

**THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH STUDENT ACTIVISM  
IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID FROM 1968 TO 1994**

**BY**

**SETHUTHUTHU LUCKY VUMA**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE**

**MASTER OF ARTS (HISTORY)**

**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

**SUPERVISOR: PROF MP MORE**



**2018**

## DECLARATION

This dissertation was conducted at the Department of Cultural and Political Studies, University of Limpopo, under the supervision of Prof M.P More (Department of Cultural and Political Studies in the School of Social Science) at the University of Limpopo. All research activities were conducted from January 2016 to October 2017. This dissertation, submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in History, in the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Limpopo, represents original research conducted by the author; exceptions are where the work of others is duly acknowledged in the text.

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VUMA SETHUTHUTHU LUCKY

23/10/2017

I certify that the above statement is correct:

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PROFESSOR MABOGO PERCY MORE

Supervisor

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my father, Albert Kimeta Vuma, my late mother Thandi Mabokwane and my sister, Sara Vuma, my younger brother, Magwaene Gift Vuma and my son Amukelani Gimeta Vuma. Your love, prayers and care sustained me throughout my studies.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am indebted to the following people who offered me various forms of assistance during the preparation of this dissertation: Prof S. Mokgoatšana, Dr A.V Dhlwayo, and Dr.K.B. Shai. Special thanks to my supervisor Prof M.P More.

## **ABSTRACT**

Student activism is a global phenomenon which mostly refers to work by students to cause political, environmental, economic, or social change. Most countries have benefited tremendously from student activism. For example, the students have played a central role in the independence and anti-colonial struggles in most African countries. The dissertation focuses on an exploration of the role played by University of the North student activism in the struggle against apartheid from 1968 to 1994. This was a period which was characterised by an upsurge of the nationalist struggle in South Africa led by political organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) the South African Communist Party (SACP) and United Democratic Front (UDF). Student organisations such as South African Student Organisation (SASO), University Christian Movement (UCM), South African National Students' Congress (SANSCO), Azanian Student Organisation (AZASO) and many others played a significant role.

The dissertation deployed both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was derived from published and unpublished dissertations, journal articles, newsletters, books and autobiographies. Primary information was obtained through archival materials, official university documents, speeches and, unstructured and interactive interviews in order to provide evidence for the nature and character of student activism in the university.

Periodisation theory as articulated by Hollander, Rassuli, Jones and Farlow (2005) was utilised to interpret and illuminate the political struggle activities of the student activists. This theory was the most appropriate frame to tackle student activism because it divides the chronological narrative into separately labelled sequential time periods with distinct beginning and ending points.

The investigation reveals that the dominant ideology at the beginning of the period under investigation was Black Consciousness inspired by Steve Biko. However with the lapse of time this ideology was watered down by the liberal ideology which underpinned the Freedom Charter. The student activists operated within organisations such as SASO, UCM, AZASO, SANSCO and many others. The

dissertation also reveals that while the students were relatively successful in mobilising the support of rural schools and communities, they also faced vicious repression by the apartheid security establishment. The dissertation lays a solid foundation for further critical historical investigation.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### STUDENT ACTIVISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Contemporary literature in the discipline of History by historians such as Altbach & Teferra (2003), Boren (2001), Chapman (2001) and political scientists such as Alexander (1992), Fredrickson (1995) and Pretorius (2014), indicates that the youth, and students in particular, play significant roles in their countries worldwide. This is not a recent development, but it has evolved historically over time. Their roles feature prominently in politics, cultural and socio-economic change. In fact, the youth are broadly considered as the key agents of change in their respective countries (Chapman, 2001). As an essential segment of youth, students in any country are regarded as the most advanced group in society (Balintuli, 1981). It is also widely believed by historians such as Alexander (1992) and Mlambo (1995) that the future of society is in the hands of students and the youth as a whole. Generally, it is argued that students are the most informed, energetic, militant and creative individuals in society (Chapman, 2001).

In Africa, most countries have benefited tremendously from student activism. For example, the students have played a central role in the independence and anti-colonial struggles as has been noted by Chapman (2008) and Badat (1999), and political scientists such as Friedman (2013) and Balintuli (1981). These include the pioneers of the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles such as Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Amilcar Cabral (Cape Verde) and Nelson Mandela (South Africa) to name but a few. Beyond the African continent, Barack Obama is a classic example of a statesman whose leadership skills were honed within the political circles of students. Obama was involved in student activism at the University of Chicago while Mandela was a member of Student Representative Council (SRC) at the University of Fort Hare in 1940. Mandela was responsible for organising one of the largest branches of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) after it was established in 1944 (Friedman, 2013).

Mandela was expelled from the University Fort Hare because of his political activities and his defiance of the university authorities. He then went to enrol at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) in 1943 (Friedman, 2013). At Wits Mandela met students of all races and was exposed to liberal, radical and Africanist thought, which motivated him to be more involved in the liberation struggle.

Nkrumah was a student activist at historically Black-Lincoln University in the United States of America (USA) (James, 1977). Nkrumah served as Vice-President of the West African Students' Union (WASU). During this time he tried to build an alliance between student radicals and impoverished workers of London's East End (BBC World Service, 2000). He wrote: "In the East End of London particularly, the meanest kind of African mud hut would have been a palace compared to the slum that had become their lot" (James, 1977:53). He brought the Coloured Workers Association into a larger alliance of radical African organisations including the Students Union (Cohen, 2013).

The mention of the old and current crop of leaders who cut their teeth for leadership in student politics is an indication that student activism is an evolving phenomenon. The challenges that were faced by the students in South Africa and the USA, in particular, were racial discrimination and inequality. The students had to organise themselves and fight against these challenges and many others not mentioned here (Vellela, 1988). It is worth noting that students always want to be in a country that is free and holds a promising future for them. If this is not the case, students tend to become the first segment of the population to react against any injustice that is perpetuated by government, education departments and university or school managements (Vellela, 1988).

The above mentioned statement is supported by the various student uprisings that took place in various continents and countries across the globe. The 1976 Soweto Uprising in South Africa is one of them, and it remains in the collective psyche of Sowetans and South Africans at large (Frederickson, 1995). It happened when students from numerous Soweto schools embarked on a mass demonstration in their township streets.

It is crucial to mention that this historical event was triggered by the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in local Black schools. Black children

perceived the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction as a stumbling block to their education as well as promoting the language of the oppressor. This was an issue, a decision that they were not willing to accept. Massive student uprisings also took place across the globe. In 1970, Jackson State University Students were fired upon by police for protesting against racial intimidation and harassment in Jackson, Mississippi, a town in the southern part of USA (Chapman, 2001). The reasons behind the uprising were racial discrimination, economic inequality and lack of educational freedom. At Kent State University in Ohio (USA) in May 1970 four students were killed by the police for demonstrating against the bombing of Cambodia by USA military forces (Bills, 1988).

Student activism has made a magnificent mark in the world and it continues to have an influence even today. For instance, the South African students' struggles were often tied to the overall battle against the brutal and inhumane system of apartheid. To this end, student organisations became immediate feeders of South African liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), Azania People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), to mention a few (Cohen, 2013). This is a matter that positioned the universities as a fertile breeding and training grounds for the cadres of the above-mentioned liberation movements. It is important to note that the then University of the North (UNIN) is used as a case study in this study to explore student activism in the struggle against apartheid.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Student activism in SA played a significant role in the struggle for liberation, especially in the Historically Black Universities (HBUs), such as UNIN, Western Cape (UWC), Durban-Westville (UDW), Zululand (UNIZUL) and Fort Hare (UFH). However, not much has been done to thoroughly document this history at UNIN, except the contributions by Nkondo (1976), Wolfson (1976), White (1997), Mawasha (2006) and Kanyane (2010).

The specific problem under investigation in this study is the role of student activism in the struggle against apartheid at the University of the North in the period from 1968 to 1994. This problem has several dimensions. One critical dimension of the

problem relates to the political, social, and economic conditions in which student activism emerged.

The second dimension relates to the type of organisational structures created by the students. The third dimension relates to the ideology/ ideologies which powered the activism of the students. Finally, the impact / effects of this activism must be investigated. These dimensions constitute the core problem under investigation.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

This study was guided by the periodisation theory of Hollander, Rassuli, Jones and Farlow (2005). It also borrows the principles of the Altbach theory of student activism to inform its data collection and analysis procedure. "Periodisation is the process of dividing the chronological narrative into separately labelled sequential time periods with distinct beginning and ending points" (Robert, 1976:26). Historical narrative may be organised technically and geographically to cover separate events in different venues. Within such a framework, the account of what happened is presented chronologically and subjected to periodisation. This study adopts this framework to examine student activism at the UNIN in a chronological order. For example, in the 1970s the Black Consciousness movement was the force behind most student political activities, but in the 1980s the situation was different; UDF became the force behind most student political activities. The study, therefore, describes historical events in a chronological order, and also assesses the force behind them based on periodisation. Hollander et al. (2005) assert that, a study that uses periodisation as its framework must stick to the following principles, namely: consistency, reductionism and duration. This study attempts to observe these principles by describing student activism in the struggle against apartheid between 1968 and 1994 at UNIN.

The Altbach's theory of student activism (1964) provides the precise importance of understanding the formation, context, characteristics and background of student activists and student movements (organisations). Altbach's thinking on student activism is centred on key notions of student politics, representation, unrest, protest and organisation in the context of higher education. Furthermore, he argues that certain characteristics in different national higher education systems and types of universities matter for understanding student activism.

According to Luescher-Mamashela (2015:5), the Altbach's theory of student activism gives an analysis on complex multi-level system of categorical classification as well as specific propositions regarding the emergence, outcomes and impact of student activism, response to student activism, and the characteristic features of student organisations and movements and of student activists. The analysis and presentation of Altbach's (1964) framework is guided by the following questions.

- Under what conditions does student activism emerge?
- What are the typical characteristics of students' organisations/ movements?
- What are the typical characteristics of student activism?
- What are the effects of student activism?

This theoretical framework was very important to this study because it provided an approach to be followed in order to conduct an extensive scientific study about student activism, student movements and student organisations.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will contribute in highlighting the role played by UNIN student activism in the struggle against apartheid. It will help to scientifically document the history of UNIN student activism and its contribution to the struggle for liberation. Hopefully a book may be produced to further shed light on the role played by UNIN students' activism in the struggle against apartheid.

Student activism at higher education institutions in South Africa is important to study, especially during this era because students helped to keep the spirit of resistance alive during the banning of liberation movements and the exile of many of the leaders of the struggle. This study will assist in expanding the scholarly debate about the history of student activism in the country.

#### **1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

##### **1.5.1 Aim**

The aim of this study is to explore the role played by the UNIN students' activism in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa from 1968 to 1994.

### **1.5.2 Objectives**

- To describe the problems that Black students faced and how they responded to the Bantu Education system;
- To examine the role of the ideology of Black Consciousness and United Democratic Front in student activism;
- To examine the growth of student activism and factors that contributed to its growth, and appraise the changes that took place at UNIN from 1968 to 1994, and
- To describe the role of students in the destruction of apartheid.

### **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The year 1968 is used as a starting point in this research because it marked the break-away of the majority of African students from the National Union of South Africa Students (NUSAS) and the formation of South African Student Organisation (SASO), which had its first inaugural conference in July 1969 at UNIN. At this conference, Steve Biko was elected its first president. These two developments brought more changes in the national politics of Black institutions of higher learning in South Africa and indeed national politics of the country. It also served as a watershed period for the emergence of Black Consciousness movement. The year 1968 also marks the high-point of student unrest world-wide, to be specific in countries such as the United States of America (USA) France, Germany and Egypt (Hoefflerle, 2012). The year 1994 is significant as it marks the end of legal apartheid and the establishment of a new democratic government in South Africa (SA).

### **1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This study had a number of limitations that defined its scope. The study used unstructured and interactive interviews for data collection. With this method of data collection, the challenge was to secure appointments for interviews with high profile people such as Cyril Ramaphosa, the current Deputy-President of South Africa, and Frank Chikane, the current President of Apostolic Faith Mission International

(AFMI). These important political figures were directly involved in the student political activism at UNIN. Due to their high responsibilities and tight schedules it became impossible for the researcher to get hold of them.

## **1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

**Chapter One:** It opens with the general introduction of this study, the purpose, statement of the problem, theoretical framework, and motivation for the study, limitations and closes with a chapter breakdown.

**Chapter Two:** It presents a review of scholarly literatures related to the topic under investigation.

**Chapter Three:** It focuses on research methodology

**Chapter Four:** It analyses the social and academic challenges faced by students at Turfloop.

**Chapter Five:** This chapter focuses on the contribution of student activism at Turfloop to the struggle against the apartheid government by examining different forces that influenced student political activism at that particular period.

**Chapter Six:** It summarises the research findings and closes with concluding remarks.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided the general introduction on the role of UNIN student activism in the struggle against apartheid, while the current chapter will deal with the review of the existing literature on the topic under study. This chapter is key in this study because it provides an overview of the field under investigation, determining what has already been done, and identifying gaps and prospects. It is for this reason, that a literature review is the backbone of a study. The chapter investigates and studies what has already been done in order to contextualise the present investigation. Furthermore, the researcher explores the findings and limitations of studies by other researchers on this subject. To this end, the review of related literature served as a critical aspect of this study to avoid the duplication of existing research.

The subject of student activism in South Africa exists in documents, but student activism at UNIN has received little attention from scholars from various disciplines, including historical and political studies. Most historical and political scientists and researchers tend to focus mostly on the so called “big moments” or “big figures” and neglect the important historical contributions of other regions, particularly rural areas (Heffernan, 2015). For the purposes of this research, scholarly works from the disciplines of History and Political Studies were reviewed as part of this study.

#### **2.2. WORLD PERCEPTION OF STUDENT ACTIVISM**

Student activism is a world-wide phenomenon. Students were an important force in the revolutionary movements of 1848 in Germany and later in the unification of Germany and Italy in the 19th century (Altbach 1989). Almost every nationalist and

liberation movement in the struggle for independence had a strong component of student participation, for example in Asia and Africa (Altbach 1989). Students in countries such as Vietnam, Kenya, India, and Ghana were involved in efforts to free their countries from colonial rule (Altbach, 1989). So the issue of student activism is not a new issue and is not the issue that is limited to a certain country or continent.

There is considerable amount of research on student activism across the globe. Most research and analyses on students' political activism in Southern Africa dates back to the period of the 1960s when most universities were introduced (Negombwe, 2012). However, Altbach (1989) dates it to the period before 1960. Negombwe (2012) observes that students have been involved in political processes and issues that include protests against imperialists, colonialists, political assassinations, corrupt governments maladministration and prioritisation of issues of national importance and investment paths. The above mentioned statement supports the claim made by Chapman (2008) which says that, student activism is not only limited to university based issues such as shortage of books and extra charges for late return of library, welfare matters such as bad food, congestion in residences, poor catering services, freedom in residential halls, and access to recreational and guidance services. Some of their issues with management within the university centred on administrative inadequacies, debates regarding the allocation of resources, discipline matters on campus, and disputes on management styles. Chapman (2008) regarded students as the most advanced group in society, and he further emphasised the fact that they are always more likely to be the first group to entertain issues of national importance such as racism, struggles against oppression and many other issues. According to Chapman (2008), their activism is not only limited to their academic related issues. Most countries have benefited tremendously from student activism. For example, the students have played a central role in the independence and anti-colonial struggles as has been noted by Chapman (2008).

Wight (1966) wrote a very informative article titled "Roots and Soil of Student Activism". In this document he discusses a multitude of issues, at the same time indicating the roots of student activism. Wight further states that, after World War II, there were few countries in this world which had not been subjected to revolutionary changes in part or the whole of their internal institutional structures and in their relations with other nations, noting that in society, the group that is more prominent

and more potentially significant for the present and the future are the students. Wight studied the roots of student activism in Mexico, Colombia, Japan, India, Egypt and the USA. The aim of his study was to locate the origins of student activism in the above mentioned countries and also to determine if those countries had a different definition of student activism or not.

Wight 's findings revealed that similarities in student activism with respect to the six countries under study are as follows: the rank and file is composed of the youth, predominantly between the ages of 16 and 23, give or take a couple of years at either extreme; all examples have some kind of organisation with officers and frequently at headquarters office; all engage in group activities, the most frequent of which is the mass demonstration in which the activists are protesting against something they do not like or the absence of something they are asserting; all are led by few initiating activists who propose certain targets for action and the kind of action to be taken, and whose continuing problem is to mobilise a following large enough to make the action effective, and all of them raise problems of public authorities.

They differ, in the degree to which they can be characterised as a movement, in their organisational structure, in their relationships to other pressure and action groups, in the characteristics of their leaders, in the numbers and characteristics of their members and supporters, in kinds and characteristics of their activities, in their emphases on particular operational field (e.g. campus, community or national politics), in the objects to which their actions are directed, and in their ideological orientation. In short, the findings of Wight were that, the definition of student activism and what constitute student activism in those countries is the same. But the difference is in their actions and how they approach issues. For example, in Egypt student activists may prefer to use violence as a solution to resolve their issues, while in Mexico student activists may prefer peaceful demonstration and engagements to resolve their issues. Wight also notes pressure of the matter on the table as a determining factor on the decision of what kind of action to take. For example, if the issue is very problematic and burning to the students, the possibilities may be that the students will resort to violence or any proactive strategy that will put the authorities under pressure to act in their favour. He goes further and develops numerous hypotheses of causal relationship in the process of interpreting student

activism. He defines three classes of insight as to the causes of student activism which are: the stage of youth in the maturation process, actualisation of the image of the student involvement in societal problems and relation to action groups.

The present researcher concurs with Wight on his findings of the universal definition of student activism and what constitutes student activism. What is regarded as student activism in America, Asia and Africa is the same. The only difference is their character and their approach to issues. That comes as a result of the conditions and challenges which students face in their countries, which differs from one country to another; hence their struggles are not the same. For example, in well-developed countries you may find students demonstrating for car parking while in the less developed countries students may be demonstrating for healthy food. The approach to both challenges will not be the same. Obviously the fighting spirit of those who are demonstrating for healthy food will be high because they are fighting for a basic need rather than those who are fighting for a want. Such differences dictate different actions, different characters and different approaches to issues.

Scott (1968) made a fairly valuable contribution to research on student political activism in Latin America. Scott's work focused on understanding motivation that draw students into national political issues, usually in some form of confrontation politics that sets them at odds with the existing power structure. In order to get a grasp of this trend, Scott wanted to know more about the value system that motivates the students and schools in which they study. Scott also made an attempt to delve into the political system of the region and varying roles in this regard. Constructive or otherwise, the political system in question reflects the ability of the other social and political structures participating in the political process to meet the needs of a changing society. His study looked at five Latin American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico.

Scott established that more students are drawn into national political life because they are the most advanced group in the society, and before they become students they are members of the general society. According to Scott, "the youth are drawn into national politics because every revolution that takes place in their society affects them in one way or the other" (1968:23). He further claims that another reason which

makes students to be more visible in the national struggles is that, they are an essential segment of youth and the most advanced group in society. He also points out that, students play a central role in providing the political direction of their countries.

The researcher shares the same sentiment with Scott on his claim, “that students are drawn into national politics because every revolution that takes place in their society affects them in one way or the other” (1968: 24). Black students in South Africa during the apartheid era were affected by apartheid as students as well as members of the general society. As a special group of emerging intellectuals in society based in an environment that was meant for knowledge creation (University), they had to challenge the oppression of the apartheid government. This study has benefited from Scott’s work, hence, the current research is centred on UNIN.

Fisher (1979) contributed an article on the major strikes that were led by students world-wide. It is relevant in this study because it advances the understanding of student activism from an international perspective. Fisher’s work focused on major student uprisings that took place in various countries around the world, particularly in Vietnam, England and South Africa. Fisher discovered that, most of the strikes were caused by either political, environmental, economic, or social change. Although often the strikes arise as a result of curriculum, residence, food and educational funding. Fisher emphasised that, student strikes doesn’t cause by university based issues only. He mentioned that in most cases, students were involved in strikes for societal issues that are beyond university based issues. He further argues that student strikes influenced greater political events in countries such as South Africa, Argentina, Canada and France.

Fisher compiled the major student strikes around the globe under one document. The limitation of his work is that it was based on information from newspapers, radio and television. He did not go out to those countries to do field work. Media reporters are more likely to exaggerate some of the facts when they report to listeners or readers. Media reporters are also more likely not to report the whole event. They tend to cover the part that will make their newspapers sell or attract more readers. It is against the principle of research to rely on media reports for the scientific studies such as this one. Despite the highlighted flaws in Fisher’s work, it should be noted

that the current research has benefited enormously from it, because it touches on the militancy of student activism from various countries around the globe.

### **2.3. STUDENT ACTIVISM IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT**

Altbach (1989) maintains that almost every nationalist struggle for independence in Africa had a strong component of student participation. The majority of leaders of African liberation movements such Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe) just to mention a few, are the product of student activism. Their political credentials are traced from as early as during their days as students in institutions of higher learning. They later played a very pivotal role in the struggle against colonial rule in their respective countries and subsequently became the heads of states.

The university is an environment which produces knowledgeable people who contribute to their countries either politically, socially, and economically. Early protests in Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania were, indeed, directed against external forces and colonial rule (Badat, 1999). Besides the involvement in the broader political events, students have also been involved in effecting academic-related changes. Such academic problems as noted by Luescher-Mamashela & Mugume (2014) include protests against difficult examinations, incompetence of lecturers, shortage of books, introduction of new courses, and favouritism in teaching and examinations. For instance, at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, students have vigorously participated in the definition of what is legitimate knowledge since the late 1960s. At the University of Zimbabwe, students protested in 1989 against shortage of relevant and dated books and charges for late return of library books (Omari & Mihyo, 1991).

Zeilig (2008) provides a graphic account of the problems affecting students in Africa's higher education institutions. These range from physical decay of buildings to slashing of library books and journal stocks. Issues of major concern, as noted by Zeilig (2008) include escalation of student fees, high living costs on campus, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate teaching. The above mentioned problems

are not over in most African universities because people continue to witness student protests that are triggered by the same problems. For example, in 2015 in South Africa the researcher witnessed the beginning of a huge student uprising known as #FeesMustFall. The #FeesMustFall is a student-led protest movement in response to an increase in fees at South African universities.

Student activism has received varied responses from governments and university authorities in different countries (Zeilig, 2008). Government responses to student activism range from ignoring student protests entirely and violently repressing demonstrations in order to silence them (Omari and Mihyo, 1991). For example, the initial response to #FeesMustFall movement by South African government was repressive. In most campuses such as the University of Pretoria and the University of Limpopo, the police were deployed in numbers to calm down the situation. The police had to fire stun grenades, rubber bullets, and paper spray. The South African government was doing all this in order to suppress and silence the students. But unfortunately their strategy did not succeed. As a result of these demonstrations, the South African government responded positively to the call of students by announcing a non-fee increment for 2016 in all South African universities. This decision was a victory for South African university students and it also proved that students have power to hold the government accountable.

Government repression of student protests in South Africa is not an isolated phenomenon. The violent repression of student activism is featured in both developing nations and industrialised nations. In France and West Germany in the 1960s, repression of student protests resulted in deaths of students at the hands of the police (Altbach 1989). Furthermore, clashes between students and the police in Mexico City in 1968 resulted in what became known as the Tlateloco massacre. During the Iranian student riots of July 9, 1999 that began in the residences of the University of Tehran, and spread to several campuses around the nation, several people were killed in a week of violent confrontations (Robin, 2004).

There are many examples of violent repression of student movements, with leaders being jailed, tortured and sometimes killed. Onkgopotse Abraham Tiro is one of the student leaders who suffered the brutality of university authorities at UNIN in 1972 in South Africa. On 29 April 1972, Tiro made a stirring speech at the university

graduation ceremony, decrying the inequities of apartheid and its policy of Bantu Education (Heffernan, 2015). His speech led him into trouble because the university management and the advisory council took a decision to expel him from the university.

Heffernan (2015) argues that the contributions of rural regions such as the Northern Transvaal in South Africa have often been omitted from books of history. In his argument he also stated that most historians tend to focus more on the so called “big moments” or “big figures” such as Soweto Uprising and neglect other important historical events particularly in the rural areas. Heffernan’s article seeks to redress that omission and to make a case for the importance of Turfloop, of Black Consciousness, and of Abraham Tiro as a critical influence on the schoolchildren of Soweto, and student activists around South Africa, during the early and mid-1970s. Heffernan (2015) also focused on the implications of Tiro’s expulsion and its significance to the student body. Heffernan’s observations are of direct relevance for this study.

Hanna (1975) explores the reasons that largely led to student protests in the independent Black African states. Hanna further states that the poor economic conditions in most African countries play a role in student protests. He notes that there have been demonstrations, boycotts or violent protests concerning the depressed economic conditions of the students’ countries. The other main cause of student protests according to his findings is the quality of student education. The relationship between the university and the regime, the regime and international “aggressors”, also have a potential to spark student protests. There are also two university-related issues that have often led to student protests: the personal freedom of students and the academic quality of their education. According to Hanna’s findings, students at many institutions of higher learning have expressed dissatisfaction with such restrictions as dress requirements, hours of co-educational visits to rooms, and faculty censorship of student publications. There have also been complaints concerning matters of educational quality such as Africanisation, faculty teaching ability, library resources and the content of examinations.

He has also hinted on the outcomes of the student protests. He observes that, the political success or failure of a protest can be measured by the political outcome of

the protest episodes. Hanna asserts that the outcome of the protest is normally negative or positive. He provides the example of the University College of Dar es Salaam's protests against Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere's 1968 decision to have university students participate in the national service programme. This led to a one year suspension of more than three hundred students (Hanna, 1975).

However, he notes that a relatively small percentage of student protests lead to a significant change in the situation which initially catalysed the action. He cites the example of the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) student protests against the regional pension bill, which contributed to its immediate withdrawal. Protests by students at the University of Ghana also led to reductions in penalties for student protests imposed upon some of the students' leaders and to changes in the procedures for penalising students. The foregoing clearly indicates that student protests have their own positive and negative outcomes. The outcomes of the protest are determined by the conditions of the time, the reasons for the protests and the pressures for the protests. It is not always the case that the majority of the outcomes of protest are more likely to become negative according to the claims of Hanna.

Byaruhanga (2006) examines the role of student activism in shaping Uganda's higher education. He focuses on the critical incidents of student protest, using eyewitness accounts drawn from past and present student leaders. To put the study in context, Byaruhanga provides a brief history of Uganda from pre-colonial times to the present, a short (and selective) overview of education in Uganda, and a consideration of certain theoretical debates on student activism in higher education. Byaruhanga defines student power as "the impact of student activism" (2006:07). He indicates that although student activism has brought change to higher education in Africa and has had a significant impact on national politics in the region, few studies on the subject have been conducted in Africa. With no unifying framework on student activism available in the literature, what we have, he argues, is "a fragmentary tapestry of theoretical threads, based primarily on western experience" (2006:11).

In general, as Byaruhanga shows, African governments have been heavy-handed in their response to student activism. Students and professors have been imprisoned, detained, raped and killed. Yet student activism has been a significant social force. "In South Africa for example, student activism played an important role in ending

apartheid and moving the country toward democracy” (Cohen, 2013:66). Student activists at Makerere University saw themselves as the conscience of Ugandan society, especially on issues of social justice, and represented a powerful voice for change in the country.

During Idi Amin's rule in the 1970s, they focused on democracy and the overthrow of the military dictatorship and the impact of their activism has been significant up to the present. Students are now represented at all levels of university governance, including the university council. A significant number of former student activists also hold positions of leadership in East Africa.

Byaruhanga's work examines student activism periodically, beginning in the 1950s. For each period, there is a commentary on the political events followed by a chronicle of the critical incidents of student protests and their aftermath, with his interpretative reflection on the events. Student eyewitness accounts of the critical incidents help us understand their grievances as well as the response of the university administrators and the government, although a clearer description of the author's methodology for reporting the student accounts would have been useful. The current researcher concurs with Byaruhanga on the critical need for more studies to revitalise higher education in Africa. To reduce poverty and intellectual and economic dependency, the tertiary institutions of the region must be able to turn out skilled graduates capable of managing national affairs in the years ahead.

According to Mlambo (1995), student activism has made an important contribution to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. In the first years of independence students were among the most fearsome defenders of the regime. Three broad periods of student activism can be identified. The first pro-government period was followed by a violent break with the regime in 1988; the second period saw students declare that they were “the voice of the voiceless”. With the onset of structural adjustment programmes in the early 1990s, the privileged status of students in higher education was rapidly eroded. The third period emerged after 1995 as student activism converged with the urban revolt that was beginning to shake Zimbabwe (Mlambo, 1995). Mlambo addresses the question of whether educational institutions will in the future become the arenas of social struggle in African countries as other avenues of dissent become progressively closed.

He first provides a brief outline of the social and economic context in African countries in order to cast student political activism in the wider picture of the rapidly deteriorating conditions. Such an outline is deemed necessary to understand the genesis of student activism, and in particular, how school-based concerns such as declining educational standards can escalate, providing the embryonic elements for the articulation of more widely-based social and economic questions, which have no other avenue of expression in increasingly closed and repressive political regimes. The vicious circle of student action and predictable government reaction such as repeated closures of educational institutions which further contributes to the decline in the quality of education is then discussed. Finally, Mlambo touches on the problems of rising violence in student demonstrations, the solidarity which seems to be emerging between students and other social groups in some countries, and the potential implications for the struggles for democracy and political pluralism in sub-Saharan Africa.

#### **2.4. STUDENT ACTIVISM IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

In a chapter entitled: "Where an Ideal was Expressed, Hijacked, and Redeemed" (in Nkomo et al., 2006), Mawasha made an attempt to outline the general history of UNIN. His chapter was not specifically focused on the student activism, but he touched on some aspects of student activism such as how the first SRC was formed. Mawasha's work focused on the history of how the UNIN was created, the formation of the first SRC at UNIN, the conduct and leadership style of the university management and the challenges that were faced by students at UNIN.

It should be noted however, that periodisation as a key element in the research has been overlooked in this work. Dates play an important role in validating the evolution of any struggle. Unfortunately, Mawasha did not demonstrate the roots of different phases of student activism or highlight the link between student activism and national struggle for liberation. He only gave a narrative of the general history of Turfloop. His chapter does not provide enough detail on student activism at Turfloop; it only managed to touch on the issues of student activism in passing.

Nkondo (1976) also contributed a very informative book, although the book does not focus specifically on student activism. It was fundamentally a report of the testimony the Black Academic Staff Association (BASA) gave to the Commission of Inquiry

chaired by Judge Ishmael Mohamed on the crisis such as political unrest at the then UNIN. His work has value for this study because it contains most of the challenges that were faced by the University from staff members to students.

Members of BASA did not differ much from Black students in terms of the challenges that they faced as a result of apartheid government policies. Some of these challenges are racial discrimination, unequal treatment of staff and harsh working conditions. For example, a White lecturer was not treated the same way a Black lecturer was. White lecturers were given special treatment and higher salaries than Black lecturers irrespective of whether they were doing the same job or not. Black students also suffered racial discrimination and unequal treatment as compared to White students in White institutions. For example, the quality of education in White universities was far much superior than in Black institutions and even their facilities were more advanced to those found in Black institutions. White institutions were given priority than Black institutions. Black academics and students shared similar challenges, especially racial discrimination.

Badat (1999) made a major contribution to the study of student activism in South Africa in his book titled “***Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid from SASO to SANSCO 1968 to 1990***”. Badat’s book is centred on the analysis of two Black higher education organisations that span the period 1968 to 1990. One is the South African National Students’ Congress (SANSCO). The other is the South African Student Organisation (SASO), popularly associated with the person of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness. He analyses the ideological and political orientations and internal organisational features of SASO and SANSCO and their intellectual, political and social determinants. He also analyses the role of SASO and SANSCO in the educational, political and other spheres and the factors that shaped their activities. He also assesses their salient contributions to the popular struggle against apartheid education, race, class and gender oppression and the extent to which their activities reproduced, undermined and transformed apartheid and capitalist social relations. According to him, student activism through SASO and SANSCO played a very pivotal role in the struggle for liberation in the country. He argues that students played a central role in the independence and anti-colonial struggles in South Africa. Badat also makes a revealing observation. He notes that during that era students

helped to keep the spirit of resistance alive during the banning of liberation movement and the exile of many of the leaders of the struggle.

Badat made a fairly valuable contribution to research on Black student politics. It is clear that his study is not divergent from the current research and it is thematically linked, though variables differ. The variables differ because the focus of his work was on the two Black students' higher education political organisations, SASO and SANSCO, while the focus of the current research is on student activism in Turfloop and its contribution in the struggle against apartheid. Badat's work is limited in terms of providing a comprehensive history of student political activism. It only covers the role played by SASO and SANSCO in the struggle against apartheid at institutions of higher learning. However, his work is of value for this study because SASO and SANSCO were both active at the UNIN. SASO played a dominant role at UNIN since its inception in 1968.

In his book, ***Student Culture and Activism in Black South African Universities***, Nkomo (1984) examines the nature of student culture and activism in Black universities in South Africa. The main argument of Nkomo's work is that, segregated education for Blacks accidentally produced a distinct and contradictory culture of resistance for a substantial part of the African student body. Ethnic-based African universities became sites of student resistance to apartheid and nurtured a new generation of activists responding to factors external to the formal university structure and curriculum. Nkomo provides a comprehensive and critical analysis of the principal legislation and subsequent amendments, the ethnic-racial personnel composition, structures, and curriculum of the institutions, expenditures, and the promotion of an official institutional culture that sought to impose an Afrikaner orientation and produce submissive African student graduates.

Nkomo's main argument is that when the apartheid government introduced the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, its main aim was to isolate Africans and provide them with inferior education, which would direct Africans to the unskilled labour market and also transform them into willing servants of Whites. However, this did not become the case because ethnic

African universities opened a platform for most African students to dedicate their knowledge and energy to the struggle for liberation.

These universities allowed the most advanced segment of youth in society, the students, to be in the same environment and be able to combine their ideas in the fight against apartheid.

Kane-Berman (1978) provides the first book-length analysis of the Soweto Uprising. For him the most important factor in explaining student resistance in the townships was the influence of Black Consciousness (BC) ideology. Fredrickson (1995) also contends that BC ideology had a major impact on student activism and resistance. He states: “the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) was not without political consequences. The circulation of ideas beyond the colleges and universities to the high school students of Soweto helped to set off the revolt of June 1976” (Fredrickson, 1995:91). He also supports the claim that BC was instrumental in influencing the South African Students’ Movement (SASM). According to him, the government had no doubt that BC was responsible for the revolt and that SASM was clearly under BCM influence.

Hyslop upholds the influence of BC on SASM. He states that “One important political influence was BC, which emerged out of African university campuses in the late 1960s” (Hyslop, 1999:9). He asserts that BC spread to schools through young teachers, providing school students with new political ideas. For him there were several reasons for students’ receptiveness to BC influences. These include discontent over school overcrowding, a changing political situation that made the state look more threatened than it had been in the 1960s, a growing economic uncertainty as the economic boom of the 1960s tailed off; and the rising influence of BC which reduced the political influence of conservative Black elites in the educational sphere.

According to Hyslop, BC was instrumental in influencing the political activities of ethnic African universities. The ideologies of BC played a very important role in influencing Black students to break away from NUSAS and form a complete Black student organisation which was rooted in the ideology of BC (SASO), which made a valuable contribution in the struggle for liberation. He further argues that BC played a very important role in the struggle for liberation, especially in the 1960s and 1970s

during the time when liberation movements (PAC & ANC) were banned in the country. The banning of liberation movements in the country and the arrest of political activists left many people in the country with fear to continue with the struggle for liberation.

But the emergency of BC provided a new political ideas and contributed in keeping the spirit of resistance very high and eliminating fear amongst political activists.

Hirson (1979) disagreed with Kane-Berman (1978) and Hyslop (1999) on the influence of BC. He argues that BC ideas had little impact on school children. More important to their behaviour were the reorganisation of secondary schools and the threat of eventual unemployment. His analysis also discredits BC ideology as having little or no influence on the SASM or the Soweto Uprising. Instead, he gives credit to African working-class militancy. The present researcher disagrees with Hirson on his claim that BC had little impact on school children. The rise of the BCM and the formation of SASO raised the political consciousness of many school children. For example, most of the leaders of Soweto Uprising such as Tsietsi Mashinini, Khotso Seatlholo, Sibongile Mkhabela and Super Moloji, just to mention a few, became openly active members of BCM post-Soweto Uprising. The key adult supporters of Soweto Uprising such as Henry Isaacs, Mamphela Ramphele, and Deliza Mji were the advocates of BC ideology. So if Soweto Uprising did not have any elements of BC ideology, then the above mentioned leaders would not have supported the uprising.

Black teachers who subscribed to the BC ideology were critical in instilling BC ideology on school children. Onkgopotse Tiro, a prominent BCM leader, was one of those teachers who were critical in instilling BC ideology at Morris Isaacson High School, which produced BCM leaders such as Esau Mkhethi and Tsietsi Mashinini (Heffernan, 2015). Tiro also acted as the SASO representative to SASM forums and seatings (Heffernan, 2015). Pandelani Nefolovhodwe was also one of the prominent BCM leaders who became a teacher in Sibasa, Venda, in 1973. "Nefolovhodwe was teaching Maths and Science but he strove to politically conscientise his learners by encouraging them to read all the available newspapers, and holding weekly discussions on current affairs. He would also pick particular learners for more overt political education" (Heffernan, 2015:12). The link between BCM leaders and SASM

leaders is the clear evidence of the influence BC ideology on Soweto Uprising because if they did not believe in one ideology they should have not had any link.

The BCM began when Steve Biko, Barney Pityana and other students launched SASO in 1969, mobilising Black students at tertiary institutions (Cloete, 2016). They adopted a philosophy of BC, and their adherents launched several allied organisations, including the Black People's Convention (BPC) and Black Community Programmes (BCPs). The BC activists also turned their attention to school-going students, and in September 1972 they launched the Transvaal Youth Organisation (TYO) (Cloete, 2016). In July 1973 they launched the National Youth Organisation (NAYO). The relationship between BC and school-going students had an impact on how students think as well as how they approached the entire struggle for liberation (Cloete, 2016). The Soweto uprising of 1976 is important to this research because soon after this event more student activism was observed countrywide. It served as the motivation to other learners and students in other regions around the country. The Soweto uprising had a direct impact on UNIN student activism because on 17 June 1976, the day after the June 16 uprisings in Soweto, students burnt down UNIN library (Cloete, 2016). The university libraries were targeted because they were perceived as symbols of oppression (Cloete, 2016).

Fort Hare alumnus, Massey (2001), also contributed a book about the rise of student activism at Fort Hare. In his work, Massey (2001) combines a trove of previously untapped university records with the recollections of dozens of former students to dig deep into the complex past of the institution that educated figures such as Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Robert Mugabe.

According to Massey (2001:3), "Through the eyes of former students, we see just how the university turned sharply off the course intended by its missionary founders and apartheid trustees, giving birth to many of the most important leaders in South Africa's struggle for democracy". Massey interviewed former students of Fort Hare ranging from Govan Mbeki and Wycliffe Tsotsi to Jeff Baqwa and Thenjiwe Mtintso, who explained the vital role Fort Hare played in the development of their activism. He pays particular attention to the 1960 government takeover, showing how the authorities' attempt to stifle student protest ended up creating the hothouse conditions that eventually brought apartheid to its knees.

Massey 's work was helpful to the current study because UNIN and Fort Hare were both Black universities with the same challenges such as Bantu education and also with the same visions of student activism such as the dismantlement of apartheid. Based on the above mentioned statement, this study has benefitted from Massey's work by understanding student activism from different Black institutions as opposed to only the institution that is under study.

Heffernan and Nieftagodien (2016) contributed a book entitled: ***Students Must Rise: Youth Struggles in South Africa Before and Beyond Soweto 76***. Heffernan and Nieftagodien take the Soweto Uprising as their point of departure, but look at student and youth activism in South Africa more broadly by considering what happened before and beyond the Soweto moment. Early chapters of this book assess the impact of the anti-pass campaigns of the 1950s and the political ideologies of BCM. It also focuses on the religion and culture in fostering political consciousness and organisation among the youth and students in townships and rural areas. Later chapters explore the wide-reaching impact of June 16 itself for student organisations over the next two decades across the country. Two final chapters consider contemporary student-based political movements, including #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall, and historically root these in the long and rich tradition of student activism in South Africa. This book rethinks the conventional narrative of youth and student activism in South Africa by placing most famous moments such as the "1976 students' uprising in Soweto" in a deeper historical and geographic context. According to Heffernan and Nieftagodien (2016:02), "the Soweto student uprising of 1976 was a decisive moment in the struggle against apartheid. It marked the expansion of political activism to a new generation of young activists, but beyond that it inscribed the role that young people of subsequent generations could play in their country's future. Since that momentous time students have held a special place in the collective imaginary of South African history".

This is valuable contribution because it focuses on early student activism and tries to link it to current student activism. It also contains a chapter that focuses on the political activities of the products of UNIN student activists, particularly those like Pandelani Nefolovhodwe and Onkgopotse Tiro, who became teachers after their studies.

It assesses their influence on learners in those schools that they were teaching. This book contributes to a relatively deep understanding and acknowledge of the important role played by student political activism in the struggle for liberation.

## **2.4. CONCLUSION**

The literature identified for this study shows that student activism is a worldwide phenomenon and students are drawn into national political life because they are the most advanced, energetic and militant group in the society. This literature also emphasises the fact that students are not isolated from their communities because before they become students they are members of their communities. Because of their intellectualism, their energy and militancy, they tend to be the first to tackle issues that confront their communities. The literature also confirms the fact that student activism is not limited to university based issues such as the curriculum or lack of proper facilities. The identified literature affirms that student activism as a topic exists in documents, but not enough records exist on student activism at UNIN.

This study also notes that Nkondo (1976), White (1997) and Heffernan and Nieftagodien (2016) made contribution on the history of UNIN in general, from its inception, linking academic issues to student activism. However, their work was limited because none of them provided a comprehensive history of UNIN student activism and its contribution in the struggle against apartheid. Therefore, the current study focuses on filling that gap, which is important to the history of liberation struggle in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided an overview of the field of investigation in order to determine what has already been done, and identifying gaps and prospects, while the current chapter will deal with the methodological part of this study.

#### **3.1 STUDY AREA**

The apartheid government established a commission in 1958 to research on the possibilities of implementing a Separate Education Bill (White, 1997). The commission in its report recommended that universities for particular ethnic groups be established. The commission recommended that, the proposed university colleges should serve an ethnic group, enriching it both spiritually and materially, as well as promoting the broader interests of South Africa (White, 1997). Each should be entrusted with the task of developing all aspects of the culture, technological development, and the promotion of the general progress and welfare of the ethnic group concerned (Nkondo, 1976). Each should guide the ethnic group towards greater responsibility, knowledge, self-sufficiency and self-development.

“In 1959 the apartheid government passed the Extension of University Education Act (No.45 of 1959). The Act enabled the Minister of Bantu Education and Administration to provide for the establishment, maintenance, management and control of university colleges, for the limitation of the admission of non-White students to certain university institutions, and for other incidental matters” (Nkondo, 1976:02). As a result of this Act, five university colleges, affiliated to the University of South Africa were established in 1960. The five established universities were as follows:

- a. University College of Western Cape (for the coloureds)
- b. University College of Durban-Westville (for the Indians)
- c. University College of Zululand (for the Zulus)
- d. University College of the North (for the North-Sotho, South Sotho, Tsonga, Tswana and Venda)
- e. University College of Fort Hare (for the Xhosa). Fort Hare had been in existence since 1916 affiliated to the University of Rhodes.

Dr Verwoerd, then the Minister of Education, stated that “We don’t want Black students in the same Universities as the young White students of today, who will be the leaders of tomorrow” (White, 1997:07). “We do not want the Whites to become accustomed to the natives, that they feel that there is no difference between them and the natives” (Wolfson, 1976: 23).

In 1960, the University College of the North (Turfloop) was founded as one of the University Colleges for Blacks. In terms of the apartheid policy, this state-controlled university, which was situated within the Lebowa Homeland, was intended to serve as an instrument for the entrenchment of the apartheid system. “Sovenga became the unofficial title given to the university college, a name originally given to the university post office and coined from the languages of the ethnic groups which the institution was intended to serve: **Sotho**, **Venda**, and **Tsonga**: SOVENGA “ (White, 1997:75). It was a symbol of the ethnic nature of the university college since it was created to serve the above mentioned ethnic groups. The university college was situated on a farm originally known to the local inhabitants as “Turfloop” (White, 1997). The university college became known as “Turfloop”.

In 1969 the apartheid government granted the University College of the North autonomy from the University of South Africa (Act No. 47 of 1969) which brought an end to the College status as of 1 January 1970 (Ndebele, 1994). The university was a centre of resistance to apartheid in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, with the South African Defense Force (SADF) occupying the grounds often during those years (White, 1997). After the end of apartheid, the university struggled through various re-organisation and rationalisation schemes, yet always managed to survive. Enrollment fluctuated wildly in the years after liberation and while some faculties did

not transition very easily, others were able to seize upon the new opportunities (White, 1997).

The University of the North was later renamed University of Limpopo (UL) in 2005. UL came as the result of a merger between the former Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA) and the University of the North, which occurred on 01 January 2005. The merger did not last long because in 2014, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande announced the demerger of UL and MEDUNSA, which was effective on the 01 January 2015.

The new medical university was named Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMHSU) and continued to train medical and allied health sciences professionals, but it also introduced new exciting academic offerings ranging from biomedical technology, bioengineering, medical informatics and veterinary science, which were not part of the curriculum before.

### **3. 2. POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

This study employed non-probability sampling. Snowball sampling was used in this study. In snowball sampling, the researcher begins by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in the study. The criteria for inclusion in this study was enrolment as a student at UNIN between 1968 and 1994, preferably those who were involved in political activities or members of BASA.

This study had 16 participants who are former students at UNIN from 1968 to 1994. Amongst these 16 participants, 2 are former members of BASA and 9 are former student leaders and the other 5 were ordinary former UNIN students. Participants were selected through snowball sampling, the researcher identified a few potential participants and interviewed them. After the interview the researcher asked the interviewee to recommend other potential participants who met the criteria

### **3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, which enables in-depth and detailed analysis of the research phenomenon (Morse & Richards, 2002:132). "The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides

information about the “human” side of an issue, often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals” (Bernard, 1995:46).

A descriptive research design was used in this study and it offered the participants an opportunity to describe student activism in their own words. Accordingly it offered the participants an opportunity to give voice to their experiences and describe events and situations. The information gained through a descriptive study was not limited to preconceived questions and categories. The researcher also employed unstructured and interactive interviews as method of data collection.

This provided rich and detailed data that led to a deep understanding of the role played by UNIN student activists in the struggle against apartheid.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was derived from magazines, newsletters, books and autobiographies. Primary information was obtained through UNIN archives, official university documents, speeches and, unstructured and interactive interviews. The interviews were tape-recorded in order to facilitate an easy analysis of data at the end of data collection process. Unstructured and interactive interviews were conducted through a list of guiding questions in order to collect more data without limitations.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used to analyse data. This type of analysis is highly inductive, that is the themes emerge from the data and are not imposed upon it by the researcher (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). The process of TCA involved, identifying themes in the data, coding and interpreting the structure and content of the themes and sub-themes. The analysis of interview data was done through transcription of interview data from the tapes. Themes and sub-themes that emerged were recorded and interpreted. This method of analysis was helpful in the analysis of data as it quantifies and analyses the presence, meaning and relation of words and concepts, and then make differences. This means that data was explored under common themes and then compiled into units of meaning of full codes. Later these codes were the basis for further analysis.

### **3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA**

The trustworthiness, credibility, dependability and conformability of this study was enhanced through triangulation of both primary and secondary sources. The inclusion of ordinary former UNIN students who studied between 1968 and 1994 assisted this study to neutralise or dilute the level of bias from self-interested and narrow responses of the former student political activists who wanted to advance a particular political course.

The voluntary participation of informants was important in this study to ensure honesty. Each person who was approached was given an opportunity to refuse to participate in this study so as to ensure that the data collection sessions involved only those who are genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer information freely. The opportunity for the scrutiny of this study by my supervisor, peers and academics also helped to enhance the trustworthiness of this study.

### **3.7 PERIODISATION**

The year 1968 is used as a starting point in this study because it marks the breakaway of Black students from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) to form the South African Student Organisation (SASO), which had its first inaugural conference in July 1969 at UNIN. At this conference Steve Biko was elected its first president. The year 1968 also marks the high-point of student unrest worldwide, to be specific in countries such as the United States of America (USA) France, Germany and Egypt (Hoefflerle, 2012). The year 1994 marks the end of apartheid and the establishment of a new democratic government in South Africa (SA).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE EVOLUTION OF STUDENT ACTIVISM AND PROBLEMS FACED BY STUDENTS AT TURFLOOP**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on the methodological part of this study while the current chapter seeks to provide an overview of Turfloop student activism and its manifestation from 1968 to 1994. It does so by analysing key factors that have shaped student activism during the period under review. As highlighted and against the time frame of this study, student activism at the University of the North (UNIN) dates back to its formation in 1959. This chapter will also describe the problems that were faced by students and look at how students reacted to those problems. This chapter will look at the social, economic and political problems that were faced by students.

#### **4.2. TURFLOOP AS A SITE OF STRUGGLE**

Before 1960, universities in South Africa were grouped into three categories: the English language universities of Cape Town, the Witwatersrand, Natal and Rhodes, and the Afrikaans universities of Pretoria, Stellenbosch, Potchefstroom and the Orange Free State (Nkondo, 1976). The university college of the North was established on the 1 August 1959 in terms of the Extension of University Education Act 45 of 1959 (Mawasha, 2006:66). The Act was aimed at the limitation of the admission to university institutions and gave the minister of Bantu Education Sweeping powers over Black university life (Mawasha, 2006). In 1960, the year of its inception, the university college of the North was put under the academic trusteeship of the University of South Africa (Unisa). "The university college of the North started

with a staff complement of 23 and student enrolment of 87 and only three of the students were female” (Mawasha, 2006:66). The majority of the first students were education students transferred from “Kolego Ya Bana ba Afrika” (College of the Children of Africa) in Pretoria (Mawasha, 2006).

### **4.3. STUDENT POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS AT TURFLOOP**

After the establishment of the University College of the North in 1959, the rector professor E.F Potgieter realised the impossibility of running student affairs with only the help of the committees (Mawasha, 2006). Therefore, he created a student leadership committees which was hand-picked by him to represent students. The students rejected this model of representation. According to Msemeki (2012: interview) “as the students we rejected that form of leadership because we felt like the hand-picked leadership will represent the interests of their master who picked them than the interests of students”. After the rejection of this model, the rector took a bold step of allowing the creation of an elected SRC. In June 1960, senate approved a committee to draw up a constitution for the SRC. A student mass meeting was convened in order to inform the general student body about these new developments (Mawasha, 2006). The mass meeting elected a committee which was going to be responsible for drafting the SRC constitution (Mawasha, 2006). The elected members of the committee were Maja Serudu, Mossolini Mametša, Sefoloko Ramokgopa and Ezekiel Makhene (Msemeki, 2012: interview). The committee successfully managed to produce the constitution and it was approved in a mass meeting held early in 1961 (Mawasha, 2006).

“The approval of the constitution followed by the first SRC elections in Turfloop. Gessler Nkondo was elected the first SRC president of Turfloop in 1961. The other members of the SRC were Sefoloko Ramokgopa, Ezekiel Makhene, Cornelius Motsumi, Mossolini Mametša, Angeline Mokgabudi, Agnes Bopape and Maja Serudu. Ezekiel Makhene succeeded G. Nkondo as the SRC president and he was succeeded by Sefoloko Ramokgopa” (Mawasha, 2006:67). According to Msemeki

(2012: interview) “Having an SRC at Turfloop was an achievement to the general student body. But the challenge was that, the SRC had limited powers and this became a problem because it made them to be unable to resolve some of the issues that were affecting students”. The limited powers of the SRC can be supported by the incident when the SRC chairperson of all sports codes, Cornelius Motsumi invited a soccer team from University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Motsumi was expelled for inviting Wits soccer team in Turfloop without the approval of the university management (Mawasha, 2006).

The SRC tried to intervene in his expulsion with the hope of saving him from being expelled but because of their limited powers they failed. The SRC was elected annually by the students and consisted of members who either represented other student organisations or were independents. The duties, functions, privileges and terms of office were set out in the SRC constitution and election by-laws approved by the university council as institutional rules. The SRC became an important stakeholder of the University. The aim of student political organisations was not only to contest SRC elections, but also to use the leadership responsibilities of the SRC as the preparatory school for future leaders who would continue with the struggle for liberation.

The student council played a very important role in the political activities of the students at Turfloop. The student political organisations worked hand in hand with the SRC and most of the SRC leaders were products of student political organisations. The student council became a platform for funding to student organisations such as SASO and University Christian Movement (UCM). The council had access to university resources such as telephones, printing, computers, university cars and venues. Those resources were shared with student organisations in order to keep them alive and vibrant. Some SRC leaders were also leaders of student organisations, for example in 1972 Onkgopotse Tiro was the SRC president and at the same time the chairman of SASO Turfloop branch, so that allowed him to open up the SRC resources for SASO (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). It was the SRC that made it possible for SASO to be inaugurated in Turfloop. It was the SRC that made it possible for BCM and BPC to host Viva Frelimo rally in Turfloop.

The Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, banned the rally, but the SRC under the leadership of Gilbert Sedibe as the president informed the students that the rally would continue and was not going to be a SASO rally or BPC rally but an SRC rally. Therefore it would fall outside the remit of the Minister's banning orders. This is a clear indication on how the SRC cooperated with student organisations. Most former SRC leaders of Turfloop played a central role in the struggle for liberation. Just to name a few, Nkondo became the first chairman of BASA and played a very important role in the Africanisation of UNIN, Tiro, the former chairman of SASO Turfloop branch and SRC president in 1971/72 was central in the activities of BCM, Aubrey Mokoena, the former chairman of SASO Turfloop branch and SRC president in 1972 became a founding member of UDF and played a central role in the activities of UDF, Cyril Ramaphosa, the former chairman of UCM and SASO Turfloop branch and the SRC president of Turfloop in 1977 also played an important role in the activities of BCM and UDF and he was also a key man during the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). So this shows how was the importance of the SRC and student organisations in grooming future leaders.

#### **4.3.1. THE HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF NUSAS**

It is important to understand the background of NUSAS before any attempt to understand the student activism of any institution in South Africa because NUSAS contained a rich history of student activism in South Africa and is the first student political union in South Africa which was founded in the year 1924. This organisation was aimed at representing and promoting the interests of university and college students. NUSAS was open to students of all races. "At the organisation's first inaugural conference in Bloemfontein in 1924 the following universities were represented: Pretoria, Natal, Witwatersrand, Rhodes, Bloemfontein, Potchefstroom and Cape Town" (Badat, 1999:72). "The Confederation of International Students (CIE) which was founded in 1919 in Strasbourg, France, to represent the interests of students internationally inspired the formation of a national union of students of that magnitude in Britain in 1920" (Badat, 1999:72). This in turn influenced students in Commonwealth countries to follow suit and South Africa was no exception. Leo Marquard, who was fortunate enough to have attended CIE congresses in Europe, was instrumental in the formation of NUSAS (Badat, 1999). Marquard studied at Oxford University where he completed his Bachelor of Arts Honours and Diploma in

Education 1923 (Alfred, 2003). During his studies he became influenced by activities of the National Union of Students in Britain (Badat, 1999). On his return to South Africa, he worked at Grey College in Bloemfontein as a teacher (Alfred, 2003). It was at this college that he established the NUSAS in 1924. Despite not being student, Marquard became the organisation's founding president (Alfred, 2003).

In 1926 NUSAS was involved in overseas exchange programmes through its executive members in order to learn more about the running of the organisation. "In 1927 NUSAS formed a student parliament in Durban and this structure was run like a political party. Membership of the new structure within NUSAS was confined to White students" (Nkomo, 1984:58). It was believed they were in a better position to engage government in dialogues than their Black counterparts. In the early 1930s NUSAS was affected by the growing feeling of the Afrikaner nationalism. "The Afrikaans Student Bond (ASB), which was in existence since 1917, felt that for full cultural and political recognition of Afrikaners, Afrikaner students needed to re-think their position in NUSAS, as a wider national body would not serve their purpose" (Badat, 1999:73). In 1933 a more political Afrikaner body called Afrikaans Nasionale Studente Bond (ANSB) was established. After the formation of ANSB students from universities of Bloemfontein, Potchefstroom and Pretoria withdrew from NUSAS. Stellenbosch was not convinced of the decision taken so it continued with its membership in NUSAS (Badat, 1999). "In 1935 the University of Fort Hare posed a serious challenge to the hierarchy of NUSAS as it wanted to join the organisation on the ground that it was inclusive of all races. The University of Fort Hare was a Black institution and their request for admission was rejected" (Sono, 1993:44). Meanwhile, the University of Stellenbosch came to the realisation that without the University of Pretoria, Bloemfontein and Potchefstroom the objectives of NUSAS could not be attained. The institution was wary of trying to create national unity amongst universities and colleges without support from others (Sono, 1993).

The University of Stellenbosch duly cut its ties with NUSAS in 1940 and this completed the split between Afrikaans and English speaking universities. "In 1945 the University of Fort Hare became a member of NUSAS. It was only after the admission of Fort Hare and the Non-White section of the University College of Natal in the 1940s that NUSAS became a non-racial organisation" (Badat, 1999:74). NUSAS started to be vocal and denounced apartheid and its legalisation. This in turn

drew fierce anger from politicians. In the 1960s there was direct confrontation between government and the NUSAS leadership which, in some instances, resulted in detention, banning, deportation and withdrawal of passports for the office-bearers. Ian Robertson, Phillip Tobias, Glenn Moss, Jonty Driver and Neville Curtis were amongst NUSAS leadership who suffered the brutality of apartheid (Badat, 1999).

NUSAS's permanent office, which was situated in Cape Town, was fundamental in the acquisition of practical benefits and services for the student community. Each year an overseas tour was organised. In 1953 NUSAS was a member of International Union of Students (IUS) but withdrew its membership due to communist dominance.

In the 1960s NUSAS handled 60 overseas scholarship grants and awarded 25 medical scholarships of its own (Badat, 1999). Local centres of NUSAS used to organise vocational part-time employment for its members.

NUSAS was also active in other social responsibilities such as educating prisoners about moral issues in society, released prisoners, counselled children of prisoners, provided adult education of Blacks and participated in feeding schemes for the poor of all races. NUSAS was well structured and organised in the late 1960s. The SRC in each and every member university sent a delegate to the organisation's central body, which decided on policy and elected an executive council. "Whilst there was always a small minority of 'radical' students heavily influenced by Marxist ideas on campus, it was not until the arrival of Rick Turner from the Sorbonne in late 1967, that the ideas of 'new left' thinkers really found a voice within this group" (Balintulo, 1981:44).

The dissatisfied members of IUS formed the International Student Conference in 1964, but it had to dissolve in 1968 due to internal problems. Rick Turner was a South African academic and anti-apartheid activist who played a leading role in radical philosophy in South Africa and published a number of papers such as "*The Eye of the Needle: Towards Participatory Democracy in South Africa*". Turner became a friend with Biko and his friendship with Biko and other BCM leaders enabled him to act as an effective interpreter of Black thinking to politically conscious Whites. He was assassinated by the apartheid regime in 1978 for his involvement in the struggle for liberation. NUSAS was not directly involved with Turfloop but it

played a pivotal role in influencing national student politics in South Africa as the first student political union. Most student political organisations which were formed after NUSAS such as ANSB, SASO and many others had its foundation from NUSAS. The Black intellectuals, who broke away from NUSAS in 1968 such as Steve Biko and Barney Pityana, had more influence on student politics in Black universities. They had influence because majority of them was members of SRC at their campuses.

#### **4.3.2. THE FORMATION OF AFRICAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION (ASA) AND AFRICAN STUDENT UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA (ASUSA)**

Students faced a plethora of problems at school and at home because of the apartheid government. As a result, the ANC and the PAC saw a need to form organisations such as the African Students' Association (ASA) (connected to the ANC) and the African Students' Union of South Africa (ASUSA) (similarly connected to the PAC in 1961 and 1962, respectively). The ASA was established on 17 December 1961 in Durban under the auspices of the banned ANC (Badat, 1999). At the time of its formation, Durban was the centre of Black student life in the country (Gevisser, 2007). The association's membership was open to both secondary and higher education students, but membership was only open to Africans. Thabo Mbeki was elected as its first National Secretary. "ASA was Walter Sisulu's idea, as he was trying to push for generational continuity in the liberation movement" (Gevisser, 2007:23). ASA had its stronghold at the Fort Hare University in the Eastern Cape. "This was because of the dominant position enjoyed there by the ANCYL before it declined after banning of the ANC in April 1960" (Gevisser, 2007:23).

In 1962, ASUSA which became an arch rival to ASA, was established. While these two African student movements had their ideological differences, they viewed themselves as student wings of the national movements (ANC and PAC) (Badat, 1999). The formation of these student formations was propelled by the desire to fight against the injustice of apartheid policies in institutions of higher learning. "These student organisations were working hand in hand with the surrounding communities to fight against the apartheid government in general. Learners from the nearest secondary school in Turfloop (Hwiti) were mobilised to work hand- in- glove with students from campus to fight against the injustice of apartheid government"

(Mokwele, 2016: interview). “Student leaders at Turfloop such as Ramokgopa and Makhene made an attempt to launch ASA branch at Turfloop in 1962, but unfortunately their attempt failed because the university management couldn’t allow the launch of ASA which was closely linked to the banned ANC” (Msemeki, 2012: interview). “The same attempt was made by Motsumi and Dominic in 1962 to launch the Turfloop Branch of ASUSA and they also failed because of its link to the banned PAC” (Msemeki, 2012: interview).

The lifespan of both student political organisations became very short because of their close links with the banned liberation movements. They became the target of the apartheid authorities and measures such as intimidations, detention and assaults were put in place in order to destroy these organisations. Such treatment from the apartheid authorities forced many of ASA and ASUSA leaders to go to exile in the early 1960s. “Once in exile, the ANC elders in London asked Mbeki to launch an organisation of South African students and youth in Britain to continue resistance against apartheid” (Gevisser, 2007:25). So this clearly indicates that, the idea of having a Black student organisation in South Africa was not something that started with the founders of SASO such as Biko and Petrus Machaka, it was an old existing idea. Machaka was the SRC president at UNIN and he formed part of the delegation to SRC conference in Marianhill in 1968. It was that conference which took a decision to form a Black student organisation. The fortunate part about SASO as compared to ASA and ASUSA was that it had more impact in the Black student political activism in South Africa.

#### **4.3.3. THE FORMATION OF THE UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT (UCM)**

In the early years of apartheid, the majority of Christian associations at tertiary institutions were denominational bodies; all represented in the interdenominational Student Christian Association (SCA). “Despite this apparent unity, the SCA was divided into four chapters, each one for Africans, Coloureds, White English and Afrikaans speakers” (Magaziner, 2010:22). After the World Student Christian Federation called on the SCA to reject segregation, the SCA withdrew from the federation in 1964, and the association split up into four separate racial bodies (De Gruchy J & De Gruchy S, 2005).

“However, certain Anglican and Catholic students, together with liberal students, joined forces to launch an interracial and ecumenical body, resulting in the birth of the UCM” (Magaziner, 2010:23). The initiators of the UCM were influenced by the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council, held from 1962 to 1965, which sought to align the Christian world with modernity. They were also influenced by the Liberation “Theology sweeping across Latin America and Afro-American churches in the US, especially by the works of Brazilian education theorist Paulo Freire and the Black American theologian James Cone” (Magaziner, 2010:23).

In July 1967, the UCM held its founding congress in Grahamstown, with about 90 religious leaders and students in attendance (Biko, 1996). “The UCM was a religious group concerning itself with ecumenical topics and modernisation of the archaic Christian religious practice” (Biko, 1996:15). It was also focused on the practical application of Christian principles in an immoral society like South Africa (Biko, 1996). The UCM came at the period where by political activity was banned on Black campuses. When the UCM was formed it was initially allowed to operate on Black campuses because it was a religious ecumenical organisation. This made it the only national student movement where Black students could meet and therefore provided the critical mass needed to cause the chain reaction which led to BC (Houston, 1997).

The founding congress of the UCM elected an executive committee of ten people, with Basil Moore as president (De Gruchy J & De Gruchy S, 2005). The executive included Colin Collins, Winfred Kgwere, and several African, Coloured and Indian members. Winfred Kgwere was a teacher by profession, and resident at Turfloop as the wife to the first Black rector at UNIN, Professor William Kgwere. “Winfred Kgwere was involved in supporting students in their protests against the government’s restrictions on campus . . . One of her early acts at the university was to organise a Methodist prayer group in defiance of an order that banned students from worshipping on campus” (Mokwele, 2016: interview). Msemeki (2012: interview) also says the following on Winfred Kgwere: “She gave sustenance to the student movement and in an ironic twist, allowed the rector’s residence to be used as a meeting place for UCM which was banned from the campus at the time” “Winfred Kgwere encouraged the youth to form a branch of SASM and to establish an SRC at Hwiti High School where Peter Mokaba was elected SRC President” (Mokwele,

2016: interview). Consequently, at the age of 15 years, Winfred Kgwere recruited Peter Mokaba to join the underground movement. Peter Mokaba was subsequently expelled from Hwiti High School because of his involvement in the struggle for political liberation and it was then that he registered as a private candidate and passed his matric exams” (Mokwele, 2016: interview).

The movement grew rapidly, setting up 30 branches at seminaries, universities and teacher training colleges, and by the second congress in Stutterheim in July 1968, 60 percent of the delegates were Black (De Gruchy & De Gruchy, 2005). The elected leaders in the UCM had credibility in the eyes of Black students which attracted them to the new body (Houston, 1997). Rev J. Davies, the national chaplain to the Anglican Students Federation (ASF) and Fr Colin Collins of the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS) were two such men who were known and respected (Houston, 1997). The UCM organised multiracial holiday camps, encouraging students to live together and express their critiques of apartheid. The UCM, in contrast to student bodies too petrified to challenge apartheid structuring, began with the premise that apartheid was an abomination (De Gruchy J & De Gruchy S, 2005:).

It reached out to the Black campuses, and its gatherings were predominantly Black, resulting in an atmosphere vastly different from the White-dominated NUSAS conferences (Magaziner, 2010). Black students felt free to express their views in UCM than in NUSAS. “The UCM cultivated links with overseas-based organisations, including the US-based body called the University Christian Movement. Basil Moore and two Black students travelled to the USA in December 1967, and raised money to fund the UCM” (Badat, 1999:77). The UCM managed to secure funding from other organisations abroad, and by the end of the decade 87 percent of their budget was from overseas funding (Badat, 1999). Moore and Collins were steeped in the discourse of liberation theology, and disseminated the new movement’s literature in their home country. They published a magazine called “One for the Road”, which carried these new ideas (Houston, 1997).

The UCM introduced innovative methods of training young students at gatherings they referred to as ‘formation schools’. They used the ideas of Paulo Freire to ‘conscientise’ the students, imparting techniques of literacy to interpret their experiences in their own terms and extrapolating these to the wider world. According

to Houston (1997), as cited by Magaziner (2010:44), Freire taught that “all oppressed people needed to develop their own critical faculties rather than have some vanguard force as an ideology upon them”. UCM proved to be a crucial factor in the resurgence of political resistance to apartheid after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the subsequent crackdown on political activity (Houston, 1997). It introduced a new discourse, one that allowed for a radical reinterpretation of the role of the Black activists, and provided an enabling environment for the birth of SASO and BCM.

“The self-effacing White leaders of the UCM, in contrast to NUSAS leaders, brought about a new understanding of the role of the White liberal, one which enabled their acceptance of the possibility of Black leadership” (Houston,1997:45). The White Consciousness group were mandated to conscientise their own White constituency (Houston, 1997).The formation of the SASO was preceded and influenced by the formation of the UCM in 1967. It was influenced by Black Theology that taught religion from an oppressed person’s perspective. Liberation theology sought to transform society into a just and fraternal one. The Black Theology was emanating from the United States, Latin America, independent African states such as Ghana and the creative reflection by Black South Africans all of which fed into the South African version in varying proportions (Houston, 1997).

The aim of Black Theology was to inspire Black people to realise equality with White people and that their blackness and inferiority was not a punishment or a condition created by God (Pityana et al., 1991). The UCM accepted these teachings as relevant for Black South Africans and important for their liberation. Despite his orientation towards Black theology, Steve Biko and his circle of associates were not content with the UCM (Pityana et al., 1991). “They observed that the UCM was reinforcing the inferior status of Black people by having a large number of White people in their leadership structures, even though the majority of its members were Black” (Biko, 1996:15). Black students rejected the notion that Whites could play a role in the liberation of Blacks. “The main thing was to get Black people to articulate their own struggle and reject the White liberal establishment from prescribing to people,” (Biko, 1972:9). This is exactly what unfolded at Turfloop.

In the mid-1960s political activities were banned at Turfloop. In July 1967, the UCM was formed. The following year the UCM branch was launched at Turfloop by

Winfred Kgware who was the national leadership of UCM. The University authorities never had a problem with the launch of UCM at Turfloop because when the UCM was formed it was initially allowed to operate on Black campuses because it was a religious ecumenical organisation (White, 1997). According to Mokwele (2016: interview) “the first group of leaders of UCM in Turfloop were Manana Kgware, Joseph Mthombeni, Tebatso Lekau, Willington Chauke and Machaka, who became the SRC president in the same year. The UCM Turfloop branch became active and Winfred Kgware as the national leadership that was based in Turfloop provided them with a maximum support”.

A series of seminars on Black Theology were held on campus. The papers about Black theology were distributed to students around campus. This teaching contributed to the intellectual foundations of the BCM (More, 2014). According to Msemeki (interview: 2012), “UCM became a relevant movement to conscientise students about the struggle for liberation without any disruption from the authority because the authority perceived UCM as a complete Christian movement with only one mandate which was to spread the word of God. The exposure and the platform which student received from UCM was priceless”.

According to Thobakgale(2016:interview) “The good thing about UCM in Turfloop was that, it did not live in isolation, it was working with other church structures around the campus and it even went as far as having social programmes such as sports activities and singing competitions which brought the young people from and outside campus together. But the teaching of Black Theology was very central to their activities”. Through UCM Turfloop students got an opportunity to travel to other campuses and interact with their peers and share ideas (Mokwele, 2016: interview).

Ramaphosa and Chikane were also notable leaders of UCM at Turfloop. Ramaphosa and Chikane met through UCM and started to work closely in the political activities of the campus (Thobakgale, 2016: interview). They both came to UNIN in 1972. Chikane had a strong religious background because his father was a preacher in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) church (Mokwele, 2016). As student leaders they were both influenced largely by the Black Consciousness ideology (Mokwele, 2016: interview). They both came to Turfloop while SASO was already formed and operational. They became involved in the activities of SASO at the

university. In 1974 Ramaphosa served as the chairman of UCM Turfloop branch. In the same year, he was elected as the chairman of SASO Turfloop branch. Chikane was also in the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) of both SASO and UCM during the leadership of Ramaphosa (Thobakgale, 2016: interview). It is important to note that the formation of SASO did not take out all Black students from UCM. Most students continued to be the members of both, SASO and UCM. Ramaphosa and Chikane were part of the group that was responsible to organise the Viva-Frelimo rally in Turfloop. After the Viva-Frelimo rally Ramaphosa was detained for 11 months under section 6 of the Terrorism Act (White, 1997).

As a result of the Viva-Frelimo rally at Turfloop, UCM and SASO were banned on campus by the university management through the instruction from the South African police (Thobakgale, 2016: interview). Black Theology played an important role in the struggle for liberation in South Africa. It was Black Theology that provided the Black Consciousness movement with an immensely powerful spiritual foundation and motivation (Houston, 1997). Blacks were able, on theological grounds, to reject a negation of their humanity as 'inferior' and to affirm the value of their blackness (Houston, 1997).

#### **4.3.4. THE BREAK-AWAY OF BLACK STUDENTS FROM NUSAS AND THE FORMATION OF SASO**

NUSAS was a liberal organisation dominated by White students. When it was formed in 1924, it was an exclusively White student body, but was supposed to represent the interests of students from all racial and cultural groups. In the 1960s White members became sympathetic to the Black students' cause. As a result, Black students membership began to increase. Many of these students, the majority of whom were based at the University of Natal, became increasingly dissatisfied with the inability of NUSAS to tackle deep racist structures and policies of both the government and universities (Pityana et al., 1991).

The formation of SASO did not come as a surprise because in the early 1960s there had been an attempt to found non-White student organisations. In 1961 and 1962 the ASA and the ASUSA were established. The Durban Students' Union (DSU) and the Cape Peninsular Students' Union (CPSU) which later merged to form the Progressive National Students Organisation, were formed and opposed to NUSAS

(Biko, 1996). Unfortunately none of these organisations survived. "NUSAS continued to be a force in Black campuses, but the fact that its own power base was on White campuses (University of Witwatersrand, Rhodes, University of Cape Town, Natal ) meant that it was virtually impossible for Black students to attain leadership positions (Pityana et al.,1991:26). "This was confirmed by the controversy that arose in 1967 at the NUSAS conference at Rhodes when the Black students were made to stay at a church building somewhere in the Grahamstown location, each day being brought to conference site by cars while on the other hand their White brothers were staying in residence around the conference site" (Biko,1972:6).

Primarily because NUSAS was dominated by Whites, Rhodes University, the conference host, refused to allow mixed-race accommodation or eating facilities (Pityana et al., 1991). Black student's started to question their value in NUSAS as well as its capacity to represent them. According to Biko, "The overriding impression was that the Blacks were there in name only, hence the executive that was elected was all White" (Biko, 1996:12).

Biko reacted angrily to the incident, and slated the incomplete integration of student politics under the existing system, and dismissed talk of liberalism as an empty gesture by Whites who really wished to maintain the status quo and keep Blacks as second-rate citizens (Biko, 1996).

In 1968 at the UCM conference the same treatment of discrimination of Black students continued under the Group Areas Act (Biko, 1996). Group Areas Act clause was the apartheid clause which forbade Blacks to remain in a White area for more than 72 hours. Black students demanded time to meet alone and discuss a way forward. They presented a motion refusing to obey the rule (Pityana et al., 1991). "White delegates expressed displeasure at being left out of this, and a compromise motion was adopted whereby the whole conference was to march to the borders of the magisterial district" (Pityana et al., 1991:24). Such treatment underlined the extent to which Black South Africans were isolated, even from the church. They discussed for the first time the idea of forming a Black organisation unfortunately none of them was student leaders and they could not take binding decisions (Biko, 1996). "The Black caucus also took a formal decision to work towards a conference

in December to deal with the specific issues of a Black student organisation” (Wilson in Pityana et al., 1991:24).

In December 1968 a conference of SRC from the Black campuses held in Marianhill, Natal decided overwhelmingly in favour of the formation of a Black organisation. At the conference the Black student rejected the notion that Whites could play a role in the liberation of Blacks (Biko, 1972). “The main thing was to get Black people to articulate their own struggle and reject the White liberal establishment from prescribing to people” (Biko, 1972:15). The majority of Black student’s at the conference felt that Blacks needed to learn to speak for themselves (Biko, 1996). On the 1 July 1969 SASO was officially inaugurated at the Turfloop campus of the UNIN with Steve Bantu Biko as its first President and Barney Pityana as Secretary. The delegation from Turfloop who formed part of the first national leadership of SASO was Machaka (SRC President 1968) who was elected as the deputy president, Harry Nengwekhulu, Manana Kgware and Hendrick Musi. The delegation from Fort Hare who formed part of the first national leadership of SASO were Lindelwa Mabandla, Jeff Baqwa, Ben Langa and Barney Pityana (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). Pityana was elected to serve in the national executive committee of SASO while he was suspended from Fort Hare.

The delegation from Natal (Wentworth) who formed part of the first leadership of SASO were Aubrey Mokoape, Vuyelwa Mashalaba who became the second general secretary of SASO in 1970 and Abram “Geez” Goolam (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). The delegation from University of Western Cape (UWC) who formed part of the first leadership of SASO was only Henry Isaacs who was the SRC president of UWC at that time and later in 1973 he was elected the secretary general of SASO (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004).

According to Biko “SASO was inaugurated in Turfloop because Turfloop was the largest campus in the country for the Blacks and it worked beautifully in the process of the formation of SASO” (Biko, 1972:14). Manana Kgware and Machaka were among student leaders from UNIN who were delegates at the 1968 SRC conference in Marianhill and they bought the idea of the formation of the Black student organisation and started to work closely with Biko and other student leaders across the country.

At the conference there were challenges in terms of the policy direction which the newly born organisation must take (Biko, 1972). There were two groups at the conference with conflicting ideas, namely, the non-racial NUSAS orientation and the Africanist PAC orientation. The pro-NUSAS group wanted SASO to affiliate with NUSAS and recognise NUSAS as the national union in the country. The pro-PAC group were against the recognition and affiliation of SASO to NUSAS. The argument of the pro-PAC student was that SASO was formed to play a specific role which is to be the custodian of the interest of Black people, so it cannot develop structural relationship with any organisation which may later interfere with its effectiveness (Biko, 1972). That became a challenge to the newly born organisation and unity was the only thing which was needed in order for SASO to emerge stronger. The challenge was bigger than the affiliation issue because the pro-PAC students went as far as suggesting the rejection of the membership of coloureds and Indians because of their pro-NUSAS stance. The pro-PAC students saw the pro-NUSAS students as the extension of NUSAS which failed them. Manana Kgware, Nengwekhulu and Machaka from Turfloop were also amongst the group which was pro-Africanist cause of PAC orientation (Biko, 1972). Coloureds and Indians were not comfortable with the word "Blacks" which was used a lot in SASO. The pro-PAC were defeated on their suggestion of rejecting Indian and coloureds membership (Biko, 1972).

"The 1968 conference agreed that, SASO is not a movement for Africans, not a movement for Indians and not a movement for coloureds people, it's a movement for people who are oppressed and those who feel the oppression are welcome to join it" (Biko, 1972:16).

The aim of SASO as an organisation as outlined by Biko are as follows:

- "To crystallise the needs and aspirations of the non-Whites students and to seek to make known their grievances.
- Where possible to put into effect programmes designed to meet the needs of the non-Whites students and to act on a collective basis in an effort to solve some of the problems which beset the centres individually.
- To heighten the degree of contact not only amongst the non-White students but also amongst these and the rest of South African student population, to

make the non-White students accepted on their own terms as an integral part of the South African student community.

- To establish a solid identity amongst the non-White students and to ensure that these students are always treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.
- To protect the interests of the members centres and to act as a pressure group on all institutions and organisations for the benefit of the non-White students.
- To boost up the morale of the non-White students, to heighten their own confidence in themselves and to contribute largely to the direction of thought taken by the various institutions on social, political and other current topics”.

(Biko, 1996:16)

The formation of SASO was warmly welcomed by the UNIN management. The acting rector of UNIN Professor F.J Engelbrecht, bought the idea of the formation of a new Black student organisation (White, 1997). According to Mokwele (2016:interview), “Professor F.J Engelbrecht was comfortable with the idea of the formation of a Black student organisation, he even went as far as allowing the request of the SRC to host and fund the inauguration of SASO in Turfloop”. “The emergency of SASO was seen as a sign by the authorities that separatist policies were finding favour with Black people and SASO was enthusiastically received by some Whites as a logical and desirable development” (White, 1997:104). According to Thobakgale (2016: interview), “We had a feeling that the positive acceptance of SASO by Professor F.J Engelbrecht and his team was not genuine, we could not celebrate that because we did not trust those people, and instead we started to ask ourselves that what could be their mission”.

According to Mokwele (2016: interview), “The formation of SASO in 1968 strengthened the level and standard of politics in Turfloop. Student politics at Turfloop started to be more vibrant, militant and radical”. Turfloop was the first campus to be won by SASO and Turfloop eventually became the stronghold of SASO and followed by University of Natal Black Section (UNB) where SASO had its headquarters (Biko, 1972). “The SASO Turfloop branch and UNB branch were very influential in the politics of SASO” (Mokwele, 2016: interview). However, it is worth noting that the students of the UNB played a leading role in its formation. According

to Msemeki (2012: interview), “The introduction of SASO at Turfloop played a very important role in student politics because during that period we witnessed the high political participation from students on campus and more political programmes which we never witnessed before. One of such programmes were political schools which was concentrated on leadership training. He further argue that it was through SASO and its programmes which made it possible for Turfloop to realise the pool of leadership which were scattered in campus without being utilised”. “It was through SASO when we see the radicalism of student leaders such as Tiro, Ramaphosa, Nengwekhulu, Nefolovhodwe and many others who eventually played a very central role in the struggle for liberation in the country,” said Mokwele (2016: interview). It is important to note that SASO had limitations in the national struggle for liberation because it was a student organisation. But SASO was able to identify its limitation and come up with a solution.

SASO initiated discussion about the formation of community organisations and promote the idea of BPC (Biko, 1972). The reason for the creation of BPC was to spread the BC ideology beyond university campuses and also to create a platform for SASO products to graduate into and continue to spread the ideas of BCM in all sphere of society (Biko, 1972). They were many people who were outside the system which needed to be brought inside the system and it was the responsibility of SASO to do so (Biko, 1972).

The Urban African, Asians and Coloureds were mostly part of the group that was outside the system (Biko, 1972). According to Biko, “Rural people have much more understandable group-orientation than urban people, and hence it is faster to work among rural people than it is to work amongst urban people. But at the same time, what goes on in the rural area becomes heavily influenced by what goes on in the urban area, because of migratory labour” (Biko, 1972:29). This became a reason for SASO to come up with programmes which will incorporate the urban Africans in the system.

#### **4.3.5 SASO AND NUSAS: CONFLICTING OPINIONS**

SASO adopted a conciliatory tone towards NUSAS stating that its objective was to promote contact between Black students in different universities as well as contact

between White and Black students. SASO was deeply concerned that breaking away from NUSAS would alienate it from those Black students who were strongly committed to working within and with NUSAS (Biko, 1996). “One such student was Ben Ngubane. Ngubane who was a student at University of Natal (Wentworth) and a former vice-president of NUSAS expressed pessimism about SASO, which he regarded as too right wing” (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, and 2004:133). Ngubane was of the opinion that Black politics should not grow outside the liberal fold on the grounds that White liberals had also suffered from state abuse and humiliation and they deserved support, respect and the freedom to love Black South Africans (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). He was further concerned that breaking away from a national body like NUSAS to form an additional national body would weaken the liberation movement (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). Ngubane predicted that the organisation’s life-span will be very short. Another student concerned with the formation of SASO was Aubrey Mokoape. Mokoape was an Africanist and former member of the PAC since his high school days (Ramphela, 1995). He was against the inclusion of “Coloureds” and “Indians” in the BCM on the grounds that they were neither Black nor Africans (Ramphela, 1995). “Some White students and some Black students who were pro-NUSAS expressed fears that SASO was a conformist organisation and a sign from Black students to turn towards militancy” (Biko, 1996:4).

Faced with these conflicting perspectives it placed SASO in a very difficult situation because SASO needed all those group. In order to deal with such conflicting views and also to attract pro-NUSAS black students, the SASO policy towards NUSAS was created in a way that it will be accommodative to Black students who were pro-NUSAS. The position of SASO towards NUSAS was presented as follows:

- (a) SASO recognises NUSAS as the true National Union of students in South Africa today and it offers no competition to NUSAS for Black membership.
- (b) SASO criticises the dichotomy between principle and practice found in the organisation. It rejects their basis of integration as being based on standards predominantly set by White society. It is more of what the man expects the Black man to do than the other way round. We feel we do not have to prove ourselves to anybody.

(c) According to SASO, the fact that there are 27 000 White students and 3000 Black students in the organisation is not complementary to Black opinion being fairly listened to.

(d) SASO also felt that, the commitment of White students to the principles of the organisation is limited to very few individuals and hence NUSAS credentials as a sincere and committed aspirant for change". (Biko, 1996:14)

"The first SASO General Student Council (GSC), held at Wentworth in July 1970, elected Pityana as the president to succeed Biko, who became the founding editor of the SASO newsletters" (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004:114). The council voted to de-recognise NUSAS as the national student union of this country, with the right to speak for all students, Black and White (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, and 2004:114). In the first SASO GSC, the 'conservative' first preamble was amended to assert BC and the independence of Black students to act according to their own free will in response to apartheid and racism in general.

At the same general council SASO took a resolution that the emancipation of the Black people of this country depended entirely on the role Black people themselves are prepared to play (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, and 2004). It was at this meeting that SASO dropped the term "non-White" in preference for "Black" to refer collectively to groups officially designated Bantu, Coloured and Indians. An editorial in the SASO Newsletter "Who is Black", September 1970, explains the rationale behind the term "Blacks" as follows:

The term Black must be seen in its context. No new category is being created but a re-christening is taking place. We are merely refusing to be regarded as none-persons and claim the right to be called positively. Adopting a collective, positive outlook leads to the creation of a broader base which may be useful in time. It helps us to recognise the fact that we have one common enemy. One should grant that the division of races in this country is so entrenched that the Blacks will find it difficult to operate as a combined front. The black umbrella we are creating for ourselves at least helps us to make sure that if we are not working as a unit, at least the various units should be working in the same direction, being complementary to each other.

By all means be proud of your Indian heritage or your African culture but make sure that when you're looking around for somebody to kick at, choose the fellow who is sitting on your neck. He may not be as easily accessible as your Black brother but he is the source of your discomfort. (SASO Newsletter, 1970:03)

From 1970 SASO began to assert its ideological stance and political objectives. The organisation had grown in confidence because of increased student support and assertiveness of the independent political organisation (Pityana et al., 1991). In July 1972 to encourage adult participation and promote their broad objectives, SASO leaders and representatives from some twenty-seven Black organisations established an adult wing of their organisation, the Black People's Convention (BPC) under the Presidency of Winfred Kgwere.

1970s was a turning point for SASO. Driven by an assertive spirit SASO introduced community-cum-political projects to spread its ideas about self-reliance and Black Consciousness (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). These projects were aimed at schools and Black communities (SASO Newsletter, 1970). Political projects at Formation Schools quickly became SASO's most important in the programme. "The aim of the schools project was to produce a new breed of youth leaders, ready to confront the challenges faced by Black people" (SASO Newsletter, 1970:06). Most importantly the 1970s was a period when the organisation began to define itself as a powerful force opposing the state and Apartheid (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004).

SASO also called on homeland leaders to withdraw from apartheid structures and stop being 'ambassadors of oppression (Badat, 1999). On the subject of education, SASO adopted a more radical and a clear position rejecting the Bantu Education system (SASO Newsletter, 1971). In July 1971, SASO adopted the declaration of student rights which marked a departure from their earlier cautious approach (SASO Newsletter, 1971). What made the declaration radical was the inclusion in its clauses of the right to dissent with university management. The declaration was preceded by the adoption of a policy manifesto that had divided South Africans into groups of those "who are part of the solution (Black people)" and those "who are part of the problem (White people) (SASO Newsletter, 1971:07). Following the adoption of these policies, SASO organised an "Education Commission" to study possible ways of making education relevant to Black South Africans (SASO Newsletter, 1971).

In 1972 SASO rejected a separate development platform and expelled its third president Themba Sono who called for the pragmatic use of separate development platforms to advance the liberation struggle (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). The SASO SGC regarded Sono as a security risk to the organisation and to the Black

community (SASO Newsletter, 1972). Sono was only president for one year, from 1971 to 1972. In 1972, the commission tabled a “Black Education Manifesto” to be adopted by the third GSC (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). The Black Education Manifesto took a different turn in that it rejected racist education and the notion that universities are neutral bodies in the process of acquiring knowledge (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). SASO saw its role in these years closely tied to the transformation of race relations in South Africa by crafting a political destiny independent from any political organisation and government. Moreover, SASO wanted to revive pride in African culture and knowledge systems to inspire pride in Black identity and Black roots (Biko, 1996). As Black consciousness became more radical, it acquired the appearance of an alternative society in the making (Mzamane, Maaba & Biko, 2004). With this change came increased police surveillance and state repression. Some of the student leaders from Turfloop who suffered from this increased police surveillance and state repression were Cyril Ramaphosa, Karabo Sidibe, Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, Mosiuoa Lekota and many more.

#### **4.4. THE PRIMARY ROLE OF STUDENT ACTIVISM AT TURFLOOP**

The UNIN was designed for Black students but run by White management. These Whites were the agents of the apartheid government and they administered the university within the framework of apartheid policies. Student activism at the time could be seen as a response to the ambivalent feelings that students were experiencing in a situation where they had to enrol in an institution designed as part of a system to oppress them. In short, the role of student activism was to fight against the injustice of apartheid government. Turfloop became a preparatory school for a new generation of young leaders. These young leaders focused mainly on articulating and resolving academic and social problems.

Turfloop was designed as part of a system to oppress Black students. Bantu Education was the major problem to the Black students. This system of education offered Black students inferior education, while White students were offered superior education. Superior education in terms of the availability of all the resources required for effective learning that will enable them to receive the standard of education which will allow them to respond to their immediate needs. White education was also

mandatory and free. Thirty percent of the black schools did not have electricity, twenty-five per cent had no running water and less than half had no plumbing (Christie, 1985:17). Education for Blacks, Indians, and Coloureds was not free. Bantu education was designed to teach Blacks to be servants of Europeans. It was the pillar of the apartheid project. "This project was intended to separate Black South Africans from the main, comparatively very well-resourced education system. Its stated aim was to prevent Blacks from receiving an education that would lead them to aspire to positions they would not be allowed to hold in society" (Christie, 1985:18). This project constituted the foundation of the problems that affected Turfloop students.

Students at Turfloop were faced with many academic problems. The first major problem was the apartheid policy of Bantu Education Act of 1954. The Act ensured that Blacks received an education that would limit their educational potential so as to remain cheap labourers. This policy directly entrenched racial inequalities by preventing access to further education. "This was one of the key challenges for Black students at Turfloop and in other Black universities. School was compulsory for Whites from age seven to sixteen, and for Asians and Coloureds from seven to fifteen and age of seven to thirteen respectively" (Vella, 1988:72).

"Educational inequality was also evident in funding. The Bantu Education Act created separate Departments of Education by race, and it gave less money to Black schools while giving more to Whites" (Balintulo, 1981: 53). Since funding plays a role in determining the amount and quality of learning materials, facilities, and teachers, disproportionate funding clearly created disparities in learning environments. "For instance, Apartheid funding resulted in an average teacher pupil ratio of 1:18 in White schools, 1:24 in Asian schools, 1:27 in Coloured schools, and 1:39 in Black schools. Furthermore, the apartheid system also affected the quality of teachers. White schools had 96 percent of teachers with teaching certificates, while only 15 percent of teachers in Black schools were certified" (Christie, 1985:20). In addition to affecting the quality of education, the Bantu Education Act also resulted in the closure of many learning institutions since it withdrew funding from schools affiliated with religion. Since many church schools provided education for a large number of Blacks, Black students were the ones most profoundly impacted by the withdrawal of these funds. Although the government explained its actions under the premise of

separation of church and state, eliminating schools that served Blacks was an ultimate form of educational injustice.

Education for Black students was not free and it was very rare for Black students to get bursaries, either from the government or the private sector. Most students at Turfloop were the sons and daughters of peasants. Since Blacks and Coloureds were historically limited to working class jobs, the ability to fund an education for younger generations or their children was the challenge which many families could not overcome (Mawasha, 2006). As such, racial inequalities were perpetuated through lack of access to higher education. The policies and funding disparities in schools ensured contrasting access to higher education. Additionally, there was no financial aid, and banks did not give out loans to Black students. This meant that even if students could break through Bantu Education with under-qualified teachers in overcrowded classrooms, they still faced financial barriers to achieving their academic goals. The choice of degrees at Turfloop was limited. Turfloop consisted of four faculties, namely, Arts, Education, Natural Sciences and Health. There was no faculty of Engineering and other high rated degrees in the faculty of Health such as Medicine (Nkondo, 1976).

The quality of the facilities available at the university was poor compared to White universities. A simple examination of library facilities is revealing. "A valid comparison can be made between Turfloop and the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU). Turfloop was established in 1959 and RAU in 1967. One would expect the former to be better stocked than the latter. However by the mid-1970s RAU's library contained 195 000 volumes, while the library of Turfloop held 67 000 and 84 000 books" (Badat, 1999: 80). Most volumes from Turfloop were useless, outdated, and poor quality rejects from other libraries. Since the university was receiving limited funds from the government, its book-buying capacity was also limited.

Turfloop academic staff was predominantly White. Black staff tended to be concentrated on the lower ranks of the staff hierarchy. Since the senate of the university comprised largely of senior staff, White staff dominated academic decision making. The White academic staff consisting mainly of Afrikaans-speaking persons from Afrikaans-speaking universities did not sufficiently understand the inspirations of Blacks. Generally they behaved and expressed themselves in a manner which

was hostile, but usually patronising. Most White lecturers had a negative attitude towards the students and while others were racists. According to Komana (2016:interview), “In our physics first year class in 1975 our physics lecturer (White man) came to our first class and said that only a quarter of this class will proceed to the next level and the rest will fail because physics is difficult and is not for everyone”. With such a statement one could ask: which instrument did the lecturer use to determine that only a quarter of the class would pass and the rest would fail? Such a statement was very problematic, especially coming from a lecturer who is expected to provide guidance and motivation to students. This was a clear indication that indeed most White lecturers did not have the interests of Black students at heart. Theirs was just to be there for salary in order to support their families but not to educate a Black child. Expanding university enrolments strained existing facilities, resulting in large classes and limitations being imposed on course options (Nkondo, 1976). Overcrowding in class-rooms was another problem that was faced by Turfloop students.

Numerous conditions ranging from the governance of institutions, to restrictive rules, to segregated facilities and amenities alienated students. As noted above, the council of the UNIN was dominated, initially, by White racists. “Both the composition of the council and ultimately policies and rules were objects of resentment. Students resented the control on movement into and out of campus residences, being denied visitors in residences, the general prohibition on alcohol and the lack of social amenities. There was also restriction on issuing press statements on student organisations and student meetings” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). It is highly likely that the majority of Black students would have been in their early twenties to mid-twenties age range, and would have also found some aspects of this control humiliating (SASO Newsletter, 1976). There were also problems with student accommodation and transport to and from campus. “Accommodation was limited and its capacity could not accommodate all the registered students. Those who were residing off- campus did not have transport to take them home during late hours after academic activities came to a close. They frequently became the victims of gangsters of Turfloop Township. The quality of catering and food in hostels caused wide spread grievances as well” (Mawasha, 2006:65).

The repressive conditions at Turfloop were underlined by security guards policing entrances to university. In an interview with Mokwele (2016), the following statements were made about the conditions of being at Turfloop.

It was more of an embarrassment to be here in the 1960s- but all of them [enrolled students] - we had no option but to be here and we were made up of students fresh from high school ....[...] .. all of us - we were not happy to be here, and that was the year they banned ASA and ASUSA. ASA was a student organisation of the ANC and ASUSA a student organisation of PAC.

So there was a lot of tension. We were not free and the lecturers - we were all suspecting them to be serving the special branch, to be informers. So, it was a very difficult time.

We as students, our attitude was that we are here because we have no choice and our attitude was not to identify with the college because it was an imposition on the Blacks and we were consciously aware that it was meant to train a product of a different type from the product trained at the so-called 'open universities.

#### **4.5 CONDITIONS OF BLACK STAFF**

It was not only the students who were faced by problems at Turfloop, but also Black university staff. "Black academic staff were paid lower salaries. They were also subjected to less favourable conditions of employment and afforded less comfortable housing amenities than their White counterparts with equivalent qualifications" (Mokwele, 2016: interview). Emphatically the Turfloop administration and its control were in the hands of Whites. Black staff found this as the big problem. This situation reflects their low status on campus and beyond. "The sorry state of affairs at Turfloop presented an opportune moment for natural solidarity between Black students and Black non-academic staff. Furthermore, it was not easy for Black academic staff to be promoted to high positions such as, Head of Department, School Director or Faculty Dean even when they met the requirements.

The colour of their skin was a badge of inferiority and as a result it was blocking any chances of promotion" (Msemeki, 2012: interview).

The BC began to make its impact on both students and parents. "Since the inception of the university in 1960, Black and White staff members belonged to the same staff association" (Mokwele, 2016: interview). But in 1971 there was a growing feeling amongst the Black staff, that because of the differential treatment of Blacks and

White staff at the university, they could bargain more effectively in a separate staff association (Nkondo, 1976:5). In 1972 this feeling crystalized into a conviction, consequently they applied for the recognition by council of what came to be known as the Black Academic Staff Association (BASA) (Nkondo, 1976). Formal recognition by council was received early in 1973 (Mokwele, 2016: interview).

The aim of BASA was to address the grievances of Black academic staff. It worked hand in hand with student political organisations through secret arrangements. “The association fought for the liberation of the Black university community and society at large” (Msemeki, 2012: interview). In short, they were anti-apartheid, but they did not show that openly because they feared to lose their jobs since the university was under the control of apartheid.

#### **4.6 THE REACTION OF THE STUDENTS TO PROBLEMS AT TURFLOOP**

Students reacted in a radical way to the conditions that confronted them (Komana & Mokwele: 2016: Interview). At a policy level, separate universities were rejected as an attempt to control the education of Blacks. An article in a SASO publication argued that universities were extensions of the apartheid system and had the “effect of creating a Black elitist, middle class that is far removed from the true aspirations of the people” (SASO newsletter: 1976: 04). Turfloop was criticised for being dominated by White staff, for having differential salary and service conditions for White and Black staff, and for a curriculum that was “oriented towards White, exploitative norms and values” (Nkondo, 1976: 27).

In a Declaration of Student Rights adopted in July 1971, the SASO expressed the belief that “institutions of learning and all therein serve in the noble pursuit and unprejudiced acquisition of knowledge” (SASO newsletter, 1971:02). Elsewhere it was stated that the university needed to be recognised as a community in common search for the “truth”, defined in terms of the “needs”, goals and aspirations of the people (SASO newsletter, 1971:02). It was furthermore argued that the meaning of a university was to “bring forth a new humanity with a higher conscience” (SASO newsletter, 1971:03). The declaration of student rights also asserted “the rights of a student to “free academic pursuit”, to “attend the University of his Choice” (SASO newsletter, 1971:03). “As Turfloop students we believed that we are an integral part of the oppressed community before we are students. Therefore, we were compelled

to join other forces to fight against the apartheid government” (Thobakgale, 2016: interview). According to Nefolovhodwe (2016: interview), “We believed that education in South Africa was unashamedly political and therefore Black education should be tied to the entire struggle for the liberation of Black people”. The students committed themselves to “breaking away from the traditional orders of subordination to Whites in education” and to “ensuring that their education would further the preservation and promotion of what was treasured in their culture and their historical experience” (Kanyane, 2010:43).

For students at Turfloop, education was conceived as being for the benefit of individuals and society, and defined as “a process of inculcating a way of life, of transmitting a cultural heritage, of acquiring knowledge and ideals, and of developing the critical faculties of the individual” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). “The aim was to foster social change, help realise an egalitarian and communalistic society, to promote Black unity and collective action, and to inculcate into the Blackman a sense of initiative, enquiry, creativity and self-reliance” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). Matlala has the following to say:

The mission of Turfloop students was fivefold. First, it was to promote the interests and aspirations of the community. Second, it was to inculcate within Blacks pride and confidence in their blackness, their traditions and their indigenous way of life. As part of this socialisation, the Black university was to discourage elitism and intellectual arrogance which promotes alienation, acquisitiveness and class structures. Third, it was to modernise people, institutions and society, to remove from the community the older epoch of backwardness, dependence and immobility. These were to be replaced by values such as modernisation, class mobility and communal solidarity. Forth, it was to contribute, through the production of knowledge and trained personnel, to economic and social development. Finally, the students wanted to contribute to social cohesion and integration (2016: interview).

The students were also not keen about the curriculum and the way it was presented as Kanyane (2010:123) points out: “The students were not in favour of the curriculum that was designed by apartheid government for them. They were more interested in Black Studies, with African thought, history, culture, language and literature, and the Black experience.” The criticism of education was political and the conception of the university that was posited was thoroughly idealist.

The SASO activists were well aware of the role of apartheid education in reproducing racial and cultural domination. Badat (1999:151) notes: “Influenced by Freire and

Nyerere's notions of education for liberation and education for self-reliance respectively; they conceived a different role for education: to socialise Blacks into new values and conduct, to transfer knowledge of relevance to liberation and to produce critical thinkers." Badat goes on to point out:

In short, education was used as an important tool to transform the life of the Black people and their status in society. However, beyond notions of a need to mobilise Black teachers and to encourage parents to relate folklore and indigenous stories to children, the vision offered little in the way of strategy and tactics for contesting apartheid education within Black schools and replacing it with Black education (1999:152).

However, in contrast with the earlier knowledge conception of the university, in the new vision, the university was now seen as an educational tool to provide service to communities, at the same time assisting in forming people's identity as well as in the production of trained and skilled personnel and in the fields of economic and social development.

In defining the role of the "Black university" in these fields, the vision failed to address a number of important issues. First, because of the tendency to treat Blacks as a homogenous group, there was no recognition that, apart from certain common interests and aspirations, very different interests could also be expressed by different sections of the Black "community" would mediate. Second, as part of SASO's general embrace of "communalism", the "Black university" was called on to socialise students so as to counter "acquisitiveness and class structures" (Badat, 1999, 154). However, there was also a call for the "Black university" to promote "class mobility". In short, while the university was, at the economic level, called on to promote capitalism and class mobility at the ideological level, it was required to prepare Black people to be the active participants in the economy.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

Having noted the key factors which shaped the radicalism of student activism at Turfloop, one can conclude that all this was the result of the problems which were caused by apartheid government. Most of the student political organisations were formed as a response to the injustice of apartheid rule. The other burning issue was that, students were concerned about the fact that, Turfloop was established for Black

students but administered by the White people who neither understood nor sympathised with the primary needs of Black students. They were also clueless about the most appropriate way to handle Black students.

It is also clear that student politics at Turfloop was connected with politics in other Black institution and also closely tied with struggle for national liberation. This integration was a product of the fact that Blacks faced a common vicious enemy, the apartheid system. Biko and Tiro of Turfloop worked together to find solutions for the problems confronted by Black students at institutions of higher learning. Their involvement in the struggle for liberation was not only focused on the student level only but also on the national level.

The relationship between the students and university management at Turfloop was characterised by conflicts and it was very sour, because the members of management were agents of the apartheid government while student activism was the agent of revolution. They were pushing two different agendas which compromised their relationship and the development of the university.

It is also observed that the Bantu Education Act of 1953 created educational inequalities through overt racist policies. This policy furthered racial disparities by preventing access to quality education. These apartheid legislations affected the education potential of Black students and this became one of the key challenges for students at Turfloop and in other Black universities throughout the country.

It is noted that, the apartheid government was not interested in investing on Black education. Bantu Education was given less support while channelling more funds towards Whites. Since funding determines the quality of education, it is clear that, those who got less funding received inferior education. The treatment that was given to the students by the Turfloop university management was unfair and inhuman. Students were treated like prisoners instead of being treated as free people. The harsh treatment of the students by the university management made the former to look for strategies for protecting themselves. This thinking propelled the formation of the SASO and many other students' organisations such as UCM and SCA. Because of the injustice of apartheid policies and the brutality of the university management, Turfloop became a place of tension, riots, demonstrations and unrest. Students were

expelled for their political activism and the phenomenon of informers sowed distrust in the student community.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE CONTRIBUTION OF TURFLOOP STUDENT ACTIVISM IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided an overview of Turfloop student activism and its manifestation from 1968 to 1981. It did so by analysing key factors that have shaped student activism during the period under review. The current chapter focuses on the contribution of student activism at Turfloop to the struggle against the apartheid government by examining different forces that influenced student political activism at that particular period. For example, in the 1970s the BCM was the force behind most student political activities but in the 1980s the situation was different; the United Democratic Front (UDF) was now a force behind most student political activities. So this chapter will study such historical events in a chronological order and also assess the forces behind them based on periodisation. This chapter will also focus on the important political events that took place at Turfloop during the struggle for liberation such as the Viva Frelimo rally and the expulsion of Onkgopotse Tiro.

This chapter will also show how student activism at Turfloop was closely connected to the national struggle for liberation. That is to say, the concerns of the students were extended beyond the educational arena and social relations in education to social relations in the political sphere. This means that the form and content of student struggles at Turfloop were mediated not only by educational apparatuses, but also by the apparatuses of the political sphere. In short, this chapter seeks to discuss the relationship between campus politics and national politics and how the on campus and off campus political activists worked together to fight against the apartheid government.

## **5.2 THE ROLE OF BCM AND THE UDF AT TURFLOOP**

A proper analysis and understanding of the role of BC should begin with its adequate and comprehensive definition, which would serve as a context within which we could then begin an exposition of the philosophy and ideology, which are the basic tenets of BC. The 1972 Policy Manifesto of the SASO defines BC as ". . . an attitude of mind, a way of life whose basic tenet is that the Black must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity" (SASO Newsletter, 1972:03). The concept of BC therefore meant an awareness and pride in their blackness by Black people and implies that Black people should and must appreciate their value as human beings (Nengwekhulu,

2015). “BCM defined Blacks as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations” (Badat, 1999: 91). According to BCM, Blacks must build up their own value systems, see themselves as self-defined and not as defined by others. “The concept of Black Consciousness implies the awareness by the Black people of the power they wield as a group, both economically and politically and hence group cohesion and solidarity are important facets of Black Consciousness” (Badat, 1999:378). BCM required the totality of involvement of the oppressed people, hence the message of BC has to be spread.

Nefolovhodwe (2016: interview) explains:

BC means that Black people should be aware of the significance and importance of their own value systems, their socio-economic, political and cultural values. Implied in this appreciation of their value systems is the need to reject those foreign, alien value systems which were forced down Black people's throats as part of the oppressor's logic of maintaining and perpetrating its brutal system of exploitation and emasculation.

According to Mashamba (2016: Interview), “BC was a significant aspect in calling for cohesive Black solidarity”. Thus, the quintessence of BC was the realisation and acceptance by Blacks in South Africa that, in order to play a positive role in the struggle for liberation and emancipation, they must effectively employ the concept of group power and thereby build a strong base from which to counter the oppressor's policy of divide and rule (Hyslop, 1999). The philosophy of BC therefore meant for group pride and determination by Black people in South Africa to rise together from the death bed of oppression and exploitation (Biko, 1996). BC called for a psychological revolution in the Black community; it was a revolution which was directed towards the elimination of all stereotypes by Blacks about themselves, and one which is directed towards the complete eradication of the slave mentality and feelings of inadequacy characteristic of an oppressed and exploited society (Biko, 1996). According to More “Black Consciousness is the Black person’s coming to consciousness of herself as Black” (2014:177).

The basic logic inherent in BC is that no human being can wage a meaningful war of liberation unless and until s/he has effectively eradicated his/her slave mentality and accepted themselves as full human beings who have a role to play in their own

struggle. BC therefore forces Black people to see themselves as full human beings, complete, full and total in themselves, and not as extensions of others. According to Nefolovhodwe (2016: Interview) "One of the basic views of BC which the SASO has emphasised was the development of socio-political awareness amongst Blacks in South Africa such as to activate the Black community into thinking seriously and positively about the socio-economic and political problems that beset them in their country and to seek solutions to emancipate themselves from these dehumanising shackles". The BCM introduced community projects, which were designed to heighten the sense of awareness and to encourage Blacks to become involved in the political, economic and social development of the Black people (Pityana et al., 1991).

SASO became a training ground for future Black leaders who would relate to the Black community and who would be capable of assessing and directing the attitudes, goals and aspirations of the Black community (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). "Cruel White racism and massive economic exploitation have placed upon the Black people a psychological yoke of despondency, helplessness and dependency which kills the initiative, originality and will of a people" (Kane-Berman, 1978:17). Creative instincts and skills of Black people have not surfaced due primarily to the lack of opportunities, but also because they were relying on Whites who, ironically, were their oppressors and would not open venues for the social and political development of their victims (Hyslop, 1999:22). It is for this reason that the SASO and other BC movements used its ideology to heighten the awareness and consciousness of the Black people, and confront them with the realities of their situation, their oppression and exploitation (Komana, 2016: Interview). Such efforts and ideas made it possible to redirect Black energies towards the goal of Black liberation and emancipation.

The BC ideology developed in close association with the practical activities of SASO. "The rapid, but somewhat surprising, immediate proliferation of BC ideas to communities via hundreds of local organisations, and the consequent resurgence in Black political activity, led SASO to help initiate a national Black political organisation called the Black People's Convention (BPC)" (Badat, 1999: 378). Its preamble suggests its intention to challenge the structures of power in the society at large, since the BPC saw itself as a movement of Black people, rejecting any form of tribal affiliation and ethnic mobilisation (Badat, 1999). Most of the SASO members became senior leaders in the BPC and Biko was made the Honorary President because of

his banning order that restricted him to the King Williamstown area (Pityana et al., 1991). By the mid-1970s the BCM had established a host of organisations, and many community organisations already in existence, associated with its ideology. "A loose, mosaic of organisations, of women, workers, students, youth, cultural arts, brick-building, pottery etc., located at local, regional and even national levels, linked in various ways to one another, contributed to creating a renaissance in Black civic and political culture" (Pityana et al., 1991:155). It was basically a culture of opposition when the students in Soweto revolted against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their schools. They were manifesting a new assertiveness that came with the cultural context of protest pervading Black communities in the early 1970s.

According to Biko, the reason behind the formation of this community based organisation was to allow the graduates of SASO to keep the spirit of resistance alive in their communities (Biko, 1972). Biko declared: "If I am operating as a priest in a rural area, there are no students necessarily there, but I have got ideas I gained while I was working within SASO, and these must find expression somewhere in my daily life. Because the ideology was not tied down to my being a student" (Biko, 1972:26). According to Kane-Berman (1978), the most important factor in explaining student resistance in the townships was the influence of BC ideology. Fredrickson also contends that BC ideology had a major impact on student activism and resistance. He states: "The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) was not without political consequences" (Fredrickson, 1995:90).

The circulation of ideas beyond the colleges and universities to the high school students of Soweto helped to set off the revolt of June 1976 (Fredrickson, 1995). He also supports the claim that BC was instrumental in influencing the SASM. According to him, the government had no doubt that BC was responsible for the revolt and that SASM was clearly under BCM influence. Hyslop (1999) upholds the influence of BC.

He states that "One important political influence was BC, which emerged out of African university campuses in the late 1960s" (Hyslop, 1999:9). He asserts that BC spread into the schools from young teachers, providing school students with new political ideas. For him there were several reasons for students' receptiveness to BC influences that included discontent over school overcrowding, a changing political

situation that made the state look more threatened than it had been in the 1960s. A growing economic uncertainty as the economic boom of the 1960s tailed off, and the rising influence of BC reduced the political influence of conservative Black elites in the educational sphere. This clearly indicates that BC had a huge influence in the struggle for liberation.

BC influenced many UNIN student activists and such influence was directed to the struggle for liberation. For example, those who became teachers after their studies such as Pandelani Nefolovhodwe and Onkgopotse Tiro used their influence by teaching learners in those schools the ideology of BC. BC became very influential in fostering political consciousness and organisation among the youth and students in townships and rural areas in the 1970s. It became a political force to reckon with. All the strikes such as Turfloop (Tiro) Uprising and Soweto Uprising which occurred in the country in the 1970s were a reflection of the role being played, directly or indirectly, by the BCM. It also helped to keep the spirit of resistance alive during the banning of liberation movements and the exile of many of the leaders of the struggle. Such influence threatened the enemy. The enemy had to respond to the threat that was brought by BCM. One of the strategies which they used to weaken Black power was to introduce colonial strategy of "divide and rule".

Their main aim was to crush the unity of Black people in order to weaken them (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). The oppressor also came up with the strategy which would systematically cut-off meaningful communication amongst the oppressed.

In fact it was one of the essential aspects of the oppressor's strategy to keep the oppressed divided and not to allow communication amongst them, because communication could bring unity and consensus. Mokwele noted the following:

The police harassment, intimidation, banning orders and other means were employed to make it difficult for the oppressed to organise themselves. The use of state machinery to suppress political views of Black people threatened the rate of political activism amongst Blacks. It also instilled fear amongst Black activists and this also diluted the Black struggle. It is fear founded on the realities of the situation or fear of finding oneself on Robben Island or banned or even assassinated like Steve Biko. Such fear has led to the frightening silence in the Black community in South Africa. The regime was not wasting time in sustaining and perpetuating this fear in order to preserve and perpetuate the status quo" (2016: interview).

All the factors that created fear in the communities became integral parts of the entire societal structure in South Africa. Black people knew that the entire structure was against them. Hence, it is not the individual White they were afraid of. It was the entire racist monolithic White structure that lynched, maimed and exploited them. Because of those threats and intimidation, leaders were now faced with the problem of convincing the people that, despite the real and great hazards, they had to continue fighting for their liberation. Community involvement was necessary as Thobakgale (2016: interview) points out:

That is why they tried to communicate with their people through community projects rather than inviting them to a political discussion, which they would often be afraid to attend. In this way they developed a rapport between them and their people. The aim was to instil confidence in Black people because once confidence has been built up it becomes easier to talk about more fundamental issues of liberation. The basic rationale behind their community projects was that community development is inherently liberating because it enables a person to become aware of the inadequacy of his/her present situation and, moreover, it enables him/her to act or respond in such a way that he/she will be able to bring about change in his situation.

It is an open reality that BCM had notable influence on most political activities of Turfloop. The Tiro speech at the university's graduation ceremony in 1972, which sharply criticised the Bantu Education Act of 1953 reflect the influence of BC ideology. The hosting of Viva Frelimo rally in Turfloop, which was organised by BCM and BPC was also a clear indication of the influence of BCM in Turfloop.

The call for the Africanisation of the university by BASA and Turfloop student leaders such as Tiro and Nefolovhodwe were also the evidence of the impact of BCM in Turfloop. The involvement of Turfloop student leaders such as Ramaphosa, Tiro, Harry Nengwekhulu, Manana Kgware, Aubrey Mokoena, Petrus Machaka, Mosiuoa Lekota, Gilbert Sedibe, Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, Frank Chikane and many others in the activities of BCM and BPC shows the influence of BCM at Turfloop.

### **5.3 THE EMERGENCE OF UDF**

“After the weakening of BC in the late 1970s, in the early 1980s the UDF emerged as the new force to continue with the struggle for liberation” (Baloyi, 2016: Interview)

Allan Boesak called for a united Front of churches, civic associations, trade unions, student organisations, and sports bodies to fight oppression. “On the 20 August 1983, the UDF was formed in a community hall in Rocklands, Mitchell’s plain in Cape Town. Frank Chikane, a product of Turfloop student activism, was the first speaker and he also played a very important role in the formation of the UDF” (Kanyane, 2010:63). “Chikane described the day as being a turning point in the struggle for freedom” (Kanyane, 2010:63). The keynote speaker, Boesak, spoke of bringing together a range of groups and unity among those fighting for freedom. A list of tasks was drawn up, focusing on organisation building and highlighting the aim of the UDF as an organisation that represented all South Africans (Kanyane, 2010).

The UDF was also formed to contest the constitutional reforms proposed by the National Party (NP) government, which sought to co-opt Coloured and Indian South Africans in a new political organisation, while maintaining White domination and racial segregation (van Kessel, 2000). “The Front consisted of some 600 affiliated organisations. Most organisations fitted into sectors which the UDF had identified as crucial forces for change: youth, civic organisations and women” (Mashamba, 2016: Interview). Church-based groups and religious organisations were also prominent, but the major Black trade unions kept some distance from the Front. In many respects, the UDF carried the traditions of the African National Congress (Van Kessel, 2000). “The formation of the UDF served as an umbrella organisation of anti-apartheid groups. The apartheid state soon came to believe that the UDF was in fact the internal wing of the ANC” (Mashamba, 2016: interview).

Although the UDF acknowledged the primacy of the ANC as the real national liberation movement and revered the ANC leadership in exile and in prison, it did have an identity of its own, with appropriate strategies and tactics. “Among the innovations in the UDF style of anti-apartheid campaigning were the emphasis on local organisations built around bread-and-butter concerns of ordinary residents, its sophisticated public campaigns, its capacity to reach out to sectors of the South African population, which were separated by NP politics but not ready to join the liberation movement and its massive use of a wide array of media, ranging from community papers and posters to buttons and T-shirts” (Van Kessel, 2000: 07).

The first notable action of UDF was a boycott campaign against the tricameral elections in August 1984. "UDF created a forum to oppose the Tricameral Constitution. The low turn-out in the Coloured elections, followed by an even lower turn-out of Indian South Africans, was a resounding success for the UDF" (Van Kessel, 2000:08). "This victory was followed by an episode of disorientation, in which the initiative passed from the arena of national politics to the African townships where discontent about living conditions and educational standards provided an explosive mix" (Van Kessel, 2000:8).

According to Mashamba (2016: interview), "The backbone of UDF in the Northern Transvaal was UNIN". In 1984, Peter Nchabeleng was among the first members and the regional chair of UDF in the Northern Transvaal. He was involved in activities of both the ANC and the UDF. But two months later after his election as a chairperson of the UDF in Transvaal, he was detained and murdered in Schoonoord police station in Lebowa. Before his arrest, Nchabeleng received a letter bomb containing his son's school results. He refused to open the letter and directed his son Maurice to return it to the principal. According to Maurice as cited in Kanyane "the principal was aware that the envelope had contained a letter bomb (Kanyane, 2010:64). "After he escaped this bomb trap he was arrested by police at his home in the presence of his wife Gertrude. Two days after he was arrested his wife received the devastating and shocking news that her husband has died in hospital" (Kanyane, 2010: 64). "He was succeeded by the vice chairperson Louis Mnguni, a philosophy lecturer at the UNIN. Mnguni was succeeded by Thabo Makunyane, who had been a friend to Tiro.

The secretary of the regional executive was Joyce Mabudafhasi, a library assistant at UNIN. Mabudafhasi was arrested during 1976 uprising" (Mashamba, 2016: interview). She was later seriously injured when her house in Mankweng was firebombed. "The publicity secretary of the UDF in the Northern Transvaal was Peter Mokaba. Alfred Mabake Makaleng, a law student at UNIN was a regional organiser" (Thobakgale, 2016: interview). "However, Alfred Makaleng was detained in June 1986 and died in prison two years later" (Kanyane, 2010: 64). "The UDF Northern Transvaal had meager facilities, but it had access to the resources of UNIN, which played a tremendous role as the centre of communication, coordination, ideological direction, and recruitment. UNIN offered sanctuary to the activists on the run from police" (Mashamba, 2016: interview).

Because of the important role which was played by UNIN in the activities of the struggle for liberation, it was then nicknamed Lusaka, the ANC headquarters in Zambia (Kanyane, 2010). “Student leaders at the university had access to telephones, photocopy machines, meetings facilities, and occasionally cars” (Thobakgale, 2016: interview), and this helped in communicating with other people and also in simplifying their work. “Sports outings to other Black universities were used for spreading the gospel of freedom. The UDF and the ANC leadership in Lusaka, Zambia, encouraged people to study at Turfloop rather than other universities because of Turfloop’s central role in the fight against apartheid” (Mashamba, 2016: interview).

Contacts with community members were important, it was part of spreading the message of liberation. “In 1983, students from Sekhukhuneland met at Turfloop to address the formation of organisations in their home villages” (Thobakgale, 2016: interview). Over the holidays, students from Turfloop formed youth groups in their villages, and when the university re-opened they would meet at the student centre to exchange experiences. According to Letsoalo (2016: interview), “most students from Turfloop had political influence in their villages. In most of the cases, they were responsible for providing political direction to their communities”. Letsoalo (2016: interview) further states that “school holidays for them were not for resting or playing like the kids of today, they provided the chance to spread political education to members of our communities and our political inputs were always carrying more weight to our communities because we were regarded as the most advanced people”.

#### **5.4 THE FORMATION OF AZASO**

“Following the banning of SASO a new student structure was constituted to fill the void. The new structure called the Azanian Student Organisation (AZASO) was established in 1979 by students from Fort Hare, Zululand, Natal, UNIN and Durban-Westville universities as well as Maphumulo College” (Letsoalo, 2016: interview). AZASO was an organisation for Black students at the tertiary level of learning. It catered for Black students at university, college and technical schools. Part-time and correspondence students were encouraged to join the organisation either through the nearest campus branch or by forming a branch in their area of residence if they

were more than ten in that area (AZASO Newsletter, 1981). At its inaugural conference in Pietermaritzburg, a preamble was adopted endorsing the philosophy of Black Consciousness and an interim executive led by Tom Nkoana and Mafa Goci was elected to establish branches at the various campuses and to draft a constitution (Van Kessel, 2000).

According to Mamabolo (2016: interview), who was part of the delegation from Turfloop to attend the first General Council, which resulted in the formation of AZASO, he had this to say: “our main challenge in the council was an ideological debate, with the major concerns being the roles of Whites in the national liberation struggle and the question of socialism in a future South Africa”. The ideological debate took place at AZASO’s Annual General Council (AGC) held at Wilgespruit in 1981, and the issues of non-racialism and socialism dominated the discussions as Mamabolo already mentioned. The outcome was decisive in that the organisation committed itself to the Freedom Charter, cooperation with COSAS and non-racial politics among the organised youth (AZASO Newsletter, 1981). Such a decision highlighted a drift by AZASO from the philosophy of BC and its associated organisations like SASO and the BPC.

The AGC played an important role in bridging the distance that had existed between Black student organisations and NUSAS by developing a working alliance on the Education Charter Campaign. As the number of Black students increased in the early 80s, these students constituted a social category that was distinct from the majority of Black people, who were predominantly working class (Van Kessel, 2000). Low wages, unemployment, inadequate housing and services were realities out of which they had emerged. “It was thus a natural course of action for students to identify with and involve themselves in a number of community campaigns and trade union support campaigns” (Mamabolo, 2016: interview). He also notes: “Student activists were involved themselves in research, data collection, analysis and compilation of information that would assist in the struggle for liberation” (2016: interview). AZASO also focused on the Education Charter campaign, specifically the need for students to formulate a common set of educational demands. It viewed the Education Charter campaign as a rallying point to mobilise students and make student structures more mass-based. It did so firstly by supporting the Freedom

Charter and then later in 1986, by changing its name to South African National Students Congress (SANSCO) (Van Kessel, 2000).

Baloyi (2016: interview) further explains:

AZASO saw a direct relationship between the educational and other (socio-political) struggles. Its guiding principle was the struggle for the creation of a democratic South Africa free of racist oppression and exploitation. It also welcomed the formation of the UDF and had participated in meetings that preceded the formation of the Front. Its members and leaders such as Aaron Motswaledi, Joe Phaahla, Paul Sefularo, Abba Yacoob, Mafa Goci, Thomas Mdluli and Bennedicta Monama played an important role popularising the UDF, by promoting anti-election campaigns and collecting signatures during the Million Signature Campaign. The Million Signature Campaign was a national campaign run by UDF to collect Million signatures. These signatures were meant to show support for the non-racial principles of the UDF, a rejection of apartheid government and solidarity with organisations across the country working to create a democratic, non-racial South Africa.

Turfloop was central to the formation of AZASO. “The students from Turfloop who formed part of AZASO leadership were Tom Nkoana, Blessing Mphela, Bennedicta Monama, Peter Maake, George Mpitso, Calvin Mutheiwana, Themba Maluleke, Warara Kakaza, Kgaogelo Lekalakala, Chikane Chikane, Rapule Matsane, Tebogo Moloi, Nikisi Lesufi, Natala Mathebula, Nosipho Phambuka, Sphiwe Mndaweni, Benjamin Mphiko, Moeti Mpuru, Godfrey Selepe, Dan Mashitisho, Mamoloi Mpitso and Sello Lediga” (Mamabolo, 2016:interview).

Bucks Mahlangu, Irvin Phenyane, Abbey Dlavane, Kabelo Motshabi, Cebile Khanye, Ernest Khoza and Nдавhe Ramakuela were another crop of leaders who arrived at the tail-end of AZASO and lead SANSCO (Van Kessel, 2000).Tebogo Moloi, Bucks Mahlangu and Ernest Khoza are former SRC presidents of Turfloop” (Baloyi, 2016: interview). In 1987 SANSCO called for the transformation of tertiary institutions into Peoples Campuses and called for the formation of committees of peoples' power at all levels, from the SRCs through to hostel and floor committees, faculty councils, class committees, as well as sports and cultural committees. These structures that had their parallel in the street committees, were seen as the foundations of people’s power and democratic control of campuses” (Van Kessel, 2000).

In 1986 AZASO was weakened by repressive state measures. Most comrades were arrested for their political activism in campuses. According to Baloyi (2016: Interview), “many student activists in Turfloop were arrested at that time.

Police harassment, intimidation, banning orders and other means were employed to make it difficult for the students to organise themselves". The repressive measures were done in order to instil fear among the students and their leaders. Police harassment discouraged potential activists because of its brutality. "The aim of the authorities was to kill political activism on campuses" (Letsoalo, 2016: interview). "Unfortunately killing political activism on campuses did not happen because at that time the struggle for liberation had reached boiling point, thus no amount of police harassment and intimidation was going to stop activists" (Baloyi, 2016: interview).

The influence of AZASO played a very important role in the 1980s school boycotts, the protest against the introduction of the tri-cameral parliament and Black Local Authorities, the 1984 Vaal Triangle uprising and the 1985 school boycotts (Van Kessel, 2000). This was interspersed with local student struggles that led to sustained boycotts over the expulsion of student leaders, racist lecturers, and dismal conditions at Black tertiary institutions. "AZASO was able to ensure that the struggle at tertiary institutions presented a challenge to the apartheid system" (Baloyi, 2016: Interview). This was embodied in their commitment to the Freedom Charter and the goal of national liberation as well as the links they identified between educational issues and other forms of national oppression.

## **5.5 THE COOPERATION OF THE AZASO WITH THE CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS (COSAS)**

The COSAS was established in June 1979 as a national organisation to represent the interests of Black school students at High school level. During its formation SASM and other organisations of the BC movement were banned by the apartheid government (O'Malley, 2011). COSAS organised students at secondary and night schools, as well as technical, teacher training and correspondence colleges. Soon after their formation, the organisation set up branches in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Transvaal, and Orange Free State (O'Malley, 2011). Branches in the various provinces were set up with the aid of executive members specifically deployed to the various regions for that purpose. COSAS adopted the ideology of BCM but a year after its formation COSAS became the first organisation to declare its support of the Freedom Charter. "Its first president, Ephraim Mogale was actually a prominent

member of the ANC and was later to be convicted of furthering the aims of the ANC” (Magoro, 2016: interview).

At the time of its formation the ANC was banned along with other liberation movements under the Unlawful Organisations Act. “A guiding principle of the COSAS was the view that the ANC was the genuine liberation movement of South Africa. In its first two years COSAS took up two commemorative campaigns that authorities saw as ANC-supporting; the 1979 hanging of uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) guerrilla Solomon Mahlangu and the centenary of the Zulu victory over British troops at Isandhlwana” (O’Malley, 2011:04).

COSAS was formed in the same year as AZASO, and both aligned themselves with the ANC and Freedom Charter. “The organisation’s principal aims were the conscientising of students and the wider community to the repressive nature of education in South Africa, to participate in the drawing up of an educational charter for a future non-racial democratic education system. Its view was that a democratic education system could only be achieved in a democratic society based on the will of all the people” (Magoro, 2016: interview). “It recognised that Bantu Education was aimed at controlling and indoctrinating youth and that this could only be changed by transforming the country’s entire political system” (Magoro, 2016: interview).

In 1983, like AZASO, COSAS welcomed the formation of the UDF and played a key role in the formation of the regional UDF structures in all of the provinces. It saw the UDF as representing a common platform to fight for a free and democratic South Africa. In its early years, COSAS, focused on educational issues but with its alliance to the UDF, and by the end of 1984, its students were making demands around educational as well as political issues (O’Malley, 2011). Throughout the 1980s, under the banner of COSAS students staged a variety of resistance activities such as boycotts, strikes and negotiations. “In 1984 at Hwiti, a high school that was based next to UNIN, there was a huge protest. Students were protesting against the principal and accusing him of being an agent of the apartheid regime. Students from UNIN joined in solidarity with learners from Hwiti” (Magoro, 2016: interview).

AZASO and the COSAS worked together as they had similar position in terms of ideology and approach to the struggle for liberation. They were both aligned to the ANC and supported the Freedom Charter. COSAS, however, was more active in

high schools, while AZASO was more active in institutions of higher learning. They worked together during protests, boycotts and strikes.

They were both confronted by the same enemy which was the apartheid regime. According to Magoro (2016: interview) “a branch of AZASO in Turfloop and a branch of COSAS in Hwiti (a high school next to UNIN) worked very closely in terms of addressing the problems that were affecting Black students. He further states that when there was a protest at UNIN campus, learners at Hwiti joined them, because they perceived each other as one.” Basically AZASO and COSAS had to work together because they knew that they were faced by one enemy and the only way to defeat the enemy was through unity; so they had to unite and work together in order to threaten the enemy. COSAS introduced a political education programme called “Each one teach one”. The programme was aimed at dealing with the psychological part of the revolution in Black communities (O’Malley, 2011).

The *Each one teach one* programme was aimed at eliminating all the stereotypes by Blacks about themselves and the complete eradication of the slave-mentality and feelings of inadequacy characteristic of an oppressed and exploited society (O’Malley, 2011). In this programme, the COSAS Hwiti branch worked very closely with the AZASO branch on campus. “The COSAS Hwiti branch used to invite knowledgeable comrades from the campus to give political education to learners” (Magoro, 2016: Interview). The political education was very useful in encouraging young people to join the struggle for liberation.

## **5.6 NOTABLE HISTORICAL EVENTS IN TURFLOOP**

### **5.6.1 THE LAUNCH OF SASO AT TURFLOOP IN 1969**

Representatives from Black higher education institutions met at Marianhill and approved the formation of SASO and publicly launched the organisation at UNIN in July 1969. The launch of SASO at UNIN was of historical importance. According to Nchabeleng (2016: interview), “Turfloop was chosen as the launching place because it was perceived as being progressive in terms of student political activism by delegates who attended the formation of SASO at Marianhill”. Bringing the launch of SASO in Turfloop can be seen as a form of appreciation of the work that Turfloop student political activists were doing in the struggle for liberation. If Turfloop was not active and visible in the struggle for liberation, surely Turfloop was not going to be an

option for the launching venue of a revolutionary student organisation like SASO. During the launch Steve Biko was elected as the first president of SASO and immediately after the election he embarked on a series of workshops and rallies to popularise the organisation (White, 1997). SASO introduced political education programmes called "formation schools". Formation schools provided Black students with BC ideas to develop their own ideas and political programmes. At the first "formation school", held at the Natal University Medical School in December 1969, Biko talked about the significance, role and future of SASO (Badat, 1999).

"The basic and immediate aims of SASO were to: mobilise Black students by increasing contact nationally, identify crucial grievances that affected Black students, represent the interests of Black students, establish a solid and strong identity to boost Black students' self-confidence and begin concrete programmes to respond to pertinent issues to get the majority of Black students directly involved in SASO activities" (Badat, 1999:221). According to Nchabeleng (2016: interview), "The formation of an independent Black organisation was not conceived as support for government policy of separate development, but as a realistic response to Black issues. What SASO did was simply to take stock of the current scene in the country".

They realised that unless the Black students decided to lift themselves from the doldrums, no one would do that. What was needed was not mere visibility, but real Black participation (Biko, 1996). The new stance allowed Blacks to break their dependence on White society; to develop confidence in themselves and to work out their own strategies and ideas about liberation. The SASO comrades used the slogan "we are 'Black' students and not black 'students' which popularised the importance of establishing strong ties to local communities (SASO Newsletter, 1972). The BC ideology developed in close association with the practical activities of SASO. "The BC ideology of SASO, which had a firm roots at UNIN, caught on among high school students like wildfire; it fuelled and radicalised the political consciousness of the young students who emulated the sacrifices of their older brothers and sisters at the university level" (Ranuga, 2014:167). "Their political consciousness reached its highest point and contributed to the exploding of Soweto Uprising of 1976. That historic uprising by the youth proved to be a critical contribution to the internal political upsurge, which made South Africa ungovernable and precipitated the demise of the apartheid regime" (Ranuga, 2014: 167). The BC

philosophy felt very strongly about the urgent need for the oppressed Blacks to raise their level of political consciousness, as a prerequisite step towards total liberation from White domination (Ranuga, 2014).

This philosophy therefore undertook the task of politicising the masses with a sense of urgency and commitment. Their dedication on the cause for liberation, from the consciousness level was highly inspiring.

### **5.6.2 THE EXPULSION OF ONKGOPOTSE TIRO IN 1972**

Tiro, representing the graduands, made his historic speech at the graduation ceremony at UNIN in 1972. His speech was focused on the nature in which the university's power and authority resided in White hands, while the Blacks were occupying advisory and token positions (Heffernan, 2015). The speech angered the university authorities and Tiro was expelled from the institution. The reason given for his expulsion was that Tiro chose the wrong occasion to give the type of speech he gave (Heffernan, 2015). The reaction of SASO to the expulsion of Tiro was swift, militant and systematic. Mass meetings were organised and student leaders were giving speeches in support of Tiro, instead of attending classes (Ranuga, 2014). "The students were fully behind Tiro's graduation speech and resolved to fight for his reinstatement. Students made it clear to the university authorities that if Tiro was not reinstated they would shut down all academic activities" (Ranuga, 2014:160).

"The university authorities' responde by closing down the dining halls" (Ranuga, 2014: 160). Closing down the dining halls was the strategy for the authorities to deal with protesting students, because they believed that you cannot be radical on an empty stomach. Unfortunately their strategy did not work because the students had to be creative in dealing with the scarcity of food. "A general appeal was therefore made to all the students who had any money, to make generous contributions to a common fund to buy food. Only basic foods were ordered, just bread and drinks in order to give them energy to continue with their struggle" (Ranuga, 2014:161). According to Ranuga (2014:161), "We would not let lack of food be our distraction; we were determined to stay the course, and not succumb to administrative pressure. We held a rally and marched to the vice chancellor's office, to present a petition for the reinstatement of Tiro. The march was orderly and dignified".

According to Thobakgale (interview: 2016) who was also present at the march had this to say: "We stood at the office entrance and solemnly sang, Our Father Who Art in Heaven, after submitting the memorandum. Our memorandum was rejected immediately by the vice chancellor". His response left students with no other option but to declare a war on the authorities. "The authorities' mobilised visible superior power, a temporary camp was set up for soldiers about three miles away" (Ranuga, 2014:161). "The administration realised that the students' morale was not in the least affected by the lack of food and show of military force. More drastic measures were then employed. The water supply system was completely shut off. There was no water for drinking and no water for washing" (Ranuga, 2014:162). According to Thobakgale (2016: interview), "It was difficult to live without water, just imagin life without water, when nature called, people continued to use the bathrooms and the whole place started smelling". "The vice chancellor took further drastic measures by closing down the university. All students were ordered to leave the university premises". Closing down the university was a radical decision which lacked the sense of parenthood from the management side". (Ranuga, 2014:162) "It was announced that the reopening would take place a month later, and that all students would be required to apply for readmission" (Ranuga, 2014: 162).

According to Ranuga (2014:162) "At the last mass meeting, before their departure, it was decided that they would all return on the set date, including those who were not readmitted. It was also agreed that, upon arrival, on the opening day, [they] would re-evaluate the situation and decide on an appropriate course of action". It was clear that they were not willing to succumb to administrative pressure. "On the first day of school, after the scheduled reopening, it was anybody's guess what lay in store for us. The general expectation was that the boycott of classes would resume, if our demand for the reinstatement of Tiro was not met" (Ranuga, 2014:165). "It was also not clear how the administration would deal with those students who had not signed the "declaration statement" (Ranuga, 2014:165). "On the opening day, the university authorities took a radical decision and expelled all the SRC members and the whole student leadership" (Thobakgale, 2016: interview). Students took a decision to rally behind their expelled leaders. The general consensus was that all the students must go back home, so that the university could stay closed (Ranuga, 2014). "The total registered number of students in 1972 was 1146 and half of this number withdraw

voluntarily from the university, to protest the expulsion of the SRC” (Ranuga, 2014: 163). The rest of the students threw the towel and gave up the boycott of classes (Ranuga, 2014). Those who departed faced an uncertain future and their studies had virtually come to a dead end (Ranuga, 2014).

The readmission process came with strict conditions. “Those who were re-admitted were required to sign a pledge agreeing that (1) Tiro will not be readmitted, (2) The Students Representative Council has been suspended, and (3) The Constitution of the SRC has been suspended including the committees and also the Local Committee of SASO” (Mokwele, 2016: interview). Over the course of the winter holidays, most Turfloop students eventually signed these agreements in order to return to campus, but the entire SRC and other additional influential members of the student community were denied re-admission for at least two years (Heffernan, 2015). “Through SASO, from Turfloop the boycott spread to the universities of the Western Cape, Zululand, Durban-Westville, the M.L. Sultan Technical College and the Natal Medical School. Some White students at the University of Cape Town demonstrated in solidarity with the Black students” (Heffernan, 2015:181).

The students criticised Bantu education and the entire apartheid political order. Against the background of a rampant, confident racist regime, widespread fear of the dreaded security police, a generalised political apathy pervading Black communities and an organisational ‘vacuum’ in Black politics, the May-June 1972 student boycott was an important development in protest politics

Tiro left campus and moved to Soweto where he stayed with his mother, who was living there at the time. He continued his activism in student politics immediately, unhampered by expulsion from Turfloop. He became a key organiser for SASO at the executive level, and was paired with Permanent Organiser (and fellow ex-Turfloop student) Harry Nengwekhulu as part of SASO’s tiered approach to leadership (Heffernan, 2015). These tiers were designed to create stables of leadership within the organisation that permeated beyond the most visible leaders like Steve Biko and Barney Pityana. They were aware of the banning of other political groups, including the ANC and the PAC, less than a decade earlier, and realised the risks of directly challenging the state (Heffernan, 2015).

Tiro took his university qualifications in Education to look for a job. He found a temporary post at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto. The principal there, Lekgau Mathabatha, hired Tiro to teach English and History (Heffernan, 2015). Though his tenure at the school lasted less than a full academic year, Tiro's impact and legacy were significant. "He was critical in instilling BC as an ideology in the already politically active African Student's Movement (ASM) at the school, and worked to seek out politically curious and motivated students, striving to conscientise them in the SASO mould" (Heffernan, 2015:181). Tiro arrived at Morris Isaacson and influenced the name changing of ASM to SASM in 1972, to be in line with SASO's more inclusive interpretation of Black identity. During his time at Morris Isaacson, between 1972 and 1973, Tiro acted as the SASO representative to SASM itself (Heffernan, 2015). "Tiro produced some of the influential students in the struggle for liberation such as Tsietsi Mashinini who became the chair of the influential Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC), which played a critical organisational role in the June 1976 Soweto Uprising" (Heffernan, 2015:182).

Tiro was later assassinated by the apartheid regime while in exile in Botswana. The expulsion of Tiro marked a turning point, not just for the students of Turfloop, but for the staff as well. Until 1972 Black and White academic staff at the university had co-existed in a joint staff association, which was responsible for academic management and making recommendations to the rector and university senate (Nkondo, 1976). "Though social activities and living quarters remained firmly separated by race, academic and administrative matters were undertaken and debated by this joint body. In an emergency meeting after the 1972 graduation ceremony, this group faced the question of whether to support or condemn the university administration's decision to expel Tiro" (Heffernan, 2015:181). In an interview with Mokwele (2016), he said this about the incident: "During the discussions of what Tiro said, there was a great tension in the staff meeting. The chairman was, of course, a White man and he wanted the staff association to condemn what Tiro said. But as the Black staff we said nothing to him, we couldn't agree. We didn't support that motion of condemning what he said and that the university was doing well by expelling him. It was great tension". White staff members were in the majority at UNIN, so they dominated most staff decisions. The issue of Tiro was debated until they resort to voting and White staff won that motion of condemning Tiro and supporting the administration for

expelling him. “The Black members of staff marched out, led by the most senior Black member of staff such as Prof M.E Mathivha and Prof P.F Mohanoe” (Mokwele, 2016: interview).

The conflicting views about how to handle the issue of Tiro between White staff and Black staff was the main reason that led to a fundamental and lasting division between the two groups at Turfloop for many years. It triggered the formation of BASA, and by default, a White academic staff association. The issue of Tiro’s expulsion, had fundamentally divided the staff along the lines of race, and as tensions continued to heighten at Turfloop, the polarisation between the White staff and the Black staff and students became entrenched (Nkondo, 1976). “Increasingly, racial divisions on campus were more prominent than those between students and staff, and in the mid-1970s BASA became a vehicle for Black staff to express their political support and solidarity with student causes” (Msemeki, 2012: interview).

At the political, cultural and symbolic levels, the 1972 boycott opened the way for the recurring use of the boycott strategy, to the extent that by the 1980s, it became a regular aspect of Black community life. “It was the first in a series of student protests, of clashes between the students, university administrations and the police, culminating in the memorable 1976 township revolts and the countrywide civil uprisings in the 1980s” (White, 1997:128). The spread of BC beyond a small group of university students, and the experience of the 1972 boycotts contributed towards a rejection of apartheid education in most urban areas.

### **5.6.3 THE 1974 VIVA-FRELIMO RALLY**

On the 25 September 1974, Mozambique gained its independence under the Liberation Party of Mozambique (Frelimo). The achievement of independence in Mozambique inspired the South African BCM organisations, BPC and SASO, to organise a 'Viva Frelimo' rally. “If Portuguese colonialism could be defeated in Mozambique, so could settler-colonialism in South Africa. The idea was conceived by the SASO Secretary General at the time, Muntu Myeza and Sathasivan Cooper approached other leaders and, on 15 September, the representatives of SASO, the BPC and the Black Allied Workers’ Union (BAWU) met in Durban” (Mamabolo, 2016: interview). “They came to an agreement to coordinate multiple rallies across the country, with the aim of celebrating FRELIMO’s victory” (Mamabolo, 2016: interview).

They agreed that each regional office should organise its own rally. In the event, however, only Durban and the University of the North held their own rallies (Brown, 2012).

These rallies were the only national campaigns to be staged by SASO and it accelerated tension between SASO and the South African government. “The Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, banned the rally planned for 25 September 1974. But, much publicity had already gone out, and the image of the BCM was at stake. Muntu Myeza who was the secretary general of SASO at that time issued out a press statement denying the legality of Kruger’s statement. In the statement he stated that: “We are not aware of any banning and we don’t care even if it is banned, we are going ahead at all costs with the rallies nationally” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). The leadership of SASO was very determined about hosting those rallies and their attitude was very clear that they are ready for anything that comes to their way. “Myeza telephoned a number of reporters to reassure them that the rallies would go ahead” (Brown, 2012:15).

These conversations were recorded by the police and introduced as evidence during the later trial (Brown, 2012). According to Komana (2016: interview), “Myeza attempted to convince journalists to report that the rallies would be going ahead regardless of the Minister’s words”. In his statement, “he encouraged them to believe that the threat of state repression was insufficient either to disrupt the organisers or to prevent the Black public from participating” (Brown, 2012:15). It was clear that Myeza wanted everything to go ahead as planned regardless of the threat that was posing by the authorities. Myeza and Cooper were so confident of their right to hold the rallies that they were even willing to risk the possibility of violent repression. According to Myeza, as cited in Brown (2012:16), “If the state were to use violence to repress the rallies, this would only serve to strengthen the moral authority of SASO and the BPC. It would demonstrate the illegitimacy of the apartheid state, while simultaneously demonstrating the ability of SASO and the BPC to defy it”

Students who were in attendance claimed that they were appearing as an ordinary students and not as members of SASO. By 14h00, several hundred students had congregated in the campus’s main hall. “Karabo Gilbert Sedibe, the SRC president, informed his audience that this would be an SRC rally, and not a SASO rally, and

would therefore fall outside the remit of the Minister's banning order" (Brown, 2012:17). According Nefolovhodwe (2016: interview), "Just before the rally could commence Gilbert stated that 'anyone who wishes to address the rally should do so in his or her personal capacity, and not as a representative of any organisation. Gilbert, in his address outlined the programme of speakers, and spoke on the history of Frelimo and exhorted the crowd to shout, 'Viva Frelimo, Viva Machel!' and raised a clenched fist in the Black power. "He then called me to speak". Everyone who got an opportunity to speak claimed to be speaking on his own behalf, and not for SASO or BPC. "Nefolovhodwe in his address, he told the students that they were gathered 'to commemorate those who had suffered for freedom's cause and those who had ultimately gained their humanity. He called upon them to re-dedicate themselves to their own struggle in South Africa" (Komana, 2016: interview).

As expected from the warning they have received from the authorities, the police entered the hall under the leadership of Major Erasmus and informed the students that the meeting had been banned. He ordered them to disperse within fifteen minutes (Brown, 2016). "Students began to leave the hall, but not all dispersed. Instead, some regrouped on the university's sports field and started singing and marching in formation. Male and female students separated in part, in response to a suggestion that they return to their respective hostels" (Komana, 2016: interview). The police continued to count down the fifteen minutes given for the students to disperse (Brown, 2012). According to Komana (2016: interview), "The police began to attack the crowd and tear gas was released, dogs were allowed to roam at the end of their long leashes and were encouraged to bite the students whilst the police used their batons to assault male students".

As a result, student leaders were subsequently detained and the university was closed. The arrested student leaders were Gilbert Sedibe, the UNIN SRC president, Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, SASO national president and Cyril Ramaphosa, the chairman of SASO Turfloop branch (White, 1997). "Students staged a protest march to Mankweng police station near the university to demand the release of those arrested leaders" (Komana, 2016: interview). This is the clear indication that students were determined to challenge the authorities by continuing to protest even in the absence of their leaders since they were arrested. Unfortunately in every revolution they are counter-revolutionaries and revolutionaries. A counter-revolutionary group

of about one hundred students, most of them into their final year, have drawn up a counter-petition saying they want to go on attending lecturers and writing their exams. They disassociated themselves from the protest (White, 1997).

The situation at Turfloop was of the great concern to Black parents and leaders of Black communities. Concerning the Frelimo Rally, Professor H. Ntsanwisi, then the Chief Minister of Gazankulu, as cited into White, had this to say "Time and again we read about demonstrations similar to the recent one at Turfloop at White universities, but we never hear that they were closed, not even for a day" (1997:108). The Pro-Frelimo Rally emphasised that the learning and teaching experience at Turfloop could not be divorced or isolated from the broader struggle against racial dominance and oppression nationally or regionally. This rally also indicated the determination of students in challenging the apartheid government. Unfortunately their stand against the authorities couldn't continue without a fight from the authorities. "Twelve SASO and BPC members were held incommunicado for four months, and on 31 January 1975 nine out of these twelve were charged under the terrorism Act with conspiring to transform the state by revolutionary and violent means, with intending to endanger the maintenance of law and order, with fostering feelings of racial hatred, and with publishing and distributing subversive and anti-White publications that discouraged foreign investment in South Africa" (Christenson, 1991:84). The trial of nine who had been detained began on 7 August 1975 in Pretoria before Justice Boshoff. "The defendants were Sathasivan "Saths" Cooper, the BPC public relations officer, Muntu Myeza, secretary general of SASO, Mosiuoa Lekota, SASO national organiser, Aubrey Mokoape, a former leader of SASO and medical practitioner, Sedibe, SASO leader at UNIN branch and UNIN SRC president 1974, Nkwenkwe Nkomo, BPC national organiser, Strini Moodley, SASO administrative assistant and editor, Zithulele Cindi, secretary general of BPC, and Pandelani Nefolovhodwe SASO president" (Christenson, 1991:84). They were represented by advocates Roy Allaway, and David Soggot, who were instructed by Shaun Chetty. Amongst these defendants three of them, namely, Nefolovhodwe, Sedibe and Lekota were coming from UNIN.

Ramaphosa who was also a student leader at UNIN was amongst the twelve that were held incommunicado for four months but he was never charged with the nine of his comrades. Biko was summoned as a defence witness, and he appeared in the

dock at the Pretoria Supreme Court from 3 May to 7 May, 1976 for an entire week (Millard, 1978). “He was faced with a difficult task: he had to present Black Consciousness as a progressive anti-apartheid movement, but he had to take care not to provide the state reasons to find the defendants guilty of ‘terrorism’ or incitement to insurrection, which were the charges the state levelled against the accused” (Bizos, 1998:33). This was the first time Biko spoke in public after being banned in March 1973.

The prosecutor constantly led arguments in which he attempted to connect BC, and those charged, with the politics of the banned movements and their leaders (Pityana et al., 1991). Biko was called at the very time that the BPC was embarking on its unifying role aimed at making contact with those banned organisations, and his genius lay in the way in which he kept many balls in the air at once, not compromising, not intimidating and yet maintaining the attention of the judge (Pityana et al, 1991). Not everything he said was exactly the way it was because he had a responsibility to save his comrades (Millard, 1978).

The accused were all sentenced to terms ranging from five to six years on Robben Island. It is possible that they would have received harsher sentences were it not for Biko’s testimony (Bizos, 1998). The prosecution called fifty-nine witnesses before closing its case on 12 December 1975 (Millard, 1978). “It was through this historic event when BASA, SASO and BPC in Turfloop were accused of affecting race relation on the campus” (Komana, 2016: interview). BASA openly advocated the aims and objectives of SASO before the Viva-Frelimo Rally (White, 1997). Krijnaw from the Council of South African Police (CSAP) as cited in Whites, “described the relationship between SASO and BASA as being unholy alliance and that the BASA ideology was just an extension of the SASO ideology. He claimed that, BASA had influenced the students of Turfloop to further their aims of Africanisation of the university through their association with SASO” (1997:124). BASA and SASO were accused by UNIN management of having intentions to overthrow the government.

#### **5.6.4 THE AFRICANISATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH**

The debate on the Africanisation of UNIN has been ongoing for many years. SASO and BASA were central to this call for many years. The African Parents Association (APA) was calling for Africanisation of African universities (Mawasha, 2006). They

categorically stated that, “Black universities should be controlled and run by Black people in conformity with our government policy of separate development” (Mawasha, 2006:74). Because of BASA’s critique and the general mood on campus, in April 1975 Council constituted the Jackson Commission to look into the issue of Africanisation of the University of the North (Mawasha, 2006). “The Jackson Commission supported Africanisation in principle, but advised that it should take place at a pace that could be maintained” (Mawasha, 2006:72). The commission also cautioned against a hasty removal of Whites from the campus. Boshoff as cited in Wolfson, had this to say: “Africanisation must remove Black-White confrontation on campus. The present situation cannot be allowed to continue as it will destroy the university. The confrontation between Black and White staff must be sorted out before handing over takes place” (1976:32).

Following the Jackson commission’s report, came the Snyman Commission, whose report was tabled on 30 June 1975. Based on the findings of the Snyman Commission as cited in Mawasha (2006:73) “Student leadership of SASO had developed an antagonistic attitude and became a powerful pressure group to promote Africanisation of the staff and taking over of the university”. The Snyman Commission observed that, “Students at the University of the North harbour deep-seated antagonism which is overtly manifested in a strong anti-White attitude often expressed in spontaneous reaction even if only in the form of muttering at certain statements and questions and even remarks made by White staff with perfectly innocent intention” (Mawasha, 2006:73). The most telling submission to the Snyman Commission was a memorandum on the need for the Africanisation of the University submitted by BASA (Mawasha, 2006).

BASA was represented at the hearing before justice Snyman by the Chief Justice Ishmael Mohamed. Mohamed used apartheid policies to argue the case for Africanisation of the university” (Mawasha, 2006). Mohamed argued that “Black people must be given the power and responsibility to conduct the administration of their affairs in the homeland” (Mawasha, 2006:74). Mohamed as cited in Mawasha had this to say: “To refuse Africanisation would be tantamount to negating the very same policy that had led to the creation of the university in the first place” (2006:74). The university was virtually a battlefield between Black staff, White staff, students

and the police. In 1977, the council accepted the principle of Africanisation and appointed its first Black rector, Professor William Kgware (Mawasha, 2006).

The Black staff and community at large believed that the appointment of a Black rector would help bring peace to the embattled campus and promote a spirit of solidarity, especially between the Black staff, the administration and the students (White, 1997). According to Mokwele (2016: interview), “We were very happy about the appointment of William Kgware and as the BASA we saw this as our achievement”.

Another BASA member, Msemeki (2012: interview) had this to say, “we felt like we have achieved freedom and is now our turn to be in charge”. According to Nchabeleng (2016: interview) who was a student at that time, “the appointment of William Kgware brought excitement to the students because in William Kgware we saw us, and we were also on the view that Black rector will understand us better”.

The appointment of William Kgware was perceived as victory to BASA and student populace at large. Unfortunately things did not go as expected by the students and BASA. William Kgware personally was against radicalism (Mawasha, 2006). “Many Black people, especially the students and the intelligentsia, saw him as a sellout, a stooge of the White man’s apartheid institution” (White, 1997:125). E’skia Mphahlele as cited in White, described him as “a mere signature, a megaphone for orders that are issued by Whites who are above him” (1997:126). William Kgware was caught in the horns of dilemma: on the one hand he was the first Black rector and thus symbol of the Africanisation for which Black staff, students and the community at large had campaigned for but acted contrary to the wishes of his constituency and please the authorities. Eventually William Kgware was rejected by the constituency that campaigned for him because he was failing to meet their expectations. This created a power vacuum which allowed the White staff to infiltrate them (Mawasha, 2006). “Student militancy increased dramatically, police moved in with the brutality typical of the times and, by and large, Black staff remained unsupportive” (Mawasha, 2006:75). William Kgware found himself in an impossible position. His health was affected and in 1980 he collapsed and died.

As much as William Kgware did not fulfil the expectations of his constituency, but the important part about his term was that, the seeds of Africanisation had been planted

and began to grow. The myth that a Black rector could not oversee Black and White staff was dispelled (Mawasha, 2006). It is also important to note that as much as William Kgware failed the students and the Black staff, there were certain issues such as the equality of staff salaries that he managed to address (Mawasha, 2006).

Professor Mokgokong took over in 1981. When he took over the university senate was constituted by 39 Whites and only 04 Black professors (Mawasha, 2006). The imbalance was embarrassing. According to Mokwele (2016: interview) “The senate did not reflect a Black University that is under the leadership of a Black man”. Mokgokong tried to address this issue by promoting Black academics with a doctorate to associate professors even without publications and some even without a doctorate (Mawasha, 2006). Some faculty members with a master’s degree were promoted to senior lecturer. His aim was to address imbalance through increasing Black senate membership (Mawasha, 2006). Mokgokong’s strategy served in the best interest of his constituency but on the other hand it had a negative impact on the quality assurance. Mokgokong also fell out of favour from his constituency and started to experience hostile treatment (Mawasha, 2006). According to Mokwele (2016: interview), “We felt like his pace of transforming the university was very slow. We were of the view that he can do better than what he was doing”. Eventually Mokgokong experienced the same challenges as William Kgware. Student militancy increased dramatically and Black staff remained unsupportive (Mawasha, 2006). His health was affected and his legs were amputated. He died in 1990.

### **5.6.5 THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN 1985**

By the mid-1980s, SA was in flames, with violent resistance and escalating rebellion from anti-apartheid activists in exile, including the ones inside the country (Glaser, 2010). Rural uprisings in the countryside of South Africa's Bantustan were met by violent demonstrations within the masses of South Africa's townships (Glaser, 2010). The state's response was to declare a state of emergency. The State of Emergency in 1985 gave the President of South Africa the ability to rule by decree, to strengthen the powers of both the South African Defence Force (SADF) and South African Police Service (SAPS), and to restrict and repress any reportage of political unrest (Goodman & Weinberg, 2000). This was the first State of Emergency since 1960, and gave the police powers to detain, impose curfews and control the media and, a

few days later, to control funerals (Glaser, 2010). It was a tough time for the UDF, with leaders imprisoned, networks collapsing and people feeling disillusioned.

It was at this point that it turned to consumer boycotts, which it found to be acceptable resistance as they are non-violent. Consumer boycotts became the most widely used form of protest in the second half of 1985 (Goodman & Weinberg, 2000). Boycotts were against White-owned shops, and sometimes excluded those owned by progressive Whites and included those owned by Black collaborators (Goodman & Weinberg, 2000). According to Molepo (2016: interview), "They were looking for any strategy which would help them in keeping the spirit of resistance alive and ignore the strategies of the oppressors, which were meant to defocus them in their struggle for liberation". UDF supported the call for consumer boycotts and it quickly spread across the country. Although boycotts were considered non-violent, they did sometimes turn violent, especially as they were forced on people who did not initially participate (Goodman & Weinberg, 2000).

During this state of emergency Turfloop was the nerve centre of this unfolding wave of uprisings in the North. Turfloop assumed this revolutionary leading role because of its activism in the struggle for liberation. In the North, Turfloop became a centre of attention and police and soldiers were deployed on Campus to disrupt the political activities of the students and to instil fear amongst student leaders such as Joe Mokgotsi and Bucks Mahlangu (Hlongwane, 2016: interview).

Molepo (2016: interview) had this to say about the conditions at Turfloop during the state of emergency, "During these periods we were treated like prisoners, it was difficult to be in Turfloop, we were not allowed to walk as a group, we were not allowed to go to study during the night; there were police and soldiers everywhere, our campus was turned into a military base".

Hlongwane (2016: interview) shared the same sentiment and he had this to say "It was difficult to be on campus during this period because we were harassed by the police and soldiers for no reason and the environment was no longer conducive to studying". The aim for targeting Turfloop was to kill its revolutionary activism and to instil fear to students, so that they can refrain from political activities. According to Hlongwane (2016: interview) Turfloop was targeted because "It was more than a fount of knowledge; it was an oasis of revolutionary ideas, that's why it became a threat and a target to the oppressor".

Most student leaders were assaulted, tortured and arrested for their political activism. One of the student leaders who suffered the brutality of the oppressor during this period was Josephine “Jos” Moshobane. “She was arrested for three months under the notorious Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, which provided for indefinite detention for interrogation, without access to lawyers or family members” (Matlou, 2015:02). She was released from Haenertsburg police station, into the custody of her uncle, the late Serepe Moshobane, who had been her high school principal and who was then the dean of students at Turfloop (Matlou, 2015).

“Hundreds of students converged at the university’s main entrance to give her a heroine’s welcome” (Hlongwane, 2016: interview). But she couldn’t appreciate the rousing reception because she had lost memory and orientation, and could not recognise members of her family and friends (Matlou, 2015). According to Molepo (2016: interview), “It was very hurting and devastating to see a young active female leader like “Jos” coming back from prison in that condition”.

The security police paraded “Jos” Moshobane in front of student activists on campus, telling them that they would meet the same fate if they continued with their revolutionary activities (Matlou, 2015). Moshobane’s state of health meant that she could not continue with her studies, and her family took her home to take care of her. She spent Christmas 1985 with her family before going for surgery for what turned out to be a brain haemorrhage (Matlou, 2015). She was admitted to a number of Gauteng hospitals, including Leratong and Chris Hani Baragwanath, to remove blood clots from her brain. “She died on April 3, 1986, in Leratong Hospital, five months after being freed from detention” (Matlou, 2015:05). The death of Moshobane clearly indicated the brutality of the apartheid regime in their attempt to suppress student activism at Turfloop.

## **5.7 TRANSITION TO THE NEW DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA**

The increasing social unrest in South Africa that swept through the country in the 1980s, and the changing geopolitical circumstances on the international political scene forced the apartheid government to enter into negotiations with the ANC. In March 1982, Mandela together with senior members of the ANC was transferred from Robben Island to Pollsmoor prison after spending 18 years on Robben Island (Pretorius, 2014). Between 1984 and 1989 secret meetings aimed at bringing down

apartheid took place between the ANC and the NP. Western countries with business interests in South Africa also played a part in putting pressure to the apartheid government to enter negotiations which would bring transformation. On 31 January 1985, P.W. Botha announced to parliament that the government was considering releasing Mandela from prison (Davenport, 1989). This would be done on condition that he renounced the armed struggle and agreed to return to his hometown of Qunu (Pretorius, 2014). "Mandela responded by rejecting the offer for his conditional release in a letter that was read by his daughter, Zindzi Mandela in a rally in Soweto on 10 February 1985" (Pretorius, 2014:63). In July 1986 while he was in Victor Verster Mandela wrote to the Commissioner of Prisons, requesting a meeting with Kobie Coetsee. During the meeting with Coetsee, the idea of negotiations between the NP led government and the ANC raised a request to meet President PW Botha was tabled and the promise was made that such meeting will be arranged (Ross, 2008). That same year Mandela was visited by the Eminent Persons Group from the Commonwealth Groups of Nations (Ross, 2008). Coetsee continued to visit Mandela to negotiate on behalf of Botha. Some of the demands from Botha were that the ANC should end its alliance with the SACP (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

Mandela was transferred from Pollsmoor Prison to Victor Verster Prison, near Paarl, where he was held in a house formerly occupied by a prison warder (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). "Despite being allocated a house, upon arrival Mandela was given another prisoner number which was 1335/88" (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:23). "After almost three years of meetings between Coetzee and Mandela, in 1989 Mandela wrote to Botha agreeing on the need to negotiate but refusing still to accede to the government's conditions for negotiations" (Ross, 2008:88). On 5 July 1989 SA President Botha secretly met Mandela, but Botha was overtaken by events and circumstances. In February 1989, he suffered a mild stroke and was forced by the cabinet to resign (Pretorius, 2014). He was replaced by Frederik Willem De Klerk, who quickly moved to implement reforms that would enable the negotiated settlement to take place. On 2nd February 1990 president of SA De Klerk opened parliament with a speech that changed the course for South Africa's future. This was the start of De Klerk dismantling the Apartheid regime which had previously ruled over South Africa. "Two of the key factors that De Klerk had brought up were the unbanning of all political parties such as the ANC and PAC and the release of all

political prisoners including Mandela” (Ross, 2008:89). De Klerk also spoke about his willingness to work with all political groups to create a new democratic constitution for SA (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

The process of negotiations had impact on Turfloop. Such impact was witnessed by when students at Turfloop were striking in 1992. “The strike was triggered by a national campaign of public protests sparked by rivalries between political groups during negotiations for establishing a new democratic order” (Manganyi, 2016: 163). What sparked the crisis at Turfloop campus was the fact that the local police authorities had decided to ban the holding of public protests outside the gates of the university (Manganyi, 2016). Students refused to leave such decision unchallenged. According to Bopape, who was a student at Turfloop during this period, “In response, we arrange a huge march outside the campus towards Mankweng shopping complex and Police station led by student leaders such as David Makhura, Robinson Ramaite and Onkgopotse Tabane. The situation became tense to the extent that the police had to take out their rifles and point to us. According to Manganyi (2016: 163), “ the police were determined to make the situation as difficult as possible in an attempt to provoke the students, who had created a wall of bodies between the police and one of the university ‘s main entrances”.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal (VC) Professor Chabani Manganyi managed to convince the police to withdraw their confrontation with students. The VC also managed to convince students to go back to campus and continue with their protests on campus (Manganyi, 2016). According to Manganyi (2016:164), “It was important for me to legitimise and acknowledge the protest through rhetoric links to national politics and struggles”. Through the robust engagements, the student leaders together with the university management managed to defuse a tense and dangerous situation that could have turned into an unspeakable tragedy (Manganyi 2016). On the 25 April 1992 Mandela was installed as the Chancellor of UNIN. The following day, Professor N.C Manganyi was installed as the VC of UNIN. “Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo (then Chancellor of Fort Hare), Oscar Mpetha (ANC veteran), Professor Walter Kamba (then VC of University of Zimbabwe) and many other luminaries and struggle stalwarts attended the ceremony” (Manganyi, 2016:168). During the course of the two days, various university buildings and student residences were renamed after leading political struggle heroes in public recognition

of their contribution to the liberation of our country (White, 1997). The stadium was given a name for the first time in the history of the University: Oscar Mpetha Stadium, in honour of this liberation stalwart (White, 1997).

According to Bopape (2016: interview) Mandela in his inauguration acceptance speech as chancellor, “Mandela singled out that occupation of the university as one of the most sinister acts of the apartheid regime. He went further to remind his audience that even as he spoke the apartheid regime continued to maintain an observation post a short distance away from the campus gates”.

He acknowledged the contributions and personal sacrifices of past UNIN students such as Onkgopotse Tiro. Immediately after the installation of the new university leadership, the management and the SRC demanded the reconstruction of the university council. “The university management approached Sam de Beer, the minister of Education and Training to inform him about their intentions to dissolve the university council (Manganyi, 2016: 169). The proposal to dissolve the council came during the period when there was a dispute between Mandela and President De Klerk at the negotiations in Kempton Park. “The minister of Education and Training informed the university that their request is not going to materialised but the university took the unprecedented step of unilaterally dissolving the council” (Manganyi, 2016: 170).

Minister De Beer and his government reacted by threatening to freeze the payments of regular financial subsidy allocation to the university (Manganyi, 2016:171). The student leadership were informed about this threat and they reacted by holding a huge protest march at the office of the minister of education in Pretoria. A meeting was arranged between Professor Chabani Manganyi (VC), Nelson Mandela (Chancellor), John Samuel (Educationist), Sam de Beer (Minister of Education), and Dr Bernard Louw (Director General of Department of Education) in Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg (Manganyi, 2016: 172). The university management won the debate on their decision to dissolve the council and continued with the reconstituted and transformed council, with Professor Kader Asmal as the chair. This was a positive achievement to the Black community.

While there were such positive achievements at UNIN, on the other hand the negotiations for a new democratic government continued to take place between the

ANC and the apartheid government. Government officials (NP) and ANC officials met at Groote Schuur in Cape Town in order to discuss and negotiate the way forward. “The highlight of this negotiation was the end of dominant White rule by means of releasing all remaining political prisoners, granting immunity to prosecute political offenders, and to bring back political offenders in exile” (Pretorius, 2014:66). “Due to the success of the Groote Schuur Minute the negotiations continued with the Pretoria Minute on 6 August 1990, which was the next negotiation conference held once again between NP and ANC officials in Pretoria” (Pretorius, 2014: 67). The main point of discussion was the ANC’s announcement to suspend all armed action struggles. The NP was demanding the disbandment of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC’s armed wing which had been used during the apartheid period as a form of violent protest by actions such as setting off bombs in public areas. After the Pretoria Minute the NP government ended the State of Emergency in SA except in Natal due to the on-going violence (Ross, 2008).

After the success of the negotiations between the ANC and NP it was agreed that all political parties should now be included in the negotiation process. Nineteen political organisations, excluding PAC and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) took part in the first CODESA held at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park, Johannesburg on 21 December 1991 (Pretorius, 2014). The negotiations at CODESA were to discuss the formation of a multi-racial government for the New South Africa. The Declaration of Intent was drawn up and signed by all political organisations present which was a commitment by all members to a goal towards an equal and undivided South Africa. In early 1992 De Klerk ordered that a “Whites only” referendum be held on the issue of reform and to see what the response by the White public was to reform (Pretorius, 2014). The referendum came back with very positive results as 68% of White South Africans voted towards a political reform (Pretorius, 2014).

Due to the success of CODESA One, a follow up known as CODESA Two was held which was once again at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park on 15 May 1992. Although CODESA One was a huge success, CODESA Two was not very successful as all the political organisations failed to meet a consensus over a majority rule or power sharing form of rule for the new government. Political parties such as the ANC wanted majority rule, whereas the NP wanted power sharing (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). This discussion was also not helped by all the on-going

violence in the townships such as the Boipatong Massacre and Bisho Stadium tragedy which occurred on the 17 June 1992.

The Record of Understanding involved an agreement between Roelf Meyer of the NP and Ramaphosa of the ANC. The actual agreement was that the negotiation process had to continue despite all the violence taking place and the 'third force elements' in the country (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). NP government members and ANC officials finally agreed on a 5-year term for government and political parties that gained over 5% in the election would be proportionally represented. On 27th April 1994 South Africa eventually reached its first democratic election whereby all citizens of the country could vote. Over 19 million South Africa voted and the ANC won the elections. Mandela became the first democratically elected president of South Africa. The struggle for liberation was now over and the evidence of the role played by Turfloop students' activism was now visible through its products such as Ramaphosa and Mosiuoa Lekota.

## **5.8 THE NOTABLE PRODUCTS OF UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH STUDENTS' ACTIVISM**

This section seeks to identify the individuals who are the products of Turfloop students' activism and who played important roles in the struggle against apartheid. It also aims at disclosing their current whereabouts in the society. This section is crucial for measuring the contribution of Turfloop towards the national struggle against White minority rule. It must be noted that Turfloop students' activism produced a lot of leaders who made various and important contributions in the struggle against apartheid. This study, however, seeks to identify a few and provide a bit more detail about them and the role they played in the struggle against apartheid. The study focuses on the following freedom fighters: Nefolovhodwe Pandelani, Cyril Ramaphosa, Mosiuoa Lekota, and Aubrey Mokoena.

### **5.8.1 NEFOLOVHODWE PANDELANI**

Pandelani Jeremia Nefolovhodwe was born on 2 February 1947 in Folovhodwe village in the Northern Transvaal (now Limpopo). Nefolovhodwe did his primary and secondary education in Folovhodwe village. "Nefolovhodwe then went to the University of the North, where he continued with his political activism and became a

member of the SRC and the BEC of SASO in 1971” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). At the time when the university expelled SRC president Harry Nengwekhulu and several other students propagating the BC ideology, Nefolovhodwe and Abraham Onkgopotse Tiro emerged as leaders of the movement at the institution ([www.ul.ac.za](http://www.ul.ac.za)).

“The expulsion of Nengwekhulu sparked protests, leading to the deployment of the police around the institution to prevent banned students from entering the campus. Nefolovhodwe, together with Tiro, led these protests” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: Interview). “When Tiro was also expelled Nefolovhodwe organised and led more protests, which subsequently led to his own expulsion in 1972” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: Interview). After this, he worked as an Assistant Welfare Officer for the Musina Copper Mine in 1972 before working as an assistant teacher at Mphaphuli High (Nefolovhodwe Biography available online, [www.who'swho.co.za](http://www.who'swho.co.za)).

Nefolovhodwe was later readmitted to Turfloop and allowed to continue with his studies. In 1974 he was elected president of the SRC, and he was also elected as national president of the SASO. Together with his comrades, he helped organise the ‘Viva FRELIMO Rally’ in Durban and Turfloop in 1974 which was aimed at celebrating the ascension to power of Mozambique’s liberation movement after the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule. “In October 1974 Nefolovhodwe and nine members of SASO were arrested for organising the rally and charged with terrorism. Among those arrested were Sathasivan ‘Saths’ Cooper, Strinivasa ‘Strini’ Moodley, Aubrey Mokoape, Mosiuoa Lekota, Nkwenkwe Nkomo, Zithulele Cindi, Muntu Myeza and Karabo Sedibe” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview).

After a lengthy trial that became known as the SASO Nine trial, all were convicted on 21 December 1976 and sentenced to imprisonment. Nefolovhodwe was sentenced to six years in prison and together with others served his term on Robben Island. He was held in the A Section of Robben Island prison, with his BCM comrades (Nefolovhodwe Biography available online, [www.who'swho.co.za](http://www.who'swho.co.za)). After his release he went back to his political activism and joined a BCM-aligned trade union, the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union (BAMCWU). “He became the regional organiser for Northern Transvaal in 1983 and was elected its Secretary General in 1984” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). “In 1986 he became a founder

member of the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) where he was elected the first Assistant Secretary General. In 1988 he became the Coordinator of Labour Studies at the Ubuntu Social Development Institute, a position he held until 1994” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). In December 1990 Nefolovhodwe was elected president of AZAPO. In 1992 he was elected as the party’s deputy president, a post he held until March 2010. In 1994, Nefolovhodwe became the Executive Director of People’s Agricultural Development, a post he held until 2001. He also served as the chair for the Imbumba Group between 1998 and 2001.

In 2002, Nefolovhodwe went to Parliament to replace Mosibudi Mangena, who resigned his seat in the National Assembly after he was appointed Deputy Minister of Education. “Nefolovhodwe served as AZAPO’s only Member of Parliament from 2001 to 2009. He served on various portfolio committees, including Trade and Industry, Science and Technology, Land and Agriculture, Foreign Affairs and an Ad Hoc Committee on Democracy and Political Governance of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)” (Nefolovhodwe, 2016: interview). Nefolovhodwe is currently the director of Isbaya Development Trust, where he is responsible for cooperative development as part of a Village Renewal programme involving 56 villages in the former Transkei. Nefolovhodwe also serves as a member of the Robben Island Museum council and member of University of Limpopo Student Trust Fund. Nefolovhodwe was appointed as the chairperson of the University of Limpopo Council in 2016 ([www.ul.ac.za](http://www.ul.ac.za)).

### **5.8.2 CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

“Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa was born in Johannesburg on 17 November 1952. He is the second born of the three children of Erdmuth and Samuel Ramaphosa, a retired policeman”. (Butler, 2011: 02). “He grew up in Soweto, attending a local primary school and Sekano-Ntoane High School, Soweto. In 1971 he matriculated from Mphaphuli High School in Sibasa, Limpopo” (Butler, 2011:19). In 1972 he registered at the UNIN North (Turfloop) for a BProc degree. “He became involved in students politics and joined the SASO in 1972. In 1974 he served as the chairman of SASO and UCM Turfloop branch. After the pro-Frelimo rally at the University in 1974, Ramaphosa was detained for 11 months under section 6 of the Terrorism Act” (Butler, 2011:44). On his release he joined the BPC, holding posts on various

committees. He obtained articles with a Johannesburg firm of attorneys while working for BPC (Butler, 2011).

“In June 1976, following the student unrest in Soweto, Ramaphosa was again detained under Terrorism Act for six months and this time held at John Vorster square” (Butler, 2011:60). On his release, he continued with his articles and completed his BProc degree through correspondence with Unisa in 1981. “He completed his articles in the same year, and joined the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) as an advisor in the legal department” (Butler, 2011:113).

In August 1982, CUSA resolved to form National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and in December of the same year Ramaphosa became its first secretary. Ramaphosa was a conference organiser in the preparations leading to the formations of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). “He delivered a keynote address at Cosatu’s launch rally in Durban in December 1985. In March 1986 he was part of COSATU’s delegation which met the ANC in Lusaka, Zambia” (Butler, 2011:210).

In July 1986, after the declaration of the state of emergency, Ramaphosa went into hiding after security police swept on the homes and offices of the political activists. He travelled to United Kingdom and appeared with NUM president, James Motlatsi, at a conference of the British National Union Mineworkers (BNUM). Ramaphosa was refused a passport to travel to Britain in September 1987, but when he became the recipient of the Olaf Palme prize, was permitted to travel to Stockholm to receive it. In December 1988, Ramaphosa and other prominent members of the Soweto community met Soweto’s Mayor to discuss the rent boycott crisis ([www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

In January 1990, Ramaphosa accompanied released ANC political prisoners to Lusaka, Zambia. Ramaphosa served as chairman of the National Reception Committee (NRC), which co-ordinated arrangements for the release of Nelson Mandela and subsequent welcome rallies within South Africa, and also became a member of the International Mandela Reception Committee (Butler, 2011). He was elected General-Secretary of the ANC in a conference held in Durban in July 1991. Ramaphosa was a visiting Professor of Law at Stanford University in the USA in October 1991 ([www.who'swhosa.co.za](http://www.who'swhosa.co.za)). “In his capacity as a General-Secretary he became the head of the negotiations commissions of the ANC and participated in the

convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA)” (Butler, 2011:253). Ramaphosa was present at the ANC’s march on Bisho on 7 September 1992, when Ciskei troops fired on the crowd, killing 24 and wounding 2000. In May 1994 he was elected chairperson of the New Constitutional Assembly. In May 1996 Ramaphosa resigned as both the General-Secretary of the ANC and chairperson of the new constitutional assembly ([www.who'swhosa.co.za](http://www.who'swhosa.co.za)).

Ramaphosa is the Executive Chairman of Millennium Consolidated Investment (MCI) and non-executive Chairman of Johnnic Holdings, MTN Group Limited and SASRIA. He is the past Chairman of the Black Economic Empowerment Commission.

His directorships include South African Breweries, First Rand Limited, Macsteel Holdings, Alexander Forbes and Medscheme Limited ([www.who'swhosa.co.za](http://www.who'swhosa.co.za)). Ramaphosa is also the current deputy president of the ANC and he is also in the top ten of the richest people in South Africa. Ramaphosa is the current deputy-chairperson of the national planning commission (NPC) of South Africa ([www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)) and also the current deputy president of South Africa. Ramaphosa is currently contesting for the position of ANC presidency. The ANC national elective conference will take place in December 2017.

### **5.8.3 LEKOTA MOSIUOA**

Lekota was born in Kroonstad on 13 August 1948, into a working class family where he was the eldest of seven children. Most of Lekota’s schooling was completed in Kroonstad, but he matriculated from St Francis College, Marianhill, where Steve Biko had completed his schooling just a few years earlier. Lekota got the nickname, "Terror", on the soccer field ([www.who'swhosa.co.za](http://www.who'swhosa.co.za)). In 1971 Lekota enrolled at the University of the North, and it was here that he became politically active. He joined SASO, and when the full-time organiser, Abraham Tiro, fled the country in 1973, Lekota took over this position. In September 1974 Lekota was arrested with eight other SASO members for organising celebrations around the independence of Mozambique (Mosiua Lekota: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). He was charged under the Terrorism Act, found guilty and sentenced to six years on Robben Island. While on Robben Island he wrote these words to his daughter: *“Above all then, my dear, I am in prison for the sake of peace for our country and the*

*world. I am in prison so that our generation may leave to yours and later generations a country and a world that has the greatest potential for progress"* ([www.who'swho.co.za](http://www.who'swho.co.za)).

On Robben Island, Lekota came into contact with other political prisoners who in turn influenced his ideas. He moved towards ideas of non-racialism and away from BC ideology. Lekota was released at the end on 1982, and eight months later attended the launch of the UDF (Mosiua Lekota: a biography (online) available [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). At the launch, he was elected national publicity secretary. As a member of the UDF, Lekota faced police harassment and detention. In 1984 he was arrested and later released. In 1985 he was arrested again, together with other UDF leaders, and charged with high treason in the long Delmas Trial.

Throughout the trial the leaders were not allowed bail. In November 1988 Lekota was one of the four found guilty, and he was sentenced to twelve years in prison. He was acquitted on appeal to the Supreme Court (Mosiua Lekota: a biography (online) available [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

When the ANC was unbanned, Lekota became involved with it. He was elected chairperson of the Southern Natal Region, and then of the Northern Free State Region. In 1991 he was elected to the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC, where he worked as chief of intelligence. In 1994 Lekota became the Premier of the Free State, a position he held until 1996. In 1997 he became the first chairperson of the new National Council of Provinces (NCOP), and in 1999 he was appointed Minister of Defence (Mosiua Lekota: a biography (online) available [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

In 2008 Lekota spearheaded the formation of the Congress of the People (COPE) with other former members of the ANC such as Mbhazima Shilowa and Mluleki George to contest the in the 2009 general elections. The party was announced following a national convention held in Sandton on 1 November 2008, and was founded at a congress held in Bloemfontein on 16 December 2008. The name echoes the 1955 Congress of the People at which the Freedom Charter was adopted by the ANC and other parties, a name strongly contested by the ANC in a legal move dismissed by the Pretoria High Court. In the 2009 general elections, the party eventually received 1 311 027 votes and a 7.42% share of the vote. Lekota is the

current president of COPE and a member of parliament (Mosiuo Lekota: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

#### **5.8.4 AUBREY MOKOENA**

Mokoena was born in Orlando West, Johannesburg in 1948. He grew up in Soweto, but due to his mother's bad health was brought up by Anna Khomo. Khomo became his adopted mother, but he continued to be in contact with his family, and they made trips back to the Free State to visit the graves of his relatives almost every year (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). Aubrey's father, Steven Mokoena was involved in the activities of the ANC. He was also a strong Christian and a member of the African Episcopal Church (AEC).

In the Khomo house he was taught the value of education, and he developed a very close bond with his adoptive mother. He became aware of politics at a very young age through Bantu Education. He remembers how one day they were suddenly no longer provided with meals at school and how slogans about Bantu Education were painted on walls (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). One-day members of the ANC came to visit the school, and said that a boycott should be started. Mokoena was very unhappy about this, as was Khomo, but his father, who was a branch organiser of the ANC, told him they must do something to get an equal education (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

In 1960 at the age of twelve Mokoena learnt about the potato boycott from his father, and from then on potatoes were not eaten in either the Mokoena or Khomo households (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). It was also in this year that the ANC and PAC were banned. While Steve Mokoena made his son politically aware, Anna Khomo continued to insist that he continue his education. He completed school, and was Head Prefect in his last year. He also got chosen to train as a Sunday school teacher while in High School (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

After his matric he wanted to go to university, but could not afford it. He was able to get a teaching job at his old school, and by saving and being awarded the African Teachers' Association bursary was able to enrol at Turfloop in 1970 (Mokoena

Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). At the university he founded the university choir, became chairman of the UCM in 1971 and was elected Vice-President of the SRC, while Tiro was the President.

He was later elected chairman of SASO Turfloop branch and became very involved in resistance politics (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available ANC .org.za). Mokoena had by this time been aware of politics for a long time, and this long awareness had developed into anger. He got involved with BC ideas of Black power. In 1972 Mokoena was elected President of the SRC at Turfloop. Mokoena was in the forefront of the student protest at Turfloop which came as a result of the expulsion of Tiro after to give his historic speech in a graduation. Aubrey became part of the expelled SRC members during the Protest for reinstating of Tiro (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

At the insistence of Khomo, Mokoena enrolled at UNISA to continue his degree, and got a job heading the Transvaal section of the Black Community Programme. From here he was able to help his community and develop and spread his political ideas (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). Although the government became concerned about the project, it did not attack the organisation directly. It did however use other means of attack such as intimidating people who are involved in the project until 1974, when SASO organised Frelimo rallies for the independence of Mozambique. The government banned SASO rallies. Despite not going on with the rally in Johannesburg, unlike in Durban and Turfloop, Mokoena and others were detained (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

He was tortured in detention while the police tried to find out about the links that they presumed existed between Frelimo and BPC (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). He was released nine months later with no charge. He began his clinic and got married. The clinic however did not last long as the government began to clamp down on all Black Programmes (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). In 1976 the Soweto school uprising began, and the government placed the blame on BC. He faced arrest again and SASO, BPC and other Black Consciousness organisations were banned (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available ANC .org.za). A year later all were released,

although Mokoena received a five-year banning order. Over the next years Mokoena was excluded from political activity as a result of his banning order, which expired in 1983 (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). He however decided not to return to BCM as he had been outside it for so long and because AZAPO had taken on an anti-ANC viewpoint (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

He felt that he would have given support to the ANC had it not been banned. Instead, Mokoena decided to join and get involved with the UDF in 1984. In the UDF he became involved in the Release Mandela Campaign and joined the anti-tricameral parliament campaign. The release Mandela Campaign was successful and almost all governments of the world have repeatedly called for his unconditional release, in the USA and other fora. Parliaments, trade unions, religious bodies and numerous other public organisations, as well as millions of people around the world, have joined the campaign which has greatly helped to educate world public opinion about the struggle in SA. He was again arrested, charged with treason in the Pietermaritzburg Treason Trial and was acquitted. He continued this work, until he was arrested again in 1986 and held in detention. On release he was once again banned (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)). Mokoena joined the ANC after it was unbanned, and is still a member. He is currently chairperson of the Committees of the National Assembly.

He is a Member of Parliament, and is on the committee for Environmental Affairs and Tourism and for Public Enterprises (Mokoena Aubrey: a biography (online) available on [www.anc.org.za](http://www.anc.org.za)).

## **5.9 CONCLUSION**

Student activism at Turfloop and in other Black universities made a major contribution to the struggle against apartheid. The university served as a place that prepared or produced intellectual political cadres. Those cadres such as the above mentioned products of Turfloop were instrumental to the intensification of the struggle against White minority rule. For example, they had the ability to come up with strategies and tactics that gave the apartheid government tough times. The sophisticated formation of an independent Black student organisation (SASO) was of

paramount importance and a realistic response to the injustice of apartheid government towards Black universities and the Black community in general.

The universities, particularly the Black universities, provided the institutional terrain, displaying repressive as well as conducive conditions (protective spaces) that facilitated student protest political behaviour. Those contributions were more positive to the forces of change. The spread of BC beyond the institutions of higher learning, and the experience of the 1972 boycotts at Turfloop contributed towards the rejection of apartheid in most urban areas. The role of UDF in the 1980s was also important in the struggle for liberation. The students in Black universities and the majority of Black communities had a common goal, which was to unite and fight against the injustice of the apartheid government in SA. This should be understood within the context that both students in Black universities and Black communities had common experiences insofar as apartheid was concerned. Problems that were confronted by their parents, their brothers and sisters at home as a result of apartheid, also directly affected them at school and at home. Hence, they all saw the need to come together and fight against the apartheid government.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **FINDINGS AND GENERAL CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that UNIN was created as a political, not an educational, necessity. From its creation in 1960 up to the 1990s, UNIN remained a highly politicised campus. The institution became a battleground between the pro-apartheid forces and those determined to see its destruction. Turfloop student activism played significant role in the struggle against apartheid. This activism gave the pro-apartheid forces a run for their money. The contribution of Turfloop in the struggle against apartheid can be measured by its involvement in the national struggle for liberation as well as the role that was played by its products in the struggle against apartheid.

The UNIN student activism played a significant role in the struggle against apartheid system. It also served as a preparatory platform for future intellectual cadres of the liberation movement. These cadres were instrumental in the intensification of the struggle and they had the ability to come up with sophisticated strategies and tactics that gave the apartheid government a serious political problems. The formation of an independent Black student's political organisation such as SASO was of paramount importance and it was also a good move and relevant response to the injustice of apartheid government. The universities, particularly the Black universities, provided the institutional terrain, displaying repressive as well as conducive conditions

(protective spaces) that facilitated student protest behaviour. Those contributions were more positive to the agenda of change.

Bantu Education was a major challenge to Black students. This system of education offered Black students an inferior education, while White students were offered Western-standard education at the time. Bantu Education contained a curriculum which was designed to promote skills that would be useful in menial jobs to serve White people rather than promote educational development. This kind of educational system was developed to make Black people accept their situation which came as a result of the imposed apartheid policies. The June 16 1976 Uprising that began in Soweto and spread countrywide proved to the apartheid authorities that young people were not going to fold their arms and accept oppressive policies of the apartheid regime. This important historical event changed the socio-political landscape in SA. It inspired and influenced other young people throughout the country to challenge the injustice of the apartheid government in all spheres. The rise of BCM and the formation of SASO raised the political consciousness of many students while others joined the wave of anti-Apartheid sentiment within the student community. The conduct of the 1976 youth was seen as a response to the ambivalent feelings that young Black people were experiencing in a situation where they had to be part of the educational system which was designed to oppress them.

Turfloop student activism was closely connected to the national struggle for liberation. That is to say, the concerns were extended beyond the educational arena and social relations in education to social relations in the political sphere. This means that the form and content of student struggles at Turfloop were mediated not only by educational apparatuses, but also by the apparatuses of the political sphere. Turfloop produced and domesticated emerging Black elites who made higher education an important terrain of student mobilisation, ideological debate, and resistance and these made a positive contribution in the struggle.

This study identified that the struggle for liberation in Turfloop was divided into two periods. This study refers to these two periods as the period of BC and the period of UDF. In the 1970s the BC was the force behind most student political activities but in the 1980s the situation was different, UDF was now a force behind most student political activities. BC called for a psychological revolution in the Black community; it

was a revolution which was directed towards the elimination of all stereotypes by Blacks about themselves and one which is directed towards the complete eradication of the slave mentality and feelings of inadequacy characteristic of an oppressed and exploited society. It conscientised Black people about the need to rally together with their brothers around the cause of their oppression, making them aware of the blackness of their skin and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bound them to perpetual servitude. BC wanted to make Black people be aware that they were not inferior to White people and that there was no privileged race and that people were equal in the eyes of God irrespective of their skin colour.

BC was more about eradicating the slave mentality of Black people and make them to accept themselves as full human beings who have a role to play in their own struggle. It forced Black people to see themselves as full human beings, complete, full and total in themselves, and not as extensions of others. BC inspired Black people to realise equality with White people and also make them aware that their Blackness was not a punishment, nor a condition created by God. BC influenced the decision to break away from NUSAS and form an independent Black student organisation which was aimed on championing the interest of Black students. SASO was formed because BC rejected the notion that Whites could play a role in the liberation of Blacks. BC played a very important role in the struggle for liberation and it helped to keep the spirit of resistance alive in the 1970s.

After the weakening of BC in the late 1970s, in the early 1980s UDF emerged as the new force to continue with the struggle for liberation. The mid-1980s was one of the most intense periods in South Africa in terms of protests. Student struggles continued and a major uprising country wide represented one of the longest and most widespread periods of sustained African protests against White rule. There was the burning of government buildings, businesses, and cars; rent strikes, school boycotts, and work stay ways. The uprising lasted from September 1984 to the end of July 1985 with an estimated 500 deaths, making the political climate in South Africa in the mid-1980s one of violence and resistance. The government declared a state of emergency in July 1985. Meanwhile protests continued at UNIN as tensions between students and the university administration continued to intensify.

Although the state of emergency lasted throughout the late 1980s, the apartheid government was nearing its final days in power. Foreign countries were beginning to exert pressure on the government, while international divestment and sanction campaigns were weakening the national economy. In the USA, the anti-apartheid movement exerted a powerful influence which caused many American companies to pull out. The brutality which the South African police and soldiers displayed in the violent township raids was shown on television for all around the world to see. Many of those harassed and detained were youth. Most had been beaten while in custody or in some instances killed.

The government resorted to banning over thirty organisations, but nothing could stop the drive for freedom. Following the banning of SASO in the late 70s, a new student's structure called AZASO was constituted to fill the void left by SASO.

This is the clear indication that UDF carried the struggle where it was left by BC and continue to fight for liberation.

Student activism at UNIN, from 1968 to 1994, shows that students had created a culture of resistance at the university, which grew from a rich history of African nationalism. UNIN students, from its inception, had always been forerunners in the initiation of the student-based political activism. This study has shown a consistent pattern of student activism beginning around 1968 throughout the late 1990s. The study has also shown that UNIN student activism inspired other university and college students to resist apartheid education. This can be seen when the management of UNIN took a decision to expel Tiro after his speech in 1972 during graduations. His expulsion caused demonstrations in all Black universities countrywide.

The year before the 1994 elections student organisations were set on sustaining the political momentum. Student organisers were developing a cadre in the areas of leadership, political education, and organisational administration. The South African Students' Congress (SASCO), in its efforts to boost an ANC victory in the elections, focused on voter education and making sure people were properly registered to vote. When apartheid came to an end in 1994, student activism continued at UNIN.

Students would now boycott due to an increase in fees which had been necessary to run the university. Decades of activism by UNIN students would culminate in a

culture of resistance which seemed to be unbreakable, even with the emergence of a new African leadership. Student activism at UNIN had in many ways become a tradition, which ultimately had negative consequences as well. UNIN, with its rich history of struggle, had etched its place in South African history as an agent of change, and that change has undoubtedly been for the good of all South Africans.

Turfloop student activism produced a young generation of leaders who made significant contribution in the struggle against apartheid such as Onkgopotse Tiro, Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, Cyril Ramaphosa, Aubrey Mokoena, David Makhura, Matthew Phosa, Ngoako Ramahlodi, Bucks Mahlangu, Ernest Khoza, Mosiuoa Lekota, and Frank Chikane, just to name a few.

The knowledge and political education that they received in Turfloop made them to be one of the greatest leaders in the country. Their selflessness, sacrifices, and commitment to the struggle played an important role in eroding the system of apartheid. The university played a major role in preparing them to become what they are today. It was because of UNIN that they got involved in organisations such as SASO, BCM, UCM and many others. It was also because of UNIN that Turfloop students interacted with students from other institutions such as Biko, Barney Pityana and shared ideas such as BC, which encouraged Black people to soldier on with the struggle for liberation. Both UNIN and its products played an important role in the struggle against apartheid and their legacy will continue to exist from one generation to the other. Their struggle made SA a better place to live, where human dignity was restored.

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## **ANNEXURE A**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. In which year did you come to UNIN and when did you leave UNIN?
2. Can you describe student political formations at UNIN during your student days?
3. What were the main activities of those student political formations?
4. What were the main student challenges?
5. How did students react to those challenges as well as the student political organisations?
6. Did political parties that were fighting for liberation have any meaningful role to play in the challenges that were faced by students at that time?
7. If your answer to question 6 is yes, which were those political parties and what role did they play?
8. How was the impact of Bantu Education on Africans, especially at the University level?
9. Do you think the ideology of BC had an impact on the struggle for liberation?
10. To what extent did BC contribute in the struggle for liberation, especially at UNIN?
11. Was there any link between the student struggle at UNIN and the struggle for liberation at the national level?
12. How did student activism at UNIN contribute in bringing about the destruction of apartheid?
13. Who are the products of UNIN student political activism that you know who played a role in the struggle for liberation at the university level as well as the national level?

**ANNEXURE B**

**CONSENT FORM**

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to participation in the study:  
**The role of University of the North student activism in the struggle against apartheid from, 1968 to 1994.** I understand that participation in the study is completely voluntary. I will be asked to answer questions about the role played by students in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

By signing this form I agree that I have read and understood the information above and I freely give my consent to participate in this project.

Signatures:

Participant.....	Date.....
Witness.....	Date.....
Researcher.....	Date.....



**University of Limpopo**  
Department of Research Administration and Development  
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa  
Tel: (015) 268 2212, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email:noko.monene@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**MEETING:** 26 May 2017

**PROJECT NUMBER:** TREC/63/2017: PG

**PROJECT:**

**Title:** The role played by University of the North (UNIN) student activism in the struggle against apartheid from 1968 to 1994

**Researcher:** Mr SL Vuma

**Supervisor:** Prof MP More

**Co-Supervisor:** N/A

**School:** Social Sciences

**Degree:** Masters in History

  
**PROF TAB MASHEGO**

**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

**Note:**

- i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
- ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.  
**PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.**