was the fundamental Nationalist belief that 'universal' university

---

53. De Beer, Z, student leader, University of Cape Town, late 1940s and early 1950s; interviewed in Johannesburg, 4 December 1992; Mandela, NR, student leader, Fort Hare, 1939-40; interviewed in Johannesburg, 15 January 1993; Rachanis, C, student leader, University of the Witwatersrand, 1950s; interviewed in Johannesburg, 12 November 1992; Tobias, PV, student leader, University of the Witwatersrand, late 1940s and early 1950s; interviewed in Johannesburg, 17 January 1993. Wits students were, however, prominent among the founders of the ANC Youth League.
54. HAD (1957) 27 May, cols. 6765ff.

education was undesirable and impossible to attain anyway, and that the pursuit of the ideal was misguided and dangerous.

In contrast, the Nationalists' 'particularist' conception of university education was plainly the inspiration for the separate institutions. Viljoen said that

> the university is in a place within a particular community ... it must have a knowledge of the community whom it wishes to serve. It must also have a knowledge of the areas in which it is established and their circumstances.

He argued that the university's 'method of approach to science and human problems will be determined by the community and the soil from which it springs'. So, in contrast to the 'open' universities, Viljoen proposed that the new institutions would be based on 'the necessity of maintaining ethnic ties in university institutions':

> the future leader during his training, including his university training, must remain in close touch with the habits, ways of life and views of members of his population group.[55]

This closely echoed Koornhof's line that separate university facilities would make it possible for African students to 'develop the attributes of leadership in his own circle'.[56]

Although the Government spoke of creating university colleges bound to distinct ethnic communities, authoritarian apartheid dictated that there was to be no place for the democratic involvement of the communities in these institutions. Viljoen considered that

> The non-whites are still too immature to accept the responsibilities concomitant with an independent university.[57]

When WA Maree, Verwoerd's deputy minister at the NAD, spoke, he stressed that while the policy would still bring white and black into contact, it would be 'on the basis not of equality but of guardian and ward'.[58]

---

55. *Ibid.*
56. Quoted in *Cape Argus*, 28 November 1956; and *The Star*, 26 November 1956.
57. HAD (1957) 27 May, cols. 6765ff.
58. *Ibid.*

As Minister of Education Viljoen introduced the Bill, because until then all university education had been the responsibility of his department. But as the thrust of the Bill was to remove responsibility for providing university education for Africans to the NAD, he was placed in the awkward position of explaining a policy over which he would have little control. It was also obvious to all present in the House that Viljoen was presenting ideas that were not his own. Speaker after speaker pointed out the inconsistencies between the views of his address and earlier positions which he had espoused: he was repeat dly reminded of a speech he had made in 1951, when he had promised not to i nterfere with the autonomy of the universities. He was constantly taunted by Opposition members suggesting that he was being manipulated by Verwoerd: one member said that Viljoen had 'fettered his discretion with the inflexible preconceived ideas of the Minister of Native Affairs',[59] while another interjected 'you do not sound very convincing. I think the Minister of Native Affairs should rather have introduced this Bill'.[60] Margaret Ballinger's (see below) account of the process was that

> By 1957 Dr Verwoerd was ready to grasp this nettle. The Minister of Education, Arts and Science, with whom this responsibility for higher education lay, was *induced* to introduce a Separate University Education Bill.[61]

Verwoerd himself did not intervene at all during the entire debate, but an Opposition member caustically observed that Maree was 'one of the first speakers that was put into the debate by [Verwoerd]... just to make quite sure that the debate would proceed along the right lines'.[62]

In justifying the establishment of new, state-controlled separate institutions for black students, it might have been expected that Viljoen would have spoken about the new university colleges for Coloureds and Indians as well as those for Africans.

---

59. *Ibid.*, col. 6778.
60. *Ibid.*, col. 6769.
61. My emphasis: Ballinger, VM (1969) *From Union to Apartheid, A trek to isolation*, Bailey Brothers, Folkestone, p350.
62. HAD (1957) 27 May, cols. 6847-6848. Maree was the leader of the NP in Natal, and in 1958 became the youngest member of Verwoerd's Cabinet. Beyers describes him as 'one of the architects of separate development in South Africa' (Beyers *op cit.*, p491).

However, indicative of the control and the initiative of the NAD regarding this policy, he spoke mostly about the African institutions and the way in which they were to articulate with other Government policies, under close NAD supervision. Viljoen had to argue that the NAD was in a better position than his own department to control the African university colleges because the NAD already had responsibility for African schools, the Bantu Education Account and 'Bantu development' generally. This, he said, put the NAD was in the best position to 'co-ordinate ... the supply and demand of university-trained Bantu'.[63]

Besides the principled and strategic considerations of university philosophy and separate development, the policy was clearly also based on visceral sentiments popularly held and widely understood by Nationalist supporters: protecting white interests and suppressing black aspiration. The threat of *oorstrooming* (literally, that white students would be 'swamped' by black students) was the real concern for those not directly involved in conceptualising the policy and was repeatedly reiterated by other NP members in the course of the debate. This constituency needed to be convinced that their white Government should spend its funds on black higher education. Viljoen explained to these supporters that unless black enrolments were checked, the 'open' universities would inexorably become black institutions in 'atmosphere and orientation' so that 'white students will not feel at home there and will eventually have to hand over these universities to the non-whites'.[64] Maree also reassured NP followers that the aim of the policy was to protect white interests:

> It is absolutely essential for the application of our apartheid policy and for the safeguarding of the white civilisation that we should supply and produce as soon as we can the numbers of Natives required for the development of those areas out of their own power and not on the back of the white man.[65]

63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*

Taking very different lines, neither of them strictly official, both Viljoen and Maree spoke about the educational role of the new institutions and the skills that it was hoped that they would transmit. As has been seen above, the Van der Walt Committee had followed Verwoerd in choosing a 'modest' curriculum based around the BA and BSc degrees and teaching diplomas, guided by the established pattern of African subject choice and employment. Maree, however, reverted to the Tomlinson line, perpetuating the myth that the university colleges would 'offer those courses which are necessary for the development of the Bantu areas'.[66] Viljoen betrayed his imperfect grasp of apartheid separate development with a comment drawn from the unreconstructed segregationist ideas of his Afrikaner Party past:

> The greatest need of the non-Whites, and more particularly of the Bantu, for several generations to come will still be to acquire civilisation, and that the subjects to be studied should bear this in mind.[67]

The Bill was debated for three days in the House of Assembly. The United Party (UP) opposed the Bill at every stage from the first reading, as did the Labour and Liberal Parties and the Native Representatives.[68] The leader of the UP, Sir de Villiers Graaff, moved that the Bill should not be introduced

> because it provides for a serious interference with traditional academic freedom by means of the control, other than the reasonable financial control, of a university institution by the state.[69]

The UP's education spokesman warned of the dangers in the policy:

> We have all seen in this House how the hon. the Minister of Justice trembles with emotion and righteous indignation because he was educated under a system of which he disapproves in later life. These Bantu leaders will have the same grievance against the white man's government today. They will tell you 'We were given a raw deal; we were put out on a limb;

66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*, col. 6772.
68. *Friend*, 12 March 1957; *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 January 1957.
69. *Daily Dispatch*, 12 March 1957, quoted in White, TRH (1994) 'ZK Matthews and the politics of education in South Africa', unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of York, p159.

> we were told we were not to have the white man's culture, the opportunity to become citizens of the world'. They will have a grievance.[70]

Despite these protests, as White observes, 'the UP responded somewhat nebulously, apparently content with the principle of segregation although sceptical of its cost'.[71] When the debate concluded, the Bill passed the second reading by 72 votes to 42, but instead of proceeding to the third vote and the statute books, it was referred to a Select Committee, which was converted into a Commission of Enquiry at the close of the session.

### 4.5 Delay: the referral to the Select Committee

In Parliamentary practice, the function of the second reading is to examine and debate the principles contained in a Bill. If a Bill has passed this stage, the majority of the House has accepted these principles. At this point the Bill can be referred to a Select Committee to remove inconsistencies that have emerged in the course of the debate. If the business of this Committee is not yet complete when the session ends, it can be transformed into a Commission.

The reasons for the decision in May 1957 to refer the Separate University Education Bill to a Select Committee, and subsequently to a new Commission of Enquiry, are not clear. Popular tradition at the 'open' universities implied that the scale and determination of opposition to the Bill forced the Government's hand. It seems more likely, however, that the climate within the NP was more influential.

Before the second reading stage, Wits had asked Viljoen to appoint a Select Committee to examine the principles of the proposed legislation, but there is little to suggest that this was a serious consideration.[72] One of the members of the Select Committee was Margaret Ballinger. Ballinger, who been a history lecturer at Rhodes and Wits (see Chapter 2), had served as the Natives' Representative for the Eastern Cape from 1936 until the post was abolished in 1959. In 1953 she had

70. HAD (1957) col. 6786.
71. White (1994) *op cit.*, p159.
72. *Die Burger*, 14 May 1957.

helped found the South African Liberal Party and been elected its first leader, a position she held for two years.[73] She was still an active member of the Liberal Party, which was anti-Communist as well as anti-apartheid, but co-operated with the left on some issues, at the time of the Select Committee. Ballinger was well aware that the principles were not open for examination after the second reading. She later wrote that

> Whether the gesture of a Select Committee was worth contending for or accepting was doubtful even at the time, but since it had been conceded, it had to be explored.[74]

Having passed the second reading by a clear majority, the Bill could easily have been enacted. Instead, a process was set in motion which ultimately delayed the implementation of the policy of university apartheid until 1960.

### 4.5.1 Extra-Parliamentary opposition

The Government's plans to introduce apartheid legislation for university education had long been criticised from many quarters, and for many reasons. At first, in the early 1950s, students at the 'open' universities, especially Wits, and in Nusas and the South African Institute of Race Relations took the lead, but the Government's advancing plans inevitably roused opposition from the institutions threatened and other groups concerned about the principles involved.

At the time of the Eiselen Commission, Nusas published a tract on 'The African in the Universities', in support of open admissions policies.[75] As early as 1953, the Wits SRC invited MPs to the campus to see 'how harmoniously the system of academic non-segregation worked'.[76] The report of the Holloway Commissi was denounced by students at Wits, UCT and in Nusas.[77]

---

73. Beyers *op cit., Volume V,* pp24-25.
74. Ballinger *op cit.,* p351.
75. A second edition was published when the Holloway Report was released.
76. SAIRR (1953) *op cit.,* p70.
77. *Ibid.*

When it became apparent that legislation for university apartheid was imminent, there were deliberate and effective efforts to consolidate an inclusive student response. At the 'open' universities, rather than continuing to express student opinion only through the SRCs and Nusas, mass student meetings were organised to allow for student opinion to be accurately assessed and expressed. At Wits in September 1956 all except 51 of a meeting of about 1 300 students voted in favour of protest against university apartheid; at a student meeting at UCT in October 1956, students voted by 1 144 to 15 in favour of full university autonomy. Students at Rhodes University and the University of Natal, campuses which were also affiliated to Nusas but where no black students were admitted, held meetings in support of the Wits and UCT campaigns.[78] After the first draft of the legislation was published in 1957, the Fort Hare SRC called a mass meeting to consider 'the invitations extended by Wits, Cape Town and Nusas students for co-operation on this question' and decided that

> In view of the action taken by the students of Wits and Cape Town University in connection with apartheid in the universities, Fort Hare students should do something more positive.

Fort Hare then decided to rejoin Nusas so that the Bill could be fought from a united organisation.[79]

At the start of the 1950s, the constituent parts of Wits were politically divided and formulated no united response to the Government's plans. Over the decade, a liberal middle ground was created, allowing Wits to take a far stronger stand against university apartheid.

Murray argues that in the early 1950s, the Wits SRC was dominated by 'the left' which had little in common with the university's conservative Principal and Council. At the time of the Holloway Commission, for example, along with the SRC, both the Wits Senate and Convocation were mobilised to reject the Holloway

78. SAIRR (1957) *op cit.*, p204 and Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p304.
79. SAIRR (1957) *op cit.*, p204.

report.[80] Murray points out that in contrast the Council statement on Holloway was carefully worded and cautious, treading

> through a series of minefields to produce a full endorsement of the university's overall policy of 'academic non-segregation and social segregation'. It represented Wits not so much as an open university but more as a 'European' university that admitted a limited number of black students.[81]

Murray suggests that the SRC and Council could agree only that the university should continue to admit black students, but disagreed over issues such as how many black students should be admitted (especially to the Medical School) and about social segregation on the campus. After the 'exceptionally conservative' Professor WG Sutton became Wits Principal in the mid-1950s, he chose these two issues to break the independence of the SRC and to assert the authority of the Principal and Council with a new constitution for the SRC. Thereafter, from 1955, liberals controlled the SRC and tried to participate in constructing a united front against the Government and its plans for university apartheid. This was helped by the liberals on Council, and the liberal Chancellor, Richard Feetham, becoming increasingly assertive after the death of PM Anderson, the chair of Council, at the end of 1954. Murray argues that 'Wits moved from a hesitant defence of academic non-segregation to a more affirmative assertion of the advantages of the open university', a process which made Sutton 'more of a liability than an asset' and, as a result, he was 'sidelined':

> The whole concept of protest was alien to him, and he could not understand what all the fuss was about over preserving open admissions to Wits when so few blacks actually attended the university.[82]

According to Murray, the Wits staff too had become more liberal over the 1950s, because of the experiences of the 1950s generally and because more Wits students were being appointed to the staff. The Lecturers' Association set up an 'Open Universities Vigilance Committee', which in 1956 helped to launch the 'Open

---

80. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, pp295-298.
81. Murray, BK (1990) 'Academic 'non-segregation and social segregation': Wits as an 'open' university, 1939-1959', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 16 No 4, December, p10.
82. *Ibid.*, p8.

Universities Liaison Committee' with representatives from Senate, the Lecturers' Association, Convocation and the SRC in order to facilitate co-operation with UCT.

At its national Assembly in July 1956 Nusas decided to concentrate on Academic Freedom, a far broader concept than university autonomy. SRC Committees were set up at Wits and UCT. The Wits SRC Academic Freedom Committee aimed to mobilise 'a university-wide consensus for a collective protest' which would be far more dramatic in its impact than any student protest.[83] They called for lectures to be cancelled for an hour, or for students to stay away, as a symbolic protest against university apartheid. Although the acting Principal, ID MacCrone, vetoed it as a breach of university discipline, 70 staff members signed a petition in support of the students' protest and the boycott proceeded. Murray argues that this was not a return to 'the cleavage and conflict of the earlier phase' because the action was designed to appeal to a broader constituency and gain 'the fullest possible co-operation of the staff'. He also points out that MacCrone was himself sympathetic to the students, but that he felt that university routine should not be disrupted and that the Council should not be embarrassed in its dealing with the Government.

Murray argues that MacCrone was important in linking Council, Senate and the students. Left wing and liberal student leaders, however, believed that the campaign against university apartheid was part of a wider campaign against apartheid itself. The left on the SRC decided to work with the SRC appointed under the new constitution rather than continuing to resist it. This facilitated the united front and allowed the left to continue to influence the university apartheid campaign and achieve continuities in their agenda.

It was widely recognised that there was no chance of forcing the Government to back down, but it was felt that the principles at stake could not be flaunted without comment. There was eventually opposition in all the English-medium universities.

---

83. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p295.

Nusas organised international support and was joined in its campaign by Fort Hare, the ANC, the Parliamentary Opposition, the SAIRR and the Black Sash.

In late 1956 Viljoen met a senior Wits delegation and simply reiterated that legislation for university apartheid would be introduced in the next session of Parliament. With the opportunity for constructive engagement dismissed by the Government, the campaign became more public. In December 1956 the Councils of both Wits and UCT passed resolutions on the Government's plans. These resolutions differed slightly in highly significant ways, revealing that the stance of UCT was considerably more liberal than that of Wits. Both Wits and UCT argued that academic integration 'accords with the highest university ideals and has contributed to interracial harmony and understanding in South Africa' and that they therefore wanted to be allowed to proceed as before. But whereas the UCT Council simply resolved that it in principle opposed 'academic segregation on racial grounds', Wits made a very different point: that it in principle opposed 'the *legislative enforcement* of academic segregation on racial grounds'. The extra words 'legislative enforcement' lead inevitably to the conclusion that Wits, unlike UCT, did not find 'academic segregation on racial grounds' spurious. UCT also concluded that separate facilities could not be equal to those of the 'open' universities, a point not made by Wits.[84]

In January 1957 the Councils and senior academics from Wits and UCT held a conference in Cape Town and produced an edited account of the proceedings, published as *The Open Universities in South Africa*, which they described as 'a reasoned statement of our belief in the value of Open Universities in South Africa'.[85]

In *The Open Universities* Wits and UCT set out their views on the nature of university education in general and the university education system in South Africa.

---

84. Centlivres, AvdS *et al* (eds.) (1957) *The Open Universities in South Africa*, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, p4.
85. Murray (1990) *op cit.*, p21.

The approach of the book was grounded in the principle that the primary function of the university was 'the pursuit of truth'. The authors argued that for universities to function properly, no other considerations should be entertained. Knowledge had to be 'its own end, not merely a means to an end' and so the university could not 'be true to its own nature if it becomes the tool of Church or State or any sectional interest.' Universities needed to admit students from a 'diversity of backgrounds', because, they said, 'diversity ... contributes to the discovery of truth ... in the clash of ideas'. (On this theme they argued that 'a closed university in South Africa throws away, in the field of social and linguistic studies, the very advantage which is afforded by its position in a continent of diverse cultures and languages'.)

The authors considered that there were four essential freedoms necessary for universities to function properly: to determine autonomously, on academic grounds, who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught and who may be admitted to study. They argued that these freedoms were 'bound together' and that if one was 'broken down' it 'imperils' the others.

Within South Africa, the authors argued that the Wits and UCT admissions policy 'is in general accord with the ideas, attitudes and values of the Western world' and 'accords with the universality of Christendom' because they tried, 'so far as possible' to admit students 'on the basis of academic qualifications only', and 'in all academic matters treat non-white students on a footing of equality and without separation from white students'.[86] They used these admissions criteria because they had a 'duty to provide higher education to all' and because 'racial diversity within the university is essential to the ideal of a university in a multiracial society'. They argued that

> a university should represent a cross-section of all that is civilised in the society which it serves. It is plainly the duty of the open universities to

86. Centlivres *et al*, *op cit.*, p2.

> provide higher education for those who, in their opinion, can benefit from it.[87]

But Wits and UCT modified the universal ideal in ways which, they argued, suited it to the South African context. So despite the open admissions policy, all was not equal within the universities as they conformed 'to the South African practice of separation in social matters (residence, games, dances)' although black students could participate in literary, debating and scientific societies as well as the SRC.[88] *The Open Universities* argued that despite social segregation, black students were still at an 'advantage' attending an 'open' university:

> All the evidence goes to show that what these students appreciate more than anything else during the course of their careers as students at the open universities is the fact that they feel they are treated like human beings and that their dignity as human beings is respected.[89]

The booklet also claimed that the open admissions policy held advantages for South African society as a whole as well as individual black students, as open admissions fostered 'interracial understanding' and the 'growth of mutual confidence' and also claimed that 'high and impartial standards of scholarship' were the 'solvent of the prejudices of the non-white as well as the white'.[90]

As well as bringing black and white students together so that they could develop understanding and learn mutual respect, the booklet also clearly conveyed the idea that the 'open' universities were bearers of a superior civilisation, which they had a responsibility to impart to uneducated, uncivilised people. Although they argued that 'what concerns us as universities is not the colour of a man who is the bearer of civilisation, but the quality of the civilisation which he represents',[91] they clearly believed that white, 'Western' civilisation had to be 'communicated comprehensively to at least the *elite* of the non-white population' or 'the very

87. *Ibid.*, p6.
88. *Ibid.*, p20.
89. *Ibid.*, p27.
90. *Ibid.*, p19.
91. *Ibid.*, pp21-22.

existence of the White man in South Africa will be in jeopardy'.[92] There was a need to overcome 'irrational modes of thinking, the magic[al] view of the world, and all the heritage of barbarism' and replace it with 'a true [and] inner assimilation of rational modes of thought, the scientific view of the world, and the spiritual values of the West'.[93]

The 'open' universities therefore believed that they were acting in the long-term interests of South Africa, and that they had a duty to defend their autonomy and admissions policies.[94]

The 'open' universities had other concerns about the Government's plans. They contended that there was a relationship between university autonomy and academic freedom and that if the state interfered with admissions and created an atmosphere of coercion and fear, they would disrupt 'the freedom to search for the truth' and the free dissemination of knowledge.[95]

They feared that segregated institutions would encourage 'an uncritical cult of exclusive nationalism' which was 'potentially a disruptive force':[96]

> If an enemy ... wished to make certain of the destruction of Western civilisation in this country, he could find few better instruments for his purpose than a network of non-white universities, to which *all* non-white students were compelled to go. Experience has already shown us that institutions of this kind tend to be centres of narrow and intense nationalism; that their students are likely to be contemptuous of authority and will come to look upon the white man with bitter prejudice and resentment.[97]

92. *Ibid.*, p37.
93. *Ibid.*, p38.
94. *Ibid.*, p26.
95. *Ibid.*, p9.
96. *Ibid.*, p20.
97. *Ibid.*, p39.

(Despite this official view, senior figures in the Wits hierarchy, at least, disagreed. The conservative Wits Principal, WG Sutton, wrote to an Australian colleague in November 1959 that

> It should be realised that, no matter how much we may differ from the Government on the question of the admission of non-whites to what are termed the 'open universities', the authorities must be considered to be sincere in their desire to provide, within the ambit of the official policy of apartheid, a university standard of education for non-whites ... there is, in my opinion, considerable merit in the project of establishing special university facilities for non-whites.[98])

*The Open Universities* also pointed out that segregated institutions could not be equal and that it was impossible to make a direct comparison of facilities at universities:

> despite its plausibility the 'separate but equal' doctrine has no legitimate place in university education, because it fails to take account of those factors which matter most, namely, the factors which cannot be assessed in physical or monetary terms.

For example, it said one could not quantify and compare 'the ethos of the university and the professional reputation of particular faculties' or 'that which makes a staff distinguished'.[99] It also thought that segregated institutions would be so expensive that it was inevitable that equal provision would not be carried through properly.[100]

Underpinning both of these points - that segregated institutions would be inferior and they would breed nationalism - was the assumption that these problems would

---

98. Sutton to Sir George Paton, Chairman of the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee, 20 November 1959, Wits internal archive, F22, 2/1/59 - 2/7/73, Freedom: Academic (students). The former Principal, Humphrey Raikes, wrote to Sutton at the time of the Holloway Commission that he was concerned to avoid the development of parallel classes at Wits on the Natal model. He wrote that 'I feel that as things are at present, a separate non-European college in Johannesburg would become a hot-bed of Communism for which the University should under no circumstances make itself responsible'. He also wanted legal protection from black students protesting that the university was closed to them. Raikes to Sutton, 15 February 1954, Wits internal archive, *op cit.*
99. Centlivres *et al, op cit.*, p44.
100. *Ibid.*, p41.

beset *black* segregated institutions specifically. There was no recognition that there would also be political and intellectual implications for the 'open' universities as they were transformed, by default, into segregated white institutions. As Janet Robertson argued in *Liberalism in South Africa,* 'most non-Nationalists had yet to realise that if they condoned the infringement of non-white rights they automatically infringed their own freedom'.[101] It seems that Ballinger was therefore rather charitable in her interpretation when she wrote that

> Every thinking person amongst the European population is opposed to this measure, for at last they are beginning to realise, with these attacks on the highest institutions of the country - first, the church and now the universities - what apartheid as visualised by the Nationalist Government really means. It means the undermining of everybody's freedom.[102]

Critically, although *The Open Universities* defended the admissions policies of Wits and UCT, they did not attempt to argue that 'theirs is the only kind of university which should be allowed to exist in South Africa or receive State aid'[103] and part of their criticism of the Government was that it intended to 'impose upon the universities a uniformity of practice, in accordance with its theory of apartheid'.[104] They therefore also defended the right of universities to be 'closed' on the grounds of autonomy. Murray argues that *The Open Universities* believed

> it was all a matter of free choice ... there should be no more compulsion on closed universities to become open than on open universities to become closed.[105]

Robertson contends that 'the grounds on which [the 'open' universities] criticised the Government's scheme for university apartheid were liberal ones' but points out that in objecting principally to the legislative enforcement of academic segregation, 'more often than not ... concern was shown for the white rights which were in jeopardy rather than for non-white rights'. She observes that there were important

101. Robertson, J (1971) *Liberalism in South Africa, 1948-1963,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, p135.
102. HAD (1957) 27 May, col. 6811, quoted *ibid.*, p137.
103. Centlivres *et al, op cit.*, p7.
104. *Ibid.*, p3.
105. Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p307.

strategic implications of making this the central thrust of the 'open' universities' objections:

> Protests on these grounds enjoyed the support even of those who were firmly opposed to the extension of political rights to non-whites. Theirs was clearly not a liberalism which meant they were willing to apply a liberal solution to the colour problem.[106]

A Wits philosophy lecturer, FS McNeilly, wrote in 1956 that

> The liberal forces of South Africa ... have raised the wrong flag ... it is [the] rights [of the 'non-Europeans' of our universities] that should have been defended, and not the imaginary rights of our universities.[107]

But rather than an active promotion of fully integrated universities, which would have threatened every other university in South Africa and sections of their own institutions, both the booklet specifically and the general opposition of Wits and UCT stressed university autonomy. The issue of a university's right to make autonomous decisions about its affairs, including which students to admit, provided an extremely sharp focus to the opposition campaign to the Government. Robertson comments that 'tactically, it was a wise choice of emphasis' because it drew in all non-Nationalists, allowing, for example, the Council of Rhodes University to oppose the Government's plans alongside Nusas, as well as Afrikaans universities:

> The staff and students of Afrikaans universities might well be willing to oppose the Government on the issue of their autonomy; they would be unlikely to do so on the issue of non-white rights.[108]

With *The Open Universities* providing an extended explanation of their position, Wits and UCT also held protest marches to raise the profile of their campaign. Wits had two 'corporate' protests, the first in the university's history, a march from Braamfontein to the City Hall in May 1957 and a general assembly in April 1959. While the Bill was being discussed in Parliament, in May 1957, 2 000 members of staff, convocation and students dressed in university gowns and

106. Robertson, *op cit.*, p135.
107. Quoted in Murray (1997) *op cit.*, p321.
108. Robertson, *op cit.*, p136.

blazers marched from the university to the City Hall behind the banner 'Against Separate University Bill'. There were also protest marches at Fort Hare, Rhodes and in Cape Town.

Outside of the universities there was also opposition to the Bills. In January 1957 the Anglican Bishop of Pretoria said 'no racial considerations should be allowed to interfere in [the universities'] quest for knowledge'; and the Catholic Archbishop of Pretoria said the introduction of apartheid would bring about 'a reversal to a system which was just beginning to bear fruit'.[109] With most of its leaders involved in the Treason Trial, there was little response from black organisations. In retrospect, the silence of the ANC is notable. According to Mandela,[110] the ANC generally expected ZK Matthews to co-ordinate the organisation's response to matters concerning the universities. In 1957, however, Matthews was one of the accused in the Treason Trial and in no position to respond actively to mat[illegible] beyond Fort Hare. He did, however, write several articles on university apartheid, which appeared as his own views rather than those of the ANC.[111] In his thesis on Matthews, White argues that Matthews did not object to the establishment of more African university colleges and accepted that Fort Hare, sited as it was in a Xhosa area, would have a predominantly Xhosa culture, but he strongly opposed the elements of compulsion in the Government's plans.[112] In November 1956, however, the Natal Indian Congress condemned apartheid at universities because it said the universities provided

> the greatest opportunity for multi-racial contact [and] the greatest opportunity for encouraging the universal traditions of thought.[113]

---

109. *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 January 1957.
110. Mandela, NR (1993) Student leader, Fort Hare, 1939-40, subsequently ANC leader; interviewed in Johannesburg, 15 January 1993.
111. See for example Matthews, ZK (1957) 'Ethnic Universities', in *Africa South*, Vol. 14; and Matthews, ZK (1957) 'The University College of Fort Hare', in *South African Outlook*, April-May.
112. White (1994) *op cit.*, p173.
113. *Eastern Province Herald*, 28 November 1956.

### 4.5.2 Nationalist unease over the Bill

Mid-1957 was also a period of conflict within the Cabinet. The health of the Prime Minister, Strijdom, was failing and his potential successors and the different positions within the NP that they represented scrambled for influence and power. When Strijdom died in office just over a year later, there was a three-way leadership contest between Verwoerd, CR Swart (Speaker in the House and leader of the NP in the Orange Free State) and TE Dönges (leader of the Cape NP and organise .ie NP's electoral pact with the Afrikaner Party) and it is therefore significant that it was the latter two who intervened to delay the Bill, which was a challenge not only to Verwoerd's status and influence but also to the authoritarian apartheid which he represented.

This succession struggle within the Cabinet overflowed into an unusually critical and open period in senior NP circles. In particular, the rise of Verwoerd and policies that he backed were fair game for carefully couched attack. Lazar argues that the Cape NP was growing increasingly concerned about Verwoerd's aggressive style. He was reproached for pushing through the church apartheid clauses of the Native Laws Amendment Act, and there was unease about the way in which Verwoerd was perceived abroad. In May 1957 *Die Burger*, a newspaper linked to the Cape NP and Stellenbosch intellectuals, editorialised about how hastily the Bill had been drawn up, and suggested that the stress on the exclusion of black students from the 'open' universities, alongside the establishment of new facilities for black students, gave 'enemies of separate development their opening to bring the whole policy into discredit'.[114]

In his role as Speaker it was Swart who announced the decision to refer the Bill to a Select Committee to an 'astonished' House, leading to press speculation about a 'last minute change of mind by the Cabinet'.[115] Swart explained that the decision had been taken as a result of 'representations by individuals and bodies who

114. Quoted in *Cape Times*, 20 May 1957.
115. *The Star*, 17 May 1957.

supported the principle of the Bill but wanted consideration given to purely administrative aspects'.[116] In other words, this delay was not the result of public opposition to the principles of the Bill, such as had been mounted by the 'open' universities, but the concerns of loyal Nationalists. Dönges took a similar line, arguing that 'the Government is not wedded to the administrative details in this Bill, but takes its stand on the principles involved'.[117] While Dönges did not specify what he found problematic, Swart specifically criticised the inclusion of the Conscience Clause in the Bill. Under attack, Verwoerd would have been foolhardy to press ahead with the legislation in the face of these senior interventions. These struggles within the Cabinet, not just between individuals but the visions of apartheid they championed and expressed in part in struggles over university apartheid, are probably the major reason the legislation was delayed.

### 4.6 The Nel Commission

Despite these wrangles, it was clear from the start that Verwoerd managed to exert a great deal of influence over the Commission. Verwoerd's approval was sought before the decision was taken to transform the Select Committee into a Commission: in August 1957 the Secretary of the NAD wrote to Viljoen to say that Verwoerd

> accords with the resolution of the Honourable Minister of Education to appoint a Commission, with the terms that you have expounded.[118]

Furthermore, the appointed chairman of the Commission was not from the Department of Education, but was the Deputy Minister of Native Affairs, MDC de Wet (Daan) Nel. Nel had worked closely with Verwoerd in the *Naturellesakegroep* since he had campaigned for Verwoerd to be appointed Minister of Native Affairs.[119] Nel was also a Sabra executive member, a senior *Broederbonder* and

116. *Ibid.*
117. HAD (1957) 29 May, col. 6954.
118. Letter from the Secretary of Native Affairs to the Minister of Education, Arts and Science, dated 15 August 1957, Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*, volume 1407 part 1
119. Evans, I (1997) *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p70.

had been Verwoerd's deputy on the Native Affairs Commission.[120] This was a further shift in control from the Department of Education to the NAD, having moved from the Holloway Commission, which consisted of men hand-picked by Viljoen as Minister of Education and through an inter-departmental commission. The completion of this shift came in December 1957 when Viljoen died, and Nel succeeded him as Minister of Education.

Although the explicit function of the Commission was to consider the administrative details of the Bill, it also provided a formal channel for groups and individuals to air their views on the principles of university apartheid. The secretary for the Commission tried to contain this opportunity for debate, telling those giving evidence that

> To obviate any possible misunderstanding, I have to point out that in accordance with its terms of reference of the Commission will be unable to hear evidence on the principles contained in the Bill.[121]

Nel himself declared that two principles had been established: the desirability of the provision of separate university education facilities, and the prohibition of the admission of black students to universities designated white.[122]

In late 1957 and early 1958 the Commission received written submissions from over thirty organisations and individuals, heard oral evidence in Cape Town and Pretoria, and visited the University of Natal in Durban, and Fort Hare.[123] But although a wide range of views were aired and collated, most significantly, from the Department of Education, the NAD, the universities affected and their

---

120. Posel, D (1991) *The making of apartheid: Conflict and compromise*, p70 and p244, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
121. Letters sent to those giving evidence, Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*, volume 1407 file 1.
122. Nel, MDC (1959) *Report of the Commission on the Separate University Education Bill*, p1, Government Printer, Pretoria.
123. National Council of Women of South Africa; Natal Coastal Branch of the Medical Association of South Africa; University of Cape Town; SRC, University of Natal; Nusas; four provinces of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerke; University of Pretoria; Lecturers' Association, Fort Hare; University College of Fort Hare; Mr AT Laubscher; Rhodes University; Mr BS van As; NAD; University of Natal; Convocation, University of Natal; Raad vir Evangelisasie van Nie-Christelike Volke van die Ned. Herv. Kerk; Wits Lecturers' Association; Education League, Wits SRC; Sabra; Wits Convocation; Natal Indian Teachers' Society; Department of Education, Arts and Science; UCT SRC; Unisa; Wits Council; South African Institute of Race Relations; Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education; Christian Council of South Africa; Professor W Rollo. Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*, volume 1408 part A.

constituent parts, some Afrikaans churches, some Afrikaans universities and Sabra, Nel disregarded submissions on the principles that he considered had been established:

> a considerable part of the evidence submitted to the Commission had a bearing on precisely this aspect [the principle of separate university education]. The consideration thereof is, however, beyond the scope of the Commission's terms of reference.[124]

What is of interest here is to uncover where the changes accepted by the majority of the Commission originated, as well as to examine the suggestions from within the broad circle of NP intellectuals that were rejected. For these reasons the evidence submitted by the Department of Education, the NAD, Sabra, Potchefstroom University and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) are examined.

### 4.6.1 Department of Education and NAD submissions to the Nel Commission

The Department of Education pointedly remarked that as it had been responsible for drafting the Separate University Education Bill, its suggestions and opinions were already contained in the Bill. Its only new recommendation concerned the position of black students at the 'open' universities before the new university colleges were established. In the terms of the Separate University Education Bill, the Minister would be responsible for ensuring that the 'open' universities were not 'overrun' with black students at this stage. The Minister recommended that this provision be scrapped, as this was 'a matter which the universities themselves had to regulate and accept responsibility'.[125] In the Extension of University Education Bill this measure was changed, so that black students already registered at the universities were able to complete their courses.

---

124. Nel, *op cit.*
125. Evidence of the Department of Education, Arts and Science, Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*, volumes 1407-1409.

Although the Commission was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Native Affairs, the NAD also made formal representation in the form of a memorandum which considered each article of the Bill. Dr PAW Cook, a professional advisor for Bantu Education in the NAD who became the first Rector of the University College of Zululand (see Chapter 5), was also interviewed by the Commission.[126] The NAD recommended two significant changes: to prevent the establishment of convocations and to empower the Minister 'to establish a further body (or bodies)', a reference to the 'advisory' Councils and Senates. (Ballinger later referred to these suggestions for advisory bodies as 'Dr Verwoerd's ... amazing proposition'.[127])

'Advisory' committees had been appointed by the University of Natal to assist in the running of the non-European section. As a fund raising appeal from the early 1950s explained:

> There are in the University two committees specially looking after the interests of the non-European section - one advising the University Council on general policy and the other the Senate on academic matters. Prominent non-Europeans are appointed to these committees in order that the University can keep itself informed about non-European needs, and can consult non-European opinion.[128]

This model seems to have been seized upon by the NAD, and given a new ideological spin.

Through these new measures the NAD amended the Bill to allow it to articulate with its plans for the development of the Bantu Authorities as a response to African political opposition. Cook's evidence often indicated that the policy was being tailored to fit new needs that had arisen, in particular, the NAD's increasing concern to control African opposition to the new institutions. The NAD did not want a representative group like a Convocation to provide a constitutional,

126. Cook had been a Native schools inspector, a professional assistant in the Department of Education, Arts and Science as well as a member of the Eiselen Commission.
127. Ballinger, *op cit.*, p351.
128. University of Natal, Non European Section, (1953) 'Appeal for Funds', KCM 56990.

organised and democratic platform for opposition to its policies or to have representatives on a partly elected Council, as was the case at the other universities. Instead, hand-picked sympathisers who could be relied upon to back departmental control were to be appointed to 'advisory' bodies. Cook argued that it was

> ... not a secret that at Fort Hare there are members who are elected by Convocation and they tend to raise all sorts of demands for this, that and the other. It may be perfectly natural, but I think it is not a good principle particularly for the developing people.[129]

Under tight Government control, these 'advisory' bodies were to allow for the grooming of compliant black leadership under segregated conditions. As the plans for the Bantu Authorities were not then finalised, Cook argued tentatively that:

> With the development of the system of regional and area authorities, it will probably be desirable to appoint an 'advisory' Council for each university college that consists of Bantu members from the regional authority, and possibly also co-opted members from different academic institutions.[130]

Ballinger asked Cook why the NAD considered it necessary to establish separate 'advisory' Councils and Senates instead of 'putting their representatives of their own communities on the Council and giving them the same responsibility for running it'.[131] Cook responded that Ballinger's approach would result in

> a body which consists of two or three European professors, you might have a native professor, you might have two or three officials and then you would have several chiefs, shall we say from the local authorities. The natives would not understand that as a body which constituted any native responsibility as such. He would regard that as a European body and these other members that have been attached would simply be like additional trucks on a goods train.[132]

---

129. 'Transcript of oral evidence', Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*
130. 'Welsontwerp op afsonderlike universiteitsopleiding: Opsomming van die getuienis wat namens die Departement van Naturellesake afgele sal word', *Ibid.*, volumes 1407-1409.
131. Transcript of oral evidence, *Ibid.*, volumes 1407-1409.
132. *Ibid.*

Cook said that 'certain functions' would be allocated to the 'advisory' bodies from the start, and that in this way the members of the bodies would 'learn to take responsibility'.

Cook's amendments enhanced state control over the new institutions. He explained that the reason for this was that

> Especially in the first stages of the institutions it is likely to be necessary that all the members of the Councils will need to be appointed to side-step unnecessary delay and friction. The Councils will in any case be bodies whose functions will be prescribed by the Minister.

In contrast to the existing Council at Fort Hare, which, like many other South African universities included members elected by the Convocation or alumni, Cook thought that a greater degree of state control over the membership of the Council would expedite matters:

> As an executive body a Council tends to be very slow and to argue the toss and if you want to get things done it is better to have a nominated Council.[133]

The changes introduced by the NAD tightened control over the university colleges by giving the Minister powers of untrammelled intervention and blocked African political control over the direction and policy of the institutions. The NAD's amendments enhanced already extensive Ministerial powers as a response to the political crisis, but other Nationalist ideologues expressed serious reservations about the extent to which the state would control the new institutions.

### 4.6.2 Criticism of the Bill by Afrikaans intellectuals: Concerns about state control

Although Sabra welcomed the introduction of the Separate University Education Bill in 1957, the organisation had also asked for it to be referred to a Select Committee. Together with Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher

133. *Ibid.*

Education (Potchefstroom), Sabra questioned whether extensive state control over the new institutions would further the aims of the policy. The tone of Sabra's submission is surprisingly trenchant and scathing:

> the Minister concerned actually has sole authority and complete and unqualified control over the university colleges ... the university colleges are regarded as mere divisions of the civil service, with no independent legal status [*regspersoonlikheid*] whatsoever ... the lecturing staff are regarded as state officials, to be replaced arbitrarily by the Minister.[134]

Rather than simply nit-picking over administrative details, the doubts raised by these groups reflected deep concern over the future integrity and viability of separate development.

The relationship between Sabra and the NAD and the influence of Sabra over policy making changed over the 1950s. Lazar's study of the organisation demonstrates that the question of total separation, and its implications for economic integration and white reliance on African labour, repeatedly generated conflict within Sabra and between Sabra and Verwoerd. Lazar argues that the 'visionary' element of Sabra was frustrated by Verwoerd's approach, which was reconciled to the permanence of a settled urban African labour force.[135] Lazar suggests that until about 1956 the tensions between Sabra's 'visionaries' and Verwoerd had been diplomatically muted, but after Verwoerd's rejection of the report of the Tomlinson Commission, which advocated total separation, this diplomacy began to erode.

In January 1958 Sabra's Professors NJJ Olivier, JL Sadie and JH Coetzee appeared before the commission. They restated their support for separate institutions, which, they believed, would help Africans participate in the development of their communities in a positive way, create academic employment opportunities for black people, win African support for separate development and allow for a

---

134. 'Memorandum insake die Wetsontwerp op afsonderlike universiteisopleiding voorgele deur die Suid-Afrikaanse Buro vir Rasse-Aangeleenthede (Sabra)', *Ibid.*, Box 1408 Part A.
135. Lazar, J (1987) 'Conformity and Conflict: Afrikaner Nationalist Politics in South Africa, 1948-1961', unpublished DPhil Thesis, Oxford, p183.

'healthy' student community and spirit, free of the discrimination and other problems of the 'mixed' universities.[136]

The men from Sabra argued that for these goals to be attained, the planned institutions had to develop into 'true universities', equivalent to the existing institutions, as quickly as possible, avoiding the impression that the university colleges were in any way inferior. It was imperative that excellent academic staff should be attracted to prevent the university colleges from becoming havens for second rate academics.[137] They thought it necessary to affirm that

> The dominant intention must be to establish institutions that will serve the non-white population groups (and not the white population) and that will further their interests.[138]

(The university colleges subsequently struggled to recruit staff with university teaching experience. Most of those employed were graduates of Afrikaans universities: see Chapters 5 and 7 for more detail.)

Sabra warned that the unqualified control of the Minister over the university colleges, the way in which the university colleges would be divisions of the civil service with no legal standing, the status of lecturing staff as state officials that could be replaced by the Minister at will and their limited academic freedom 'would not have the effect of achieving the desired aims' nor, they said, were they even designed with those aims in mind. The organisation therefore recommended that the black university colleges would need to conform to the same 'British-American' pattern as other South African universities, with Council control of the university colleges, including the employment of lecturers and other officials and that the university colleges should have their own legal standing. They said that the role of the state should be limited to providing the Council with the necessary financial means to achieve its goals, although they tempered this by suggesting that as the state was bearing the heavy cost of establishing the university colleges, it

136. Sabra, 'Negende Jaarverslag', pp11-15, Japie Basson Papers, 2/21/i/1/1, 13 January 1955-28 November 1960, PV 58, INCH.
137. *Ibid.*
138. *Ibid.*

should have effective control by appointing all or most of the members of the Council and by granting the Minister final say over all decisions of the Council.[139]

Sabra argued that if the new university colleges were found to depart from this 'British-American' pattern they would be considered inferior and that this would be bad for race relations. They said any difference would be regarded as 'a further example of unasked for and unnecessary discrimination', which would be particularly sensitive as the establishment of the university colleges was being linked to the exclusion of black students from the existing 'mixed' universities.[140]

Besides its fears that [illegible]anded state control would tarnish the image of the new institutions in the eyes of the black communities, Sabra also worried that university autonomy and academic freedom would be breached and that the cardinal features of university function would thereby be compromised.

> Our genuine conviction is that a university institution can only fulfil its function correctly when government interference is limited to the absolute minimum.[141]

The submission by Potchefstroom made very similar points. They were also concerned about the extent of state involvement, pointing out that despite their heavy reliance on state support, South African universities had hitherto been granted independent legal status. For Potchefstroom,

> ... against the background of the current sensitive race relations in our country, exclusively permanent state control of these institutions (as is suggested in the current Bill) could be interpreted as unnecessary, innocuous discrimination; as mistrust in the eventual ability of the community for whom the institutions are meant to be able to manage them with maturity, and therefore as an element of inferiority so that the

139. *Ibid.*
140. *Ibid.*
141. *Ibid.*

> institutions that could under other circumstances be highly desirable and acceptable to the non-whites will be less acceptable.[142]

The question of state control in the new institutions also divided the Afrikaans churches because of its implications for theological training. Initially, three branches of the Afrikaans church, including the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), had drafted and submitted a memorandum asking for the establishment of complete theological faculties. But the NGK, the most liberal of the three, reconsidered its position on this question. In a later memorandum submitted separately, the NGK said that it no longer considered it desirable that theological training should be undertaken by the new university colleges, on the grounds that they would be

> in all respects, state institutions: the state will, for example, appoint and pay the professors of theology.[143]

The NGK questioned the feasibility and desirability of such an arrangement. They asked for the creation of facilities to obtain theology degrees at these universities, but on a basis comparable to the arrangement between the University of Stellenbosch and the independent Seminary of the Afrikaans churches at Stellenbosch.[144]

### 4.6.3 'Conscience Clause' concerns

The Separate University Education Bill included the 'Conscience Clause', based on the 1923 Higher Education Act, which read:

> No test of religious belief shall be imposed on any person as a condition of his becoming, or continuing to be a professor, lecturer, teacher or student

142. Evidence of Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*, Box 1408 Part A. Potchefstroom also argued that the name of the Bill was 'an unfortunate choice': 'A more neutral name where the stress falls rather on university provision and less on the separate, would probably have provoked less sensitivity.'
143. Letter and enclosed memorandum from the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk van Transvaal to the Minister of Education, Arts and Science, 21 May 1958, in Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*
144. *Ibid.*

> ... nor shall any preference be given to or advantage withheld from any person on the ground of his religious belief.[145]

In 1932, when he was Minister of Education, DF Malan had eloquently defended the Conscience Clause:

> I consider the Conscience Clause as necessary in the interests of science and I am of the opinion that it is just as necessary in the interests of religion. I believe that both science and religion can only live in an atmosphere of liberty ... I regard the Conscience Clause as a protection, not only to the liberty of thought and enquiry in our higher educational institutions, but, at the same time, as a protection of their honesty.[146]

But during the debate on the 1957 Bill, CR Swart argued that far from protecting academic freedom, the Conscience Clause interfered with the right of the universities to decide who they would teach, and therefore with the autonomy of the universities. In complete contradiction of this point, however, Swart also argued that the state had a duty to intervene in what was taught at the universities:

> If the Department of Philosophy propagates atheism, is the State to allow it in South Africa? Are we to allow that Academic Freedom?[147]

When evidence was submitted to the Nel Commission, Potchefstroom, which had managed to avoid the Conscience Clause in its own founding legislation (see Chapter 2), made a strong plea for its exclusion:

> It is really also our deepest conviction that the need exists and that we are obliged to the non-whites as a Christian people and State to present an opportunity for the establishment of one or more university institutions for non-whites that, like the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, are built on the principle of Christian Higher Education.[148]

The three Afrikaans churches,[149] namely the NGK, the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk (NHK) and the Gereformeerde Kerk (GK) were united in asking for the universities to be founded without the Conscience Clause.

---

145. Higher Education Act, Act 30 of 1923.
146. Quoted in the course of the 1957 debate, HAD (1957) 28 May, cols. 6864ff.
147. *Ibid.*
148. Evidence of Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*, Box 1408 Part A.
149. The division of the churches dated to the Great Trek, when the NHK broke away from the NGK. In the 1850s, the GK broke away from the NHK. The NHK became the official church of the Transvaal Republic.
*Continued ...*

These criticisms from Afrikaans quarters infuriated Verwoerd, who fumed about Sabra and the 'theorising Professors of Potchefstroom'.[150]

### 4.6.4 Report of the Nel Commission

Ballinger describes how, almost as soon as the taking of evidence was complete,

> the obviously departmentally prepared report began to emerge, not from the Department of Education but from the Department of Bantu Administration and Development.[151]

Nel, preoccupied by power struggles in the Cabinet after Strijdom's death, was

> pressing for the conclusion of our work. Indeed, so urgent was he in this regard that the majority report was rushed out from his Department in sections, in one language only.[152]

As 'all the circumstances were imposing a considerable strain on Mr Nel', he then made the 'extravagant challenge' of demanding the minority report in 24 hours, although a little more time was later allowed. Ballinger and four others of the thirteen members of the Commission compiled a minority report,[153] which drew on the evidence of the University of Natal, Wits, UCT and Potchefstroom as well as Sabra, which, they said, all

> unequivocally rejected the idea of 'State' institutions governed from above for non-whites. They insisted that if the proposed university colleges were to fulfil the function postulated for them - to provide university institutions for non-whites of a standard equal to that of our existing universities - they

---

In the 1950s differences among theologians over political issues seemed to transcend church divisions. According to Lazar, the majority of Afrikaans clergymen supported the Government and believed that the policy of apartheid was based on Biblical laws and the will of God. The handful who opposed apartheid, argues Lazar, 'had neither a specific geographical origin nor a definable constituency and power base. If anything, its relatively important influence derived from the fact that its most notable leaders were well-respected teachers and academics.' (Lazar, *op cit.*, p239.)

150. Evans, *op cit.*, p56.
151. Ballinger, *op cit.*, p351.
152. *Ibid.*, p352.
153. Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*, volume 1409, file D.

must be autonomous institutions in the sense of managing their own affairs with the least possible interference from above.[154]

This, the minority wrote, was the only way to 'avoid the damaging impression among non- whites of inferiority of character and quality'. The minority also criticised plans for the 'advisory' bodies, arguing that

> ... if these new colleges were to train the non-white groups for whom they are intended to the point where they can assume independent control of their own institutions, they must provide for co-operation between whites and non-whites on Council and Senate.[155]

By late 1958, the report of the majority of the Commission and a new Bill had been prepared.[156] The report proposed and outlined in detail 119 changes, of these, perhaps the most significant were those recommending the establishment of separate, 'advisory' Councils and Senates and the omission of the Conscience Clause.

The report recommended the creation of the 'advisory' bodies because of the 'present state of immaturity the non-European groups' rendered them unable 'to finance, staff and control a university college on their own'. For Nel, this meant that white staffing was essential, but it was considered desirable that 'non-Europeans should serve, not as subordinate members of a European body, but rather on their own bodies which will gradually develop into bodies with full status'.[157]

Nel linked the need for 'advisory' bodies to the Bantu Authorities, writing that 'as systems of local control are developed for the Bantu, it will become desirable to constitute an 'advisory' Council for each university college'.[158] It is obvious that the considerations of the NAD for controlling African opposition were the prime

154. *Ibid.*
155. *Ibid.*
156. Nel, *op cit.*
157. *Ibid.*
158. *Ibid.*, p15.

consideration here, imposed for the sake of uniformity on the university colleges for Coloureds and Indians.

Nel outlined the way in which the Council was expected to work with the black 'advisory' Council, which was to be appointed by the Minister:

> The object of the institution of the Advisory Council is to provide from the outset for the training of a non-European Council which will not only be able to act in advisory capacity but will also be prepared for the eventual assumption of responsibility ... The Minister and the Council may gradually delegate important functions to the Advisory Council, such as matters in connections with bursaries, negotiations with non-European statutory bodies, discipline, etc ...[159]

It was planned that the Council would eventually be a black body, when the 'advisory' Council would become a white body.

Regarding the parallel Senate structures, Nel explained that initially only white people would be appointed to senior teaching positions, and they would serve on the Senate. As soon as the majority of the senior staff was black, provided that 'the Minister is satisfied that the time has arrived for such a step', the Senate would become black: 'A European lecturer who is fully responsible for a subject, will remain in charge of that subject. Eventually the European staff members will disappear from the scene', Nel added.[160]

Nel supported calls for the Conscience Clause to be omitted. The majority report said

> If the university colleges are to be a success and are to render the highest service to the non-Europeans, they should be built on a religious foundation. They should always be imbued with a positive religious spirit and have a religious character ... the responsibility for upholding religious

159. *Ibid.*, p16.
160. *Ibid.*, pp15-18.

> freedom and living up to our religious national character rests with a Minister of State who is always responsible to Parliament.[161]

These two changes to the legislation indicate the sources of pressure on Verwoerd and the NAD that were accommodated by the Commission. First, the parallel 'advisory' structures had been designed in response to mounting African political mobilisation. The suggestion of the creation of parallel 'advisory' Councils and Senates had come only from the NAD, as the minority report observed. Second, the omission of the Conscience Clause had mollified some of the moral objections to the policy from within the NP. Other Afrikaans criticism of state control was ignored, as was all opposition evidence.

### 4.7 Extension of University Education Act

Nel, who had been Minister of Education since Viljoen's death in December 1957, gave notice in August 1958 that the Extension of University Education Bill would be introduced.[162] The revised Bill, renamed the Extension of University Education Bill on the recommendation of Potchefstroom,[163] who thought that this would convey more of the 'positive' intentions of the policy, was debated in Parliament in April 1959.[164]

The debate was protracted and bitterly contested.[165] On the part of the NP there was extensive discussion concerning the principles and motives underpinning the Bill. This discussion largely reiterated and expanded on what had been said in 1957. Little interest was shown by either the NP or the Opposition in the new elements which had been introduced to the policy. Verwoerd himself took the responsibility of addressing the question of the role and functions of the 'advisory' bodies, baldly restating the motivation that had been reported by the Nel

---

161. *Ibid.*
162. Letter dated 6 June 1958, Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*, volume 1407 Part 3.
163. Nel Commission archive, *op cit.*
164. HAD (1959) 8 April, cols. 3188ff. JJ Serfontein was Minister of Education in June 1959, when the Act was passed.
165. SAIRR (1959) *op cit.*, pp266-267

Commission.[166] The Extension of University Education Act was passed on 11 June 1959.

### 4.8 The Fort Hare University College Transfer Bill

Utter disregard and lack of consultation on the part of the Government were the defining characteristics of the history of the Fort Hare University College Transfer Act, which ignored the Councils both of Fort Hare and of Rhodes University, the academic parent of the university college (see Chapter 2). The Government was concerned less with the sensitive transformation of a viable educational institution than with crushing the university college, with its 43-year history, into the same mould as the new African university colleges.

The Government's challenge to Fort Hare's status came at a difficult time, with the leadership of the university college in disarray. In the wake of the 1955 closure of Fort Hare (see Chapter 2), the Principal, CP Dent, had resigned. Although he was temporarily appointed acting Principal in December 1955, this was not regarded as a long term solution. It proved difficult to find a successor. Hobart Houghton, Professor of Economics at Rhodes, tentatively accepted the post in March 1956, but he withdrew when rumours began to circulate about Fort Hare's future. ZK Matthews, who had acted as Principal on several occasions, was an obvious candidate, but he was arrested in December 1956 and spent the first nine months of 1957 on trial for treason. TRH White's thesis on Matthews argues that the Government deliberately removed Matthews from the scene as it had no interest in the appointment of a new Principal at Fort Hare.[167] Eventually, in late 1957, HR Burrows, an economist with experience of university administration at Natal University, agreed to take the post from January 1958. White describes how

> Confronted by a demoralised college Burrows concentrated on practical issues such as the laying out of gardens, the designing of a flag and the encouragement of students to concentrate on their work. He encouraged

166. HAD (1959) 10 April, col. 3510.
167. White (1994) *op cit.*, p150.

> staff to stay despite the impending changes ... he argued that their first duty was towards their students ... to an extent, he was able to hold the college together during its final confrontation with the state.[168]

Information about the Government's intentions was not readily and systematically available. White argues that this was a deliberate strategy on the part of the Government, 'designed to frustrate opposition'.[169] In desperation, with vague reports of legislation leaking in the press, in August 1956 the Fort Hare Council asked that the existing relationship with the Department of Education should be maintained. They requested the Minister of Education to inform the Council of any plans to alter that arrangement and to allow the Council to submit its views. This had no effect, and when the 'hybrid' Separate University Education Bill appeared in February 1957, planning to remove Fort Hare from Rhodes and the Department of Education and transfer its control to Unisa and the NAD, the Rhodes Council also complained that the Cabinet planned to alter the Rhodes University Private Act, No 15 of 1949, without the consent of or prior consultation with the university.

Throughout the period in which the legislation was considered, the Fort Hare Council had very few opportunities to discuss its position with the Government. In June 1957, a Council deputation, consisting of the Rhodes Vice Chancellor and Professor Nic Olivier, a government-appointed member of the Fort Hare Council who was also a Sabra member, met the Minister of Education. Thereafter, there were no meetings between Fort Hare and the Government. In November 1957 Fort Hare was officially notified that a Bill dealing with the transfer of the university college would be introduced in 1958. In January 1958 Burrows, Matthews and Professor de Villiers appeared before the Nel Commission in Cape Town in support of their written evidence on the 1957 Separate University Education Bill. As Fort Hare was not directly dealt with in this Bill, this did not afford the opportunity to air problems with the pending transfer of the college. In early 1958

168. *Ibid.*, p152.
169. *Ibid.*, p156.

the Fort Hare University College Transfer Bill was drafted, but it was not introduced as the Government wanted the main Bill to be passed first. In July 1958 Fort Hare asked the Minister of Education and the Minister for Native Affairs to receive a deputation. The Minister of Native Affairs found several reasons to refuse this meeting: he said the Senate had already given its attitudes and objections to the Nel Commission and that as the Fort Hare Transfer Bill would be redrafted to conform with the Extension of University Education Bill of 1958,[170]

> it also could not serve any useful purpose to send a deputation to Ministers on that Bill who could hardly deviate in a similar matter from what will then be an Act of Parliament.[171]

The Minister of Education, meanwhile, said that Fort Hare deputations should seek interviews with the Minister of Native Affairs rather than with him.[172] Burrows complained to the Minister for Education that

> the Minister for Native Affairs does not consider that an interview would serve any useful purpose ... I am convinced that the proposed transfer of Fort Hare from your department to any other department would be an educational tragedy.[173]

The NAD was clearly not prepared to consider legislation dealing with the future of Fort Hare separately from the legislation establishing the new university colleges. They said the Bills would be handled in the 1959 session and enacted 1960. Despite these constant rebuffs, senior figures at Fort Hare persisted with trying to make contact with the Government. As Professor JT Davidson commented:

> For years there has been the feeling that responsible people in the Government are not regarding Fort Hare as an educational institution of the greatest importance, but as a kind of political chess piece. They make no effort at direct contact, don't seem to care how they upset the work by

---

170. University College of Fort Hare, 'Comments on proposed legislation affecting the University College of Fort Hare', 23 January 1959, S/14, Cory PR 4118.
171. Private Secretary, Office of the Minister for Native Affairs, to Burrows, HR, Fort Hare Principal, 5 August 1958, Cape Town, Cory PR 4088.
172. Minister of Education to Burrows, Cape Town, 12 August 1958, O4/1/4, *ibid.*
173. Burrows, HR, Principal of Fort Hare, to Nel, 18 August 1958, *ibid.*

> hasty legislation and rumours and the main line of communication appears to be the CID. These can hardly be called good methods of education.[174]

Burrows was under pressure from these colleagues to try to present Parliament with Fort Hare's reasons for opposing the Bill:

> ... the circumstances of Fort Hare, as a long established university college, must be quite different to that of the colleges which are yet to come into existence, and that a scheme of government by your department, which might be appropriate to those institutions, would not be as appropriate to Fort Hare.[175]

The Department of Education appears to have washed its hands of Fort Hare: in October 1958 Burrows complained to the Minister of Education that the department had not responded to important enquiries about Union Loan Bursaries, new appointments to new posts in approved departments and the subsidy for the department of law.[176] Administrative problems of this type continued to mount until the NAD took control of Fort Hare in 1960 (see Chapter 5).

The new Bill, the Extension of University Education Bill, was introduced to the House of Assembly on 14 August 1958. The redrafted University College of Fort Hare Transfer Bill was published in November 1958 and debated in Parliament in February 1959. The clauses of the Bill transferred control of Fort Hare from its Council, from Rhodes University, from the churches who ran the university college hostels and from the Department of Education to an 'advisory' Council and Council chosen by the Minister of Bantu Education, Unisa and the Department of Bantu Education. All assets were transferred to the Bantu Education Account and the churches were compensated for their loss of the residences. Existing staff members were given notice, or transferred to newly-created 'state posts' (for black staff members) or 'Council posts' (for white staff members).[177] No white students could attend the university college, and only Coloured and Indian students who

---

174. Davidson, JT to Burrows, 'Comments on Transfer Bill', 20 June 1958, *ibid.*
175. Burrows, HR, Principal of Fort Hare, to Private Secretary for Minister of Native Affairs, 12 August 1958, Fort Hare, *ibid.*
176. Burrows to Secretary of Education, 17 October 1958, *ibid.*
177. Maree, WA (1960) *Transfer of the Fort Hare University College*, Information Service of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development, Pretoria; and SAIRR (1960) *op cit.*, pp269-271.

were already enrolled could be registered in order that they might complete their studies. African admissions could be limited to certain groups. During the debate WA Maree, the newly-appointed Minister of Bantu Education (a post created by Verwoerd in order to bring Maree into the Cabinet) said that Fort Hare was 'nothing but an English university for non-whites'. The policy of the Government was to overhaul the institution so that it would serve apartheid's ideal of the Xhosa group.[178] The 'closed' Select Committee, under JJ Fouche, heard evidence from the NAD's PAW Cook, who spoke, as White observes, in terms of the needs of independent African homelands, a political rather than an educational agenda.[179] Fort Hare's three-pronged strategy of petitioning the Bar before the second reading, petitioning the Select Committee and appealing to the UP for help was ineffectual.[180] The Bill was eventually passed on 2 July 1959.

### 4.8.1 Fort Hare and Rhodes opposition to the Bills

Although Fort Hare and Rhodes found few opportunities to present their views to the Government, they carefully thought through their objections to the Bills in their various stages of development.

The Rhodes Council was most concerned about losing control over Fort Hare, whose students constituted one third of their student body and the consequent loss of status for Fort Hare.[181] Despite Fort Hare's 43 years of development Rhodes said it was to be 'degraded to the rank of a tribal college'.[182] They said they had been given the task of supervising the academic standards at Fort Hare and there had been 'no suggestion that the university has in any respect failed in its duty'.[183] They had hoped that the link would be broken by Fort Hare being given full

178. Maree, *op cit.*
179. White (1994) *op cit.*, p170.
180. *Ibid.*, p169.
181. Isolated in Grahamstown, student numbers at Rhodes were critical to the viability of the institution. In the early 1960s further constituent parts of the university were removed with the development of the University of Port Elizabeth: see Chapter 6.
182. Alty, T, Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University, 'University Autonomy', address to protest meeting against the Extension of University Education Bill, 1958 and the Fort Hare Transfer Bill, 1959, held at Rhodes, 4 April 1959, reprinted from *South African Outlook*, May 1959, by Lovedale Press, p3.
183. *Ibid.*

university status, but that this development represented a 'disastrous blow' for Fort Hare [184] The Rhodes Council was also concerned about the interference with their university autonomy, especially as they could not see how Fort Hare students were to benefit.[185] Furthermore, Rhodes opposed the closing of the 'open' universities, because it represented 'a most dangerous precedent, that the traditional freedom and autonomy of the universities should be so diminished'. Although Rhodes had admitted relatively few black students, they were 'jealous of our right to decide these matters for ourselves'. [186]

At Fort Hare, there was general agreement among the Council, Senate and Lecturers' Association about the problems with the Bills.

Their main concern was that an entirely new and untested system of university education was to be created, to operate separately from the established universities. Fort Hare, which had functioned as a member of that club, albeit on a junior basis, was to be bundled with the new colleges. They objected to the deletion of Fort Hare from the Universities Act, No 61 of 1955, which accorded Fort Hare the status of a university in certain respects.[187] They protested that the college would be reduced from the status of an autonomous university institution to a branch of the public service, subject to the conditions envisaged for the new university colleges.[188] There was agreement that Fort Hare's status would be protected by continued association with Rhodes.[189] They also thought that all university colleges, including the new ones, should fall under the Minister of Education;[190] the Fort Hare Council feared that otherwise they would be 'cut off from association' from other universities.[191]

---

184. *Ibid.*
185. Letter from Rhodes Registrar to Secretary of Education, Grahamstown, 23 February 1957, Cory PR 4088.
186. Alty, *op cit.*, p3.
187. Fort Hare Senate, S/22/3/57/71, Cory PR 4118.
188. Summary of Evidence to be given to the Commission on the Separate University Education Bill by the Lecturers' Association of Fort Hare, Cory PR 4088.
189. Petition of the Council of Fort Hare College in the regard to the Fort Hare Transfer Bill, Cory PR 4118.
190. Lecturers' Association, *op cit.*
191. Petition of the Council of Fort Hare College, *op cit.*

Fort Hare was concerned about the new funding arrangements and implications of the change in governance. They said that as with other universities, the new university colleges should be subsidised through the Education, Arts and Science vote as opposed to from the Bantu Education Account, which was intended mainly for African school education. They feared that there would be limitations on the resources that could be drawn from the Bantu Education Account. The low level of private endowments would make the new university colleges more dependent on the state for assistance, and a larger state subsidy per student was required as black students were generally unable to pay fees at the level demanded by established universities elsewhere in the country.[192] The Fort Hare Council feared that Fort Hare would suffer financially if it was no longer regarded alongside the established universities for purposes of subsidy in terms of Act 61 of 1955. It was also felt that there would be fewer private grants forthcoming for a purely state college.[193]

Fort Hare's second cluster of concerns related to the unprecedented reach of ministerial power, with its implications both for effective institutional representation and academic freedom. They objected to 'the excessive and sweeping powers to be granted to the Minister', particularly over the Council and Senate, staff members and decisions about where African students would be permitted to study.[194] It was felt that university autonomy could be safeguarded by having the Council, Senate and Principal appointed in the same way as at other universities, with control over students residing in the university Council.[195] They thought Academic Freedom could only be guaranteed if the staffs did not become civil servants, if they had security of appointment and if they had the right to 'discuss and investigate freely any subject restricted only by the ordinary laws of the country, e.g. the laws pertaining to slander'.[196] Rhodes objected that the new university colleges for black students would not be 'academically satisfactory', because they would 'possess none of the traditional freedoms of self-government

192. Lecturers' Association, *op cit.*
193. Petition of the Council of Fort Hare College, *op cit.*.
194. Fort Hare Senate, S/22/3/57/71, Cory PR 4118.
195. Lecturers' Association, *op cit.*
196. *Ibid.*

normally associated with a university', being under 'the absolute control of a Cabinet Minister'.[197]

There were concerns that there would be no representation on the Council and Senate of Unisa, the parent university.[198] While it was subject to the academic control of Rhodes, Fort Hare was represented on the Rhodes Senate whenever any matter affecting Fort Hare was discussed. If Unisa was the examining body for Fort Hare, Fort Hare students would be internal students of Unisa and the academic staff of Fort Hare would 'naturally claim the right to have a say in the framing of syllabuses, the appointment of examiners and the conduct of the examinations, with at least as much freedom as was previously accorded to constituent colleges of Unisa'.[199]

The 'advisory' Council and Senate system was opposed by the Fort Hare Council and Senate as 'wrong in principle and unworkable in practice'.[200] They said 'advisory' bodies were insulting to black people and that

> It is our daily experience at Fort Hare that Europeans and non-Europeans sit and work together in friendship and in harmony in the Senate and in Council, which includes four Government representatives.[201]

This issue roused the indignation even of conservative, white staff members at Fort Hare, who said they had 'hitherto refrained from making public their personal opinions about the proposed creation of new and reorganisation of existing academic facilities for non-Europeans'. Several voiced their protest against the dual Senate system by writing to *African Outlook*.[202] It was pointed out that if Fort Hare was represented on the Senate and Council of Unisa, the participation of

197. Alty, *op cit.*, p2.
198. Fort Hare Senate, S/22/3/57/71, Cory PR 4118.
199. Draft Memorandum by Council and Senate of the University College of Fort Hare, 'Extension of University Education Bill', S/25/8/58/397, *ibid.*
200. Alty, T, Chairman of the Council of the University College of Fort Hare, 'Petition of the Council of the University College of Fort Hare', Cory PR 4088.
201. Draft Memorandum, *op cit.*
202. Letter sent to African Outlook, signed by W Steyn, Prof. Raum, A Coetzee, Prof. D Williams, Pienaar, de Villiers, Rensburg, Webb, van Wyk, Pretorius, van den Berg, Galloway, Sass, Jacobs. 1958. Cory Library, Rhodes University PR4088.

non-white members of the staff of the college in the work of Unisa would have to be considered.[203]

There was also profound disquiet about the compulsion on where students should study and its links to the racial and ethnic grouping of students. In the first place, they believed that students should have the right to choose where to study,[204] especially as they did not think that black university colleges could provide for all the academic needs of black students, even taking into account the Natal Medical School.

The question of how to oppose racial grouping was more complex, as Fort Hare had a black enrolment and had long accepted and seen merit in this arrangement. They did not believe that racial grouping was necessarily wrong, but the Council and Senate argued that the *compulsory* division of black and white students was neither 'necessary or desirable',

> Nor do we think that non-European students who wish to enjoy the wider facilities which are necessarily more available at one of the larger European universities should be debarred from doing so.[205]

Senate and Council thought it appropriate that segregated and 'open' institutions should co-exist:

> By all means let us encourage non-European institutions of higher learning and give them all possible privileges and assistance. They will then inevitably attract themselves a large number of non-European students ... in general they may afford to non-European students a more satisfactory academic and institutional life. They may become important centres of non-European culture and tradition.[206]

But while they argued that 'there can be no objection in principle to separate, non-compulsory, non-European colleges, to which all non-Europeans may go', they

---

203. Alty petition, *op cit.*
204. Lecturers' Association, *op cit.*
205. Draft Memorandum, *op cit.*
206. *Ibid.*

believed that 'there can be no justification for this so-called compulsory ethnic division'.[207] They pointed out that at Fort Hare African students 'mingle together in complete harmony in classroom and on campus'. They said transforming Fort Hare into an institution serving students from a single language area would limit the scope and variety of its courses and curtail its opportunity for comparative study in Bantu languages.[208] The Council said limiting enrolment to Xhosa students would 'stultify the normal growth of Fort Hare [and] reduce it to a mere shadow of its former self'[209] as 'numbers would be too low to justify ethnic division'.[210] They submitted that mother-tongue instruction in an African language at university level was unrealistic and they feared that it would be very difficult to find decent quality staff.

Fort Hare supported plans to make university education available to more South Africans, especially Africans, but they thought that Parliament and not the Minister should decide when new institutions were to be established. On both economic and academic grounds, they thought no new university college should be established until Fort Hare had been allowed to develop to the size of, for example, UCT or Stellenbosch, and it had been granted full university status.[211] They worried that it would be difficult to find the African staff for these institutions, and thought 'the practicable course' would be to 'leave some universities "open" for a period of at least ten years so that staff could be trained in them for the proposed new colleges'.[212]

When Fort Hare opened in 1959, over 500 students were admitted and conditions were cramped and difficult because of the accumulation of Government neglect. There was no space for more science students and the dining room and classes were crowded. The staff were burdened with heavy teaching responsibilities and the students were living under austere conditions. Despite these problems, there

207. Petition of the Council of Fort Hare College, *op cit.*
208. *Ibid.*
209. Alty petition, *op cit.*
210. Draft Memorandum by Council and Senate of the University College of Fort Hare, 'Extension of University Education Bill', s/25/8/58/397, Cory PR 4118.
211. Lecturers' Association, *op cit.*

seems to have been a spirit of co-operation in the institution with all constituencies united in opposition to the Government. As soon as term opened in 1959, students held a legal protest march on March 4.[213] When Thomas Alty, the Rhodes Vice Chancellor opened the university in 1959, he told the college that

> We have devoted months to the work of preparing the defences of Fort Hare, and whatever the outcome we feel there is nothing more that could possibly be done: at any rate by mere human beings.[214]

## 4.9 Conclusion

The two Acts passed in 1959 imposed the vision of university apartheid favoured by Verwoerd on the country as law. In September 1958 Verwoerd claimed that 'I do not have the nagging doubt of ever wondering whether, perhaps, I am wrong',[215] but an examination of the implementation of this policy at Fort Hare and the new university colleges demonstrates that the process through which this vision triumphed resulted in a contradictory legacy. The policy generated conflict and was contested among nationalist intellectuals and the terms of the debate accordingly revolved around the overtly political issue of control. In this environment, central educational considerations were blurred and sidelined and the spirit of co-operative endeavour among Nationalists was damaged.

The Government's university policy was partly formed in this period by forces moulding the overall shape of apartheid. Recent studies have demonstrated that as the 1950s drew to a close, apartheid entered a second phase in response to the failure of its earlier policies to stabilise the turbulent urban environment.[216] Fundamental policy shifts were occasioned by this continuing, and escalating crisis, which threatened both white supremacy and white prosperity. In this context the NAD consolidated and extended the reach of its influence, redefining the role of

---

212. Alty petition, *op cit.*
213. Letter from Burrows, RH, Principal of Fort Hare, to the Town Clerk of Alice, 6 March 1959, Cory PR 4088.
214. Principal's address, opening of the 1959 session, *ibid.*
215. Evans, *op cit.*, p56.
216. See for example Lazar *op cit.* and Posel *op cit.*

the regional authorities, and linking them to a plan to create the conditions for political stability.

The contention that the NAD wielded increasing power over policy making is borne out by the way in which Verwoerd and Eiselen's version of university apartheid became dominant after 1955. That the NAD developed policies that were responsive to the political context, rather than pre-planned and linear, is also supported by the delays that beset and the changes that were introduced to the policy. This is especially evident in the history of the introduction of the 'advisory' bodies between 1957 and 1959. Verwoerd and Eiselen's version of the policy changed little after it was first expounded in 1954, but it took time to impose this version on the NP as a whole. In the meantime, other pressures arose, which led to adjustments, to linking the policy more and more closely to the Bantu Authorities, rather than to some vague sense of 'development'. By 1959, university apartheid had become an integral component of a strategy to defuse political tensions through the Bantustan policy.

## Chapter 5

## Implementation of the 1959 Acts

Parliament passed the Extension of University Education Act on 11 June 1959 and the Fort Hare University College Transfer Act on 2 July 1959. The Acts created a new system of university colleges for the students of five separate black population groups, transformed Fort Hare and closed the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of Natal and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) to new black students. This process introduced two new principles in the organisation of university education in South Africa. First, a system of state-controlled university institutions, for black students, was created to operate alongside the existing state-aided institutions, now designated for white students only. Second, the universities were deprived of the right to decide who they would admit as students.

The contested translation of the 1959 policy into practice is examined in this chapter. First, it examines how the state-controlled system of university colleges was established, including the process of taking control of Fort Hare from its Council, staff and students. Second, it explores the responses of the 'open' universities and the University of Natal to their loss of control over student admissions. Finally, it investigates some of the early attempts to provide black students with alternatives to enrolment at the state-controlled university colleges.

As the previous two chapters have shown, the policy encoded in the 1959 Acts was very controversial. The Government had been fiercely opposed by, among others, the 'open' universities, Fort Hare, the University of Natal, Rhodes University, the United Party and students represented by Nusas. Most of this opposition focused on the interference with autonomous university decisions over whom to admit. Significantly, the Government was also opposed by Afrikaans intellectuals, who disagreed with aspects of the policy as formulated by the Native Affairs Department. The previous chapter explored how intellectuals based at Afrikaans-medium universities, active in Sabra and in the Afrikaans churches, voiced concerns about a number of features of the policies, including the element

of compulsion, the levels of state control and the nature of segregation within the institutions. However, after the Select Committee chaired by Nel gave the opportunity for these misgivings to be aired, the NP parliamentarians closed ranks, endured marathon debates in Parliament, and passed the Acts.

Although the Government succeeded in passing the Acts, opposition from within Afrikaner ranks, among academics and liberals within the country and in the international community created an inauspicious atmosphere for the implementation of the new policy. The Nationalists had hoped that the new institutions established in terms of the Acts would serve as an example of the highest and finest ambitions of separate development and thus silence their critics. However, the conflict meant that attention focused on the politics of the policy, especially the loss of university autonomy for the established universities, rather than questions about the educational aims and practicability of the new institutions.

The principles of the Acts were far from clearly thought through and elegantly structured: as has been seen in the previous chapters, they congealed from a mix of surviving ideas. Furthermore, the implementation had not been realistically thought through. Which trustworthy but able servants of apartheid would steer the process, putting themselves and their families into rural exile, working with potentially hostile black students, to set up the university colleges? How many layers of loyal staff would be needed to ensure that the apartheid policy was faithfully executed from the Council chambers to the lecture halls and libraries? How could it be ensured that the 'open' universities and the University of Natal would toe the line?

## 5.1 Creating the state-controlled system

The 1959 Acts created an entirely new system of state-controlled university colleges and established new patterns in the governance of university education in South Africa.[1]

1. The Fort Hare University College Transfer Act was part of the same initiative, and was only dealt with in a separate Act because of Parliamentary rules: this is discussed in Chapter 4. As a result, many of the clauses of the Fort Hare Transfer Act were identical in wording and intent to those of the Extension of University Education Act.

From the creation of the Union in 1910 until the 1959 Acts were passed, all university education had been the responsibility of a single government department, namely, the Union Department of Education, Arts and Science.[2] In terms of the 1959 Acts, control of the African university colleges was vested from the start in the Minister of Bantu Education (at the time, WA Maree). The University College for Coloureds (Western Cape) was controlled from 1962 by the Minister of Coloured Affairs[3] and in 1963 the administration of the University College for Indians (Salisbury Island) was assigned to the Minister of Indian Affairs, but the Department of Education was responsible for their establishment and this led to important differences.[4] The remaining universities, now designated for whites, and Unisa, remained under the Department of Education. The application of racial division to university education which was a central objective of the 1959 Acts also resulted in the fragmentation of the governance of university education. Over the years, as homelands were granted independence, this fragmentation continued, until by 1990 South Africa's 21 universities were governed by no fewer than eight government departments.[5]

The Acts gave unprecedented powers to the minister of each government department concerned to regulate the university colleges, providing for specific ministerial control over the constituent components of the university colleges and 'generally, all matters which he considers it necessary to prescribe in order that the purposes of this Act be achieved'.[6] These sweeping new ministerial powers, which applied only to the university colleges for black students, created two distinct

2. It becomes clumsy to use this full title repeatedly, so usage hereafter is abbreviated to 'Department of Education'.
3. Proclamation 70 of 30 March 1962 (SAIRR, 1962 *Survey*, p199).
4. This was achieved through the Higher Education Amendment Act, No 20 of 1963, which made provision for the State President to allocate the provisions of the Higher Education Act to any minister or combination of ministers. Salisbury Island students protested against this change in April 1963. (SAIRR, 1963 *Survey*, p242.)
5. Bunting, IA and Figaji, B, undated, 'An overview of post-secondary education in South Africa', unpublished mimeo, p4.
6. Section 36, Extension of University Education Act, Act 45 of 1959.

'models' of university institutions, namely, 'state-controlled' and 'state-aided' institutions.[7]

The first indication of how these ministerial powers would be deployed came in late 1959, when the Department of Bantu Education addressed the urgent task of bringing Fort Hare into line with the new university colleges.

In terms of the Act, Fort Hare would be transferred from the Department of Education to the Department of Bantu Education on 1 January 1960. The Department of Bantu Education opted for an abrupt transfer of power, prompting the press to write of 'murder', 'liquidation' and 'assassination' to describe the Government's policies. In July 1959 Maree informed Fort Hare's Principal, HR Burrows, that he would not be re-appointed and his offer to stay on for a few months to help ease the transfer was rejected.[8] (Maree told Parliament that this was because Burrows had broken an undertaking not to oppose the Government's policy at Fort Hare.[9]) Council protested at its meeting on 30 July 1959 that Fort Hare staff was being unfairly treated in terms of new salary scales, and that until the transfer was effected, the Minister of Education should ensure fairness.[10]

Despite these snubs, Burrows attempted to play a constructive role in the transfer. In early August he approached the Department of Education 'to discuss how best we can co-operate in reducing the difficulties of the transfer of Fort Hare,' referring to urgent matters such as advertising posts, transferring the hostels from the churches, processing applications and the calendar for 1960 and appointing the new Rector. These suggestions were ignored, perhaps because under the new division of governance, he had approached the wrong department.[11]

---

7. Behr, AL (1988) *Education in South Africa: Origins, Issues and Trends, 1652-1988*, Academica, Pretoria.
8. Burrows, RH, Principal of Fort Hare, 'A Personal Note', 4 July 1959, Cory PR 4088.
9. HAD (1959) col. 9426.
10. Burrows to Op't Hof, JJ, Secretary of Education, 11 August 1959, Cory PR 4088.
11. Burrows to Op't Hof, 6 August 1959, *ibid.*

In the last months of 1959 the Department of Bantu Education purged the Fort Hare staff. Eight senior staff members were fired: Maree commented that

> I disposed of their services because I will not permit a penny of any funds of which I have control to be paid to any persons who are known to be destroying the Government's policy of apartheid.[12]

This devastated the university college's leadership. Besides Burrows, those fired included the Registrar, the librarian, the Professors of Law, English and History and the heads of department of Philosophy and Politics and Geography. No reasons for the dismissals were given.[13] Other senior figures were also due to depart: the wardens of three hostels were obliged to retire as the Department of Bantu Education had assumed control of their hostels.[14]

A Department of Bantu Education official visited Fort Hare to carry out the dismissals and to offer 'state' appointments to African members of the staff. He explained that if they accepted a 'state' post, it would be an offence to be a member of any political organisation, or to be politically active.[15] Internal regulations for the colleges were circulated in September 1959, which specified that the Rectors of 'tribal colleges' were directly responsible to the Secretary for Bantu Education, who could require the Rector to submit a written report on any member of staff or employee under his control.[16] The introduction of these and other stringent and repressive regulations governing conditions of employment made remaining on the staff inconceivable for many staff members.

Once these conditions became widely known, attention immediately focused on Professor ZK Matthews. Matthews had also been a Fort Hare Council member for five years, a member of Senate for 24 years, served as the Vice-Chair of Senate for a decade and had on occasion been acting Principal. Furthermore, he was the chair

12. *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 November 1959.
13. University College of Fort Hare, 5 October 1959, 'Details concerning certain staff members', Cory PR 4118.
14. University College of Fort Hare Senate, 12 October 1959, *ibid.*
15. Matthews to Nokwe, Fort Hare, 15 October 1959, ZK Matthews Papers, Unisa.
16. Department of Bantu Education, 'Tribal College Regulations', 10 September 1959, Cory PR 4088.

of the ANC in the Cape. Matthews could only continue to work at Fort Hare if he resigned from the ANC, because if he did not, he would be dismissed.

The political sensitivity of Matthews' position did not escape Maree. As Matthews was close to retirement, Maree perhaps thought that he could back Matthews into a corner and force him to choose his job, his benefits and his loyalty to Fort Hare and its students over the ANC. For Maree, this would have served the purpose of demonstrating that a respected African academic of Matthews' calibre had been won over to supporting the 'new Fort Hare'. In early October Maree told the press that

> Professor Matthews has told me that he is prepared to put the past behind him and work for the success of the college. He has withdrawn from the African National Congress. On that basis I have kept him on.[17]

It is not at all clear whether Matthews had in fact given Maree this undertaking, but this announcement caused consternation in the ANC.[18] Duma Nokwe, Secretary General of the ANC, pressed Matthews to take a principled, unequivocal stance. Matthews prevaricated: by the middle of October he still seemed to be weighing up the options. As he explained to Nokwe, the practical consequences were serious:[19]

> The trouble is that suitable jobs are not easy to find, especially as far as the non-whites are concerned, and consequently some may be compelled to stay on here until they can find something better.[20]

Matthews was probably also under pressure from Alexander Kerr, the founder and former Principal of Fort Hare, who thought that it was 'a cardinal principle in universities that the interests of the students must be paramount' and called on staff who were considering resigning to 'stick to your students and your post unless there is some principle which you regard as inviolable and which overrides what appears to be plain duty'.[21]

---

17. *Argus*, 2 October 1959.
18. Govan Mbeki wrote to say *New Age* wanted to carry the statement, and pressured ZKM to make a statement before the students left for their holidays. (Mbeki, G to Matthews, Port Elizabeth, 26 October 1959, ZK Matthews Papers, Unisa.)
19. Nokwe, D to Matthews, Johannesburg, 8 October 1959, *ibid.*
20. Matthews to Nokwe, Fort Hare, 15 October 1959, *ibid.*
21. *The Natal Daily News*, 29 October 1959. The Senate of the University of Natal created a special 'fellowship fund' to support the Fort Hare staff members who had been dismissed or felt that they had to

*Continued ...*

Torn between his public responsibilities as an educator and as a national political figure, as well as his personal responsibilities to his family, eventually, at the end of October, at the final assembly of Fort Hare under Rhodes University, Matthews announced that he would not stay on at 'the new Fort Hare'.[22] This decision was greeted with relief and sympathy by the ANC president, Albert Luthuli, who wrote to Matthews that he recognised the 'magnitude and severity of the implications of the sacrifice to you and your family' (Matthews was a few months short of claiming his pension) and assured him of ANC and mass support:

> This 'New Fort Hare' will stand for values you have stood against all your life. Nonetheless it was a most difficult choice to make ... it was the right choice most becoming a true and loyal Son of Africa.[23]

Three other African staff members, Dr DGS M'timkulu (who had served on the Council for 13 years, on the Senate for four years and who was also a hostel warden), Professor CLS Nyembezi (who had served for six years on the Senate) and AM Phahle, also rejected employment in 'state' posts.[24] At least six other staff members, including two professors, resigned in protest and solidarity.[25] By the end of 1959 fewer than half of the members of Senate remained.[26]

### 5.1.1 Rectors

With Burrows dismissed from Fort Hare and Matthews' resignation, Maree and the Department of Bantu Education faced the task of finding three Rectors to whom, in practical terms, the running of the colleges could be entrusted. The appointment of the Rectors was the key to translating policy into practice as the Rectors were

---

resign. (*Argus*, 25 November 1959.) Sir Fulque Agnew commented that he and his wife regarded their dismissals as 'an honour' and 'a certificate of decency'. (*Cape Times*, 26 September 1959.)

22. *Daily News*, 28 October 1959.

23. Luthuli, A to Matthews, Natal, 3 November 1959, Groutville Mission, ZK Matthews Papers, Unisa.

24. Phahle, AM, to Secretary for Bantu Education, Fort Hare, 19 October 1959, UOD U3/64/15, Matthews to Secretary for Bantu Education, Fort Hare, 30 October 1959, UOD U3/64/15.

25. These included Professor M Webb, Professor D de Villiers, Dr W Steyn, T Dandy, EA Mayisela and S Ngcobo.

26. A resolution taken by Fort Hare students in October 1959 complained that the Government's 'dictatorial action' in dismissing the staff members had created an 'atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty' which made 'the normal pursuit of university education almost impossible'. *Evening Post* 14 September 1968.

assigned extensive powers by the Acts and their abilities and attitudes exerted a disproportional influence on policy implementation at the university colleges.

The first three Rectors chosen by Maree had all studied 'Bantu Studies' or anthropology and all had experience of teaching African students.

The first Rector of the new Government controlled Fort Hare, chosen by Maree, was Professor JJ Ross, who held the post until his retirement in June 1968. Ross's academic background was diverse: he had a BA and BSc from Grey University College, Bloemfontein, and an education diploma from Stellenbosch. From 1928 he worked as an inspector of native education in the Orange Free State, while studying for a Bachelor of Education degree and a diploma in Bantu Studies through Unisa. Awarded a Carnegie Scholarship in 1936, at Yale he wrote an MA thesis on 'The educational systems of the American Negro and the Mexican Indian'. Back in the Free State, he became chief inspector of native education in 1942. He took an LLB through the University College of the Orange Free State and taught law there from 1954. He became Professor of Public Law in 1955.[27] Ross was interested in the development of government policy, serving on the editorial board of Sabra's *Journal of Racial Affairs (JRA)* and throughout his term as Rector he published articles reviewing the progress of the university college project. As an ideologue, an experienced administrator and an educator, Ross must have appeared to be the ideal candidate for the job.

The Rector chosen for the University College of the North was Professor EF Potgieter. He studied African languages at Stellenbosch, graduating with distinction. He then took an MA through Unisa in African Studies, writing a thesis on a dialect of Nguni-Ndebele[28] and a DPhil through the University of Pretoria on 'An anthropological investigation into the process of integration of the Bantu into the white economic system in South Africa'. At this time he also lectured in

---

27 dminy, PA, 1968, 'A Tribute to Professor Johan Jurgens Ross', *Fort Hare Papers*, Number 4, Part 2 (June 1968).
28. Potgieter, EF (1951) 'Inleiding tot die klank en vormleer van isiNdzundza, 'n dialek van Suid-Transvaalse Ngoeni-Ndebele, soos gepraat in die distrik Rayton en Pretoria', unpublished MA Thesis, Unisa.

anthropology at the University of Pretoria and Unisa, where he taught African students enrolled with Unisa and the *Kolege ya Bana ba Afrika*, which was managed by staff based at the University of Pretoria (see Chapter 3).

In early August 1959 the Department of Bantu Education announced that Professor JP van S Bruwer of the University of Stellenbosch would be the first Rector of Zululand.[29] As an anthropologist with experience of African education, Bruwer was an obvious choice. He had studied Bantu languages and anthropology at Pretoria, and worked as an education specialist for the NG Sendingkerk of the Orange Free State in Zambia, serving for a time as Principal of a teacher training school. He had taught at Stellenbosch since 1951, becoming Professor of Anthropology in 1956. In 1959 he had served on the Fort Hare Council as a government appointee.[30] However, for reasons which are not apparent, Bruwer declined the post and by mid-August the Department of Bantu Education issued new advice that Dr PAW Cook, Deputy Secretary for Bantu Education, had been appointed instead. Bruwer would, however, be the chairman of the new Council.[31]

As has been seen in the previous chapter, Cook had appeared before the Nel Commission as the representative of the Department of Native Affairs. He had taught at mission schools in the Eastern Cape and held a BA in Bantu Studies and ethnology and an MA from UCT.[32] He also held a Bachelor of Education degree and had worked at African teacher training colleges in the Cape and Natal. In 1934 he wrote a DPhil on 'The Education of a South African Native Tribe' at the Teachers' College of Columbia University in New York. In the thesis he argued that mission education disrupted the social organisation of the tribe and did not facilitate what he called 'tribal evolution'. During the 1930s he worked as EG Malherbe's assistant at the South African Council for Educational and Social Research, producing large statistical surveys on *The Native Standard VI Pupil*

29. *Cape Times*, 1 August 1959.
30. Beyers, CJ (ed.) (1987) *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol V, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria.
31. *Cape Times*, 10 August 1959.
32. According to Fleisch, in the 1920s he completed a masters thesis under Radcliffe-Brown at UCT and appears to have been influenced by the work of the French anthropologist Levy-Bruhl on 'native mentality'.

(1935), *The Transvaal Native Teacher* (1939) and *The Native Student Teacher* (1940).[33] He was appointed Director of the Bureau after the war and in this capacity he was nominated to serve on the Eiselen Commission. Fleisch argues that Cook's ideas, rather than Eiselen's, provided the organising principles of the Eiselen Report. Fleisch points out that much of the research done for the three statistical surveys listed above was updated and published in the first half of the Eiselen Report, and that the theoretical orientation of the Eiselen Report seems to draw extensively on Cook's PhD thesis.[34]

At the same time that the Department of Bantu Education was searching for three appropriate Rectors, the Department of Education had to find a Rector for the University College of the Western Cape and, a year later, for the University College for Indians in Durban. The Department of Education offered the post of Rector at the University College of the Western Cape to Professor Abel Coetzee, Professor of Afrikaans at Wits and a member of the *Suid Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*, but he refused the post.[35] Professor JG Meiring, BSc, BEd, PhD then accepted the post.

It is not clear why the establishment of the University College for Indians in Durban was delayed for a year. Sabra's original submission to the Holloway Commission had called for three university colleges for Africans and one for Coloureds to be established. It omitted reference to an institution for Indians. In 1955 the Van der Walt committee had concluded that a university college for Indians was needed because although they were numerically the smallest black group, they had the largest number attending university. The first Rector, Professor SP Olivier, thought that the decision to proceed on this recommendation was only taken in 1960, the year in which policy shifted and Indians were for the first time accepted as 'an inherent part' of South Africa.[36]

---

33. Fleisch says that this work was commissioned for the Welsh Report but not included.
34. Fleisch, B (1995) 'The Teachers College Club: American Educational Discourse and the Origins of Bantu Education in South Africa, 1914-1951', unpublished PhD Thesis, Columbia University.
35. *Cape Times*, 10 August 1959.
36. Olivier, SP (1962) 'Die Universiteitskollege vir Indiërs, Durban', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol 14, No 1, December, p57.

> Indians were regarded as people to be repatriated, not part of the South African structure. I issued a statement arguing that the establishment of a university college for Indians indicated that Indians were going to be accepted as an integral part of the South African population structure, that there was a place for them ... I was criticised by Government sources for putting the thing so bluntly.[37]

It is probable that there was less public pressure to remove Indian students from the 'open' universities than there was for African students, which allowed for some delay. Also, as has been seen, the Department of Native Affairs, not the Department of Education, was the driving force behind this policy. The former department was thus far more prepared to proceed with the implementation of the policy as soon as it was passed (and indeed, before it had been passed), while the Department of Education no doubt was overwhelmed with the bureaucracy of establishing the new university college in the Western Cape.

Olivier, who had been Dean of Education at UCT since 1957, was appointed to the Durban post during 1960. He had studied for a BA and education diploma at Stellenbosch, then taken an MEd through Unisa. He completed his doctorate on the cultural, educational and language needs of Afrikaners in Rhodesia at Potchefstroom. He then taught in Rhodesia, and from 1949, lectured at UCT. He was made an Associate of the Institute of Education of the University of London in 1955, and was awarded a Carnegie Grant to attend the Teachers College at Columbia University in 1957. In 1959 he was appointed to both the Fort Hare and Western Cape Councils.[38]

Olivier's own academic field was philosophy of education and at the time that he was Rector his views on the subject were extremely authoritarian. In 1976 he co-authored *A Basic Philosophy of Education* with JH Bekker and SA Naicker.[39] The authors argued that the young must be 'forced' to undergo 'the ordeal of

37. Olivier, SP, former Rector University of Durban Westville, interviewed at Pennington, 23 March 1995.
38. Bhana, S, 1979, 'University Education' in Pachai, B (ed.), *South Africa's Indians: The evolution of a minority*, University Press of America, Washington, p420.
39. Bekker, JH, Naicker, SA and Olivier, SP (1976) *A basic philosophy of education*, Perskor, Johannesburg.

education' by an authoritative educator 'to change the natural being into a responsible cultural being'.[40] They believed that education in South Africa must

> provide a basis and a contra-alternative against the all-encompassing force of Communist enslavement of and absolute dominion over the minds, souls, spirits and bodies of every man, woman and child.[41]

Interviewed in 1995, Olivier said that the Christian National Education philosophy known as 'Fundamental Pedagogics' was 'something that arose at Pretoria University'. He said that the subject was taught at UDW under the name Philosophy of Education but implied that he disapproved of Fundamental Pedagogics, saying 'we shied away from it and stuck to the English concept of Philosophy of Education'.[42] However, despite the different name, his widely-used book can be considered a textbook of Fundamental Pedagogics, which is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Thus two of the first five Rectors chosen declined appointment, and the first five who took up office generally regarded the task as a grave responsibility. Although they spoke in almost missionary terms of a sense of political and religious calling to their duty, it would be a mistake to regard them all as unquestioning ideological servants driven only by their commitment to apartheid.

Of the five, perhaps Ross fits this image most closely. He seems to have been motivated by his belief that his work at Fort Hare was helping to ensure the survival of his people. Writing in the *JRA* after a few years at Fort Hare, Ross wrote that 'the actual transfer of Fort Hare was no slight task' and that he had accepted the post 'with hesitation'. He was persuaded only by

> the conviction that the policy of separate development, including provision of separate university education for non-whites, presented the only realistic solution for a peaceful close relationship of the white and non-white population groups in the Republic ... a matter of conviction and belief ... in the survival not only of your own people but also in that of other

40. Bekker, *op cit.*, p74.
41. *Ibid.*, p76.
42. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*

> population groups that share the same fatherland with you and for whom there must also be created and allowed a just possibility for survival and development.[43]

At Turfloop, Potgieter never projected the same type of defensive commitment to apartheid. In the early 1960s he was popular with potentially hostile visitors, such as researchers from the Institute of Race Relations and journalists from the English-language press, persuading them that he was primarily an educator, divorced from the political policies that had spawned his institution. His attitude to the controversy of the university colleges was favourably reported as 'I have a job to do and I'll do it as best I can'. In particular, he was an enthusiastic supporter of the new educational opportunities provided by the 'Extension of University Education Act', saying that Turfloop's aim was 'to train Africans to come forward in full dignity to represent their people'.[44] He wrote that he had accepted the post so he could develop a university in the area, working with 'a Bantu staff' to

> train ... potential human material for the future of our country, students often not having enough money and the opportunity really to develop into a mature identity at the so-called 'open' universities in this country.[45]

Like a handful of other Afrikaans intellectuals, Potgieter publicly distanced himself from the policy's elements of compulsion. He openly objected to 'being drawn into a controversy', stating that he was 'not responsible for the closing of Wits to non-white students'.[46] He emphasised that he was intent on building up a 'true university institution', irrespective of the Government ideology of the necessity for separate institutions for the different races and ethnic groups.[47] For Potgieter, the closing of the 'open' universities was

---

43. Ross, JJ (1962) 'Fort Hare: Geskiedenis en ontwikkeling as universiteitsinrigting vir die Xhosa-sprekende groep in die Republiek van Suid-Afrika', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol. 13, No 4, September, p180.
44. *The Star*, 8 November 1963.
45. Potgieter, EF (1962) 'Die Universiteitskollege van die Noorde', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol. 13, No 4, September, p201.
46. *The Star*, 23 January 1962.
47. *Ibid.*, 6 December 1960.

> entirely another issue, a battle to be fought out in other circles, and not in the offices of the University College of the North.[48]

Despite his role in the development of apartheid education policies, Cook was a rather abstract and unconvincing educator and unsuccessful as first Rector at Zululand. He easily trotted out lines about the need for 'a community of Zulu scholars, adequately housed and provided with the services of a good library',[49] and spoke somewhat glibly of how the University College of Zululand should provide an understanding of

> the aims and ideals of university education, the value of scholarship, of academic excellence, of individual thought, of respect for the opinions of others, the duty of learning to know oneself, the nature of a true discipline, the place and nature of research, etc.[50]

In 1962, along with all the other Rectors of the new university colleges, Cook wrote an article for the *JRA* reviewing early developments at the college. Despite his academic background and his role in the policy's development, Cook's article is distinguished from the others in the series by the unmistakably bureaucratic preoccupations of the civil servant: appropriate buildings, well-trained staff and viable numbers of students. None of the personal or political justifications that appear in the other articles ruffle the dry tone here: for Cook, this was clearly an appointment taken up in the spirit of an undesired secondment as a career civil servant.[51] Cook was often away from the campus and in 1964 he returned to work permanently at the Department of Bantu Education. He was replaced by JA Maré, Professor of Bantu Law at the University of Pretoria.[52]

Given the emphasis on ethnic differences in the development of the five university colleges, there were many ironies in these appointments. Ross, who had spent most

---

48. Potgieter, *op cit.*, p201.
49. *The Star*, 6 December 1960.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Cook, PAW (1962) 'Die Universiteitskollege van Zoeloeland', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol. 13, No 4, September.
52. *Vaderland*, 4 November 1963. Maré said that separate universities had 'brought the university to the masses' He said that 'It is our moral duty the same facilities for our non-white students ... All things being equal, we must give preference to the African.' (*Natal Mercury*, 23 February 1966.)

of his professional educational life among the Basuto was appointed to 'Xhosa' Fort Hare, while Cook, who had been on the Fort Hare Council and worked professionally among the Xhosa, was appointed to the University College of Zululand.[53]

In the *JRA* in 1962 Meiring justified the establishment of the University College of the Western Cape as 'in the highest interest of our Coloured community'. He said that unlike the education offered to Coloured students at the 'open' universities, at the new university college they could enjoy the full benefits of university life, a true 'university' education, which he distinguished from a limited 'academic' education. He wrote that he and his students were in service to the Coloured community, and the country as a whole:

> Such a vocation is calculated to make one happy. And when they, as well-educated and happy people, serve their community, then they will also make other people happy and make a positive contribution to the fortune and prosperity of their community and thereby make our country a happier country.[54]

Of the five Rectors, only Olivier had no direct experience of teaching black students or scholars. He recalls that he did not particularly want to move from his post as Dean of Education at UCT where he says he 'could identify myself with its policies at that time',[55] but that he considered that it must be 'part of God's plan' and he therefore accepted.

In his review for the *JRA*, Olivier was frank about his ignorance about the Indian community. He said that whereas Afrikaners and 'Cape Coloureds' had 'lived alongside each other for centuries' and 'the Bantu' had been 'studied since the 1930s',

---

53. *Evening Post*, 5 September 1959.
54. Meiring, JG (1962) 'Die Universiteitskollege Wes Kaapland', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol. 13, No 3, June, pp130-131.
55. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit*.

> the Afrikaans-speakers and the Indians of Natal were certainly the groups that stood, and perhaps still stand, furthest from each other.[56]

He confessed that he was surprised to find that the Indian 'community' was not an homogenous group, but divided by language and religion. Olivier's motivation is couched in religious and ethnic terms: he says that his actions as Rector were inspired by his devout Christian faith. His justification of the apartheid policy that inspired the establishment of his institution was that there was a need to think 'nationally' and not 'sectionally'[57] because

> where one member is happy, the whole body is happy, and where one member suffers, the whole body suffers.[58]

Olivier said that the issue of whether segregation should be imposed was not a new issue, and that it had been discussed since the thirties and forties:

> There was a time when we were hoping for a relationship which would develop into something positive, something constructive, but the white community was divided, and the house that is divided among itself cannot stand.[59]

Olivier said that he never tried to impose his strong Christian faith, although he spoke often about 'the plan and the will of God'. He was against religious fanatics, and encouraged them to accept posts at other universities as they did not 'fit into the scheme of things'. He said that the important thing was not to compromise on academic matters.[60]

As Dean of Education and a member of the Senate at UCT, Olivier seems to have been in a position to extract some valuable promises from Vorster (to whom he refers as the Minister of Education although he was only the Deputy Minister) that he would be funded as generously and treated as he had been at UCT.[61] When Olivier joined the four other Rectors in 1961, this seems to have altered the troubled relationship between the Rectors and the Government.

---

56. Olivier, SP (1962) *op cit.*, p61.
57. *Ibid.*, p68.
58. *Ibid.*, p69.
59. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*

Because the Rectors were loyal supporters of apartheid and hand-picked by their political masters, it might be wrongly concluded that the relationships between the Rectors and their departmental bosses were smooth and co-operative, but there are several suggestions that the relationship was embattled. No matter how deep their political commitment, once they were burdened with the responsibility of making a success of the university colleges they headed, the tight restrictions of the Government's ideological policies chafed. Problems seem to have started early, even with Ross, who was probably the most ideologically-driven of the new appointees. On meeting Ross in late 1959, one of the departing Fort Hare wardens commented that Ross was moving to Fort Hare out of a sense of duty, but that 'more and more one realises that he is not being consulted by his boss Mr Maree'.[62]

The Rectors had no forum to voice their common concerns. They had observer status on the Committee of University Principals, but did not participate on the grounds that they headed university colleges and not autonomous universities, and because they were governed differently. However, Olivier describes that 'with the other Rectors there was a kind of a brotherly feeling that we were in this together',[63] so they formed an informal club. Olivier recalls that

> What helped was when the Rectors of the non-European university colleges of the time constituted ourselves into a committee ... although there were three departments involved, it was difficult for them to ignore the requests of one college and not the others so that we had some sort of parity amongst ourselves.[64]

This committee was obviously contested terrain. Government records suggest that it was, in the first instance, the initiative of the Department of Education, which in February 1962 asked the Cabinet to appoint an advisory committee for university colleges and a committee of heads of the university colleges, because a tendency had arisen on the part of the university colleges to 'play off' the Department of Bantu

62. Summers, J, Director of Lovedale Press, to Shepherd, RHW, 30 October 1959, Alice, Cory, PR 3692.
63. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*
64. *Ibid.*

Education and the Department of Education in order to gain good conditions and privileges, a problem which would be exacerbated when the Department of Coloured Affairs took control of the Coloured university college in April 1962.[65] Cabinet rejected this proposal, perhaps because it came from the Department of Education which was being relieved of responsibility for the black university colleges, but two years later a committee was established on the initiative of the Minister of Bantu Education.[66] While the agenda of this committee discussed matters of common concern, such as the establishment of Advisory Senates, the need for more facilities to teach black doctors, examiners, finances, regulations, salaries and problems of Indian and Coloured matriculants without Afrikaans and later, the autonomy of the university colleges,[67] it seems that this committee was meant to help the Government to retain control over the fledgling institutions and their Rectors.

### 5.1.2 Councils and Advisory Councils

The Acts also provided for the appointment of Councils and Senates for the university colleges. This structure, which divided responsibility for executive and academic matters between the Council and Senate respectively, was in line with the constitutions of other universities in the country, which were in turn modelled on British university institutions.[68] 'Advisory' Councils and 'advisory' Senates were also to be established: this departure from the established pattern had been introduced to the 1959 legislation and the conception of the university colleges relatively late in the 1950s (see Chapter 4). Although the Acts did not specify that the Councils and Senates would be white and the 'advisory' bodies black, they had been discussed in these terms at the Nel Commission.

---

65. University colleges: Appointment of Advisory Committees, TES F33/834.
66. Interdepartmentele komitee van ondersoek insake uitbreiding van universiteitsopleiding van nie-blanke universiteitskolleges, TES F33/864.
67. 'Memorandum vir oorweging deur Kabinetskomitees', UOD 4/1/3 (sub), Volume 3. My translation.
68. See Viljoen, GVN (1977) 'The Afrikaans universities and particularism' in Van der Merwe, HW and Welsh, D, (eds.) *The future of the ... in Southern Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town; and Moodie, GC, 1994, 'The state and liberal ... South Africa, 1948-1990', in *Higher Education*, No. 27, pp1-40.

The university college Councils were to consist of at least eight members, including the Rector, at least four of whom should have 'special knowledge of or connection with university affairs'. All the members were nominally to be appointed by the Governor General, who would also appoint the chair, but these decisions rested *de facto* with the ministers and their departments.[69]

At Fort Hare the existing Council was, as Burrows put it, 'summarily liquidated'.[70] Only one member of the 1959 Council, the Rev SG Pitts, survived the change. A former government appointee to the Fort Hare Council, Professor Nic Olivier, was not re-elected. A Stellenbosch professor and Vice President of Sabra, Olivier had presumably annoyed Maree with his outspoken criticism of the 1959 legislation to the Nel Commission (see Chapter 4).

Four of the five chairs of Council were experienced Rectors or Principals. The chairs of Council for the three African university colleges were Professor Samuel Pauw, at Fort Hare, Professor CH Rautenbach, at the North and Zululand's Council was chaired by Professor JP Bruwer. Pauw was Principal of Unisa and had served on the Council of the *Kolege ya Bana ba Afrika*, Rautenbach was Rector of Pretoria University and Bruwer, who was Professor of Anthropology at Stellenbosch, became chair of Council after he declined the post as Rector (see above). The Western Cape Council was chaired by Professor HB Thom, Rector of Stellenbosch[71] and the chair appointed for the Salisbury Island Council was Professor AJH van der Walt, former Principal of Unisa.[72]

In addition, and perhaps as a concomitant of, their common experiences as senior Afrikaans academics, the new chairs of Council held similar, peculiarly Afrikaner Nationalist, views about the role and nature of university education. This meant that they subscribed to the idea that university education should be adapted to meet the

---

69. Section 5, Extension of University Education Act, Act 45 of 1959.
70. *Natal Mercury*, 29 October 1959.
71. University College of the Western Cape (1961) Calendar, University College of the Western Cape, Bellville, pp5-6. Other Council members were Professor AJ Coetzee, P Grobbelaar, GSP le Roux (MP), Senator JG Olivier, Professor SP Olivier (later Salisbury Island Rector), Professor S Pauw of Unisa, Bishop B Peacey, MH Pienaar, Dr AM Rabie, Rev JAJ Steenkamp and the Rector, ex officio.
72. SAIRR, 1961 *Survey*, p259.

particular needs of an ethnic group: that rather than the neutral pursuit of universal goals that could potentially benefit all society, the institutions should become *'volks'* universities. Thus Rautenbach countered the idea that integrated universities 'affirm faith in common humanity' with the argument that

> We think that respect for the *humanum*, the common humanity in the Bantu ... will grow and expand more readily in his own university and homeland than where he is a stranger and academic share-cropper as a member of a small minority at a so-called open university.[73]

Van der Walt believed that while international standards of scholarship had to be maintained among students and staff, the university colleges had to 'adapt to their environment' and the society they were called to serve.[74] Thom, who was chair of the Broederbond from 1952 to 1960 and head of the Department of History at Stellenbosch for 17 years before he was appointed Rector in 1954, had an ability, as Albert Grundlingh observes, which 'blended academia and *volksgeskeidenis*'. More broadly, this meant that he was 'particularly adept at maintaining a symbiotic relationship between the demands of academe and the demands of the *volk*'.[75]

Once again, despite their impeccable Nationalist credentials, there are hints of conflict of interest between the Council chairs and the Government. At the time of the transfer, in late 1959, a former warden at Fort Hare remarked that

> Dr Pauw confessed that he had not been consulted before Fort Hare was thrust into his lap and from reading between the lines he would have preferred not to have had Fort Hare. The three senior officials at the conversations I attended in Pretoria were obviously trying to restrain Maree but he paid no attention to their words of restraint.[76]

---

73. Rautenbach, CH (1963) *Open discussion on closed universities*, University College of the North, Sovenga, p11.
74. Van der Walt, AJH (1963) 'University Education and the Community Development of the Bantoe (sic)', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol. 14, No 3, June.
75. Grundlingh, A (1990) 'Politics, principles and problems of a profession: Afrikaner historians and their discipline, c. 1920 - c. 1925' in *Perspectives in Education*, Vol. 12, No 1, University of the Witwatersrand, p2.
76. Summers to Shepherd, 30 October 1959, Alice, Cory, PR 3692.

Unlike the established universities there were no Senate representatives or representatives of past graduates on the Councils.

The other appointed Council members for the African university colleges had some common members, namely, JH van Dyk, who held masters degrees from Wits and Unisa and doctorates from Pretoria, CB Young, who was the Deputy Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development but was named to serve in his personal capacity rather than *ex officio*, the Chief Bantu Commissioner for the area and the Regional Director of Bantu Education. The Rectors also served on their Councils. There were also Council members drawn from the English-medium universities: Professor SP Olivier, still at UCT, was appointed to Fort Hare Council, as was the conservative Professor JJ Gerber from Rhodes;[77] UCT's Professor GP Lestrade served on the Turfloop Council and Professor DT Cole of Wits on the Zululand Council. Professor HJJ Bingle, Rector of Potchefstroom University, sat on the Turfloop Council,[78] and Professor AJH van der Walt, in addition to serving as Rector at Salisbury Island, served on the Zululand Council. Another Zululand Councillor appointed was Dr WG McConkey, former Director of Education in Natal, but he resigned in October 1959 on hearing about the dismissals at Fort Hare.[79]

At the University College for Indians, SP Olivier recalls that the council was chosen by Vorster and JJP Op't Hof, the Secretary of Education.[80] P Grobbelaar, a senior official at the Department of Education was appointed to both the Western Cape and Salisbury Island Councils, as was Professor Pauw. SP Olivier was himself appointed to the University College of the Western Cape Council, and then also served on the Salisbury Island Council as Rector. Dr ID du Plessis, the poet and writer who had acted for the Department of Coloured Affairs in various senior capacities, was head

77. Other Fort Hare Council members included Professor PFD Weis, Drs CH Bodenhorst, JM de Wet, AH Conker and J de W Keyter.
78. University College of the North (1960) Calendar, University College of the North, Sovenga, p3 Other Council members were Professor JH van der Merwe, FJ Niemand, Dr JA Schutte, Professor SJH Sieven, Rev CB Brink.
79. *Cape Times*, 7 October 1959. Other Zululand Council members included Professor PJ Coertze, a Senate and Council member from the University of Pretoria, Dr PS Dreyer BD Drs Phil (Gron) DPhil (Pretoria), Senator CG Nel and Ds HJC Snyders BA. (SAIRR, Natal Region, NR 119/1959, 'Extract from Government Circular on University College of Zululand'.)
80. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*

of the 'Institute of Malayan Studies' at UCT and who had served on the Van der Walt Committee was appointed to the UCWC Council.[81] Professor GS Nienaber, head of the Department of Afrikaans and Nederlands at the University of Natal, served on the Salisbury Island Council.[82]

The Advisory Councils were also to consist of at least eight members, and were also to be appointed by the Governor General. The Chair of Council and the Rector had the right to attend, but not vote, which did not really make much difference as the Advisory Council was only to have powers and duties as prescribed by the Council.

The Department of Bantu Education prepared lists of nominees to the Advisory Councils for the Governor General to approve. Each member was appointed for a period of three calendar years. They could resign by informing the secretary of the Advisory Council, or be fired if they missed two consecutive meetings without permission, became insolvent, or were found guilty and sentenced to a jail term without the option of paying a fine. The Advisory Councils were to meet a minimum of twice a year.[83]

The Secretary for Bantu Education explained the principles that informed the choice of members. He said that 'the idea was generally accepted (unless I am mistaken)', that

> It was our ambition (again within the ethnic group or groups) to acknowledge geographical, tribal, economic and professional concerns. It remains a question whether we succeeded in doing this.[84]

They also attempted to balance rural and urban representation:

---

81. University College of the Western Cape (1961) Calendar, University College of the Western Cape, Bellville, pp5-6. Other Council members were Professor AJ Coetzee, GSP le Roux (MP), Senator JG Olivier, Bishop B Peacey, MH Pienaar, Dr AM Rabie and Rev JAJ Steenkamp.
82. Other Council members were Professor H Rund, Professor PWG Groenewoud, Col J Butler-Porter, Rev CJA Greyling and Mr PRT Nel. (University College for Indians, 1963, *General Prospectus*, University College for Indians, Durban.)
83. 'Bevoegdhede, plegte en werksaamhede, toelaes betaalbaar aan lede, ampstermyn van lede en prosedure by vergaderings van 'n Adviserende Raad', INL (NAD) Reference 446/13/4, Volume 1/4/11. My translation.
84. Secretary for Bantu Education, untitled memorandum, 15 February 1960, INL (NAD) Reference 446/13/4, Volume 1/4/11. My translation.

> I consider that the urban concerns were not utterly neglected: an attorney from Durban, a bus-owning businessman from Kingwilliamstown, ministers from various towns and cities and Bantu officials from urban associations certainly have the right and frankness to speak on behalf of urban Bantu.[85]

When vacancies arose on the Fort Hare Advisory Council in 1961, efforts were made to find a regional and professional balance: two ministers of religion were rejected in favour of a medical doctor and an education inspector.[86]

The first chair of the Fort Hare Advisory Council was a former Council member. He was SM Mabude, Paramount Chief of the Pondo, a Unisa graduate and a member of the Transkei Regional Authority.[87] At the University College of the North, the new chair was MJ Madiba, described as an education specialist with a BA, who trained at Kilnerton. He was formerly head of various schools in the Northern Transvaal, and later supervisor until 1946. He had furthered his studies by taking a teachers diploma partly through Fort Hare. He had also contributed to the compilation of prescribed school books and other writings.[88] At Zululand, EN Zulu became the chair.[89] In 1961 the Advisory Council at the University College of the Western Cape was chaired by S Dollie.[90]

At Salisbury Island, no Advisory Council was appointed until November 1967, due to the organised opposition of the Indian community. In December 1960 more than 50 Indian organisations, covering a cross-section of opinion, attended a conference in

---

85. *Ibid.*
86. INL 446/13/4 (1).
87. *Ibid.* Other nominated members were Chief DDP Ndamase, Chief Kaizer Matanzima (BA, Fort Hare), Headman EM Sangoni, Reginald Cingo, SS Guzana, Rev ET Mattheus, Rev JJR Jolobe, Rev JC Nvusi, Dr MOM Seboni and EWM Mesatywa. They were described by Ross as 'outstanding Bantu educators', ministers and businessmen in the *JRA*.
88. INL (NAD) Reference 446/13/4, Volume 1/4/11. Other members were Chief H Makapan, Shangaan Chief PM Shibugane, Venda Chief PR Mphephu-Ramabulana, Chief Lucas Mangope (former teacher, chief in Western Transvaal), Chief KL Montshioa (Western Transvaal), Chief RMM Matlala (studied law at Wits), SES Ntoahla, AM Ramokgopa (a sub-inspector of Bantu Education), Rev SS Tema, Rev SA Moroke, WM Kgware and ESN Mudau (supervisor, Northern Transvaal.)
89. *Ibid.* Other members were Chief CB Hlengwa (BA and education diploma), Chief MN Mnguni, Chief EO Ndwandwe (Eshowe), RT Caluza (MSc, businessman), Rev Walter Gcabashe (Methodist), Philip James Manzini, Rev Charlie Vilakazi, GRM Zwane (businessman) and AM Nzimande. Over 700 chiefs and their retinues attended the ceremonial opening of Ngoye. (*Rand Daily Mail*, 9 March 1961.)
90. University College of the Western Cape (1961) Calendar, University College of the Western Cape, Bellville. Dr SJ Arendse, Rev JFC Booysen, Dr ET Dietrich and Dr JW Forbes (both medical doctors), C Liedemann and TR Swartz.

Durban convened by the Natal Indian Congress. The conference called for 'total non-co-operation' with the new university college, asked Indian leaders to reject positions of the Advisory Council, called for a boycott of staff positions and asked prospective students to 'explore and exhaust' the alternatives to the new university college. Even the conservative Natal Indian Organisation said the new university college was 'diametrically opposed to the wishes of [the Indian] people'.[91] According to Bhana, several of the members who served on it 'were of the opinion that the Advisory Council's function was limited to non-essential matters': for example, they were only given five days to consider the 1969 autonomy legislation, and then their suggestion that provision be made for a Convocation was ignored.[92] Olivier said that the appointment of the Advisory Council 'weighed heavily on my mind':

> I waited a long time before the appointment of an Advisory Council. We did have one for a short time, but it soon got integrated into the Council. My relationship with the Indian community had advanced so positively, that I saw no need for the appointment of an Advisory Council. We then moved fairly quickly from the Advisory Council concept to the mixed Council.[93]

### 5.1.3 Staff, Senates and Advisory Senates

Academics at the university colleges were subject to controls and conditions of employment that obtained at no other university institution in the country. Posts were designated either 'state' or Council posts by the minister, and the designation could be changed at any time. Academics employed in state posts were treated as if they were civil servants: the minister controlled their appointment, promotion and discharge and conditions of service, in consultation with the Public Service Commission. State post employees were subject to the 'misconduct and inefficient officers rules' of the civil service and could be dismissed for any of seven reasons; and as with civil servants, they could be transferred to posts at other university colleges.

---

91. Bhana, *op cit.*, p416.
92. *Ibid.*, p423.
93. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*

Council posts formed a separate category. Although they were not treated or regarded as public servants in the same way in matters such as disciplinary procedures and pension rights, all conditions of their employment by the Council had to be approved by the minister.[94] Cook said that the arrangement of 'state' and Council posts assisted in the secondment of staff from civil service posts (presumably, himself included).[95]

In late 1959 posts were advertised in the press, then applicants appeared before selection committees composed of senior academics from Unisa, and the Universities of Pretoria, Potchefstroom, the Free State, Wits, Natal and Cape Town. The Councils then submitted short-lists to Maree for the final decisions.[96] The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that many of the vacancies were not advertised but were filled internally by the Department of Bantu Education.[97]

There were wide differences in the initial success in staffing the African university colleges.

The introduction of new conditions of employment at Fort Hare caused serious problems with the transfer of Fort Hare to Government control. Dismissals and resignations left the new administration with 23 vacancies to fill, at a time when the three new institutions were also recruiting. Ross later wrote that staff recruiting had been made more difficult by a 'flood of negative, and for the most part, malicious criticism',[98] but that the reaction of suitably qualified Afrikaans-speaking academic staff to the vacancies advertised at Fort Hare was 'almost unbelievable' and 'proof of the inherent goodwill of the Afrikaans-speaking person to the Bantu.'[99]

At Turfloop, 24 of 130 applicants were selected for the faculties of Arts, Education and Science. Appointments at Turfloop included Professor AJB Wiid,

---

94. In 1963 the Minister of Bantu Education allowed African staff members to choose whether to be employed in Council or state posts. (Potgieter, EF, in foreword to Rautenbach, *op cit.*)
95. Cook, PAW (1962) 'Die Universiteitskollege van Zoeloeland', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol 13, No 4, September.
96. *Die Burger*, 17 November 1959.
97. *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 July 1968.
98. *Cape Times*, 25 September 1962.
99. *Ibid.*

mathematics, from the CSIR; Dr FJ Joubert, head of chemistry, also from the CSIR; Dr DJ Fourie, head of physics, a lecturer from the University of Pretoria; Dr PA Ryke from Potchefstroom became head of Zoology; Mr T van Dyk from the Department of Labour became head of Psychology; Dr SJ Preller, formerly a school Principal on the Rand, became head of education; Dr GK Engelbrecht from the Department of Sociology at Wits became head of Sociology; Mr MJ Louw, lecturer in Geography at Unisa became head of Geography; WM Kgware a deputy schools inspector who held masters degree, Bantu Languages and Education became senior lecturer in the Department of Education; Mr C Hanekom, lecturer in ethnology at the University of the Orange Free State became head of ethnology; VWM Ramokgopa, BSc, would teach biology and deputy schools inspector EF Lekhela, MEd, would lecture in education. Posts in economics and classical languages had not yet been filled.[100]

The successful applicants at Turfloop therefore included several senior civil servants among the academics. An analysis of the first teaching staff reveals that 70 per cent were graduates of the northern Afrikaans universities (Pretoria graduates accounted for 30 per cent, Potchefstroom for 25 per cent and the Orange Free State for 15 per cent), that 25 per cent were black and that 50 per cent of the academics had PhDs.[101]

In contrast, Zululand experienced severe difficulties in finding staff. Cook said there was no difficulty getting staff with good qualifications for Zululand, but in fact very few staff members came from university backgrounds.[102] For example, Dr CW Hudson, deputy Principal of Hyde Park school in Johannesburg, became senior lecturer in Afrikaans-Nederlands, Mr CE Hundleby, head of St Matthews Training School at Kieskammahoek became Professor of English, A Nzimande, head of Middlebare School Lamont in Durban became senior lecturer in Psychology and Dr GJ Ackerman, a school Principal from Boksburg, became Professor of Education with JS Sibisi, supervisor of Bantu Education and BC

100. *Die Burger*, 17 November 1959.
101. University College of the North (1960) Calendar, University College of the North, Sovenga.
102. *Cape Times*, 25 September 1962.

Ntshali, deputy inspector of Bantu Education, becoming lecturers.[103] Cook said that at Zululand there was a preference for Zulu and Nguni speakers, but that only four of these applicants were appointable. By 1962 only 25 per cent of the Zululand staff had PhDs and only four per cent of the staff was black.[104] It is not surprising that in November 1959 Maree said that as the colleges would start with only first year courses, senior lecturers would suffice as heads of departments. The absence of an Afrikaans university in Natal and the isolation of the Ngoye campus probably made recruiting particularly difficult.

The University College of the Western Cape had a far better qualified staff: 53 per cent of the staff in 1961 had PhDs. On the other hand the staff was, with only one exception, white.[105] Perhaps this was partly because in November 1959 the Western Cape-based Teachers' League of South Africa issued an unequivocal condemnation of those who accepted teaching posts in the new university colleges:

> Those who accept appointments on the staffs of tribal institutions, will do so in the full knowledge of the nefarious par . they will have to play in the indoctrination of the non-white students. There purpose in going there will not, and cannot, be to educate: on the contrary, it will be actively to collaborate with the Herrenvolk in implementing Eiselen-De Vos-Malan schooling at the post-matriculation level.[106]

These views were ignored by Adam Small, a philosophy lecturer at the Western Cape, who was the only black lecturer at his own institution and the only Coloured academic in the country.[107] Small had been a lecturer at Fort Hare in 1959, where he had condemned opposition to the Acts as the 'howling' of 'so-called liberalism' and said that 'defeatism' was a 'sickly influence'. He claimed that 'my attitude is based solely on responsibility'.[108]

---

103. *Die Burger*, 17 November 1959. Other appointments at Zululand included Mr CH van den Bergh from Unisa, senior lecturer in History; Mr LJ Fourie, from agriculture economics at the University of Natal, senior lecturer in commerce and economics.
104. Cook, PAW (1962) 'Die Universiteitskollege van Zoeloeland', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol 13, No 4, September.
105. University College of the Western Cape (1961) *Calendar*, University College of the Western Cape, Bellville.
106. Teachers' League of South Africa, 1959, 'Statement on University Apartheid', Cory, PR 4204.
107. *Cape Times*, 23 February 1960.
108. Cory PR 4118, *op cit.*

In Durban there were calls by the Natal Indian Congress for staff to boycott the new University College for Indians. Olivier also st gled to recruit Indian staff and even attempted to recruit in India, although he said that this failed because the Indian Government would not allow Indian citizens to come and teach in South Africa.[109] Writing of the staff found for Salisbury Island, he explained that

> the fact that mostly Afrikaans speakers were appointed at this institution is because of the fact that there were no applicants of other languages - and they are simply not available for any institution in South Africa! It has nothing to do with the political views of applicants or non-applicants![110]

The absence of a regional Afrikaans university obviously did not affect the University College for Indians in the same way that it affected Ngoye. The location of the former in Durban probably explains the different response.

Afrikaans academics dominated the new institutions. Writing in the late 1980s, AL Behr, Professor of Education at the University of Durban-Westville, condemned the 'policy' of the four English-medium universities to

> dissociate themselves from the non-white ethnic universities and to abrogate responsibility for assisting them in their early years, and to demean their very existence as 'tribal colleges', [which] was in the view of the present author a fatuous act, because it gave Afrikaner academics a free rein to take up teaching posts in these institutions and to imbue the students there with the insular Christian National philosophy which was reflected in much of the research and writings of those who received their education there.[111]

It is not clear either whether graduates of the English-medium universities applied or whether they were considered on their merits in the early 1960s. Behr's point seems to ignore the restrictions on academic freedom that operated on these campuses, which sometimes resulted in staff being dismissed and almost certainly

109. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*
110. Olivier, SP (1962) *op cit.*, p60.
111. Behr, AL (1988) *op cit.*, p194.

meant that many applicants were not fairly considered. These points are considered in more detail in the following chapter.

Senior white academics, most of them Afrikaans, constituted the Senates. As with the established universities, the Senates were to be responsible for 'the superintendence and regulation of the discipline and instruction of the several departments, lectures and classes' and for organising and controlling exams. Unlike the established universities, however, at the university colleges the Senates were politically constituted: they were to consist of the Rector, and 'such Professors and lecturers ... as the minister, after consultation with the Council, may from time to time delegate for the purpose.'[112]

The 'Advisory' Senates, which were also to have a membership of senior black staff members designated by the minister, were supposed to undertake such functions as were delegated to them by the Senate. From the start, the Advisory Senates caused 'several and endless problems' and they were discussed extensively at a meeting of the Rectors and the Department of Bantu Education and the Department of Education, held in Cape Town in March 1963.[113] Ross wrote in the *JRA* that the Rector was in the difficult position of having to keep the Senate and 'Advisory' Senate in touch:

> It cannot be denied that delicate problems and situations arise in this connection ... however good the intention was with this ruling, only time will tell if it can be in the interest of good relations between white and non-white staff.[114]

Of the African university colleges, only Fort Hare managed to establish an Advisory Senate of a reasonable size: it had nine members in 1961, but by 1963 the Department of Bantu Education was forced to frame regulations to control the way that it was functioning, by specifying that only items set down on the circulated agenda were to be considered by the Advisory Senate.[115] At the same time, the constitution of the Fort Hare Advisory Senate was changed, limiting

---

112. Extension of University Education Act. An inter-departmental committee established on the initiative of the Minister of Bantu Education recommended that Senate members from the university colleges should participate on the Unisa Senate in the same way that the former university colleges had. (Interdepartmentele komitee van ondersoek insake uitbreiding van universiteitsopleiding van nie-blanke universiteitskolleges, TES F33/864.)
113. 'Memorandum vir oorweging deur Kabinetskomitees', UOD 4/1/3 (sub), Volume 3. My translation.
114. Ross, JJ (1962) *op cit.*, p188.
115. *Government Gazette*, 13 March 1963.

membership to heads of departments and professors. This further reduced membership from six to a far more tractable two: the two were Dr MOM Seboni and Mr IGM Mzamane.[116] An Advisory Senate was also set up at Zululand, but it had only three members in 1961. By February 1961, an Advisory Senate had not yet been set up at the North, but Maree reassured Parliament that 'Professor Kgware was consulted by the Senate on all relevant matters'.[117]

An Advisory Senate was never appointed at Salisbury Island.[118] Again, this is probably an example of the greater flexibility permitted by the Department of Education compared to the Department of Bantu Education. Olivier commented that he 'refused to have an Advisory Senate ... I at least had that authority.'[119]

### 5.1.4 Student enrolment: Ethnic segregation, viable numbers and political control

Among Nationalists imposing segregation was one of the earliest and most popularly supported reasons for the 1959 Acts. Black students would be excluded from the 'white' universities (see below) and the Acts decreed that no whites would be allowed to register at the university colleges. Furthermore, the minister was given the power 'to limit the admission of non-white persons to any university college, to persons of one or more ethnic or other groups'.[120] The doctrinaire insistence on ethnic as well as racial segregation may have been seen as essential in terms of the elaboration of apartheid through the Bantustan policy, but in the early years of the new university colleges, it threatened their viability because student numbers were very low.

At Fort Hare, the Department of Bantu Education turned away new, non-Xhosa applicants. Maree commented:

116. *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 March 1963.
117. SAIRR, 1961 *Survey*, p257.
118. Bhana, *op cit.*, p423.
119. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*
120. Section 13 (5) Extension of University Education Act, Act 45 of 1959.

> Previously all colours were mixed up at Fort Hare, and all that was done there was to make black Englishmen out of them. Under the new system Fort Hare will produce good Bantu.[121]

In late September 1959 they issued instructions for student admissions in 1960. Except for students who had already started courses, Indian and Coloured students and 'Bantu of ethnic groups other than Xhosa' could only be admitted if facilities were not available elsewhere. This rapidly became more complicated. Coloured applicants were to be directed to the college in the Western Cape for arts but not science courses, all Sotho applicants were to be directed to Turfloop, and Zulu applicants were to be directed to Zululand for arts and education courses.[122] A month later new instructions were issued: accommodation for women at Zululand would not be ready for 1960 and the Fort Hare authorities were told that 'Zulu girls' could therefore apply for admission to Fort Hare. Science teaching would start in the Western Cape after all and Coloured science applicants were to be directed there.[123]

This ethnic purging caused enrolments at Fort Hare to plummet until 1964. In the *JRA* Ross attempted to explain the fall in student numbers, arguing that high schools in the Ciskei and the Transkei would have to produce far more potential first-year students before a gradual rise in student numbers could be expected.[124] The following table demonstrates both that it is not clear how far Fort Hare enrolment became Xhosa and that Coloured and Asian students had disappeared from the institution by 1970.

---

121. *Argus*, 2 October 1959.
122. Du Preez, HJ, for Secretary for Bantu Education, to Burrows, 25 September 1959, 'Admission of new students to Fort Hare 1960', Cory PR 3142.
123. Du Preez to Fort Hare Registrar, Pretoria, 26 October 1959, Cory PR 4118.
124. *Cape Times*, 25 September 1962.

| Table 5.1: Enrolments at Fort Hare, analysed by population group, 1959-1970[125] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | African | Xhosa | Coloured | Asian | Total |
| 1959 | 320 | 173 | 59 | 59 | 438 |
| 1960 | 245 | 177 | 49 | 66 | 360 |
| 1961 | 242 | 179 | 50 | 52 | 344 |
| 1962 | 195 | 167 | 26 | 21 | 242 |
| 1963 | 224 | n/a | 7 | 8 | 239 |
| 1964 | 264 | n/a | 5 | 3 | 272 |
| 1965 | 315 | n/a | 1 | 1 | 317 |
| 1966 | 401 | n/a | 1 | - | 402 |
| 1967 | 436 | n/a | - | - | 436 |
| 1968 | 450 | n/a | 1 | - | 451 |
| 1969 | 486 | n/a | 1 | - | 487 |
| 1970 | 613 | n/a | - | - | 613 |

Ross also blamed the drop in enrolments on the reaction against the transfer of Fort Hare to the Government, as well as unrest at Healdtown and Lovedale, two of the most important regional feeder schools.[126]

In response to falling numbers at Fort Hare and very low enrolments at Z 'and in particular, in 1962 the Government was forced to relax ethnic grouping. Zulu students who wanted to study law and theology were allowed to go to Fort Hare, and Xhosa students who wanted to study social work to go to Zululand. This move was presumably also prompted by the high cost of providing courses at several institutions for small numbers of students. By 1967 the commitment to a purely Xhosa enrolment at Fort Hare seemed to have weakened even further. Ross told that press that Fort Hare had turned away over 100 applicants because of crowding at the campus, adding that although Fort Hare was a university college for Xhosas, they were not being given preference over other ethnic groups and that admission was on merit.[127]

In the 1969 Acts which granted the university colleges 'autonomy' they were allowed to admit 'other' black students subject to certain conditions. In 1977 and 1979 further

125. Figures for 1959 are from Beard, TVR (1972) 'Background to student activity at Fort Hare', in Van der Merwe, H and Welsh, D (eds.) *Student Perspectives on South Africa*, David Philip, Cape Town, p156; the others are from Bhana, *op cit.*, p433.
126. *Cape Times*, 25 September 1962.
127. *Rand Daily Mail*, 7 March 1967

laws allowed the admission of students from all population groups, subject to ministerial approval.[128]

Political campaigners encouraged students to boycott the new university colleges. In 1959 in the Western Cape, matric students were circulated with a pamphlet encouraging them to boycott the campus and follow correspondence courses through Unisa instead.[129] In 1961 fewer students than expected arrived at Salisbury Island, under 120 instead of between 200 and 250. Olivier said that this was in part because matric standards had been raised the previous year, but also admitted that the hostile political atmosphere pro d many students to pursue alternatives, such as enrolling for courses at white universities that were not yet available, attending teacher training college, planning to go overseas or simply waiting.[130] (See section on 'Alternatives' below).

| Table 5.2: Enrolments at university colleges 1960-1970[131] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Fort Hare | Zululand | The North | Western Cape | Salisbury Island |
| 1960 | 360 | 41 | 80 | 161 | - |
| 1961 | 344 | 53 | 122 | 289 | 114 |
| 1962 | 242 | 94 | 194 | 320 | 433 |
| 1963 | 239 | 136 | 248 | 361 | 514 |
| 1964 | 272 | 180 | 304 | 389 | 847 |
| 1965 | 317 | 238 | 384 | 416 | 973 |
| 1966 | 402 | 299 | 460 | 477 | 1 129 |
| 1967 | 436 | 331 | 538 | 560 | 1 258 |
| 1968 | 451 | 368 | 611 | 368 | 1 407 |
| 1969 | 487 | 428 | 671 | 428 | 1 621 |
| 1970 | 613 | 599 | 810 | 599 | 1 654 |

In the mid-1950s, the Van der Walt Committee had struggled to anticipate student numbers. They thought that after four years, the African institutions would each be enrolling about 370 students, and that the Coloured and Indian institutions were expected to have 300 students each after three years (see Chapter 4). From Table 5.2 it can be seen that despite the slow start, Coloured and especially Indian student numbers soon outstripped these expectations, while of the African

128. Behr, AL (1988) *op cit.*
129. Meiring, JG (1962) 'Die Universiteitskollege Wes Kaapland', *Journal of Racial Affairs*, Vol 13, No 3, June, p126.
130. Olivier, SP (1962) *op cit.*, p58.
131. My calculations, based Bhana, *op cit.*, pp432-435.

university colleges, only Turfloop developed as expected. Numbers at the Ngoye campus were particularly low, and many of the students enrolled were not fully matriculated and therefore could not enrol for degree courses. They were studying for a range of diplomas instead, making up student numbers.

There were particular problems with Coloured students, mostly from Natal, who could not speak Afrikaans. Olivier related that when the University College for Indians tried to admit a Natal Coloured student who would not have been able to follow lectures in Afrikaans at the university college in the Western Cape, officials in Pretoria responded with 'this is not the policy, you can't allow it'.[132] EG Malherbe, Principal at the University of Natal, said only six Coloured students had been allowed to enrol at the University of Natal in 1960, compared to 22 in 1959, and he doubted that many of the others could have afforded to leave their homes and jobs and travel to the Cape.[133]

The costs of travelling long distances from home and residing at the university colleges also depressed student numbers, even though the Government had made provision for financial aid in the 1959 Acts and Potgieter said that the generous funding at the African university colleges was 'attempting to give would-be graduates a good degree at the least cost to themselves'.[134] But although from 1960 study loans for education diplomas and degrees were available for up to £50 per annum, in the same year at Fort Hare, for example, fees reached up to £106 per annum.[135] Malherbe, who was a particularly observant and vocal critic of the financial and educational waste of the 1959 policy, believed that the costs of studying at the residential university colleges meant that many potential students were unable to pursue university education. He said that of the 30 African students refused entry to the University of Natal in 1960, only six chose to proceed to Zululand. He speculated that the others could not afford to leave Durban. Olivier also commented that the

---

132. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*
133. Malherbe, EG 'University education for non whites: Recent consequences of government policy in South Africa', 25 February 1961, KCM 56990(132).
134. *The Star*, 6 December 1960.
135. Du Preez, HJ, for Secretary for Bantu Education, to Burrows, 25 September 1959, 'Admission of new students to Fort Hare 1960', Cory Library, Rhodes University PR3142; and University College of Fort Hare, 'Information regarding admittance and registration of students for 1960', Cory PR 4118.

University of Zululand was 'out in the bundu somewhere with limited accommodation: it could never develop into something substantial', adding that African students living in Durban could have afforded to study in the city and that it was a mistake that African students were not admitted to the University College for Indians sooner. He contended that the university college managements were more sympathetic to applicants from the 'wrong' population group, but that they were thwarted by departmental officials who were themselves 'generally afraid of the person higher up'.[136]

In addition to the ethnic channelling of student admissions, student enrolments under the new regime were also subject to unprecedented political checks and controls.

For Ross, at Fort Hare 'surely the biggest problem of the transfer was to bring about the necessary adjustment of the students'.[137] He was referring to the protest mounted by students on the occasion of his first visit to the campus, in October 1959. When the new Fort Hare Council was announced, the Fort Hare Senate invited Pauw and Ross to the campus to attend a special meeting of Senate to discuss syllabuses and other academic details.[138] Students heard of the invitation, and organised a day of protest which included hoisting a black flag on the college flagpole, then cutting the ropes and greasing the pole so that it could not be removed; putting up banners and posters in inaccessible spots and hiding every ladder owned by the college so that they could not be removed and daubing slogans on the college quadrangle. Satirical poems about the visitors were composed and circulated. Students wore black armbands and ribbons for the day. Some students wrote slogans in lipstick on the visitors' car, and deflated and slashed one tyre. Students insisted on meeting Pauw and Ross, and although there was some heckling, they listened to what was said. Later, they continued the discussion with the new Registrar, HJ du Preez, but after an hour of increasingly heated discussion, pelted him with tomatoes.[139] The SRC president, JM

136. Olivier, SP, interview, *op cit.*
137. Ross, J; (1962) *op cit.*, p182.
138. Burrows to Pauw, 16 October 1959, Cory PR 4088.
139. Burrows, 29 October 1959, 'Principal's report on the student demonstration on 23 October 1959', Cory PR 4118.

Majola, said that no apology would be made by the students to Pauw: he explained that the demonstrations could have been more serious were it not for the students' respect for the outgoing authorities.[140]

A political purge of the returning students was administered by the new authorities early in 1960. Before term started students were warned by post:

> If, in the opinion of the minister, it will not be in the interests of the institution to register a candidate who reports for registration, he may refuse to allow such a candidate to be registe: ., even if such a candidate complies with all the other conditions of registration.[141]

They were also given notice of a new set of regulations for 'the control of students'. Some of these were simply disciplinary, for example that no resident could be outside the hostel after 10.30 p.m. without permission; while others had a more overtly political content. Students were warned that all student activities and organisations were subject to the prior approval of the Rector; that no meetings would be allowed on college grounds without the Rector's permission; and that no student publications or statements could be circulated on the campus, nor could statements on behalf of students be issued to the press, without the Rector's permission. Students could not leave the college precincts without the permission from the hostel superintendent or his representative.[142]

These regulations were put into immediate use. At the start of the 1960 academic year all the remaining members of the 1959 SRC (between eight and 24 students) were refused readmission by the Department of Bantu Education. No reasons were given but Ross said that it was because they had been 'non-co-operative' the previous year. Ross also banned Nusas and other 'hostile' organisations or visitors from the campus.[143]

---

140. *Evening Post*, 31 October 1959. Adam Small, then a lecturer at Fort Hare, was appalled and distributed a personal condemnation called 'A protest from Fort Hare against villainy'. He wrote, 'No excuse can be offered ... for this swinely behaviour. It was no longer a protest - a protest has no need to be apologised for; it is the right of every man. This was street violence fit to make one sick'. (Cory PR 4118, October 1959.)
141. *Cape Times*, 8 February 1960.
142. *Ibid.*
143. *Argus*, 23 February 1960.

The Acts also gave the minister extensive disciplinary powers over students, and students were obliged to register annually, and they could be refused if they 'failed to meet requirements' which were not specified. These were used to suppress political dissent at the university colleges: this is discussed in Chapter 7.

### 5.1.5 Buildings

Although Fort Hare had a developed campus, the Department of Bantu Education chose to modify arrangements to introduce stricter segregation, which altered the social tone of the institution. To comply with the Group Areas Act white staff housing, including the Principal's residence, had to be located off campus in Alice or Fort Beaufort. No black students were permitted to enter the homes of white staff members, and according to a former staff member huts were erected in the gardens of white staff accommodation to allow for music lessons and out-of-hours meetings between staff and students.[144]

At the newly-built African campuses the attempt was made to create buildings and environments specific to the ethnic communities. Planning for the new African university colleges were based on estimates of 500 students. It was specified that only single-storey buildings should be developed and that the architecture 'must bear a Bantu character'. Housing for African staff was to be provided in a neighbouring town, and any accommodation provided for whites should not be too different 'with an eye to the replacement of whites by Bantu'.[145] When the Rectors of the African university colleges met in 1964, they asked for further research and guidance on 'the question of Bantu building style' and the advisability of using grates and grilles to secure buildings.[146] Both Turfloop and Zululand were provided with 'lapas', traditional Zulu enclosures where meetings were held.[147] Turfloop was described by *The Star* as

144. Makalima, W (1989) Fort Hare student 1930s, teacher at Lovedale 1940s-1970s, Fort Hare lecturer 1980s; interviewed at Fort Hare, Alice, August 1989.
145. Bantu Education files, 11/10/1 Part 1, memorandum by Cook (as Deputy Secretary), 'Beplanning van toekomstige ontwikkeling van Bantoe universiteitskolleges', 22 April 1964.
146. Bantu Education files, 11/10/1 Part 1, 'Aide Memoire' by Cook (as Deputy Secretary) after he met the three Rectors on 10 June 1964.
147. *The Star*, 6 December 1960.

> architecturally an attractive and exc' 'ng breakaway from the traditional university buildings - a combination of Western utility and indigenous decorative design.[148]

The Zululand campus was built by 300 African artisans working under white foremen from the Department of Public Works. *The Star* pointed out that ironically most of the construction workers came from Lesotho.[149]

In 1964 Cook noted that there was also a problem with residences for women at Fort Hare.[150] As the African university colleges were entirely residential, it is possible to get a sense of the Government's planning and expectations about the numbers of women students, who are not otherwise explicitly discussed. In general, three residences for men students were built for every one residence for women, and building of the residences for women was often delayed. In both cases, the residences were Spartan and most students shared rooms, as the Van der Walt Committee had decided that new residences should be built equivalent to the standard of those at Fort Hare, rather than those at Pretoria University.

Classes at the University College of the Western Cape started in a large former primary school for white children, unused since Belville South had been redesignated a Coloured area. By 1962 permanent buildings were being erected in Modderdam Road.[151] Meiring comments that the cultural and sports facilities developed at the new campus were also useful for the local community, a possibility in an urban area.[152] The University College for Indians opened in 1961 in temporary buildings, formerly the property of the South African Navy, on Salisbury Island in Durban Bay.[153] In May 1964 architects were appointed to design buildings for the university college at Chiltern Hills, Westville.[154]

---

148. *Ibid.*, 24 May 1966.
149. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1962.
150. Bantu Education files, 11/10/1 Part 1, 'Aide Memoire' by Cook (as Deputy Secretary) after he met the three Rectors on 10 June 1964.
151. SAIRR, 1962 *Survey*, p199.
152. Meiring, JG, *op cit.*
153. SAIRR, 1961 *Survey*, p259.
154. SAIRR, 1964 *Survey*, p294.

## 5.2 Developments at UCT, Wits and the University of Natal

As discussed in Chapter 4, UCT, Wits and the University of Natal all opposed the 1959 Acts. Despite this opposition, the Government's procedures for implementing the 1959 Acts placed responsibility for the first, crucial, bureaucratic stages of excluding black students from the universities in the hands of the universities themselves. Either they could turn away black applicants, believing there to be no other option, effectively acting as gatekeepers for the Government, or they could investigate the options, trying to find loopholes, even trying to subvert the new law, which they had opposed so vehemently.

In October 1959, the Minister of Bantu Education, WA Maree, issued Proclamation 221, about 'The admission of Bantu persons to universities', and the Minister of Education, JJ Serfontein, issued Proclamation 223, about 'The admission of non-white other than Bantu persons to universities'. (Serfontein was another Verwoerd acolyte and graduate of the *Naturellesakegroep*.[155])The two Proclamations, identical except for the references to population groups, decreed that from 1 January 1960 no black person who was not yet registered as a student of a university, other than Unisa or the Natal Medical School, would be allowed to register with or attend a university as a student without the written consent of the Minister of Bantu Education, in the case of Africans, or the Minister of Education, in the case of Coloureds and Indians.[156] In November 1959 the universities were advised of the administrative procedures for prospective black students seeking admission. African students were to complete forms and send them to the Secretary for Bantu Education, Indian and Coloured students would send their forms to the Secretary for Education. The forms required students to state which

155. Evans, I (1997) *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*, University of California Press, Berkeley, p70 and p73.
156. Proclamation No 221 of 16 October 1959, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, 'Admission to non-European sections', November 1959-December 1962, 29/1/4/2.

courses they wished to follow, at which university, as well as the 'reasons for application to attend a university'.[157]

When it had been announced that black students would need ministerial consent to study at the universities, Maree let it be known that 'we will be very miserly in granting permission'[158] and at the end of 1959 he granted permission to only four of the 190 African applicants for 1960. Most of the students were refused because the courses were available at the African university colleges, the Natal Medical School, or by correspondence through Unisa, although seven applicants, who wished to study engineering at Wits, were refused permission on the grounds that 'there were no prospects of employment for qualified Bantu engineers'.[159] (Many of the issues surrounding black enrolment in the 'white' universities concerned professional and applied courses, such as Dentistry and Engineering, which were not offered at the university colleges. These matters are explored further below and in Chapter 7.)

One of the African applicants for admission to UCT for the 1960 academic year was Pallo Jordan. He completed the Department of Bantu Education's forms but refused to supply an identity number, which was then filled in by the Bantu Education officials. He entered 'negroid' as his race, a population category not used in apartheid legislation. He applied to study for the BA LLB degrees, giving as his reasons

> I want a sound liberal education and to qualify for the legal profession. I want to live with my parents at home in Cape Town and benefit by my father's guidance. As my father is on the staff of UCT I am entitled to a considerable reduction in fees and I want to make use of this privilege.[160]

---

157. Acting Secretary for Education to Registrars of all Universities, 'Interim limitation on the registration or attendance of non-white persons as students of certain universities', University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *ibid*. At the same time, the Registrars were asked to compile lists of the African and black students registered at their universities in 1959, giving details such as identity number, date of first registration, courses followed and the normal date for the completion of the course.
158. *Argus*, 2 October 1959.
159. SAIRR, 1959-60 *Survey*, p230.
160. Bantu Education files, 11/9/4/1.

When this application was rejected, Jordan submitted a second application, to do a Performance Diploma in Opera (Singing). He gave as his reasons:

> Because I love singing and I would like to receive expert training in Opera, Singing etc. and qualify in all aspects of this art. UCT offers this course and I live in Cape Town.[161]

Jordan's case was presented to Maree, who decided that the application was an attempt to circumvent the regulations because another black student had been granted permission to study for this one-year course. Although they could find no legal grounds, his application was refused.[162]

There were 127 Coloured and 562 Asian applicants for the 1960 academic year. Serfontein refused 48 of the Coloured applicants because 'alternative facilities' existed at the new university college, but he granted permission to all the Indian applicants as the University College for Indians had not yet opened.[163] These applicants gave a range of reasons for wanting to attend the universities, including wanting to live with their spouses or parents or to work part time. Categorised lists were compiled and processed by Vorster. In general, he simply refused all applicants for BA and BSc degrees, although he granted permission to complete courses and take up post graduate studies. Most Chinese applicants were accepted. In contrast to Maree's rejection of African medical and engineering applicants, Vorster accepted most Coloured and Asian applicants for these courses. Vorster's decision was conveyed to each applicant on a form letter: if unsuccessful, the 'reason for refusal' usually simply gave the name of an alternative institution, sometimes Unisa, where the course could be followed. These records reveal that Vorster was actively involved in the process as he frequently made detailed amendments to lists compiled by officials.[164]

---

161. *Ibid.*, 4 February 1960.
162. In 1961 he asked for admission to the BA LLB course again but because by then Proclamation 434 had come into force his application was again refused.
163. SAIRR, 1959-60 *Survey*, p230.
164. UOD U3/47/18 Volume 117. A student who had been rejected by Wits as too young to study medicine appealed to Vorster, and received the reply that 'in view of the fact that the University is an autonomous institution I am unfortunately not in a position to help you in this matter'. (UOD 4/7/2 Volume 57.) Every year not all of the students who were given permission to attend the universities proceeded to register: many were refused admission by the universities themselves on academic grounds.

Before applications could be considered by the government departments, however, they had to be processed by the universities. Students had to obtain the necessary forms from the university they hoped to attend, and the application had to be endorsed by the university. The responses of the universities to the opportunity provided by this bureaucratic responsibility differed widely.

There is no indication in the state or university archives that in the early 1960s either Wits or UCT attempted to evade or resist the working of the new law. The record instead reflects that administrators at these universities efficiently screened black applicants and staffed the first bureaucratic hurdle that would lead to their exclusion from their institu[illegible]he spirit and tone of the correspondence between each of these institutions and the government departments concerned is one of ironing out difficulties in order to get the job done. In 1960 the UCT Registrar apologised to the Secretary for Education because by mistake an [illegible]ican student had been sent a form to apply for consent.[165] The next year, he tried to clarify the rules governing existing students changing course or proceeding to postgraduate study, saying in passing that

> Prospective students are, of course, easily dealt with as they are informed that in all cases they have to apply either to your Department or to the Department of Bantu Education for a permit.[166]

At Wits, far from exploiting ambiguities in the legislation and regulations to admit black students, the Assistant Registrar, DA Duggan, brought them to Government attention by firing off a series of questions to Op't Hof. Did occasional students registered before 1959 need consent?[167] Did students need permission to proceed from bachelors degrees to higher degrees or diplomas or LLB degrees?[168] Could students from other universities be admitted to Wits, to continue courses or

---

165. UCT Registrar to Op't Hof, UOD U3/47/18, Volume 118, 11 January 1960. His explanation that 'it is regretted that no facilities exist for the training of African students at UCT and applicants are advised to apply to Wits or Natal' perhaps implies that UCT was itself excluding African students.
166. Benfield, JG, UCT Registrar, to Secretary for Education, Arts and Science, 12 September 1961, UCT Archive ex Reg F2, 'Admission of students - Apartheid'.
167. Op't Hof to Wits Registrar, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 to L. 9/6, 'Admission of non-European students', 19 December 1959.
168. Wits Registrar to Op't Hof, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *ibid.*, 21 December 1959.

proceed to second degrees?[169] Op't Hof responded that the minister's consent was required in all these cases.[170]

In 1960, of 84 applicants processed by Wits, only one was admitted. During the year an internal memorandum grumbled that 'We waste much time dealing with these applications, scores of them, all of which were refused this year.'[171] Frustrated by this bureaucratic load, Wits administrators offered to play an even more active role in rejecting black applicants on behalf of the Government. Duggan asked the Secretary for Bantu Education

> To indicate whether the minister is likely to approve the admission of any Bantu person to the University in 1961 ... it would be of great assistance to the administration of the University and it would eliminate much administrative work if it were known that the minister does not propose to admit Bantu students in 1961, on the other hand, if the minister proposed to continue to consider each application on its merits, the University will continue to forward these applications to the Department for its consideration.[172]

The Secretary for Bantu Education replied that each application would be considered on its merits.[173] Having failed to reduce the administrative workload in this way, internal memos and letters from the Wits central administration to the faculties and the SRC reflect a very narrow and conservative interpretation of the regulations. For example, in early 1963 Duggan discouraged the Dean of Arts from supporting a prospective African student:

> The University has in the last two years made representations on several occasions for the admission of Africans to various faculties in the University. The Department of Bantu Education has replied on each occasion that the minister has no authority to admit Africans to the University. The only exception which the Department has made since the publication of the Proclamation referred to above was in the case of an

169. Wits Registrar to Op't Hof, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *ibid.*, 31 December 1959.
170. Op't Hof to Wits Registrar, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *ibid.*, 28 January 1960.
171. Duggan to Registrar, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *ibid.*, undated note.
172. Duggan to Secretary for Bantu Education, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *ibid.*, 17 October 1960.
173. Secretary for Bantu Education to Registrar, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *ibid.*, 1 November 1960.

> African who wished to read for the Diploma in Town Planning ... it would be pointless to approach the Department to seek permission for the candidate ... there would appear to be little point therefore in forwarding his application for admission as a higher degree candidate to the Senate.[174]

The responses of Wits and UCT, the 'open' universities which had mounted such principled and high-profile opposition to the Bills, were therefore unimaginative and administrative. Murray agrees that the high-profile formal protests at Wits

> were never more than symbolic. The fact of the matter was that the university otherwise fully acquiesced in the application of the Government's restrictions on black admissions - there was no attempt to challenge, defy, evade or systematically undermine them - and had itself sought to curb radical dissent on campus.[175]

In contrast, the University of Natal attempted to subvert the spirit of the law, while obeying the letter of the law, by admitting students without permission who would have been advised to seek permission by Wits or UCT. At Natal the neutral co-operation on which the Government depended for the system to work broke down and the Government files overflow with the letters of frustrated officials and ministers who tried to bring the institution into line.

Unlike Wits and UCT, where these matters were dealt with by the Registrar's office, at the University of Natal, matters concerning black students were the responsibility of an academic, Ian Allan, who was then also the organiser of the 'Non-European Section' of the university. Allan explains that at the time

> The English-speaking universities embodied the traditional liberal democratic spirit of conforming with a democratically elected government even if one disagreed with specific measures. Open defiance of legal

174. Duggan for Registrar, to Valkhoff, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, 1 March 1963, University of the Witwatersrand Registry, L 9/6.
175. Murray, BK (1990) 'Academic 'non-segregation and social segregation': Wits as an 'open' university, 1939-1959', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 16 No 4, December, p1.

government was not acceptable to them despite more radical views of some leftist staff.[176]

Allan believes that the response at the University of Natal was different because of 'Malherbe's hostility to government persons whom he had found subversive and aided the enemy during World War II':

> This strong personal feeling was major in Natal putting up a much more determined and persistent fight than did other English-speaking universities. This strong attitude was essentially Malherbe's - it did not have positive support from many of the staff - especially the well-established seniors - but they did not actively oppose a determined Malherbe so long as their own interests were not directly involved.[177]

Allan says that 'Malherbe always avoided being an agent of the Government unless clear-cut infringement of the statutes and regulations was involved'.[178]

Working within this framework, Allan asked the university's legal advisor, Professor Exton Burchell, about how to interpret Proclamations 221 and 223 of 1959, who responded that the Proclamations could be interpreted in two different ways. They could mean either that only a black person who had been registered as a student of *a particular* university (being one established by Act of Parliament) could register with 'any such' (i.e. *that particular*) university without ministerial consent, or, that a black person who had been registered as a student of a particular university (being one established by Act of Parliament) could register with '*any such*' (i.e. *those*) universities without ministerial consent. Burchell's advice was that students registered before the cut-off date could proceed to *any* of the universities without seeking permission.[179]

In 1960, without applying for ministerial permission or confirming this interpretation with the Government (as Duggan had, at Wits), the University of Natal proceeded to admit twelve African students on the basis of Burchell's

---

176. Correspondence from Ian Allan, 28 October 1996, Howick.
177. *Ibid.*
178. *Ibid.*
179. Burchell, Exton, to Allan, Ian, 1 February 1960, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *op cit.*

advice.[180] The University of Natal alone among the three universities affected put this interpretation on the Proclamations and admitted students as a result. As a result of enquiries made by the Wits Chancellor, Richard Feetham, Wits was aware that Natal was using this 'loophole', but he was asked by Allan to treat the matter as confidential.[181] In any case, as Duggan had sought and obtained a definitive interpretation from the Department, it would have been a particularly confrontational strategy for Wits to use this 'loophole'.

In addition to admitting, without ministerial permission, students who had attended UCT and Wits before 1960, Allan wanted to admit former students of Fort Hare, which was not 'a university established by Act of Parliament' but a university college. This could, theoretically, be defended by arguing that as pre-1960 Fort Hare students were preparing for degrees awarded by Rhodes University, they could be considered to be Rhodes students. In March 1960 he wrote to Malherbe to argue for the admission of two African students who had been excluded from Fort Hare without reason being given:

> In terms of Exton Burchell's opinion, we can enrol them here without seeking the minister's permission. If we do so he will be particularly cross. I consider that we should without hesitation or delay enrol them and prevent the completion of their degrees being closed to them. Please may I go ahead on this basis?[182]

It is not clear whether Allan was aware that former Fort Hare students were in a different category to former Wits and UCT students. From the records it is also not clear what happened in the particular case of these two students.

---

180. This was quite apart from the students who had applied for ministerial permission: Bantu Education forms had been collected by 151 students, of whom 61 definitely applied, but none received permission to attend. 27 Coloured applicants had been issued with forms, of whom 5 were granted permission. About 550 Indians applied for permission, and none were refused. Allan to Malherbe, 21 March 1960, 'Re: Enquiry Mr. Chancellor Feetham', University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *ibid.*

181. Allan to Malherbe, 21 March 1960, 'Re: Enquiry Mr. Chancellor Feetham', University of Natal Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *ibid.*

182. Allan to Malherbe, 16 March 1960, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *ibid.*

The risk taken by the University of Natal in admitting former Wits, UCT and especially Fort Hare students was compounded by a serious administrative error which infuriated the Government.

In December 1960 the Department of Bantu Education issued another Proclamation to further limit the access of African students to the universities. Proclamation 434 of 1960 was intended to be the 'ultimate step' in prohibiting the registration of Africans at the universities, whereas the earlier Proclamations had been 'interim measures'. It made three important changes First, the wording was altered, so that it became clear that students could only enrol for the first time without ministerial permission at the *particular* university where they had registered before 1 January 1961, and not at 'any such' university as before: this closed Burchell's loophole. Second, with effect from 1 January 1961 faculties and departments were listed where it would no longer be possible for African students to register, except for those already registered.[183] The departments restricted were: Chemistry, Physics, Zoology, Botany, Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Geography, Psychology, Agriculture, Afrikaans, English, History, Economics, Commerce, Sociology, Social Work, Anthropology, Native Administration, Bantu Languages, Classical Languages, Philosophy, Political Science, Law or Divinity, in the Faculties of Science or Arts, and the entire Faculty of Education.[184] Third, in terms of the Proclamation the Minister of Bantu Education had no discretion to grant exceptions to this ruling. No comparable Proclamation was issued by the Department of Education.

Proclamation 434 was published in the *Government Gazette (Extraordinary)* of 23 December 1960 and was overlooked by the University of Natal administrators. The previous two Proclamations had been sent to the University, but in this case the Department of Bantu Education did not do this. Further, the Proclamation was not

183. Proclamation No. 434, 'Extension of University Education Act - Attendance of Bantu persons at universities', *Government Gazette* (Extraordinary), 23 December 1960, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *ibid.*
184. J De Klerk, Minister of Education, to GG Campbell, Chair of the Council, University of Natal, 'Admission of certain Bantu students to your university', 4 September 1962, Pretoria, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *ibid.*

indexed properly, so in 1961 the University of Natal continued to admit students on the same basis as in 1960, ignorant about the changes in the law.

In 1961 Allan admitted African students who had been expelled from Fort Hare at the end of 1960, including WT Mhlambiso, and this brought the University of Natal's continued use of the 'loophole' to the attention of the Government. Mhlambiso, who had been secretary of the Fort Hare SRC, had been refused readmission to the university college on grounds of insubordination.[185] Then, in July 1961, Mhlambiso's status as a University of Natal student came to the attention of the Government when it was reported in the press that he had been elected vice-president of Nusas.[186]

On 27 July 1961 the Department of Bantu Education wrote to Allan about Mhlambiso's admission, who 'gave a brief reply that he was not aware of any reason why permission should be necessary'. When the Department then enquired if Mhlambiso had previously been registered with the University of Natal, 'a curt negative reply was furnished'. With mounting irritation the Department of Bantu Education then asked Allan for a list of African students enrolled in 1961, other than 'medical students or students registered prior to 1961 at your University and completing the course ... for which they were so previously registered'.[187] Allan provided the names of seven African students, including WT Mhlambiso.

In November 1961 the Secretary for Bantu Education communicated this information to Op't Hof and argued that the University of Natal was 'attempting to sabotage the policy of the State in connection with separate universities'. The Department of Bantu Education was seriously considering prosecuting the students involved even though the academic year was over and despite the risk that 'a prosecution would enjoy much publicity overseas'.[188] Maree eventually decided not

185. SAIRR, 1961 *Survey*, p258.
186. Secretary for Bantu Education to Op't Hof, 'Insake Bantoe student WT Mhlambiso', 30 November 1961, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1; SAIRR, 1961 *Survey*, p254.
187. De Klerk to Campbell, 'Admission of certain Bantu students to your university', 4 September 1962, Pretoria, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *op cit.*
188. Secretary for Bantu Education to Op't Hof, 'Insake Bantoe student WT Mhlambiso', 30 November 1961, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1; SAIRR, 1961 *Survey*, p254. My translation.

to prosecute Mhlambiso because it was so close to the exams and because it would be perceived as 'a punitive rather than a preventative measure'; but he wanted the Department of Education to agree to report the matter to the police, with the request that at the beginning of the 1962 academic year the enrolment of African students at the University of Natal should be monitored by the police and that they should be prepared to act against *all* those who had not been enrolled students for the same course and the same university before the Proclamations came into force. In particular, the police should be ready to apprehend two students, Mhlambiso and Ntoi, should they attempt to enrol again.[189]

Officials at the Department of Education then asked the University of Natal why it had admitted these students 'contrary to the provisions of Proclamation 434 of 1960 issued under Section 32 of Act 45 of 1959'. As the University of Natal had not heard of Proclamation 434, the Registrar did not comprehend the significance of the Department's anger, and simply replied that

> the University was not aware of any irregularity in the admission of the students in question and that they were admitted as legal opinion taken advised the University that they possessed the necessary qualifications in terms of the relevant Act freely to enrol.[190]

After more pressure from the Department of Bantu Education, in June 1962 the matter was eventually brought to the attention of Serfontein's successor as Minister of Education, Senator Jan de Klerk, by Op't Hof. De Klerk recommended obtaining information from the University of Natal, and said that 'drastic steps will need to be considered'.[191] By the end of July 1962, no action had resulted and the

---

189. *Ibid.* and Bantu Education files, BO/1/42, Minister to Secretary for Bantu Education, 16 November 1961.

190. De Klerk to Campbell, 'Admission of certain Bantu students to your university', 4 September 1962, Pretoria, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *op cit.* De Klerk replied 'I am not prepared to accept this bald assertion and take exception to the abrupt and inadequate explanations tendered in reply to some of the enquiries ... such reactions by members of your staff are certainly not in keeping with the co-operation one would normally expect from your university'.

191. De Klerk's notes on memorandum from Op't Hof to minister, 'Wederregtilike inskrywing van Bantoe-students by die Universiteit van Natal', 4 June 1962, Cape Town, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1. In July Op't Hof received a letter from the Registrar of the University College for Indians, which contained the information that an Indian student, Sivenathen Appavoo, formerly a BSc student at Fort Hare, had enrolled for a BA at the University of Natal that year without obtaining ministerial permission. (Heystek, GE, Registrar, University College for Indians, to Op't Hof, 11 July 1962, Durban, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1.

Department of Bantu Education began to lose patience. Maree wrote directly to De Klerk to inform him that he had been waiting since November 1961 for his agreement to send the police to prosecute the students. After the original letter, he had made three further attempts to push the Department of Education on the matter, in February and in May, with no result. Maree now wanted De Klerk to pursue the matter personally, especially as Mhlambiso had again enrolled at the University of Natal in 1962.[192]

Stung into action, in September 1962 De Klerk wrote a threatening letter to GG Campbell, chairman of the University of Natal Council, demanding explanations about why the university was flouting the law of the country:

> It is evident that, in defiance of the terms of the Proclamation, the criminal sanctions of the Act and the declared Government policy of separate university training for the Bantu, your University proceeded to enrol the Bantu students in question in 1961 and 1962.[193]

In terms of Section 40 of the 1959 Act, it was the student and not the university that was liable for prosecution for breaking the law.[194] De Klerk argued

> I am quite aware of the fact that the law penalises the student and not the University. None the less, by enrolling such students your university has aided and abetted them in the perpetration of illegal acts, thereby openly flouting the authority of the Government and, what is more, Parliament which passed the Act in question. You will therefore understand that the matter is viewed in a most serious light.[195]

De Klerk wanted a culprit. If the students were admitted by officials acting without informing Council, he wanted to know 'who is the person responsible and what steps your Council intends taking against him'. If, on the other hand, the students were illegally admitted 'with the cognisance of your Council', he enquired

192. Maree, WA, Minister of Bantu Education, to De Klerk, 'Insake Bantoe-student WT Mhlambiso: Universiteit van Natal', Pretoria, 31 July 1962, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1.
193. De Klerk to Campbell, 'Admission of certain Bantu students to your university', 4 September 1962, Pretoria, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *op cit.*
194. See Chapter 5.
195. *Ibid.*

'whether there is any reason why the Government subvention should not be withheld in part or *in toto* in future'.[196]

Threatened with having Government funds withdrawn, the Council responded cautiously and tried to placate the minister. Allan pointed out that he had been 'completely unaware' of Proclamation 434 and that it was not his responsibility to peruse the *Government Gazettes* for the University. Furthermore, he denied that there was 'any deliberate intention of not conforming to legal requirements', pointing out that they had

> refused many scores of otherwise eligible applicants because of the 1959 Proclamation, in comparison with which the numbers admitted in ignorance of the 1960 Proclamation are very small indeed. Certainly there has been no defiant flouting of the Act.[197]

Allan was concerned that the African students that he had admitted should not be criminally punished and that their studies should not be compromised:

> These African students were enrolled by the university because we believed it legal to do so, and they relied upon our belief in this matter. I am particularly anxious that these African students do not suffer on account of an omission on our part.[198]

The Registrar said that because Proclamation 434 was in an extraordinary *Gazette* it had been overlooked by the officials concerned, a problem that was compounded because the Proclamation was not indexed in the next ordinary *Gazette*, and because the Department did not send copies of the Proclamation as it had in the past. He admitted blame, apologised for the error and said that 'no deliberate defiance or discourtesy was intended'.[199]

---

196. *Ibid.*
197. Allan to Du Toit, Registrar, University of Natal, 11 September 1962, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *op cit.* Malherbe later pointed out that this was a useful point that should have been made to De Klerk in Campbell's letter of explanation.
198. *Ibid.*
199. Registrar's comment on letter from Allan to Du Toit, 11 September 1962, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *op cit.*

After a meeting of the Council of the University of Natal on 21 September 1962,[200] Campbell made a fulsome apology to De Klerk, explaining why the University had been ignorant of Proclamation 434. He said that the curt replies made to Departmental enquiries stemmed from this ignorance and that

> these officers were bewildered by enquiries relating to Bantu students whose admission they firmly believed in all innocence to be regular in every respect.[201]

Campbell made 'a special plea' that no steps be taken against the students who were wrongfully admitted, and asked that they be permitted to complete the degrees for which they were registered at the University of Natal.[202]

Despite this conflict with the Government, in 1963 the University of Natal continued to admit students under the 'loophole' in the 1959 Proclamations. These included an African student, Henderson M Radebe, who had been a Fort Hare student before 1960 and was admitted to the LLB degree at the University of Natal in 1963. Op't Hof identified Radebe, determined that as he had been a registered student of Fort Hare University College, and not 'a university established by Act of Parliament' and concluded that the enrolment was illegal. He referred the case to the Department of Bantu Education. At the same time, the Department of Education was considering a criminal prosecution of a similar case. An Indian student, S Appavoo, had been a Fort Hare student from 1958 to 1961 and then been admitted to the University of Natal in 1962, without the officials of the University advising him to seek ministerial consent. The Department of Education sought the opinion of the Attorney General of Natal,[203] who decided not to pursue a criminal prosecution against the University of Natal about Appavoo's admission. They also noted that Appavoo had committed an offence but because he was at

---

200. Minutes of meeting of Council, 21 September 1962, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *ibid.*
201. Campbell to de Klerk, 24 September 1962, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *ibid.*
202. *Ibid.* Their status had not yet been decided by February 1963, when the Registrar of the University of Natal wrote to Op't Hof, to find out what had been decided about the ten students that had 'inadvertently been enrolled by this University during 1961 and 1962'.(Leeb-du Toit, PG, Registrar, University of Natal, to Op't Hof, Durban, 18 February 1963, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1.) By May 1963 the matter was still not decided: Op't Hof advised De Klerk that it was a matter for Bantu Education to decide.( Op't Hof to De Klerk, 'Universiteit van Natal: Onwettige toelating van Bantoestudente', Cape Town, 3 May 1963, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1.)
203. Bantu Education files, JLN Hansmann, for Op't Hof, to Attorney General, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, 15 March 1963.

that time outside of the Republic as a student at Roma, they decided not to prosecute him personally either.

The Department of Bantu Education then had to decide whether they would ask the Attorney General to prosecute Radebe, who had, they considered, committed 'comparable' offences. They were aware of five other ex-Fort Hare students, Bopape, Mbele, Mxenge, Ntoi and Sithole, who were also enrolled for law at the University of Natal, having been admitted as 'Rhodes' students. There were two angles to this potential prosecution. First, Radebe had been a Fort Hare student and could not be considered to have been a Rhodes student. Rhodes was in any case 'a University other than the University of Natal'.[204] Second, the students had been admitted to the Faculty of Law. The Department of Bantu Education knew that the University of Natal had taken legal advice about the connotation of the words 'faculty' and 'department' in Proclamation 434, which had led them to believe that

> though in terms of the Proclamation African students are precluded from taking courses in the *Faculty of Arts*, where a legal subject may also be taken, the Proclamation does not preclude the enrolment of African students in the *Faculty of Law*.[205]

The Department of Bantu Education therefore asked the Department of Justice to clarify the interpretation of Proclamation 434 of 1960. They explained that they had interpreted the Proclamation to mean that because an Engineering student, for example, needed to study physics and mathematics, which were departments listed in the Proclamation, they would not be allowed to register at one of the Universities.[206] The legal opinion returned by the Department of Justice confirmed the Department of Bantu Education's interpretation.[207] The University of Natal was informed that although the Faculty of Law was not restricted in terms of

204. Bantu Education files, Department of Bantu Education, Senior Administrative Official to First Administrative Official, memorandum, 'Wederregtelike toelating van Indierstudent S Appavoo tot die Universiteit van Natal' 2 October 1963, 11/9/2 and 11/9/1.
205. Bantu Education files, Department of Bantu Education, EG Malherbe, Principal, University of Natal, Durban, to Op't Hof, 24 April 1963; copied to Secretary for Bantu Education.
206. The question of where black students were to train as Engineers is examined in more detail in Chapter 8.
207. Bantu Education files, Secretary for Justice to Secretary for Bantu Education, 4 April 1962.

Proclamation 434 of 1960, the Department of Bantu Education considered it unlikely that African students would be able to complete a degree course as they would not be able to attend classes offered by the Faculty of Arts rather than the Faculty of Law, such as Latin.[208]

No criminal prosecutions were pursued, the Government obviously deciding that the costs of such action were too high.

At the same time that these prosecutions were being considered, the departments also stumbled on to the University of Natal's practice of admitting students on a provisional basis, some of whom were subsequently rejected by the minister. Op't Hof concluded that

> There is no legal provision for provisional admissions. The law is infringed even if such a person is admitted for only one day.[209]

The University of Natal's continued actions against the spirit of the law astounded Op't Hof:

> One would have expected that after its unlawful actions were brought to its attention, the University would be on guard against coming into conflict with the law again. These further unlawful admissions demonstrate the true spirit with which the University acts in this affair.[210]

In the light of this intransigent spirit, Op't Hof recommended that the University should suffer a financial penalty.

---

208. Department of Bantu Education files, HJ van Zyl, Secretary for Bantu Education to Registrar of University of Natal, 25 August 1964, 11/9/1.

209. Op't Hof to De Klerk, 'Universiteit van Natal: Onwettige toelating van Bantoestudente', Cape Town, 3 May 1963, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1.
Wits received a warning about provisional enrolment from the Department of Indian Affairs. They said that while permission would be granted for Indian students doing professional or advanced courses not offered at Salisbury Island, 'One or two of the Universities apparently enrol Indian students without a permit, pending ministerial approval, a practice which can only lead to disappointment and needless expenditure, and one which, because of its irregularity, would reduce the student's chances of obtaining a permit.' (Acting Secretary for Indian Affairs to Wits Registrar, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *op cit.*, 18 July 1963.) By 1969 it is clear that the practice of admitting students provisionally had been adopted in the Wits Faculty of Medicine. The Dean, Professor F Daubenton, wrote to the Registrar, 'We have registered non-European students provisionally in the past when they were selected by our Selection Committee on academic merit. This I report to you in the strictest confidence, as the procedure is apparently illegal. However, this was the only way in which we could help the academically most deserving non-European applicants.' (Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *ibid.*, 1 December 1969.)

Legally, funds already voted by Parliament could only be reduced if the University failed to meet the requirements of Act 61 of 1955, the Universities Act. As the University was in breach of a different Act, this financial sanction could not legitimately be used. Nevertheless Op't Hof recommended that subsidy for 1964-65 should be reduced by R20 000, adding the twist that this money should be subtracted from the funds earmarked to cover the financial losses incurred by the closure of the 'Non-European Section'.[211] De Klerk initially responded that he was against the reduction of subsidies, but he asked for more details about exactly how the figure of R20 000 had been calculated[212] and later accepted the principle of Op't Hof's financial sanctions.[213] In 1966 it was observed that the university could not claim subsidy for these black students, even though they were enrolled at the University with the minister's permission.[214] There is no record at the University of Natal that this penalty was ever applied.

After the 'ultimate step' of Proclamation 434 of 1960, the Minister of Bantu Education seldom gave permission for African students to register, arguing that he had no discretion in the matter. For the remainder of the decade African student numbers fell dramatically. This was at least partly because the Minister of Bantu Education's stock reply that he had no discretion to admit African students conditioned some university administrators to believe that applications were hopeless. As has been seen above, in the early 1960s, especially at Wits, they sometimes acted as the first gatekeepers for the Government, discouraging applicants, and the academics who supported them, from wasting their own time in making 'hopeless' applications, not to mention the time of the university administrators and the government bureaucrats.

---

210. *Ibid.*
211. *Ibid.*
212. De Klerk's comments, 7 May 1963, on Op't Hof to De Klerk, 'Universiteit van Natal: Onwettige toelating van Bantoestudente', Cape Town, 3 May 1963, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1.
213. De Klerk's comments, 14 May 1963, on Op't Hof to De Klerk, *ibid.*
214. University of Natal, 'Memorandum on the enrolment of non-European students', 24 November 1966, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *op cit.*

By late 1963 there are signs that the conservative responses at UCT and Wits began to be modified. UCT held discussions with Maree about allowing two African lecturers at UCT to enrol for postgraduate study at the University. (Maree said that he would consider framing special new regulations, as in terms of the existing regulations he had no discretion to grant permission. However, he asked his own department to obtain reports on the two from the South African Police as 'I will not willingly approve special regulations for people against whom there are unfavourable police reports.'[215] There is no record of the outcome.)

Wits academics also began to realise that the administrators had perhaps been interpreting the regulations too conservatively. Glyn Thomas, the Vice Principal, wrote a confidential letter to a Mr PRD Germishuis, a senior official in the Department of Bantu Education

> I shall very gratefully appreciate your personal advice on the following matter. Because of the careful consideration which your Department gave to a case which I submitted quite recently, I wonder whether my office has not been interpreting the Proclamation of 23 December 1960 in too restrictive a way.

He was referring to the Wits practice of refusing students, for example, for registration outside the Faculty of Science for degrees in Engineering because they included courses in mathematics and physics, which were departments listed in the Proclamation.

> The fact that the University has submitted no applications from Bantu persons for permission to commence undergraduate studies in any faculty is due to our interpretation of the Proclamation as excluding every Bantu applicant. Have we gone wrong in this? It is possible that the Proclamation was not intended to be quite so far-reaching?[216]

(This is obviously the same issue which would have been definitively resolved in court through a test of the law in prosecuting Radebe.) By 1970 the matter had still

---

215. Department of Bantu Education files, Maree to Secretary for Bantu Education, 10 March 1964, 11/9/2.
216. Glyn Thomas, Vice Principal, to PRD Germishuis, Department of Bantu Education, confidential, Wits Archive, Sub File I *op cit.*, 2 December 1963.

not been ·ified. On 10 November 1970 Glyn Thomas wrote to JP Evert, the Assistant Re· 'rar in Engineering:

> It is a b· 'worded document, but has been interpreted as meaning that the University c 'not admit Africans to any course in the Departments mentioned, wh 'ever the faculty concerned.[217]

However, from the mid 1960s, with the co-operation of the Department of Bantu Education which had 'a new-found desire ... to train engineers for "the Bantustan areas"',[218] Wits developed a scheme to provide 'postgraduate' engineering training for BSc graduates from the black university colleges. The first African to enrol under this scheme was admitted in 1969. GR Bozzoli, former Dean of Engineering and Wits Vice Chancellor, explained that it

> took some time to get under way as it meant locating suitable matriculants, having them graduate in science, finding the financial support and then getting them here.[219]

Meanwhile, at the University of Natal, Ian Allan continued to try to find loopholes and exceptions. At the end of 1962 he persuaded Malherbe to support the applications of three African students for postgraduate studies in Zulu in 1963, even though Proclamation 434 gave the Minister of Bantu Education no discretion if the student intended to enrol for Bantu Languages. Allan's argument, designed to appeal to the desire of the Department of Bantu Education to see the African university colleges succeed, was that as the University of Natal had an outstanding reputation in Zulu studies, it was the only place where 'African staff of sufficiently high quality to teach the Zulu language at high academic levels' could be prepared for academic posts at the University College of Zululand.[220] Nevertheless, the Department of Bantu Education bluntly refused permission and suggested that the

---

217. Glyn Thomas to JP Evert, Assistant Registrar in Engineering, Wits Archive, Sub File 1 *ibid.*, 10 November 1970.
218. Murray, BK (1997) *Wits: The 'Open' Years, a history of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1939-1959*, Wits University Press, Johannesburg, p324.
219. Letter from Bozzoli, GR, Wits Vice Chancellor, to Vice Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast, 18 April 1972, Wits Archive. Thanks to BK Murray for locating this information.
220. Allan to Malherbe, 5 December 1962, University of Natal Registry, Box 252, *op cit.*

students should enrol at Unisa.[221] The University of Natal's attempts to admit black students were particularly sensitive because the institution was located close to the new university colleges in Durban and Zululand. Numbers at the Zululand campus in particular were so critically low that any potential students diverted from enrolling there was significant, while the opposition mounted by the Indian community to the Durban campus, as well as the University of Natal's successful campaign to retain control of its black Medical School all contributed to a tense relationship with the Government.

In March 1967 the University of Natal applied to Department of Education for permission to allow MT Moerane, who had already completed the Bachelor of Commerce degree, to be admitted to the Faculty of Law for an LLB degree. The University was by this time aware that permission was required for this registration, although when Moerane had initially registered, they had advised him that he would be able to proceed automatically. They had not notified him of the changed position. The University told the Department of Education that

> It follows that if the candidate cannot register at this University he will be seriously prejudiced. Some of the law credits will not be recognised by the universities which he can legally attend and he will be obliged to take an extra year or possibly two over the LLB degree. In the circumstances I support his application for special permission to register.[222]

The University of Natal obviously then proceeded to admit him provisionally, while waiting for the response, because a staff member at the Durban campus, AS Trutter, informed the Department of Bantu Education that

> I wish to bring to the Department's notice malpractices that are being carried on at this University. The Department of Law ... has admitted one Bantu, MT Moerane, to study the LLB this year ... I hope the minister will be advised to act accordingly in this matter.[223]

---

221. Secretary for Bantu Education, to Op't Hof, 'Admission of Bantu persons to the University of Natal: Postgraduate study of Zulu', Pretoria, 4 March 1963, UOD, Volume 57, Reference 4/7/2/1.
222. AS Matthews, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Natal, to Op't Hof, 9 March 1967, Department of Bantu Education files, 11/9/1.
223. AS Trutter to Secretary for Bantu Education, 28 March 1967, Department of Bantu Education files, 11/9/1.

In July 1967 the Secretary for Bantu Education, HJ van Zyl, wrote a confidential letter to EG Malherbe, saying that Moerane's father had written to them, perturbed, because they were not prepared to register his son for the LLB degree. (There is no copy of this letter in the Department of Bantu Education files.)Van Zyl pointed out that under Proclamation 434 Moerane was not prohibited from registering for a degree in the Faculty of Law, and that he would not be following courses in departments and Faculties prohibited by Proclamation 434. Therefore, he wrote, 'It seems as if this matter is surrounded by a certain element of doubt.'[224] The Registrar replied that

> Mr Moerane's registration would clearly be in contravention of Proclamation 434 of 1960 and the University is unable to accept him as a student.[225]

The stringent conditions regulating the admission of Africans to universities were not extended to Coloured and Asian students in the same way. The Department of Education did not pass a Proclamation to mirror the Department of Bantu Education's 'ultimate measure' of Proclamation 434. Instead, in December 1961 Op't Hof clarified the conditions under which the minister would grant consent to Coloured and Indian students, namely, if they were enrolled before 1 January 1960, if the course was not offered at the Western Cape or Salisbury Island University Colleges, or if the applicant was Chinese. Part time students would be refused if the course was offered at Unisa.[226] By clarifying his position in this way, rather than promulgating regulations in the *Government Gazette*, the Minister of P ication was able to exercise more discretion in deciding who could be a' nitted. As a result, as Table 5.3 shows, more applicants from these population groups than African applicants were granted permission, and the numbers of Coloured and Asian students attending the 'open' universities did not fall as rapidly as did the numbers of African students.

---

224. HJ van Zyl, Secretary for Bantu Education, confidential, to EG Malherbe, Principal, University of Natal, 12 June 1967, Department of Bantu Education files, 11/9/1.
225. Registrar, University of Natal, to Secretary for Bantu Education, 6 July 1967, Department of Bantu Education files, 11/9/1.
226. UOD 4/7/2 Volume 57.

| Table 5.3: Enrolments at the Universities of Cape Town, Natal (excluding Medical School), Rhodes and the Witwatersrand, analysed by population group, 1959-1970[227] | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | African | Coloured | Asian | Black enrolments as percentage of all enrolments |
| 1959 | 192 | 530 | 731 | 9.8 |
| 1960 | 160 | 472 | 889 | 9.6 |
| 1961 | 141 | 384 | 770 | 7.9 |
| 1964 | 48 | n/a | 648 | n/a |
| 1965 | 37 | 281 | 475 | 4.4 |
| 1966 | 41 | 293 | 568 | 4.1 |
| 1967 | 18 | 280 | 527 | 3.6 |
| 1968 | 38 | 285 | 529 | 3.5 |
| 1969 | 33 | 311 | 513 | 3.4 |
| 1970 | 16 | 332 | 576 | 3.6 |

African student numbers fell more rapidly because Proclamation 434, which applied only to African students and had no equivalent that applied to Coloured and Indian students, removed discretion from the minister. This discrepancy can probably be ascribed to the preparedness of the white electorate to accept Coloured and Asian students in the universities rather than African students. It is also pertinent that student numbers at the University College of the Western Cape and Salisbury Island were growing steadily, which meant that there was more latitude to allow students to enrol elsewhere, whereas the low numbers of enrolments at the African university colleges would have meant that every African student who was allowed admission to the university was threatening the viability of the nascent African university college system. While no comprehensive information about the numbers of applicants and the numbers admitted is available, Mbanjwa has compiled the figures available to provide the following table:

227. My calculations, based on SAIRR, 1962 *Survey*, p195; SAIRR, 1965 *Survey*, p274; SAIRR, 1970 *Survey*, p243; and information provided by the Department of Development and Statistics, University of Natal, Durban.

| Table 5.4: Black students applying and admitted to white universities, 1960-1970[228] | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | African | | Coloured | | Indian | |
| Year | Applied | Admitted | Applied | Admitted | Applied | Admitted |
| 1960 | ? | 4 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1961 | ? | 7 | ? | ? | 4 | 4 |
| 1962 | ? | 7 | ? | ? | 165 | 143 |
| 1963 | ? | 1 | ? | ? | 238 | 222 |
| 1964 | ? | 1 | ? | ? | 476 | 408 |
| 1965 | 9 | 0 | ? | ? | 318 | 281 |
| 1966 | 6 | 1 | ? | ? | 414 | 367 |
| 1967 | 13 | 4 | ? | ? | 461 | 416 |
| 1968 | 7 | 1 | ? | ? | 537 | 495 |
| 1969 | 63 | 6 | ? | ? | 691 | 644 |
| 1970 | 29 | 3 | 381 | 323 | 784 | 694 |

Despite the almost comprehensive exclusion of African students and the reduction in the numbers of Coloured and Asian students, throughout the 1960s dissatisfaction about the implementation of segregation and rumours that new legislation was being prepared were periodically expressed in the conservative and Afrikaans press. A report in *Die Vaderland* in January 1961 suggested that the Department of Education had prepared legislation to tighten up on the admission of black students to the universities. (The report indicates that the matter had not yet been presented to the Cabinet, and I have no other documentation about this.) In September 1965, the *Pretoria News* reported that over 900 exemptions allowing black students to study at the universities had been granted, and that 'concern was growing' that students chose subjects to obtain exemptions to study at the universities.[229] In early October De Klerk wrote to Op't Hof about ending the 'misuses and bolt-holes' in Articles 31 and 32 of the Acts of 1959. He said things 'could no longer be allowed to develop in this way' and asked the Departments of Bantu Education, Coloured and Indian affairs to co-operate in preparing a memorandum on the matter for submission to the Cabinet.[230] Later that month *Dagbreek en Sondagblad* reported that 'informed sources' said there was pressure on De Klerk to make it more difficult for black students to gain access to the universities on 'various pretexts'. It was believed that black admissions were being

228. Mbanjwa, T (1975) 'Education for Blacks: higher education', in *Black Review 1974/75*, Black Community Programmes, Lovedale, pp186-187.
229. *Pretoria News*, 23 September 1965.
230. De Klerk to Secretary, 7 October 1965, UOD A1/2/14/1.

deliberately engineered, for example, by changing the name of a course in order to evade Government restrictions on black enrolments. They speculated that the aim was to give the universities an 'artificial multi-racialism'. It was hoped that De Klerk would amend the 1959 Acts to introduce stricter conditions for admission. It was also hoped that the four departments involved (by this stage the Department of Education was responsible for vetting Chinese applicants, Indian Affairs and Coloured Affairs for Indian and Coloured applicants respectively, and Bantu Education for African applicants) could achieve closer control on the actual number of black admissions so that the anticipated number of admissions was not exceeded, perhaps by agreeing a quota or ceiling on black enrolments.[231]

In 1969 the Departments of Bantu Education, Indian Affairs, Coloured Affairs and Higher Education (which by then was responsible for the white universities) held discussions to prepare new legislation for discussion by the Cabinet. They were concerned that after the university colleges were granted full autonomy, they would also be 'Universities ... iblished by Act of Parliament' and therefore in order to continue the segregationist intention of articles 31 and 32 of the Act, there was a need to indicate more clearly what was desired.[232]

## 5.3 Resistance and Alternatives

Ivan Evans argues that the coercive power of apartheid stemmed partly from its ability to win 'a limited but consequential degree of co-operation' for its policies 'without attempting to win ... ideological support'.[233] He points out that providing desperately poor black communities with cheap housing, public utilities and mass transport in the 1950s disorganised attempts at African opposition. Similarly, once the Government threw its ideological and financial weight behind its 1959 plans for university apartheid and established the black university colleges, year on year more black students enrolled, although there were some isolated, small scale

231. *Dagbreek en Sondagblad*, 31 October 1965.
232. HJ van Zyl to the minister, Chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee for non-white University Colleges, memorandum, 'Toelating van nie-blanke studente tot blanke universiteite', 16 April 1969, Department of Bantu Education files, 11/9/1.
233. Evans, *op cit.*, p7.

attempts to resist the juggernaut and to provide black students with alternatives to the university colleges. One was the attempt by the University of Natal to admit black students in breach of the spirit and letter of the law, as described above. Paradoxically, although the 'open' universities, Wits and UCT, had taken the lead in institutional opposition to the 1959 Acts, their opposition as institutions, as has been seen above, did not continue after the Acts were passed.

According to Anne Yates, a junior lecturer in the Wits Economics Department from 1954 and a member of the University Liaison Committee, after the Acts were passed the prevalent attitude at Wits was that the chapter of opposition was over. It was generally perceived that the University had to keep running and working with the Government and that it could best help black students through bargaining with the Government, for example, to let Coloured students into Engineering. There was no 'positive move to break the law' by the University, partly because there were worries about the future of any individual who was 'smuggled in'. Furthermore, Yates argues that the opposition of the institution to the 1959 Acts had been based on a limited notion of university autonomy, rather than the broader and more fundamental principles of academic freedom. Most academics shared this view, believing that they needed to be 'impartial' and removed from 'the political ding-dong'. As a result, she says, in the aftermath of the passage of the Acts there was 'a general web of doing nothing at all'.[234] However, this institutional passivity did not extend to all the members of the institution. In particular, members of the Liaison Committee continued to think about ways to help black students excluded from the University. This was an internal university group, composed of activist staff members, with no United Party or Liberal Party backing, which regarded academic freedom as indivisible from broader freedom. They devised a scheme to enable black students in South Africa to take degrees as external students of the University of London.

234. Yates, A, (1996) Wits staff member, 1950s, active in establishment of Sached; interviewed in Oxford, 18 June 1996.

This scheme resulted in the founding of the South African Council for Higher Education (Sached) in Johannesburg in 1959. John Shingler, Nusas president, and Alan Hall, a Wits English lecturer, approached the Johannesburg-based correspondence Britzius College, which had previously been involved in matric-level studies. Students would be provided with English correspondence materials through the college and meet individually with tutors every week to consolidate their work. Sached would be partly financed through money that Nusas had previously made available for Medical School bursaries, a scheme which was by this time defunct because of the restrictions on black student enrolment and money from the World University Service (WUS) was also arranged. In the early years this allowed Nusas to cover all the costs for the students, including fees, materials and tutors fees, which came to about £100 per student each year.

The initiative was politically endorsed by the ANC, which was concerned that the Government was undercutting and perverting education standards for Africans. The ANC was against students registering at Unisa as an alternative, because they feared that Unisa might exclude blacks or reduce standards. They wanted Sached to provided access to internationally-recognised qualifications, which meant that students had to take A-Levels and University of London degrees. A member of the organising committee was WB Ngakane, the Secretary of the ANC in the Transvaal. Bishop Ambrose Reeves joined the ANC and Nusas as the initial backers of the scheme, and secretly organised Defence and Aid money. Later, through WUS, Swedish money was provided through SIDA.

In late 1959 Sached advertised for its first students and about six students were admitted in 1960. One of the first students was Thabo Mbeki. Yates believes that most of the first students who came to Sached acted for reasons of conscience and politics rather than education, although most of the students had a sense of what good education should be, and therefore chose to pursue English qualifications rather than Unisa degrees. Others found it difficult to move away from their families and jobs and could not afford to study elsewhere. Norman Bromberger, a Rhodes academic who organised Sached in Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown, recalls that some students were attracted by the opportunity of a bursary to study

through private tuition, while others were inspired by 'political resistance to the take-over of South African university education by the state'.[235]

Sached spread from Johannesburg to other centres around the country. In Cape Town and Durban there was more university-based support. The Natal Branch of Sached was supported largely by Indian business and professional men.[236] Activity in Port Elizabeth ceased when Bromberger was arrested for his activity in the African Resistance Movement and the banned and another organiser, Olive Landman, left South Africa when the underground organisations were subject to harsh repression in 1963 and 1964. A small branch survived in Grahamstown.[237]

As the South African matriculation exemption certificate did not qualify students for admission to University of London degree courses, over the years, most Sached students took A-Levels rather than the London degrees. In the 1960s it was not possible to teach science courses because of problems with facilities. There was a lot of practical pastoral care, for example, providing folding tables and lights for students to work at home, and dealing with the police after students were arrested for pass difficulties. The Johannesburg Library was still closed to black people, so many students used the British Council and American Information libraries during the day. By the end of the 1960s Sached was also acting as a base for Unisa students who had been excluded from other institutions.

In 1965 Sached was harassed in the series of police raids on Defence and Aid-linked organisations. Textbooks were removed, houses, homes and offices were raided. There were spies reporting to the police on Sached activities. This was viewed as an attempt to bully Sached into inactivity, but there was a decision not to pre-empt the Government and do its work for it, and the initiative survived.[238]

---

235. Bromberger, N, personal communication, September 1998.
236. Bhana, *op cit.*, p418. Sached also spread to Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth.
237. Bromberger, *op cit.*
238. Yates, *op cit.*

Besides Sached, another alternative to the university colleges planned in Natal was devised the Gandhi Memorial Academy. The basic principles of the scheme were the same as Sached, except that it was proposed that voluntary teachers would take classes of 30 or 40 students. In 1960 Sir Douglas ('Jock') Logan, Principal of the University of London enquired of Malherbe how viable the schemes were, and about their legal status. Allan reported to Malherbe that although there were no legal restrictions on these schemes, he thought they were likely to remain small scale or fail. He commented that the Gandhi Memorial Academy scheme was

> nebulous and somewhat half-baked and they do not seem to appreciate the enormous organisational difficulties that a network of voluntary teachers and scattered classrooms would involve ... enthusiasm is already cooling.[239]

Malherbe advised Logan that the signs were that the new university college at Salisbury Island would succeed, as 125 students had already applied, there was 'no scarcity of good applicants for the teaching posts' and because the Government was 'sparing no expense' at the new university college. He therefore predicted, correctly as it turns out, that 'most of the attempts to boycott it will peter out in the long run'.[240]

In 1963 *Die Vaderland* reported that 'influential liberal circles in South Africa' were considering the Pius XII University College at Roma in Lesotho as an alternative to the African university colleges.[241] Roma was founded by a Catholic order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, in 1945 'to train African leaders providing higher education invested with spiritual values'.[242] Students were prepared for Unisa degrees in Arts, Science and Commerce and Education diplomas. Roma was an associate college of Unisa, with representatives of each institutions sitting on the Councils, but, unlike the university colleges in South Africa, the staff of eight priests and 22 lay lecturers was drawn from all over the world (about one third of whom were Canadian and one third South African) which gave the institution 'a diversity of approach which would otherwise be difficult to find in so secluded a

239. Allan to Malherbe, 9 December 1960, KCM 56990 (174).
240. Malherbe to Logan, 11 January 1961, KCM 56990 (174).
241 *Vaderland*, 18 June 1963.
242. Horrell, M *Report on a visit to the University College of Pius XII, Basutholand*, SAIRR, RR60/60JH, 13 October 1960.

place.'[243] All lecturers were required to hold at least a Master's degree. Students enjoyed more freedom that their counterparts in South Africa, electing an SRC and publishing a college newspaper.[244] In 1960, when the student enrolment was predominantly African (84 per cent), male (78 per cent) and Catholic (63 per cent), just under half of the 167 students were from South Africa, although preference was given to students from High Commission Territories. Although just over two thirds of the students were in receipt of bursaries,[245] it was expensive for South Africans to go to Roma and South Africans were eligible for fewer bursaries than the students from the High Commission Territories. In 1964 the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland was formed and the University of London replaced Unisa as the examining body.[246] The South African authorities quibbled about whether it would recognise UBLS degrees and from 1964 new South African students were forbidden by the Government from going to Lesotho to study at Roma.[247]

*Die Vaderland* predicted in 1963 that the Government would have no difficulty in 'frustrating these plans' to help black students avoid enrolling at the university colleges.[248] Bhana points out that Government intervention was not needed to undermine the attempts to provide alternatives: referring to the Gandhi Memorial Academy scheme, he argues that

> It was the prospect of participating in a programme that might falter somewhere along the line that caused students to shy away from it, and thus spelled doom for the whole scheme.[249]

Some students chose not to go to the new university colleges for ideological or educational reasons. Others could not afford to move away from home and employment and register at the entirely residential, full-time institutions. Increasingly, the established universities were closed to black, especially African,

---

243. *Cape Times*, 16 April 1956.
244. *Ibid.*
245. Horrell, *Report on University College of Pius XII, op cit.*.
246. Ministry of Education, Maseru, Lesotho, *Commission of Enquiry into Student Unrest at the UBLS Roma Campus*, March 1975.
247. SAIRR, 1964 Survey, p293.
248. *Vaderland*, 16 August 1963.
249. Bhana, *op cit.*, p418.

students by the provisions of the 1959 Acts, despite the attempts to subvert the intentions of the laws.

Relatively few students took advantage of the alternatives described above. For example, Allan recalls that the Natal branch of Sached assisted only between 12 and 15 students, and resulted in two students graduating. The records on external students held at the University of London show that examination entries from students in South Africa increased from seven in 1957 to 13 in 1960, 29 in 1965 and 40 in 1970, but these numbers were still very small relative to student enrolments in the university colleges.[250]

It is also very difficult to determine how many South Africans succeeded in studying abroad for broadly political reasons in the 1960s. A tracer study conducted for the Africa Educational Trust found that in this period they financed the studies in Britain and Ireland of 75 South African students. Of these, 65 per cent were African, 17 per cent were Indian, ten per cent were Coloured and eight per cent were white. One third had left South Africa for political reasons and another third had left to gain educational opportunities denied to them in South Africa. Two thirds were strongly linked to the ANC. Among this group, most had middle class or professional parents. Contacts with individuals in the exile movements, for example Barney Desai in the PAC, or contacts with British people who had links in South Africa, such as Sir Robert Birley, were often important factors.[251]

By far the majority turned to correspondence through Unisa, which despite its ideological slant, offered the flexibility of part-time study from home and a wider choice of subjects.

250. Ex 3/4/1-3, 'Overseas Examination Statistics' (chiefly 'Table II'), 1921-1975, Archives, University of London.
251. Unterhalter, E and Maxey, K (1996) *Educating South Africans in Britain and Ireland: A review of 33 years of sponsorship by the Africa Educational Trust*, Africa Educational Trust, London.