

Title: Under Protest: The Rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare
Author: Daniel Massey
Publisher: Unisa Press
Genre: Non-fiction

You cannot accuse Daniel Massey of not lacking in ambition. His book, *Under Protest: The Rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare*, takes as its subject the role of the

university in the liberation struggle against apartheid and how it helped shaped some of the future leaders in southern Africa, including former president Nelson Mandela.

Fort Hare, which lies along the banks of Tyume River in the small town of Alice in the Eastern Cape was primarily a Christian college meant to produce an emerging elite that was not going to threaten the status quo.

The book mainly covers the period between the 1950s and 1970s – and recounts some of the most interesting national and international events that led these students to challenge the status quo by engaging in protests and eventually joining political organisations such as the African National Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement.

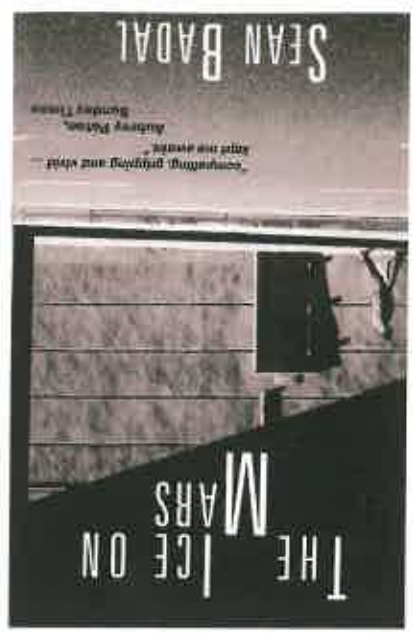
It was never going to be an easy task, but Massey's tireless eye for detail makes the book a pleasure to dip into. To achieve this feat, the author used unpublished university records, including recollections of former students – among them the late ANC stalwart Govan Mbeki, Inkatha Freedom Party president Mangosuthu Buthelezi, advocate Marumo Moerane and former University of South Africa vice-chancellor Barney Pitso.

It is riveting, trip down memory lane of a period bubbling with heated political discussions and interest. It also gives a glimpse into the political role of Professor ZK Matthews, often accused of being “elitist” and too liberal by the militant ANC Youth League members.

Matthews was staunchly independent-minded and never allowed his thoughts and actions to be dictated to by the Youth League. He invited students to his house in Alice and engaged them on a range of subjects – from politics to science.

The book's strength lies in its portrayal of various stories and anecdotes, including those about Matthews and other political luminaries who went on to become distinguished South Africans.

It is well written and accessible

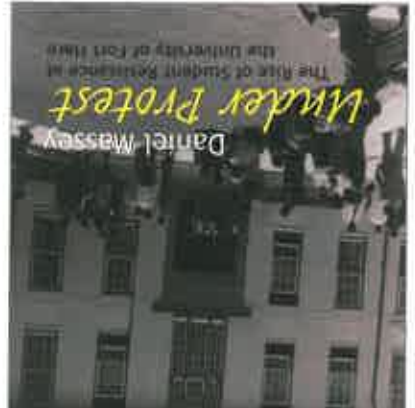


Title: The Ice on Mars
Author: Sean Badal
Publisher: Wigan Pier Press
Genre: Fiction

In *The Ice on Mars*, Sean Badal tells the story of Samuel Steyn, a Johannesburg surgeon who plunges into the inky blackness of a harrowing personal grief when his eight-year-old daughter is accidentally killed by a stray bullet in a botched cash-in-transit heist. Steyn becomes fixated with the need to know exactly who it was that delivered the fatal shot that killed his daughter. Was it the cops or the crooks?

As he gropes his way through

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and features a number of old black and white photographs, including one of former sports minister Makhenkesi Stofile doing a ball-room dance. There are interesting nuggets too about student life, including one about Buthelezi and his friends pouring Detol on the bedding of one of the students they suspected of being a sell-out.

The book ably places the Fort Hare in its rightful place in the fight for freedom.

While parts of *The Ice on Mars* left me unmoved and impatient for the story to hurry itself up, this book is redeemed by little pockets of text that are beautifully strung together to tell such profound truths that I found resonant of my own quarry of thoughts.

REVIEWER: Thabisa Fazel is a full-time student and a part-time magazine editor.