

"PUBLIC STATEMENT – 18 MARCH 2015

18 March 2015, University of Cape Town – This morning Black Monday put out posters of Adolf Hitler and the swastika on the pillars of Jameson Hall without offering sufficient context. The Student Representative Council received a complaint from a group of students who were offended by the act. Black Monday was asked to account; and we acknowledged that the use of the swastika without sufficient context was done in ill-taste.

We are aware that the swastika has been used to incite violence against the Jewish community, and would like to apologise if our actions were interpreted as being anti-semitic. Black Monday is not anti-semitic, and we condemn the use of the swastika to incite any kind of violence, especially at this sensitive time when the Jewish community is under siege in some parts of Europe. However we would like to provide context to the use of symbols of evil as a tool to appeal to the non-white community to support the Rhodes Must Fall campaign.

CONTEXT

Black Monday stands in solidarity with the student-led campaign to rid the University of Cape Town of the statue of Rhodes, and more broadly to challenge structural White supremacy. We believe this is a defensible cause that should be supported by society as a whole; however we have been met with apprehension and division along racial lines. Some students have been expressing their pain, while other students have been expressing complete and utter dissent. Black Monday realizes that this dissent may be a result of a lack of understanding about what the Rhodes statue means for Black students, and what the implications of Rhodes legacy is presently, in the lives of Black people.

In an attempt to bridge the divide, Black Monday attempted to present Rhodes in a way that is relatable to the majority of students. That is, we decided to use symbols that represent the worst extreme of evil in living memory to represent what Rhodes did to Africans. The response we received was anticipated. We wanted people to walk to campus and see symbols of evil. We wanted them to feel uncomfortable and to complain. But mostly we wanted people to empathize with our cause. To ask themselves why they are not uncomfortable with the statue of Rhodes and why they do not complain about these issues. We had hoped that by putting up symbols of evil that are relatable to the majority of society, we would have activated people to feel what we are feeling and to see what we see.

Hitler committed a gross crime against humanity, and equally, Rhodes committed a gross crime against humanity. We believe that it is an insurmountable task to try and compare crime to crime or genocide to genocide. Acts such as these cannot be scaled and thus cannot be compared.

It is more relevant to compare one's reaction to a symbol that represents his physical and psychological demise to another's denied reaction to a symbol that represents the same. The degree of evil is neither here nor there.

We, as a society, must educate ourselves.

OUR WAY FORWARD

For the rest of the week, Black Monday will be putting up symbols of Adolf Hitler, the Ku Klux Klan, the Confederation Flag and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging. We note that these symbols are offensive, and we distance ourselves from the propagation of violence and xenophobia. However we maintain that our actions are educational. We urge the public to understand and discuss the use of these symbols in the right context.

Lastly let us expose UCT's management for their hypocrisy. For more than a week, students have been

campaigning about the removal of the Rhodes statue yet we have received an inadequate response that came in very late; whereas the University has been very efficient in responding to bad press. In just 30 minutes of the Hitler and swastika poster going up, the University called Black Monday to a meeting to account. This inconsistency highlights UCTs embedded institutional racism.

Black Monday remains exceptionally concerned about Management's failure to address the issue of the Rhodes statue and the serious threats it poses to the integrity of the University.

Black Monday stands in solidarity with the Rhodes Must Fall campaign. We call on the public to rally with us.

Black Lives Matter"