Wits Student welcomes any contributions, comments or criticisms. Bring responses to our offices, room 215, Students’ Union.
SRC President, Claire Wright orders the riot squad to leave.

SMA banners in flames.

Demonstrating against SADF atrocities.
A "Free Political Prisoners Rally" was planned by Projects Comm, as part of a national Nusas campaign, and SASS to take place on Tuesday 20 May. SADF raids into ANC headquarters, in three Southern African capitals caused the nature of the rally to change. A protest starting at 8:30 was called.

From early on Tuesday morning, students began distributing pamphlets and posters. At approximately 8:45am, there was a march by SASS onto the library lawns. The crowd of students gathered on the lawns to join the singing and dancing. Within half an hour, riot police appeared from the direction of the Great Hall. Students approached them singing and dancing. The police told the students that the meeting was illegal and they were asked to leave.

After some conferencing with student leaders and Professor Shear, one squad left campus. Students regrouped on the library lawns to discuss what to do next. Many sat down. Within a few minutes, riot police charged them from two directions, trampling a number of students at the Wartenweiler Library. A dog was set on a woman leaving the library and she was arrested. A number of other students were arrested. A nun protested at the arrest of one student and managed to secure his release.

The police regrouped on the lawns while Dali Mpofu addressed the students. Prof. Shear urged students to follow their leaders' instructions and warned that if they continued with their open-air meeting, the police would use whatever means necessary to disperse them. Dali told police that until they left campus and released the arrested students, no action would be taken.

The police then left. Students moved towards the arcade. The SMA was confronted at the entrance to the arcade where they had put up a display. Pamphlets and an SMA banner were burned.

Dali and Chris Ngcobo addressed the students in the arcade, after which everyone marched to the Old Mutual Sports Hall.

The programme for the rally began. One of the released students addressed the crowd, after him, Chris gave a brief history of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. Thandi Gqubule, president of SASS, gave an account of symbols used in the struggle.

Aubrey Mokoena, from Release Mandela Campaign, urged students to continue with the struggle. Claire Wright, SRC President, spoke of the need for whites to involve themselves in democratic organisations, some of which exist on campus.

Nusas President Brendan Barry explained to those present that the raised fist is a symbol of unity and should never be alienating to whites. He also warned that the governments' promises of reform are empty ones that this was proved by the raids into the frontline states.

Other speakers were a member of the Transvaal Indian Congress, Laurie Nathan of the End Conscripted Campaign and Murphy Morobe, a UDF executive member.

Winnie Mandela was unable to speak as she had been requested to go to Polsmoor Prison in Cape Town.

The meeting ended with the singing of the national anthem - "Nkosi Sikele l'Africka". Students left the hall to the song "Free Nelson Mandela" by the Special AK, in high spirits.

Students gathered around the SMA, requesting the six who were present, including Russell Crystal, to leave campus forever. Riot police arrived on the scene, but took no action.

Some of the police were questioned about their attitude. One who had been in the riot squad for about two years said he believed it because of the danger and excitement involved. Another policeman, questioned about the beating of students running away from the commotion, said that some policemen are vicious and enjoy that sort of thing. He denied that it was something he had done or approved of.

Students dispersed after the SMA had been escorted off campus by the riot police.

A picket of about 40-50 students was later held on Jan Smuts and Empire Roads. The response was generally hostile and police arrived with a video camera. There was a confrontation between a policeman and a student who had attempted to prevent the policeman from taking photographs of the demonstrators.

"Voetsak SMA"

Protest days at Wits are inevitably characterised by clashes between Azaso and the SMA. Yesterday SASS pamphlets were burned by anti-SMA students and the SMA scattered their cultivated "innocent" image by burning a poster of Winnie Mandela and by spraying the "Voetsak SMA" poster (affixed to a signpost) with paint. The riot squad then broke into a run and chased the students, no action was taken.

The original reason for the rally yesterday, was to protest against the detention of political prisoners. The combination of the two issues heightened the anger of protesting students. The reaction of these students to police invasion of campus was therefore not surprising. The police, once again, denied the students the right to protest peacefully. In invading campus, the police changed what was a peaceful meeting into a potentially explosive situation.

While we recognise the right of the SMA to take a stand, they were specifically requested to move their display elsewhere, because of the tense atmosphere. By refusing to do so, they made themselves targets of the anger of the protesters.

We uphold the rights of students to protest peacefully. It is important that we are aware of the political climate in which we find ourselves, in order to understand why the events that took place yesterday could recur. White students should not alienate themselves from these events, and should rather try and understand the motivation behind them.
Yesterday's police raid on campus was not the first. Students may ask 'Will this be the last?'
The 31st of May 1981 marked the 20th anniversary of the Apartheid Republic. The government organised celebrations countrywide. In Durban, the Military Tattoo and the Comrades Marathon formed part of the farce.

Republic Day also provided the focus for the mobilisation of over 160 organisations opposed to the Republic Day celebrations.

Wits students supported the anti-Republic Day campaign. On Monday, May 25, 1981, over 3,000 students attended an Anti-Republic Day mass rally in the Great Hall. A lecture boycott was called for. Tuesday saw the second day of the lecture boycott and finally on Wednesday, campus experienced a riot police raid. Students were baton-charged and teargassed. Student leaders like Sammy Adelman (SRC President), Andrew Boraine (Nusas President), Firoz Cachalia (BSS President) were detained and banned.

Last year, on Monday 12th August, a protest against the state of emergency was organised. About 600 students attended the meeting which culminated in a passive organised demonstration at the Joosset Street entrance to the university. On the command of the head on the squad, the police baton-charged and teargassed. Student leaders like Sammy Adelman were arrested two of whom will face charges under the internal security act. The third student will be charged with obstructing the police in their duty.

Shortly afterwards, students reassembled to stage a second demo. They managed to seal off access to the protesters for 15 minutes with motorcades and a human wall before the picket was called to an end.

Meanwhile in Crossroads, this week the scene of burning shacks and violence, UCT students are offering health and welfare services to refugees whose villages have been burned down by vigilantes. The student leader in charge, Sammy Adelman, was fired from the front while the police charged. A water cannon was fired from the front while police with sjamboks attacked from behind.

During the chaos, a student police spy in a balaclava emerged to assist the police. Three people appeared two of whom will face charges under the internal security act. The third student will be charged with obstructing the police in their duty.

The progressive movement has committed itself in principle and practice to democracy and non-racialism. Fighting for these policies involves actively destroying racist and undemocratic practices. It doesn't mean that different groups of people, by virtue of various freedoms, are permitted to be racist or to perpetuate apartheid and minority rule.

The struggle for non-racialism involves actively opposing these policies of the SMA. The SMA have set themselves up as representatives of the government on campus and they must thus be prepared to face the anger felt towards the government by the majority of oppressed people.

A nun stepped in to secure the release of a classmate.

UCT students do it too.

Police surrounded and charged about 800 protesting students in DeWaal Drive, Cape Town yesterday. The students who were protesting against the recent raids of the SANDF into neighbouring states were assembled for no longer than two minutes before police charged. A water cannon was fired from the front while police with sjamboks attacked from behind.

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Yesterday SMA pamphlets were burned by anti-SMA students at the SMA shattered their cultural "innocent, moderate, but victimised" image by involving themselves in the conflict and allegedly burning a Project Comm. banner.

Later in the day, chanting anti-government students surrounded SMA leadership demanding that the government leave campus - forever! The SMA has consistently argued that freedom of speech does not exist at Wits campus. It has however been argued that freedom of speech cannot exist in an unfree society. Yesterday the SMA were once again defeated when riot police 'persuaded them to surrender the position - which at that time was up against the wall - and leave campus'.

The SMA symbolise the apartheid government on campus and therefore their presence is provocative to those who consider themselves oppressed by the government. According to Deputy President Sifiso Elu, the SMA symbolises the starvation and bloody oppression of our people. The purported aim of the SMA is to reproduce 'moderate' supporters on campus and in doing so they are perpetuating apartheid and white minority rule.

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is clear that the Witdoeke are actually being recruited and armed by the police. The mobilisation of the Witdoeke by police function firstly to eliminate organised opposition to the government and secondly as a strategy for facilitating the move to Kyalitsha.

The students caught up in yesterday's events were all members of Student Health and Welfare Committee (Shawco). The group plan to collect blankets and food for the refugees today.