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### Beyond Protest: The University of Cape Town and complicity with apartheid<sup>1</sup>

UCT's land runs down to the border of Groote Schuur, the Prime Minister's residence in Rondebosch. The grounds staff of the residence used to use African prison labor, like a chain gang, to do the gardening. Once I saw an Afrikaner warder assaulting one of the prisoners. White UCT students were walking by. From their accents I think they were originally from Rhodesia. They watched the beating and laughed.<sup>2</sup>

...in existential terms we may need a way of telling what makes for a better or worse, a less or more significant response to the call of responsibility, of good or evil.<sup>3</sup>

The National Party (NP), which introduced the formal policies and legislation of apartheid in South Africa, won 39% of the vote in the 1948 general election, and nearly 64% in 1961.<sup>4</sup> This means that white South Africans found the NP's principles - apartheid, *baaskap*, white supremacy - to be increasingly attractive propositions.<sup>5</sup> As many studies and the popular understandings of recent South African history have shown, the NP systematically, consciously and visibly inflicted severe discrimination and suffering on the 85% of the South African population.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, as early as 1966, apartheid was branded as a "crime against humanity" by the United Nations.<sup>7</sup> The election results cited above

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<sup>1</sup> The research that grew into this project began in my tenure in the History Department at the University of the Western Cape. Earlier versions of this paper were presented to the African Studies Association annual meeting, November 2014; and the History Workshop of the University of Illinois History Department, January 2015. My thanks to everyone who has given me comments on and assistance with this project over many years.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Gottschalk, personal communication, commentary at African Studies Association annual meeting, 21 November 2014; and interview by the author, Cape Town, 10 December 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Clingman, "On Ethical Grounds," *Law and Literature* 17/2, p. 281.

<sup>4</sup> Although it did not win a majority of the votes in 1948, the NP won the election because of rural votes were weighted more heavily than urban votes. South Africa Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Vol. 1, 1960-70* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), p. 2, 37.

<sup>5</sup> After 1948, and although with slightly reduced majorities after 1970, the NP won every whites-only general election in South Africa until it was crushed in the country's first fully democratic election in 1994.

<sup>6</sup> For a recent synthesis of this vast scholarship, see Saul Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Alette Smeulers, Fred Grunfeld, eds. *International Crimes and Other Gross Human Rights Violations: A Multi- and Interdisciplinary Textbook* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 87-88.

show that the majority of the white South African population was complicit in the perpetuation of this crime.

How can we understand complicity on such a large scale? Mark Sanders' wonderfully nuanced examination of cultural and intellectual life in the apartheid era, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* defines complicity in two ways: first, as an essential connectedness between people, and secondly as intimate involvement with and acquiescence to evil.<sup>8</sup> Evil can be defined in many ways; my definition would feature a deep-seated, ingrained, callousness towards the suffering of others – such as that displayed by the students in the quotation above. The purpose of this paper is to think about complicity both in terms of connectedness and acquiescence to evil - but in relation to an institution, rather than to an individual. This is a register in which we can begin to discern how indifference to the evil of apartheid became increasingly ingrained over time. The task of this paper, then, is to explore the concept of complicity with apartheid in relation to one particular institution, the University of Cape Town (UCT), mainly in the 1960s. It draws on archival and oral history evidence, and in particular the professional papers of Prof. Andrew Howson Murray, head of the UCT Philosophy Department from 1937-1970.<sup>9</sup>

On the basis of this body of evidence, the paper argues that UCT was significantly complicit with apartheid. It moves beyond a pervasive “protest-only” narrative to investigate ways in which the fundamental tenets of apartheid and white supremacy not only went unchallenged, but were supported and reproduced at UCT. This paper and my work overall are motivated by a desire to begin to right a historiographical imbalance, to move “beyond protest” and to achieve greater clarity and accuracy about the politics of higher education in the apartheid era.

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<sup>8</sup> Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The intellectual and apartheid* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Murray's professional papers are housed in the Manuscripts and Archives collection, Jagger Library, University of Cape Town.

UCT and its sister institutions, the Universities of the Witwatersrand, and Natal, and Rhodes University were formerly known as the “open universities.”<sup>10</sup> Their relationship with the apartheid state has been told in a “protest-only” mode which exclusively cites evidence of public and private acts of resistance, and identifies the state as the perpetrator of educational evil, imposing its odious dictates from above on the unwilling. In this narrative, the institutions themselves battle to maintain historically high levels of academic freedom in the face of the state’s onslaught. Two publications in particular, both entitled “the open universities in South Africa”, published in 1957 and 1974 respectively, have articulated this narrative.<sup>11</sup> Thus,

From Verwoerd’s legislation to segregate universities in 1957 to the official measures threatened by de Klerk in 1987, this is a story of a beleaguered academic community rallying around the need to safeguard academic freedom as the foundation of free intellectual life and discourse against explicit and imminent external threats. The archetypal image is that of staff and students standing together on Jameson [Hall] steps facing off the batons and teargas of the riot police. This is an important story and justly commemorated and celebrated in Academic Freedom lectures and on other official occasions.<sup>12</sup>

If the threats were external, it is axiomatic that the institutional culture of the university was inviolate to the degree that it was distanced from the state. Apartheid legislation dictated the racial impermeability of student admissions and faculty hiring policies around the university’s outer perimeter; but the institution’s core functions remained uncontaminated.

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<sup>10</sup> These universities admitted a few students of color before 1959, thus the appellation “open.” Before 1994 they were in a subset of the “white” (English- and Afrikaans-medium) universities, distinct from the “black” ethnic universities created by the state after 1959. From 1994 to 2005 they were often called “historically advantaged universities.” After 2005, a large-scale merger of historically advantaged and disadvantaged universities supposedly made such nomenclature anachronistic. However, the merger program was not applied to Wits or UCT, which still exist in virtually the same configurations as in 1960.

<sup>11</sup> Academic Freedom Committees, *The Open Universities in South Africa* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1957); Academic Freedom Committees, *The Open Universities in South Africa, 1957-74* (Cape Town: Juta, 1974).

<sup>12</sup> Andre du Toit, “Critic and Citizen: The Intellectual, Transformation and Academic Freedom,” *Pretexts: literary and cultural studies* vol. 9 no. 1 (2000), p. 95.

To a significant extent...“the private life” of the white universities (the activities pursued in their classrooms, laboratories and libraries) was not directly affected by state intervention, whether through legislation or the security forces.<sup>13</sup>

There are three problems with this formulation of the relationship between the university and the state. First, at a philosophical level, it assumes that the university could somehow remain untainted by the wider apartheid culture in which it was situated; that it was largely immune from the social entwining, the connectivity and essential “folded-ness” which is the first part of Sanders’ definition of complicity. Any such immunity on a large scale seems highly unlikely, given what we know about the ubiquity and success of the ideologies of racial supremacy, the essence of the apartheid ideal, for the majority of white South Africans in this time period. Second, the view that the open universities were havens of resistance to state-imposed evil does not take into account the fact that there were UCT professors who openly supported apartheid, and served the state in a variety of capacities. These professors demonstrate conclusively that apartheid was not simply imposed from above; it was also generated literally from within. Third, a university’s core functions may occur in classrooms, laboratories and libraries, but the educational activities carried out in those spaces are closely connected to the work of the institution’s administrators and managers. When the attitudes, conduct and networks of these people are taken into consideration, it becomes apparent that UCT was, as an institution, significantly entwined with apartheid.

This claim pushes the historiography on the open universities forward. A widely quoted assessment of their ambiguous stance towards apartheid comes from Bruce Murray’s study of Wits, UCT’s sister institution in Johannesburg. Acknowledging that the four open institutions fought for their freedom to admit and hire people of color without government interference while simultaneously enforcing social segregation on those same students and staff, Murray noted, that at Wits,

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<sup>13</sup> Graeme Moodie, “The State and Liberal Universities in South Africa, 1948-1994” *Higher Education* vol. 27, no. 1 (1994), p. 23.

...a defensively-minded Council rooted its stand against university apartheid in the narrow principle of university autonomy, a principle that enabled it both to protest against enforced university segregation and simultaneously to maintain practices of racial discrimination.<sup>14</sup>

While Murray identifies this ambiguity correctly, his formulation implies that even while practicing “racial discrimination,” the open universities somehow remained distinct from the machinations of the apartheid state because of their protests. I argue, on the other hand, that taken as a whole, these practices show the similarities and links, rather than the differences and walls, between the open universities and the state.

It is felt to be somehow unseemly to think about the open universities in the same frame as a word like complicity. Thus, for example,

It is an historical irony that South Africa’s English-language universities, despite their opposition to university apartheid should recently have come under even more severe attack than their Afrikaans university counterparts. This is despite the fact that the latter universities openly supported their own racial exclusivity.<sup>15</sup>

At an aggregate level, the four universities have been proud to feature the names and work of faculty whose work criticized apartheid from a variety of perspectives. These were academics such as Rick Turner, Johannes Degenaar, Daantjie Oosthuizen, Jack Simons, Monica Wilson, Raymond Hoffenberg, Jeremy Cronin, Eddie Webster and David Webster whose scholarship went (to varying degrees) hand in hand with their commitments to social justice. But for every exiled Jack Simons, imprisoned Jeremy Cronin and assassinated David Webster there were scores of academics at the open universities who did not challenge the injustices of apartheid. Omitted by definition from the “protest-only” canon, their stories have not been told, their positionalities have not been theorized and their legacies have not been traced. Those are the goals of this paper and of my wider project.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Bruce Murray, *Wits: The Open Years* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1990), p. 320.

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Hugo, “The Politics of ‘Untruth’: Afrikaner Academics for Apartheid,” *Politikon* vol. 25 no. 1 (1998), p. 32.

<sup>16</sup> The project is tentatively entitled, *Apartheid’s Professor: Fighting Freedom in South Africa*.

Although the higher education sector was not included in the purview of the 1990s Truth and Reconciliation Commission and there has not been a concerted effort to investigate or examine either the sector's past or how it has been affected by the legacies of apartheid, important work has been done on inequalities in South African higher education.<sup>17</sup> On the policy front, after 2005 the parastatal Council on Higher Education and the Ministry of Education claimed to have resolved the historical issues of inequality in the higher education sector by formulating dual policies of individual and institutional redress. Individual students from "formerly disadvantaged groups" became eligible for increased scholarship funding after 1996 and in 2003-2005, some institutions were merged across the color lines, ostensibly to overcome the inequitable allocations of structures, resources and facilities of the past.<sup>18</sup> Several works have chronicled the troubled history of South African higher education. For example, working mainly in the "protest-only" style, Bruce Murray and Mervyn Shear have written substantial chronicles of the "open university" tradition at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), and there is an important volume on the history of UCT up to 1948.<sup>19</sup> Some of the leaders of the open universities have penned their memoirs, as have leaders of radical student movements.<sup>20</sup> The University of Fort

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<sup>17</sup> See The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Vols. 1-5* (Johannesburg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998). Since then, an enormous literature has developed on the TRC and transitional justice in South Africa. See Muhammed Haron, *South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: an annotated bibliography [circa 1993-2008]* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Teresa Barnes, "'Changing discourses of redress in South African higher education'" *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 41:1-2 (2006); Teresa Barnes, N. Baijnath, K. Sattar, eds. *The Restructuring of South African Higher Education: Rocky roads from policy formulation to institutional mergers, 2001—2005* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2009); Mlungisi Cele, "'Student Politics and the Funding of Higher Education in South Africa: The Case of the University of the Western Cape, 1995-2005'" (PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2015). See also D. Cooper and George Subotzky, *The Skewed Revolution: Trends in South African Higher Education 1988-1998* (Bellville: Education Policy Unit, 2001); Reitumetse Mabokela and Kimberly King, eds. *Apartheid No More: Case Studies of South African Universities in the Process of Transformation* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Bruce K. Murray, *Wits, the early years : a history of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and its precursors, 1896-1939* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1982); idem. *Wits, the "open" years : a history of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1939-1959* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1997); Mervyn Shear, *Wits: A University in the apartheid era* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1996); Howard Phillips, *The University of Cape Town: The Foundation Years, 1918-1948* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1993); idem, "What did your university do during apartheid?" *Journal of Southern African Studies* vol. 26 no. 1 (2000).

<sup>20</sup> EG Malherbe, *Never a Dull Moment* (Cape Town: Juta, 1981); Stuart Saunders, *Vice-Chancellor On A Tightrope: A personal account of climactic years in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000); Martin Legassick, *Towards*

Hare, which was forced to undergo a painful metamorphosis from an independent Christian academy proudly serving the subcontinent's African elite to an ethnic backwater under the thumb of the apartheid state, has attracted several excellent histories.<sup>21</sup> On the multi-faceted legacies of apartheid in higher education, Ian Bunting's seminal work, *A Legacy of Inequality*, has recently been joined by four important books by Jonathan Jansen, Archie Dick, John Higgins, and Nithaya Chetty and Christopher Merrett.<sup>22</sup> A conference discussed the conduct of Rhodes University in the apartheid era.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, there has not been a larger scholarly and social conversation about how South Africa's open universities comported themselves in the apartheid era.

UCT may seem an especially odd choice for thinking about institutional complicity with apartheid. The reputation of the university is that it stoutly resisted the evil of apartheid. In fact, UCT is generally held to be one of the few organizations in apartheid-era South Africa of which this could be said. The university's public actions led it to be popularly equated with Communism, officially thought to be the most extreme enemy of apartheid, and thus the university, high on the slopes of Table Mountain was scornfully called "Moscow on the hill" by its detractors (who were legion). The officials of the apartheid state did not mince their words on this issue.

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*Socialist Democracy* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwazulu/Natal Press, 2007); Glenn Moss, *The New Radicals: A Generational Memoir of the 1970s* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2014); Ben Turok, *With My Head Above The Parapet* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> Donovan Williams, *A History of the University College of Fort Hare, South Africa – the 1950s: The Waiting Years* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001); Daniel Massey, *Under Protest: The Rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010). On the character of education in post-1960 African "ethnic universities", see IB Tabata, *Education for Barbarism: Bantu (Apartheid) Education in South Africa* (London: Unity Movement of South Africa, 1980 [1960]).

<sup>22</sup> Ian Bunting, *A Legacy of Inequality: Higher Education in South Africa* (Rondebosch: UCT Press, 1994); Jonathan Jansen, *Knowledge in the Blood: Confronting Race and the apartheid past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Archie Dick, *The hidden history of South Africa's book and reading cultures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); John Higgins, *Academic Freedom in a Democratic South Africa* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2014); Nithaya Chetty and Christopher Merrett, *The Struggle for the Soul of a South African University: The University of KwaZulu-Natal Academic Freedom, corporatization and transformation* (self-published, <http://soul-of-ukzn.co.za>, 2014)

<sup>23</sup> See particularly Barry Streek, "Skeletons in the Rhodes Cupboard: What Should Be Done About Them?" *African Sociological Review* vol. 9 no. 1 (2005).

The Universities of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Rhodes and Natal are engaged in destroying the backbone and pride of our youth and in stripping them of their self-respect...The teaching personnel of the Universities consists mostly of liberalists and half-communists who on every possible occasion try to impress on young people that they are no better than the primitive black man...Is it not time for every parent to ask himself whether he can afford to send his child to one of these Universities?<sup>24</sup>

UCT and Wits publicly engaged in public acts of dissidence at the time of the passage of the 1959 Extension of University Education Act (which officially segregated the institutions) such as sending deputations to government ministers, publishing a manifesto, making campus speeches, holding protest marches complete with the extinguishing of “the torch of academic freedom”, sponsoring lecture series on academic freedom, and memorializing this protest in the form of plaques placed in libraries.<sup>25</sup> UCT and Wits also had university committees concerned with academic freedom; the UCT committee investigated complaints and sent recommendations to university administrators and the governing Council.<sup>26</sup> As the 1970s bled into the volatile 1980s, individual departments at UCT and Wits were important sources of dissidence in teaching, research and activism against apartheid.

UCT also pushed back against apartheid in quieter ways. After 1959 black students were barred from taking UCT courses unless they had special permission from the Minister of Education. This policy was collectively evaded in at least one case. On the seeming insistence of Prof. Dulcie Howes, the head of the UCT Dance program, dance classes were kept “open” despite a controversy in the local press.<sup>27</sup> In another case, the university employed a black academic right under the nose of the apartheid state. For three decades, Prof. John van der Westhuizen (1933-2012) improbably taught medieval studies,

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<sup>24</sup> Albert Hertzog, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, 1963, quoted in R.F. Currey, *Rhodes University 1904-1970: A Chronicle* (Grahamstown, South Africa, 1970), p. 159.

<sup>25</sup> Academic Freedom Committees, *The Open Universities in South Africa* (1957); Academic Freedom Committees, *The Open Universities in South Africa, 1957-74* (1974).

<sup>26</sup> Files of the Academic Freedom Committee, Administrative Archives, University of Cape Town.

<sup>27</sup> “Dulcie Howes,” in E. Triegaart, *They shaped our Century: The Most Influential South Africans of the Twentieth Century* (Johannesburg: Human and Rousseau, 1999), p. 468-470; abridged at [http://www.v1.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/howes\\_d.html](http://www.v1.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/howes_d.html) accessed 8 January 2015; Wayne Muller and Hilde Roos, *Eoan: Our Story* (Milpark, South Africa: Fourthwall Books, 2013); Jonathan Crewe, “Arrival: JM Coetzee in Cape Town,” *English In Africa* vol. 40 no. 1 (1983).

specializing in Old Icelandic and Viking sagas.<sup>28</sup> His very proper Afrikaner-sounding surname seemingly kept him under the radar of the state's ire, and presumably no one – students, staff or faculty - reported his presence to the authorities.<sup>29</sup> Van der Westhuizen was a lecturer in the English Department in 1968 during the Mafeje debacle (see below), so perhaps the university administration “simply” played its cards close to its chest in his case.<sup>30</sup> It is possible that van der Westhuizen was the only faculty member of color employed at UCT in those years. A former student, Rustum Kozain, remembered his style and impact.

My introduction to Professor John van der Westhuizen was in 1986, in English I, a large class that filled the lecture theatre in the PD Hahn building... I was apprehensive and excited: it was Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, wholly alien to me, a thick book, but much of the vocabulary sporting its Germanic roots. As a then Afrikaans first-language speaker struggling with both the overt and hidden English curriculum, this encouraged me.

The obligatory hush fell as I walked the professor in his neat navy-blue suit, who set his papers on the lectern, hung the mic around his neck, threw his head back and, with eyes closed almost in ecstasy, proceeded to recite the opening passages of the Pardoner's Tale:

In Flaundes whilom was a compaignye  
Of yonge folk that haunteden folye,  
As riot, hazard, stywes, and tavernes,  
Where as with harpes, lutes, and gyternes,  
They daunce and pleyen at dees bothe day and nyght,  
And eten also and drynken over hir might,  
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifice...

“Isn't that what you do at the Pig and Whistle every night?” he asked, chuckling like a jackal and pointing at someone in the front row as he implied a line of interest between late-20th century student life and the putatively alien subject matter of Chaucer.

It was properly eccentric and elicited laughs from many of us. Moreover for me – and there's no other way of registering my astonishment – he was 'coloured'. This was my first encounter with a senior, full-time, black academic. A *professor* because of this eccentric start, but/and a *black professor*. A *black professor* who was as eccentric as any of the (white) professors depicted in

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<sup>28</sup> List of Emeritus Professors at UCT, 2014.

[https://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/apply/handbooks/authorities\\_2014.pdf](https://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/apply/handbooks/authorities_2014.pdf) accessed 8 January 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Thus, Stuart Saunders mentions that he officiated at van der Westhuizen's professorial inaugural lecture in 1981, noting only his field of “medieval English”. Saunders, *Tightrope*, p. 113.

<sup>30</sup> University of Cape Town, *Calendar of the Committee Meetings of Council and Senate, 1968* (Rondebosch, 1968), p. 96.

film, beavering away or spouting passionately about an arcane topic, like Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.<sup>31</sup> (emphasis in the original)

UCT can be rightfully proud to tell the stories of Howes and van der Westhuizen, along with those of the public displays of protest against university apartheid. Indeed, plaques and displays about UCT's defense of academic freedom are prominently displayed on the university campus. In addition, the substantial history of protest and dissent of UCT's radical students is an important part of South Africa's political history. Students such as Martin Legassick, Ian Robertson, Raphael Kaplinsky, Geoff Budlender, Duncan Innes, Paula Ensor, Anthony Holiday, Neville Rubin and Glenn Moss cut their political teeth at UCT and went on to make substantial contributions to South African academic and political life.<sup>32</sup> UCT was also the undergraduate home of the inimitable Neville Alexander, who recalled heckling Prof. AH Murray at public lectures with fellow members of the Non-European Unity Movement in the late 1950s.<sup>33</sup>

In any review of UCT's behavior in the apartheid era, these public and private acts and histories of resistance are not to be discounted; they were clearly important in the mix of UCT's institutional culture and history. But they were not the only ingredients in that mixture.

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<sup>31</sup> Rustum Kozain, "RIP Prof. John van der Westhuizen," 6 March 2012. <http://rustumkozain.bookslive.co.za/blog/2012/03/06/rip-professor-john-van-der-westhuizen/> accessed 8 January 2015.

<sup>32</sup> See Legassick, *Towards Socialist Democracy*; Moss, *The New Radicals*; H. van de Merwe and D. Welsh, *Student Perspectives on South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1972).

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Neville Alexander, Rondebosch, July 2010. Ironically, although Murray would go on to testify against Alexander in his 1964 trial, playing a part in Alexander's 10 year prison sentence, the activist would later, in the last years of his long and productive career, take up a post at UCT and work from an office just a stone's throw from Murray's old haunts in the Philosophy Department.

## The liberal university

Elsewhere I have presented a new formulation of South African liberalism, arguing that a larger “protest-only” narrative of liberalism itself has obscured two things.<sup>34</sup> The first is liberalism’s structural kinship with the ideology of apartheid, as liberalism consistently invoked the vector of time as the inhibiting condition for African equality (“Africans can be equal - but not yet”) while apartheid invoked the vector of space (“Africans can be equal - but not here”). The two are thus linked in their joint refusal to contemplate immediate unconditional equality for Africans everywhere. In the case of liberalism, the stubborn hold and legacy of the idea of the qualified franchise, which posited that while all white adults could vote but blacks had to qualify through property or education, remain to be accounted for. Helen Suzman, perhaps South Africa’s most well-known “good liberal” belonged to a political party that, incredibly, did not disavow the qualified franchise until 1978. But this aspect of the liberal story is usually either muted or omitted altogether.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, the general narrative of South African liberalism has not acknowledged that while some liberals – people like Alfred Hoernle, Margaret Ballinger, Alan Paton, Helen Suzman - opposed apartheid (even if ambiguously, as above), there were other liberals who were outright supporters of apartheid. Thus, liberalism was not synonymous with opposition to apartheid – a point that has, of course, been made repeatedly by the intellectuals and activists of the Black Consciousness Movement.<sup>36</sup>

My book manuscript uses the professional biography of Prof. AH Murray of the UCT Philosophy Department, to prise open the dynamics of the complicities of liberalism in the apartheid era. This paper particularly focuses on these dynamics at an institutional level, where the structural ambiguities of liberalism were very much in play. For example, in Bruce Murray’s formulation as quoted above, the

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<sup>34</sup> Teresa Barnes, “Following the path into the darkness: ‘bad liberals’ in apartheid-era South Africa,” (submitted to *The Journal of African History*, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> See Mamphela Rampole, Malusi Mpumlwana, Lindy Wilson and Barney Pityana, eds. *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001).

racial discrimination that was enforced on students of color in the open universities (as they were not allowed to live in the residences, attend dances or formal dinners) was entirely of a piece with the traditions of Cape liberalism and the qualified franchise, in which only a few “natives” might eventually, in time, reach civilization and become citizens. “Equal rights for all civilized men,” was the well-known banner under which the Cape Liberals marched. With the application of enough time, people of color could be treated as equals. What could not happen was full equality now, and thus even before 1948, students of color were only permitted to attend classes but were barred from other university functions.

Prof. Archie Mafeje (1937-2007) is usually remembered in relation to the 1968 *cause celebre* in which the UCT Council collapsed under pressure from the state and rescinded the offer of a position in the Anthropology Department to him because of the color of his skin. The Council’s spinelessness provoked furious protest and a nine-day student sit-in in the administration building.<sup>37</sup> However, Mafeje had also been an undergraduate biology student at UCT in the 1950s. He recalled that at the time, his white professors regarded him “as the ‘other’”.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, for them, he was “the other”: a man living outside his own time – which from their perspective, was an era of backwardness.

Students like Mafeje received the full blast of Cape liberalism, which was alive and well at UCT through the 1960s. For example, in the following quotation, Thomas Benjamin Davie, UCT’s vice-chancellor from 1948-1955, and the author of a very famous formulation of academic freedom (see below), articulated a quintessentially liberal view of the existing relationship between black and white students at UCT.

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<sup>37</sup> Fred Hendricks, “The Mafeje Affair: The University of Cape Town and Apartheid,” *African Studies* vol. 67 no. 3 (2008); Lungisile Ntsebeza, “The Mafeje and UCT Saga: An Unfinished Business?” *CODESRIA Bulletin* no. 3&4 (2008).

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Andrew Bank with Vuyiswa Swana, “‘Speaking from Inside’: Archie Mafeje, Monica Wilson and the Co-Production of *Langa: A Study of Social Groups in an African Township*,” in Andrew Bank and Leslie Bank, eds., *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and her Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 263.

It is certainly not the function of the university, either to impose an alien culture on any race group, or yet to impede access of that race group to the cultures of other groups. If there is any meaning in the claim that segregation of the African from the Europeans is justified by reason of their being “primitive” or even “barbaric”, then surely it is desirable that those who can benefit from the superior culture of the white man should not be denied the blessings of these contacts which alone can raise him from the primitive and barbaric. To restrict him to an educational system based on his own African culture is to deprive him of his chances of intellectual and spiritual salvation; yet such appears to be the policy proposed by some of those who have submitted evidence before the Commission on University Facilities for Non-Europeans which is sitting at present.<sup>39</sup>

[There will be] an inevitable progress towards social integration *within the university*. I am not unconscious of the dangers of even mentioning social integration in this connection; but it would be bordering on the ridiculous as well as the hypocritical to pretend that in the Universities of Cape Town and Johannesburg there is no movement towards this bogey of mixing in social matters. At present our students in Cape Town have lunch and tea in the same restaurants sitting at the same tables, although they do not go to the same formal dinners; they join in table-tennis together in their university sports halls, although they don’t play Rugby together at Newlands; they attend the same meetings of the student academic and cultural societies, although they don’t go to the same dances.<sup>40</sup>

Davie’s statements make it crystal clear that the university’s practice of racial discrimination was intimately linked to its liberalism. Its formulation held that students of color might achieve “intellectual and spiritual salvation” at some point in the future, given enough exposure to “the superior culture of the white man.” There might be “inevitable progress” towards racial integration but its achievement lay in the future. Time was thus literally of the essence when it came to equality.

How significant were these liberal restrictions? Students of color who were barred from full participation in university activities were placed in humiliating positions. Ralph Lawrence (1920-2009), a member of a prominent Indian family in Durban, graduated from the UCT medical school at a time when he and his fellow students of color were allowed to attend medical lectures, but were not allowed to

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<sup>39</sup> TB Davie, “The Function of a University in a Multi-Racial Society,” in *The Idea of the University: A Symposium* (Johannesburg: South African Institute for Race Relations, 1954), p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

watch autopsies being performed on white bodies or to practice clinically on white patients.<sup>41</sup>

Lawrence's student days had been even more marked by the racial double standard: elected as the first black member of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) in 1944, "he suffered the indignity of having SRC members walk out of the annual dinner because of his presence. He was also barred from the official SRC photograph in case the vice-chancellor, Jan Smuts, was offended by the presence of a black student."<sup>42</sup>

These stories about Mafeje and Lawrence show that the discrimination suffered by students of color at the open universities was not simply an absent-minded aberration. It was an insult, a burden, an evil in itself.

This line of argument allows me to extend John Higgins' recent discussion of UCT's institutional culture. Higgins reviewed an influential 2001 study which identified "whiteness" as the essential problem of UCT's institutional culture - a "socially pervasive though often subliminal racism 'still at work' ten years after the formal demise of apartheid."<sup>43</sup> Whiteness, in the study's formulation, was synonymous with a particularly South African version of Eurocentricity. Higgins suggested, however, that although important, whiteness was overdetermined in the 2001 study, and that it should rather be seen as one of many secondary categories of privilege in UCT's institutional culture; others were "maleness, heterosexuality, being able-bodied, urban background and/or South African nationality".<sup>44</sup> Higgins is

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<sup>41</sup> Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed, *Inside Indenture: A South African Story, 1860-1914* (Johannesburg: Madiba Publishers, 2007), p. 216-217; Anne Digby, *Diversity and Division in Medicine: Health care in South Africa from the 1800s* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 206. Thanks to Goolam Vahed for reminding me of Lawrence's story.

<sup>42</sup> Gonda Perez, Leslie London, Hugh Lawrence, "Ralph Lawrence: In Memoriam," *South African Medical Journal*, 1 April 2010, accessed at <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/South+African+Medical+Journal/2010/April/1-p52728> on 1 December 2014. The UCT Medical School acknowledged the discrimination faced by Lawrence and others in a charter which was signed in 2007, and vowed to never allow it to happen again. Anne Digby, "Some early black doctors – a very politically active cohort, 1941-1954," *South African Medical Journal* vol. 97 no. 8 (August 2007), p. 578.

<sup>43</sup> Higgins, *Academic Freedom*, p. 117.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 120. Re the entrenched heteronormativity of South African higher education, see Teresa Barnes, "Pregnancy and Knowledge in a South African University," *African Studies Review* vol. 56 no.1 (2013).

certainly correct in identifying the existence and intersectionality of several vectors of privilege. But the “whiteness” of the open universities was neither a neutral or equivalent descriptor. TB Davie’s concept of “the superior culture of the white man” was, as I have argued above, most deeply entrenched in the modus operandi of the apartheid-era university. This means that UCT’s institutional culture was more than simply Eurocentric; because it explicitly assigned a normative value to “the superior culture of the white man,” it was racist, and not subliminally so. Burdens were intentionally and regularly placed on Archie Mafeje, Ralph Lawrence and their colleagues which white students never had to carry. Thus, overt racism was a structural characteristic of the university’s liberal epistemology. If echoes of Davie’s formulation were still alive in the “whiteness” identified by the 2001 study, the university’s practices were, and remained, structurally skewed.

### **UCT’s links to apartheid society**

Almost by definition, a publicly funded university must be complicit with its larger society, at least in the first sense of the word as Sanders defines it – as an intimate connection, a “folded-ness.” Certainly in the 1960s, UCT was no ivory tower – rather, it was a stage where some of the most important educational dramas in the country were played out. For example, Jack Simons, a radical sociologist who was leading the study of African cultures into a new era, and Raymond Hoffenberg, a medical doctor who linked the nascent British anti-apartheid movement with South African activists were both forced into exile. At Simons’ request there was no protest in his case, but UCT staff and students protested Hoffenberg’s banning and sent a delegation in academic gowns to the airport to bid him farewell.<sup>45</sup> Student leader Ian Robertson was banned in 1966 following his invitation to then-US Senator Robert Kennedy to speak at UCT.<sup>46</sup> The UCT medical school and its Groote Schuur Hospital, were

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Mary Simons, Cape Town, July 2013; Richard Luyt papers, Manuscripts and Archives Collection, University of Cape Town.

<sup>46</sup> John Daniel and Peter Vale, “South Africa: Where were we looking in 1968?” in Phillip Gasset and Martin Klimke, eds. *1968: Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt* (Washington DC: German Historical Institute, 2009). Accessed

the site of the world's first heart transplant, set in the context of a racialized narrative about bodies and expertise.<sup>47</sup>

Back to TB Davie, who is most often remembered for his iconic formulation of academic freedom as “freedom from outside interference in what we teach, how we teach and whom we teach.”<sup>48</sup> UCT's well-known series of academic freedom lectures, delivered annually since 1959 by a prominent invited guest, are named after him. Yet as Leslie Witz has pointed out, there was another side to Davie. He played a prominent role in the early 1950s in the planning and performance of the Van Riebeeck Festival, a national celebration to mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing of Dutch settlers on South African soil. Although there were voices in the student government who objected, UCT was chosen to represent the higher education sector in the July 1952 national celebrations of the colonial milestone. Grandiosely, this consisted of a UCT float featuring students in togas, posing around plinths which represented the university's five faculties.<sup>49</sup> The festival provides an excellent example of UCT's connections with the wider society of which it was such an important part, certainly demonstrating that the university community did not stand aloof from these celebrations of white supremacy.

UCT, of course, had many of connections with the wider world. The book marking the university's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary listed activities as varied as students volunteering to provide social services in the Cape Town slums to faculty research on the chemical analysis of moon dust.<sup>50</sup> Here it is

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at [http://ghi-dc.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1041&Itemid=932&Itemid=161](http://ghi-dc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1041&Itemid=932&Itemid=161) 12 January 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Dr. Christiaan Barnard's second heart transplant operation sutured the heart of a deceased Coloured man into a white Afrikaner. See Tsung Cheng, “Hamilton Naki and Christiaan Barnard Versus Vivien Thomas and Alfred Blalock: Similarities and Dissimilarities,” *American Journal of Cardiology* vol. 97 no. 3 (2006); Anne Digby, “The global and the local: changes at Groote Schuur Hospital,” *Lancet* vol. 374 no. 9692 (2009); Alexandria Niewijk, “Tough Priorities: Organ Triage and the Legacy of Apartheid,” *Hastings Center Report* vol. 29 no. 6 (1999).

<sup>48</sup> A. van de Sandt Centlivres, “Thomas Benjamin Davie, the first TB Davie Memorial Lecture, May 1959,” (Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1961), p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> Leslie Witz, *Apartheid's Festival: Contesting South Africa's National Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 159-162.

<sup>50</sup> Alan Lennox-Short and David Welsh, eds. *UCT at 150: Reflections* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), p. 104-121.

worth noting that one would have to ask questions about the ethos and conduct of each of these sets of activities to discover who benefitted, and who was included and excluded in order to gauge the depth of complicity of each.

We might, for example, ask new questions about complicity in relation to UCT's connection to the Hyman Liberman Institute in District Six. Liberman had been the first Jewish mayor of Cape Town in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. District Six, an inner Cape Town neighborhood that was both an outright slum and a site of vibrant mixed-race, working class culture, was notoriously obliterated by the implementation of the Group Areas Act in the 1970s.<sup>51</sup> Until the end of the 1960s the Institute housed a cultural center and a library that was a popular meeting place for political discussion.<sup>52</sup> It was also a site of production of "high culture" in arts such as ballet and opera in and for the Cape Town coloured community. For example, the dance students who trained in Dulcie Howes' program at UCT came back to dance in productions mounted by the community's performing arts ensemble, the Eoan Group.<sup>53</sup> In addition to all this, however, the Institute was also a common site of field work for UCT social science students. Prof. Edward Batson, a sociologist, was an "honorary warden" and with Prof. W.H. Hutt, an economist and head of the UCT Commerce Faculty, gave lectures there.<sup>54</sup> Batson, who pioneered the development of poverty datum line studies in urban African populations in South Africa and colonial Rhodesia, and Hutt, who wrote an economic critique of apartheid in 1964, were well-known liberals on the UCT staff.<sup>55</sup> Batson and Hutt were members of the center's board of directors, thus facilitating the

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<sup>51</sup> Teresa Barnes, "More than the sum of its parts? The merger of Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon," in Barnes, Baijnath, Sattar, op cit; Ciraj Rassool and S. Prosalendis eds, *Recalling Community in Cape Town* (Cape Town: District Six Museum Foundation, 2001); S. Jeppie and C. Soudien, eds. *The Struggle for District Six: Past and Present* (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1990).

<sup>52</sup> Dick, *Hidden History*, p. 104, 106.

<sup>53</sup> Muller and Roos, *Eoan: Our Story*.

<sup>54</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen, Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: an illustrated social history* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), p. 84.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Batson, *A contribution to the study of Urban Coloured Poverty* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1942); idem., *The poverty line in Salisbury* (Cape Town: School of Social Science and Social Administration, University of Cape Town, 1945); idem., *The Social Survey of Cape Town: Series of Reports on a Survey of Greater*

support of a university funding connection. In the mid-1950s a controversy arose over the relationship between the Institute and the university, which led to a commission of inquiry in 1955.<sup>56</sup> The university eventually ceded the administration of the Institute to the Cape Town City Council, and it closed at the end of the 1960s.<sup>57</sup>

The academic relationship between the Institute and UCT brings up the question of the politics of knowledge production.<sup>58</sup> Since research at the Institute was “integral part” of the training of scores of UCT social science students over the years,<sup>59</sup> could it be that the Liberman-UCT relationship was a cornerstone of the “Bantu Studies” tradition that Mahmood Mamdani so controversially encountered 30 years later at UCT?<sup>60</sup> In this tradition, knowledge about people of colour was always refracted through the lenses of “primitivism”, measuring their movement along a continuum of civilization and progress. Given the nature of South African liberalism (as above) and the Institute’s emphasis on the production of so-called “high culture”, the interpretation of the Institute’s pivotal role in the “Bantu Studies” tradition could be quite justified. If the UCT-Liberman Institute relationship – and presumably, others like it - bolstered hierarchicalized understandings of culture and “race relations”, a backstory of the ways that the production of knowledge at UCT was epistemologically entwined and complicit with practices of racial supremacy and subjugation begins to come to life.

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*Cape Town* (Cape Town: School of Social Science, University of Cape Town, 1952). W.H. Hutt, *The Economics of the Colour Bar: A Study of the economic origins and consequences of racial segregation in South Africa* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964).

<sup>56</sup> “Hyman Liberman Institute,” File BC 1433, University of Cape Town Manuscripts and Archives Collection.

<sup>57</sup> Bickford-Smith et al., p. 84; Hyman Liberman Institute, *Report on the Transfer of the Hyman Liberman Institute to the Cape Town City Council* (Cape Town: 1958).

<sup>58</sup> Teresa Barnes, “Owning what we know: Racial Controversies in South African feminism, 1991-1998,” in Catherine Higgs, Barbara Moss, Rae Ferguson, eds. *Stepping Forward: Black Women in Africa and the Americas* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002).

<sup>59</sup> Bickford-Smith, van Heyningen, Worden, op cit, p. 84.

<sup>60</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, “Teaching Africa at the Post-Apartheid University of Cape Town: A Critical View of the ‘Introduction to Africa’ Core Course in the Social Sciences and Humanities Faculty’s Foundation Seminar, 1998,” and “Is African Studies to be turned into a new home for Bantu Education at UCT?” *Social Dynamics* 24.2 (1998).

This is not to say that the Liberman-UCT relationship was evil. I would suggest, however, that further investigations of the relationship between the Institute and the University might well provide further evidence about the ways in which the epistemological normativity of apartheid was produced and reproduced at UCT.

### **Professorial support for apartheid**

Mark Sanders' definition of complicity also holds the dimension of an intimate connection with evil practices. Institutionally, UCT also housed this aspect of complicity.

Andrew Howson Murray (1905-1997) was the head of the UCT Philosophy Department, holding its Chair of Philosophy and Ethics from 1937 to 1970 in an era when the model of "the professor as a permanent and quasi-autonomous [head of department]" obtained.<sup>61</sup> He taught the university's courses in political philosophy in the era before there was a political studies department, so students who wanted to learn the basics of politics were drawn to his classroom. According to Phillips, Murray was a popular lecturer because he modernized the philosophy department's pedagogical practices, and its curriculum to include topics such as Machiavelli and Marx. Consequently the number of "undergraduates and postgraduates taking Political Philosophy rose significantly during the 1940s".<sup>62</sup>

AH Murray was a liberal supporter of apartheid. His professional career and many extra-curricular activities, over the course of a long and productive career, were dedicated to the proposition that liberal freedoms could best be secured for all by segregating white from black. Murray's family background in the missionary wing of the Dutch Reformed Church, his early involvement with liberal causes such as the Joint Council movement and the South African Institute of Race Relations, his position at UCT and his prodigious work ethic as a public intellectual rendered him – not a great man, but a significant man. By all accounts a polite and pleasant person, Murray personified a branch of

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<sup>61</sup> Du Toit, "Critic and Citizen," p. 97.

<sup>62</sup> Phillips, *The University of Cape Town 1918-1948*, p. 281.

liberalism that elsewhere I have dubbed, “bad liberalism.”<sup>63</sup> The fact that he and his exploits have (with the exception of the Treason Trial, see below) been largely forgotten is only testimony to the quixotic nature of political memory, not to a lack of consequence of the man in his day.<sup>64</sup>

It is difficult to judge Murray’s academic standing amongst his peers at UCT and other South African universities. The American historian and chronicler of the 1956-60 Treason Trial, Prof. Tom Karis, recalled a “pleasant” lunch with Murray at the UCT Faculty Club once in the 1950s in which other faculty diners shunned Murray in distaste.<sup>65</sup> In 1956, Murray wrote approvingly on the effects of apartheid on the university and was publicly debated in the press by a group of UCT professors.<sup>66</sup> His support for apartheid would thus have been well-known on the UCT campus, presumably rendering him *persona non grata* in some, but not all, circles.<sup>67</sup> Murray contributed chapters to volumes published in honor of two conservative South African philosophers, HJ de Vleeschauwer, the Belgian ex-Nazi who became

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<sup>63</sup> Murray’s family and liberal backgrounds are discussed in Barnes, “Following the path into the darkness.”

<sup>64</sup> Other than his role in the Treason Trial, Murray has left a very faint wake in the vast ocean of South African political historiography. His longevity in political trials originally piqued my interest; see Michael Lobban, *White Man’s Justice: South African Political Trials in the Black Consciousness Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). His role in the Bantu Education Commission is critically reviewed by Cynthia Kros, *The Seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education* (Pretoria, 2010). He is mentioned referentially in Pierre van den Berghe, *South Africa: A Study in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); T. Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Charles Bloomberg [Saul Dubow, ed.], *Christian-Nationalism and the Rise of the Afrikaner Broederbond, in South Africa, 1918-48* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 218. His philosophical contributions are reviewed in William Sweet, “Philosophy under Apartheid,” in J.A. Lavery, L. Groarke and W. Sweet, eds. *Ideas Under Fire: Historical Studies of Philosophy and Science in Adversity* (Madison, NJ, 2013) and mentioned in Pieter Duvenage, “Afrikaner Intellectual History: An Interpretation,” in Peter Vale, Lawrence Hamilton and Estelle Prinsloo, eds. *Intellectual Traditions in South Africa: Ideas, Individuals and Institutions* (Pietermaritzburg, 2014).

<sup>65</sup> Karis was an attache of the US Embassy at the time, conducting research on political developments in South Africa. Communication from Karis to Gail Gerhart; email communication from Gail Gerhart to the author, 17 June 2010.

<sup>66</sup> AH Murray, “Universities’ Freedom and Challenges That Confront It,” *Cape Times* 7 May 1956; letter to the Editor from B. Beinart, G. Goold, K. Hall, W. Isaac, T. Price, L. Thompson, S. van der Horst, M. Wilson, “State Should Not Dictate Who Shall Attend A University,” *Cape Times* 10 May 1956. File BC 1253 C42 2/2. AH Murray Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Collection, University of Cape Town (hereafter AHMP).

<sup>67</sup> As I argue elsewhere, Murray was a liberal of sorts and his relationships with other people on campus must have fluctuated over time. For example, he collaborated with the members of NUSAS on a publication about universities and academic freedom in 1953. AH Murray, “Academic Freedom,” in *The Concept of a University* (Rondebosch: Research Dept. of NUSAS and the UCT Philosophy Dept, July 1953). The introduction to the volume was written by Benjamin Pogrud, then “NUSAS Regional Director of Research”.

head of the library at Unisa, and HG Stoker of Potchefstroom University.<sup>68</sup> Murray continued in the UCT Chair of Philosophy and Ethics until his retirement in 1970, following which he was appointed to the university council.<sup>69</sup> He was also awarded the national Stals Prize for Political Science in 1971.<sup>70</sup>

As with any professor, there are conflicting opinions about Murray as a lecturer. As a post-graduate supervisor, two of Murray's students were the Coloured philosopher and poet Adam Small and the ultra-conservative politician Andries Treurnicht.<sup>71</sup> Ben Turok, in later years a prominent ANC member and parliamentarian, credits Murray and his colleague Prof. Martin Versfeld for nurturing his first interests in political philosophy.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, Albie Sachs, whose life as an activist, exile, lawyer and ANC member carried him to the post of chief justice of the highest court in democratic South Africa, the Constitutional Court, was a student of Murray's. He remembered that Murray's lectures were superficial and "lightweight."<sup>73</sup>

Murray taught Communism as a confirmed anti-Communist.<sup>74</sup> Following the passage of the draconian Suppression of Communism Act of 1950, he explained his somewhat disingenuous stance about continuing to teach Marxism.

I include lectures on Marxism in the first course on politics, but I do not think the Bill will have any effect on the liberty of university teaching at all. My lectures on Marxism are open and

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<sup>68</sup> *Festschrift H.J. de Vleeschauwer* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1960); *Truth and reality, philosophical perspectives on reality dedicated to Professor Dr. H.G. Stoker* (Johannesburg, De Jong's Bookshop, 1971). Re de Vleeschauwer, see Dick, *The Hidden History*.

<sup>69</sup> Republic of South Africa, Department of the Prime Minister, "Minuut No. 944, 15 June 1971" South African National Archives, Pretoria.

<sup>70</sup> P.G. McDonald, UCT Registrar to AH Murray, 3 June 1971. AH Murray Personnel file, University of Cape Town.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Neville Alexander, University of Cape Town, July 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Turok, *With My Head Above the Parapet*, p. 14, 19.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Justice Albie Sachs, University of the Western Cape, July 2010.

<sup>74</sup> AH Murray, "Hoekom ek is nie Kommunis nie [Why I am not a Communist]," *Die Huisgenoot*, 24 September 1937. My translation. "No Red Takeover Without Bloodshed – Professor" *Cape Argus* 18 December 1964; AH Murray, A.H. Murray, *Red Strategy and Tactics* (Johannesburg: South African Broadcasting Corporation, 1961).

objective. A professor should, in any case, never use his chair to propagate any kind of doctrine.<sup>75</sup>

Interestingly, his course featured more on socialism and Marxism in his first year of teaching at UCT in 1938, including works by Beatrice and Sidney Webb, A. Weber, Max Beer and HJ Laski than it did thirty years later when only Laski's *Communism* remained on his syllabus. Phyllis Doyle's *A History of Political Thought* (first published in 1933) stayed on his curriculum from 1938 through 1968.<sup>76</sup>

As a philosopher and educator, Murray's perspective was that the concept of pluralism was the only answer to the challenges of life in a multi-racial society. Although in other settings pluralism can be a reasonable call for democratic decentralization, in Murray's hands it was deformed into an apology for apartheid. Deriving the idea of pluralism from a set of 16<sup>th</sup> century texts, he maintained that the Dutch declaration "Vindiciae contra tyrannos" ("Defence of liberty against tyrants") of 1574 contained an explication of freedom which had much to offer to 20<sup>th</sup> century South Africa. Murray pointed to the document's defence of the rule of law, its attack on centralized government and its espousal of "the principle of political pluralism."

To-day scholars of politics are turning to this side of the *Vindiciae's* teaching, after three centuries of pre-occupation with [theories] of sovereignty in theory and practice. It is the *Vindiciae's* recognition of the significance of decentralisation and pluralism for our liberties which makes it an important document where we have to do with racially mixed populations, as in South Africa, in our body politic.<sup>77</sup>

He also found meaningful "pluralism" in the work of an early official of the Cape Colony in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, J. de Mist, and argued that "in the new Africa where every body politic is plurally constituted, either racially, in language or by tradition," that resistance to the centralized state was

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<sup>75</sup> "Marxism as a Subject. Professors and the Anti-Red Bill," *Cape Times*, 20 June 1950. File BUZV, AH Murray, Manuscripts and Archives Collection, University of Cape Town.

<sup>76</sup> University of Cape Town, *Calendar, 1938-1939* (Cape Town: Cape Times Ltd, 1938), p. 73; University of Cape Town, *General Prospectus, Calendar, 1959* (Parow: Cape Times Ltd, 1959), p. 107; University of Cape Town, *Calendar of the Committee Meetings of Council and Senate, 1968*, p. 145.

<sup>77</sup> A.H. Murray, "The 'Vindiciae contra tyrannos'" (reprinted from *Acta Juridica*, 1958), p. 310.

appropriate – so that “rights and liberties may be maintained.”<sup>78</sup> For Murray, South Africa was “plural” was because of the proliferation of tribal and ethnic groups, and the establishment of supposedly sovereign tribal areas (the “homelands”, or Bantustans) was to be welcomed. Thus, the concept of pluralism in South Africa at this time became a euphemistic legitimation for injustice.<sup>79</sup>

Murray’s professional papers in UCT’s Manuscripts and Archives collection show that he was, among other things, a frugal workaholic. There are drafts upon drafts of his published and unpublished writings. We know he was frugal because many of those drafts were typed on the backs of student exam papers. Here is an excerpt from a students’ answer to an exam question about pluralism, which, based on the date of a draft of one of Murray’s papers typed on the other side, probably dates from about 1962. The answer is marked with a grade of 7 out 10.

Political Pluralism is the [indistinct] of political philosophy which seeks not to break down the conception of sovereignty in a state but rather to point out that this sovereignty appertains to the whole and not to any one determinate body within it...[Pluralism] may involve the creation of certain autonomous bodies of [the views of two authors] are based on reason and rationality and both are led to the conclusion that unity in a state is not conducive to the inherent welfare of the individual and both thus claim that only by a decentralization of lawmaking bodies...will the welfare of the individual be enhanced.<sup>80</sup>

This answer suggests that Murray taught that pluralism was the best solution to the problems of maintaining individual freedom. Arguably, this is an example of the way in which Murray’s philosophy

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<sup>78</sup> A.H. Murray, *The Political Philosophy of J.A. de Mist, Commissioner General at the Cape, 1803-05* (Cape Town: HAUM, 1961).

<sup>79</sup> Some years later, of course, in the late 1970s, the South African state was to borrow the term to rename and supposedly sanitize some apartheid bureaucracies; thus the Ministry of Bantu Administration and Development (already a reincarnation of the Ministry of Bantu Affairs) became the Ministry of Plural Relations and Development, complete with a Minister of Plural Relations. The wry joke at the time was that this meant that in the countryside there were “rural plurals.” See the chronology of South African political events of the 1970s, including the rise and fall of the term “plural” in government departments at <http://sahistory.org.za/pages/chronology/main-chronology-1970snew.html>.

<sup>80</sup> Handwritten exam answer; found on the back of typed draft with handwritten corrections by AH Murray of a talk for the South African Broadcasting Corporation, “Red Invasion of Africa.” The file also contains the letter, JK Dunlop, SABC to Prof. A.H. Murray, “Re: Talks on Communism for broadcast 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> June and 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1962,” 14 May 1962. File BC 1253, E1. AHMP.

classrooms contributed to ingraining an acceptance of the legitimacy of the idea of separate development; and thus, by extension, an indifference to the evils of apartheid.

But Murray also made his mark outside the classroom, as a crusader against Communism and a virtual phalanx of anti-apartheid activists who, he asserted, were Communists. As an anti-Communist expert, Murray served the apartheid state in many capacities. He is remembered in South African history for his testimony in the Treason Trial of 1956-60, which was the state's (spectacularly unsuccessful) attempt to rid itself of 156 top leaders of the anti-apartheid movement in one fell swoop. Murray was brought in as a state witness by the pro-Nazi, chief prosecutor Oswald Pirow (who was succeeded after his mid-trial death by J. de Vos, a member of the pro-fascist organization Ossewa Brandwag).<sup>81</sup> It was Murray's job in the Trial to identify the writings and reading material confiscated from the accused as Communist or Communist-inspired, and thus the accused themselves as abrogators of the Suppression of Communism Act. But the defense team tricked Murray into identifying pieces of his own writing from the 1930s as Communist, in an episode that has gone down gleefully ever since in the history of South African anti-apartheid activism.<sup>82</sup>

Murray continued to testify against anti-apartheid activists (contributing to long terms of imprisonment in some cases) until the 1980s.<sup>83</sup> He had many other extra-curricular roles as well.<sup>84</sup> The

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<sup>81</sup> Christoph Marx, *Oxwagon Sentinel: Radical Afrikaner Nationalism and the History of the Ossewabrandwag* (Munich: LIT Verlag, 2009), p. 558.

<sup>82</sup> See for example, Thomas Karis, Thomas Karis, "The South African Treason Trial," *Political Science Quarterly*, 76:2 (1961); idem, *The Treason Trial in South Africa: a guide to the microfilm record of the trial* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965); Helen Joseph, *If This Be Treason* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963); Anthony Sampson, *The Treason Cage: The Opposition on Trial in South Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1958); Lionel Forman and ES Sachs, *The Treason Trial* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1958); Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Johannesburg: Macdonald Purnell, 1994); Ismail Meer, *A Fortunate Man* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2002); Rusty Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting: Memoirs from a Life in South African Politics* (New York: Viking, 1999); Don Pinnock, *Writing Left: The radical journalism of Ruth First* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2007), p. 179-181; Stephen Clingman, "Writing the South African Treason Trial," *Current Writing* vol. 22 no. 2 (2010); Moss, *The New Radicals*, p. 225-227.

<sup>83</sup> Teresa Barnes, "The curious case of Prof. A.H. Murray in South African political trials, 1956-76," (paper presented to the "Rivonia Trial 50 Years On" conference, University of Pretoria, June 18-20, 2013).

most salient of those for the purposes of this paper was his work as a member of the Publications Appeal Board, the main South African censorship board, from 1960 through the 1980s. Murray was a part-time censor from 1963-1970 while he was still teaching, and a full-time member after his retirement from UCT. In the 1970s and 1980s, Murray was the head of the political committee of the Board, and wrote many opinions that were central in the Board's decisions to ban books and silence authors of critical political materials.<sup>85</sup> In 1981, for example, writing for the political committee, Murray penned the following opinion for the larger Board on the magazine *Work In Progress*, edited by former UCT student Glenn Moss.

The Committee feels that the document "Work In Progress No. 19" is important and significant for the insight it gives into the strategy, tactics and aims of the program for insurrection in the Republic...The Committee decided to ask that this document and the attached report of the reader be forwarded to Military Intelligence and to Intelligence for its information on the underground strategy and tactics of current revolutionary propaganda...The Committee is of the opinion that this issue of the Journal will serve to strengthen left-wing elements in the insurrectionary movement in its theories and practice.<sup>86</sup>

Murray was not the only UCT professor who taught on the one hand and banned books on the other. Prof. R.A. Lighton of the English Department and Prof. Scholtz van de Merwe were members of the Board in the 1970s, as was Murray's colleague in the Philosophy Department, Prof. S.I.M. du Plessis, in the 1980s.<sup>87</sup> Murray taught at the neighboring University of the Western Cape from 1973-74, where his colleague Prof. Philip "Flip" Smit was also a member of the censorship board.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Murray was a member of government commissions in South Africa and colonial Rhodesia. He contributed to the popular anti-Communist discourse of his day through decades of writing articles and letters in the popular press and giving radio addresses in both English and Afrikaans. See numerous newspaper clippings of Murray's articles, talks and letters, File BUZV "AH Murray" and BC 1453, AHMP.

<sup>85</sup> Peter McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and its Cultural Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 39, 53, 63; Prof. P. Smit interview, University of the Western Cape, 1 April 2008.

<sup>86</sup> File 1253, B2, AHMP.

<sup>87</sup> See the "Biographies" section of [www.theliteraturepolice.com](http://www.theliteraturepolice.com).

<sup>88</sup> "UWC post for Prof. Murray," *Cape Times* 21 Dec 1973; Koosie Abrahams interview and Philip Smit interview, University of the Western Cape, April 2008.

Prof. Keith Gottschalk, who started teaching at UCT as a junior lecturer in the early 1970s, remembered that all the books that he assigned for his African politics class were banned.

Murray was head of political censorship when I had systematically banned, one by one, every single work I prescribed for my course on Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. The librarians were so frightened that they cut out Harold Wolpe's article in *Economy & Society* that I prescribed for my other UCT course on liberals vs. revisionists.<sup>89</sup>

This meant that students were not able to openly read and discuss ideas that Gottschalk considered to be important for their education. As head of the censorship board's political committee, there is little doubt that Murray had a direct hand in banning the books and articles on Gottschalk's syllabi. There is more than irony in the situation of one UCT professor banning the materials that another UCT professor needed to teach. It is a marker of institutional complicity, of university practices – both oppositional and supportive – that were entwined with apartheid.

One might legitimately ask if university administrators knew of Murray's extracurricular activities. They most certainly did. Murray's own UCT personnel file hold Murray's applications for leave from teaching leave to attend the Treason Trial, and sittings of government commissions such as the Bantu Education Commission of 1949-51, and the Commission on the Relations Between the Provinces in 1960-61. In the file, minutes of UCT Senate meetings express concerns about how much leave has been requested and worries about how the Philosophy Department would manage to cover Murray's teaching load. In all cases, the leave was granted; and Murray's colleagues, S.I.M. du Plessis and Martin Versfeld repeatedly stepped into the breach to teach his classes. This correspondence – all official, on university letterhead - demonstrates that the UCT principal, registrar and Senate were well aware of

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<sup>89</sup> Email communication from Keith Gottschalk, 28 February 2010. He meant that the UCT librarians literally scissored Wolpe's article out of the journal volume.

Murray's work for the apartheid state outside the classroom.<sup>90</sup> These bodies neither censured him for these activities nor has evidence come to light that they intervened to try to stop him.

### **Liberal administrators, spies and lawyers**

After TB Davie retired due to ill health, the next permanent vice-chancellor of UCT was Johannes Petrus Duminy, a local Cape scion.<sup>91</sup> Duminy was raised on a farm in the Tygerberg area of greater Cape Town, which has long since been transformed into a leafy upper-middle-class suburb. Duminy's racial attitudes were formed in this farming background. His memoir recalled "our coloured people" as trusty and loyal servants with "innocent, simple" senses of humor.

The relationship on the farm between ourselves and those who served us could not have been happier. They were hardworking and happy folk and served us willingly and cheerfully all their working lives. They had comfortable cottages in which to live, with adjacent patches of ground for growing vegetables and flowers; they were well-fed and clothed; they shared our joys and our sorrows.<sup>92</sup>

Awarded a Rhodes Scholarship, Duminy enjoyed something of a cricketing career for South Africa in the late 1920s. As a mathematician, he took up posts at the University of Pretoria and the Pretoria Technical College. He was the head of a commission of inquiry into events at the black University of Fort Hare in 1955, after the closure of the college following student riots over their living conditions.<sup>93</sup> As UCT vice-chancellor from 1958-67, he presided over many episodes of UCT's encounters with the apartheid state. However, Duminy's name is not mentioned in the same "protest-only" breath as later vice-chancellors of the pre-democratic era, Richard Luyt and Stuart Saunders.<sup>94</sup> Like AH Murray who is only remembered for his gaffe in the Treason Trial, Duminy is generally remembered only for his

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<sup>90</sup> AVH Carter, University Registrar to Secretary for Education, Pretoria, 17 February 1949; AH Murray to the Principal, UCT, 26 September 1959; JG Benfield, University Registrar to AH Murray, 12 October 1959; AH Murray to University Registrar, 14 October 1959; AH Murray to University Registrar, 17 October 1959; Extract from University Council minutes, 4 November 1959; Extract from Council Minutes, 2 March 1960; AH Murray to University Registrar 11 October 1961. AH Murray Personnel File, University of Cape Town Administrative Archives.

<sup>91</sup> After TB Davie fell ill, RW James served in an interim capacity in 1957-58.

<sup>92</sup> JP Duminy, *Twilight over the Tygerberg* (Kommetjie, Cape Town: JF Midgely, 1979), p. 108-109.

<sup>93</sup> Donovan Williams, *A History of Fort Hare*.

<sup>94</sup> For Saunders, see *Vice-Chancellor On A Tightrope*.

1958 announcement that mixed-race dances would not be tolerated on campus.<sup>95</sup> But like Murray, Duminy was also a liberal, a man of his time and place. Here he is in 1961, explaining his views on then-existing South African race relations.

...no matter how well-educated [“our Cape Coloured citizen] might become, no matter how commendable the economic advances he might make, no matter how far he might go along the road of Western Culture, no matter how thoroughly he might prove himself as a man of intelligence, initiative and ability, no matter how grand a fellow he might grow into in terms of a basic qualities of character – in short, no matter how outstanding his personal, individual merit might be, there are lines which he cannot cross, doors which he cannot open, granite walls which he can ever scale because we Whites have consigned him to these frustrating and humiliating worlds – and solely because the colour of his skin is different from that of ours.<sup>96</sup>

Duminy was thus well aware of “race discrimination,” seeing it as unfortunate but always framed in terms of time and evolution. And in this awareness of racial discrimination, he enforced it. This embodies the very definition of complicity.

It is well known that the campuses of South Africa’s open universities campuses were well-populated with student spies such as Gerard Ludi, Craig Williamson, Joy Harnden and Olivia Forsythe. They infiltrated student government, organizations and leftist, anti-apartheid circles generally, sending informant reports on activists’ views, plans and physical locations to the security police.<sup>97</sup> But these students were not alone - other members of the university community also had such links. Keith Gottschalk remembered vividly how quickly the police arrived on campus after one particular university employee witnessed an anti-apartheid meeting.<sup>98</sup> Even in those pre-social media days, one spy with access to a telephone was all it took to alert the apartheid police. In 1981, UCT vice-chancellor Stuart Saunders participated in the “unmasking” of a staff member who was police spy; Daniel Pretorius, a

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<sup>95</sup> Williams, *A History of the University College of Fort Hare*, p. 418.

<sup>96</sup> JP Duminy, “The Call for Reappraisal,” 13 October 1961. File B3.62, Z.K. Matthews Papers, University of South Africa Archives. Accessed at <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/5975> 1 October 2014.

<sup>97</sup> Terry Bell and Dumisa Ntsebeza, *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth* (London: Verso, 2003).

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Keith Gottschalk, Rosebank, 10 December 2014.

member of the SRC confessed to spying in 1987.<sup>99</sup> In addition, according to the last head of the apartheid-era National Intelligence Service, faculty members at both the Afrikaans- and English-medium campuses were paid to spy on each other and send reports back to the security police. Faculty also consulted with the police in their professional capacities, giving expert opinions on domestic and international matters.<sup>100</sup>

Massey's study of the rise of student resistance at Fort Hare contains several descriptions of campus spying.<sup>101</sup> The activists of "Moscow on the hill" would doubtlessly have been an even greater focus of the security police, who would have recruited informants from UCT students, staff and faculty.<sup>102</sup> Murray himself was well-connected to domestic and international intelligence networks. He had regular correspondence with the security police as a frequent consultant witness for the prosecution against anti-apartheid activists.<sup>103</sup> In the 1980s, at least, he corresponded with the head of South Africa's national intelligence service, Dr. Niel Barnard.<sup>104</sup> In the context of the Cold War, from 1968 through the 1970s Murray was one of only two South African academics who received anti-Communist materials from the Information Research Department, a secret arm of Britain's MI6.<sup>105</sup> He was thus very well-positioned to act as a source of information for the security police about developments on the UCT campus although no such direct links have come to light.

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<sup>99</sup> Saunders, *Tightrope*, p. 114-115; John Higgins, "The Warrior Scholar vs. the Children of Mao: Conor Cruise O'Brien in South Africa," in Bruce Robbins, ed. *Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, Academics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 315

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Dr. Niel Barnard, Gansbaai, 9 December 2014.

<sup>101</sup> Massey, *Under Protest*, p. 78, 172, 173, 185, 192, 194-195.

<sup>102</sup> See Christopher Saunders, "Apartheid-era spying: a glimpse into UCT's past," *UCT Monday Paper* vol. 23.30 (11 October 2004).

<sup>103</sup> Barnes, "The curious case of Prof. AH Murray."

<sup>104</sup> AH Murray to Niel Barnard, National Intelligence, Verwoerd Building, 10 July 1984. File F1, AHMP.

<sup>105</sup> File FCO 95/523 "South Africa, IRD Work In", British National Archives, Kew, UK. My thanks to Prof. Nicholas Cull for bringing the IRD files to my attention. On the IRD, see Paul Lashmar and James Oliver, *Britain's Secret propaganda war* (Stroud: Sutton Publishers, 1998); Giles Scott-Smith, *Western Anti-Communism and the Interdoc Network: Cold War Internationale* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Overall, however, although there is a great deal of additional research to be conducted on the question of staff and faculty informants (whether or not Murray himself was in these ranks), a university populated with police spies cannot be regarded as having been an unsullied haven from apartheid.

One final snippet encapsulates UCT's complex entwining with the apartheid state. In 1960, the Republic of South Africa was charged by Ethiopia and Liberia with human rights abuses in then-South West Africa (now Namibia). The territory had originally been placed under South Africa's stewardship by the League of Nations following Germany's defeat in World War I; fifty years later, the new nations of independent Africa were, as a bloc, outraged by the institutionalized discrimination and lack of development imposed on its people. Ethiopia and Liberia were delegated to bring a charge against South Africa to the International Court of Justice in 1960. Perhaps inevitably, Murray served as a consultant for South Africa's defense against the charges at the ICJ, trotting out the principle of pluralism once again to defend the conduct of the apartheid state.<sup>106</sup> Replying to a quotation that "a state which includes many races or nationalities can be held together only by reducing centralised law-making to a minimum," he asserted,

This fact underlies the policy of apartheid. The policy is based on the lessons of history that the recognition of separations offers the sounded guarantees and safeguards of liberties under certain conditions of social pluralism. Apartheid or pluralism is a re-affirmation of the principle of continuity in the history of Africa against the disintegrative effects of European imperialism and nineteenth century European economic ideologies.<sup>107</sup>

Interestingly, however, a radical UCT law graduate, Neville Rubin, worked opposite Murray on the Ethiopia/Liberia legal team.<sup>108</sup> After years of legal wrangling, in 1966 the ICJ sidestepped giving a judgement and controversially declared that Ethiopia and Liberia had not had the standing to bring the

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<sup>106</sup> T. Barnes, "The best defense is to attack": African agency in the South West Africa Case at the International Court of Justice, 1960-66," (paper presented at the 24th biennial conference of the Southern African Historical Society, University of Botswana, June 2013).

<sup>107</sup> A.H. Murray "Report II. Apartheid." dated 24/8/61, in file BC 1153 "Reports for ICJ [International Court of Justice]. AHMP.

<sup>108</sup> South African Department of Information, *Ethiopia and Liberia Versus South Africa* (Pretoria: nd, 1967?), p. 300.

case in the first place. The African countries which had worked so hard for so long on the South West Africa Case reacted to the 1966 decision with “utter bitterness.”<sup>109</sup> UCT went on, however, to confer honorary degrees on the Honorable Justice Mr. J.T. van Wyk, South Africa’s *ad hoc* judge on the ICJ bench, and in 1977 on DP de Villiers, South Africa’s main counsel in the case.<sup>110</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This paper has argued that UCT supported institutional structures and individual practices that led to the production of knowledge that supported, bolstered, reproduced and reinforced the evils of apartheid. This assertion flies squarely in the face of a nearly hegemonic narrative of UCT’s institutional blamelessness, which exclusively features the activists and resisters of whom the institution can justifiably be proud. Yet once the curtain of such a “protest-only” narrative is drawn back and pinned to the minority of the institution’s population where it belongs, there is also plenty of clear, clean evidence that the majority of UCT’s academic practices in the apartheid era were shot through with complicity. Although it can be assumed that the precise forms of this complicity waxed, waned and shifted over time, its presence in UCT’s institutional culture must be acknowledged. In addition, the university, its sister institutions and higher education analysts today must not lean on a narrative that either implicitly or explicitly posits a golden age of academic freedom before 1994 or even before 1959.

I have shown that the university supported structures and relationships that led to the production of knowledge by student researchers in spaces like the Hyman Liberman Institute. I have suggested – although this is subject to further research on the curricula that were supported through the link with the Institute – that this could well have been a cornerstone of knowledge production of the kind which so bedeviled UCT 30 years later, as in the Mahmood Mamdani affair of the late 1990s. UCT

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<sup>109</sup> D. Elwood Dunn, *The Foreign Policy of Liberia During the Tubman Era 1944-1971* (London: Hutchinson Benham, 1979), p. 181.

<sup>110</sup> J.T. van Wyk, “The United Nations, South West Africa and the Law,” (Rondebosch: Public Relations Department, University of Cape Town, 1968); Edwin Munger, “Preface” in DP de Villiers, “The Rule of Law and Public Safety in South Africa,” *Munger Africana Library Notes* 50 (Pasadena: California Institute of Technology, 1979), p. 4.

professors like AH Murray supported the apartheid state as censors, in all the authority and weight of their academic gowns. This had deleterious effects on students' ability to freely access materials that they needed to learn. Censorship was like a worm eating away at the heart of academic freedom, and it conclusively demolishes the argument that the inner life of the university was somehow maintained in an inviolate state of purity, far away from the taint of apartheid. The rhetoric and conduct of liberal administrators like TB Davie and JP Duminy exposed the structural kinship between liberalism and apartheid: students of color could not access full social equality in the present, they had to wait until a future (that might never come) to be admitted to full equality in the social life of the university. This segregation engendered both humiliation and shame in the institution.<sup>111</sup> If it is evil to develop callousness towards the suffering of others, these practices were evil. In addition, there were police spies amongst UCT students, staff and faculty. And the university conferred its highest honors on men who, as in the South West Africa case, argued for the fundamental appropriateness of apartheid.

This is not to say that UCT did not shed some of these practices under subsequent vice-chancellors, especially under pressure from the significant student activism that began in the late 1950s and continued through the political maelstrom of the 1980s.<sup>112</sup> Others have told and will continue to research and tell those stories.<sup>113</sup> But as I have argued here, there are also other stories: of substantial complicity with apartheid, produced and reproduced at many different sites inside the institution.

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<sup>111</sup> There have been official apologies for some of this; see footnotes 37 and 42 above.

<sup>112</sup> Hendricks, "The Mafeje Affair"; Robert Erbmann, "Conservative Revolutionaries: Anti-apartheid activism at the University of Cape Town, 1963-1973," accessed at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/%C3%A3%C2%A2%C3%A2%C2%82%C2%AC%C3%AB%C2%9Cconservative-revolutionaries%C3%A3%C2%A2%C3%A2%C2%82%C2%AC%C3%A2%C2%84%C2%A2-anti-apartheid-activism-university-cape-town-1963-1973>; Saleem Badat, *Black Student Politics, Higher Education & Apartheid: From SASO to SANSCO 1968-1990* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1998).

<sup>113</sup> The genres of biography and autobiography seem especially well-suited to this narrative; examples are Saunders, *Tightrope*; Gavin Evans, *Dancing Shoes is Dead: A Tale of Fighting Men in South Africa* (London: Doubleday, 2003); Moss, *The New Radicals*; Billy Keniston, *Choosing to be Free: The Life Story of Rick Turner* (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana Media, 2013).

The stakes in this matter are very high. The complex and often heartbreakingly ham-fisted efforts to transform South African higher education – as in the institutional merger exercise of 2002-2005 - rest squarely on the assumption that after 1994, the baggage of the “white institutional culture” of the apartheid era was a barrier to equality of opportunity across the sector.<sup>114</sup> The tenor of these transformation debates is often very bitter. Chetty and Merrett have recently accused Mamdani of “historical fabrication” for his assertion that black South African intellectuals were more responsive to social needs in the apartheid era than white intellectuals who (in Mamdani’s phrase) “functioned like potted plants in greenhouses.” Chetty and Merrett hold that although it was flawed in some ways, the record of the open universities is “essentially honourable; a record of which those who owned it were justifiably proud.” This record, they argue, should be “vigorously defended in the interests of historical truth.”<sup>115</sup> In their view it would be a gross falsehood to argue that the open universities were complicit with apartheid or that the traditions of the open universities were barriers to equality. Yet the evidence that I have presented in this paper shows that a whole new set of questions can be asked, and evidence gathered, about deeply-rooted practices of complicity inside the university. This evidence can help us think more holistically, “beyond protest,” about how an institution like UCT interacted with apartheid.

This paper began with two quotations: a recollection about white students finding mirth in the beating of a defenseless African prisoner, and with a plea to hear “the call of responsibility.” I have suggested that contempt for the suffering of others was a primary marker of the evil in the apartheid system. In conjunction with the evidence presented here, these quotations suggest that institutions like UCT can reconsider, with the development of a wider set of conceptual tools, how the evils of apartheid

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<sup>114</sup> Barnes, Baijnath, Sattar, *Rocky Roads*, passim.

<sup>115</sup> Chetty and Merrett, *Struggle for the Soul*, p. 18, quoting Mahmood Mamdani, “There can be no African Renaissance without an Africa-focused intelligentsia,” in MW Makgoba, ed. *African Renaissance: The New Struggle* (Sandton: Mafube, 1999), p. 131.

may still be laced into, or, alternatively, have been uprooted from, contemporary practices of knowledge production.