

Not Yet Uhuru!

Power Struggles in a neo-liberal University

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Critical consciousness, they say, is anarchic; others add that critical consciousness may lead to disorder. But some confess: Why deny it? I was afraid of freedom. I am no longer afraid! (Paulo Freire 1972).



Workers resorting to the toyi-toyi in defense of their rights at UKZN (picture by Helen Poonen)

Introduction

Not long ago Bourdieu (1988) clearly articulated that the crisis point in academia arises when expectations of stakeholders are disrupted and ordinarily balanced tensions are thrown out of equilibrium. Mantzaris and Cebekhulu argue that in the post merger period social and economic contestation has become an integral part of university life. It is common knowledge that Universities are sites of knowledge, research outreach and contestation. They are sites of transformation, hope and disillusionment. It is extremely difficult to create a clear cut understanding of the exact nature and mission of universities in South Africa and worldwide without taking into account the nature of the social and economic context within which they operate and the social and economic contradictions emanating from the past present and future class and racial inequalities that persist within most societies (Mantzaris & Cebekhulu 2005).

In this historic period of 'mergers', the working class continues to make history, but not in circumstances of their own choice as Marx aptly put it several centuries ago¹. For example the perpetual 'withdrawal' of workers benefits by management and the skewed allocation of resources have created tension and conflict among stakeholders. Poised on the dividing line between past and future is the workers, a social and class polarisation. One would not understand modern societies if one does not understand the way 'education' is inextricably tied to the most general matters of social structure (Bourdieu 1988). This is captured in the UKZN vision and mission statement of striving to be a premier University of African Scholarship. Contrary to this inclusive noble vision, what has emerged from this 2 year old institution is an absolutely authoritarian and bureaucratic Management backed by Council with no respect for the laws of the country and the well being of all other stakeholders. This perception is also shared by a White Female Deputy Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences Leanna Uys who has advanced the thesis that conflict at UKZN is associated with a strong tradition of authoritarianism by Management which leads to unwarranted submissiveness by other stakeholders (Uys 2005). This is the expressed position of one of the top university managers.

¹ See Karl Marx on Wages, Price and Profit (1865).

This paper is hopefully a humble intellectual contribution on how the failures of social policy and the lack of meaningful social dialogue have created unwarranted conflict in the new University. It was through *participatory research and observation* of the changing trends in governance that the authors concluded that the failures of social policy at UKZN can be attributed to the lack of transparency, accountability and arrogance of the University Management. This line of argument/hypothesis is also empirically supported by Nhlapho (2005), a Student Representative Council President in the past and a serious intellectual of the future, who has advanced the position that institutional failures at UKZN cannot be understood without reference to the leadership style of management which is characterized by selfishness, corruption and greediness (*bazingela bephethe usawoti*). It is public knowledge that the salary packages of the University Executives Managers far exceed that of State President Thabo Mbeki. Brown (2006) correctly pointed out that increase in participation has done little to balance the rate of participation by socio-economic group. As is the case at UKZN where workers remained polarized in the processes of decision making which affects their future. Our contribution does not attempt to provide the multiple causation symptoms that have led to the present conjuncture, because they are more or less known i.e. Globalisation of Higher Education, but it attempts to suggest remedial strategies. In understanding the 'causal' nexus of conflict at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, it needs to be said that conflict is located at the centre of the discourse of governance.

The Broken Promise

Kader Asmal himself stated clearly in 2002 that the merger would be based on access, equity, regional collaboration, and rationalization of programmes (Star 12/2/2002). A great deal of optimism emerged when the merger processes at play were publicly declared as the pillars of transformation and massification, according to the existing legislation and the relentless pronouncement of the then Minister of Education. Even the learned started repeating what they heard without digestion. Neo-liberalism, however, a very elusive, yet unmistakably precarious reality, unfolded at a fast pace. 'Left with no alternative', and given the disastrous financial position of the

then University of Natal, the merged institution ultimately became the pillar of rationalization, cost efficiency, managerialism, and outsourcing. Even its very existence shifted from being a 'knowledge society' orientated University to a 'knowledge economy' oriented University. As for Jansen (2002), educational reforms in South Africa since the end of legal apartheid have been lodged clearly and consistently within powerful economic rationales as the overriding motivation for 'transforming' apartheid education. The above analysis reinforces the market approach of profits before people. Van der Walt, Bolsman, Johnson and Martin (2002) argue that not every University can make the transition to a 'market university'; outcomes will depend on the existing resource base of a particular institution, their public image, management competence, political resistance and so forth.

Empirical evidence points to the undisputed fact that the mergers were tried and tested in Germany (First World country), but they were not successful². As aptly said by Saleem Badat (2000), 'We don't have the luxury to settle these issues as the north did in their drive to modernity'. On the downside, the current existing conflict over the issues of governance at UKZN confirms Chinua Achebe's dictum that Africans have a tendency to repeat the history of trial and error (see Achebe 1990).

The West having failed to merge its own institutions opted to sponsor the merger of South African Universities with conditions. One of them was the adoption of a 'College Model' system much used in the West but relatively unknown in the South. As the pressure on the University to 'live within its means' and 'cut its coat accordingly to its cloth' increased, so did the demand for techniques which could facilitate more control over the fiscal crisis of the modern state. Hence the most potent document produced by the highest educational authority of all, the Department of Education (the 'Merger Guidelines') has been thrown into the dustbin of history and replaced by the neo-liberal accounting approach termed 'brake-even'. Desai (2004) in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Nelson-Mbeki regards such exercise as the 'McDonaldisation of higher education'. Fukuyama the postmodernist reactionary philosopher warned us that

² Siphos Seepe on Ingede Conference, 2004.

The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk's one's life for purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle which called forth daring courage, imagination and idealism, will be replaced by economic circulation, the endless solving of problems, environmental concerns and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands (Fukuyama 1992).

The mergers, despite existing legislation and guidelines created institutions that are based on a top down approach, shaped and determined in an unequal way. The Minister should have explained to South Africans why the Universities of Western Cape and Stellenbosch were left untouched while UDW and UN had to merge in the name of 'regional collaboration'. Geographically speaking, the country's map indicates that the Western Cape is as much a region as KwaZulu-Natal. Thus the Western Cape has three universities, while the most populous province in the country, KZN, has the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the remnants of University of Zululand. Lest we not forget that the impending mergers were challenged (*at least verbally and initially*) by Black Vice Chancellors (*Sunday Independent* 17 February 2002). Then there was deafening silence amongst the intellectual elite of the Vice Chancellors. Clearly there was a skewed rationale behind the merger.

Sitas (2004) has argued that universities have been in decline as institutions. This reflects a broader global process of reductions in public spending as monetarism in the West and structural adjustment in the so-called Third World have nudged funding away from most tertiary institutions. Whereas this process has led to a regrouping of universities away from the human and the social sciences, and a rapid needs-driven 'professionalisation', the weakness and skewed and unequal development of many countries in the world's periphery (and in Africa in particular) has led to real constriction on posts, salaries, whole departments and sections. As academics had to move out of their formal employment and earn to subsidise their dwindling incomes, they became party to forms of developmentalism nurtured by aid-related Western non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and started researching other people's agendas (Sitas 2004).

The collapse of the Berlin Wall did not end the sufferings of the East Germans; instead it created a new society divided by class boundaries and realities. The merger of the former Natal University, a formerly White institution and UDW a formerly Indian institution, which later accommodated and absorbed large number of African students, had both alienated Africans and especially workers to a large extent (Tudge 2004; Ndlela 2005). Despite numerous attempts to 'accommodate' both African students and workers in the new University, they still feel a sense of loss. For the 'natives' private property gate number 1913 have not been breached (see Desai 2004). According to Uys (2005) gated communities, patronage and national standards exacerbate fragmentation. The earlier poses serious threat to African development as a whole. She further argues that powerful lobbies inside the university marginalize 'outsiders' which ultimately lead to an 'us versus them situation'. Castells' argument sum it all in his dictum that universities are subject to 'the conflicts and contradictions of society and therefore they will tend to express and even amplify the ideological struggles present in all societies' (2001: 206).

Makgoba (2004) himself confirms that there is no question that universities in South Africa – no matter how liberal or 'verkrampste' – are products of apartheid and colonization. The key question is how to destroy such legacies through well planned and decisive transformation processes.

The Pre-merger Conflict

The current problems facing the new university are an indication that the planning phase was not properly handled. Such negligence can be attributed to the 'warring factions' of political worlds that emerged between the 'pro Cooper' and 'pro Makgoba' supporters. Incidences such as phone tapping, gossip and substantial conversations that hit the Sunday press and floor-crossing became the order of the day. Edelman has argued prophetically and metaphorically that our political worlds are segmented, disjointed, focused at any moment upon some small set of anxieties, even though each such issue is part of an increasingly integrated whole. He wrote that in place of the ability to deal with issues in terms of their logical and empirical ties to one another, the language of politics encourages us to see them and feel them as separate (Edelman 1977). Crenson (1971) argued that the political issues are

transitory, episodic phenomena, and because the political life of a community tends to be organized around issues, it tends to be episodic and unordered. The pre-merger rivalries were not related to existing and impeding class polarisation and struggles, but rather on who would be the beneficiary of the 'whole cake'.

In the end, the race for one of the best paid jobs in South Africa was won by Professor MW Makgoba. The 'pay back time' for a good number of ex-Natal University academics/turned managers who after the merger became the 'interim management team' was intact. Their ultimate and expected crowning was followed by months of inactivity, lack of decisiveness and accountability as well as planning. It is one of the hand-picked senior managers (as he was the only short-listed candidate), Peter Zacharias (2005) the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Head of College Agriculture correctly pointed out that the leadership at UKZN lacks personal accountability, self organization, ownership of one's deeds and actions. Decision making activity is channeled and restricted by the process of non-decision making. There is a growing tendency to associate inactivity with progress in a sense that a manager is consequently best when he/she did the least.

The Nature of Leadership at UKZN

Despite Castells' (1998) warning that, as transformation unfolds, the distributional logic has been altered and the barriers, boundaries and fences have been shifted, institutions too, have transfigured, creating a new milieu for movement and settlement. Predictions were made by senior scholars that there will be senior and middle management that will manage the university in a democratic, transparent, fair, accountable, participatory and above human and just manner (Mantzaris & Cebekhulu 2005). However they ignored wisdom, efficiency and credentials, which are very important variables, hence their predictions could be regarded as *shortsighted* (Skilberkk & Gilje 2001). For UKZN, 'structural transformation' brought about a new tyrant university management (*Izindlovu aziphikiswa*) which live in a world located outside the real world. A daily newspaper's headlines (*Mercury* 25/1/2006) that reads 'To some a dictator, to some a *visionary*' pinpoints the structural problems that the UKZN management faces.

Whatever supposes to be collective is transformed into personal, the personal becomes the collective, and the personal is political. The 'Machiavelian' collective style of management is multiplied, but in the end stops at the door of the CEO of the corporation, irrespective of weaknesses in planning, the insidious oversupply of infrastructural over human resources development, financial or academic exclusions, or salary increases.

Using A. Sitas's analysis, Makgoba's assuming leadership at UKZN can be described as follows by the African population at the university and at all levels:

He was the hope of the hopeless and the dispossessed, the poor and the destitute, the meek. And on that rose and rose in strength, in power. He met iron with iron, eye for an eye, he used, as tradition has it, a thorn to remove another thorn from his flesh. He was feared and respected. Everyone fell to his or her knees to thank him or to ask for new favours. He was disturbed when he looked down the hills to see all the people walking on their knee-caps practising for their next encounter (Sitas 2004).

The Sunday Independent newspaper's half page diatribe headlines ('Our Academic freedom must be safeguarded', *Sunday Independent* 22/1/2006) pinpoint some real problems. Clearly management's 'iron hand' approach to governance has not gone unnoticed by the media. Questions as to whether academic freedom is under threat remain unanswered. The University's decision not to approve Desai's appointment is an indication that critical independent scholarly appointments of A rated academics is barred whilst appointment and promotion of dubious candidates continues. The hiding of real freedom of expression and human and intellectual rights issues epitomised in the 'Desai saga' behind legalistic and technicist jargon only damaged the image of the university internationally and nationally as the sober voice of Chris Govender, UDW's Deputy Chairperson of the Council and at present the State Attorney of KwaZulu Natal pointed out recently ('The Vuyo Mbuli Show' SAFM radio Station, 27/1/2006, 9-10 am). The 900 signatories from academics all over the world over the case of Desai is a symbolic and historical incident in defense of academia. Desai is an internationally acclaimed academic and researcher, whose path breaking

book *We are the Poors* has been translated in many languages. Giant intellectuals such as Naomi Klein, I. Shivji, and Noam Chomsky have come to his defense and defense of freedom of expression publicly by signing the petition for his re-instatement at UKZN. Desai was an Honourary Fellow at the Center for Civil society at the University for a number of years, but when he resigned as requested to apply for a remunerated research job that was widely advertised, he was stopped by the University's Vice Chancellor. Professor Makgoba insisted that Desai should first ask the permission from the University Council and 'apologise' for his trade union activities at the then University of Durban Westville before he applies for the research job. Makgoba also called upon Desai to make public his 'separation deal' when he resigned from UDW. Desai made public the deal which was quoted freely in many national and provincial newspapers, but Makgoba insisted on his initial position. The public debate on the issue between the two main protagonists of the saga dented the reputation of the institution both nationally and internationally. The final step in this sorry state of affairs occurred in May 2006 when at a Faculty Board meeting of the College of Humanities, there was an unanimous decision that Desai should be reinstated as an Honourary Fellow at the University.

The Desai case resembles Shelembuze, portrayed by Sitas (2004) as a very versatile person fired for being unable to work with discipline and order. The excuse offered by Management is that we have to distinguish between corporate governance and academic freedom. However the mere thought of the Management class that they enjoy privileged access to government, as well as to the media, leads them to think they are in a position to promote the values that support and legitimize their privileged or dominant position vis a vis the position and privileges of the majority of staff and students. It is the very same context and position that enables them to tolerate only those dissenting viewpoints that do not fundamentally challenge their credentials, actions, duties or omissions and squelch any views that do³.

Lecturers and researchers who have been involved in community outreach and research in various informal settlements such as Kennedy Road

³ The management defines discourses and restrict individual actions and thoughts.

and Foreman Road have been intimidated by state agencies and local government leaders while university senior managers tolerate such behaviour on the part of state apparatuses. Research conducted on the Banana City squatter settlement, situated within the Westville campus of the university reveals that the University has reneged on its previous agreement with the informal settlement residents and the city council. The latter had come to an agreement with the leadership of the settlement to develop housing and infrastructure in the area. Before Christmas 2005 the University applied to the High Court to evict four, allegedly new, residents. The case was heard on the 6th of January in the Durban High Court and it was adjourned as the university had not prepared its case properly. Despite the case being handled by the High Court, the University went ahead and stopped the water supply to this informal settlement. A subsequent case was also adjourned. One need to question where in such a gesture the noble goal of 'community outreach' is, one of the three key objectives of the new university is to be found. All these deeds have not gone unchallenged. There have been individuals, organisations and unions, such as the Combined Staff Association (COMSA) that have questioned and challenged such decisions and actions.

It has been assumed that in any 'civilized society', problems are supposed to be solved by open, rational debate in a harmonious and free societal mode that is governed by laws (Skirbekk & Gilje 2001). Such an important process requires a combination of trust, honesty and tolerance which has never existed at UKZN. There have been a plethora of public questions, both verbal and written that have never been even debated, never mind answered satisfactorily (Cebekhulu & Mantzaris 2004). The culture of robust and rational debate coupled by the respect of the university statute seems to be absent while differing opinions and perspectives are scorned, isolated and sidelined. Thus despite the continuous challenges to management, two years into the merger to even seriously debate the question of salary harmonisation between employees of the two institutions has fallen into deaf ears. Thus it is well known to all that professors and senior lecturers as well as administrative staff working for the previous components (University of Natal and UDW) earn vastly different salaries. How a Senior Professor of ex UDW can earn less than R60-70 000 than his equivalent of the University of Natal?

Freire in his 'Praxis and Education' reiterated this point when he wrote that not only in the universities, but also in secondary and primary schools, education is always a political event. Thus, power is inseparable from education. Those who hold power define 'what education will be: its methods, programme and curriculum, wrote Freire (Freire, P. Praxis and Education, Social Policy File 85/1999). Marx and Engels noted poignantly that 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas'. In their view, those who control the production of material wealth in a society also control the production of knowledge, as well as systems (or ideology) and insight, and in this way they control the production of an entire way of life. Thus, a society is highly likely to create a culture that justifies, reinforces, and reproduces the privileges, advantages, and power of its ruling class (Marx & Engels 1970:64). In the case of UKZN, Africans at all levels are sandwiched between the former University of Natal's colonial mentality and the complicated blend of UDW that encompasses South African Indian, multicultural, colonial, as well as liberation and resistance ideology and practice. Their way out of this sandwich will not necessarily lead them into the land of milk and honey, but rather to a collective struggle towards equity and transformation.

The relationship between the University Management and workers is characterised by a silent polarisation where there is no clear cut synergy between key stakeholders and players at the University in terms of consultation, transparency, accountability, full participation, access, transformation and the curriculum. Such synergy could ultimately avoid confrontation, contestation would be confined to widely accepted channels and communication across boundaries would substitute top down directives. The philosopher Rauche (1993) who once said,

My fellow-man is my critic, my judge, my partner in dialogue. In private life, in professional life, on academic and cultural levels, I measure myself by him. I require him as terms of reference. In limiting and negating me, he, at the same time, expands me in that I fulfill myself through him and he affirms me as an individual.

For these processes that will dent polarisation to unfold, the major step forward will be that of a continuum of conscientisation, a dialogical,

dialectical and material process shaped by prevailing circumstances and the vision and mission of the university. Conscientisation is founded on a critical and fundamental understanding of justice, equity, access, fairness and democratic practices advanced and adhered to by knowing subjects, and aspiring to achieve a deepening awareness both of socio-cultural, educational, social and economic realities that shape their lives, and their capacity to transform it (Freire 1973).

Workers under Siege

What happens if you appoint a wolf as a shepherd? A steady downsizing of the flock. The wolf, professing vegetarianism, calls it right-sizing and states his enthusiastic commitment to fattening the remaining sheep (Terreblanche *Mail and Guardian* October 8 to 14 2004). Noting our historical background and the current socio-economic and political context, conflict between parties polarised by financial, economic, administrative, and organisational attitudes, behaviour and goals becomes inevitable. Following the Vice-Chancellor's appointment, the CEO of the institution indicated that 'there will be no duplication of staff in the new University' and after the pronouncement, permanent and contract employees numbers started to dwindle in a serious and protracted process of staff rationalization. Trade unions' right and benefits that have been won through historical struggles such as encashment of sabbatical leave after retirement, staff concessions are under attack, in the name of 'budget cuts' and pure and simple neo-liberal cut back exercises that would make the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund red from envy. However, never in its history of two years has the CEO of the institution and its management delved into the historical roots of what they call 'huge deficit', who was the culprit, how did we arrive at such a situation, what were the measures undertaken for such failures not be repeated, what has happened to those responsible for the debt. As expected, Sitas (2004) argues that in all societies people gather, talk, jest, and resist; they become crowds; their grievances evolve into a strike. This seems to become a habit and a yearly occurrence at the university, and always around a fundamental issue, that of a salary increase. The working population at UKZN has become aware of the extravagant salaries and

subsequent annual increases and bonuses of the top managers and thus is forced to utilise the available legal channels to fight for their rights.

The 2006 salary negotiations were supposed to *start* at 4% as per the agreement signed by management and unions last year. For two months management procrastinated on the matter, by insisting that the Remuneration Committee of the Council did not give them a mandate to move above the 4% increase. Hence the Monday 16 of January 2006 a strike certificate awarded by the CCMA to the 4 unions (COMSA, NTESU, NEHAWU and UNSU) to strike was both fair and expected. The arduous three hour of deliberations exposed the uncoordinated and double-sword strategy of management. On the one hand they 'offered' an extra R8 millions, R3, 5 million for a 'once off payment' and R4, 5 million towards 'normalisation of salary scales'. The offer was rejected unanimously by the four unions, but the CCMA commissioner in his closing statements expressed his surprise to the university team, which included a highly qualified lawyer, an advocate and two Deputy Vice Chancellors, for their overall approach to the hearing. They came to the CCMA without a mandate for meaningful bargaining.

The University needs to be transparent, equitable, fair, accountable, open and based on common humane values if it is to achieve its vision and mission statement. The unions and their leadership have been on record on countless occasions that are prepared to work towards the University's goals as enshrined in the vision and mission statement of the institution. However, simultaneously they have to be vigilant and decisive in challenging injustices, unfair labour practices, through full participation in all decision making organs of the University. It needs to be reiterated that UKZN stakeholders and role players cannot avoid contestation, as it is an integral historical and present reality of every transition. Contestation is the dialectical outcome of the existing social polarisation. However, contestation does not necessarily mean conflict or absolute consensus, but a continuous effort to unite the opposites, whenever possible. Through contestation unity might result, but the road is not a bed of roses.

The relationship between the management and staff ought to have been built on dialogue where all participants mutually co-operate to make the running of the institution as smooth as possible. Since there is an unequal distribution of power, coupled by the lack of common search for truer insight, the vision and mission statement of the university continues to drift

apart. In all fairness, the management regards the latter as not competent enough for co-determination. The mere fact that the Standard Institutional Statute excludes Unions despite numerous requests from being part of decision-making at a Council level signals a skewed power allocation at UKZN. Since the personal is the political, as correctly phrased by Karl Marx, this means that the organizational and the educational are also political. According to Protagoras (481-411 BCE) (in Skirbekk & Gilje 2001) the '*personal is also the measure of all things*', for example, power in the hand of an authoritarian management can easily reverse the gains made by the working class over the years. Clearly the management using their own experiences, their own myopic interest and their own situations, 'stamp' things in their own image.

Politics extends beyond the formal 'political' institutions. Politics never stop once the bill becomes a law. It does not stop in the political process, nor does it cease in the decision-making process (Bardach 1977). Therefore, we need to redefine the boundaries between politics and bureaucracy, and between the decision-making process and the delivery of those decisions. Implementation is therefore simply another form of politics which takes place within the domain of unelected power in the form of management.

Transformation

Promises can create hopes, but unfulfilled promises can lead to disillusionment and frustration. Fewer promises may be made in view of a heightened awareness of the obstacles to fulfillment, but more of them should be kept. The increasing corporatization of management (the adoption of business models of organization and administration of universities) coupled with the social composition of top management are a direct affront to transformatory imperatives. Professor Makgoba himself defended the corporatisation of management recently thus in a recent interview:

There is merit in what people are saying, (criticising the corporatisation of the university), but this has to be put into context. I have studied at the best universities in the world. These institutions have become corporatised. They demand greater accountability of

academics. Universities of old were run by the church or the pope. What would I benefit the country by running an old-style institution? (*Mercury* 25/1/2006).

Such contention goes against the principles of an organisational and logistical parameters of a scientifically run corporation. Which corporation worth its salt and with a budget equivalent to that of UKZN would employ seven deputy vice chancellor's? Corporate entities are generally accountable to shareholders, to whom is the UKZN management accountable to besides a 30 or so group called the University Council?

In such a context the key conceptual and practical underpinnings of transitive consciousness is of paramount importance. Hence transitive consciousness emerges as the people begin to perceive and respond to the themes and myths that characterise their world. Naïve transitivity, is the initial stage of transitive consciousness and is marked by gross simplifications and generalizations of problems; frail arguments and lack of interest in critical investigation; polemics rather than dialogue; and magical; emotional explanations for problems (Freire 1973). Can the new leadership of the University avoid this path?

To understand the nature of conflict created by the lack of transformation to date, Mills' (1956) argument is relevant. He wrote that 'We must study the available range of social structures, including the historical as well as the contemporary'. The importance of studying and asking questions regarding the crucial significance of history linked us to an awareness that it is vital that we understand how we have come to be where we are now. In essence it will enable informed reasoning as to whether the equity office is really addressing the problems of inequity created by the racial divisions inherent in the historical legacy of apartheid. The view of Devi Rajab, a psychologist and the former dean of student development at UKZN is that 'UKZN can't be a place where people are too scared to discuss their feelings because they are labeled racist' (*Mercury* Wednesday January 25 2006).

The proliferation of racism threatens human rights (Balfour & Cadava 2004). For example racial divisions associated with the former Institutions and clash of personalities was at the forefront of every decision taken regarding the merger. If indeed the 'rainbow nation' is to be realized,

urgent attention should have been channeled towards addressing racism prior and after the merger. Since no attempt was made to bridge the divide line, the organizational culture inherent in the two institutions that comprise the new university remains unchallenged.

Kumar (1988) is of the view that societies can live with their 'contradictions', if not comfortably at least tolerable, for long periods. Incidents of racism were allegedly revealed in the Medical School, but there is deafening silence on the part of management regarding the only one disciplinary case heard. Hence, quite a number of serious questions need to be asked:

- Why the university authorities have not yet released the findings of the disciplinary hearings yet?
- Are there more disciplinary hearings to occur or has the case been forgotten?
- Why was only the Medical School targeted and not other schools and disciplines?
- How many incidents of racism go unnoticed by the authorities?

Sandwiched between the 'rock , steel and a hard place' are hundreds and even thousands of African staff and students who have to daily survive academic, professional and organisational onslaught from all sides of the didactic and professional terrains. Despite the CEO being an African, he is in danger of being seen as a beneficiary of the now infamous 'rent an African' syndrome clearly evident throughout the country.

The battle cry for real equity and transformation cannot be confused with the narrow nationalism of the viewpoint that from the 'ivory towers' of the new institutions, the Bollywood and the Hollywood congregations of power need to be replaced by darker skins. Transformation and equity does not equal the attempts of the African elite to learn to speak Model C English with a Victorian or Gujarati accent or else remains isolated from the circles of power. The deep seated problem at UKZN is that the ideas and values of the dominant class are diffused throughout the University and imposed on the workers (see Gramsci 1971). This needs to change, otherwise a broad based transformation and equity will never be achieved in our lifetime.

Conclusion

Fanon in the *Wretched of the Earth* argues that the national bourgeoisie that will take over after decolonization will try and fit themselves in the shoes of the colonizer. In some instances the national bourgeoisie tasked with managing the native affairs will be worse than the colonizers themselves. Are we not witnessing the fulfillment of such prophecy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal? The contradiction that the university can strike a balance between 'Ubuntu and profit making' remains a contested terrain. Corporatisation at UKZN is synonymous with the increasing neo-liberal new world order and globalization. It is based on the principles of 'balancing the books', maximization of profit and organizational and administrative structures that are hierarchical, inflexible and 'top down'. Such a system is extremely prejudicial to the majority of employees and in favour of a small number of senior managerial elites.

Hence a cloud remains hanging over the future of the new institution. Committing ourselves to the gigantic effort to make UKZN the Premier University of African Scholarship where excellence in teaching, research and community outreach become the foundation of humanity, is not just an imagination. It is up to those who care to transform this imagined into a real community.

Chronology of Events

Date

Ashwin Desai part ways with the UDW after a settlement was reached with Professor Ramashala	1997
Kader Asmal publicly stated that mergers would be based on access, equity, regional collaboration and rationalization of programmes	2002
Battle for Vice-Chancellorship of the newly to be formed University of KwaZulu-Natal between Cooper and Makgoba	2003
Professor Mkgoba appointed as interim Vice-Chancellor	2004
Approval of the Terms and Conditions of Employment of UKZN	2004
The Vice-Chancellor announced his intention of Corporatising the university	2004
UKZN Workers strike over wages	2005

Management adopted an authoritarian approach of managing the university	2005
Ashwin Desai is refused an interview for a post due to his 1997 'so-called ban'	2005
Reflections from the University of KwaZulu-Natal on organizational democracy was published	2005
College Model adopted	2005
Intimidation letters written to Academics who were failing to publish	2005
Medical School targeted on racism allegations	2005
Four Banana City informal settlement families taken to the high court by the university	2005
Academic threatened for supporting Abahlali baseMjondolo	2005
Management intentions of the withdrawal of some benefits in the Terms and Conditions of Employment is made publicly	2006
The Vice-Chancellor publicly said Naomi Chomsky is suffering from dementia	2006
Academics all over the world signed a petition on behalf of Desai	2006
Two weeks UKZN Workers strike over wages	2006
Unilateral variations of Terms and Conditions of Employment by management via the 'Matching and Placing'	2006
Mr Fazel Khan charged for dishonesty after the <i>Mail and Guardian</i> airbrushing article	2006

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