

STATEMENT FROM CONCERNED RHODES UNIVERSITY STAFF REGARDING THE
RECENT INCIDENT OF GROSS RACISM AT WITS UNIVERSITY

It has been reported in the media that on 28 August 2013 protesters gathered against the concert performance of Israeli jazz musician Daniel Zamir at Wits University as part of BDS South Africa's campaign highlighting human rights abuses in Palestine and the occupied territories by the government of Israel. At this protest a song containing the slogan "dubula e juda" ("shoot the Jew") was sung. This song was then defended by a leadership figure in the BDS campaign on the basis that there was an equivalence in the song's use to that of the "Shoot the Boer" song sung in the era of the anti-apartheid struggle. An official statement by BDS South Africa however unequivocally distanced the organisation from the song and its sentiments and condemned any incitement to racism, anti-Semitism and violence.

We the undersigned members of the Rhodes University community want to publicly register that we are utterly appalled at the singing of this scurrilous song at a university institution. We unreservedly condemn it as a virulently racist and anti-Semitic song which issues a call to violence against our fellow citizens. We feel that there is no room for either any compromise or disingenuous contextualization on this matter of principle concerning an extreme expression of racism. Those who sung this song, or anyone associated with its use should, in good conscience, at minimum publically retract the sentiments expressed in the song and issue an unequivocal apology for singing what we consider to be a violent and deeply offensive song which should have no place in our constitutional democracy. Anything short of such a retraction and apology represents in our view a defence of an expression of a call for violent racism against people who identify as Jewish or are identified as such by others, the extreme ends of which has been seen in the Holocaust and the current activities of various neo-Nazi groups.

Our public stand on this matter is about defending the human rights of others, in this case those who identify or are identified as Jewish. We can only re-state the words of Nelson Mandela in 1994 to a Human Rights Education meeting. Mandela said: "We view the promotion of a Human Rights culture, a culture of mutual respect and tolerance, as critically important for our project of building a democratic society. The failure to develop a culture of Human Rights can be so painfully witnessed in Rwanda today. But such a culture has to be nurtured."

The song is completely indefensible for anyone who has a modicum of belief in the non-racial and democratic ideals, values and principles of our hard fought and won constitutional democracy, which, as indicated by Nelson Mandela, has to be nurtured as a culture of mutual respect and tolerance. The song calling for the shooting of Jews is a complete violation of these ideals and we unequivocally condemn it as such.

Signatories:

1. Prof. Larry Strelitz (Head of School, School of Journalism and Media Studies)
2. Ms. Alex Sutherland (Senior Lecturer, Drama Department)
3. Dr. Saleem Badat (Vice-Chancellor)
4. Mr. Nick Hamer (Project Manager, Department of Environmental Science)
5. Prof Fred Hendricks (Dean, Faculty of Humanities)
6. Ms. George Barrett (Lecturer, Department of Political and International Studies)
7. Prof. Sizwe Mabizela (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Student and Academic Affairs)
8. Prof. Monica Hendricks (Director, Institute for the Study of English in Africa)
9. Dr. Sally Matthews (Senior Lecturer, Politics Department)
10. Prof. Steven Friedman (Director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy)
11. Prof. Pedro Tabensky (Director, Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics, Philosophy Department)
12. Dr. Vashna Jagarnath (Lecturer, Department of History)
13. Prof. Robert van Niekerk (Director, Institute for Social Economic Research)
14. Mr. Richard Pithouse (Lecturer, Department of Political and International Studies)
15. Prof. Lynette Steenveld (School of Journalism and Media Studies)
16. Prof. Chrissie Boughey (Dean, Teaching and Learning)
17. Prof. Leonhard Praeg (Associate Professor, Department of Political and International Studies)
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19. Ms. Sarah Bruchhausen (Postgraduate, Departments of History and Political and International Studies)
20. Prof. Catriona Macleod (Professor, Psychology Department)
21. Prof. Heila Lotz-Sisitka (Environmental Learning Research Centre)
22. Dr. Joy Owen (Senior Lecturer, Anthropology Department)
23. Prof. Paul-Henri Bischoff (HoD, Department of Political and International Studies)
24. Prof. Ruth Simbao (Associate Professor, Fine Art)
25. Prof. Charles Young (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology)
26. Ms. Jamie Alexander (Institute for Social and Economic Research)
27. Mr. Joshua Rorke (Postgraduate, Department of Political and International Studies)
28. Ms. Fiona Still-Drewett (Principal Faculty Librarian: Rhodes University Library)
29. Dr. Tony Fluxman (Senior Lecturer, Department of Political and International Studies)
30. Ms. Mathe Maema (Department of Computer Science)

31. Ms Juanita Praeg (Senior Lecturer, Drama Department and Artistic Director, First Physical Theatre Company)
32. Prof. Julia Wells (Associate Professor, Department of History)
33. Prof. Thembele Kepe (Visiting Professor, Geography Department)
34. Dr. Lynn Quinn (Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning)
35. Dr. Enocent Msindo (Senior Lecturer, Department of History)
36. Dr. Penny Bernard (Senior Lecturer, Department of Anthropology)
37. Dr. Carla Tsampiras (Senior Lecturer, Department of History)
38. Prof. Cornelius Thomas (Head, Cory Library)
39. Prof. Jane Duncan (Highway Africa Chair of Media and Information Society, School of Journalism and Media Studies)
40. Ms. Nina Butler (Postgraduate, Department of History)
41. Prof. Paul Maylam (Professor Emeritus, Department of History)
42. Dr. Warren Snowball (Retired Senior Lecturer, Classical Studies Department)
43. Miss. Ulandi Du Plessis (Project Coordinator, Institute for Social and Economic Research)
44. Ms. Chantelle Malan (Postgraduate, Department of Political and International Studies)
45. Ms. Camalita Naicker (Postgraduate, Department of Political and International Studies)
46. Dr. Alan Kirkaldy (Senior Lecturer, Department of History)
47. Ms. Mbali Baduza (Postgraduate, Faculty of Law)
48. Ms. Hussein Badat (Postgraduate, Department of Anthropology)
49. Mrs. Orla Quinlan (Director, International Office)
50. Ms. Michelle Morgan (Student, School of Journalism and Media Studies)