

# RHODED

SPECIAL

## Editorial

In 1959 Rhodes University participated in a symbolic campaign of protest against the then Extension of University Act. The protest failed. The result: the infamous "permit system" and "bush colleges".

Now again Rhodes has done its liberal duty by opposing the "quota system" as proposed in the Extension of University Education Amendment Bill.

That the proposals of the Bill are a threat to university freedom and autonomy cannot be ignored. In all fairness though, the government cannot claim originality for the concept of a quota system. It had its origins in pre-1939 Nazi Germany where it was used in an effort to keep Jewish people out of German universities.

In the same way that these universities ended up as simple instruments of the Nazi state, can we expect our universities to end up as simple instruments of the apartheid state?

## Quota System

What are the changes envisaged in the new system to be introduced through the Extension of University Education Amendment Bill?

At present, black students wanting to study at white universities have to apply individually to the department of Education for a permit. Under the new system a maximum quota of black students allowed to attend a white university will be laid down.

While the extensive bureaucracy of administering the permit system will not longer plague the Department of Education, the responsibility of administering the system of racial quotas will fall on the universities themselves. If implemented, this will inevitably mean the universities will have to refuse certain students the permission to study, on the basis of their race.

Thus, the responsibility for administering apartheid in the universities is being shifted from the state, onto the universities.

The quotas, to be determined by the Minister of National Education in consultation with the universities, will vary from campus to campus. Not only will a limit on the overall number of black students the university may

accept, be set down, but also included are far more specific restrictions.

Firstly the Bill states that different quota conditions may be applied to different "population groups" - students are categorised and divided into white, coloured, Indian and African groups, each with a different quota limit.

Secondly, the Bill provides for different quota conditions for different faculties thus controlling the jobs into which black students are channelled.

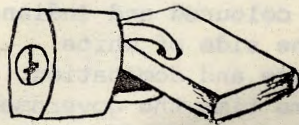
Thirdly, the Bill as it stands allows the Minister to pin other conditions onto the quota. For eg: a proviso that only African students with permanent residence rights can qualify as part of the quota.

Through the quota system, the state will play a more direct role in ensuring that the education system is producing enough graduates to fill skilled posts in different areas of the economy. By allocating quotas according to faculties the state is able to supervise the flow of black students into jobs which the state deems important to fill, with more efficiency than was ever possible under the permit system.

### Academic Freedom statement:

## Bill rejected as racist

The right to decide who will teach, who shall be taught and what shall be taught, without regard to any criteria except academic merit has been a principle proudly upheld in South Africa's English-language Universities for many years.



In 1959, hundreds of academics and students marched through the streets in vigorous protest against the introduction of The Extension of Universities Education Act.

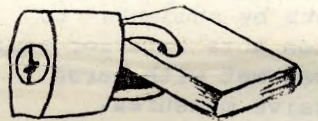
Today, we once again raise our voices to protest against the government's attempts to enforce and streamline university apartheid.

Part of what we affirm in our dedication to the principle of academic freedom is that free universities cannot exist in an unfree society. The university, as an institution, cannot be seen in isolation from the society it serves. In the South African context, the unequal education system and unequal access to power, wealth and resources already limits the number of black students who will have access to university education.

The government's new initiative must be seen in the context of the state's particular brand of political reform with its attempts to

further divide the country ethnically by driving a wedge between Coloureds and Indians on the one hand, and Africans on the other.

The quota system must be viewed against the backdrop of the already-established Vista University scheme as a tool in the hands of the Minister under which the intake of African students to white universities may be steadily cut back in accordance with the state's divide and rule strategy.



We reject the quota system for its racism, its entrenchment of unequal education, its divisive and discriminatory aims, and because it will be yet another tool for the state to use to entrench the broader inequalities of wealth and power in our society.

Thou shalt not study  
BECAUSE THY SKIN IS  
TOO DARKLY PIGMENTED





## STATE EDUCATION POLICY

# Divide & rule

In 1959 the South African parliament passed the Extension of University Act. The effect of this legislation was to entrench statutory racial discrimination in the universities. Blacks would only be allowed to enter "white" universities if they were individually granted permits from the Department of Education. The permits were only granted where major subjects were not offered at the students' "ethnic college"

The Act also made provision for the establishment of separate campuses for each ethnic group.

These separate "ethnic universities" or "bush colleges" as they were more commonly known, were not only separate but also unequal. For example they received reduced subsidy.

The few people who could afford to attend these universities ended up with inferior qualifications and any attempts by students to question this inferior education was met with harsh repressive measures.

The question immediately arises: why does the South African government now want to change the permit system to a quota system? The answer has its origins in the 1970's.

Since the mid 1970's South Africa has experienced an economic crisis compounded by an increasing shortage of skilled labour - technical, professional and managerial. The institutions that train and provide people with such skills have thus come in for an overhaul.

We have had the De Lange Commission of enquiry into education and the setting up of the new "university", the

so-called Vista University for blacks only. Vista aims not only at academic education but also at technical and vocational training.

Since the mid 1970's South Africa has also experienced an ongoing political crisis. There has been a rapid growth in organized opposition to apartheid. Examples are the rapid resurgence of independent trade union activity and the emergence of countless community organisations. Educational institutions have also been sites of increased resistance to the apartheid system.

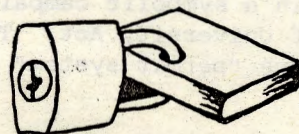
The government has responded with the constitutional proposals which are aimed at dividing opposition by co-opting coloured and Indians onto the side of white privilege and domination. At the same time the government is trying to draw the coloured and Indian "bush colleges" into the same ambit as the white universities. The same Bill proposing the quota system also proposes that these universities be incorporated into the white Committee of University Principal structure.

Thus, on the one hand, the government seems to be intending to draw all African students into their "ethnic colleges" or Vista University. On the other hand the government is likely to use the quota system to cut back on the intake of African students at "white" universities while allowing the intake of coloured and Indian students to increase.

Ironically then the liberal call for the opening of the universities to all students irrespective of race may become a semi reality - open universities for whites, Coloured and Indians.

# Student organisations respond

The following organisations issued these statements in rejection of the Bill:



#### SRC:

- believes that the proposed legislation will further limit the universities function of serving the entire South African society.

- believes that the proposed legislation is designed to transfer to the university the obligation of enforcing the governments apartheid policies.

- demands a free and equal education system for all.

- calls on all students and staff in this university to join the nation-wide opposition to the Bill.



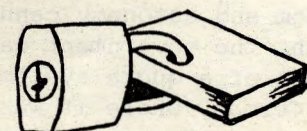
#### BLACK STUDENTS MOVEMENT:

- view the Bill as a reflection of the power relations in this country where the minority dominates the majority.

-believes that the South African state has failed to meet the demands of the people of South Africa for a non-racial democracy where the education system would serve all members of society.

- believes that the Bill will reinforce the States strategy of divide and rule by further dividing the black community along class, race and ethnic lines.

- believes that the Bill aims at more effective control of black student activities on the white campuses



#### NUSAS HEAD OFFICE:

- believes that the Bill serves not only to entrench racist education in the university, but now intends to make the universities themselves do the governments dirty work in administering the system.

- believes that already the unequal education system and the unequal distribution of power and wealth in South Africa limits the number of black students who have access to university education.

- believes that the quota system will allow the government not only to control and limit the overall number of black students on our campuses, but also, the ratio between coloured, Indian and African students, and how many of each may be admitted per faculty.

- such control is unacceptable.

# Mass Meeting

## The Quota System

# Zoo Major

# Thurs 5.15