

FACTS: POLAROID AND APARTHEID

- 1937: Polaroid formed as a corporation.
- 1938: Polaroid forms first subsidiary in South Africa to manufacture polarizing goggles and lenses.
- 1942: John Vorster, Minister of Justice, arrested and jailed for pro-Nazi sabotage acts.
- 1948: Polaroid makes first instant "sepia" film.
The Nationalist Party comes to power and John Vorster becomes Prime Minister of South Africa. His party passes repressive legislation called "Nuremberg" laws laying the foundation for the apartheid state.
- 1950: The Population Registration Act established a racial register dividing the population into racial groups requiring racial identity cards as proof of race.
- 1952: Polaroid makes instant black and white film.
Nationalist Party legislation calls for consolidation of the passbook and issuance to all Africans over the age of 16.
- 1960: Langa and Sharpeville Massacre: Police fire on non-violent anti-pass protestors, killing 83 and wounding more than 365 Africans, many of them women and children.
- 1960 to 1967: J. Vorster and his followers of Hitler pass more repressive legislation thus creating the brutal police state South Africa is today.

P.A.N.I.C - People Against National Identity Cards

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Polaroid S. Africa sale continues

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Polaroid has once again promised to cease all business transactions with the South African government. As with past promises, however, it isn't being taken too seriously. The Cambridge-based company has several means to continue doing business with the racist regime.

The latest promise came after evidence surfaced last week that the photographic company—specializing in cameras and instant developing film—has been continuing its brisk business selling photo ID equipment to South Africa's security police. The business was conducted through an undercover Johannesburg distributor, Frank and Hirsch (Pty.) Ltd.

Polaroid publicly announced it was discontinuing business with the South African government in 1971, reacting to the demands of a group of Black Polaroid employes, since fired, that it cease support for the fascist South African regime. It continued marketing Polaroid products to the "private sector" in South Africa, however.

Polaroid has disavowed any knowledge that large shipments of its self-developing color film for ID cameras was being secretly funneled to the Bantu Reference Bureau, one of the government agencies which makes passbooks, the key element in enforcing the apartheid system.

POLAROID'S CLANDESTINE BUSINESS

Robert Palmer, public relations director for Polaroid, told the Guardian that "Frank and Hirsch (Pty.) Ltd., the independent distributor of Polaroid products in South Africa, has been selling film to the government of South Africa in violation of a 1971 understanding. Accordingly, Polaroid is advising Frank and Hirsch that it is terminating its business relationship with the company."

What Polaroid doesn't say is that the suffix "(Pty.)" in "independent" Frank and Hirsch's company name is the legally required designation in South Africa for subsidiaries of U.S. corporations. Frank and Hirsch has publicly stated that it regularly billed Muller's Pharmacy in Johannesburg, which in turn sold the equipment to the South African government, with Polaroid's knowledge and approval.

Despite the recent announcement, Pretoria's security agencies will continue to obtain Polaroid equipment and film. Other companies are licensed by Polaroid to manufacture their equipment and would be under no sales restrictions. The Avant Corporation in Concord, Mass. is one such licensee, making camera equipment compatible with Polaroid film.

FORMER EMPLOYEE BLOWS COVER

Indrus Naidoo, a member of the African National Congress and former employe of Frank and Hirsch (Pty.) Ltd., contacted Paul Irish of the American Committee on Africa in New York City with the story and the evidence. He revealed that through its secret conduits, Polaroid was making regular deliveries to the Voortrekker Hoogte military headquarters outside Pretoria and to several local reference bureaus.

Polaroid is no stranger to fascist regimes. It has provided photo ID systems to Rhodesia, Namibia, Chile and South Vietnam. Polaroid's ID system helped U.S. intelligence services prosecute the infamous "Phoenix Program" in Vietnam, in which 20,000 Vietnamese civilians were tortured and executed.