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FERLINGHETTI

Breytenbach Case

**"The confession of the accused is a medieval principle of jurisprudence."
—Nikolai Bukharin**

On November 24, 1975, the South African (Afrikaner) poet, painter, and anti-apartheid activist Breyten Breytenbach was sentenced to *nine years'* imprisonment under South Africa's "terrorism" laws.

The verdict in the Breytenbach case followed Breytenbach's own confused "confession" to the court.

The circumstances of Breytenbach's trial are very disturbing, and strongly suggest that a false confession was extracted from him under torture.

Breytenbach is considered the leading poet of the Afrikaans language today, and is a spokesman for the young generation of anti-racist Afrikaners. The only charges entered against him involve activity for solidarity with the Black people's resistance movement.

A group has been formed in San Francisco to gather and disseminate the facts in the Breytenbach case, and a preliminary report has been issued. Copies are available from the address below.

Meanwhile, Breytenbach is being held in solitary confinement.

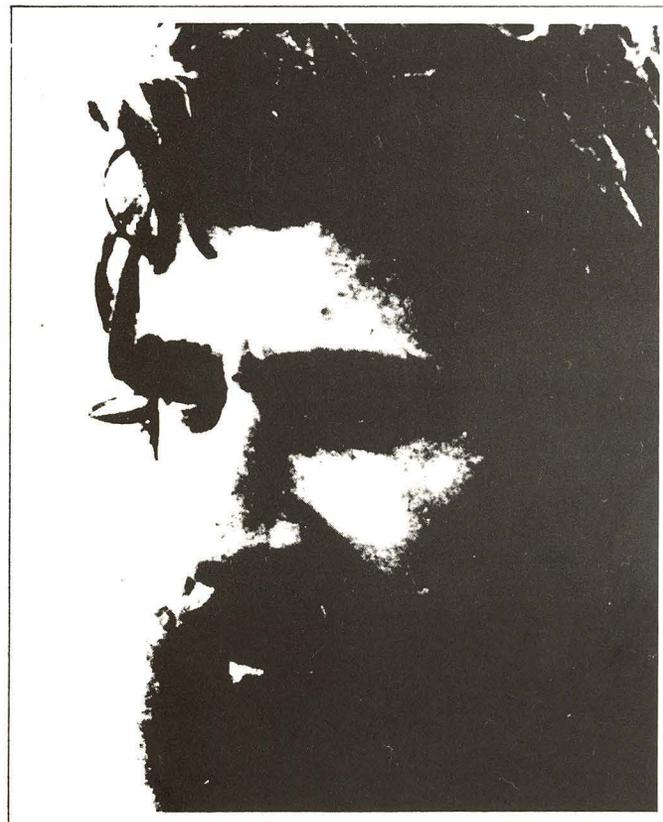
WE ASK ALL PEOPLE OF CONSCIENCE IN THE U.S. TO JOIN US IN DEMANDING THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY:

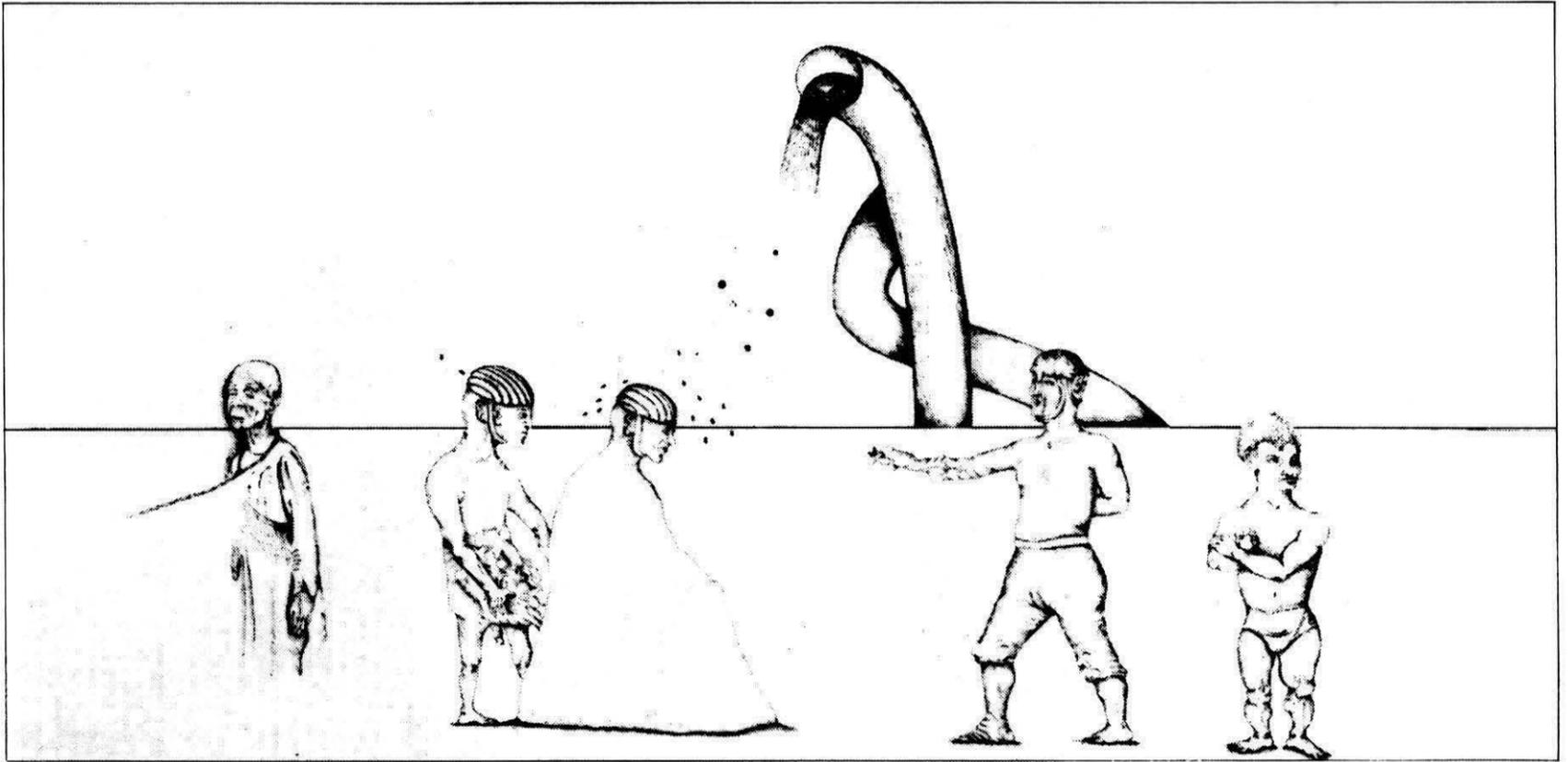
- A) RELEASE BREYTEN BREYTENBACH FROM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.
- B) PERMIT ACCESS TO BREYTENBACH BY INDEPENDENT MEDICAL AND LEGAL AUTHORITIES COMPETENT TO AID BREYTENBACH IN REPRESENTING HIMSELF BEFORE SOUTH AFRICAN LAW.

Committee on the Breytenbach Case

P.O. Box 26481, San Francisco, CA 94126, USA

WHITE ON WHITE





Drawing by Breyten

WHITE ON WHITE

Today I'll write white on white
 wear nothing but white
 drink nothing but white
 eat nothing but white
 And I would be that sea-creature
 who eats light
 straining the ocean for its phosphorous—
 For present time
 is a 'white dot' in space
 and white is the sand
 in the hourglass
 running out
 White dunes of Africa
 running through it
 Snows of Siberia
 sifting through it
 The seas white with sperm
 under the white moon
 where aluminum stars wheel about
 noiselessly
 over quivering meat-wheel earth
 with its white whales
 white phagocytes
 white bleached skulls
 and albino animals
 (Blacks bleached out
 into white men?)
 And to dream of white string
 a symbol of innocence
 Though the color of death be white
 And the world checkered with death
 white-on-black & black-on-white
 'dumb pawns
 in black-and-white kingdoms'
 An angel stands on a station platform
 slowly shaking its gossamer wings
 A white horse
 comes alone from a torn village
 Everywhere around the earth
 on station platforms they
 are still putting up the placards

No pasaran
 Go back Wrong way
 White searchlights
 search the sky
 The gun turrets turn
 on the old Walls
 The angel slowly moves its wings
 breathing the light white air
 The earth breathes and trembles with it
 The governed
 will be governed
 Liberty is not freedom
 Eros versus civilization
 No Way
 without a pass
 It is snowing white documents
 The very rich
 get richer still
 A white gloved hand
 still reaches out the window
 for the money in the cup
 Liberty is not free
 Some poor still ride some trains
 The angel
 stands on the edge
 of the station platform
 slowly moving its large white wings
 which look too fragile
 to lift the body of being
 which still breathes anarchist air
 And the train
 the train made of nothing but boxcars
 jammed with three billion people
 still stands in the station
 trembling

—Lawrence Ferlinghetti
 San Francisco March 1977

(After reading Breyten Breytenbach, Afrikaans
 white poet)