

Media Workshop on
**COUNTERING APARTHEID
PROPAGANDA**

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PAPER PREPARED BY PROFESSOR DENNIS BRUTUS

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Media Workshop on Countering Apartheid Propaganda: London, May, 1985

IMPEDIMENTS TO THE EXPOSURE OF THE EVILS OF APARTHEID IN THE UNITED STATES

Ironically, at this time, when we are considering how to get greater exposure in the United States for the evils of apartheid, and are ready to complain about the absence of regular coverage of South African issues, there has been a breakthrough. Each day in the press, on the radio, and on television there are reports about the South African situation, frequently with pictures. This is making a strong impact on public awareness in the United States, but it is likely to be a passing phase and it is therefore necessary to continue examining problems arising from the dissemination of information in the United States. It is also necessary to look at ways in which information is distorted.

Several aspects need to be considered:

The control of the media by major corporations based in the United States and operating in South Africa. More than 500 corporations have some form of operation in South Africa, working within the apartheid system and derive considerable profit from it. Because of their financial resources, they have considerable leverage on the media in the United States.

Many publications are part of larger corporate interests which have interlocking financial and manufacturing interests both in the United States and South Africa. This too exerts an influence.

A limited number of major newspapers appear in the United States: the tendency is to reduce major dailies in large cities. Thus the amount of information is limited. Often the dailies are part of larger chains.

Advertising revenue is a major part of every publication and the advertisers are capable of exerting considerable influence on the type of material which appears.

The influence of television reporting, superficial and restricted to short periods, is a serious handicap to in depth reporting.

The assumption -- probably well founded -- that the reading public has a short attention span and that new subjects must constantly be served up to titillate their interest is a serious impediment.

The emphasis on large circulation and on profitability makes serious journalism and in depth reporting difficult and often impossible.

Increasingly there is the tendency to include "fluff" -- feature articles on gourmet dining or travel etc. and these are substitutes for news.

The political climate in the United States which under Reaganism has become increasingly conservative and reactionary is also an impediment. The Reagan policy of "constructive engagement" represents a major defense for the apartheid system.

The climate of the United States has become increasingly racist and hostile to minorities: this is borne out by numerous surveys.

Because of the conservative cast of editors and of editorial policy, there is a limit on coverage of apartheid -- United Nations decisions for instance on apartheid are rarely reported -- and hence reporting is selective. Apparently positive reforms in South Africa are hailed with enthusiasm and are not subjected to scrutiny.

The strong current of racism which is also present in the society influences both writers and readers. Material is shaped so that it is acceptable to the prejudices of the readership.

There are notable exceptions in individual journalists and in specific journals, particularly those that might be termed, progressive or liberal or radical. Journalists such as Antony Lewis, Tom Wicker, and Flora Lewis of the New York Times might be mentioned. So too publications like the Nation, the Guardian and In These Times.

The determination of the Reagan Administration to influence the dissemination of news and to pollute it with political bias is especially seen in developments relating to the Voice of America under its director Charles Wick and in Radio Free Europe and Radio Jose Marti.

The most striking evidence of South African penetration into the United States economy -- and thereby into the corporate world and the publishing world -- is seen in the operations of the Anglo-American Corporation and its subsidiaries in the United States. Many in the United States are unaware that South Africa has become the largest foreign investor in the world operating in the United States.

Distortion of news from South Africa is seen in several instances:

clashes are reported between "police and rioters": the apartheid police are presented as the forces of law and order and justice: those protesting the unjust system are presented as criminals, looters and thugs:

the protestors are presented as cruel, inhumane, and even atavistic: there was extensive coverage of an incident when an infant was killed (accidentally); there is little reference to the thousands of infants who die each year of starvation under the genocidal policy of apartheid:

clashes between Africans are often reported in tribal terms: the classic misreporting was by a reporter of the Chicago Tribune writing from Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage who referred to conflict between the "Chosas" (Xhosa) and the "Kwazulu" (the bantustan of the puppet Buthelezi)

The central issue to be analyzed in this problem is the fact that the powerful corporate interests who control information in the United States together with the present Administration in the United States, have a vested interest in the preservation of the apartheid system, in depicting it in a manner which will not arouse revulsion in the United States and, which will not expose them to criticism and opposition from the people of the United States.

(See Appendices)

Dennis Brutus

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Apartheid foes acquitted

Jury rules trespass 'necessary'

By Rosalind Rossi

In what defense attorneys hailed as an "historic" decision, a jury yesterday acquitted eight demonstrators of misdemeanor charges, ruling it was "necessary" for the group to trespass to stop South African apartheid.

"I didn't know if they'd have the courage to do it," said jury alternate James Conley Sr., 57, who waited out the jury's 2½ hours of deliberation and greeted its result with tears. "My tears are of joy, not sorrow."

The courtroom erupted into applause, and jurors, defendants and defense attorneys broke into broad smiles as the jury's decision was announced.

Wants to join

"Where can I join the picket line?" one juror later asked Keith Davis, one of seven defense attorneys on the case.

"A jury of our peers acquitted us, but in fact indicted the government of South Africa," said one defendant, Steve Culen, international vice president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The defendants—including Ald. Allan Streeter (17th) and two ministers—were charged with trespassing for refusing to leave the hallway outside the South African Consulate, 444 N. Michigan, after closing hours on Jan. 15 and Feb. 7.

Defense attorneys contended the group was responding to a televised offer

"It was the only alternative they had," juror Mathilda Zola, 57, said later. "They had to do what they did because of what was going on—people being tortured, people starving."

The four-day trial saw a host of dignitaries and public officials speak out on apartheid. Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and Rep. Charles Hayes

"What was an honored and protected activity on their part became an act of self-indulgence when they ignored the rights of someone else," Welter said.

Seen as signal

Defense attorney Louis Meyers later called the jury's verdict an "historic" decision that "sends a signal to our government, the White House, and the larger community that people are concerned."

"The verdict was courageous, bold and audacious," Meyers said. "It made a point."

Also acquitted were Edward Palmer, president of the Black Press Institute; Jane Ramsey, director of the Jewish Urban Affairs Council; Dr. Ralph Henley, pastor of the Discipleship Baptist Church; Rev. Orlando Redakopp, pastor of the Church of the Brethren; Robert Lucas, director of the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization, and Thomas Savage, whip and floor leader for the 1984 Jesse Jackson for President campaign.

The defendants had faced potential fines of \$100 to \$500 each.

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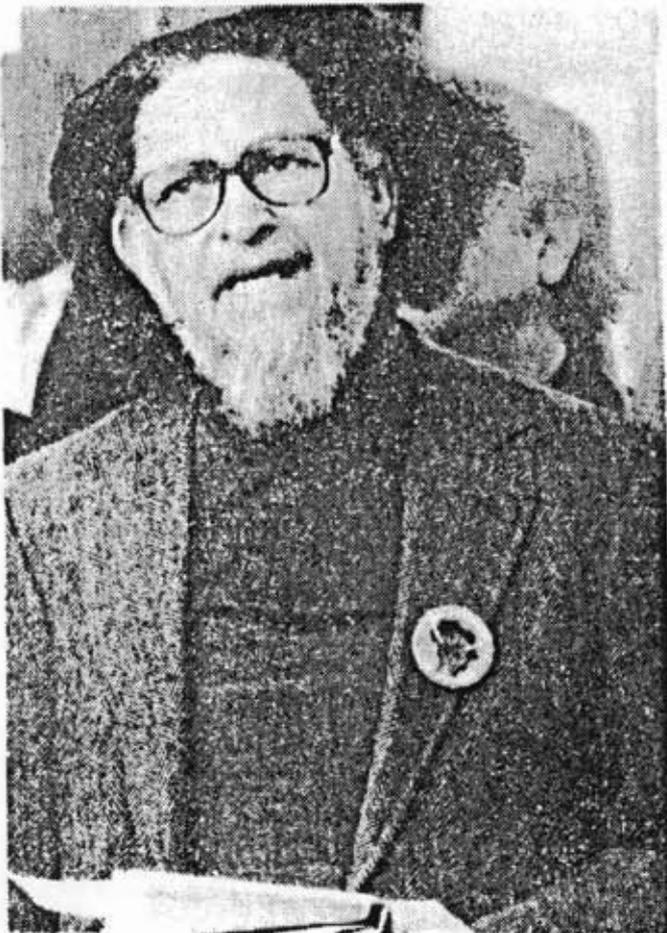
by the South African consulate general to speak to anyone interested in his country's policies.

They said the defendants had all tried unsuccessfully to protest and stop South African apartheid, its policy of racial segregation.

Posing an unusual "necessity" defense, the attorneys argued it was necessary for the group to trespass to stop the "greater evil" of apartheid.

(D-Ill.) testified that demonstrations could have an effect on the 38 anti-apartheid bills pending in the U.S. Congress.

Assistant Corporation Counsels Daniel Welter and Gary Wallace argued the focus of the trial was not thousands of miles away but at 444 N. Michigan, where the protesters ignored the rights of the building manager by refusing to leave after closing time.



SUN-TIMES/Gene Pesek

Dennis Brutus, Northwestern University professor and South African poet, announces his support of eight demonstrators arrested for protesting apartheid. A jury yesterday acquitted them of misdemeanor charges.

Dennis Brutus
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STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

The 8 who are on trial for trespassing are to be thanked for their courageous actions in the cause of justice.

I thank them especially as a South African exile and former political prisoner who has opposed the evil system of apartheid and has suffered for it. I thank them also on behalf of all the thousands who have died in South Africa and particularly on behalf of the 600 who have died in recent months at the hands of the apartheid police and army.

These men and women are in the forefront of the hundreds of thousands who are protesting across this country at the present time calling for an end to the crime of apartheid. And they are calling for an end to the collaboration of the United States government with the criminal acts of the Pretoria regime through the policy of "constructive engagement".

I believe that these men and women have acted out of necessity in order to prevent greater crimes -- crimes of genocide and crimes of collaboration with genocide. Each day men, women, and children in South Africa are arrested, beaten, tortured, and killed. Some of this I have witnessed with my own eyes. I bear bullet scars in my body. And the process of repression has grown steadily worse in recent years; particularly as a result of the money, technology, arms and political support which has been given to the vicious Apartheid system by the United States government. This is why it is necessary for people of conscience to protest. I thank them and I salute them.

Dennis Brutus - May 17, 1985.

Dennis Brutus



DENNIS BRUTUS

Guest columnist

The smiling mask is ripped off

EVANSTON, Ill. — The situation in South Africa clearly grows worse.

For a while, there was a pretense that things were getting better under the new president, P.W. Botha, who was supposedly a moderate. But the smiling mask has now been ripped off, and Botha, nicknamed "Weapons," has been shown to be even more ruthless than his predecessors.

The leaders of the United Democratic Front, the major organization opposing the apartheid government, have been charged with high treason.

At the Crossroads squatters' camp outside Cape Town, thousands have tried to resist forced removals; at least 15 were killed by police.

Over 3.5 million Africans have been removed under the "resettlement policy." Three thousand fought running bat-

les with the police.

Apartheid can no longer rely on the police but has been forced to call in the army. At Sebokeng, 7,000 troops and military vehicles surrounded a single African township and went through it like a steamroller.

Courageous statements by clergy such as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak and Beyers Naude have reinforced protest. Tutu, especially in his declaration that he was willing to call for economic pressure on South Africa if apartheid was not dismantled, showed great courage. (Defenders of apartheid rarely mention that there is a penalty of up to 20 years in prison for calling on foreign companies to divest from South Africa).

Tension mounts. Anger grows against the apartheid system. We may see it erupt to the point where the system is blown apart.

Dennis Brutus, a South African poet, teaches at Northwestern University.

An important component in the new tension has been U.S. action. U.S. support for apartheid has evoked growing hostility (some of which was directed at Sen. Edward Kennedy on his recent visit).

Protesters in South Africa have taken heart from protests at South African embassies and consulates and by legislation pending in Congress that would require divestments by American companies in South Africa, prohibit all trade and new investment, bar tax credits and deductions, outlaw Krugerrand sales, and deny landing rights to South African Airways.

Action in the United States both in the private and public sectors can make an important contribution to the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

P.W. BOTHA

Guest columnist

We pursue fairness and justice

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — For the first time in the history of our country, more communities than before are directly represented in Parliament and in the government.

This has indisputably broadened the democratic base of our system. It reflects the acceptance that one part of our population cannot on its own pursue our goals for South Africa, and cannot on its own protect our common fatherland against those things that threaten it. All the communities, all reasonable South Africans, will have to stand together if we are to lead our country to peace, safety, and development.

Let there be no misunderstanding about (our) ability and determination not to let the rest of the world prescribe to (us) — not through diplomatic channels, nor through demonstrations, nor through

any form of violence.

We are committed to cooperative coexistence, and we believe that this ideal can be achieved only if the diversity of our society is recognized and it is accepted that the composition of our country's population need not be an obstacle in our way. But this is possible only within a system in which there is no domination of one population group over another, which in turn requires self-determination for each group over its own affairs and joint responsibility for and cooperation on common interests.

The government has been engaged for some years now in a program of fundamental reform in every sphere of life. Reform, and specifically constitutional reform, is a continuing process. The government is resolved to pursue peaceful and democratic solutions that

The views of P.W. Botha, president of South Africa, are excerpted from his speech to Parliament Jan. 25.

satisfy the requirements of fairness and justice.

The government's general constitutional goal is, while maintaining security, stability, and self-determination for each group, to give all the country's people a say in decision-making that affects their interests.

The government accepts the permanence in the Republic of South Africa in large numbers of members of black population communities who find themselves outside the national states. Structures must be developed for black communities outside the national states through which they can themselves decide on their own affairs up to the highest level.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT TO NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY ANTI-APARTHEID ALLIANCE
FROM NAOMI TUTU-SEEVERS, DAUGHTER OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER SOUTH
AFRICAN BISHOP DESMOND TUTU.

"SUFFERING PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA HAVE ALWAYS ASKED THE WORLD
COMMUNITY TO APPLY PRESSURES ON THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT.
THEREFORE, I AND ALL FREEDOM LOVING SOUTH AFRICANS ARE THRILLED
WITH THE RENEWED ACTIVITY TAKING PLACE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES ACROSS
THE UNITED STATES.

WE HOPE THIS MESSAGE OF SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION AND OPPOSITION TO
OPPRESSION WHICH HAS BEEN HEARD BY THE MASSES IN SOUTH AFRICA WILL
BE HEEDED BY THOSE IN POWER IN THIS COUNTRY AND THAT THEY WILL STOP
THEIR DE FACTO SUPPORT OF THE APARTHEID REGIME."