**STUDENT VOICES**

**Campuses full of pain, frustration**

**UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**
SRC president Axolile Gina

IT is troubling to see the hostility in terms of race and language at some universities, but this is a reflection of many underlying and unspoken issues that face as students and as a country. The problem is not so much about Afrikaans but more that students want to receive education in a language they understand, so that education is not a barrier to access within the classroom.

The problem is the slow rate of transformation, as well as frustration and unanswered concerns which students really want to see addressed. Yes, there are challenges, in terms of misunderstanding and lack of sensitivity towards one another, in light of the diversity we share. We need leadership that calls each citizen and student to service and shared responsibility for the development of our nation, where values are lived and applied for the benefit and growth of each other.

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**
SRC president Rorisang Moseli

The reason students are behaving this way can be understood as a venting of frustration, and it’s valid. However, students need to bear in mind that violence is not going to sort out the problem. Students trashing colonial symbols is about students speaking out against the architecture, the curriculum and about the institutional culture. It’s about the legacy of colonialism which was further reinforced by apartheid. Students don’t want to be in an environment that glorifies colonialism and apartheid.

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**
SRC president Gift Sandi

IT is about the time the youthful realised where they are and where they are going and we can’t have these symbols of colonialism and apartheid because for black people it is a reflection of the past and how black people were treated. It is time to transform institutions.

Although there are buildings named after black icons, we can’t have a situation where there are still symbols like statues of colonialism in our institutions. The Afrikaans language will not face a challenge because it’s uncomfortable for a black person to learn in a language that oppressed black people.

As much as we need to talk about transformation and not burn buildings and destroy everything in our path, when it does happen it’s because students feel they are not being heard. There are racial tensions at universities and we should understand that there are certain things we need to change.

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERLAND**
SRC secretary-general Fashiha Hassan

There is a common underlying factor among the university protests which is not only the fight for free and quality education but also about the decolonisation project. Post-1994, people who are born free have not overcome the racial dependencies we have faced over the last 21 years. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission tried to heal those wounds but the wounds are still here. We still experience the same animosity and oppression.

Students are being forced to learn in a language they don’t understand, but it does not mean that there is no place for Afrikaans people in this society. We as students have maintained the culture of nonviolence but there is a space to burn colonial paintings because we want our institutions to be named after a history we can resonate with as black people.

We are nothing but a lost generation, we are by no means lost. We know what we want, we know what we are going to do and I know we are going to achieve it. If we don’t fight, we will be doing South Africa a disservice. We did not live under apartheid but there is still a lot of black pain and we want our institutions to resonate with us and our history. — Compiled by Shemnas Jami