

Stop Beating about the Bush – The UKZN Merger: A Tragic Mishap

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1. Introduction

The perceived “failure to consolidate the Historically Black Universities (treated) as undergraduate colleges” in the first years of the much celebrated political transition in South Africa, led a number of senior educational researchers and subsequently senior state officials to argue that there should be “*no more beating about the bush*”; there was an urgent need for systematic planning of the post-secondary education system (Badsha 1992). The question of what the future role of HBU’s would be remained hanging until the discussions ensued in regard to the transformation of the higher education landscape in 1996.

The current mergers of educational institutions in South Africa are a brainchild of the first democratically elected government of our country. Mergers, rationalization, cost-efficiency, and outsourcing have become the key and fundamental terms defining the “transformation” of the universities in post-apartheid South Africa (Van der Walt 2003:9). It is understood then that the orientation and structures of the institutions in the process of their development, would take new directions and forms, in relative material and intellectual autonomy - though never in isolation - from global forms of education (Crossman 2004). Hence there is no middle road; the choice faced by higher education planners is one that either prioritises and pays homage to an abstract market economy or one that speaks to the needs of flesh and blood people (Vally 2000: 72).

Decades of Bantu education inflicted severe wounds on the hearts

and the minds of the majority of the country's population, and the recent government initiative of transformation of higher education is seen as an attempt of healing these wounds. The reality is that these wounds inflicted are too deep indeed, hence no matter what the government does; the scars will bear testimony to the harsh histories of the past.

A scientifically-based historical analysis of the dynamics of the country's education will inform that it will take the new University of KwaZulu-Natal which came into existence on 1 January 2004 more than a few years to get rid of the worm-eaten roots of the structure whose ideas are inherited from the Verwoerd's thinking. The first few years will be understandably marked by the struggle for survival which will entail taking one step forward while in the meantime taking one step back. Mamdani's (2003) hypothesis that those institutions which survive the first five years are likely to have more than even chance of surviving into a ripe old age is very relevant to today's mergers. Nyerere (cited in Eze 1998) emphasised the relevance of time when he said "*nothing has a perfect beginning; time is required for anything to be perfect*". Mkandawire (1996) analyses the condition of universities by her phrase that universities are "*born in chains*". Her analysis is adopted from the social contract theory of Jean Jacques Rousseau¹. The thoughts that follow are by no means exhaustive but merely highlight certain very central and pertinent issues related to the UKZN merger.

2. The Vision and Mission of UKZN

The vision of UKZN is to be the premier university of African scholarship and its mission is to be a truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past. The analysis of this paper will be in line with whether the vision and mission statement of the new university can be

¹ The French philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau, made the famous statement that man is born free, yet he is always in chains, and that he cannot furnish the answer for this dilemma. The answer is his social contract theory and this is very relevant to today's livelihoods.

attainable given the diverse nature of the socio-political, economic and cultural dynamics inherited and still rooted in our education system. Subotzky and Cele (2004:342) argue that, addressing the basic needs of South Africa's majority poor as well as enhancing the nation's emerging engagement in the new global economy should be reflected in our knowledge production. What is ironic is that for the higher education sector in particular, the precise policies that are being promoted and implemented impact on its ability to fulfil the increasing demands that are made on it in the present era. The expectation for instance that graduating medical doctors, IT specialists financial practitioners and others would stay in their home countries and work to raise living standards or increase national competitiveness is constantly being undermined by the opportunities to migrate elsewhere thus earning higher salaries and enjoy a "better quality of life" in the global knowledge economy (Manuh 2002: 43).

3. Reforms at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Throughout the world, there is a conscious re-thinking of the structure of the entire higher education system and, as it concerns the university, debates are taking place on two interrelated fronts simultaneously: what the future holds for the university and what the future might look like (Olokoshu & Zeleza 2004). In the absence of a clear framework for higher education, many governments have been drawn into destructive interference in the internal affairs of tertiary institutions. This according to an intellectual of the broader left spectrum must be seen as a sign of weakness of state institutions in these countries, rather than simply the actions of an all-powerful state (Nzimande 2004)². In understanding the nature of the problem, the historical source of conflict cannot be overlooked.

At the heart of the problem is a fundamental conflict over the nature and social responsibility of universities in the post-apartheid era as Mantzaris (1993) and Van der Walt (2000) have argued. Balintulo (2004) argues that given the educational context characterized by vested interests,

² Dr Blade Nzimande as part of the leadership of the South African communists strongly feels that state intervention in education should be minimal.

multiple stakeholder contestations and conflicting and competing agendas within and between institutions, the tensions between these variables are inevitable (2004)³. Furthermore such tension is fuelled by the role played by the council in managing the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Dr Blade Nzimande was certainly correct at the time when he said eight years ago that:

When I talk of transformation, I do not mean that we simply have to change the faces that serve on councils. We have to change the roles the councils play. Many University councils merely endorse the administrative decisions of management. In fact, they should be seen as crucial instruments in implementing, evaluating and monitoring the transformation of our institutions. It is not enough for the University to adopt a progressive mission statement. University councils need to examine the extent to which these missions are translated into a programme of action for the University. The councils should be taking up policy matters relating to access, redress and curriculum transformation.

It will be interesting to follow closely the role of the new university's council in respect of these fundamental aspects of governance, especially as one of the selected few in it is Dr. Nzimande's former activist wife as well as a number of struggle participants, professionals, Black Economic Empowerment achievers, and ex-politicians.

4. Power Relations in the New Institution

Ideally, institutional transformation should be driven by the university in a process that includes all stakeholders (Nzimande 1996). However, the fortunes of the university and other higher education institutions have been

³ Dr Marcus Balintulo's contribution is more valuable in the higher education debate, since he was once an acting Vice Chancellor at the former University of Durban-Westville and now the Vice Chancellor of Peninsula Technikon. Thus his arguments are not based on theory but on daily experiences and engagement with the merger process.

tied to those of the state, which also determines the kind and levels of funding available, and the level of institutional autonomy and academic freedom (Manuh 2002:43)⁴, forgetting that the honeymoon between the intellectuals and the political class has never lasted (Zezeza 2003). Thus the positive statements made by the most senior manager of the University, its present Vice Chancellor, in the press before the 2004 elections are instrumental in our understanding of institutional intellectuals and the state. Thus the newly elected rector cited President Thabo Mbeki as his chief source of inspiration and a role model who inspires him in his approach to all issues of importance (Metro 2004). This he said a few months before his uncontested election as the Vice Chancellor of the University. It is rumoured that there were several applicants for the position, but their names and qualifications were only known to Council members. Professor Makgoba was only name in the shortlist of suitable candidates. The honeymoon started long before the Principal's election, the question is whether and how long these bonds that shape and bind will last.

Sitas's (2002), analysis of this scenario is that when the bonds that shape and bind individuals and the state are broken, you need to start digitalizing victims. Manuh's (2002) hypothesis quoted earlier is supported by Olukoshi and Zezeza's (2004) argument that reform issues tend generally to be understood only in terms of proposals for change sponsored by governments and donors. While this dimension of the quest for reform is critical, it is important to assess the reforms which are being autonomously generated within the university system itself and the ways in which these interface with reform proposals driven by interests external to university.

4.1. Management

It has been said by one of the most penetrating minds in the history of revolutionary progressive thought that in any transformation process, *"the proof of success lies in a whole (management) social structure being changed from the bottom up"* (Fanon 1963, e.a.). In transforming the newly University of KwaZulu-Natal, putting Africans and Blacks generally first on

⁴ The role of the funding institutions such as the NRF needs to be thoroughly scrutinized.

the agenda should be the main priority. This is precisely the whole argument advocated by the newly elected Vice Principal himself in one of his many provocative popular press articles (Sunday Times 2004). This is in line with Crossman's (2004) hypothesis that by Africanisation the intention should be the nationalization of the agenda, that includes amongst others the replacement of foreign staff and the indigenisation of all university structures. This in itself is a complicated process and can take place through an evolutionary and gradual movement forward. The same *tabula rasa* approach should have been adopted at the UKZN.

For example, the recent Executive management appointments created serious controversy within the university community with regard to the future of the merged institution. With the exception of one executive posts, all other posts had only one candidate shortlisted, interviewed and appointed for the job. The university community and the population of the province and the country were left in the dark as to names and qualifications of the candidates, their credentials, background and relations with the future. Despite serious reservations and counterproposals in the Senate, the highest academic decision making body at the university, all advertisements were internal with the exception of the Vice Chancellor's one. The question asked in the Senate was simple: "How can one build a new University with a vision of excellence if it does not appoint the best available in the South African market in terms of equity, representativity, talent, capability, research excellence, international recognition and administrative capacity? Why advertise the position of the Vice Chancellor externally and all Deputy Vice Chancellors ("College Heads") internally?" In the end, as predicted, the new university ended up recycling its current leadership with a few new faces. The vast majority of posts were recycled with a few new faces, almost all of them from what was known as the University of Natal (Howard College Campus) Jansen (2003) has argued, that had such a thing occurred under the draconian 'emergency' legislation of the apartheid regime, it would have provoked public outrage and widespread debate. Yet it passed without sustained protest and outrage from the public and public intellectuals. Although a number of serious questions have been asked on these issues at public meetings, the Senate and the Joint Bargaining Forum, where management and the unions negotiate day to day and other issues, such fundamental considerations have been well hidden under metal,

impenetrable carpets. The provincial and national press has been silent, especially after the closure of *THIS DAY*. Questions raised in the press by concerned parents and students at the university have been bypassed and unanswered. (See *Witness* 09/12/04, Where the idea comes from? What if Maritzburg Varsity was to go it alone?). There seems to be a triumphant silence, celebrating the birth of a new baby. Strategically, however it will be wise to think that changing the jockey and not the horse, does not guarantee that the jockey will win the race, maybe nothing was wrong with jockey but the problem was with the horse.

4.2. Institutional Forum

The Standard Institutional statute published by then Education Minister Kader Asmal in accordance with section 33 (3) of the Higher Education Act, 1997 Act No. 101 of 1997 , makes provisions for the establishment of the institutional forum. The primary function of this body is to play an advisory role to the council on institutional matters. From several years ago the institutional forum at the two universities (especially the University of Durban Westville) was a contested terrain of ideas and actions. In the new university the composition of the forum alone, indicates clearly that the body is not in a position to properly advise the council because the majority of its members are either involved directly or indirectly in university politics. Lack of autonomy from the institution renders such a structure a toothless dog, hence, its mediation and dispute resolution role is compromised. The current Chair of the Forum, the Vice Chair and the Secretary are all employees of the institution, with the Chair being a senior manager. Will a manager be accountable to the constituencies comprising the Institutional Forum or to management of which he is a strategic link because of his organic position? There is evidence of lack of accountability and transparency in the Forum as to what issues are being engaged at a forum level.

4.3. Unions

Waterman (1995) argues that trade unions are in crisis not only in South Africa but internationally. This crisis goes beyond policy, ideology, particular world area, it is to be found at the very nature and form of

unionism. The distributional logic has been altered and the barriers, boundaries and fences have been shifted; institutions too, have been transfigured, creating a new milieu for movement and settlement. A materialism sensitive to that will instantly be able to pre-suppose that subsistence, survival and settlement are closely related (Sitas 2002). The role of Combined Staff Association, National Education Health and Allied Workers Union, National Tertiary Education Staff Union and University of Natal Staff Union in advancing and protecting the workers interest is now either reduced or sandwiched because of subordination to management or co-option; hence they are not in a position to make an independent assessment of the merger. The current position that the 4 Unions find themselves in can be best described by quoting from Fanon (1963) who once said,

In every political or trade-union organization there is a traditional gap between the rank-and-file who demand the immediate bettering of their lot, and the leaders, who, since they are aware of the difficulties which may be made by the employers, seek to limit and restrain the workers' demands.

Hence Waterman's argument should be seen as an open invitation to thinking unionists as well as to shop stewards to rethink and re-strategise the future of unionism at the university. For example, when it was announced by the then interim Vice Chancellor of the former University of Durban-Westville, Dr. Saths Cooper, and the current Vice Chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, that "THERE WILL BE NO DUPLICATION OF STAFF IN THE NEW UNIVERSITY", this signals future job losses⁵.

It is important to note that a society which represses the individual spirit by denying employment will rapidly degenerate into stagnant mediocrity (Ohaeto 1997). There are still a number of major problems facing the unions in the merged institution, including harmonization of salaries and

⁵ See the University of KwaZulu-Natal policy on interim deployment of university academic and support staff. The four page document is actually a redeployment policy for the purposes contemplated in Section 189 and 189A of the Labour Relations Act 1995.

benefits, job grading, representation on council, unresolved grievances from the past and contract staff. These have been entrusted in the hands of a nationally-based human resources consultancy (21st Century), which will attempt to solve such chronic problems. Only time will tell.

4.4. Student Challenges

Students at institutions of higher learning are facing serious threats with the recently unveil plan by the government to curb what they referred to as 'unsustainable' growth in student numbers (Stephen 2004). Ahmed Essop, the chief director of higher education planning in his parliamentary statement lashed out at institutions who are enrolling students in areas such as humanities rather than science or business because the government does not consider them as a priority. Such a statement should have sparked debate among student leadership, but the silence is deafening. The possibility of robust debate on this issue was nullified by the fact that the days of student activism have died a slow and painful death at a very critical juncture of the country's intellectual and academic history.

Students are now left at the mercy of Senate senior bureaucrats and academics and university staffing committees whose job is to rubberstamp without interrogating the future implications of such policies. With the increased new point system at UKZN, students from disadvantaged background are facing a serious challenge of being turned back. The following case study serves as an example: *A potential new student from Vukuzakhe High School at Umlazi Township with 35 points wishing to do a degree in Commerce majoring in accounting was told that he cannot be accepted because he did not have 36 points. Instead he was advised to do a one year bridging course. This despite the fact that he has passed Mathematics with a B and Accounting with a C in higher grade*⁶. The access principle has been severely compromised at UKZN by educational gates with a huge sign that says Private Property, No. 13, Keep Out. Access has been impeded. Thus entrance requirements have been unilaterally increased e.g. BA entrance has increased from 24 to 32 points. This automatically disadvantages Black students and African students in particular.

⁶ A township student with such a high percentage deserves access if transformation is on the UKZN agenda.

5. Challenges Facing UKZN

The corporatisation of management (the adoption of business models of organization and administration of universities), especially when strategic decision making positions are still occupied by white conservative bureaucrats, makes one wonder whether the much talked about transformation will ever take place. This despite the much talked about "massification" propagated by the then Minister of Education Kader Asmal when the mergers were forced upon HBUs. UKZN can no longer persist on providing superannuation to a whole cadre of White retirees. This is not transformation but retrogression. Having an African Vice-Chancellor and few Africans in management positions does not mean that transformation has taken place. Fanon (1963) argues that in some instance you will be surprised to find out that the very same Blacks are whiter than the Whites⁷. Given that the merger is an extremely complex undertaking it would be unwise for one to accept uncritically the glowing reports of huge success of this merger portrayed in the 100 days report and the Saunders report (Report of Higher Education Merger Study Group on the Progress OF University of Natal and University of Durban-Westville to form University of KwaZulu-Natal). The truth has not been told, easy victories have been claimed.

5.1. Excessive Influence by the Donors

One would be naïve to take for granted and unquestioned the impact of globalization on higher education in South Africa which is directly linked to the construction of knowledge economies. Manuh (2002) argues that to a large extent, reform efforts are mostly donor-driven and do not necessarily reflect strong commitments by national governments to rebuild their higher education systems. For decades, the West through its principle agent, the World Bank have been attempting in vain to infiltrate them. Mamdani (2004:4) argues that the World Bank has failed in its attempt to close African universities by starving them of funds; the Bank is now getting ready to choke them with conditionalities that will go with the provision of much

⁷ When Blacks speak English with a Victorian accent, one wonders whether the future of our younger generation in Universities lies in the right direction.

needed funds. This is presumably one of the reasons why the new Vice Chancellor, travelled extensively last year.

Olukoshu and Zeleza (2004) argue that foreign donors have a significant role in African Higher Education which includes setting the broad policy frameworks. These donors include governments, multilateral institutions, philanthropic foundations and international scholarly associations. They further noted that the questionable role of the donors although significant is also worthy of sustained investigation. Intellectually African scholars are feeling the brunt of the brain "drain" imposed upon them institutions abroad⁸.

Another strategy being used by the West is to offer African Scholars funding to study at universities such as Harvard and Boston with a belief that they will path way with their native background. While a local economic system can be effectively stifled by global conditions, the human mind can never be reduced to global determinants (any more than to local ones) despite the fact that these may impinge on its expression (Crossman 2004).

5.2. One Hurdle too Many to Cross in Academia

The contexts and content of the challenges to academic freedom of course differ between countries, but they all centre around the challenges of institutional autonomy, ideological controls, internal governance, and intellectual authority (Zeleza 2003). In the quest for African Scholarship, it should be noted that Africans want to prove the richness of their thought and the equal value of their thought to the world at all costs. But in doing so, one cannot simply shy away from the established fact that African institutions heavily depend on institutions of the developed world for knowledge production consumption, creation and dissemination. While a degree of institutional autonomy is important for the health of the higher education system this must be balanced with the need to create a co-ordinated higher education system that is responsive to the national needs to reconstruction and development (Nzimande 1996). This means that the primary emphasis

⁸ This is part of the entire rush to the bottom process, where there is competition among the hegemonic states for brain drainage in the once so-called slave nations of Africa.

must be on the poor and the working class as well the populations of the rural areas which are still undeveloped or underdeveloped. If the University of KwaZulu-Natal wants to be success story it should divorce itself from the thinking that African countries are the home of small and fledging scientific communities that are often ineffective in the creation and communication of knowledge (Teferra 2004). African intellectuals and academics need to assert and re-assert themselves in the globalised environment. They have no choice.

It is disturbing times for South Africa as the vocation of the intellectual has fallen on hard times. Persons are under attack and reputations are muddled. Courageous voices have been severely attacked for daring to pose uncomfortable questions about the merger⁹. This is further fuelled by the fact that any criticism of the merger by academics has been seen as anti-nationalist and anti-developmental, and has led to fallout between academics and the state. With UKZN adopting an assorted Western style college system, one questions the very purpose of our educational prerogatives. Crossman (2004) poses a penetrating and probing question by suggesting that, in contextualizing and interrogating the African scholarship debate, one cannot deny that they are very real historical and racial issues linked to the circumstances of the debate and to the conditions for our understanding and clarifying the concepts. One needs to add the class dimension here as hundreds of deserving students have been already excluded because they are poor. (*Isolezwe* February 9 2005) Members of the academic community are not homogenous, and are divided along gender, class, ideological, regional, ethnic, and racial lines. Among these different groups, the freedom to study, teach, conduct research and the like is as much a struggle taking place within the academy as a struggle against outside forces (Manuh 2002:45).

As the country enjoys our 10th year of our democracy and one looks beyond the UKZN 1st merger anniversary, the main task is a sober reflection

⁹ Dr Ashwin Desai is a prominent Sociologist banned from Westville Campus from 1997 to date because he is regarded by our very own democratic government as uncontrollable. Prof. Sipho Seepe refers to our democracy as 'democracy' because our universities are worse than apartheid ones.

on how to rise to the challenges of the future, including how to do so in a manner that will give credit and foundation to the vision of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. In doing so, one needs to acknowledge that African Universities are a product of African Nationalism, hence scholarly research of the University of KwaZulu-Natal should be driven by Africa's needs, defined within the African borders. Neither universities nor countries have much control over the products that they have invested in, and do not directly enjoy the benefits of that training, which the global world, with its need for 'global workers' absorbs, further reducing the growth of national human capital and national knowledge, and consequently, the ability to compete in the so-called global market-place (Manuh 2002:43).

The question of transforming the curriculum is of course at the heart of academic freedom; curriculum transformation should not be resisted in the name of academic freedom and there is a need to further develop our vision of teaching in the South African context (Nzimande 1996). Mahmood Mamdani (1993:15) argues that the problem faced by African Universities as identified is:

We have nurtured researchers and educators who had little capacity to work in surrounding communities but who could move to any institution in any industrialized country, and serve any privileged community around the globe with comparative ease. We ended up creating an intelligentsia with little stamina

The few current crops of African Scholars WITH STAMINA are faced with a difficult and challenging task of identifying, grooming, mentoring and retention of the next potential generation of African scholars.

With the decline of the nation-state and the rise of the composite state in the context of globalization, the organization culture of the new institution should lay the foundation for the next generation of African Scholarship. Olukoju (2004) highlights the fact that in merged South African universities, academics are distracted from their primary assignments of teaching, research and supervision of students' research, and are made dissipate energy confronting official neglect and wrong-headed policies. They are either:

- Pre-occupied with other things, especially university administration and external politics
- Involved in struggle to make ends meet (2004).

Examples of pre-occupation with university administration are evident at UKZN as well respected academics have assumed the roles of administrators, leaving young generation of successors to perish. A house can never be built without a foundation and the younger generation cannot fit in the shoes of the older generation because they are oversized. To make ends meet, a number of academics have emigrated to the HSRC where they operate as government technocrats. Others spent their time bemoaning the state of affairs in the merged institutions in the corridors without tackling the real issues head on, publicly and with honesty.

Rising political ecologies of intolerance and intervention by states and cultural actors into university affairs, coupled with the curtailing of their fiscal responsibilities for higher education, threaten academic freedom, as Zeleza (2003) has warned tacitly. The ability to carry out institutional transformation depends on the existence of some measure of academic freedom, which will in turn be reinforced and guaranteed by the extent to which universities are able to forge links with wider communities and identify with their needs and aspirations (Manuh 2002). Crossing the bridges of academia designed by conservative scholars of all religions, colours and creeds is a mammoth task for progressive and thinking African scholars, especially those young and up and coming. Currently the South African research editorial boards of accredited journals are still dominated by the old generation of white scholars. The very same problems are facing the West African state of Nigeria, whereby editors and their friends published themselves and attained Professorships and latter lost interest in the journal (Olokaju 2004).

It is of significant importance that research work engaged by scholars needs to identify itself with the African problem in all its dimensions and angles. A good example at UKZN can be found at the Centre for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), where intensive investigation and practical engagement with the AIDS epidemic is underway. However, it needs to be emphasised that such research also ought to seek African solutions to the problem concerned. Most scholars' research

within African communities but such work is not translated to indigenous languages for people to access it. It ends up in the high ivory tower libraries without being read for years, if ever. Zeleza (2003) argues that the hegemony of European languages in African institutions of higher learning and in African intellectual discourse poses a major constraint to the expressive freedom of students and even faculty. Unless we tackle this issue at UKZN, countless generations of Africans will remain mediocre, and in the end failures.

6. Scholars' Views on the UKZN Merger

There have been voices that describe the UKZN merger as a government strategy of rewarding formally historically advantaged (White) university with a takeover of the historically disadvantaged institution-University of Durban-Westville, in the form of a hostile takeover (Mantzaris 2004). In fact this takeover was described vividly before it occurred by the Combined Staff Association (REFERENCE/LETTER TO ASMAL). Renowned sociologist and analyst A. Desai (2004) sees the recent initiative by government of merging institutions as a strategy of McDonaldisation of higher education in the name of transformation .

Universities might end up functioning as a franchise and the breeding ground on neo-liberal agents. The adoption of such route will not allow much room for the legitimisation of African views. How possible will it be to create a Premier University of African Scholarship when the African voice is marginalised and academic performance is measured in terms defined by Western standards of scholarship and research (such as frequency of publication internationally refereed journals)? Under such circumstances the average African scholar is already severely handicapped, no matter what the subject matter may be (Crossman 2004).

Pitika Ntuli's analysis (cited in Makgoba 1999) that we are chasing the gods that are not our own, enlightens the debate. As learning becomes increasingly valued for its instrumentality, more emphasis is put on the technical and professional fields at the expense of humanities and the basic sciences, on applied research over basic research (Zeleza 2003). Singh (2001) argues that reforms in higher education embody narrow economic

cost-efficiency principles and do not sufficiently integrate the broader social purposes of public education.

7. Conclusion

Fanon (1963), once said,

The unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps.

The same tragic mishaps happened with the merger at the UKZN as people were not thoroughly prepared for the challenges ahead, academics never raised a voice of dissatisfaction over issues of governance, and those who took the front seat in the process did it for positioning themselves for positions of power. This renders the so called transformation of higher education process a tragedy of historical significance and future repercussions. One of the authors of the article speaking as a unionist stated openly that, "The merger is doomed because all university committees are dominated by white former UN employees" (*Mail and Guardian* 9/7/2004). Majoritarianism in decision making bodies such as the Senate, the Faculty Boards, and the Staffing Committees is the order of the day and they rubberstamp decisions that will bear lasting consequences at all layers and levels of the new university. A merger is never an event. Although some people have treated it as one it is a process of pain, struggle and tenacity. Those who are decisive will triumph; those who are silent will ultimately face the consequences of their decision.

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