

## STUDENT STRUGGLES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE 1980s

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### Introduction

This paper looks at the 1980s in terms of student resistance in South Africa. It is not a comprehensive survey of all student activities, merely a summary.<sup>1</sup> An outline of student campaigns introduces the topic, and we then concentrate on the two types of universities, 'historically White' (HWU's) and 'historically Black' (HBU's). This may appear to be an artificial classification of the university sector. Nevertheless, for convenience, we shall use the classification (HWU/HBU's) to organise our data of resistance during the 1980s. This resistance was obviously much more concentrated at the HBU's. Historically too, there was a wealth of political and other kinds of resistance at the HBU's to aspects of the tertiary system, the social structure, and specifically to apartheid's Bantustan system. Finally, the distinction between 'historically White universities' and 'historically Black universities' is made in the light of an educational system that was the product of a colonial legacy and apartheid.<sup>2</sup>

I wish to categorize resistance data in terms of four specific aspects:

- Political resistance. This includes resistance within the university but primarily against the state or Bantustan concerned.
- Resistance specifically regarding financial issues including corruption and the abuse of power. This is done for logistical convenience, due to the intensity and pervasiveness of politics in all areas of resistance.
- Academic resistance and access related issues. These include all aspects of resistance by students in the academic sphere, whether against graduation ceremonies or such concerns as access to universities or residences.
- Finally, general social and other types of resistance as an open category. These include the resistance that took place at universities within the student sector, and include such things as (local) ethnic conflict and resistance to ritual killings.

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<sup>1</sup> My main source of reference here is the Race Relations Surveys (RRS), 1982/3 to 1989/90.

<sup>2</sup> The notion of HWU's and HBU's began to be used in discourse prior to the elections, prior to which they were known as black and white universities. All these distinctions have a certain truth about them, but they also distort to a certain extent, if we are to take it for granted that their politico-linguistic definition describes them adequately. Thus even when we say HBU and HWU, historically all universities had mainly White staff, and the Black universities had a majority of Black students (and White universities had a minority of Black students). The terms HWU and HBU, on the other hand, also distorts in that it glides over the vast differences within each of the institutions. Thus libraries, facilities, recreation, academic quality and research output all vary greatly at the HBU's in contrast to the HWU's (they are very much less well endowed). The HWU's have been very Eurocentric in character even in their curriculum. Some prefer to call the Black institutions historically developing institutions and though this has a certain relevance, it has the drawback of assuming that the White ones are developed, which they are to a certain extent. It is the conservative history of the HWU's in the apartheid era that draws the line between HWU's and HBU's. Of course this does not mean that there are no conservative tendencies at the HBU's, only that resistance there was much higher. Similarly HWU's have certain radical trajectories however slight they have been.

While these categories are convenient for our purposes, they are not meant to be rigid, and as we see above, all of them overlap to some extent.

### **Student constituencies and campaigns**

There was a plethora of constituencies in terms of contestations for power and political hegemony making up educational arena prior to the 1994 election. This was especially the case with student politics. The South African Students Congress (SASCO) had links to the dominant partners of the liberation movement and may be considered a partner in the tripartite alliance.<sup>3</sup> It was the most organised student constituency in the tertiary sector, though by no means the only one. SASCO was a threat to the conservative managements as well as the state, and was the most effective student organization at a national level.

There were other constituencies that were resistant to the regime as well as to the managements of universities, especially in the face of the intransigence and authoritarianism that was the dominant mode of functioning at tertiary level. From the Africanist camp, there was the Pan African Students organisation (PASO) aligned to the Pan African Congress (PAC).<sup>4</sup> There was also the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). This organisation had a chequered history. It was formed in the White universities, experienced a Black conscious breakaway in the 1960s, whereafter it became highly involved with struggles in the White universities until the 1980s, when new alliances began to be formed with NUSAS and some of the organisations mentioned above.<sup>5</sup>

Then there were the various Black student organisations across the mainly White campuses. 'Societies' representing Blacks began blossoming at HWUs due to the exclusion or sidelining of the Black majority within the confines of these institutions. Thus there was the Black Students Society (BSS) at Wits and the Black Students Organisation (BSO) at Rhodes. Finally, the central organisation that formed the umbrella body of all the various organisations described above, was the Student Representative Council. (the SRC's). These varied according to the campuses in terms of their outlook, their programs and general ambit of action. Suffice to say that the historically Black SRC's were very active in resistance especially when SASCO dominated the SRC's, but that the English (liberal oriented) universities began to see more resistance in the 1980s in the form of alliances between various inter-university student sectors.

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<sup>3</sup> The tripartite alliance was a strategic alliance of the dominant constituencies of the liberation movement, and consisted of the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade unions (COSATU).

<sup>4</sup> The PAC, the Africanist breakaway from the ANC, was banned together with the ANC in the Rivonia Trial in the early 1960s. There are a number of other student organisations (AZASM, AZASCO, SANSCO, COSAS, AZASO) that were involved in tertiary and pre-tertiary resistance. For the purposes of this paper we only trace the dominant trends in the tertiary sector.

<sup>5</sup> These 'Black organisations' were student constituencies at all black HBU's or consciously organised Black groups at Eurocentric HWU's.

The Student Christian Movement (SCM), with more moral and religious overtones to its organisation and planning did not see a political role for itself.<sup>6</sup> The political Students Organisation (POLSTU) was also formed during 1980s and was political in outlook.

On the right of the spectrum there were mainly conservative, Afrikaner cultural or 'verligte' organisations that continually formed, disbanded and reformed. These included the Afrikaner Studente Bond (ASB)<sup>7</sup>, the Nasionale Studente Front (NSF), the Youth for South Africa (YSA), and the right wing Afrikanse Studente Front (ASF).

Finally, the Inkatha Youth Brigade needs to be mentioned. It was the only (far) right organisation amongst the Black student sector, in accordance with the national political scenario of Inkatha, the Black 'cultural' body 'representing' the Zulus.<sup>8</sup>

The strategies, campaigns and general 'Weltanschauung' of all the student organisations was a product of the politicized environment that was the educational sector during those decades. They were resistant to the conservative managements of universities, as well as to the state and its allies. The main aim of these groups can be summarised by the general statement that theirs was a struggle for a better system of education, a free political dispensation and the general conditions of freedom lacking within the apartheid era.

### Student campaigns

Before looking at some of the main campaigns of the Eighties in the student sector, we need to have an overview of some of the main events of that era. This will serve to introduce the campaigns, especially those of the politically inclined organisations cited earlier.

Firstly, the slow pace of reform did not help alleviate the education crises. Secondly, the country was experiencing a war between the liberation movement and its various allies and the regime. Thirdly, within this war saw the formation of certain alliances that could not have existed in the period prior to the 1980s.

Specifically within universities, there was a major move to re-align two groupings that were set apart by the Black Consciousness breakaway (1968).<sup>9</sup> NUSAS had Black representation at its annual conference (from AZASO and COSAS).<sup>10</sup> There were even

<sup>6</sup> P. Christie, *The right to learn*, (1991).

<sup>7</sup> This organisation meant to keep Afrikaner unity, remained a cultural body, split with a conservative take-over in the mid-1980s, and a new organization of verligtes forming the YSA was formed in 1986.

<sup>8</sup> The inverted commas have a reason. Due to the fact that Inkatha's cultural veneer hid many dealings with the NP government, that its notion of culture was tied in to this relationship to the regime (Zulu self-determination). This did not mean that Zulu culture could unilaterally be reduced to the regimes machinations.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Biko led the breakaway from the liberal oriented NUSAS then due to their acceptance of conditions of apartheid within student arrangements. Thus NUSAS had not done enough to challenge separate racial accommodation at conferences.

<sup>10</sup> Azanian Students Organization and Congress of South African Students.

signs of new alignments amongst Afrikaner organisations. Thus, the Political Students Organisation (POLSTU) was formed in 1980 with Afrikaner notables condemning the 'authoritarian structure of Afrikaner education'.<sup>11</sup>

NUSAS' theme in 1983 was 'Education for Change', and saw its role as being supportive of the black democratic movement. The ASB voted to remain a cultural body and aim for Afrikaner unity in 1983.<sup>12</sup> The National Students Federation was formed as a liberal-right alternative to NUSAS' organisation. Another important development was the attempt to formulate an Education Charter by AZASO, NUSAS and COSAS. In consultation with various civil organs like communities, students and workers, they aimed for the following:

- Establishing an education charter as a streamlined alternative to apartheid education;
- To co-consult and reach out for a democratic alternative;
- To create a document around which students can rally around and strive for democratic and relevant education; as well as other organisational developmental and resistance issues of AZASO (university) and COSAS (schools).<sup>13</sup>

Though sectarian conflicts were on the rise, as in the clashes between AZASM and AZASO, both organizations made anti-capitalist and anti-apartheid statements.<sup>14</sup> AZASM campaigned to make New Zealand's All Black rugby tour a failure and condemned SADF raids on Botswana and in the townships. AZASM also called for a campaign for democratic Student Representative Councils, the establishment of an Education Charter, expressed its intention to build organizational structures, and finally sought to improve women's participation in AZASO.

On the rightwing, the Afrikaner Studente Bond (ASB) and Inkatha Youth held a first (formal) cojoint conference. Another first was the passing of **political** resolutions at this joint conference of cultural organizations. It called for influx control to be dismantled within a year and replaced with positive urbanization that would encourage informal economic and social infrastructure.

NUSAS' theme for the 1985 was 'Student Action for Peace', focussing on the recession, the school crises and student challenges to build a just South Africa. The rightist-liberal Students' Federation (NSF), formed a new international organization ('Liberty and Democracy International'), a conservative/Christian/democratic/liberal coalition of students.

<sup>11</sup> Rev. Tutu and Alan Boesak were ecumenical activists participate (RRS: 510).

<sup>12</sup> This was at a ASB conference on 'Freedom' with De Klerk opening and Treurnicht, the right wing Nationalist (or 'Dr. No'), closing the proceedings. Thus at its 36th annual congress sharp divisions arose in calling for the repeal of the following: the Mixed Marriages Act, the Immorality Act (Section 16), the repeal not allowing Indians to live in the Free State, and finally to ask Afrikaans church authorities to view mixed congregations as a Christian principle. All these were not voted on, with no final resolutions taken on them (RRS, 1984, p. 699).

<sup>13</sup> Christie, *Right to learn*.

<sup>14</sup> This was at the height of the 1980s war, and the ideological differences between the groups but also a growing sign of political intolerance. Thus an AZASM member was beaten and forced to sing UDF songs by AZASO students (RRS: 1986, p. 698).

AZASO (students linked to AZAPO) called for an academic boycott of South Africa, after the ban of meetings in the Western Cape. Its 1986 Congress also called for a total academic boycott of South Africa and it opposed overseas scholarships, boycotted graduations, and continued demands for an education charter. The organization also changed its name to South African National Students Congress (SANSCO).<sup>15</sup> With the banning of the launching of the 'National united Action Against Apartheid' as well as the AZASO convened multi-constituency meeting (October 1986), repression was reaching its height. Meanwhile, reflecting the resistance on the right, an ASB split resulted from a conservative take-over and moderates thereafter gave up on the organization due to its ultra-rightist leanings.

In 1987 during the national banning of many organisations, NUSAS launched a 'Ban Apartheid not Democracy' campaign. NUSAS also launched a campaign against government repression and municipal elections (NUSAS Wits Offices were later burnt). In 1989 AZASO adopted the motto 'Black power for a Socialist Azania', viewing the Black working class as the vanguard of the struggle and launching a campaign against White liberal students who attempted to articulate Black students interests.

The NUSAS executive also had an eight day fast to resist against the increasing national detention of activists. It called upon academics and non-academics to fast one 24 hour per week, until their political hunger strike was over. In the meantime, Jeugkrug (Youth Power) was established, having branches at all Afrikaans universities. It claimed to represent the verligte Afrikaner youth. For Jeugkrug the possibility of socialism was not considered, and an alternative to the official language of Afrikaans was non negotiable.<sup>16</sup>

## **A. Historically White universities**

### **1. Political resistance at HWU's**

Having briefly described the campaigns by NUSAS and the counter offensives by the (continuously splitting) Afrikaner groups, we need to only look at the specific forms of political resistance at the HWU's. Beginning with the English medium universities, in 1983 Wits university threw out the National Party national anthem. Pointedly absent was the adoption of 'Nkosi Sikelele' (the liberation movements version of the national anthem). The BSS was banned in 1984 with Wits criticising this. In 1984 along with the national students school boycott, there was a 1 500 strong sympathy lecture boycott.<sup>17</sup>

Another 300 marched in 1985 to protest against detentions and deaths of a student and

<sup>15</sup> Naming South Africa as 'Azania' (nirvana) for instance, would be the choice of the people rather than a task of some intellectuals.

<sup>16</sup> Jeugkrug had links with the NP and US capital and called for universal suffrage (with group protection), the abolition of discrimination, and a lower and an upper house of parliament (for 'one-man-one-vote' and group rights respectively). The NSF in the meantime shook off its links with the NP and called for a repeal of the Group Areas Act and the lifting of the State of Emergency.

<sup>17</sup> This resulted in violence and about R750 000 damages.

a trade unionist.<sup>18</sup> In 1986 protesting Wits students commemorated the Sharpeville and Langa killings, leading to violence.<sup>19</sup> There were other political protests, the result of increasing numbers of Black students at universities but also perhaps due to the increasing level of student maturity there. The protests included the following: protests against the South African Defence Force and their raids against the neighbouring states;<sup>20</sup> protests against army conscription for White students;<sup>21</sup> and finally an off-campus march commemorating the Sharpeville/Uitenhage events.<sup>22</sup> Two other incidents stood out at Wits in 1987, the Samora Machel commemoration and Winnie Mandela's attempted address there.<sup>23</sup> Helen Suzman was also banned from talking at the university in 1987.<sup>24</sup>

Still at Wits in 1988, 350 students commemorated the Sharpeville killings, with sympathy protest for the Sharpeville six hangings, and thousands also protested when student leaders were detained.<sup>25</sup> The height of resistance and intransigence was captured by the following two incidents: an anthropologist at Wits, David Webster, was gunned down, and the BSS there was effectively banned.<sup>26</sup> The Minister of Law and Order (Vlok), attempted to restrict student activities to student issues. Students resisted this by claiming that they were community members first and students thereafter. A Black Students Interim Committee (BSIC) was formed to outmanoeuvre the statal BSS bannings. Finally, the BSS and BSM unbanned themselves in 1989.<sup>27</sup> Within Wits' hierarchy, the first Black Council member (Kambule) was appointed.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Police use teargas, dogs and even baton charged students.

<sup>19</sup> Students interrogated a person with a fake identity and who was an alleged state spy, but who was taken to safety. The VC condemned the overall violence.

<sup>20</sup> Thirteen students were arrested with police using dogs and sjamboks.

<sup>21</sup> There were also clashes between Students moderate Alliance (a right-liberal organisation), and students of the left, with two marches and 45 arrests.

<sup>22</sup> Hundreds are teargassed, with the BSS intimidating students attending lectures, and administration persuading students to stop the march.

<sup>23</sup> Police baton charged and chased students for the first, with a later inquiry finding that police presence was inappropriate. With regard to Winnie Mandela's talk, students were teargassed, whipped, and arrested and her address was declared illegal.

<sup>24</sup> Machel of Marxist Mozambique was a charismatic leader, suspiciously killed in a plane crash; Winnie Mandela was at the time Nelson Mandela's wife; Suzman was the Progressive Federal Party leader, who contested the NP from within Parliament. The party was a liberal free market-oriented party, and stopped operating when it saw its function as useless within formal opposition, though some argue that it legitimated the system.

<sup>25</sup> The university began legal proceedings, and 52 students took the Minister of Defence to court for Soweto teargassing during Mayday protests.

<sup>26</sup> 'Effectively banned' meaning that they were allowed to exist but not operate as political organs. They were only allowed to possess books without any activity.

<sup>27</sup> This was in accordance with the national resistance campaign for organisations to unban themselves. This was the case with the Mass Democratic Movement, formed after the UDF was banned. It was an alignment of democratic civic and political organisations that had the state and apartheid as its main enemy.

<sup>28</sup> Kambule was a successful educationist in Soweto, running PACE college in Soweto.

During 1984 there was a sympathy student boycott for workers harassed at Natal University, and also a closure of the university.<sup>29</sup> In 1987 there were boycotts against the Whites only elections, and a one day closure.<sup>30</sup> With the banning of SASCO in 1987, the residences were raided and the politics department burnt down.<sup>31</sup>

At another HWU, the University of Cape Town (UCT), there was a three day boycott against the state of emergency in 1984 with police action against the marches. Two thousand students attempted to march to Polsmoor prison where national political prisoners were held, but were turned back. Protests against the firing and deaths of members of South African Railway and Harbour Workers union (SARHWU), resulted in disruptions of lectures in 1987.<sup>32</sup> Police used birdshot, whips and teargas. The year also saw Anti-House of Assembly elections protests with 3 000 demonstrators being dispersed. In 1988 there was a heavy police presence there coinciding with the municipal elections.<sup>33</sup>

At Rhodes, the other English medium HWU, the only notable event in terms of political events were demonstrations for the BSM to be represented on the Senate of the campus, which was later accepted. 1987 also saw the BSM effectively banned as at Wits, being unable to operate within constricted conditions that the apartheid regime laid down.

From the above it is evident that students at HWU's (mainly Black) scored political points about national issues, and that there was certainly a rise in the HWU resistance related actions though this was, of course, restricted to a minority there.

In contrast to this, the Afrikaans medium institutions only slowly moved towards change, if at all. At Pretoria University for instance, although there was a rejection of the (reformist) Constitutional Proposals (1983), there were other ultra-conservative tendencies.<sup>34</sup> Of course there was even a withdrawal of recognition by the SRC of the conservative student organisations in 1986 (such as the ASF).<sup>35</sup> The nub of the conservative character of these Afrikaans medium institutions is brought home when the law changed: the latter allowed for local choice at the university level in relation to university integration (1989), but there was resistance by students to this in terms of the 'Afrikaner character' of the institution.

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<sup>29</sup> The closure was the result of exam grievances but the exams continued.

<sup>30</sup> There were general protests and repression on various campuses across the nation.

<sup>31</sup> This was related to Schlemmer's office. He was a social scientist involved in the Natal 'Indaba talks' (involving Inkatha and opposed by the liberation movement). A university report could not find the full explanation except for arson and general political motivations for the burning.

<sup>32</sup> Police used teargas, whips and birdshot against the protesters.

<sup>33</sup> Mandela's birthday was celebrated peacefully, though a student camera was dispossessed for the police to scrutinise.

<sup>34</sup> Included amongst students rejecting the proposals were those from the National Party (NP), the Conservative Party (CP) as well as the PFP (Progressive federal Party). These represented the formal political spectrum.

<sup>35</sup> Students wavered on the non-recognition of the ASF, with opinion of non-recognition swinging from a 'Yes' to a 'No' and then to a 'Yes.'

At other Afrikaans (medium) institutions, at the heart of Afrikanerdom, the University of the Orange Free State and Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education had the following two notable events.<sup>36</sup> There was a majority student 'No' for the acceptance of Black students there, yet the management accepted them with stringent conditions (1983). In 1989 there was a first anti-apartheid march resulting in violence as well as a march on the day before the 1989 elections.<sup>37</sup> At Potchefstroom, in 1983, there was a referendum for Black access to the institution resulting in a resounding 'No', with two students assaulted for showing an interest in NUSAS (1985). In 1986 there was an acceptance of admission for other race groups (on a 'limited basis'), with a 'Black residential site' found in 1988.

At Stellenbosch University a student was suspended and later reinstated (1985) for criticising P. W. Botha, the state President, in a student newspaper and a peaceful march (with opposition) is conducted against the state of emergency (1985). It was broken up by the police which banned all demonstrations. In 1988 the residences opened to other races, but the SRC banned a meeting to be addressed by a conscientious objector. While the law regarding mixed race accommodation was dropped (making it a local university decision, as we have mentioned), resistance was still evident with the assertions of the 'Afrikaner character' of the institution at Stellenbosch too.<sup>38</sup>

Finally at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), 200 BSO (mainly Black students) marched amidst jeering White students protesting at the administrations racist policies, but also against the 75% ballot voting to keep the residences segregated (1989) .

All these go a long way to show that the Afrikaans institutions portrayed a highly conservative character with very tiny pockets of change envisaged or with little evidence of critical thinking, if at all. The English speaking White universities, on the other hand, remained conservative on the whole but with a rising tide of student resistance.<sup>39</sup>

## **2. Academic and access related resistance at HWU's**

As mentioned earlier, the overlap between these categories of political, academic resistance is obvious. Some of the events above belong in this category but cannot be so neatly shelved. Nevertheless, at HWU's there are various academic and access related events that are worth pointing out in the educational struggle in South Africa.

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<sup>36</sup> The Orange Free State (OFS) was the province where the Afrikaner (rural) heartland was located and where the Indian population was not allowed to stay for more than twenty four hours at any time. Potchefstroom University is known to be the heart of Christianity and the Broederbond, and where F. W. de Klerk emanates from.

<sup>37</sup> This was a small Black group protesting against a White vote that wanted the residences segregated. Students were assaulted, security police photographing while they were being assaulted with no interventions by the police.

<sup>38</sup> A NUSAS/SRC activist is shot four times and the Witwolve claimed responsibility.

<sup>39</sup> Pockets of left thinking also grew at these institutions, but the danger of a new orthodoxies was always there, as in the heydays of Structuralist (neo-)Marxism in the seventies.



Beginning with Wits, there were the Connor Cruise O'Brian talks. O'Brian refused to endorse the position of the liberation movements calling for a total academic boycott, and his talk had to be cancelled at Wits (1986) due to the incidents at UCT. It should be noted that a meeting that did not include ANC views was also banned at Wits (1989). On the other hand, a BSS disruption of a debate on parliamentary politics was viewed in a bad light by the administration. A British Conservative youth leadership group was also not allowed to speak at Wits.<sup>40</sup> Students were met with a fine for causing disruptions.

In relation to access for Black students to the White sector the picture was still bleak in 1989: the low Black student numbers at tertiary institutions in general, the very low number of Black student numbers at the HWUs, the high ethnic numbers at all these institutions, with the bulk of African students being channelled to the Bantustan universities.<sup>41</sup> All these point to the structural successes of Apartheid in the tertiary sector.

At Natal University, in terms of disruption of talks in 1983, there was violence after Buthelezi was given a platform to speak there.<sup>42</sup> There was an academic boycott resulting from the exclusions of failures at Natal (1986), and the disruption of the Connor O'Cruise Brian lectures (1989).

At the University of Cape Town (UCT) a Buthelezi talk was cancelled (1984), and a 1986 Inkatha talk was disrupted by students in 1986.<sup>43</sup> The Connor Cruise O'Brian lectures were disrupted, as was a talk to be given by a Kwazulu educationist. The issue of access focussed on residential access to the hostels. There were thus two week squatting protests in 1984 due to the accommodation crises.

Looking now at the Afrikaner universities, in 1984 Pretoria University's proposal was an interim measure to deal with the issue of African access to the institution. Stringent conditions were attached to African access to the institution. In relation to another form of access, allowing a PFP branch to operate on that campus, the Afrikaans character of the institution was still considered important to be kept.<sup>44</sup> At OFS university the issue of African access was similar to Pretoria university in 1988, with a disruption of a 'Freedom Charter meeting' in the same year. The presence of Beyers Naude, a noted Afrikaner anti-apartheid clerical activist, was an important reason for the disruption at

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<sup>40</sup> This also occurred at Rhodes and Natal, with the latter giving the following reasons. That the UK posters were provocative and offensive and that it was within the university rules to do this.

<sup>41</sup> The figure is 74% from about 49 000, Afrikaans speaking ones were still mainly White (97% from 63 000) (UPE being dual and had 89% White from about 5 000), UDW had 61% Indians (from 7,5 thousand), while UWC had 76% Coloureds (from about 10 000). The six African universities (except Transkei and Unibo) had 98 % Africans (of about 50 000 students).

<sup>42</sup> After students walked out peacefully from his talk and sang outside the lecture hall, Inkatha impis unprovokedly attacked students and assaulted them with 'knobkieries'.

<sup>43</sup> There was also a disruption of Worrall's talk, with court battles ensuing, and the university having their own 'court cases'.

<sup>44</sup> The PFP has been traditionally associated with (English) liberalism as counterposed to Afrikaner nationalism.

this Afrikaans speaking university.<sup>45</sup> The first anti-apartheid march (1989) there resulted in violence.<sup>46</sup>

At the university of Stellenbosch, in 1989, two new hostels were opened due to the accommodation crises there.<sup>47</sup> The SRC and the student affairs section banned a meeting to be addressed by the conscientious objectors (to the army). The SRC also voted for open residences.<sup>48</sup>

Pretoria moved from a 'No' on Black access (1983) to accepting all races (1986) with a Black residential site (1988). And RAU also saw a BSO march against the administration's racist policies to keep residences segregated.

Coterminous with the slow pace of change at Afrikaans universities, and with growing numbers of Black students being admitted by English universities, resistance rose here. When we look at the kinds of resistance at the HBUs, the point will be made not only about the highly politicized nature of these institutions but also about the intensity, diversity and sustained nature of this resistance.

### 3. Social and other issues at HWU's

Two events stand out in the literature, both related to ethnic and race issues. These events were not merely signs of resistance but also of conflict on the social level and both thus fall within the category of social problems for the purposes of this paper. Firstly, the ethnic issue at Wits, in 1982 there were clashes between Jewish and Moslem students, and all meetings were banned.<sup>49</sup> The Jewish synagogue was defamed by the right wing, and a court battle ensued with the Students Moderate Alliance (SMA) losing out.<sup>50</sup>

Secondly, with regard to the race issue, at Rhodes university the distribution of anonymous racist pamphlets made 300 students march for the administration to take action against the perpetrators.<sup>51</sup>

Both of these were signs of racial/ethnic social tensions. Racism is not confined to the Afrikaner population or its leaders. It is deeply etched into the grain of the HWU's. In

<sup>45</sup> The referendum of 1983 had a majority 'No' for accepting African students there.

<sup>46</sup> As mentioned earlier, and this testifies to the cross cutting currents of the categorisations used here, the march consisted of a small number of blacks protesting against the white vote to keep the residences segregated.

<sup>47</sup> This was 'not to be a precedent' according to the university, with the fact of black student access growing there.

<sup>48</sup> NUSAS viewed this as, in principle, okay. But NUSAS went on to point out the contradiction that this did not augur well with the SRC stance on seventeen organisations being banned by the state. The BSO saw the SRC stance as patronising. The SRC nevertheless did meet different organisations to call for negotiations and for a multi-racial dispensation.

<sup>49</sup> Twelve students were suspended until a disciplinary meeting when it was lifted.

<sup>50</sup> The SMA was a right wing organisation (with liberal pretensions) that attempted to contest the left at Wits.

<sup>51</sup> The pamphlets portrayed Blacks as drunkards and rapists amongst other derogatory racist images. The VC there condemned the pamphleteering.

contrast, the literature does not show that the HBU's having any form of race related incidents that stand out.

## **B. Historically Black Universities**

As I have mentioned earlier, the distinction between Black and White universities is arbitrary. The rising resistance in the 1980s at the HWU's shows this to be the case, though this does not show that those universities were themselves changing at a fast enough rate. The Afrikaner ones were at the end of the political spectrum of resistance and change. We will now look at the HBU sector and the kinds of resistance that occurred there, in terms of the categories that we have outlined earlier. Noticeable here, as we shall see, was the rise of political resistance but also protests regarding facilities and financial issues. The policy of fighting racism was part of the core values of HBU's too, with many liberation leaders emanating from this sector.

### **1. Political resistance at HBU's**

To begin with Fort Hare,<sup>52</sup> an anti-graduation protest in 1983 resulted in violence, detentions and lecture boycotts.<sup>53</sup> Management also curtailed staff views,<sup>54</sup> and 2 000 students marched against the state's decision to hang ANC comrades.<sup>55</sup> There was a sympathy boycott with the community when bus fares were increased in the area.<sup>56</sup> In 1984 there was a six week lecture boycott by students. The main reasons for this was the Biko commemoration, dissatisfaction with hostel food and sympathy with the Vaal Triangle strikes.<sup>57</sup>

There were closures in 1985 throughout the exams, with student clashes with the security, and the unresolved and vexed issue of student detentions and police presence at the campus. In 1986 the campus closed again with students in solidarity with workers.<sup>58</sup> There were numerous lecture boycotts.<sup>59</sup> The SRC and its Constitution was

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<sup>52</sup> This is the oldest university in the country and produced notable political and academic figures within the Southern hemisphere. It also boasts a tradition of resistance and non-racialism.

<sup>53</sup> Students protested against renaming the university 'Ciskei university' (after the Bantustan), but also against the honouring the local dictator (Sebe) with an honorary degree.

<sup>54</sup> The Black Staff Association's critical view of management was not taken lightly, with the freedom to release their views being curtailed. Thus a staff member was suspended after criticising management, resulting in a long court battle. Meanwhile University of Cape Town (UCT) and Rhodes University Staff Associations condemned the suspension of the Fort Hare staff member, while sympathy student boycotts, for the 1500 expelled at Fort Hare, occurred at UWC and Rhodes universities.

<sup>55</sup> The year was quite tumultuous at Fort Hare, as are other years, with violence at the graduation ceremony, the anti-ANC march, massive campus damage, and protests against hostel and fee hikes by management.

<sup>56</sup> Biko's death was also commemorated with violence resulting with allegations of police shooting students. Biko was the Black Consciousness leader killed in detention.

<sup>57</sup> This results was a curfew, all meetings being banned until students returned to classes. Students refuse amidst allegation of police harassment and sjambokking.

<sup>58</sup> Workers demand a salary increase and recognition of their representative.

<sup>59</sup> There was the worker-solidarity boycott; the boycott resulting from a security enforced

suspended by the university in 1986. In 1988 there was a six day boycott due to indefinite student detentions.<sup>60</sup>

At Unitra in 1984, within the political arena of contestation, there was a boycott of lectures after four students were detained and five staff were deported and assaulted, with one shot dead.<sup>61</sup> In 1985 the Bantustan state was again confronted with the anti-Bantustan boycotts and the non-allowance of a funeral commemoration (of activists). More protests and boycotts rocked the Bantustan when two students were deported with an early closure of the university, and a dawn raid on the residences with about 50 being arrested.<sup>62</sup>

In 1986 students protested the arrest of two students, the university was closed early (twice in the year) and with a dawn raid of hostels, about 500 were arrested.<sup>63</sup> In 1987 the university was closed and re-opened.<sup>64</sup> Later in the year students were arrested for commemorating a the death of a student (and past SRC member).

In 1988 there were three peaceful boycotts (according to university authorities), but with a sympathy stayaway in line with the national call for Labour Day stayaway, there was violence on the campus with the hostels being closed.

The situation at University of the North is more problematic to summarise in a paragraph or two. There was a massive history of political resistance. The details will be either footnoted, or condensed. It is hoped that this will not make University of the North seem less prominent in the education struggle.

At the University of the North (Uninorth), the Tiro commemoration witnessed violence (1982),<sup>65</sup> with continuous disruptions and boycotts in the year.<sup>66</sup> In 1984 there were

resignation of a senior lecturer (Rev. Stofile now E. Cape Premier); there were protests against a campus curfew; a boycott after staff intended to meet the Education Minister; and finally, a boycott when administration refused a history exam to be rescheduled.

<sup>60</sup> The university alleges intimidation by the boycotters.

<sup>61</sup> The fatal activists shooting occurred mysteriously when 'three women and a man picked him up at home'. With a helplessly conservative management there, Matanzima, the Bantustan dictator, threatened to close the institution. Police baton charged university members, the Staff Association found the VC to be autocratic, with a university commission concurring. When students returned to demand the resignation of the VC, and the re-employment of deported staff, the Bantustan authorities disallowed this. Thus boycotts continued and police raided the hostels with 260 arrests. Though the boycotts continue after the institution opens, all students are allowed to continue studies.

<sup>62</sup> The hostels were 'cleared, the boycotts continued, there was a university closure and a boycott with the women's hostel being closed.

<sup>63</sup> All male students were told to leave the hostel in the first boycott, with the closure and with the continuing boycott, the university closed earlier again with the mid-year break. In the second boycott later in the year, the women's hostel was closed.

<sup>64</sup> According to the RRS there was no information on this (RRS: 1987/8).

<sup>65</sup> Tiro, a previous student there and was killed in exile.

<sup>66</sup> These included the following: An unsuccessful graduation in absentia boycott in sympathy for students arrested, a sympathy boycott for two detainees. After one such closure, the VC asserted that there would be 'no closure, no going home, no police and no ultimatum to return to lectures'.

protests and several closures. Protests included the state of education in the country; Labour Day sympathy protests where police and students clashed; a June 16 killing and a campus closure; and finally, another closure after a hostel student was shot to death.<sup>67</sup>

In 1985 the hostels were raided, resulting in another class boycott. There are protests against the Bantustan Minister attending a symposium. Such political protests colours Uninorth resistance throughout the 1980s. In 1986 there are a spate of boycotts due to a students being shot, or police raids off campus, protests against the death in detention of a UDF Northern Transvaal activist.<sup>68</sup>

In 1987 with the tightening of security on the campus, there was a greater ethos of surveillance there. There were thus three more boycotts in 1987.<sup>69</sup> In 1988 a boycott resulted as the result of a demand for an SRC, and the removal of the army from the campus.<sup>70</sup>

In 1989 there were eruptions again at the university. The main ones were a three day stayaway for the removal of the SADF, an investigation of three students shot by pellets, about seven thousand going home after the hostels were closed with the academic program continuing, a multi-constituency meeting and the decision of management to remove the troops. Yet later in the year, 2 000 students protested against SADF presence at the campus with the SACC attempting to help.<sup>71</sup>

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When an ultimatum was finally given, students returned to classes. Yet because the SRC made a decision 'without a quorum and did not discuss the issue of two detained women', the result was damage to the women's hostels.

<sup>67</sup> There were other incidents too, a lecturer acquitted for racial insults, AZASM/AZAPO clashes, lecture boycotts by law lecturers and a the white staff association (a law lecturer having acid poured over him). With threats of burning the building the university is closed, reopened on Labour Day to meet with renewed resistance. Boycotting continues with the June 16th, Labour Day and hostel shooting as flashpoints.

<sup>68</sup> Buildings were set alight after accusations of an abusive lecturer, with police raids and confiscation of documents, the on-off boycott situation remains with management and students pitted against each other, with the state in the centre. Students were not allowed to gather in the hall and were to remain at classes for the whole day and only return to their hostels at night.

<sup>69</sup> At the Qwa Qwa campus the reason for the lecture boycott is reported as unknown. At the Lebowa campus the security apparatus is seen to be the cause, and finally, at the main campus the banning of national political organisations is seen to be the cause. (RRS: 1987/8)

<sup>70</sup> Students alleged political motives for some students being barred, student discipline got heavier (no legal representation for instance). With hostels being closed and opened at will, security raids on them, the academic program continued. Students lived under trees too. Normalisation and SRC activity was impossible, with increasing harassment, police patrols and detentions. A student jumped from a 2nd floor window while being interrogated in his room (kept two hours at security before being taken for medical treatment).

<sup>71</sup> Students alleged that a security company was hired to monitor students (their use of sports facilities there made it obvious). Students also protest against a CP staff member to resign due to his racial concerns in a regional services body. There was also a full lecture boycott after police raids, assaults and the teargassing of students. The university claimed to be helpless in the face of students demanding detainees releases and the withdrawal of troops, students returned to classes. Lebowa police raided the campus with an anti-election protest going on, while students decided to meet university authorities, with parents and various civic organisations. Police injured students and declare a 7 p.m. curfew. Students agreed to go to classes later, and four detained

Turning to a more recently established HBU, the University of Bophuthatswana, (Unibo - now known as the University of the North West) saw intermittent though intensive political interruptions to the academic program, but nevertheless important interruptions to Bantustan education. These point to a continuity between the national struggle and university politics that is made so easily at the peripheral situated universities. While English HWU's saw a growing trend of this, with the increasing number of NUSAS campaigns.

Following other resistance during the early eighties, Unibo witnessed a massive surge in national awareness in 1985. One thousand students marched against the Mangope-Botha talks on transfer and consolidation of land in Bophuthatswana.<sup>72</sup> Students called for the lifting of the state of emergency, and to be able to speak to the real leaders of South Africa. Mangope, the local dictator, then closed the university.<sup>73</sup> Students also marched when Treurnicht attempted to address a meeting, and were teargassed.

In 1986 ten students and administrative staff were found to be illegal immigrants to the 'independent' Bantustan, 36 students were expelled for political activity and seen as a threat to 'national security', and there was a week long boycott due to expulsions there. Students were told to vacate residences and classes were to continue. Students boycotted classes and returned a week later, with a committee set up to investigate the grievances.<sup>74</sup> In 1987 the resistance peaked again when students took over the campus, and welcomed the coup against Mangope. With three students suspended, massive damage, a huge military presence, the university was constantly being opened and closed in 1987.<sup>75</sup>

At Medunsa, the only Black medical university in South Africa, there were incidents and policy implementation that went towards alleviating the lack of Black medical access to the field. Though this is an access issue, it is highly politicised and we will look at it here. In 1986 there were protests at White students registering there ('reverse access' problems).<sup>76</sup> With no positive signs of the boycott ending the NECC intervened and students returned to campus. The whole problem of integration was handled in a different policy oriented manner at Medunsa, as contrasted to the HWU's. Preferential treatment was given to 'communities with inadequate access to education opportunities'.

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students and three lecturers were later released.

<sup>72</sup> Bophuthatswana was a Bantustan where Mangope was the local dictator. Students took the university to court and though not successful, the university did re-open..

<sup>73</sup> This was after a heeding by students of a national prayer day.

<sup>74</sup> The campus registrar was also accused of spying for the Bantustan, but a commission later found him to be innocent of the charges.

<sup>75</sup> The newly headed SRC spearheaded a boycott and even went to court due to police presence on campus (who were 'preventing intimidation'). Writing exams without accommodation made students continue their boycott. Through the courts hostels were re-opened, and the exams were not postponed.

<sup>76</sup> Students objected to the democratic semblance created by this acceptance of some white students there, though do not want to portray their stance as a racial one. The VC caught in this foiled when he told the said students to deregister, and a court ruling told them to re-register when two students went to court. The boycott thus continued throughout Easter.

At the University of Western Cape (UWC) there was massive resistance against the regime and the university. We only provide an outline here. In 1983, 1 000 marched to call an end for squatter harassment. In 1985 protests due to the state of emergency rocked the campus with violence, resulting in all meetings being banned. Students together with the progressive management marched to the police station later in the year.<sup>77</sup>

Two further notable police-student clashes, with sjamboks and teargas occurred there. Protests also were aimed at the issue of detention without trial.<sup>78</sup> Police also broke up the Mayday rally of 500. Students also protest the execution of two people convicted of killing a Town Councillor.

At the University of Zululand (Unizul) R50 000 damage occurred with the anti-hangings demonstration resulting in a burnt police car. With the Inkatha presence very heavy at the campus, there was continuing violence and confrontation. Five died in a dawn raid on the campus with a One-Man Commission later legitimating the status quo by its non-judgmental stance towards Inkatha, and its advice on more control measures on the students.<sup>79</sup> There was a closure till the end of the year in 1983 after the raid. There was constant closures and re-openings of the campus in 1984 with many students victimised by police or Inkatha. In 1988 the SRC advised students to flee after threats when students planned a commemoration of the five who were killed. On the 5th anniversary mourning, Zulu impis were posted outside the campus.<sup>80</sup>

At the University of Durban Westville (UDW) there were massive resistance in the 1980s, increasing as the decade progressed. There were anti-tricameral protests in the 1980s, with an anti-state of emergency protest in 1985. The administration and students finally agreed on the constitution of a SRC. The Mall Committee investigated, amidst protests of widespread power abuse.<sup>81</sup> There was a 2 500 strong boycott against the state of emergency.<sup>82</sup> The boycott continued with SADF presence and only stopped when the latter were removed. In 1988 there was a sympathy stayaway for the

<sup>77</sup> There was a six month boycott in 1985, with exams postponed to early 1986. The 1985 boycott also called for the resignation of two racist elements (lecturers). Students stormed the assistant registrars office, while the VC asserted that lectures would continue and warned of disciplinary action against intimidating students. All meetings were banned on campus. With the 31 July stoning of vehicles, a closure warning was issued by the VC. In August the university closed a week early, and when the campus reopened, students discussed continuing the academic program, exam reorganisation and the like. On 19 September students, led by the VC and VC elect, attempted to march to Bellville to demand the release of five students and a lecturer, but were confronted by police at the gate and were dispersed. After a five hour meeting students marginally won on a vote to return to classes, but later reversed the decision (over 60% of a bigger quorum) voted not to write exams. The Senate postponed exams for early 1986.

<sup>78</sup> Police made allegations of petrol and acid bombs in the two incidents.

<sup>79</sup> The violence there was explained as the result of a 'pamphlet war' for or against Buthelezi as a speaker for 'Shaka Day' on the campus.

<sup>80</sup> The reason given for this was that the Zulu king was to hold a meeting there and the campus should be empty.

<sup>81</sup> The Rector denied this and said the Indianization of the university continued, in accordance with Apartheid policy.

<sup>82</sup> This began with widespread damage to property and with arrests and a trial.

Sharpeville Six hangings. Harassment, defiance, student detentions and police intervention were rife.<sup>83</sup>

The Hurt Commissions findings on UDW in 1989, were more a legitimisation of the status quo than an objective investigation.<sup>84</sup> In 1989 the university closed down after students broke residence rules and a student was expelled.<sup>85</sup> There were also calls for the resignation of the top management of the university in 1989 (Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor). But the Council voted unanimously for keeping them.<sup>86</sup>

Finally at the University of Venda and Vista, which we can deal with together, there was also growth of massive resistance. Throughout 1984 there was dissatisfaction at the Venda management but also 1984 to 1989 saw resistance against Bantustan politics.<sup>87</sup>

The Minister of Justice resigned after calls for his resignation amidst protests. Students and workers had a two week stayaway, when students called for the scrapping of the Bantustan policy in general and the dissolution of the Venda administration in particular.<sup>88</sup> With lectures and the boycott both continuing amidst the violence, the

<sup>83</sup> A minority Indian faction of students and parents calling for reversion of the campuses' Indian only status. With grave intimidations during the stayaway against some Indians there was a defiance of the boycott. Four staff members defied the order to give evidence on the 'illegal events' on campus in May, and were subpoenaed. Police also interrupted a theatre festival with video equipment to record the performance - with a resultant cancellation of the performance. Detentions, of students, without trials were also rife with December student protests. With the faction fighting between the SRC and AZASM, there was a commission set up to investigate the death of a student. Amidst intimidations students went armed to lectures. A boycott ensued after 180 students were deregistered, with police teargassing students. Following a Combined Staff Association (COMSA) call for a university Assembly, and the registration of students, students voted to return to class. With the SRC boycotting the Hurt Enquiry (1988), little evidence was forthcoming.

<sup>84</sup> For instance, the Hurt Commission found that the SRC and SANSCO were racially divided (not true), and that African students were to have separate entrance requirements from other races. The SRC pointed to this as negligence and saw it as bordering on racism, asserting that the SRC/SANSCO conflict had been ideological and not racial. Other findings were: that formal student meeting resolutions were to be abided by all students (a misapprehension for Hurt); that there was a curtailment of the majority (80% for Hurt) of non-aligned students or that they were forced to align themselves to one or the other; that with the 'submerged' Indian character of UDW, made Indian parents and students want a return to Indian enrolment restrictions; that the tension between Indian 'strict rule governed students' clashed with 'radical Africans bent on enforcing their communal traditions'; that some Africans 'fared badly' academically at the beginning of the year and thus 'reacted with dissatisfaction', and this affected the whole student body; that students did not trust the university authorities nor the police nor invoke any authority when they could not manage alone; that the university also could not liaise with students or enforce disciplinary measures when necessary.

<sup>85</sup> Students were also intimidated into not writing the exams when the boycott was in force, with a resultant closure.

<sup>86</sup> RRS: 1989/1990, p. 880.

<sup>87</sup> In 1984 there was a boycott against the autocratic rector, and the resignation of a lecturer due to ill-consultations. After an investigation the rector was given long leave. There was a solidarity boycott with school students in 1986, after police-student clashes. The university closed for two months.

<sup>88</sup> A march to the government offices led to students being teargassed and whipped, with over 100 injured and one losing an eye.



Venda Bantustan did not recognise democratic SRC's, parent-teacher associations nor the trade unions. In 1989 due to various academic and other political protests, there were disruptions and boycotts.

At Vista satellite campuses there were sympathy boycotts in 1989. The Port Elizabeth branch was effected by the national unrest, and Vista-Mamelodi branch protested against the country's discriminatory laws.<sup>89</sup>

## 2. Access and academic issues at the HBU's

Coming now to the issues of academic issues at the HBU's, we find that these issues stand out more at these universities than at the HWU's.<sup>90</sup> We may include some of the Commissions that were set up at the HBU's to investigate, in so far as they pertain to academic and access issues and due to their wide ambit that makes their findings intersect with our categories of organisation.

In 1983 students boycotted endlessly for different issues, and the staff associations views were curtailed. In 1986 a history exam was boycotted with the demand of the history lecturer.<sup>91</sup> Classes continued during the 1986 boycott in 1986, amidst the chaos of clashes between and within university constituencies and the Bantustan authorities.<sup>92</sup> At the University of Transkei (Unitra) there was a similar issues of death and assaults (1984), general Bantustan conditions throughout the eighties effecting academia and the issue of general access to tertiary education in a hostile environment.<sup>93</sup>

At Uninorth the picture is similar with a longer history during the 1980s.<sup>94</sup> A registration boycott erupted after failures are excluded at the university in 1983, the exams were in

<sup>89</sup> RRS does not give any other details of any other activities at the Vistas in the 1980's.

<sup>90</sup> The development of Academic Development Centres at the HBU's is testimony to the fact that academic issues were seen to be highly important, especially the issue of raising standards. In relation to the issue of access, this has been a constant struggle in different ways at different universities. At the HWU's it has always been a question of African students getting access there to study, at the HBU's access is dealt with in a political manner in that we describe the differing struggles of access as at Medunsa. For instance the gap between school and university in terms of learning approaches and teaching methods creates such a chasm that is not bridged at any level. If we consider issues of access in terms of conditions conducive to learning then these have been inadequate at the HBU's. But then we discuss this in the next section on recreation, facilities and the issue of financial issues of contestation in the 1980s.

<sup>91</sup> A senior lecturer is forced by the security forces to resign and students object to this, as well as other conditions not conducive to an academic environment, such as curfew conditions, the SRC and its constitution being suspended.

<sup>92</sup> Police reports, if believable, of exam hall intimidation in 1989 are the stuff of constant HBU academic interruptions in the 1980s. The main interruptions are the wider general police harassment and detentions.

<sup>93</sup> We have mentioned the closures, boycotts and turmoil that the university went through. In 1989 for instance, 400 students had to vacate the residences after the mid-year exams boycott and police deny shooting at the campus. Generally there has been annual disruptions, either a boycott, a closure of hostel or the university in nearly every year from 1984 to 1989.

<sup>94</sup> RRS (1983 to 1989) portrays the history of the university as ridden with conflict as we have described above. We look at the some academic and access issues here.

chaos during the June 16 protests (1983), there was a timetable congestion boycott in 1984. Amongst the law staff there was a boycott regarding intimidation by students and there was a closure of the university. All these testify to the chaotic situation of the academic program at the University of the North.<sup>95</sup> With the intense resistance described earlier, there was no way that there could be the expected progress at an academic institution. With the tighter and worsening security apparatus on the campus from 1987 onwards (though police had always been a problem there), the university became a war zone. The issue of access to tertiary education was converted to access to township conditions in the midst of the police actions on those campuses.<sup>96</sup>

There was also general chaos at the university amidst the numerous closures, the unending lecture boycotts and the intransigent management and Bantustan authorities.<sup>97</sup> There was a three day boycott after 472 failures were not re-accepted.<sup>98</sup> Black Academia had to be highly monitored as Uninorth shows through its history.

Unibo's history showed a similar history within the context of the strictly authoritarian (and personalised) Mangope regime, while Medunsa is an interesting case to look at. The issue of access comes to a head at this university since it already began defining the point about the non-availability of academic access ('communities with inadequate access to education').<sup>99</sup> Though the intensity of boycotts and resistances was not as much as Uninorth, but were still massive in comparison to HWU's, the effects of the political situation in the Bantustan is conveyed by the 1980s conflicts that mark the institution.

At UWC the political sphere is already directly entering into the academic sphere. The Minister<sup>100</sup> attempts to increase the conditions of entry at the university and the

<sup>95</sup> Further incidents of academic concern are: Students boycotted a 'useless course', students also demanded the dismissal of the staff member who had been acid attacked (mentioned earlier) and for the release of his three attackers by the police. Students also accused the university of barring students for political motives (1988), while the university stated that it has to refuse due to student numbers doubling.

<sup>96</sup> In fact there are two hilltops at Uninorth from which police could monitor any activity even of the township located next to the university. A natural panopticon.

<sup>97</sup> To mention a few incidents (and we may be repeating here) in 1989: heavy SADF presence and the resulting protests (2000), shootings on campus, police raids, curfews... the list can go on. The point about this is that academia could not function within such an environment nor without making these types of incidents and the historical background of HBU's as part of the problem, and to be resisted as radical students did.

<sup>98</sup> I merely cite this without arguing for the merits of the boycott of the failures, as a general condition of impossible learning conditions amidst incapable (conservative) management capabilities, running throughout the HBU's in the 1980s. UWC and UDW fared a bit better when their progressive management took over but the former fared worse with the attacks of the state on its dwindling budget but also UDW in relation to its capacity. The argument is that HBU capacity is weak and needs strengthening.

<sup>99</sup> I have mentioned already that Medunsa began catering for black medical students. The medical fraternity has been a tightly controlled white one, and Medunsa actions (1989) were an institutional resistance to this. Earlier in 1983 Medunsa students had discussions about attending the state theatre or not ('white theatre'), and the university saw this as intimidation.

<sup>100</sup> House of Representatives (Coloured M.P.) within the Tri-cameral system.

university sees this as an interference in university autonomy.<sup>101</sup> The postponed 1985 exams (to 1986 January), due to six months of disruptions, were again disrupted due to police presence outside the exam hall. The impossibility of the conditions of learning at these institutions make it necessary that we cite these events (even if repeatedly, since they effect the academic program and the area of access to tertiary education, but also increase the possibility of students seeing the HWU sector as appealing to study at.)<sup>102</sup>

At Unizul the constant and death-threatening presence of Inkatha was an image that placated the university history in the 1980s. The violence that arose out of this and the unsatisfactory commissions that were conducted then, testify to the fact that these universities were not meant to be universities at all. A 1983 conference disruption, by students, due to Dhlomo (of Inkatha) speaking made the issue of politics vexed to the point of colouring all academic occasions.

The interesting link between tertiary education and ethnic Bantustans is conveyed by the conditions of bursaries that were given at Unizulu. Students were made to pledge not to criticise Buthelezi and the 'self-governing territory'.<sup>103</sup> Bantustans were directly and financially linked to legitimations through the university sector. All the past resistance described dampened these ideals and the Inkatha imposition of pledges made the direct connection of money, Bantustan legitimacy, HBU's and the racial-ethnic set up in the country. Students were meant to legitimise the Bantustans and resistance was met with the long arm of the law, with the result that academic functioning went haywire, but also the issue of access to tertiary education was blockaded with HBU crises'.<sup>104</sup>

At UDW there had been massive resistance as the 1980s progressed, the first sign of the access issue is resolved in terms of African numbers at a traditionally Indian university. Banned students met to call for access for the large number of African students to be accommodated at the hostels there (1984). With the growing political opposition as we have described it, there were proper academic activities only occur

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<sup>101</sup> The result was a two week boycott, with the inadequate response of management on grievance presented.

<sup>102</sup> Staff at these HBU's were also not always critical but conservative and even racist. A boycott at UWC in 1986 was conducted on the basis of a racist lecturer. A commission found no grounds for this but saw the staff member as unsuitable for the post.

<sup>103</sup> This was a Bantustan-in-the-making, there were others like this. The legal status of these territories were not yet 'homelands', but they were less endowed with self-governing at the local level with promises of 'independent status. Buthelezi, it must be conceded, held out on not getting the territory to become a Bantustan. The reason for this is not altogether clear, but may be that he wanted things both ways. As a self governing territory but also as co-operative partner of the regime as later revelation showed. Suffice to say that Buthelezi has a past history with the ANC with Inkatha being the cultural wing in the early years, and perhaps his stance may have had some political criteria (if at all these were not opportunist).

<sup>104</sup> HBU's have popularly had 'one man Commissions', something that nobody has pointed to as a structural fault in form. To ask a simple question: How does one man operate as a Commission, and worse if he is white (i.e. does not emanate from the community whose grievances are to be addressed)? The Hurt Commission legitimated the status quo at UDW for instance, the Mall Commission investigated corruption (RRS: 1988/1989)..

on a stop-start basis with the highly political atmosphere of the HBU's.<sup>105</sup> With the conditions of the numerous states of emergency, the growing repressive conditions of the country, and the conditions that staff and students faced - all these made academic conditions impossible.<sup>106</sup>

To finally mention University of Venda (Univenda) and the Vista universities, the former had similar issues relating to staff, courses and academic conditions in general. The literature ignores this aspect of the conditions of studying at these institutions.<sup>107</sup> Finally, Vista universities witnessed resistance to the intensely bureaucratic centralised management of a satellite operationalized campus complex, but also protests against the changes in academic operation.<sup>108</sup>

### **Social and financial issues at the HBU's.**

I will look in this section at both the social and financial grievances leading to resistance at the HBU's. The reasons for combining these is that they do not have an extensive expression in the literature, but they are both important.<sup>109</sup>

If we look at the HBU situation in the categories mentioned, we find that the issue of recreation is pronounced, not only in terms of general recreation but also in terms of general academic facilities. The point about HBU resistance is that the infra structural conditions of academic learning were not (and are still not) adequate. Thousand five

<sup>105</sup> Despite the fact that UDW and UWC did not get the Bantustan experience, the resistance to apartheid policies were strong as we move into the 1980s. The ethnicization of these universities was a radical spur to define the issues in non-racial terms. Black students who could not get access to the HWU's and had to produce either medical certificates to prove that they could not study at the coast where UDW was situated. Otherwise these students had to show that the course offered at the HWU they wished to be at was not offered at the relevant ethnic or black university.

<sup>106</sup> HBU's have thus become known to have specialities in the humanities, as well as producing the countries leaders. UDW saw 180 deregistered in 1988 with boycotts, staff subpoenaed to testify after defying the order to give evidence of 'illegal activities on campus, intimidations making students go armed to lectures. These all testify to the highly charged political situation at the campuses. Universities merely reflected the political baggage of the country, the history of a repressive government intent on creating the simulation of black universities and attempting to domesticate and localise the youth within those institutions.

<sup>107</sup> With the Venda Bantustan not recognizing SRC's in 1988 (students were legally powerless there), students boycotted due to calls for a staff dismissal, also calling for the abolishment of the course of 'Police Studies', and to end sexual exploitation by lecturers. With the other conditions described above at the university, gaining access to Univenda only meant that the struggle had to be renewed at a tertiary site of the Bantustan, with conservative (if not racist) academics and perhaps even a strong conservative black student backlash by those who either wanted to get ahead with their student lives, get a degree or become academically incompetent if they participate in boycotts.

<sup>108</sup> Students protested against the Port Elizabeth branch making new marking conditions and enforcing correspondence tuition with assessments based on throughout the year evaluation (PE branch). This was seen as a solution to the constantly interrupted studies there. In 1985 the Soweto, PE and Bloemfontein branches all boycott their exams. The reason was that they could not cope with the system of obtaining a 40% semester mark (not being applied at other universities, probably meaning the HWU's).

<sup>109</sup> Nkondo (Venda VC now) does go some way in pointing to these.

hundred were expelled at Fort Hare. There was also a boycott caused by hostel and study fee hikes (1983), and a hostel meal boycott (1984). The general dissatisfaction at the HBU's about social, recreational and financial issues cut through in a way that it did not at the HWUs. Uninorth saw boycotts in 1988 due to a 50% cut in food allowances with the theological school closing down, and a threat of withdrawing facilities.<sup>110</sup>

At Unibo there recreational facilities were lacking.<sup>111</sup> A new library would have been built there, with a DBSA offer, if the management there had not been so intransigent. In terms of social issues, Venda took up a community issue when there were tertiary boycotts after a ritual killing in that area (1988).

Medunsa has a long history of food boycotts due to dissatisfactory meals there.<sup>112</sup> The 'race issue' at Medunsa has been mentioned, with a policy of attempting to cultivate communities with less inroads to education. At UWC the 1 000 march (1983) was also due to the hostel dietary conditions. Financial conditions at the HBU's were not as rosy as at the HWU's.<sup>113</sup>

There were many reasons for Vista's boycotts in 1985, but one of them was the recreational issue. In general the HBU's had 'third world' conditions of finance, academic learning environments and financing. This has been an indelible mark that apartheid has left behind. It has been inscribed into the politics and bureaucratic functioning of those institutions. The politics of transformation would later have to contest with these at the local level of the individual university.

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<sup>110</sup> We have already mentioned that students were left destitute, without accommodation with the academic program to continue. Cooking was not allowed in the hostels. With no legal representation, students were also threatened of limitation or reduction of bursaries and or forfeiting their paid up fees. The use of force in this financial manner gives credence to the argument that I made about legitimising the HBU's in whatever manner, and in a manner that was of utmost importance to the regime via its Bantustan program. The personalised manner that discipline took place is corroborated by the pregnancy in 1982. Students resisted management's attempt to determine the marital status of nine pregnant students, when they had to appear before a committee to prove that they were married. They were kicked out of the hostel.

<sup>111</sup> The library is pathetic, the food on campus has been no better, the residences do not allow cooking, there has been no proper students union. In 1986 the residences were closed for three months (normal at the HBU's), due to timetable dissatisfaction. The politicisation of Bantustan universities were so intense that even ceremonies for new buildings were disrupted due to their strong links to status quo legitimations. We have already mentioned that hostels were closed or raided as the management or the Bantustan authorities felt fit.

<sup>112</sup> In 1987 there was a two day food boycott, for instance, with arrests and canteen damage after students stormed it. The food contracting company was, also as a result, dropped (charges against students were also set aside). But a five week boycott late in the year ensued due to a five month notification period of the contract. Students were threatened with a hostel closure, and then returned. Basic living amenities were tools of the regime to get students to attend and conform.

<sup>113</sup> The exception to this may have been Unibo, where Mangope was generous to the university, but created a spendthrift university bureaucracy when he demanded that all the money be spent in every yearly budget. Yet the network of the Bantustan regime at the university made sure that academics resistant to the regime got the least benefit out of this and the academia there has been in general spoilt by this generosity resulting in the lack of a growing academic culture.

### Summary and conclusion

We come to final part of this paper where I wish to summarise the main points about the resistance at the different universities. It also provides some kind of justification for the distinction between HBU's and HWU's, as we have shown that their emergence out of very different histories - Bantustan and colonial history in the case of HWU's - provide a general background of their political mobilisation traditions, their resistance to the regime, their differing and unequal status's and infra structural conditions as well as their different contexts. This does not mean that each university does not have its own unique history, for the classification is merely one strong historical trend, surely to change as the transition develops and as the universities align their thoughts and actions in the new tide of changes sweeping the country after the national elections in 1994.

We have found that within the student sector, the English speaking liberal HWU's were becoming more visible sites of contestation against the regime, but that this was not a distinctive mark of those universities with managements moving slowly and the universities remaining numerically White. The increasing realignments of the different sectors of the progressive students movements was a positive sign of change. The increasing number of Black students at these campuses in the form of the development of Black student society politics pushed national issues to the forefront. Of course not all Black students were assumed to be radical, and Inkatha and SCM are the evidence of this.

The campaigns of the 1980s saw an important development of the Education Charter, with democratic functioning reaching centre-stage, students demands being unified and organisational activity reaching new heights. There was also inter-organisational strife and confrontation between groups of the left (and splits within Afrikaner groups). There were increasing calls for Socialism and the wider support for the Black working class. Organisations were much more politicised, to the extent that even Inkatha and ASF passed political resolutions (calling for the scrapping of influx control), though it is doubtful if this was due to the influence of free market ideology only. We have outlined some of the main campaigns of the leftist organisations. We have also shown the greater resistance at the HBU's, the greater repression there and the overall rise of bannings and detentions at both (some) English campuses and (most) HBU's. The anti-reform protests testify to the maturity of the student movement, but also its increasing sophistication.

We also saw that Afrikaans universities remained cocooned within conservative ideology whether in terms of numbers, referendums for Black access or in terms of the preservation of the 'Afrikaans character of the institutions'. Though there were very tiny pockets of resistance, these institutions remained conservative and convey the historical background that they emanate from. There was no sight of a national vision as conveyed by students at HBU's or some of the English HWU (Blacks). Nor was there any move to include Black students on a large scale as at the English HWU's. The notion of access at the HWU's in general remains problematic. The constant closures and openings, disruptions so characteristic of the HBU's is less evident at the HWU's and particularly at the Afrikaans institutions. Of course there is variation at the HBU's too, with the rise and dip of resistance at Unibo (for instance) or the sustained and intensive struggles at Uninorth or Fort Hare.

We have also seen that issues of access are multi-levelled. There is the issue of Black access to tertiary education in general. There is the issue of Black access to HWU's. There is the issue of access to residences and especially the HWU residences. Then there is the general issue of access to tertiary educational methodology ('academic development centres' at HBU's, 'training schemes' at HWU's). Finally and what we have not touched upon, is the issue of cross institutional access, between universities and between the tertiary sector in general.

We have related the overwhelming influence of the Bantustans within HBU's in the form of the police or the SADF, but also ideologically with the development of Apartheid. We have done this without trying to reduce all HBU conditions to the same order. There were signs of the financial and academic crises at the HBU's, but there has also been evidence of Bantustans legitimations through student financing too (Unizul and Buthelezi).

Finally, the issue of governance was a thoroughly contested issue in the 1980s especially at the HBU's. Other areas developed in a less swift manner. The issue of democratisation has been contested too, but the settling of a democratic culture in the aftermath of apartheid may take longer. There are other issues that need examining, such as a participatory ethos, the elite nature of universities, and finally the general and financial conditions at the HBU's.