

UCT RHODES MUST FALL MISSION STATEMENT

We are an independent collective of students, workers and staff who have come together to end institutionalised racism and patriarchy at UCT. This movement was sparked by Chumani Maxwele's radical protest against the statue of Cecil John Rhodes on Monday 9 March 2015. This has brought to the surface the existing and justified rage of black students in the oppressive space cultivated and maintained by UCT, despite its rhetoric of 'transformation'. We want to be clear that this movement is not just concerned with the removal of a statue. The statue has great symbolic power; it glorifies a mass-murderer who exploited black labour and stole land from indigenous people. Its presence erases black history and is an act of violence against black students, workers and staff – by "black" we refer to all people of colour. The statue was therefore the natural starting point of this movement. Its removal will not mark the end but the beginning of the long overdue process of decolonising this university. In our belief, the experiences seeking to be addressed by this movement are not unique to an elite institution such as UCT, but rather reflect broader dynamics of a racist and patriarchal society that has remained unchanged since the end of formal apartheid.

This movement is not just about the removal of a statue. The statue has great symbolic power - it is a glorifying monument to a man who was undeniably a racist, imperialist, colonialist, and misogynist. It stands at the centre of what supposedly is the 'greatest university in Africa'. This presence, which represents South Africa's history of dispossession and exploitation of black people, is an act of violence against black students, workers and staff. The

statue is therefore the perfect embodiment of black alienation and disempowerment at the hands of UCT's institutional culture, and was the natural starting point of this movement. The removal of the statue will not be the end of this movement, but rather the beginning of the decolonisation of the university.

CENTERING BLACK PAIN

At the root of this struggle is the dehumanisation of black people at UCT. This dehumanisation is a violence exacted only against black people by a system that privileges whiteness. Our definition of black includes all racially oppressed people of colour. We adopt this political identity not to disregard the huge differences that exist between us, but precisely to interrogate them, identify their roots in the divide-and-conquer tactics of white supremacy, and act in unity to bring about our collective liberation. It is therefore crucial that this movement flows from the black voices and black pain that have been continuously ignored and silenced.

With regard to white involvement, we refer to Biko:

"What I have tried to show is that in South Africa, political power has always rested with white society. Not only have the whites been guilty of being on the offensive but, by some skilful manoeuvres, they have managed to control the responses of the blacks to the provocation. Not only have they kicked the black but they have also told him how to react to the kick. For a long time the black has been listening with patience to the advice he has been receiving on how best to respond to the kick. With painful slowness he is now beginning to show signs that it is his right and duty to respond to the kick in the way he sees fit."

"The (white) liberal must understand that the days of the Noble Savage are gone; that the blacks do not need a go-between in this struggle for their own emancipation. No true liberal should feel any resentment at the growth of black consciousness. Rather, all true liberals should realise that the place for their fight for justice is within their white society. The liberals must realise that they themselves are oppressed if they are true liberals and therefore they must fight for their own freedom and not that of the nebulous "they" with whom they can hardly claim identification."

We support the White Privilege Project and encourage white students to engage with that. They can contribute through conscientising their own community on campus. We also welcome their participation in radical action as a sign of solidarity, so long as that participation takes place on our terms.

AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

We want to state that while this movement emerged as a response to racism at UCT, we recognise that experiences of oppression on this campus are intersectional and we aim to adopt an approach that is cognisant of this going forward. An intersectional approach to our blackness takes into account that we are not only defined by our blackness, but that some of us are also defined by our gender, our sexuality, our able-bodiedness, our mental health, and our class, among other things. We all have certain oppressions and certain privileges and this must inform our organising so that we do not silence groups among us, and so that no one should have to choose between their struggles. Our movement endeavours to make this a reality in our struggle for decolonisation.

ON 'REVERSE RACISM'

In line with our positions, we reject the policing of the responses of black students to their violent experiences. We want to add that we feel that the Constitution's conception of racism is fundamentally racist because it presupposes that racism is a universal experience, thus normalising the suffering of those who actually experience racism.

"A derivation from the word 'race' is 'racism'. The mere definition of the word race does not amount to racism. Racism is a set of attitudes and social mores which devalue one race in order to empower another, as well as the material power to deploy those values in the devaluation or destruction of the lives of the devalued race. Therefore those at the receiving end of racism cannot be racists. They may develop counter values which despise racists, but precisely because of racism, they lack the material power to implement those values" - Yvette Abrahams, UWC Women and Gender Studies Department.

The Constitution's conception of racism has systematically been used to deter irrepressible urges by black South Africans to challenge racism and violence. An example of this was the Human Rights Commission ruling against the Forum for Black Journalists, when white journalists were banned from the organisation in February 2008 and this was declared unconstitutional and racist. An examination of South Africa's political history reveals the necessity for black people to organise to the exclusion of white people in the fight against racism.

It is laughable that UCT has a building named after Biko, when Biko himself said "Those who know, define racism as discrimination by a group against another for the purposes of subjugation or maintaining subjugation. In other words one cannot be racist

unless he has the power to subjugate. What blacks are doing is merely to respond to a situation in which they find themselves the objects of white racism. We are in the position in which we are because of our skin. We are collectively segregated against - what can be more logical than for us to respond as a group?"

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

We have noted that the UCT SRC has supported this movement, and we welcome their solidarity and appreciate the strong stance they have taken. However, we are wary of the contradictions inherent in the SRC taking up such a cause. Given that they are a structure specifically designed to work with management, having them lead puts this movement in a compromised position in which we would have to negotiate with management on their terms. To be clear, we see SRC involvement and support as crucial in this movement, but believe leadership and direction must come from students themselves. Any attempt by the SRC to co-opt the movement will thus be rejected.

ENGAGEMENT WITH MANAGEMENT

We find the way in which UCT management has 'engaged' with this movement to be disingenuous. At no point have we been engaged directly by management. Management has responded to various media houses and has made attempts to isolate individuals from within the movement to divide us. Black outsourced workers are used to deal with protests, despite their own exploitation at the hands of the same institution, whilst management keeps itself unseen. Their releasing of statements reflects the way in which the university prioritises pacifying public opinion and defending its public image over the interests of its own black students.

Our expectation is that management makes a genuine attempt at meeting with us, on our terms, which involves the removal of investigations that frame us as criminals. Meaningful engagement cannot happen if one party is under duress.

We also find it infuriating that management is attempting to open up a process of debate through their 'Have Your Say' campaign. Alumni have been emailed and asked for input, and notice boards have been put up near the statue to allow for comment from the broader student body. This is not meaningful engagement of black students by management, and in fact shows a complete disregard for the black experience. Management is making clear that they are not interested in alleviating black pain unless the move to do so is validated by white voices. It is absurd that white people should have any say in whether the statue should stay or not, because they can never truly empathise with the profound violence exerted on the psyche of black students. Our pain and anger is at the centre of why the statue is being questioned, so this pain and anger must be responded to in a way that only we can define. It must be highlighted that the push for dialogue around the statue reflects the disturbing normalisation of colonisation and white supremacy at UCT. That the presence of Rhodes is seen as debatable shows that management does not take seriously the terrible violence against black people historically and presently. Finally, it is revealing that while black protestors are threatened with and are facing investigations, the racist backlash from white students has not been dealt with by the university.

OUR DEMANDS

Our immediate demands are that we receive a date for the removal of the statue from campus grounds,

and that the university investigation of student protesters be withdrawn. We find it unacceptable that management has presented a date on which council will discuss the statue; we reject the notion that the university has any decision to make here. Our position is clear and will not be hampered by bureaucratic processes which management hides behind. Our pain should be the only factor taken into consideration, and therefore the statue's removal from UCT must be a non-negotiable, inevitable outcome.

OUR LONG-TERM GOALS INCLUDE:

- Remove all statues and plaques on campus celebrating white supremacists.
- Rename buildings and roads from names commemorating only white people, to names of either black historical figures, or to names that contribute to this university taking seriously its African positionality.
- Replace artworks that exoticise the black experience (by white, predominantly male artists) which are presented without context, with artworks produced by young, black artists.
- Recognise that the history of those who built our university - enslaved and working class black people - has been erased through institutional culture. Pay more attention to historical sites of violence, such as the slave graves beneath the buildings in which we learn.
- Implement a curriculum which critically centres Africa and the subaltern. By this we mean treating African discourses as the point of departure - through addressing not only content, but languages and methodologies of education and learning - and only examining western

traditions in so far as they are relevant to our own experience.

- Provide financial and research support to black academics and staff.
- Radically change the representation of black lecturers across faculties.
- Revise the limitations on access to senior positions for black academics. This includes interrogating the notion of "academic excellence" which is used to limit black academics and students' progression within the university.
- Increase the representation of black academics on the currently predominantly white, male decision making bodies which perpetuate institutional racism.
- Re-evaluate the standards by which research areas are decided - from areas that are lucrative and centre whiteness, to areas that are relevant to the lives of black people locally and on the continent.
- Introduce a curriculum and research scholarship linked to social justice and the experiences of black people.
- Adopt an admissions policy that explicitly uses race as a proxy for disadvantage, prioritising black applicants.
- Remove the NBT as a requirement for admission because it systematically disadvantages all students except those who attend Model C schools and private schools.
- Improve academic support programmes.
- Meaningfully interrogate why black students are most often at the brunt of academic exclusion.
- Develop an improved financial aid system.
- Radically reduce the currently extortionate fees.
- Improve facilities which deal with sexual assault, as well as facilities which help black students

deal with the psychological trauma as a result of racism.

- Implement R10 000 pm minimum basic for UCT workers as a step towards a living wage, in the spirit of Marikana.
- Get rid of the Supplemented Living Level, which prescribes a poverty wage.
- Stop using the Consumer Price Index which ensures that wages never really increase, leaving workers in poverty.
- End outsourcing. The companies must go, the workers must stay.
- There should be no capitalist companies making profits at this public sector institution. Workers must know that their job is safe, has decent working conditions and ensures comfortable lives.
- Education for workers and their families must be free.
- Stop the victimisation and intimidation of workers. No worker must be penalised in any way for supporting and joining protest action, including strike action, at UCT.
- Workers must be able, without penalty of any kind, to refuse work that is a danger or hazard to their health and safety.
- Provide workers with access to services dealing with labour, family, housing issues.
- Provide workers with avenues through which to report and address experiences of racism, sexism and other forms of abuse. These avenues must assist in enforcing legal action against the perpetrator.

In solidarity,
The Rhodes Must Fall Movement

BREMNER OCCUPATION STATEMENT

We, the Rhodes Must Fall movement, are occupying the Bremner building with the intention to 1) disrupt the normal processes of management and 2) force management to accept our demands. We have chosen to occupy the Bremner building, and the Archie Mafeje room specifically, because of its strategic and historical significance - it is the place where management carries out its activities, and these are precisely the activities we seek to subvert. In addition, the building is a historical site of protest - in 1968 UCT students opposed the university's decision to rescind the professorship of one of the continent's leading anthropologists, Archie Mafeje. We have chosen the Archie Mafeje boardroom to recognise his struggle against the very institutional racism we are fighting against.

We have claimed and transformed this space to begin the decolonisation of the university. We are implementing a programme of rigorous political education under the guidance of a group of black lecturers from UCT and other South African universities that interrogates and problematizes the neo-colonial narratives pertaining to Africa. This education forces us to reject these narratives and their normative nature because they re-inforce our displacement both geographically and existentially. We have begun to question the entire neo-colonial situation, whether South Africa belongs to all those who live in it and whether it is us the people that are occupying this building or whether we are realising the fact that this building and its land always belonged to the people. This education has extended far beyond the falling of the statue and has reached the language of struggle. How do we organise, how do we

mobilise and most importantly how do we get what we want. How do we resolve the tensions between Pan-Africanism and intersectionality, moreover how does that implicate our own movement. Management has told us that they are allowing us to stay in Bremner. This building that sits on the land of black people, this building that was constructed on the sweat and blood of black people. If UCT is not afraid at this point all we have to say is NANG'UMFAZI OMNYAMA MAX PRICE!

We are here because we are calling into question the legitimacy of the supposedly democratic process Dr Max Price has put in place to address the removal of the Rhodes statue.

It is infuriating that management is attempting to open up a process of debate through their plan of action. Alumni have been emailed and asked for input, and notice boards have been put up near the statue to allow for comment from the broader student body. This is unacceptable to the black (by this we mean all oppressed people of colour) students, workers and staff belonging to this movement. It is absurd that anyone besides those who experience the statue as a violent presence should have any say in whether the statue should stay or not. White students in particular cannot be consulted in such a process because they can never truly empathise with the profound violence exerted on the psyche of black students. Management is making clear through this process that they are not interested in alleviating black pain unless the move to do so is validated by white voices. Opening up the discussion to an alumni that is overwhelmingly white and male will only prejudice black people, and black women particularly, in the decision-making process. To refuse to explicitly acknowledge these skewed demographics is unacceptable. Our pain and anger is

at the centre of why the statue is being questioned, so this pain and anger must be responded to in a way that only we can define.

Further, the 'Have Your Say' notice boards have only made UCT's black community more vulnerable - UCT has crafted a space that allows students to be blatantly racist with impunity, at the expense of a safe space for black people. This shows that UCT either does not know the violence black people face here, or they truly have no interest in our protection. Finally, it is revealing that while black protestors are threatened with and are facing investigations, the racist backlash from white students has been met with silence by the university.

That the presence of Rhodes is seen as debatable shows that management does not understand the extent of the terrible violence inflicted against black people historically and presently. The push for dialogue around the statue reflects the disturbing normalisation of colonisation and white supremacy at UCT.

In his letter "From the VC's Desk: Rhodes statue protests and transformation", Dr Price states that there has never been such university-wide discussion on this issue. He does so without interrogating why this is the case. It is the fault of UCT management that discussion has been suppressed for so long. Black students have clearly not had any channels through which to express their pain within the university, and no genuine steps have been taken by UCT to provide such. It is telling that a student had to go to the lengths that Chumani did in order to garner the university's attention on issues of black pain. The fact that management has clearly disregarded the experiences of black students, staff and workers for the last 21 years on this campus calls into question

their legitimacy in dealing with the issue of removing the statue.

The illegitimate nature of this process is also illustrated by our walk-out last Monday in protest of the disingenuous Heritage, Signage and Symbolism seminar. After the walk-out, the remaining members of the seminar stopped the discussion to respect student protestors and our decision that any conversation on the statue can only happen on our terms. The fact that the Vice-Chancellor mentioned this seminar in his letter without contextualising it reveals that he is committed to upholding a process that is clearly to the detriment of black students.

We take issue with Dr Price's reasoning that "it is a council decision". Again, the only view relevant to the decision is that of black students, workers and staff, and we refuse to accept the trivialisation of this fact in the form of management prioritising white stakeholders. We are also fully aware that UCT senior management has taken unilateral decisions before with no delay – we refer here to the decisions taken on the admissions policy which was pushed through by senior management.

We stress that this movement is not simply about the removal of a statue, and removing the statue is only the first step towards the radical decolonisation of this university. The removal of the statue is the first condition of our campaign – from which point we will allow management to engage with us. We demand that Management accepts that there is no decision to make: this movement has decided that the statue must fall. We demand that Dr Price organises an emergency meeting of council this week Friday the 27th of March to discuss the processes involved in removing the statue from this campus. We will remain in Bremner building until we receive confirmation of this.

UCT: RHODES MUST FALL STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH GARISSA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AND THE PEOPLE OF KENYA:

On Thursday the 2nd of April 2015, the Al-Shabaab, a fundamentalist terrorist organisation based in Somalia, massacred at least 147 people at Garissa University College in Kenya.

We as the Rhodes Must Fall Movement wish to convey our solidarity with the pain of all those who have suffered as a result of this horrific assault on an educational institution and on the lives of young black people.

We as a radical black student movement struggling against the anti-black discrimination and oppression that haunts our country and our university more than 20 years into democracy, condemn in the strongest terms these acts of terrorism. In the same breath we condemn all acts of state terrorism perpetrated by the neo-colonial powers against black bodies, as seen in Israel's assaults on Gaza and the United States' attacks on the Middle East. Indeed we recognise that such state terrorism cultivates the ground on which terrorist and fundamentalist forces such as Al-Shabaab take root.

The attacks on Garissa University College must be seen as more than an attack on people's right to life – they are acts against the right to organise, the right to freedom of association, freedom of expression and the right to live in a secular and open society. Such acts undermine the genuine struggles for liberation and self-determination of oppressed people all over the world.

Instead of weakening the oppressor such acts result in an intensification of the racial, national or sectarian divisions that exist within the state, and are further

used to strengthen and legitimize the repressive apparatus of the very state they are attempting to undermine. The regime on the receiving end of these terrorist attacks responds with assaults on civil liberties, arbitrary round-ups of 'suspects', etc.

As conscious black students involved in a critical struggle for the decolonization of our university and society at large, we stand in solidarity with the Kenyan people and Garissa University College, particularly the families of those students who lost their lives - as we continue to fight for the emancipation of black bodies in an anti-black world.

THE RHODES MUST FALL STATEMENT READ OUT AT TODAY'S MASS MEETING AND BEFORE THE REMOVAL OF THE STATUE:

Exactly a month ago, the pain of one black student led to an action that implicated the university community and South African society as a whole; an action that called into question the neo-colonial situation and the rainbow nation mythology that is suffocating our country. The pain of a single black student, and the pain of millions of black South Africans has now culminated into the movement known as Rhodes Must Fall.

In the time we've spent at Azania House we have begun to understand the need for a new language that challenges the pacifying logic of liberalism. This logic presents itself to us in these ideas of 'reform' and 'transformation', which are legitimised by the Constitution- a document which violently preserves the status quo. Transformation is the maintenance and perpetuation of oppression, hidden within meaningless surface-level change. We have recognised that what is needed instead is the radical decolonisation of this institution, which is necessarily linked to the black condition both nationally and internationally. Our existence as black people is defined by a violent system of power. The university's processes and language naturalises that colonial system. Therefore, if we wish to get rid of that system of power, we have to destroy the processes altogether. Decolonisation is this very destruction.

We have realised that the systems of exploitation which confront oppressed people at this institution cannot be tackled internally, precisely because they are rooted in the world at large. Black bodies, female bodies, gender non-conforming bodies, disabled

bodies cannot become liberated inside of UCT whilst the world outside still treats them as sub-human. The decolonization of this institution is thus fundamentally linked to the decolonization of our entire society.

Therefore when we say Rhodes Must Fall we mean that patriarchy must fall, that white supremacy must fall, that all systematic oppression based on any power relations of difference must be destroyed at all costs. These are battles that we cannot fight alone.

The removal of the statue by management is not something we should be grateful for. Management has undermined and antagonised us throughout this process. They described Chumani's protest action as reprehensible, they insist on defending Rhodes' legacy, and they have made it clear that they think that black pain is debatable. Last night, we stormed a meeting of Council and refused to leave, declaring that no decisions could be taken about us, without us. After insisting for an hour that the laws forbid a decision to be taken in the presence of uninvited visitors, management eventually realised that we were not going anywhere and promptly chose to make the decision in our presence. The fact that Council was able to contradict the same rules that they had just tried to use to exclude us, illustrates both their hypocrisy and the effectiveness of our radical tactics of engagement only on our own terms without compromise.

We must at no point forget that management are our colonial administrators, and their removal of the statue is merely an attempt to placate us and be perceived as sympathetic. Our freedom cannot be given to us- we must take it. We want to be clear that our only regret is that we did not take the statue down ourselves. Going forward, we will no longer compromise. Management is our enemy.

The next step to be taken by our movement is a three pronged approach, based on workers, academics and students. Firstly, we will be launching a campaign against the unjust exploitative system of outsourcing, used by UCT to cut costs and shirk responsibility at the expense of workers' lives. Secondly, we will be launching a campaign around the financial and academic exclusion of black students. Thirdly, we will be focusing on the underrepresentation of black academics, which goes hand-in-hand with our continuing research into the development of a decolonised curriculum.

Finally, let it be known that Azania House is ours, and we will not leave.

RMF APRIL 13 PRESS STATEMENT

Richard Wright once wrote that “to be black in the world is a crime against the state”. This is the inescapable fact of blackness, captured most recently by the brutal massacre of 144 Kenyan students in the university of Garissa and the brutal police murder of American Walter Scott, an unarmed black male whose life, personality and dignity were also reduced to this same positionality of being black in the world. Every year at UCT, there is an unmistakably high number of black students who commit suicide. We would be mistaken to view these events as anomalies. They are a consequence of an inarticulate pain that is not only suppressed but condemned by society – the pain of being black in the world. UCT, that claims to be an African university, condemns the actions of its own African students when they insist that the institution contributes to that pain.

Fanon writes that “for the black man there is only one destiny, and it is white”. In other words, we need to understand that whiteness exists in such a way that the only way to survive in it as a black body is to exist in as close proximity to it as possible; to be afforded its protection through capital and knowledge - no matter how tenuous that protection is. To assimilate and reject that which the system created: blackness.

Xenophobia as it is characterized in South Africa, where we violently inflict harm on other African nationals, is a misdiagnosis of a colonial mental disorder that is rooted in the very situation Fanon describes. It is not the fear or rejection of the foreign or the alien but the exact opposite. It is the rejection and fear of the self, of blackness. The fact that this term persists in public discourse despite its inaccuracy is another manifestation of the insidious nature of

white supremacy and liberalism. Irrationality and savagery are again invoked to describe the black body in a situation that exists precisely because of a legacy of colonial oppression. We must understand these events within their historical context, as the pursuit of assimilation. We need only look at the comfort, safety and wealth that Europeans and white tourists enjoy in South Africa to understand that black South Africans are far from being xenophobic. In fact black South Africans being xenophobic in such cases would illustrate an identity constituted around black-consciousness. It would mean that black South Africans realize that they are not foreigners in their own land and that the overwhelming wealth that Europeans enjoy at the expense of Africans is illegitimate and surely something to be weary of, if not afraid. We thus characterize attacks on African foreign nationals as instances not of xenophobia, but of afrophobia. This afrophobic condition is again nothing but the rejection of the black self and the pursuit of assimilation.

At Azania House, African students and staff from all across the continent have slept side by side every night for three weeks. We have existed, organized, conscientized and elevated the question of decolonization to the forefront of international consciousness, together. We send our condolences to the victims in Kenya, America, and in the recent Afrophobic attacks in Kwamashu and Umlazi townships in KwaZulu Natal as well as those in our institution - victims of an unrelentless white world that has criminalized, dehumanized and all but invisibilised them. We must stand together as Africans against the very system that exists to divide us.

Central to the RMF mandate is its commitment to creating a humane space for black students. This space

stipulates the urgency of accepting black people as entire entities, as having experienced pain, as having rage, and, perhaps most importantly, as having vastly varying experiences of oppression within blackness, in accordance with the multi-layered machine of patriarchal white supremacy.

There are multiple strategies within the university that consistently work against this safety. These divisive strategies have been used historically in order to disrupt the power of a space that recognizes black humanity and pain precisely because this is a threat to management, and the white supremacy that management represents. Attacks on members of the movement by UCT staff, the email sent by Max Price to the UCT community, the eviction notice from the UCT Registrar Hugh Amore and the court interdict that were all delivered to us on Friday the 10th of April serve as examples of this.

The Vice Chancellor and the UCT management have purposefully distorted the events that took place in Azania House and the interactions between students and staff members who were present in the building as a ploy to discredit the movement, to protect the image of the university and to protect staff members who violated students in Azania House.

On several occasions RMF members were subjected to grave violations and assaults at the hands of senior university staff and in the presence of senior members of the university. One of the first attacks to take place happened in the presence of the Registrar of the university, Hugh Amore, where three members of the movement were physically assaulted by two G4S managers. When the registrar was asked to defend students, he boldly rejected the plea and opted to come to the defence of the managers who brutally assaulted the students. The matter was brought forward to

the university through an official complaint. It was also brought forward to institutional forum of the university in the presence of the Vice Chancellor, the deputy Vice Chancellor Crain Soudien and many other stakeholders of the university. The matter was also brought up during the University assembly. Video evidence can be found online.

The second attack was perpetrated by a member of the Communications and Media department of the university. The particular staff member entered into the Archie Mafeje room where the occupation was taking place and without consent of the students started taking photographs of the occupants who were present. When requested to delete the pictures he refused to do so and stated that he was there under the command of the university management. After numerous pleas from students to delete the photographs he refused to do so and proceeded to physically attack a student. This attack happened in the presence of members of SABC media group. It was only after the intervention of the Executive Director of Student Affairs Moonira Khan that he deleted the photographs. This matter was brought forward to the university formally. The Executive Director of the DSA and the Head of the Communications and Media department Gerda Kruger were alerted of this attack at the scene of the event and the matter was also brought up at the institutional forum.

It is also very troublesome that the university would suggest that students entered into the occupation as an attempt at “harassing staff and evicting some from their offices.” The event being referred to here is that of Enrico Uliana, the Executive Director of the finance department of the university in particular, being evacuated from his office at the request of the university management after physically

assaulting two students. This incident does not signify harassment of staff by us, but exactly the opposite. There has been a clear intent of the university to protect certain staff members who will not hesitate at any given time to harm students. It is clear that the Vice Chancellor and the university management do not have the interests of the students at heart and encourage the perpetration of violence against students they have an obligation to protect.

With that being said it is also necessary that we recognise the great relationships that we have forged with many of the administrative staff in Bremner. We are very grateful for the support and encouragement that they gave the occupants.

In his notice of eviction to the members of Azania House, the registrar Hugh Amor stated that “the council has made clear that its decision to remove the statue must be seen as an expression of Council’s renewed commitment to the project of transformation at UCT”. It is our view that this decision must be seen as nothing more than an expression of Council’s continued commitment to the maintenance of UCT’s public image. The threat to UCT’s public image which culminated in this removal was undeniably generated by the sustained actions of the Rhodes Must Fall Movement, beginning with the protest action of Chumani Maxwele. It was only in RMF’s contesting the usual practices of “transformation” at UCT that a process of true decolonization has begun.

On Friday 4 April Dr Max Price sent an email to the university community. Its purpose was twofold: to threaten and demonize the members of the RMF, and to construe the removal of the Rhodes statue as a result of the effective processes of UCT management.

In the email he provides quotes from our previous statement completely out of context to the extent

that they become nonsensical, without engaging at all with the arguments provided – I refer here to our critique of transformation as a concept relative to decolonization and our rejection of engagement with management on any but our own terms. He uses the letter as a chance to introduce at least four threats of both internal and external disciplinary action to members of the movement. The fact that he chose to first bring this up in a public email to the entire UCT community shows a complete lack of respect for the members of the movement and is clearly an act of intimidation. He states that “the student-staff groupings that occupied Bremner have now splintered and there remain a group under the banner of ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ that have declared that they will not vacate Bremner” and that management “understood that the removal of the statue would have seen the student occupiers of the Bremner Building end their occupation.” The occupation had taken place with the support of the SRC, who had agreed with management that they would pull out of the occupation upon removal of the statue – an agreement which management failed to note was not taken by the broader RMF movement. This failure speaks to the way in which management has failed to engage with our movement and its demands with any degree of seriousness or respect. The SRC sticking to its word was not a “splintering” but rather an internally agreed upon course of action of the movement.

He states that the sufficient consensus on the removal of the statue that was eventually achieved is a vindication of management’s “deliberative process” to engage UCT stakeholders on the issue, and more broadly a vindication of the university as a space for rational discussion. We contest this reading of events. In the 20 years prior to the Rhodes Must

Fall Movement the above mentioned “deliberative processes” have been embarked on by management countless times. The presence of this statue and the continued colonised state of the university, its staff demographics, treatment of workers, institutional culture and curriculum content are clear evidence of the failure of these processes in effectively decolonizing the institution. We had no reason to believe that they would start working now.

The conception of the university as a space for rational discussion has been dealt with in our previous statements. Briefly put, we as black people will not have our pain silenced or attacked, nor will we concede to demands that it be rationalized – all of which inevitably occur in any process of “rational discussion” which includes the very university stakeholders at whose hands we are oppressed. The strict demarcation of legitimate discourse at UCT to only such rational discussion is violent and silencing to black voices – which is precisely why they have been silent until now. We will not compromise our pain.

We question where this insistence on “rational debate” was when a legal case was launched against the people occupying the Archie Mafeje room in Azania House. You Max Price could have tried to engage with the people of Azania House, you could have offered alternative relocation options – you could have treated us like human beings - instead you decided to send the sheriff bearing a court summons, labelling the black student as a problem that can only be dealt with using the harshest measures. We are no strangers to this experience.

Dr Price concludes his email by stating “I want to emphasize that our firm action against this group will not in any way diminish our renewed focus on

the transformation issues that clearly challenge us” and proceeds to propose a plan for transformation conceptualized by management. Dr. Price, the task of decolonization cannot be left to the colonizer. We refuse to let white men take the lead in deciding the fate of black lives. Your blatant efforts to destroy our movement over the past few days and claim our victories as your own and co-opt the process we have begun will be fought tooth and nail.

The legal eviction notice that was served on Friday 10 April from the high court indicated that four people within the movement were being singled out – that these isolated individuals would have to personally bear the legal and potentially financial brunt of the movement’s defiance of the registrar’s unjust eviction notice delivered to us earlier that day. While the statement that we released in response to the eviction notice stipulated certain demands from management for us to vacate the space, we were forced to abandon these demands in order to protect the members of our movement for whom we are primarily committed to creating a safe space. Continuing to occupy would have forced our movement into an environment where some members were protected, while others remained vulnerable to external disciplinary measures. Management purposefully put us in this position - a colonialist tactic of ‘divide and conquer.’

It is not by chance that these four comrades were the exact same four who had filed complaints with the university’s campus protection services in response to the physical harassment at the hands of university employees as detailed above.

The four have not yet received any kind of justice for the violence they were subjected to. Instead, UCT’s court summons chose to re-traumatise and re-violate these individuals in a strategy of crude and dirty

victimization which perpetuates the black experience of intimidation and violence at the hands of the justice systems the world over. Of course, this demonstration of inhumane intimidation tactics - the notion that the university not only fails to recognize a student’s need for help and safety but in fact, chooses to put these very students’ safety even more at risk - fuels in many of us the desire to hold onto our Azania, our safe home, and fight for the space at all costs. However, following the university’s indictment, we are forced, more than ever, to acknowledge that Azania House is not a geographical location, but a commitment to black humanity.

It is with that firmly in mind that we have chosen to end our occupation of Azania House.

Although our initial next step was to take our movement into our planned three-pronged campaign, based on workers, academics and students, in light of the recent events, we have been forced to address urgent threats to the movements momentum and members.

The University claims that it wants to establish supposed meaningful forums for discussions though this yet to be established. This has been demonstrated by management’s violent efforts to not only forcibly remove us from Azania House but criminalize members under the law and university procedures, as well as the fact that a number of our initial demands are yet to be met.

The end of our occupation does not signal the end of our protest actions. We are aware of the upcoming council meeting on Wednesday, April 15 and as such, make the following demands of its members:

- The University must not instigate any internal and/or external disciplinary actions nor coercion

or duress against any participant in our struggle for decolonization and such a commitment must be in writing.

- The University must provide a conducive and suitable space for the movement to continue with its work. The space should be to the satisfaction of the movement. This is imperative as the movement has become the only shelter for many disenfranchised and homeless UCT students.
- The University must continue with the project of the removal of all glorifications of the imperialist colonial project in our post-colonial university, as detailed in our initial demands.

Finally, we would like to thank all the black students, workers and staff at UCT and other institutions as well as members of the general public nationally and internationally for the support they have shown the RMF movement thus far – in the form of food donations, messages of solidarity, monetary donations, attendance at events and more. Many of you did this at great personal risk and you played a vital role in the victories achieved thus far. To those members of the UCT community who were willing but unable to be a part of the occupation or the movement thus far for reasons beyond their control, we see you. Finally we would like to say thank you to the Azania House staff, particularly the cleaning staff, security guards and certain administrative staff members, for treating us with such respect and care for the duration of our stay – with the recognition that our struggle is yours too.

We as the Rhodes Must Fall Movement are fighting not for abstract concepts or easy victories. We are fighting for our right to exist. To any black student,

worker of staff member who wants to join us - know that there is a place for you here.

AMANDLA! IZWE LETHU!

RMF RESPONSE TO THE REGISTRAR ON EVICTION NOTICE

10 APRIL 2015

At the very outset, the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) Movement wishes to dispel the notion that our occupation of Azania House (formerly Bremner Building) was purely based on the condition of the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes' statue. The removal of the statue is but one of the demands that this movement tabled to the Special Council Meeting that the Registrar opportunistically quotes.

The University claims that it wants to establish meaningful forums for discussions in light of "Council's renewed commitment to the project of transformation at UCT" yet within hours of the removal of the statue, management has sought to forcibly remove us from Azania House.

Furthermore, with the exception of the notice of eviction, Management has made no tangible efforts to establish lines of direct communication with the movement in Mafeje. This is yet another exhibit of Management's insincerity and engagement in bad faith. In his notice, the Registrar makes a number of unfounded and bizarre allegations against our movement. Accordingly, we wish to make it known that:

- From the first day of the occupation, ours has never been an aggressive and violent approach.
- Our non-violent approach was instead met with violence from Campus Protection Service personnel who assaulted students within the Building, in the presence of the same Registrar who now claims moral high ground.

- While the Registrar asserts that "the Administration has up to now not acted on the student/staff occupation of the Bremner Building", we have evidence that Management has deployed Campus Protection Services personnel and more recently, the SAPS to curtail our efforts.
- Our disruption of the daily running of the Building was justified as it confronted Management's continued disregard of our frustration. Let it also be known that our occupation of Azania House is justified and legitimate:
- The occupation has strengthened our ability to collectively deliberate on our plight as students, academic, non-academic staff and other stakeholders.
- Azania House has evolved to be the only safe and therapeutic space for the marginalised on campus, and specifically a safe home for all students displaced by the university who have been denied re-admission.
- It has become an educational institution for alternative pedagogy and critical engagement.
- Before the occupation, our views and frustrations mattered less to the University Management.
- The Management's long standing stance, that the "broader issues of transformation remain to be addressed", is precisely the reason for our continued occupation. We refuse to allow the institution to continue to stall and marginalise transformational issues.
- As the Movement, we refuse to see the the removal of the statue as the "Council's renewed commitment to the project of transformation at UCT". This is not the first 'commitment' from Management and we are not convinced that it is the first 'renewed commitment' either. It is clear

that the only way to get positive, measurable and tangible results is continued exertion of pressure through this peaceful occupation.

That said, we are not prepared to cease the occupation until the following demands are met:

- The University must not instigate any internal and/or external disciplinary actions against any participant in our struggle for decolonisation and such a commitment must be in writing.
- The University must provide a conducive and suitable space for the movement to continue with its work. The space should be to the satisfaction of the movement.
- The University must not impede, constrain students, and/or put students who will be continuing with the occupation under duress.

Once these demands have been met, we will be willing to engage with management to discuss the end of the occupation in its current form.

Regards,

The Rhodes Must Fall Movement

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE RHODES MUST FALL MOVEMENT ON THE RECLAIMING OF AVENUE HOUSE

Yesterday afternoon the Rhodes Must Fall Movement reclaimed Avenue House, an off-campus UCT administrative building in Mowbray.

WHY HAVE WE RECLAIMED AVENUE HOUSE

Since our eviction from Azania House, the last few weeks have seen the black students who found solace in the Rhodes Must Fall movement displaced and under duress. Things have returned to normal at UCT as the status quo reestablishes itself in accordance with its white supremacist system.

Within the movement our ability to organise has been severely curtailed without a physical and symbolic base from which to operate – a place where all black students, workers and staff know to go to be a part of the movement, to develop solidarity, to educate and be educated, and to be safe to express themselves, their experiences and their pain. We have been forced to re-enter whiteness with no safe coping space to escape into, and have done so at great emotional, psychological and spiritual cost. We are well aware that these inevitable consequences of our eviction were directly intended by Management in their attempt to regain control of the situation.

Upon leaving Azania House, we made the demand that a new space be provided to us by management. Despite our negotiated agreement, no attempt has been made on their part to follow through on this. This is consistent with Management's inability to take any of the demands we have made as a movement seriously, unless accompanied by bad publicity – evidently the only language this institution

understands. Our move into Avenue House is therefore partly a result of Management's failure to make good on its own promise.

We need a new space in which to meet, to organise and to conscientise – a space in which to continue the process we began at Azania House of exploring what a decolonised educational space might look like. Until such time as the university becomes such a space, we need a New Azania House.

Beyond the need for a headquarters for the movement to carry on its activities, claiming Avenue House is critical to allow for the cultivation of a safe intellectual space for black students. The university currently offers no space in which black students can come together to discuss the pain and violence we experience on campus and in the world on a daily basis. Azania House proved to be a much-needed therapeutic space for black students to both escape and freely discuss the oppressive white supremacist and patriarchal environment of UCT. Our forced removal from that space by Management has therefore been traumatic for many Rhodes Must Fall members. Following on from this, the occupied space will also be a place at the university for black students to focus on academics, free from the violence and deep discomfort of the rest of campus. The movement will organise black tutors and lecturers to assist in this process. We require a space that can provide to black students what the institution has deprived us of, and to combat the dehumanisation it inflicts on us constantly. Indeed, a space in which we as black people can empower ourselves is crucial for the decolonising process at UCT.

Most importantly, we are claiming Avenue House as the new Azania House to protest UCT's failure to provide housing to students. A number

of students were living at Azania House because they were displaced by the university and had nowhere else to go, despite these students having consistently approached student housing for help. They experienced this displacement once again, at the hands of the university, when Management evicted us from Azania House. This occupation will therefore entail continuous 'sleep-ins' to highlight this urgent situation and to show that once again, "black (wo)man you are on your own!".

WHY AVENUE HOUSE?

Avenue house forms part of the student housing system at UCT. One ought to ask why it is that the overwhelming majority of students who are left displaced and without accommodation happen to be black. The reason is that the housing system as it exists, functions to preserve the institutional culture that violently alienates and displaces black students. Avenue House is a part of this system that denies many black students their right to belong at this university. Our presence here serves to highlight that reality. We would like to make it clear that we do not intend to disrupt the administrative work happening at Avenue House; that is not the goal of this occupation. Staff here have agreed to make designated parts of the building available to us to use without disrupting their work. It is unfortunate that staff have not returned to work today despite this agreement, as despite its failings the services they provide here nonetheless impact on the lives of many black students at this university.

If the University does not prioritise the needs of those students who are most vulnerable, whose lives have become a proxy for death as a result of 400 years of oppression, then the institution commits

itself to protecting those who benefit from that very oppressive system. Therefore, Avenue House can no longer belong to UCT alone because the university has failed black students in this regard. Instead of real decolonisation, the university is committed to a process of 'transformation' – a process of liberal paternalism which has left us, 21 years after formal apartheid, asking the same questions about our country: Why is our land in the hands of white people? Why do white people dictate where and how we can live? Why do white people dictate how and what we learn? This University too, belongs to black people and therefore no black student should ever be turned away from a university when it sits on his or her land.

This is why we are taking over Avenue House.

WE INVITE ALL MEMBERS OF THE MOVEMENT AND ALL BLACK STUDENTS, WORKERS AND STAFF TO JOIN US AT AVENUE HOUSE (HENCEFORTH NEW AZANIA HOUSE) TODAY. EXACT TIMES WILL BE POSTED SHORTLY.

**ADDRESS: 5-9 AVENUE ROAD, MOWBRAY
(DOWN THE ROAD FROM FOREST HILL JAMMIE STOP)**

MAYIBUYE I-AZANIA!