

A P P E N D I X B

F O R T H A R E C R I S I S

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BS/SL

September 10, 1968

SR/9/68-69

To: SRC Presidents  
National Executive  
Local Committee Chairmen  
Student Relations Directors  
Student Editors

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Dear Sir/Madam

The recent events at the University College of Fort Hare have been very sudden. In addition, many of the issues involved in the crisis - which led to the suspension of most of the students at Fort Hare - are somewhat clouded since, for fear of victimisation, the students have not made many statements to the press.

However, since the suspension of the students, we have been able to piece much of the information together into the enclosed fact sheet.

I hope that it will clear up any mysteries about the situation. And this fact sheet should explain the courage of those students at Fort Hare who stood up for what they believed to be right.

Yours sincerely

BARRY SERRICK  
STUDENT RELATIONS DIRECTOR

FORT HARE AFFAIR

Background Situation

In order to understand what follows in this report, it is important to remember that the students of Fort Hare have refused to appoint an SRC since 1959. One reason for this is that student leaders appointed to an SRC have unfailingly been acted against by the University authorities who have often expelled or refused to re-admit duly elected student leaders without giving reasons, and by the police who have interrogated such students. As the University is government controlled, the SRC would be a puppet SRC and the students are not prepared to accept that - there of course, would be no freedom of action.

In the absence of an SRC the only means of communication between the students and the authorities has been through elected deputations. There have been similar consequences for the students elected. On one occasion a written guarantee from the authorities that no action would be taken against a deputation was not adhered to. Thus there was an understandable reluctance on the part of the students to appoint representatives for consultation.

Events Leading up to the Sit-In

On August 16, Prof de Wet was installed as the new Rector, and Mr Blaar Coetzee (Minister of Bantu Education) was the guest speaker. There was a spontaneous boycott of the ceremony by the vast majority of the students. Following this certain offensive remarks concerning Prof de Wet, Mr Blaar Coetzee, Mr John Vorster and Dr Verwoerd were painted on the walls of various University buildings. These were subsequently removed by university staff.

On Sunday, August 18, eighteen students received notices instructing them to meet with the Rector at 9.00 am on Monday 19. Seventeen went, the 18th was 'Methodist' a known special branch spy. It is not known how the 17 names were selected. They were accused of being either directly or indirectly responsible for the paintings on the walls, and when they denied all knowledge of who was responsible, they were told that they were known to be student leaders, and therefore must be implicated. They were warned that should there be any further student disturbances on the campus, they would be held responsible and sent down.

Thus without having any administrative, disciplinary or legislative power, they were made responsible for maintaining student order at the cost of their careers.

Subsequently the Security Police were called in and most of the 17 were taken to the charge-office for interrogation and their rooms were searched. It was this action on the part of the Rector and the Police against students whose guilt of any offence had not been established that led to the reaction of the student body.

Two requests to hold a student body meeting to discuss the matter were refused by the Rector and his approval to hold such a meeting on the evening of August 27 was given late the same afternoon. At this meeting, a resolution

outlining the student grievances and requesting the Rector to address the student body on the matter was passed. They decided to gather the next day outside the Administrative buildings and to remain sitting until the Rector did address them.

The Rector left for Pretoria on University business early the next morning.

In accordance with the resolution the students did not attend lectures on August 28 but staged a quiet sit-in near the Administration block. During the day a notice was posted in the hostel saying that if the demonstration was continued until Friday 30, the College would be closed. This notice carried the authority of the Rector, who was still in Pretoria. As Thursday was the first day of the short vacation the students had not, in any case, intended to make any demonstration after Thursday noon.

On Thursday, another notice appeared on the official notice board stating that the University Christian Movement had been banned on the campus. This arbitrary and authoritarian action intensified the resentment of the students.

Thursday noon the College closed for the vacation during which the Rector returned.

#### Events leading up to the Suspension of over 300 students

On September 4, the eve of the new term, the chaplains of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational students approached certain members of staff and asked them to request the Rector to meet a deputation of students. On Thursday August 5, the students recommenced their sit-in. During the morning there were two communications from the Rector. In the first the students were warned that if they had not returned to lectures by noon further action would be taken. In the second, they were informed that they had until 4.00 pm

On Friday September 6, the sit-in continued. During the morning the following statement by the Rector was communicated to the students -

Seeing that the students of the University College of Fort Hare have contravened regulations by staying away from lectures for 3 days and have persevered in doing this even after their attention was drawn to the contravention and seeing that students have not availed themselves of the normal channels that existed and will always exist, and have turned down the invitation to make known their problems through a deputation, I feel myself compelled after a full and serious discussion with the Advisory Council to restore normal conditions by taking the following steps -

Students who are desirous of continuing their work for the year and who undertake to submit to the discipline of the College, must in the course of the morning cease their participation in the sit down strike or any other forms of demonstration, and must indicate their intentions of doing so by signing the

lists which will be available for this purpose at their respective hostels before noon today. The admission of students, who have not cease their participation in the sit down strike or any other form of demonstration and who have not signed the mentioned list at their respective hostels before twelve noon, will be cancelled forthwith, and such students will have to leave the hostels and the campus of the University College before 4.30 pm in the vehicles which will be available for that purpose.

Students who signed the undertaking at their respective hostels and who at their respective hostels and who at any stage during the rest of this year stay away from lectures without the permission of the warden or the head of the relevant department shall be considered to have broken the agreement and shall be subjected to the same measures as mentioned above.

After the appearance of this notice, the students appointed a deputation of five students which then attempted to meet with the Rector. Permission for such a meeting was refused twice; on the first occasion because the Rector was busy, and on the second because the deadline for the delegation, the students signed the lists signifying their readiness to continue with lectures, and to abide by College regulations, but stated that they would continue with the sit-in until the Rector agreed to meet their request to address them.

When the sit-in reconvened after lunch, the following statement was communicated to them -

"All students still in front of the Administrative block must please note that they have been suspended as students of this University, and are contravening regulations by their presence here. This is a final warning, and if students are still there at 3.00 p.m. steps will be taken against them".

#### Police Action Against the Suspended Students

At 3.00 p.m. over 300 students were still gathered in front of the Administrative Block. At 3.05 p.m. large numbers of police, who had been in Alice from mid-morning, arrive at Fort Hare. At least 10 police vans and an estimate of at least 30 policemen arrived. The vans were used to block entrances and roads. The police, with 6 dogs, and equipped with teargas bombs and gas bombs and gas masks, surrounded the demonstrating students.

The students were then addressed by the Commandant, who stated that they were under arrest for trespassing, and that they had only two options open to them, either to be imprisoned in the local police cells, or to pack their belongings and return to their homes under 'protective police custody'. They were advised that the matter would be referred to the Attorney General for his decision on further action. None of the students were formally charged, but police, seated at tables took the names of all the students and their home addresses. They were then taken, under police escort, to their various residences to pack

their belongings. They were not permitted to go into town to withdraw any money for the journey, nor were they allowed to collect articles of clothing from the laundries.

Fort Hare students resident at the Federal Theological Seminary were sent back to the Seminary after representation by the Seminary principals, but were warned that if they set foot on the Fort Hare campus they would be arrested for trespassing.

Under frightening circumstances, which some students felt could easily have led to panic and drastic police reprisals - especially with the dogs present - the students remained calm and orderly and at no stage resisted the police. The students sang 'Nkosi Sikelele' and 'I Afrikâ' and 'We shall overcome' before moving off to their residences.

When some of the students, who had not been in the sit-in at 3.00 p.m. saw the police action, they joined with their fellows and accepted suspension and removal. The students never really believed that the Rector would take such drastic action against them for their simple request orderly demonstration.

By 7.00 p.m. all the suspended students had been put on the railway buses, provided for the purpose, and sent to both Amebele junction and Cookhouse station to await trains the journey were not given tickets, and they were not given the opportunity to make arrangements to get from the terminus to their respective homes. They were provided with neither food nor money for the journey and some had to wait on the stations for a considerable length of time before being able to get connections or seats on the available trains.

Attempts were made by individuals to contact the students at the two railway junctions to provide them with food and money. However, large numbers of police were present on both stations. At Cookhouse, the police threatened those who attempted to contact the students with arrest, took names of some individuals and prevented any communication. At Amebele, after contact had been established with a few students, the police intervened.

The further fate of the students is not known. It is estimated that there are about 100 students left at Fort Hare.

DI/SL

September 20, 1968

p/100/68

To: Overseas National Unions  
International Student Organisations  
Overseas Representatives  
National Executive

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Dear Sir/Madam

I have just returned from my executive tour of the affiliated centres throughout the country and would like to report on the important events that occurred during the tour. Most important of all is the "Fort Hare affair" which has taken up most of my time over the past week. As you will recall from my last circular, I left Head Office on my tour after the students at Fort Hare had been sitting in for a number of days. I arrived in Durban, Natal on Friday evening to learn that on that very same afternoon over 350 students had been suspended from the Fort Hare University College. That same evening I called a meeting of the Standing Committee of SRC Presidents in Durban for Sunday afternoon, and decided to fly down to Fort Hare on the very next day to assess the situation for myself. On Saturday afternoon, I left for Port Elizabeth and arrived there on Saturday evening and was taken across to Grahamstown the same night.

On arrival in Grahamstown, I met a number of students who had been closely involved with the Fort Hare affair and gathered information from them. I was unable to meet any Fort Hare students at this stage as all those who had been suspended had left the area and those who still remained at the College were not allowed out of the grounds. My assessment of the situation therefore, was made on information which I obtained from individuals from Rhodes University, University Christian Movement and the Federal Theological Seminary at Alice who had been involved in the affair throughout. This information I transcribed into a report which is attached and which I used as a basis for speeches throughout the country as I continued on my executive tour. The report was shown to Fort Hare students who were involved in the crisis subsequently and they agreed that it was an accurate assessment of the events as they occurred. The report was given to Mr Rene de Villiers, editor of the Star (Johannesburg) and published in his newspaper on Friday, September 13 as a feature article under my name. The whole report is attached for your consideration, and as it has been used both in newspapers in South Africa and on public platforms in this country, you should feel free to use it for publications anywhere should you deem it necessary or beneficial.

Events following the sit-in and subsequent Suspension

I left Grahamstown on Sunday afternoon and returned to Durban where a Standing Committee meeting was held. Standing Committee issued a statement at the end of the meeting which deplored the fact that the students involved should have been suspended while attempting to exert their right of expression and called on the Rector of Fort Hare to withdraw the suspensions of the students

immediately and called on all university principals and university councils of other universities in South Africa to do all in their power to gain the withdrawal of the suspensions and finally called on students throughout South Africa to protest, and I quote "with vigour and determination". Protests were planned at all centres for the coming week although the form the protests on each campus would take was left to the discretion of the individual SRCs. It was decided though that a fitting ending to the week's protest would be for student leaders from South African universities to converge on Grahamstown on Saturday morning and attempt to gain an interview with the Rector, Prof de Wet.

The very next day, Monday, September 9, a mass meeting was held at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The NUSAS President addressed the meeting which was attended by over half the students on the campus. (approx 800). In his speech, he said "I would like to comment very briefly on the situation at Fort Hare. I think that the request put forward by the student body that the Rector should address them was a reasonable one. And the fact that they chose to follow up this request with a sit-in is, I think indicative of the whole system of Fort Hare. It is a system where the authority of the Rector is used to suppress the opinions of students not as at other universities to encourage them to express opinions.

"It is a system which bans organisations such as NUSAS and the University Christian Movement which encourage freedom of thought. It is a system which forbids elementary fund raising schemes from operating on the campus. This system is not aimed at educating the students to the full. It is aimed at teaching students to bow to authority. This system can only lead to the frustration of those who subject themselves to it. This system is a disgrace to the name of education in South Africa".

At the end of the meeting a petition was circulated amongst students calling for the suspension of the Fort Hare students to be lifted immediately. The petition received over 1000 signatures. On Monday evening, a student body meeting was held at Rhodes University and was attended by 700 students. The meeting passed a resolution requesting principals of all South African universities "to protest most strongly against the summary mass suspension of the Fort Hare students and the resultant infringement of academic freedom". The resolution noted that a deputation of SRC Presidents was to see the Rector of Fort Hare on Saturday morning, and it requested students from all other campuses to join with Rhodes students in accompanying the deputation in a convoy of cars when the deputation went to see the Rector. In proposing the motion, the SRC Vice President Mr Ian Kirby, said "It is possible that a large number of students will make up this symbolic protest on Saturday. Even if the deputation has no success, we will show that the students of South Africa will not be intimidated. It will be a symbol that we can still stand up when things are wrong in South Africa"

On Tuesday, September 10, a mass meeting of students was held at Witwatersrand University. The meeting was attended by about 1200 students. The students resolved to hold a picket protest on the pavement in Jan Smuts Avenue, that same afternoon between 4.30 and 6.30. The protest was held that afternoon and at about 5.00 pm a group of policemen arrived and began taking names of students who held posters and demanded of the SRC President, Mr Mark Orkin that he move the students back off the pavement. MR Orkin attempted to do this as he was not aware of his legal position but the students were reluctant to move and began chanting and shouting. At about 5.30 pm a riot van containing about 20 policemen arrived on the scene and formed up across the road from the protesters. They marched across the road towards the protesters who began chanting "Sieg Heil Sieg Heil". They then proceeded to take posters away from students and to take down the names of students who had been holding posters. The students still refused to move back and stood their ground demanding the names of addresses of the policemen. During the incident a number of policemen were jostled, their caps knocked off their heads, and abuse hurled at them by



the students at the picket. No arrests were made. It soon became evident that the police could not get hold of all the posters as many students refused to give them and a number merely ran away and stood holding the poster somewhere else. At about 6.15 pm the police left and at 6.30 pm the poster demonstration was broken up. A student body meeting was held at Wits the next day at which the Wits students voted to hold a picket protest on the same place from 2.00 to 3.00 that afternoon to protest against police interference on their campus. The students all held blank posters and there were no incidents. At lunch time on the same day a student body meeting was held at the Johannesburg College of Education and was addressed by the NUSAS President. The meeting resolved to hold a picket protest on the college grounds from 4-30 pm to 6.30 pm that evening. At 4 o' clock the Rector, Dr Holmes requested the SRC President, Mr Ken Jubber not to hold the picket protest on the campus but to move it off the campus grounds. The SRC President agreed to this and students who wished to hold their posters were told to do so off college grounds. About 30 students stood in the road outside the College holding their posters spaced ten yards apart. At 5 o' clock 2 riot vans, each containing 20 policemen plus 5 motor bikes and a few police cars arrived on the scene. The names of all students holding posters were taken and their posters confiscated. 3 students were almost arrested, but were released after the NUSAS President had spoken to the Colonel in charge of the operation. The students remained until 6.30 pm without posters.

On Thursday a student body meeting was held in Durban and on Thursday night, a torchlight vigil was held on the campus steps which was attended by over 100 students. On Thursday afternoon, a teach-in was held at the University of Pietermaritzburg which was followed by a march across the campus by 1000 students who picketed on the edge of the campus for a while. A student body meeting was held at University of Cape Town and attended by 1200 students. The students held a picket protest until 6.30 in the evening on the de Waal Drive. Although police were evident they did not attempt to break up the picket. The picketing students caused a large traffic jam which held up cars for quite some time.

On Friday the students held a picket protest on the steps of the St Georges Cathedral and this protest was broken up by about 50 naval trainees who ripped posters away from students and hurled abuse at the students. Although police were in the vicinity they did not intervene. On Friday evening, the NUSAS President and the SRC Presidents from Wits and UCT arrived at Rhodes. A meeting was held that evening of the student body at Rhodes university to decide whether to go ahead with the convoy as police blocks had been set up around Grahamstown and it was understood that the police were moving in on Alice which is the town in which Fort Hare is situated. At the same time, it was learnt that the Rector of Fort Hare had refused to see the student delegation. The Minister of Bantu Administration, Development and Education, Mr MC Botha had said that what happens at Fort Hare is of no concern to white students and indicated that any white student found on the Fort Hare premises would be prosecuted. The student body meeting resolved that one car bearing the NUSAS President, and SRC Presidents should drive out to Fort Hare and lay a wreath at the foot of the James Stewart Memorial. James Stewart was the founder of Fort Hare University College. The meeting did however indicate that any students wishing to join the single car convoy should feel free to do so.

The next morning a teach-in was held at Rhodes University at which speakers were the NUSAS President, the President of UCM, Mr Athol Fugard (the playwright) and a student from Fort Hare. At the end of the teach-in the car containing the NUSAS President, the NUSAS Deputy Vice President, Mr Andy Murray, UCT SRC President, Phil van der Merwe and the Rhodes SRC President, Peter Harris, left the campus for Fort Hare. The SRC President from Wits University had returned to his campus. A telegram of full support was received from the University of Natal SRC Presidents

who were unable to attend. The car bearing the student leaders arrived in Alice which is about 70 miles from Grahamstown to find the entrance to the memorial cut off by 5 police cars and approximately 25 policemen who were armed. They refused to allow the student leaders to move up to the memorial claiming that they were trespassing and that they would be dealt with. The student leaders however sought another entrance to the memorial which is on top of a hill and this was eventually found. A 2½ mile hike followed before the students arrived at the top of the hill and at the memorial. At the memorial the NUSAS President read out the following dedication

"We stand here today in remembrance of a great man and a great humanitarian. We stand to remember a man who had a dream of Fort Hare -- that one day it would grow into a University of full status where the students would work together in pursuit of truth, where a spirit of free enquiry would prevail and where the evils of discrimination could have no place. Today we express our regret that James Stewart's dream has not been realised. Today intolerable conditions of oppression prevail on the Fort Hare campus. Students walk in fear amidst informers and unsympathetic staff. The pursuit of truth is hampered and strangled by bans on free discussion and inter-university contact. The right of protest is dead. We stand here to pray that Fort Hare will know university life in its true sense and that its campus will live in a spirit of tolerance, fellowship and the dignity of man. Today we remember the students of Fort Hare. We will not forget them".

Mr Innes then laid a wreath at the foot of the memorial and the student leaders then stood for a minutes silence. The simple ceremony was attended by about 150 students from Rhodes University, the University of Cape Town, the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg and the Federal Theological Seminary. 5 members of the Special branch remained on the hilltop throughout taking photographs of the students who attended. All students who journeyed to the memorial were stopped at a police road block and their names were taken.

On Monday, September 16, the Rector of Fort Hare issued a statement on behalf of the Fort Hare authorities in which he said that all students who had been suspended could apply for re-admission to the college. He indicated that they should re-apply before September 26 as no applications after that date would be accepted. The NUSAS President issued a statement the same day in which he called on student protests throughout the country to cease until such time as it was known which students to be refused re-admission. So far we have heard that 190 students have reapplied for re-admission and of these 150 have already been accepted back into the college. As the closing date for admission is not yet here we cannot tell how many students will be allowed back into the college.

#### Comments

As yet it is too early to say how many students will be refused re-admission, but I would estimate that it will be between 20 and 30. I am awaiting news from the students before we attempt anything further on their behalf. However, a fund for the education of these students has been started in the meanwhile on the campuses amongst students.

One most significant aspect of the suspension and the protests that following it is the link-up between the African tribal colleges and the almost all white english-speaking campuses. It is the first time in many years that I have seen white students really concerned about the problems facing their non white fellows. On the part of the non white students whom I met regularly I felt that they were prepared to put far more faith and trust in white students than they had been in the past. Significant developments following on all this has been the move made by

the University College of the Borth (Turfloop) student body when over 400 students voted unanimously to affiliate to NUSAS. As yet we are unaware of what action the authorities are to take in this regard, but it is certain that no action will be taken against the individuals involved. In the last stages of my tour I visited the Federal Theological Seminary at Alice where I addressed the new SRC who indicated to me their desire to affiliate to NUSAS immediately. I have been tremendously encouraged by the events of the last week and see South Africa students entering into a new era of their existence.

The Prime Minister attacked us on 2 occasions in the last week and the students were attacked by the Minister of Bantu Administration, Mr MC Botha. I think it would be naive to imagine that these events will be allowed to pass without any repercussions, on the part of the Government, but I feel they will not take any action immediately as they fear the consequences of press publicity. The events of the last week received headline coverage on the front pages of newspapers throughout the country. Press backing then has been superb and this has a tremendous stimulus to students and I think enabled us to get our message across to the general public. The students' action has been heavily criticised by all Afrikaans language newspapers and by Afrikaans university student bodies. However, the English-speaking campuses have reacted very well over the past week, and I am confident that they will not fail next year.

In conclusion, I think that it would be fitting for me to mention the courage of the students who have been involved in the protests over the past Fort Hare affair. The police have become increasingly provocative in their actions, and I have no doubt that the police were trying to draw students out into an open fight. Under these circumstances I think the students conducted themselves very well indeed and I have a great admiration for them. However, I think the most courageous student body in South Africa today is the student body at the University College of Fort Hare. The attitude of these students is summed up very aptly by one student when I asked him why they ran the terrible risk that they did run, and he said "What is the use of a degree if one is only to become the puppet of one's degree?" Their attitude and their courage is an example to the other students in this country and I have no doubt that this attitude and this courage will remain with those students for many years to come.

Yours sincerely  
 DUNCAN INNES  
 PRESIDENT

DI/SL

October 22, 1968

P/107/68

TO: SRC Presidents  
Advisory Panel  
National Executive  
Local Committee Chairmen  
Overseas Representatives

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Dear Sir/Madam

Fort Hare

In the last circular sent out from Head Office I was unsure of the fate of those students who had been suspended from the University College. Since then all those suspended except for 21 have been allowed to return to the College. The 21 who have been excluded were informed a few days before exams were due to be written of their exclusion from the College. They were however told that they would be allowed to write their exams for this year if they wishes to do so. It is not known whether the students will be writing or not although this is unlikely as they have received such short notice before exams are due to start and there is little hope of their being able to return to the college and begin swotting effectively before the examinations are upon them,

All those students so have been re-admitted to the College have to sign the following document before being allowed back

"@#@#@#@#@#@"

S544

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF FORTHARE

19/9/68

I, the undersigned, hereby undertake:

(1) To confirm the undertaking put to me on the 6th September, 1968 vis

"I, the undersigned, having read the statement issued by the Rector on the 6th of September, 1968, hereby undertake to ~~discontinue my participation in the strike~~ and any other form of demonstration, to continue with my normal ~~academic work~~, to observe strictly the rules of attendance of lectures as laid down in the statement by the Rector and to submit to the discipline of the University College of Fort Hare".

(2) To desist from any hint or attempt at intimidation also in respect of students who did not take part in the strike

(3) To observe strictly all rules and regulations as for instance those pertaining to disobedience and disregard of an order or instruction given m by any person or body having authority to give it, or by word or by conduct displaying insubordination to such person or body; and to wilful or negligent damage to any property of the University College or of any person or body, on the campus or in the residences.

(4) To put my grievances to the Rector only through recognised and lawful channels.

I am also fully aware of the fact that should I at any time be found guilty of breaking one or more of the abovementioned undertakings, I will immediately be suspended as a student of the University College of Fort Hare

Signed .....

Signature of Parent or Guardian .....

Date .....

"@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@"

The University authorities indicated after the suspension that all those students who had been suspended could apply to the college for re-admission, and their applications would then be considered. This was done by all the students as far as I know and their applications were all considered. Telegrams were sent to all but the 21 who have been excluded informing them that if they wanted to return to Fort Hare they should return to the college immediately accompanied by their parents or guardians. An obvious difficulty involved here was the lack of finances for the majority of the students, but somehow they managed to scrape up the money to return to the Fort. It should be pointed out here that a large number of the students were in Johannesburg at the time which is some 700 miles from Fort Hare while others were in the Transkei, in Cape Town and in other regions far removed from the Eastern Cape. Thus the financial burden imposed on these students and their families was considerable to say the very least. On their arrival at the College, the students and the parents were made to sign the above form, before the student could be allowed to return to the college. The 21 students who were not invited to return to the College received no indication of this until a few days ago when they were informed that they had been expelled and that they could return to the college if they wanted to write their exams for this year. Of the 21 excluded students, 12 were amongst the 18 who were called up the Rector concerning the slogan painting on the wall of the main hall at the College. It was this incident you may recall that sparked off the whole Fort Hare sit in strike. An advisory board of staff and parents has been appointed by the Rector at Fort Hare in order to keep parents informed of what is happening on the campus and presumably so that they can have some sort of say in the governing of the University. It seems that there is little likelihood that this committee will be of much significance as the parents generally live so far away and are out of touch with the facts of the immediate grievances.

Despite the fact that there have been calls for a Commission of Inquiry into Fort Hare (one of these calls was made by the President of NUSAS) there is strong doubt whether such a commission will be set up. Certainly as yet there are no indications that this is being even considered. It is understood that there have been no stricter application of rules at the College and those students who have returned are treated the same as those who were not suspended. It is quite clear from the document which the students had to sign though, that should any of them "at any time be found guilty of breaking one or more of the..... undertakings" they will "immediately be suspended as a student of the University College of Fort Hare". Thus it seems that their existence at Fort Hare is on a narrow thread indeed.

There has been one resignation from the Fort Hare staff, the individual involved being a Professor Oosthuizen who is known to have pro-student sympathies, although he has not disclosed the reasons for his leaving the College.

Yours sincerely

DUNCAN INNES  
PRESIDENT

ANDY MURRAY  
DEPUTY VICE PRESIDENT

BS/MD

SR/14/68-69  
8 November 1968

TO: SRC Presidents  
Executive  
Local Committee Chairmen  
Student Editors  
Overseas Representatives  
Overseas National Unions  
International Organisations

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Attach is an account of the recent developments at Fort Hare. You will be kept informed of further developments as they become known to Head Office

Yours sincerely

BARRY STREEK  
Student Relations Director

DIARY OF THE SEQUEL TO FORT HARE SIT-IN.

Shortly after the 290 suspended students returned to Fort Hare in late September the four house committees had an interview with the Rector. They made two requests: that permission be given for a student body meeting, and that the 21 suspended students be readmitted. Both requests were refused.

Most of the 269 students who were back felt that the action taken against the 21 was grossly unjust. They knew that the 21 were not the organisers of the sit-in, nor responsible for the original slogans. They knew that they were all in the situation together and they insisted that action taken against the 21 alone was sheer victimisation of these particular students. They felt that they should do everything possible to have them re-admitted, as they had been.

Saturday 12 October:

Students attending a movie decided to stay on in the hall and discuss the issue. They resolved to send a letter to the Rector in which they respectfully explained their requests.

Monday 14th October:

A deputation of seven students delivered the letter and had an interview with the Rector. The letter had been signed by about 190 students and requested:

- (a) that the 21 be readmitted;
- (b) that the 21 be allowed to write in February, should they not be readmitted in October.
- (c) that the 21 be guaranteed re-entry to Fort Hare in 1969.
- (d) that the Rector take effective action against the system of the use of informers who had been spreading false rumours on campus and on basis of which students were getting into trouble. (One female student, for instance, had been interrogated in Louis Trichardt during her "suspension" about a supposed plot and the presence of pangas and explosives on campus.)

All of the requests were refused. The Rector, after a friendly discussion, indicated quite firmly that the matter was now closed. He also reported that informers were not necessary in "normal" circumstances, but were in times such as the present. The students became more disillusioned about the situation at Fort Hare as their position seemed hopeless.

Monday 21st October:

Several slogans had appeared on the library walls during the night.

Examples: "We want 21." "Away with Nazi tactics."  
"Address or resign". "Lecturers or Jeugbond?"

It is significant that the Rector made no response to this in his official capacity as head of the university. He called no meetings of students, made no statements and took no action. Life went on as if nothing had happened until twelve days later.

Saturday 2nd November-- 3.00am:

Three police cars with one CE and two CB registrations entered the campus and took three students away. They were Tshepo Lekhela of Beda Hall, Victor Bambari of Wesley Hall and Winston Amos also of Wesley Hall.

W. Amos was brought back between 6.00 a.m. and 7.00 a.m. as he had to write an examination at 9.00a.m. He reported that he had been held at the local charge office. Victor Bambari was also due to write an examination, but was not allowed to do so.

10.30p.m. Victor's parents arrived all the way from Kimberley to see their son - on a normal visit. They were told that he had been taken away by the police during the night. The Warden advised them to see the Rector as he could give them no further information. They telephoned the Rector who reported that "the matter was no longer in his hands - the State was now in charge." He advised them to see the police.

MIDNIGHT:- Victor's father saw the police but was given no further information. The police began to question him instead and advised him to go home. They accompanied him to his car and then took Winston into detention who had been waiting in the car.

1.00A.M. The police arrived on campus and took two more students into detention- Mr M. Tena and Mr. J. Ntsebenra.

DAY 1.00 A.M.: The police arrived after midnight again and detained Mr Hope Jamba.

MONDAY MORNING: The police detained Mr Simon Mabusela.

MONDAY 4.00 P.M.: The three police cars arrived again with Victor and entered Wesley Hall where they appeared to search his room.

They returned again with each of the other students singly, entered their respective residences and appeared to search their rooms. They did this with all except Tshepo. He has not been seen since his detention!

6.15 p.m.: The police arrived with Victor for a second time and entered the science department for a while - then drove off again.

During the weekend fellow students went to the police station to enquire about the seven who had been detained. On the Saturday at Midday one group of 3 students were told by a White constable at the police station that no-one at the police station knew anything about the seven or where they were. The same negative information was offered to other groups who enquired. However, as that group of three left the station they enquired again from some African constables and an plain-clothes policeman. The latter reported that they also knew nothing but did have instructions to detain any fellow students who came to enquire. He then encouraged them to laeve as soon as possible, or else he follow his instructions.

The position now is that the police have refused to give any information, even to parents. Some of the students have now been detained for more than 100 hours, and no-one knows on what legal basis - whether they have been arrested or are detained under "180 days." No-one knows where they are or what offence they are supposedly guilty of, as no charge has yet been made against them.



April 14, 1969.

PRESS RELEASE 2/69

The Rector of Fort Hare has accused NUSAS and certain newspapers of issuing irresponsible statements on conditions at Fort Hare. NUSAS has not done this. NUSAS has presented the facts and spoken the truth on what is occurring at Fort Hare as opposed to the recent statement by the Rector, which consists mainly of vague generalisations.

The Rector says, for example, that 22 students were expelled last year for playing "a leading role in the student unrest". If they played a leading role as the Rector says, how does he account for the fact that at least three of the expelled students were not even at Fort Hare when the protests began? They were in Port Elizabeth which is over 100 miles away.

The Rector says that refusal of admission on academic grounds is "normal practice", and that "a number of students" have been refused permission on these grounds. Why does the Rector not tell us how many have been refused? A conservative estimation of the information at my disposal leads me to believe that 70 students were excluded on these grounds this year.

The Rector claims that 9 students have been expelled this year for drunkenness and similar offences. I know of no white university in South Africa which expels students for a trifling offence such as drunkenness and I want to know why black students should be treated differently from whites.

Does the Rector deny that on his campus students are subjected to the following repressive rules?

- 1) No student may leave the campus without permission from the Rector or his deputies.
- 2) No student organisation can be set up without prior approval of the Rector.
- 3) No student meeting can be held on the campus without the permission of the Rector.
- 4) No magazine, pamphlet or publication for which students are responsible can be circulated without permission from the Rector.
- 5) No statement can be given to the Press on behalf of the students without the Rector's permission.
- 6) No outsider "may be upon the College grounds as a visitor" and no Fort Hare student may visit any other institution without the permission of the Rector, and then only under certain conditions.

These regulations do not exist at our white universities. If they do not exist at Fort Hare, I challenge the Rector to deny them.

According to my figures, there are just over 400 students at Fort Hare this year. Approximately 40 students have been expelled from Fort Hare since the beginning of the year for reasons other than academic. This is about 1/10th of the student population and they have been expelled in only six weeks.

The Government claims that it is doing as much as it can to improve the standard of black education in South Africa. Then how do they account for the fact that in ten years from 1958 to 1968, the enrolment figures at Fort Hare increased from 438 to 451, which is a total of 13, while two of our white universities, Witwatersrand and Cape Town, increased by 3,521 and 2,432 respectively over the same period of time? The Government is doing practically nothing for black education when compared to what they are doing for white education.

Last year there were 74,330 students studying on South African campuses. Of these, 65,745 were white and 8,585 were non-white. That means that of all these students only 11.6% are non-white, although there are four times as many non-whites in South Africa than there are whites.

If the Government feels that my criticisms are unfounded why don't they set up an independent commission of inquiry to investigate the tribal colleges, similar to their present commissions investigating the white universities? NUSAS would gladly assist in such an inquiry as we believe the matter of black education is vital for the future of South Africa, and we believe that not nearly enough is being done about it.

DUNCAN INNES  
PRESIDENT

Please Note: New Address

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