Apartheid South Africa's Propaganda Effort, c.1960-1980: The Hearts and Minds Campaign of the National Party.

by
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Declaration

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that the reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe on any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

December 2016

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the South African National Party's efforts at winning 'hearts and minds' within the decades of the 1960s' up to the 1980s'. Thus, the various attempts by the NP to control and manipulate the image of the Republic of South Africa as seen from within and outside of its borders, is examined. The perspective offered in this study is from the point of view from the NP itself, as this is done in order to try to get a clear picture of what the apartheid government was struggling for and against.

The methods employed within the study are, at times, of a historiographical nature and rely on various documentary sources. Because of the nature of the topic, subterfuge is to be expected and thus the sources are assessed for what they are, and not necessarily what they perhaps pretend to be. The phenomenon of subterfuge is thus examined in its own right.

The study concludes with the suggestion that it might be useful to further research one particular aspect as shown in chapter 3, as well as with the idea that further studies of this kind might be useful in contributing towards the shift towards a more integrated contemporary South African history.

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Opsomming

Die doel van hierdie studie was om in die algemeen die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Party se poging op die wen harte en gedagtes binne die raamwerk van die 1960's 'tot die 1980's te bestudeer. Dus, die verskeie pogings deur die NP om die beeld van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika te beheer en manipuleer soos gesien beide van binne en buite die land se grense. Die perspektief wat in hierdie studie gebruik word, is uit die oogpunt van die NP self, dit is gedoen om 'n duidelike beeld van waarvoor die apartheidsregering geveg het, te kry.

Die metodes wat gebruik word in die studie is by tye van 'n historiografiese aard en berus op verskeie literêre bronne. As gevolg van die aard van die onderwerp, word skelmstreke verwag en dus moet die bronne geneem vir wat hulle is en nie wat hulle dalk voorgee om te wees. Die verskillende voorbeelde van skelmstreke is dus in hul eie reg ondersoek.

Die studie word afgesluit met die idee dat dit moontlik nuttig kan wees om verdere navorsing oor een spesifieke aspek soos in hoofstuk 3 gewys word, te doen. Asook die idee dat 'n studie van hierdie soort nuttig kan wees in die verskuiwing na 'n meer geïntegreerde geskiedenis.

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Acknowledgements

A work such as this is never an easy feat, especially if viewed it against the backdrop of life and love moving forward, whilst one attempts to sit perfectly still in front of the keys and type. Therefore I would like to say thanks to my wife Yolandi Obermeyer for living with me and my thesis for almost 3 years, constantly supporting and motivating me.

A general study of any historical topic also has its dangers, as one's scope is constantly changing and thus the danger of going off on a rhetorical tangent is ever present. A topic such as this also has the danger of allowing emotional or personal bias to colour the end result. Therefore, I would like to acknowledge the role that Professor William (Bill) Nasson played in cajoling and guiding me in the right scholarly direction.

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Chapter 1

Prologue: Socio - Political landscape

'The very term 'Afrikaner' signalled a desire on the parts of the Nationalists to identify as white Africans, torch bearers of Christian civilization drawn together by a unique culture and calling. The African tribes encountered by the Boers were often hostile and it was only through feats of stubborn fortitude and by the grace of God that they overcame constant threats to their existence - as the defeat of the vastly more numerous Zulu warriors at Blood River in 1838 so vividly showed... '[1]

1.1: Introduction

The subject of apartheid has been studied increasingly since the early 1990s'; arguably, this has been done, firstly, to a large extent from the perspective of so-called 'struggle history', and, secondly, also to a great extent, has been caught up with a focus on the rise and fall of this repressive system which owed its existence to the working of both socio-political forces and economic factors.

In common or popular usage, Afrikaner nationalism, or the term 'Afrikaner' itself, as mentioned in the quote above, gives one an idea of the 19th century sufferings and determination of the Afrikaner people. Continuing with this pattern of grief, the Afrikaners also suffered at the hands of the British after their trek inland, with the South African War and the later Anglo or Anglo-Afrikaner domination of South African society in the post war era, with the trademark Afrikaner poverty that followed, which in turn created the conditions for nationalist tendencies to rise.

In the first article of *De Burger* in 1915, Malan wrote that, "for our Volk this is the darkest hour. Once there was a time when we were united, one heart, even if storms raged around us...but our hearts are torn and our cultural life has been embittered. We drink the water of Marah."[2] Subsequently, in the same article, he wrote that the task was to "...tie together what should have

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[1] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (United Kingdom: Oxford university press, 2014), p. 17
[2] *De Burger*, 26th July, 1915, p. 1

never been separated." [3] The ideal of unification was clearly in view at the end of the day, and in the way that the later Nationalists viewed the new and evolving policy of apartheid, this was intended to hold true for both white and black, if on a distinctively different basis and meaning.

When Daniel François Malan (1874 - 1959) spoke about apartheid in parliament for the first time in 1944, he explained that it was meant to be different from what was considered to be the negative idea of segregation, and that it would rather be a positive system within which all the various ethnic groups in South Africa could uplift themselves within their own cultural framework.[4]

Malan maintained that apartheid was a positive and non-repressive system which was based on the Afrikaners' divine calling and even on their historically privileged destiny to convert the heathen to Christianity without watering down their national and cultural identity. This policy could only be implemented if society remained split along the traditional racial divisions that had been practised for 300 years since the origins of European settlement. Its implementation, however, acknowledged Malan, would take many years, and that it was an experiment which was, at the time, in its initial stages. This, then, was the general way in which the proposed idea of apartheid was presented to the public.[5]

Thus, as Saul Dubow states, it was conceived of as 'a more rigorous, methodical, and fair application of age-old principles of racial segregation; as the most effective manner of guaranteeing the security of white, Christian civilization; and as an ideal to be worked towards with benefits accruing to blacks as well as whites.'[6]

The Afrikaner people, who had long seen themselves as inferior, were motivated by the policy of apartheid as it gave them purpose and spoke of a moral vision for the country. The adoption of this segregationist policy thus signalled the growing collective confidence of the Afrikaner *Volk*.

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[3] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (United Kingdom: Oxford university press, 2014), p. 30
[4] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (United Kingdom: Oxford university press, 2014), p. 11
[5] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (United Kingdom: Oxford university press, 2014), p. 13
[6] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (United Kingdom: Oxford university press, 2014), p. 13

The plan at hand was to project the moral and ethical vision of the *Volk* onto South African society, after its own image.[7]

On the 28th of May 1948, the headline of the *Cape Times* read, "Smuts Out: U. P. Loses the election" with the sub-heading, "Dr. Malan is certain of a majority".[8] At the time, this was a major shock as South Africa had lost, a 'great world statesman', as Winton Churchill described the Union's prime minister when he referred to General Smuts[9]. The NP had won the election, and the implementation of apartheid was to be the order of the day.

This brief background to the Nationalists' introduction into the ruling political sphere of South Africa serves, firstly, to anchor this study in terms of later information and discussion, and also simply to sketch the post-1945 basis of what the political system was that needed to be maintained, strengthened and marketed to both South Africa and the international world.

Later, during the 1960s' and 1970s', the National Party's leadership came to be beleaguered by fissures from within and outside of the party itself; it was also further plagued by the scandal created by a book about the secretive *Broederbond* organization, which revealed almost all the names of the members as well as their actions in terms of political influence. The NP's leadership was then shaken even more by the infamous information scandal of 1978 which caused Prime Minister B.J Voster to leave office, and subsequently led to P.W Botha becoming Prime Minister after beating Dr. C.P Mulder narrowly in an internal NP caucus.[10]

Moreover, it was becoming increasingly clear to a critical international world that the newly coined word, apartheid, was simply segregation in new and harder packaging. The international world was split into two sections in the eyes of the NP government, those being friends of South Africa, and the other, its enemies. In due course, that part of the world which fell into the latter section increased due to growing political unrest and violence within the Republic, and to the increasingly draconian nature of the NP party. The reasons for world criticism of the NP government will therefore be discussed in this chapter.

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[7] John Laurence, *The seeds of disaster: a guide to the realities, race policies and world-wide propaganda campaigns of the republic of South Africa* (London, Victor Glance, 1968), p. 45

[8] *Cape Times*, 1st May, 1948, p. 1

[9] *Cape Times*, 1st May, 1948, p. 1

[10] Giliomee, Herman and Bernard Mbenga, *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid Afrika* (Cape Town, Tafelberg uitgewers, 2007), pp.366 -367.

Marlene Breytenbach writes that freedom of speech is the life-blood of democracy, as it holds the government accountable to its citizens. The South African government claimed repeatedly that it had the freest press on the African continent, but South Africa was only a partial democracy which was 'achieved through various self-defence policies such as apartheid and the creation of the "homelands" where the disenfranchised black citizens could vote at their places of origin and not for the white-dominated parliament.'[11]

It fell to the censorship apparatus of the Publications and Entertainment Act, and to the Department of Information and its management, Eschel Rhoodie and Connie Mulder, to fight the intensifying onslaught of negative publicity created by the South African policy of apartheid and its apparatus. In that historical context, it is especially important that, 'we need to bear in mind not only the liberation that people were fighting for but also the totality of the forces they were fighting against.'[12]

It becomes necessary, then, to examine the history of the apartheid government's so-called struggle for dominance and maintenance from a balanced perspective, in the spirit of what Dubow calls 'integrated history', and not to treat the apartheid system merely from a rhetorical protagonist and antagonistic perspective.[13]

1.2: Scope of the study

As will be illustrated below with regard to the socio-political landscape, in the early 1960s' South Africa was in turmoil; the country was now exposing the ugly side of its 'separate but equal' policy of apartheid to both the domestic arena and to the international world.

Between the years of 1961 and 1966, the changes in the Afrikaner-dominated republic were extensive. The shifts had begun during the weeks after the Sharpeville emergency; it had started with the declaration of a national emergency and the banning of 'non-white' political leaders and

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[11] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phill, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p. V
[12] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (United Kingdom: Oxford university press, 2014), p. 301
[13] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (United Kingdom: Oxford university press, 2014), p. 301

movements, although a no less real mechanism of change was the boosting of internal and external propaganda, alongside the use of political arrest and imprisonment without trial. [14]

In this defensive atmosphere, the *'white tribe of Africa',* as the writer Martin Meredith deemed the white people who found themselves in Southern Africa, as well as the minority-rule country they had built for themselves, were now under attack both from within and from outside of its borders.[15]

The key issue then, is to research the nature of the perceived threat to South Africa's white minority rule, and to consider how the Afrikaner Nationalists fought against the liberal encroachment sweeping the Western world. As the initial approach to this study has thus been of a general nature, therefore, a considerable body of secondary literature was consulted from the start in order to be familiarized with the overall framework of the topic. After the initial round of research, parameters where established in order to answer certain questions that arose.

The key time-frame of this work is from the early 1960s' when the socio-political landscape of South Africa began to change, up to the late 1970s', when the actions of the Department of Information ended up in a local and an international political scandal. During these years, many propaganda activities were launched and maintained, and it becomes clear that for these initiatives to have been implemented, a foundation-like structure or basic platform was needed. Furthermore, it should also be understood that the term, 'propaganda' encompasses censorship and all manner of underhand attempts at concealing or manipulating information.

In that light, three main inquiries then come to the forefront of this topic. The first of these is the reasoning behind the South African government's need for a propaganda effort, then what made this possible in terms of its underpinning, and how, and to what extent, the Department of Information was able to implement its propaganda offensive.

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[14] John Laurence, *The seeds of disaster: a guide to the realities, race policies and world wide propaganda campaigns of the republic of South Africa* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1968), p. 50

[15] The white tribe of Africa (1988), by Martin Meredith, was a study of South Africa in the post WW2 period which was funded by the BBC in order to introduce its viewership and readership to the predominantly Christian group of White Europeans who settled in Southern Africa and were now united through both civic and ethnic nationalism as South Africans.

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The stimulus for these questions is for a contribution towards the move towards an *integrated history* of apartheid, as Saul Dubow has recently called it - rather than the continuation of a rhetorical and narrow buttressing of apartheid history. Simply put then, the study asks, firstly and secondly:

- Why was there a need for propaganda after the National Party took power and on what basis was it justified, and then, of equal relevance:

- What methods were employed by the state in order to win 'hearts and minds', and linked to that, how effective or successful were these methods.

In adddressing these, this is very much a broad study of propaganda in South Africa as employed by the National Party between the 1960s' and the 1970s', against the backdrop of the ascent and consolidation of Afrikaner Nationalism and the censorship which was associated with that. At the same time, a fourth and important question arises in connection with the topic of propaganda and censorship, which relates to the theory behind the understanding of these topics.

Accordingly, the theory of propaganda will be examined in the following chapter, so that one could place a 'template' of propagandist theory of sorts over that of the South African example, and perhaps discern a useful pattern. The same section will also discuss the conceptual question of nationalism, how it might be viewed in theoretical terms, and how it can be seen as emerging within a modern nation-state. The value behind this is the same as that of propaganda theory, in that it enables one to assess the workings of censorship and propaganda within the anchoring framework of theory.

In the third chapter, then, the National Party's developing system of censorship will be observed, as well as the road to full-blown authoritarian state censorship and control. This will be undertaken by using the Cronje Report, as it became popularly known, in order to form a basis from which to view the government's thought process. In keeping with the theme of action and reaction, the Cronje Report can be seen as having laid the foundation for what would later

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become official policy on state censorship. Viewed then, as the foundation for state censorship, this gives one some interesting insight into the meticulous nature of the government's policies and convictions. Subsequently, the Publications Acts of the 1960s' and 1970s' will also be examined in their full context alongside the dissident Afrikaner authors who were seen as having rebelled against their own.

Following on from this, the spreading influence of the South African Broadcasting Corporation will be explored as a logical, further step in the fight for national as well as international hearts and minds. Thus, while chapter 3 deals with literary censorship, this part of the study will also deal with certain aspects of audio-visual censorship. This will be done by looking at the initial stages and nature of South African radio services, and then at the introduction of television. The key aspect of this section is the reasoning behind the eventual acceptance and implementation of television, and subsequently how it then came to be utilised.

The culminating chapter of this dissertation will explore the Department of Information and its various attempts at persuasion, as well as where the need for such actions came from. This section is just as vital to the present work as the theory behind it, as it represents the end of a particular era of heightened propaganda action. These actions alone cost the South African tax payer approximately $ 75 billion between the years of 1975 and 1977. [16] Accordingly, this study will consider some of the programmes, the cost of which amounted to such a massive figure, not so much for the sake of retelling the familiar tale of the 'Information Scandal', but rather to explore the positively stubborn nature of the Nationalists' political beliefs in what they were doing.

Whether or not the Afrikaner Nationalist leadership had the moral and ethical high ground which it claimed, is irrelevant for the purpose of this study, rather the importance lies with their actions - how they reacted to the situation they found themselves in. Thus, the intention of this work is not only to examine the full scale of the propaganda war engaged in by government officials from within and outside of the Department of Information and the state as a whole, but also, why there was a need for such an extensive propaganda effort.

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[16] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jakana media (Pty) Limited, 2015), p.51

Historiography and Relevance

The study of propaganda and the manner in which it is implemented can at times be in danger of being unreliable or uncertain due to the tricky nature of sources and the way that they are gathered. By this is meant that some of the sources examined were created to be purposefully deceitful by men who worked in intelligence, a section of virtually any government which is known for being murky. Thus, due to the nature of some of the material covered by this thesis, in terms of past clandestine actions by the National Party, along with the subsequent scandals surrounding it in the late 1970s', the methodology needs to take due account of this.

This is considered by examining both primary and secondary sources, and by cross-referencing in order to get an idea of what might reasonably be considered to be an accuracy or a 'truth'. This is especially relevant in Chapter 5, where the actions and operations of the Department of Information are of central importance. On the other hand, in various other instances, the notion of ascertaining what historical 'truth' is, is actually not of great significance. Rather, understanding of the reason for the source's initial creation and existence is what carries meaning.

A newspaper such as *The Citizen,* which was established in order to propagate a government-approved perspective or message, is useful as a primary printed source, although clearly not as a bearer of the verifiable 'truth'. The same cautious consideration would apply to *To the Point* magazine, and to Eschel Rhoodie's self-justificatory book, *Die Ware Inligting Skandaal* as well as to that of Les de Villiers's, *Secret information*. Rather, as mentioned above, cross-referencing these personal sources with other secondary works might take one closer to the truth, or to a reasonable version thereof.

In terms of secondary literature, perhaps not only the most recent, but also one of the most encompassing historico-political works at this point is that of thye journalist, Ron Nixon, entitled *Selling apartheid, South Africa's global propaganda war,* released in 2015. This book not only examines the motives behind the implementation of a (counter) propaganda offensive but also addresses the physical implementation of these propagandist actions. Its value as a source of information lies in the fact that not many studious works exist which deal with pro-apartheid, or

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counter-defensive propaganda in the manner that this one does. For the most part, we see works that are written from the so-called struggle perspective, and, within this, the ideological motives for the NP's propagandist actions are largely absent, or else their actions are framed in a highly judgemental or politically partisan fashion.

Nixon writes from various perspectives, that is, from the NP government as well as from that of its adversaries, in order to offer an all-inclusive perspective. Thus, as the title states, the book discusses the various global advertising agencies employed by the apartheid state, the various persons who were bribed or were otherwise persuaded to help its cause, and the myriad of American and English politicians who saw communism as a worse fate than apartheid, and acted accordingly.

Interestingly, Nixon also focuses on the complicity of certain African-Americans in the maintenance of the acceptable image of the Apartheid state, arguing that the South African global propaganda campaign or counter-offensive was somewhat more complicated that one might think, possibly due to the backdrop of Cold War politics and its influence on Western interests. The journalist, Rebecca Davis, for instance, has quoted Nixon in an article for the *Daily Maverick*, emphasising this in pointing out that with the book the author hopes that what it 'shows is the complexity of all these movements', because the situation was 'not as black and white as it seems.' [17]

Other books which fall into somewhat the same category, although perhaps not as holistic in scale – to use such a term, are, for example, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa*, by William A Hatchen and Anthony Giffard, which deals specifically with the 'total onslaught' against the press and the various legal retrictions that could land authors in exile or have their literary works banned. The key theme of the book, as stated on page vii, is that it is a 'study of both measures taken by the South African government to control

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[17] "Selling Apartheid: New book lays bare extent of South Africa's propaganda war", *Daily Maverick*, Last Modified August 28th 2015, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-08-28-selling-apartheid-new-book-lays-bare-extent-of-south-africas-propaganda-war/

mass media and the efforts of its journalists…to express their views and resist those restrictions.' [18]

Furthermore, Hatchen and his co-author suggest that there are two forms of government control in the 'very stange society' that is South Africa, namely coercive control characterised by legislation and intimidation leading to self censorship and, secondly, manipulative control typified by covert and overt propaganda. [19] This is a valuable source of secondary reading, especially when coupled with older works such as *Press under Apartheid* by Alex Hepple or *A Culture of Censorship* by Christopher Merret in order to gain extensive insight into the aims and actions of the NP government.

The later book seeks to shed light on those publications that were banned by the NP government. As stated in its first chapter, 'the purpose of this book is to consider state-initiated political censorship and intellectual repression in South Africa.'.[20] This ties in with the above-mentioned works to form a cohesive understanding of the government's repressive stance towards independent or critical writers, authors, journalists and academics in general. Equally, these works are also beneficial to the study simply due to the previously mentioned relationship between free speech and democracy.

Further works such as *The Great White Hoax: South Africa's International Propaganda Machine* by Julian Burgess also make not only for compelling but also essential reading in order to fully understand the scope of the subject at hand. An issue, however, with such studies, is that they do not necessarily supply one with a modern or up-to-date understanding of the reasoning from within the National Party government, or possibly a non-judgemental perspective from within the hindsight of post-apartheid South Africa. That said, there have been scholarly dissertations which bring the focus closer to home, for example a PhD thesis by Marlene Breytenbach, entitled *The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa,* although it still functions for the most part to inform the reader how the government exerted censorship controls in both a directly coercive and a more indirectly manipulative manner.

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[18] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under attack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. vii

[19] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under attack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p.viii

[20] Christopher Merrett, *a Culture of censorship: secrecy and intellectual repression in South Africa* (South Africa, David Phillip Publishing, 1994), p. 5

Even a work such as the above-mentioned book by Ron Nixon, *Selling Apartheid*, which brings great illumination to the subject at hand, is still predominantly written with the international community in mind.

Therefore, concerning the relevance of this study, it is worth emphasising that the rationale behind it lies not only in the interest associated with the subject matter, but also in the points of view of that subject matter. As already mentioned, while initially this study has been conceived of as a general inquiry into apartheid-era propaganda and censorship, it has also become clear, in recent historiographical shifts, that the point of view of the Afrikaner Nationalists is, at times, increasingly overlooked in the course of a growing 'struggle history' focus on the ideological drives of the liberation or extra-parliamentary opposition movements, such as the ANC in particular, or the PAC to a lesser degree.

This is, though, not intended as a study of the apartheid government's rhetoric for the sake of fairness or balance towards the claims of the conservative wing or the white right; rather, it has been undertaken in order to try to provide a framework within which the apartheid government's rhetoric can be better understood in the light of the country's present *status quo*. In other words, the study approaches its topic from the perspective of it being primarily a 'counter-propaganda war', instead of simply a 'standard' propaganda operation.

Secondly, while the topic in question has been studied in great detail in relation specifically to the Information Scandal, there has been considerably less concern with an exploration of the wider actions employed by state actors over a longer chronological period, and with viewing these within the context of an explanatory backdrop provided by theoretical concerns.

Key figures

This study encompasses a broad spectrum both in its time period, as well as in the key figures who played a role within its examination of the censorship and propaganda campaigns to try to secure the interests of Afrikaner nationalism. Some of these influential figures will, accordingly, be briefly discussed in this section in order to illuminate their standing as props of later information developments.

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D.F. Malan, as the first editor of *De Burger,* and the leader of the National Party, played a significant role in the background of this study's focus. Notably, Malan's NP government introduced the apartheid system which developed with expertise and advice from fellow-politicians such as his close confidante, Paul Sauer, who was put in charge of a commission of inquiry into the question of South Africa's race relations. Ultimately, the idea of apartheid was formulated as a programme, and came to be imposed in order to steer 'non-white' communities and peoples into developing according to their own ethnic socio-political needs.[21]

Geoffrey Cronje, who wrote extensively on the nature of apartheid and racial segregation under the banner of pseudo-scientific and religious convictions, will be discussed in greater detail as part of chapter 3. His role in state censorship was exceptionally wide, as he was at the head of the Report on the Commission into Undesirable Publications, which would serve as the foundation for later censoring apparatus.

Dr. Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd (1901-1966) has, of course, to be noted in any study falling under the wide reach of the history of apartheid. Verwoerd continues to be often termed the so-called architect of apartheid, due to his unwavering belief in the apartheid system. For some scholars, the reason for his rigorous belief in the apartheid system might have stemmed from his clinical academic approach to South African society, having studied and lectured both abroad and nationally in the social sciences.[22]

Another important – and later - figure in this study is Dr. Eschel Mostert Rhoodie, who was the Deputy Minister of Information from 1972 until the Information Scandal in 1977. Rhoodie was engaged by Connie Mulder (Minister of Information) when he was just 38 years old, and created much controversy due to his young age compared to those within ruling circles who were overlooked for the position. Rhoodie was appointed to the position due to his influential ideas as portrayed in his book, *The Paper Curtain* (1969), which attracted the attention of Mulder, a Minister who believed Rhoodie to have been like-minded in the combative belief that South

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[21] Giliomee, Herman and Bernard Mbenga, *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid Afrika* (Cape Town, Tafelberg uitgewers, 2007), p.309

[22] Giliomee, Herman and Bernard Mbenga, *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid Afrika* (Cape Town, Tafelberg uitgewers, 2007), p.314

Africa needed to use unconventional methods in order to counter the global anti-apartheid movement.[23]

Rhoodie, of course, later went public after the 1970s scandal broke, and made public some of the information that he had had access to in interviews with the BBC and the Dutch magazine, *Elseviers* to name a couple of media outlets, and also threatened to reveal even more damaging material if he was not granted amnesty.[24]

Dr. Connie Mulder, who had appointed Rhoodie when he was the Minister of Information, was a Nationalist politician who, after going on an overseas trip to gauge international opinion of South Africa in the early 1970s, reportedly found the international world alarmingly hostile towards and fiercely critical of the Republic. Mulder could be seen as a hard-line, yet pragmatic Afrikaner ruler, not a front-runner but wanting the best for the interests of the apartheid Republic; as was quoted in an article from *Die Burger*, '*Mulder se N.P. is agter sy leier',* which underlined that P.W. Botha was seen and was accepted as the man for the job, and implied that the Republic had the capability to defeat its enemies.[25] Equally, Mulder's Department of Information was often criticised for not being sufficiently effective in combating South Africa's poor international image. To attempt to change this, he needed to start a major counter-propaganda offensive which turned to relying on unconventional methods to sway public opinion.[26]

The two main NP leaders at the wheel during the period covered by this work were, firstly, Balthazar Johannes Voster (1915-1983) who became Prime Minister in 1966. His leadership was viewed as more pragmatic and relaxed than that of his predecessor, Hendrik Verwoerd. Due to his comparative flexibility, his time in office was marked by what is known today as an 'Outward - Looking' policy, and partly because of this, his premiership was marked by party controversy and by inter - departmental strife.[27]

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[23] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jakana media (Pty) Limited, 2015), p.61

[24] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jakana media (Pty) Limited, 2015), p.51

[25] *Die Burger*, 2nd October, 1978, p. 3

[26] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jakana media (Pty) Limited, 2015), pp. 57 - 58

[27] Roger Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States; from pariah to middle power* (Taurus academic studies, New York City, 2005), pp. 11 - 12

After the Information Scandal in which Voster was damagingly implicated, P.W Botha replaced him as Prime Minister after an internal NP caucus. Botha was an experienced campaigner, especially in domestic and foreign policy. His leadership was marked by an increase in military strength and in the domestic security establishment, and by the intensified use of state power in the interest of apartheid national ideals. Botha retired in 1989 due to illness and amid allegations of inconsistent behaviour. [28] Notably, when Botha retired, it was not as Prime Minister but instead as State President. The previous symbolic position of president was abolished, and thus after 1984 the executive leader of South Africa was referred to only as the State President.

1.3: Socio-Political landscape of the 1960s

On the 3rd of February 1960, the then prime minister of Britain, Harold Macmillan (1894-1986) famously stated that "The wind of change is blowing through this continent and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it"[29] This excerpt from the influential 'winds of change' speech in Cape Town is perhaps most fitting for the first chapter of this study. Before examining the theory of propaganda and persuasion, one first needs to take a look at the socio-political landscape of the years before the 1970s. The necessity of this is that it shows the difficult landscape in which the NP found itself, as well as the specific hostility against which the government felt that it needed to protect itself and its citizens.

In other words, this chapter will briefly examine the prologue to the 1970s by looking at some of the defining features of the 1960s that made the NP consider it necessary to implement strict control over the media in the Republic, both literary and visual, in the form of strict censorship and increasingly overt propaganda. The 1960s' was, of course, the formative era when the National Party very single-mindedly began to lay the groundwork for the propaganda 'machine' which would go on to be implemented up to the late 1980s', with mixed levels of effectiveness and success.

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[28] Roger Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States; from pariah to middle power* (Taurus academic studies, New York City, 2005), p. 12

[29] "Apartheid in South Africa", BBC, Last modified November 6th 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/apartheid/7203.shtml

By evaluating these years, it is possible to identify a kind of 'propaganda foundation' for the period to follow, and within it the growth of the subsequent phenomenon that became what could be termed the South African 'propaganda machine'. What matters especially are those critical events that become, either purposefully or otherwise, foundation stones of the apartheid system. In other words, it is those actions or episodes that set the stage for the propaganda machine to launch into operation that one needs to take into proper account.

The stage was set, of course, historically by the policy of apartheid as implemented in the aftermath of the 1948 election – this was, by then, looming large in the background of South Africa's political storyline. But during the 1960s there were, too, other significant events and endeavours that led up to the charged status quo of the 1970s, as well as in the years following those.

Prologue to socio-political landscape

Whenever government propaganda is the subject of scrutiny, one has not only to examine the national realm, but also the international dimension. Therefore, this section will look first at the national political landscape of 1960s South Africa, and then at the international political landscape in terms of those elements that were in defence of the National Party, as projected by the various propaganda initiatives of the Pretoria government. Of course, the 1960s were marked by many events, apart from those on which this section focuses, such as South Africa becoming a republic in 1961 or the fatal stabbing of H.F. Verwoerd in 1966. For the scope of this work and this particular chapter, only certain episodes have been highlighted that have significance - not necessarily in terms of the fortunes of Afrikaner nationalism, but because of being marked by a *reactive* characteristic in terms of defensive 'national' propaganda, or to the build-up to defensive propaganda.

Sharpeville

John Laurence suggested in *The Seeds of Disaster* (1968) that "there have been two great watersheds in South African affairs since World War II"[30]. These were the defeat of the Smuts

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[30] John Laurence, *The seeds of disaster: a guide to the realities, race policies and world wide propaganda campaigns of the republic of South Africa* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1968), p. 60

government in the 1948 election and the subsequent assumption of power by the Afrikaner Nationalists, with the second being the Sharpeville crisis and its aftermath[31].

Today, the event referred to only as 'Sharpeville' proved to be one of the events that forever altered the political face of South Africa. But, for present purposes, the history of the Sharpeville massacre is not as important as the aftermath. Hendrik Verwoerd, then prime minister, was quoted by Laurence as saying that the authorities would have a problem on their hands after the events at Sharpeville.[32] It was not exactly an understatement.

The actual events at Sharpeville have, of course, been well documented and studied over the subsequent years. What is most important here was the response, not only nationally but also internationally. Those foreign agencies and interests such as the British Boycott movement, or the Anti Apartheid Movememnt (AAM) which had taken up opposition to the apartheid system were outraged by the shooting and exploited this episode to their political advantage. Back home in South Africa, law-abiding people became scared as violence broke out, and white civilians began to arm themselves in order to fight off a supposed *'swart gevaar'* onslaught. The apprehension that loomed in the back of many white minds could now, it seemed, very easily become a frightening reality.

On the 21st of March 1960, the police had shot 69 black South Africans and wounded close to 180 who had been protesting against the country's pass law system. As news reports of the shooting spread, the publicity was accompanied by protests, disturbances and instances of rioting in Soweto, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth.[33]

The Sharpeville crisis, unsurprisingly, immediately dominated the front pages of the national press. As the *Rand Daily Mail* read, '54 dead, 191 hurt in riots; Army called out in Cape outburst'.[34] Similarly, the *Pretoria News* of the 22nd of March, 1960 recorded, 'Riot Townships Quiet but Saracens Patrol; Casualties: 56 dead, 220 injured but more likely to die'.[35]

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[31] John Laurence, *The seeds of disaster: a guide to the realities, race policies and world wide propaganda campaigns of the republic of South Africa* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1968), p. 61
[32] Herman Gilliomee, *Die laaste Afrikaner leiers: 'n opperste toets van mag* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2012), p.75
[33] Anthea Jeffery, *People's war: New light on the struggle for South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, 2009), p.1
[34] *Rand Daily Mail*, 22nd March, 1960, p. 1
[35] *The Pretoria News*, 22nd March, 1960, p. 1

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These types of headlines echoed throughout virtually all of the newspapers in South Africa. Beneath such headlines, as the *Pretoria News* reported, 'Rush to buy weapons; Towns become armed camps'. Nationally, scores of white people were depicted rushing to buy weapons in order to arm themselves against an anticipated black uprising.[36]

On the 30th of March the government announced a state of emergency and, in the following weeks, there was a massive wave of detentions. Then, on the 8th of April of 1960, the Pan African Congress (PAC) as well as well as the African National Congress (ANC) was banned[37]. A whole generation of anti-apartheid political spokesmen and leaders were now to be exiled, imprisoned, and otherwise silenced[38].

The events at Sharpeville and at Langa in Cape Town went on to make the international news. As the *Pretoria News* advised its readers, 'Riots are big news overseas'. Its short article pointed out that The *New York Times* as well as even Britain's conservative *The Daily Express* had opinion coverage of the terrible injustice of apartheid. Such sentiment was mirrored elsewhere by the initial actions of groups overseas to the events at Sharpeville. Thus, the British Boycott Movement Committee mounted a picketing offensive outside South Africa House in London in March 1960. Moreover, apartheid as a relatively unknown, far away concept, became a more widely known topic of ordinary conversation, and some of those who had been unsure about the issue of boycotts against South Africa now became convinced that it might be the right thing to do.[39]

Today, this event is dealt with in most history textbooks as a watershed moment in South Africa, not because it ignited supposedly revolutionary actions, but more because it was the first major incident that made known to the rest of the world the harshness of the apartheid order. In a way, it could be compared to domestic and world reaction to the notorious My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War. There, too, its significance lay in the reaction to the brutal killing of civilians, and what it exposed of the nature of the war which America was prosecuting in Vietnam.

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[36] *The Pretoria News*, 22nd March, 1960, p. 1

[37] Herman Gilliomee, *Die laaste Afrikaner leiers: 'n opperste toets van mag* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2012), p.472

[38] John Laurence, The seeds of disaster: a guide to the realities, race policies and world wide propaganda campaigns of the republic of South Africa (London, Victor Gollancz, 1968), pp 75-76

[39] Roger Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid, a history of the movement in Britain: a study in pressure group politics* (London, Merlin Press, 2005), p. 20

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Through Sharpeville, it had become ever clearer to a critical Western world that in an era of African decolonisation and general liberalism, South Africa was moving in the opposite direction.

The Armed Struggle

As a prologue to the 1970s, the 1960s were also marked by the transition to what has become characterised as the liberation movement strategy of armed struggle. Principally, the military wing of the ANC, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* or the MK ('The Spear of the Nation') was established in November, 1961, and this marked a shift from the ANC's policy of non-violence to one of an armed struggle. Among other participants as well as later scholars, Joe Slovo, a member of the South African Communist Party's Central Committee, has claimed that the SACP played a large role in propelling this shift[40].

The MK formally started its sabotage campaign on the 16th of December 1961 when it bombed the Department of Bantu Education offices in Durban, followed by an explosion at the Department of Bantu Affairs in Johannesburg. Following these, there were 200 more attacks on government infrastructure and on policemen or informants during the following 18 months[41].

Inspired by the ideology of the SACP, by 1962 new MK recruits were being taught to view white South Africa as an imperialist nation and black South Africa as a colonised country, forming the exploitative basis upon which the wealth of white South Africans was derived from the political, economic and social disenfranchisement of black South Africans[42]. Meanwhile, the series of low-key acts of sabotage and bomb attacks continued for a while, on an intermittent basis. Although the power of the state was never seriously threatened, for the NP government the menace of the *swart gevaar* was brought into focus as a threat to the security and stability of the political order.

In response, Pretoria's police and army generals drew on the experiences of the French in Algeria and America in Vietnam, and began to re-fashion and re-train the security forces. The security forces made increasing use of surveillance and were aided by new legislation, such as

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[40] Anthea Jefferey, *People's war: New light on the struggle for South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, 2009), p. 4
[41] Anthea Jefferey, *People's war: New light on the struggle for South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, 2009), p. 4
[42] Anthea Jefferey, *People's war: New light on the struggle for South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, 2009), pp.4-5

the new law which allowed them to detain people for up to 90 days without trial, under which prisoners could be held in isolation, with abuse and torture being condoned by the authorities.[43]

These developments naturally undermined the earlier positive and peaceable picture of apartheid that the NP had been wanting to project to the rest of the world, and the government of South Africa was now having to come to terms with increasingly adverse opinion from many fronts – there was an emerging battle that needed to be fought and won, so that the outside world would again view the country as a place of order and peaceful harmony.

State Reactions

The obvious measure to mention at this point is the 1963 Sabotage Act which extended the powers of the already stringent security legislation. Drafted in a deliberately vague way, it made provision for a range of actions that could be defined as being against the nation, while being widened to encompass acts of terrorism and treason under the umbrella-banner of sabotage[44].

Secondly, the penalties for breaches of the Security Act were severe, from statutory minimum terms of imprisonment up to the death penalty, along with lesser penalties of house arrest or banning for political offences[45]. Under subsequent legislation, offenders could be detained for up to 180 days and in 1967 indefinite detention was introduced under the Terrorism Act. [46]

Prior to this, there had been an international outcry over the arraignment on treason charges and conviction of Nelson Mandela and other leaders in the Rivonia trials, in which proceedings received considerable world press coverage. In Britain, to cite one example, there were 28 demonstrations in various parts of the country on the day of the verdict. Apart from this, there were various marches to, and picketing protests outside, the South African embassy in London.[47]

International projection of propaganda in support of apartheid.

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[43] Anthea Jefferey, *People's war: New light on the struggle for South Africa* (Jonathan Ball, 2009), p. 5

[44] David Welsh, *The rise and fall of apartheid* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball publishers, 2009), p. 76

[45] David Welsh, *The rise and fall of apartheid* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball publishers, 2009), p. 76

[46] David Welsh, *The rise and fall of apartheid* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball publishers, 2009), p. 78

[47] Roger Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid, a history of the movement in Britain: a study in pressure group politics* (London, Merlin Press, 2005), p. 53

On an international level, the South African Foundation (SAF) was established and developed after Sharpeville in 1960 to market a positive image of South Africa, and to advance and protect its interests. According to Eschel Rhoodie, who became secretary of the Department of Information in July 1972, the SAF was trying to accomplish on a private basis, what the Department of Information was trying to accomplish on an official basis[48]. Chapter 5 will elaborate further on the activities of Dr. Rhoodie and the South African Foundation, but for initial purposes, a brief description is needed here.

In principle, the SAF claimed that it did not necessarily endorse the views of any particular political party or entity, but instead stood for a patriotic defence of the status quo of the day on the international front. Its ideological purpose was to show that the system of apartheid worked for the benefit of all races, and while in doing so, it took efforts to try to minimise damaging incidents of petty apartheid in the hope of dampening the international anti-apartheid critique. [49]

There were never any official ties between the SAF and the Department of Information, according to the Minister of Information, Dr. Connie Mulder, but they always worked together in co-operation on the basis of shared interests and informal ties[50]. Later, however, a substantive link between the private business organisation and the government would be uncovered.

Internationally, the SAF worked with like-minded and sympathetic organisations to help to promote South Africa's image. In Britain, the SAF worked along with the *United Kingdom – South Africa Foundation* (UKSATA). In West Germany, the Foundation had strong ties with the Deutsch-*Sudafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DSAG), and it appears that this organisation was partially funded by both the SAF as well as the Department of Information. In Holland, the SAF worked closely with the *Jan van Riebeeck Stichting*, which also received funds from the Foundation. In

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[48] Julian Burgess et al ., *The white hoax: South Africa's international propaganda machine* (London, Africa Bureau, 1977), p. 24

[49] Julian Burgess et al ., *The white hoax: South Africa's international propaganda machine* (London, Africa Bureau, 1977), p.24-25

[50] Julian Burgess et al ., *The white hoax: South Africa's international propaganda machine* (London, Africa Bureau, 1977), p. 24

France, the Foundation worked alongside the *Comite France-Afrique du Sud,* and in Switzerland, the SAF was associated with the Swiss-South Africa Association[51].

This shows something of the extent of Pretoria's gathering efforts to counter international criticism. The reach of the SAF was also further extended by the production and distribution of various complimentary publications, such as the monthly magazine, *South Africa international*, which was sent to over 9000 people judged to be influential and favourable towards the Republic. The Foundation also distributed *The South African Foundation News* to all of its members, as well as to academic institutions, politicians and journalists[52] .

The development of an organisation such as the South African Foundation, and the existence of its foreign subsidiaries or associations, serves as confirmation that the global climate of the 1960s and afterwards was increasingly unfavourable for the National Party's ideologies and policies. In that defensive context, it also became increasingly clear that the SAF was a propaganda apparatus, designed not simply to spread overt propaganda, but also to conceal unpleasant realities, so that the projection of South Africa as a country rested on what could be called 'lies of omission'.

The following chapters will build on this introductory political landscape in order to try to facilitate a more complete picture of the various propaganda enterprises. First, however, some examination of the theory behind this study is required, and we turn to this in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

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[51] Julian Burgess et al., *The white hoax: South Africa's international propaganda machine* (London, Africa Bureau, 1977), p. 24.

[52] Julian Burgess et al ., *The white hoax: South Africa's international propaganda machine* (London, Africa Bureau, 1977), p. 26

Theoretical Patterns

'Nationalism arises under the iniquity of foreign oppression and exploitation, and provides a powerful instrument for the demolition of existing imperial structures. From the point of view of political evolution, it can be regarded as a negative factor only if large political units are held to be essential to the stability of the international order...it is a positive factor inasmuch as it may provide the brick and mortar necessary for the construction of new and stable political units'.[53]

2.1: Introduction

The introductory chapter gave some insight into those events of the 1960s that shaped the decade, and became the watershed moments in South African history which opened up the Republic to sustained criticism from outside. The following discussion will aim at grounding this study in theoretical terms.

Two main conceptual elements which inform this thesis are, firstly, the notion of a maturing nationalist movement as well as the theory of broader nationalism and, secondly, the theory of propaganda and the manipulation of 'hearts and minds'.

A first consideration is the nature and theory of nationalism, and how it functions practically in a society. Secondly, the history, theory and patterns of propaganda come into focus, and need to be explored, as well as the modernization of propaganda. Lastly, the uses of modern mass media will be discussed as a sub-category of the dissemination of propaganda.

In order to understand the historical essence of National Party politics and its government propaganda, it can be illuminating for an examination such as this to consider whether the patterns exhibited by the case of apartheid-ruled South Africa can be viewed as having been similar to, or different from, other movements, seen broadly.

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[53] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood Press, 1970), p. 74

The theory and pattern of nationalism

This section will examine the theory and pattern of nationalism, especially those elements relevant to the Afrikaner people in South Africa. While mindful of the need to avoid what at times is a common confusion of nationalism with general patriotism, what is of importance here is to consider the nature of nationalism within the context of 'constructed' or 'imagined' new communities in the modern historical era.

Of most analytical relevance is the idea of a people's 'awakening', due to certain external stimuli which create favourable circumstances for nationalist movements to emerge. Equally, ideas about the maintenance and protection of nationalism, or of the defence of specific nationalist movements, are particularly pertinent to any study of the so-called struggle of the Afrikaner people.

Definition and nature

Before continuing, one must first have a short-hand understanding of what is meant by the notion of 'nation' or 'state', as this is the concept around which nationalism is created. While the definition of nationalism is varying in nature, for the sake of this work the following definition is apt:

> 'Nationalism is the active solidarity of a larger human collectivity which shares a common culture, or a common fund of significant experiences and interests, conceives of itself as a nation and strives for political unity and self-government'. [54]

Thus, by nationalism one could point to those modern 'national- patriotic' movements born from both the First and the Second World Wars, which ignited and spread nationalism around the globe. In Africa and Asia, the various forms of nationalist movements were a reaction to a disturbance in the way of life of societies.[55] Historically, nationalism is imbued with two of the great ideas that have changed the modern world, according to Barbara Ward. The first of these is the idea that humankind was able to be propelled into the modern political era without the

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[54] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 1

[55] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 73

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daunting challenge of going slowly from an agricultural society towards a technologically advanced society. The second idea is that nationalism made democracy possible by means of the creation of a sense of a shared national community.[56]

On the other hand, the three negative features of nationalism are:

- It is not quite capable of assuring cohesion inside the state, if the state contains minorities;

- It is not able to confront creatively the modern world in which various states must exist in inescapable proximity and economic interdependence;

- It is not able to function as the 'master' institution of a new economic universe.

Clearly, then, nationalism as a movement which looks inward, only at those who are central to its constituency, cannot be expected to be free of limitations and weaknesses. This is especially the case in the modern political world, where interdependence and the integrating force of the capitalist world economy dominate all existence.

At the same time, the insular force of nationalism cannot be discounted, given the depth of its historical development through being awakened and fostered by a positive, although more often, a negative pressure. In general terms, Symmons (1970), considers this to be a 'positive and creative response to the shattering impact of culture contact and conflict, to the threat of cultural annihilation.'[57] Examples of this can be found in South Africa, where the denigration associated with white domination of black people led to the emergence of a wide-reaching black consciousness movement, and in the power which the British exerted over the Afrikaner people; coupled to a history marked by resentment of imperial domination and the violence of war, these pressures helped to fuel the rise of Afrikaner nationalism.

Patterns of nationalism

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[56] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), pp. 73 - 74

[57] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 18

The psychology or *mentalite* of nationalism can be seen as being comprised of ambiguous elements, with the more serious, abrupt and intolerable the change to a people's way of life, the more radical their nationalist protest is likely to be.[58] This is illuminated well in the following extract:

> 'Nationalist movements originate and develop when something that is dear to a given people - their language or customs - is forcibly taken away from them, or when they suddenly realise the immense cruelty and injustice of some such past expropriation. Modern nationalism...is often critical of the weakness of its own native heritage and thus tends to be reformist in its goals...but the fundamental belief is that its own way of life is as good as any other and deserves to persist and flourish.'[59]

When a nationalist movement begins to blossom, power, education and a shared cultural history will shape the material available to nationalist makers or entrepreneurs in the task of mobilisation. If the project is successful, and the subsequent circumstances favourable, the ascending new group might set up a new state in its own image or identity, or reinvent an existing nation-state as its own. The resulting state has major advantages for the interests of the so-called *awakers*, and in due course to many of those who are able to become bearers of the new presiding culture. The path of those who are not a part of the new imagined socio-cultural state face certain options, including assimilation, emigration, the status of an excluded or a downtrodden minority, or even, in extreme circumstances, of being eradicated completely [60].

This 'typology' conforms well to the three - stage pattern of nationalist development laid out by classic writers such as Rupert Emerson. Firstly, it can encompass a xenophobic defence of the existing order. Secondly, it can entail a period of uncritical self - humiliation and the acceptance of an existing order. Lastly, it can involve the germination of a nationalist synthesis. Although

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[58] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 5

[59] N Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), nationalist movements, a comparative view, p. 5

[60] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), pp. 97-98

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this is clearly not applicable to all nationalist movements, it is of some use in the case of examining nationalist movements which represent a reaction to conquest.[61]

The collective 'awakening' of a group is seen as the first phase of a nationalist movement, tied to the idea that the subordinated group is reacting to an oppressive stimulus and, subsequently, falls back on its heritage and culture to provide the fuel that it needs to rediscover or to reinvent a past and a culture. For scholars such as Symmons, the so-called awakening occurs through two linked collective activities which are both undertaken by intellectuals. Historically, it is almost invariably the intellectual middle classes who provide influential nationalist leadership.[62] Through the utilisation of historical truths, half-truths, over-exaggerations and inventions, national myths serve to foster a sense of nationhood, the idea of citizenship, and of a specific people's exclusive ethnic history.

The limitations of nationalism in the modernising world

As is implicit from the preceding discussion, history shows that the impact of nationalism is marked by contradictions and limitations. Scholars of the theory of nationalism have pointed to three problematic factors. The first of these is ethnic nationalism's lack of ability to guarantee stability in a country or nation-state in which an identifiable minority or distinctive minorities are excluded.[63] Nationalist exclusion and alienation of a section of society creates an opposition. In the case of South Africa, it was, of course, a question of a nationalist racial minority leaving a subordinated majority outside.

The second flaw is the difficulty that nationalism confronts in the modern world where one state has to exist in proximity to another on the basis of economic interdependence.[64] Strongly inward-looking nationalism can lead to problems in relying on, and sharing with, other nation states. Lastly, then, extreme nationalism does not function well as the primary force of countries which

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[61] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 18

[62] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 23

[63] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 73

[64] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 73

constitute the modern world's economic system.[65] Whatever the insistence on, or claims of, civic or ethnic nationalism, the realities of the contemporary 'world economy' goes against any notion of every country for itself, for (outside of the odd extreme case of nationalist self-isolation) nation-states can only sustain themselves on the basis of economic interdependence and other relations of mutual exchange. In the case of an apartheid nationalist South Africa, its years of defensive struggles, all the way up to 1994, were endured on the basis of the maintenance of a white nationalism, under which virttually all morally and ethically discriminatory actions of the government could be justified.

2.3: Theory of Propaganda

While propaganda can be defined in many different ways, in one classic book definition of propaganda as the planned formation of 'man's attitudes', the author concludes that it is, "the expressions of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with the view to influencing the opinions and actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends and through psychological manipulations"[66]. This implies a stealthy or even a sinister-sounding phenomenon, although propaganda did not always carry a perceived negative connotation, as in earlier centuries in early modern Catholic Europe, when a Congregation of Propaganda served simply to 'propagate' the mission of Christian enlightenment through the planting of fresh shoots or believers.

This study rests on an understanding of the underlying theory of its subject matter to assist in contextualising it. First, briefly, a few words on its history before the modernisation and practical uses of propaganda will be examined.

History and description

On the most basic level, the act of human communication is the attempt to convey meaning or information through symbolic interaction[67]. Thus, communication is a process of exchange and people engage in it when they attempt to understand the world in which they find themselves. What might be termed informative communication is a transaction which can transcend doubt

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[65] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 74
[66] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (USA, Vintage Books, 1973), P. xii
[67] Garth S Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, eds, *Propaganda & persuasion* (London, Sage publications, 2012), p. 30

and scepticism due to the limited language being used to convey the information. It is a process of communication that seeks to create mutual understanding about data that is seen by recipients as accurate and indisputable[68]. In other words, these types of communication purport to be about 'simple' facts and figures, without any suspicion of their having an alternative meaning, or some hidden agenda.

Propaganda employs informative communication in a similar fashion, but with one important difference. The propagandistically-driven user of informative communication seeks to move past mutually agreed understanding to promote a partisan or counter-cause that serves the calculated interest of the purveyor. In this duplicitous scenario, the receiver may believe that the communication is simply informative in nature, whereas it is, of course, deliberately manipulative propaganda[69].

Once propaganda came to be used systematically as a political tool in times of war, it acquired an explicitly underhand or even sinister connotation, due to the fact that warring political elites use[d] lies, atrocity stories and subterfuge in an ideological offensive to try to influence the final outcome[70]. The next section will consider how the modern producers of propaganda focus on the vulnerable aspects of their opponents during wartime or in periods of political unrest.

Modernisation of propaganda

Although the institutionalisation of propaganda was linked most heavily to war, the mechanisms through which it came to be a popular, genuinely mass medium, go back to the later 19th and early 20th centuries, an era marked by a great propagandising expansion. Technological advances now made it possible to reach ever wider audiences, and was soon being used not only to convey information informatively, but also very persuasively.

While European newspapers and commercial news sheets enjoyed only a limited circulation in the earlier 19th century, later progress in education and literacy, and improvements in transport and distribution, eased the flow of information between geographically distant areas, and made it

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[68] Garth S Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, eds, *Propaganda & persuasion* (London, Sage publications, 2012), p. 31

[69] Garth S Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, eds, *Propaganda & persuasion* (London, Sage publications, 2012), p. 31

[70] Magedah E. Shabo, *Techniques of propaganda and persuasion* (USA, Prestwick house, 2008), p. 11

possible for controlled mass message communication to take hold[71]. Alongside this, two new historical phenomena emerged, the new audience and the emergence of mass society.

For the first time, it was possible to reach large, heterogeneous groups of people and to disseminate information reasonably rapidly to a growing audience of working- and middle-class readers who had the means to afford daily newspapers on a daily basis – they, of course, made up the so-called 'new' audience[72]. With local news and entertainment alongside politics and socio-economic information, the press played a role in creating a sense of social commonality, in which its audience was aware that they were a part of a distinctive community with shared values and opinions. The emergence of this kind of shared audience experience facilitated the working of explicit propaganda to function effectively, being targeted at a specific level, at a specific group.[73]

Practical uses of propaganda

Naturally, political propaganda involves techniques of influence being employed by a government, political party, an administration, or a pressure group within a state or in general society. The range of methods employed are methodical and calculated, and the anticipated goals are clearly distinguishable and precise[74]. Along with the specific targeting of the right audience for the right message, the mode of propaganda is critical. Jacques Ellul suggests that each method has its own merits and drawbacks. Films and human contact or other direct connections are best for messages of a sociological scope in periods of slow, all-encompassing change. By contrast, public meetings, art, pamphlets and posters are some of the most effective ways of communicating shock and intensity, although the impact fades quickly[75].

Effective propaganda campaigns generally originate from within a strong, centralised, decision-making authority that also produces a consistent message throughout an organisation. Its organisational head and campaign leader would, then, also be a strong, authoritative figure[76]. The

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[71] Magedah E. Shabo, *Techniques of propaganda and persuasion* (USA, Prestwick house, 2008), p. 11
[72] Garth S Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, eds, *Propaganda & persuasion* (London, Sage publications, 2012), p. 98
[73] Garth S Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, eds, *Propaganda & persuasion* (London, Sage publications, 2012), p. 98
[74] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (USA, Vintage Books, 1973), p. 62
[75] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (USA, Vintage Books, 1973), p.10
[76] Garth S Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, eds, *Propaganda & persuasion* (London, Sage publications, 2012), p. 293

leader or the organization would, in due course, also choose a target audience which is perceived to be susceptible to its message or dialogue[77].

In essence, propaganda can be split up into four broad areas. The first of these is psychological action, where the propagandist seeks to modify opinions and actions by purely psychological means, and through also addressing audiences in a purportedly 'educative manner'. Secondly, when constructed as psychological warfare, the propagandist's opponent is a foreign adversary whose beliefs and opinions are targeted to be devalued or destroyed by means of psychological methods[78].

Thirdly, re-education and brainwashing is where previous adversaries are turned into allies. The last area of propaganda is public and human relations, where agencies and departments strive to try to create conformity and to try to adapt the individual to a society or to a certain pre-approved living or working standard[79].

The important thing for the propaganda makers or exponents is that all messages or approaches need to be used in combination with one other, filling in gaps and thus encircling the recipient from all angles. In that sense, propaganda seeks to engulf a society in all of its life experience, to impose a prepared brand of 'intuitive' knowledge about the world and the surroundings in which inhabitants find themselves. The generation of ideas and myths to make up 'commonplace' or 'everyday' meanings for people who are influenced and governed for periods of time, are usually free of seriously divergent and multiple opinions[80]. This is especially true of phases of war or extreme crisis when multiple ideas within a society open up fissures that may be exploited by an enemy or an ideological opponent.

2.4: Mass media in the nation or state

This section will briefly discuss the role and function that the mass media performs in a society, an issue of obvious importance as it represents the modern medium of the propaganda enterprise – newspapers, magazines, television services, and so on. The question for the influence exercised

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[77] Garth S Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, eds, *Propaganda & persuasion* (London, Sage publications, 2012), p. 293

[78] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (USA, Vintage Books, 1973), pxiii

[79] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (USA, Vintage Books, 1973), p.xiii

[80] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (USA, Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 10-11

by mass media is that of the appearance of an assumed 'authenticity' in terms of trustworthiness, in the sense of providing a basis for the working of strategic or practical propaganda.

Consequently, there are four main 'functional' categories of mass media or mass communication. The first is to supply the news, or to report on the environment in a tone of constructed neutrality. Secondly, there is the supply of commentaries or opinions on prominent events or issues which take the form of editorials or columnist perspectives. Thirdly, there is the notion of education, whether in a formal or informal context and, lastly, the purveying of pure, unadulterated entertainment.[81]

The following elaboration from *Mass Communication Theory* by Dennis McQuail is particularly significant for the study of South African National Party propaganda for the protection of the Afrikaner Nationalist state. McQuail defines a co-called 'Authoritarian theory' as a condition in which the media is subordinate to the state's authority, where journalists do not have complete freedom, and where they may be forced into conformity by the authorities. These circumstances either rationalise self-censorship, or lead to punishment for deviations from the rules which prescribe the limits of coverage.

The propositions of this theory are five-fold, the first of which is that the state's authority ought not to be undermined, and indeed, secondly, that the content of communications ought to be subordinate to the state's authority. Then, it should not give any offence to the popularly prescribed or dominant political and moral values of the wider state, while fourthly, censorship is justified on the basis of conserving the established order. Lastly, any offence against the state's principles or deviations from its official policies on media conduct should amount to a criminal offence.[82]

While there are other models and theories on the state-media link, for the purposes of this study, this reading can be applied to the example of ruling South African politics and the media during the 1960s and the later 1970s.

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[81] Magedah E. Shabo, *Techniques of propaganda and persuasion* (USA, Prestwick house, 2008), p. 14

[82] Dennis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory: An introduction* (USA, Sage publications, 1994), pp. 85-86

2.5: Concluding remarks:

A few key points arise from the preceding discussion which have a specific bearing on the subject of this study. The first is a theoretical interpretation of nationalism, which can be summarised as: 'the active solidarity of a larger human collective which shares a common culture, or a common fund of significant experiences and interests, conceives of itself as a nation and strives for political unity and self-governance.'[83]

This definition is historically appropriate for the modern Afrikaner people and their nationalistic rise to power. Two of the important deductions that arise from the general definition and application of nationalist theory can be linked, firstly, to the idea that great oppression or injustice on a political or economic level against a socio - ethnic group causes nationalist movements. Secondly, there is the notion that for the resultant nationalist movements', 'their ...own way of life is as good as any other and deserves to flourish.'[84]

Put simply, the Afrikaner people who were dominated by the British, socially and politically as well as economically, were stimulated into resisting, pushing for self-determination, and into 'nationalising' their culture. It is, equally, the case that Afrikaner nationalism was, after the initial historical stimuli, hammered into dominance by various social and economic structures. Thus, through nationalism, a new culture characterised by Calvinist, Christian morals and ethics, needed to be maintained. The maintenance of nationalism from the outset required various ideological tools, such as censorship, manipulation of information, and general propaganda.

This, then, brings one to the second theoretical aspect which is, of course, the conceptualisation of propaganda. Theoretically, propaganda can be defined as:

> 'The expressions of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with the view to influence the opinions and actions of other individuals or group for predetermined ends and through psychological manipulations.'[85]

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[83] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p.1

[84] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood press, 1970), p. 6

[85] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (USA, Vintage Books, 1973), p. xii

Within this description, the important facets are the idea of influencing the opinions and actions of others in an organised fashion. This can be done in one of two ways, one being strategic, and the other, tactical. The first method, the strategic mode, is used to establish a more general, difficult and long term manipulation campaign, the second method is to achieve easier and more immediate results. [86]

Major propaganda processes are usually more prevalent in those countries with strong, centralised and authoritarian governments, and subsequently the messages being circulated thoughout the population are also both constant and similar throughout the various power structures of the state. The other important point to emerge from this theoretical discussion is that of the notion of an understanding of the use of media within a nation or a state. Within this model, the government seeks either to influence and steer, or to control, the press, other media, and various other forms of public information. There, the proclaimed ideological basis is not for the simple sake of control per se, but rather for the alleged protection of a nation's moral, ethnic and cultural values. Thus, this emphasises self-censorship for the sake of the 'welfare' of the nation as a whole.[87]

This specific theory, as defined by Denis McQuail, has specific relevance for the South African case study of propaganda and persuasion, to borrow the title from a book edited by Gareth S. Jowett[88]. The following chapter, concerned with censorship, will seek to illustrate its relevance, particularly when taking into account the manner in which South Africa's ruling party sought to preserve its vision of what constituted the moral integrity of the nation.

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[86] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (USA, Vintage Books, 1973), p.62

[87] Dennis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory: An introduction* (USA, Sage publications, 1994), pp. 85-86

[88] *Propaganda and Persuasion, the fifth edition* is perhaps one of the more modern and complete bodies of literature on the topic, although it is very much Americanised in its use of examples as it was for the Library of Congress Cataloging - in - Publication Data.

Chapter 3

Safeguarding Afrikaner principles

'From the early 1960s until about 1980, the Republic of South Africa operated one of the most comprehensive censorship systems in the world. Called in official parlance not censorship but "publications control" (censorship was a word that it preferred to censor from public discourse about itself), it sought to control the dissemination of signs in whatever form'[89]

3.1: Introduction

In order to engineer what for South African society was perceived to be feasible and acceptable, a large and elaborate propaganda machine needed to be built and, at its foundation, lay the processes of censorship. Propaganda was not just about changing the headlines, or transforming a story, it was also about what was left out of the public eye, and thus it could also be seen as a contrived lie of omission. The above quote from the world-renowned South African author, J.M Coetzee, very clearly depicts the basis of the censorship system that the Republic of South Africa had at its disposal. This chapter aims to examine this system against the backdrop of Afrikaner nationalism as sketched briefly in the previous sections, in order to provide a picture of the government's perspective on what its 'machine' was protecting the public against.

Christopher Merrett has emphasised that one of the characteristics of censorship in post-World War II South Africa is its longevity, from the early 1950s with the Suppression of Communism Act, all the way through to F.W. de Klerk's famous opening address to parliament in 1990.[90] In other words, censorship could be seen as a backbone for the constant maintenance of NP values throughout the history of the apartheid government.

In a white minority-dominated society, there were three reasons to employ censorship. The most important and overarching of these was the suppression of information about the repressive tactics employed to maintain and strengthen the politico-economic status quo in South Africa.[91]

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[89] J. M. Coetee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, university of Chicago press, 1996), p. 34

[90] Christopher Merrett, *a Culture of censorship: secrecy and intellectual repression in South Africa* (South Africa, David Phillip Publishing, 1994), p. 2

[91] Christopher Merrett, *a Culture of censorship: secrecy and intellectual repression in South Africa* (South Africa, David Phillip Publishing, 1994), p. 3

The accompanying other two reasons, which had similar socio - political dimensions, will also be considered in relation to some of the banned and censored literary works as examples of undesirable or subversive influences.

In this approach, not only the reasoning for the censorship system will be explored, but also the mechanisms employed by the state in order to to try to achieve a national goal of contrived omission. Finally, the effects of censorship not only on the people of South Africa, but more specifically on those Afrikaans authors who helped to build the Afrikaner culture and language, will be viewed against the backdrop of spreading international modernity, and efforts to deal with consequent fissures in the pressurised nationalist 'laager'.

3.2: Censorship and Publishing

The rise of Afrikaner print media and allied publishers was central to the process of censorship, and to the impact and workings of the 1957 Cronje Report which formed its crucial foundation. The importance of modern Afrikaner media has its obvious roots in the rise of the Afrikaner 'people's movement as an independent political entity, and in the subsequent use of political power to control the limits of a 'free' mass media. Before moving to the Cronje Report, the basis of state censorship in South Africa, a very brief background history of the Afrikaner press requires some discussion, as it was part of a structure erected to mould and to maintain the interests of a *Boerevolk*.

The history of *Die Burger* and other related Afrikaans newspapers, as well as of those involved with these enterprises, shows that the lines between private companies and government influence was conveniently blurred under the rule of the National Party. When the Cronje report (to be discussed later) was commissioned, there was already a substantial foundation of Afrikaner media to help with its suggested changes, and to serve on the terms set out by its proposed policies.

Afrikaner newspapers

The Afrikaner nationalists were in the fortunate position that they had been dominating Afrikaans - language news publishers for decades before the Cronje Report came out. Typically, the *Nasionale Pers* founded *De Burger* (changed to *Die Burger* in 1922), as a paper intended to

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be a mouthpiece of the National Party for in the Cape, with D.F Malan as its editor. [92] Malan would, of course, later become a leading champion of Afrikaner nationalism and the prime minister of South Africa, but he was already at the time a leading nationalist thinker and activist.[93]

During the First World War (1914 – 1918) *De Burger* had to be wary of provoking the authorities as the country was under martial law and the newspaper was suspected of having pro-German leanings. That aside, *De Burger* was a nationalist propaganda tool from the start, with Malan using the newspaper to the party's advantage and working to make it, 'the shield and sword of Afrikanerdom.'[94]

As an early forerunner of the later Department of Information's propaganda magazines and sponsored newspapers, the *Burger's* approach to news coverage was suggestive of an aspect of the history of what would subsequently become state-approved press enterprise. Initially, as a newspaper with partisan political views it did not serve as a medium of imposed censorship, but of course, by deliberately overlooking certain news matters within the Union, or political affairs that were antithetical to its nationalistic goals, the paper could be seen as conducting itself on the basis of a highly selective form of what constituted news coverage.

There are a number of examples of Boer/Afrikaner newspapers in earlier history, which have made use of the same type of 'internal' or 'self' censorship as mentioned above; during the 1899-1902 South African War, the Transvaal's *De Volkstem* is one example among others.[95]

As mentioned previously, Malan broke away from the Hertzog-Smuts bloc to create the Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party, with one consequence being that the the Hertzog party no longer had the support of the Nasionale Pers, although it still had the support of the Afrikaanse Pers in

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[92] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phill, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p. 40

[93] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under atack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. 44

[94] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under atack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. 44

[95] Fransjohan Pretorius, "Boer propaganda during the South African War of 1899 – 1902," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, no. 3 (2009): 401

the Transvaal[96]. At the same time, Malan's National Party needed its own regional mouthpiece and this led to the creation of *Voortrekker Pers* in 1936, and subsequently to the emergence of the daily paper, *Die Transvaler*.

H.F. Verwoerd was made its editor and, much like Malan, he used his press voice to promote the National Party, making the paper a strident supporter of segregation and propagating the idea of a Boer Republic, not only to separate Afrikaners from the black population, but also from the English population.[97] Then, in 1965, nationalists in the Cape created the Sunday paper, *Die Beeld* in the Transvaal, despite competitive opposition from local nationalists in that province. After this, in an attempt to unify the varied nationalist ventures, *Die Beeld*, *Dagbreek* and *Landstem* merged to form the Sunday paper, *Die Rapport* in 1970[98].

The significance of this is that the various echelons of Afrikaner nationalists and sympathisers established themselves as a dominant presence in the South African news publishing industry. Dr. Verwoerd was the editor of the *Transvaler*, earlier, D.F Malan had been the editor of *De Burger*, Afrikaans Pers was controlled or owned by figures such as Verwoerd, Jan de Klerk (the father of ex-president F.W. de Klerk) and Dr. Ben Havenga. Although all these figures did not necessarily see eye to eye on all political matters, for the most part Afrikaner newspapers were established for nationalist purposes of various degrees and levels of intensity. As Hachten and Giffard have put it in relation to the Afrikaans press:

> "The Afrikaans press was a creation of Afrikaner political aspirations, established by the National Party to spread its message and strengthen its power base...not a single Nationalist paper began as a commercial venture. They were intended to sell not so much as a party line...the press was subservient to the needs of the party."[99]

Malan and his National Party won the 1948 election following a fierce battle between Anglo-centred newspapers and those in the hands of the nationalists; while the outcome of this electoral

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[96] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phill, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p. 40

[97] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under attack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. 45

[98] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phill, Stellenbosch University, 1997), pp. 40-41

[99] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under attack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. 179

contest was naturally decided by certain political events and a range of political factors, in the popular mobilisation of the electorate, one of the major contributors to the National Party victory was through the backing of a 'dedicated press and some brilliant cartoonists that they won the propaganda battle.'[100]

In effect, the task embarked on by the post-1948 Cronje Report in the ensuing discussion would be made somewhat easier as the ruling party already had the power of a large section of the press at its disposal. The foundation of authoritarian control as created by early Afrikaner, pro - National Party newspapers streamlined attempts at later state censorship and publication control. In this, the dissemination of information, or disinformation in the case of censorship, was facilitated by channels which lay at hand. Discussion now turns to the so - called Cronje Report which was to become the blueprint for the Publication Acts of both 1963 and later in 1974.

The Cronje Report: The foundation of censorship in South Africa

The writer, J.M. Coetzee, has drawn a comparative link between the Soviet Union which supposedly had 70 000 bureaucrats for every 7000 authors within Russia's state censorship programme, and South Africa which, he asserted, had a ratio of at least ten to each author.[101] In this context, the first question is to establish the origins of the censorship programme, or, by its approved name, the Publications and Entertainment Act, and what its functions were.

In 1954, a commission of inquiry into 'Undesirable Publications' was launched by the Nationalist government under the leadership of D.F. Malan. The inquiry was a reaction into an earlier 1954 court case concerning a publication about prostitution in not one, but two Afrikaans magazines. In South Africa of the 1950s, this was, naturally, not the kind of subject that could be left to go unchecked. The inquiry was also designed to address continuing concerns about pornography that had been expressed by various church groups during the 1930s and 1940s.

Historically, the church was a major element of the culture of the Afrikaner *Volk*. Ever since the Battle of Blood River of 1838, and the creation of the blood covenant and other nationalist mythologies, including the notion that the Afrikaner people were God's chosen people on the

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[100] Rodney Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: a Modern History* (UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p.252.

[101] J. M. Coetee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, university of Chicago press, 1996), p. 34

African continent, the vast majority of Afrikaners had been governing their life according to the precepts of the Church. The social engineering politics of the National Party fitted smoothly into this arena of institutional life. Malan himself, was, of course, a former cleric of the N*ederduits Gereformeerde Kerk* (NGK) and was attentive to the church's pleas. It also made for a good political platform on which to campaign, helping to further cement the clear link between the mainstream Afrikaner church and Nationalist politics in South Africa. [102]

This foundation effectively laid the groundwork for what would later become the apartheid government's censorship system or, in other words, the blueprint for both the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963, and the subsequently amended version of 1974. When the commission's deliberations were subsequently published, they surprised many even within the government, let alone civil society, with their draconian tone, and further action was shelved for three years until 1960.[103]

In 1960, there was a move towards a Publications and Entertainment Act in order to facilitate more stringent censorship, but it was shelved by the Minister of the Interior. After some more back and forth between lobbyists for state censorship, the modified 1963 Publications and Entertainment Act (No. 26 of 1963) was finally voted in.[104] The above-mentioned Publications Commission's task was to review and to regulate both local and international literature; this could also be viewed as a structure which supported the Nationalist government's larger ideological aims at the time[105].

Geoffrey Cronje

The commission was led by Geoffrey Cronje (1907 – 1992) who was at the time a professor of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. Cronje had studied at the University of Stellenbosch, like many of the apartheid-era Afrikaner leaders, and had then furthered his studies abroad in the Netherlands and Germany[106]. By taking a brief biographical look at the person who would

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[102] Peter M. McDonald, *The literature police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (NYC Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 22

[103] Alex Hepple, *Press under apartheid* (London, London International Defence and Aid Fund, 1974), p. 15

[104] Alex Hepple, *Press under apartheid* (London, London International Defence and Aid Fund, 1974), p. 15

[105] Peter M. McDonald, *The literature police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (NYC Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 22

[106] J. M. Coetzee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, University of Chicago press, 1996), p. 1

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oversee the blueprint for the censorship system of South Africa, one can better contextualise and understand the work of the commission that followed.

As touched on earlier in the introduction, the scholarly work of Geoffrey Cronje was instrumental in informing some of the theoretical aspects of apartheid - in fact, many of the titles of his first works contained the word *apartheid,* and in their thematic scope addressed what Cronje saw as the problems which South Africa was facing with regard to its complex race relations.[107]

An avid member of the *Afrikaner Broederbond*, Cronje was viewed as one of the leading apartheid ideologues of the 1940s and onwards, with Hermann Giliomee concluding that he was one of the most nationalistic academics of his time. This, then, equipped him well to function as a ideologue of the Nationalist government's larger intellectual programme for South Africa[108]. His extreme racial nationalist beliefs were scarcely surprising. Having been born into a post-South African War country, opportunities for educated Afrikaner advancement were dominated by the church and by expanding state service. For the academically-inclined like Cronje, the logical avenue of interest and expertise became the questions of ethnicity and of Afrikaner Nationalism as a concept [109].

Cronje's first book, titled 'n *Tuiste vir die Nageslag* (1945), was dedicated to his wife and all other women depicted as *Afrikanermoeders*. The *Volksmoeder* or *Afrikanermoeder* as Cronje termed them, was constructed as the matriarchal protector of the Afrikaner nation. The *Afrikanermoeder* functioned mythically as the figure who would strive to keep the Afrikaner nation's bloodline pure through maintaining an exclusive culture, and would thus never consent to any mixing of ethnic bloodlines. In its theme of the need to guard against mixing, the book attempted to address what Cronje saw as two of the problems of modern South Africa, those being the problem of the position of the 'native' or the *naturel*, and that of the 'Coloured' or the *Kleurling*. [110]

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[107] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 13

[108] Peter M. McDonald, *The literature police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (NYC Oxford University Press, 2009), P. 23

[109] J. M. Coetzee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 168

[110] J. M. Coetzee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 168

Basically, Cronje argued that these groups, especially the latter, were the most dangerous to the *Boerevolk* as they posed the peril of a mixing of the bloodlines and this would have meant the general collapse of a 'pure' Afrikaner society. Blatant, pseudo-scientific racism aside, what one needs to consider is that the man who took the lead in the Report of the Commission of Enquiry in Regard to Undesirable Publications not only held such strong feelings, but also had a strong following. This Commission reported on its deliberations before 1960, before going on to form the foundations of the later censorship efforts by the NP government.

Structure and aim of the commission

Cronje published its report on 'undesirable publications', or what became known known more popularly as the Cronje Report, in September 1957.[111] This comprised investigative work gathered over the course of two years by various interest groups such as librarians, literary experts, lawyers, magazine editors, and clerics.

The report consisted of 22 chapters of undeniably exhaustive, although, severely partisan research on its topic, based on both quantitative and qualitative investigation. It was constructed and launched as an urgent and educative report, aimed at enlightening the government as well as its electorate about the alarming scale of the moral and cultural perils which the Union was alleged to be confronting:

> "It is not merely the moral and social values that are being threatened, however; civilization and culture itself are also being seriously jeopardized... Undesirable publications are also a cultural problem because their purpose is to drag through the gutter everything that is beautiful and good and noble... And this is a matter which most assuredly also concerns the Union in the highest degree."[112]

The Cronje commission argued that if more rigorous statutory censorship were not imposed on society, the spread of such evils as pornography would ultimately bring about national political and cultural degeneration, once 'European' leadership became contaminated and weakened by 'undesirable' influences:

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[111] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 24

[112] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 25

"As the torch-bearer in the vanguard of the Western civilization in South Africa, the European must be and remain the leader, the guiding light, in the spiritual and cultural field, otherwise he will inevitably go under. The undesirable book can and must be drastically combated because it is obviously a spiritual poison."[113]

The report concluded with a few key recommendations, namely the desirability of pre-publication censorship, and the creation of a national enforcement agency for the regulation of both imported and local books unambiguously 'called the Publications Control Board"[114]. The report also recommended that the envisaged Board should be based in Pretoria, that Board members should be South African, and that all excluded, prohibited or unwanted publications which had made their way into the Union should be destroyed under the supervision of the police commissioner.[115]

The Church

Within the context of the Cronje Report and Afrikaner Nationalism and apartheid, the position of the church was crucial, as the implications for organised Christian religion were far-reaching. Drawing on the strong presence of religion in South Africa, Cronje asserted that because "South African churches [has] a comparatively larger percentage of the population as members than those of most other countries" the clergy, therefore, had a special responsibility to the community[116].

The report recommended that the church and approved booksellers and publishers ought to work more closely together to promote "wholesome reading matter" as part of a larger effort to educate their witnesses.[117] These 'witnesses', as the report named them to invoke the sound of Biblical authority, were confirmed as having been all of the same opinion that the church ought to be more vigorously involved in what the society was reading. Only a small percentage was said to

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[113] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 164

[114] Peter M. McDonald, *The literature police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (NYC Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 23

[115] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 164.

[116] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 241

[117] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 241

have been of the opinion that the church should limit itself only to matters of non - secular literature. This assumption reflected a reasonable confidence that the majority of the contemporary Afrikaner population was wholly accepting of the Cronje Report's proposals, in that little distinction was drawn between church, state and morality. Many of the churches were themselves already taking part in the 'secular' education of the Commission's chosen witnesses.

The *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke* (Dutch Reformed Churches) had their own bookselling establishments, magazines and publishing sections such as the *N.G Kerkuitgewers* (D.R.C. Publishers) in Cape Town, and the *Sondagskoolboekehandel* (Sunday School Bookshop) in Bloemfontein. These bodies also had regular exhibitions of their newer issues and ensured that their various religious magazines were made easily available.[118] Emerging from under such influences, virtually all of the witnesses interviewed formed a homogenous group, and were in effect united in their understanding of the topic of the relationship between church, state and morality.

Accordingly, the recommendations that the report made towards the church were conspicuously general and bland, phrased in terms of furthering a notion of human goodness. For example, the first recommendation was that the church "keeps up the good work which is already being done in order to promote good literature"[119]. In carrying on, it declared that the church should make its contribution directly and indirectly in and around the home, "purposefully propagating and making available what is good."[120] Naturally, the interpretation of the notion of 'good' depended on the prevailing view of the role of conformist clergy during the apartheid era. A pertinent question then becomes that of wondering whether the church was willingly helping the National Party with its instrumental political aspirations, or whether it whole-heartedly believed that it was taking the right moral action in educating the masses by means of the protection provided by censorship, and by becoming a more assertive presence in the national world of Christian faith,

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[118] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 241-242.

[119] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 423

[120] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 423

by making its "admonitory voice heard in the broader Christian community"[121]. Regardless of the answer to that question, it can still be concluded that the church was already doing the moral bidding of the NP government, as its influence worked so closely in tandem with the secular set of political values being upheld by the cultural ideal of the Afrikaner Volk.

Newspapers and Advertisements

Given the prior history of the mainstream Afrikaans press, it is no surprise that in the period under consideration, its newspapers hardly ever swayed significantly from the National Party's main ideals. Predictably, too, the Cronje Report was full of praise for what it considered to be its high standards. Reportedly having made use of 20 years' worth of newspaper articles from various newspapers within South Africa, it took care to 'point out that, in the issues of newspapers examined, no undesirable stories or articles or other undesirable contributions were found." [122]

At the same time, however, not everything was viewed as satisfactory. For the same could not be said for the illustrations in some of the newspapers, as well as in magazines. Some of the newspapers were evidently publishing photographs of scantily-clad women in suggestive poses as part of advertising copy, or to entice readers in efforts to sell more papers. This trend was apparently on the rise, a commercial factor which was alarming to those responsible for the Cronje Report. The Report was particularly alarmed over the receptiveness of the 'Non-European', and worried over the reading material available to the 'Bantu' population in South Africa. A lack of policing meant that too much was available generally, and to the wrong readers or viewers. The Report emphasised that the literature available to the 'European' was also all too easily available to the 'Non-European', leaving "the non-European…therefore also exposed to the undesirability".[123]

As declared proof of this dangerously unwanted exposure, the Report claimed that in 30 percent of 'Bantu homes', undesirable representations or photographs of European women were to be

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[121] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 423

[122] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 54

[123] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 60

found, with ominous implications for the upholding of racial boundaries in sexuality. Furthermore, there was concern over other material which was considered to be inflammatory, with the Report declaring that newspapers for 'the non-European' had a high frequency of articles that furthered friction and feelings of hostility between "European and non-European population groups in the Union of South Africa." [124]

It became very clear, in the light of the Cronje Report, that the Commission of Inquiry was interested not merely in the 'moral' tone of newspapers directed at the country's 'Europeans', but that it was those available to its 'Non-European' population which particularly excited a censorious focus. A press taken up with material rooted in 'hostility' was, naturally, viewed as an undesirable phenomenon for a state concerned with peace and order as it pursued a path which sought to justify separate social and economic development and an unequal, minority rule, basis of political representation.

In essence then, the history of censorship in post-World War II South Africa was rooted in the rise of the Afrikaner Nationalist government and its wide-ranging conservatism, of which the appointment of Geoffrey Cronje and his commission into undesirable publications was an influential offshoot. The role that censorship and its stringent enforcement would go on to play can be seen clearly if one examines the elements which went into shaping the Publications Act of 1963, as well as the subsequent Publications Act of the following year.

The proposed Publications Board

Cronje's Report enquired into the possibility of setting up a regulatory publications board which would have absolute power over what was published within the borders of the Union of South Africa as well as all literature being imported into the country. The suggestion of establishing such a board, with sweeping legal and political functions, was apparently endorsed by all those who were asked or who were involved internally with the actual Cronje report[125].

On the terms upon which it was envisaged, the board should be created under the Governor-General, given that it would be of national importance; if this suggestion was acted upon when it

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[124] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 61

[125] R.S.A. Department of the Interior*, Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 156

was made, the individual in charge of its selection would have been Governor - General Ernest George Jansen (1881-1959). The Board would, first and foremost, have the decisive power of authority either to prohibit or to permit any piece of literature that fell under its jurisdiction. Constitutionally, the board would be serving as an advisory council to the Governor General, as well as undertaking any other proscriptive activities entrusted to it.[126]

The board would, on the other hand, have the power to grant certain scholarly libraries the permission to import or to acquire designated items which were prohibited or classified as being of a "communistic nature", as long as they were used solely for study and research. Such sensitive publications had to be kept in a separate facility that was accessible only to the librarian and to those to whom he had given official permission.[127]

The chairman of the board should be someone with judicial experience, ideally a judge or a magistrate. On paper, the official should be a "capable and experienced chairman who can inspire confidence through his impartial and disinterested guidance." [128] The board itself should also be made up of no more than 11 or no fewer than 7 other members who would not necessarily be affiliated to any branch of government, excluding those from a judicial or an educational background. These individuals would be expected to approach the regulation problem from a wide perspective, including what was assumed, peculiarly, to be a 'female' point of view, in other words, the "literary, the religious, the educational, the theological, the legal and the sociological point of view...also that of a woman in the community".[129]

In addition to such recommendations, no person other than a South African citizen could be appointed to the board, and it should compile and submit a yearly list of its annual activities to

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[126] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 156 - 157

[127] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 165

[128] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 157

[129] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 157

the government. The board's office would be in Pretoria so as to be close to all other government offices with which it would be working.[130]

If the following consideration of the various Publications Acts is examined within the framework of the boards that governed them, it is evident that what the Report was suggesting was close to what the actual Publications Acts' were in fact created to do. Furthermore, while the eligibility of those appointed on the board may well have excluded those in government service (excluding the magistracy or education), nonetheless those nominated for positions for approval by the Governor- General and the head of the board were to have 'theological', 'religious', 'educational', and other criteria, indicating a clear sectional bias. It is hard to envisage that such individuals would not have been committed Afrikaner nationalists and members of the National Party. The 271-page Cronje Report provided the foundation stone for the party to implement its systematic controls through the Publications Acts which were now to follow.

3.3: The Publications Act(s); the mechanism of censorship in South Africa

As suggested in the opening chapter, the early 1960s' set the stage for events later in the decade and in the one following, as the effects of the Sharpeville crisis and the growth of more liberal, reform-minded attitudes stimulated in part by the penetration of outside influences, were responded to, and countered in part by the NP government's re-modelling of censorship and of publication controls within what was soon to become the Republic of South Africa.

In 1963, the Publications and Entertainment Act was introduced and promoted by a prominent Nationalist MP, Dr. Abraham Jonker (father of the dissident Afrikaans poet, Ingrid Jonker), and in the following decade a further, amended, publications act was passed by the Nationalist-dominated parliament.[131] As already seen, the pioneering Publications Act had its roots in the previous decade's 'undesirable publications' investigation. What now emerged was one of the cornerstones of the NP government's 'hearts and minds' political trajectory.

1963 Publications and Entertainment Act

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[130] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of enquiry in regard to undesirable publlications* (Pretoria: Government Publication, 1957), 164

[131] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 13

Under the 1963 Publications and Entertainment Act, all material which was deemed offensive or classified as being harmful to the Republic of South Africa could be put up for review and could easily be banned.[132] The promotion of national and international works that were deemed undesirable was seen as a statutory offence. Such works that were potentially undesirable could be submitted not only by government officials such as police or customs officers, but also by members of the public who could also submit material for review of their choosing. Works that were banned could be taken to Court for judicial appeal, but, due to the high costs of a court case, this was not often a practical avenue of resistance.[133] Just as measures such as the 1953 Bantu Education Act were a cornerstone of daily educational apartheid, McDonald has suggested that the 1963 Publications and Entertainment act was another 'cornerstone' of the overall order.[134]

The Publications and Entertainment act worked on the basis of six categories which automatically deemed it "undesirable if it or any part of it" contained one or more of the following characteristics, while the Board had the power to remove an item from the banned or undesirable list if it had what it considered to be sufficient reason to do so.

 These characteristics were as follows:

a) is indecent or obscene or offensive or harmful to public morals;

b) is blasphemous or is offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the inhabitants of the Republic;

c) brings any section of the inhabitants of the Republic into ridicule or contempt;

d) is harmful to the relations between any inhabitants of the Republic'

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[132] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 14

[133] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 15

[134] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 15

e) is prejudicial to the safety of the state, the general welfare or the peace and good order;

f) discloses with any reference to any judicial proceedings -

i. any matter which is indecent or obscene or is offensive or harmful to public morals;

ii. Any indecent or obscene medical, surgical or physiological details the disclosure of which is likely to be offensive or harmful to public morals (Section 26 (2) of the Act of 1963 in Statutes of the Republic of South Africa) [135].

As far as the issue of censorship and propaganda went, the Act's different clauses were framed in distinctively neutral or even anodyne terms. In terms of the scope of the 1963 Act and all that it encompassed, the language employed projected legislation as representing a kind of 'universal good', not a political programme of the ruling government, but rather the common welfare of the inhabitants of the country itself. In its generalising discourse, it even bordered on the patriotic[136]. The Act did not, for instance, distinguish between the race and culture of authors, so in principle it did not appear to be selective, partial, or otherwise discriminatory. Thus, clause B did not cite any specific religion, and clause D seemed to be in the interest of fostering positive social, cultural and racial relations. The backdrop to this benign image was, of course, the workings of a minority government in upholding the apartheid status quo.

1974 Publications and Entertainment Act

With the Act in place, it was ready to function as the heart of a web that would be spreading out into a well-formed mesh of censorship. Then, in 1974, the NP passed a new law, the Publications

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[135] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 15

[136] Peter M. McDonald, *The literature police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (NYC Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 34

Act, under which the categories of so-called 'undesirability' stayed the same, but the review procedures changed significantly.[137] This Act came into effect in May of the following year.

One of the major differences was that that the appeal process changed. Instead of appealing to a court of law, any review was now placed in the hands of the Publications Appeal Board (PAB), which meant the effective elimination of the judicial scrutiny of the censorship decision procedure.[138] The irritation of a statutory legal check upon the reach of censoring authority was now removed. Members of the PAB were appointed directly by the State President who was, inevitably, a customary Afrikaner nationalist appointee from 1948.[139]

The structure of the censorship machine also changed. The Minister of Home Affairs had the power to appoint the members of the Directorate. These serving appointees were charged with the authority to scrutinize literary works. He also had the power to designate a larger pool of people from which the Directorate could create committees to help to preserve what was expressed as the Republic's set of civilised moral and ethical codes.[140]

In 1978, the 1974 Publications Act was amended following a dispute between the legislators, the publishers, and the dissident Afrikaans author, Etienne Le Roux over his novel, *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!*.[141] An Anglo-Boer War parody, it was considered to be yet another unwholesome or 'dirty' satirical work by the author, and was banned. The banning was highly controversial and produced an outcry, leading to a complex legal wrangle. This Le Roux dispute would go on to later become known as one of the largest controversies in the saga of the country's Publications Act. One of the issues brought to prominence was the murky relationship between ruling Afrikaans political interests and publishing. As Gabriel J. Botma has noted, during the later 1970s Nasionale Pers (later, Naspers) appointed very senior members of the NP to its directorial board, and this frequently became a source of controversy and tension over the

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[137] Peter M. McDonald, *The literature police: Apartheid censorship and its cultural consequences* (NYC Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 34

[138] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 6

[139] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 15

[140] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 7

[141] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 7

issue of publishing independence or freedom.[142] This, in all probability, would have played a part in the handling of the *Magersfontein* dispute and in the subsequent legal modification of the censorship controls.

In order to try to avoid damaging inter-Afrikaner clashes between a well-established Afrikaans literary establishment, the government, and the Nasionale Pers board, two additional elements were introduced to the process of scrutinising and justifying works that fell under censorship suspicion. The first was the formulation of a committee of chosen experts or specialists, who would consider the literary or aesthetic merit of a work. Secondly, consideration would be paid to the special conditions of publishing and distribution, instead of resorting immediately to a full or outright ban.[143] The introduction of what seemed to be an element of flexibility was a sign of the refinement of the whole system of censorship and its appeal process, in the interest of improving its overall strength and, importantly, its claim upon legitimacy.

As already noted, the sweeping nature of controls meant that 'publications' were defined widely, so that films, music, visual works, and various other forms of public entertainment could be banned and made illegal to own or to reproduce. The government also banned certain individuals who were producing and disseminating 'unacceptable' artistic works as part of its wider attempt to control the republic's cultural sphere. Some of these 1970s banning orders stemmed from an amendment to the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act, the Internal Security Act of 1976[144].

For writers identified as having links to suspect organisations or bodies, the amendment specified that "all persons are prohibited from being office bearers, officers, members or active supporters of an organization which in any way prepares, publishes or distributes any publication".[145] Banning orders also applied not only to the authors of the various works, as others were also liable to be banned for quoting from works upon which a banning order had been placed.

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[142] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 51
[143] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 7
[144] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 7
[145] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 10

Along with the censoring of authors, newspapers were also subject to scrutiny, and increasingly so in the wake of the Publications and Entertainment Act 42 of 1974, in which the censorship board's powers were increased far beyond that of any administrative state body subject to democratic standards.[146] Newspapers could be shut down for various political infringements, such as the *World* and *Weekend World* in 1977, in the aftermath of the crisis produced by the Soweto rebellion. Other papers attempted to avoid, to negotiate around, or to contest the punitive powers of the censorship act by acting as part of an industry, represented by membership of South Africa's Newspaper Press Union. Lower down, though, at individual levels, journalists could be faced with detention and even banning orders if their reporting or opinion writings did not fall within the requirements of the Censorship Board.[147] In reflecting on the increasingly charged atmosphere of the later-1970s, Breytenbach and Coetzee are just two of the noted writers who have stressed how much the censorship laws can be seen as having been an expression of the 'total onslaught' mentality of the apartheid state order.[148]

3.4 Censored and Banned Literary Works

This section will consider a small sample of the works that were banned under the two Acts previously discussed, as well as exploring why those works were banned. In a way, the deletion or censoring of these pieces from public circulation offers as much insight into the NP government's thinking as the propaganda productions that it produced itself. Among the general run of literary censorship and bannings that took place in the Republic during this period, the position of those authors designated as *Die Sestigers*, were of special significance. For their existence pointed to fissures within the defensive 'laager' mentality itself. That was of importance to the organising idea that the government had ideological enemies against which it had to fight, as some of those literary enemies came from within 'Afrikanerdom' itself.

In the initial years of the Publications and Entertainment Act, *An Act of Immorality* was the first book to be banned under the 1963 legislation. Written by Des Troye, the work provided an account of an interracial love affair which indirectly spoke out against the Immorality Act. Other

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[146] Manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media during the demise of white rule in South Africa, p. 108

[147] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phill, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p. 108

[148] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phill, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p. 156

examples of books falling foul of censorship included the 1969 2nd volume of *The Oxford History of South Africa* which carried a chapter consisting of 52 blank pages in the edition sold in the Republic. The pages left blank were the chapter on African nationalism which, as the book's editors announced in their Foreword, had been excluded by the publishers, Oxford University Press, as it quoted banned individuals which would have got the whole volume banned under South Africa's publications law. Even popular best-sellers, like Wilbur Smith's *When the Lion Feeds,* were subject to the scrutiny of the Publications Board, if not for their political material then for their sexual explicitness.[149]

Indeed, as early as April 1973, the Minister of the Interior confirmed that more than 12 000 publications and a further 44 other 'objects' were on a prohibited list, a lengthy count which included both foreign and domestic publications in the form of issues of newspapers and periodicals.[150] Some of the early international works to have been banned included:

- A 1968 issue of *Time* magazine which featured an article about the black civil rights leader, Martin Luther King.
- In 1970, Britain's *The Times* of 26 October was prohibited as it contained advertisements for the International Defence and Aid Fund, the Anti-Apartheid Movement as well as Amnesty International.[151]

Nationally, there were, of course, a vast range of prohibitions, as will be discussed more fully in due course, but, for present purposes, some of these 'morality' issues included:

- In 1968, the Cape Town newspaper, *The Telegraph*, was muzzled on three separate occasions between July and September for carrying material defined as being of a morally undesirable nature.
- In 1970, two editions of the magazine, *Scope*, were banned because they contained images and articles which could damage the morals and ethical well-being of the population.

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[149] Christopher Merret, *A culture of censorship: Secrecy and intellectual repression in South Africa* (Cape Town, David Phillips Publishers, 1994), p.62

[150] Alex Hepple, *Press under apartheid* (London, London International Defence and Aid Fund, 1974), p. 18

[151] Alex Hepple, *Press under apartheid* (London, London International Defence and Aid Fund, 1974), p. 18

- A March 1973 issue of the Afrikaans magazine, *Brandwag,* was banned due to its carrying of a nude female profile on its cover page.[152]

A clear type of publication headed for inclusion on the board's undesirable list included anything containing material which was highly salacious or which was related – however vaguely - to pornography, and then, of course, any publication with political material judged as likely to stir up 'population' hostilities, or feelings of 'hatred' across the colour – line.

Later in the 1970s, the works of certain Afrikaans authors also started to come under scrutiny for potential infringements of the Publications and Entertainment Act. The relationship between the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner Nationalist politics had, naturally, traditionally been close as language and politics worked to create those national myths and symbols needed to continue to foster a sense of national pride and identity. It was important that authors remained within an acceptable arena of literary expression. While Afrikaans authors certainly had no immediate reason to be wary of the impact of the Publications Act upon them, this position soon changed when some of their works started to deviate from the expected path approved of by the NP.

The 'Sestigers'

Before turning to the Republic's laws on censorship and how Afrikaner writers reacted to these, some particular attention should be paid to *Die Sestigers*. This was a progressive group of '1960s generation' writers, poets and playwrights which began to challenge the dominant Nationalist way of thinking that had become such an integral part of white Afrikaner experience in South Africa by the 1960s. If one accepts Coetzee's view that the local system of censorship was suggestive of the Soviet censorship apparatus, it in turn makes the *Sestigers* writers roughly reminiscent of those Soviet authors who opposed the rigid Communist Party prescriptions of their own governing body of what constituted the acceptable 'national' expression of literature and culture.

The further importance of these writers in the context of this study is that they were of the same ethnicity as that of the authoritarian political ruling class and were rebelling against the Nationalist status quo. Open to the free and often *avant-garde* modernizing cultural influences of

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[152] Alex Hepple, *Press under apartheid* (London, London International Defence and Aid Fund, 1974), p. 19

especially the continental European world outside of the Republic, what such openness generated was some increasingly overt criticism by literary figures of their own government. Internal fissures and fractures within the educated Afrikaner cultural elite over the injustices of apartheid undoubtedly signalled urges for change, and notably these emerged in a historically repressive period, characterised by general conformity. Oppositional writers included leading creative figures such as Etienne Le Roux, Andre P. Brink, Breyten Breytenbach and Delene Matthee.[153] Their works depicted a different 'type' of Afrikaner, one which struggled against the rigid world that the National Party had created around them. The characters which they created often struggled explicitly against apartheid era laws, or grappled with personal feelings, sexual and otherwise, that went against the stern spirit of Calvinist nationalism. A number of these authors were educated not only in South Africa, but also in continental Europe, an experience which helped to widen their scope of artistic vision and encouraged aesthetic experimentalism. The works of *Sestiger* authors were largely removed from the conventional pastoral realism of the local Afrikaner *plaasroman,* and had more in common with European existentialism and surrealism in order to break away and to challenge the conventions of the status quo.[154]

As already emphasised, the *Sestigers'* use of modern techniques in their writings to explore and describe imagined secular life, sexual freedom, racial tolerance, and political freedom in the context of South Africa, represented a literary striving which annoyed the cultural watchdogs of the Nationalist government. Even more, and no less significantly, the alienating drift of these unconventional writers and cultural commentators caused, as Giliomee has argued, a rift within Afrikaner society.[155]

Examples of friction between Afrikaner writers and the government will be examined in more detail in the course of ensuing discussion, but at this point it is worth noting that it was during this phase of polarization that the Nationalist *Verligte* and *Verkrampte* split was emerging to become a feature of governing Afrikaner politics.[156] Against this backdrop, it is again pertinent to note that works which sometimes came came under the censorship scrutiny of the Publications Act were not necesssarily explicitly critical of the ruling order, but were simply pieces which

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[153] Herman Giliomee, *Die Afrikaners: 'n Biografie* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2004), p. 505
[154] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 120
[155] Herman Giliomee, *Die Afrikaners: 'n Biografie* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2004), p. 505
[156] South African Democracy Education Trust, *The road to democracy in South Africa: Volume 2* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 2006), P. 48

explored Afrikaner culture and history in a creatively critical – and, at times, satirical - manner. Examples of such works will be considered below, as well as pieces of literature which could be seen as having been overtly critical of the NP government.

Afrikaner writers and Censorship

Initially, the government was clearly reluctant to censor or to ban works by Afrikaans authors as this would have highlighted the existence of dissent within the dominant Afrikaner ruling minority. Thus, the governing party used other, indirect, ways to try to keep Afrikaner writers in check, such as pressures through their publisher, as in the case of Ingrid Jonker and her poem *'Die kind wat doodgeskiet is deur soldate by Nyanga*' which was changed to *'Die Kind',* and which was further relegated from prominence within the poetry collection, *Rook en Oker* (1965).[157] The resort to pressure or to the cajoling of literary artists to stay within approved boundaries, drove writers like Etienne Le Roux, who had been once been a supporter of the National Party, to write in the Sunday *Rapport* that, "It seems to me as if the state with its elaborate legislation on the subject of the arts tries to force writers into a certain mould." [158] This situation was not helped by the fact that it was difficult for Afrikaans-language authors to publish their literary works in a commercially independent way during the 1960s', as their local publishing houses invariably had National Party ties.

Once books began to fall foul of officialdom, some other Afrikaans writers joined Le Roux in sentiment. The first literary work that was banned outright under the Publications and Entertainment Act was *Kennis van die Aand* by Andre Brink in 1973. This marked a change in the ruling party's relationship with those authors who were helping to maintain Afrikaans and to elevate its linguistic power and cultural standing. Saul Dubow has suggested that it was essentially in the imposition of censorship, the banning of his literature, and related harassment by the security branch of the police, which propelled Brink into an active anti-apartheid position.[159]

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[157] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 35

[158] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 37

[159] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 122

This goverrnment action made it clear to the Afrikaner community of writers that they, too, would not be exempt from censorship if any of their works transgressed acceptable boundaries. In due course, following the case of Brink, other prominent authors, such as Pieter Dirk Uys and Bartho Smith, also found their publications being banned. [160]

The basis for the banning of *Kennis van die Aand* was quite clear from the contentiousness of its subject matter, which related the story of a black character named Joseph Malan awaiting the death sentence for the murder of his white lover.[161] Parallel to the theme of multiracial love in the plot, the protagonist, Joseph, wants to form a theatre group to mount an artistic challenge against the government, but his dream is shattered by the repression of the Publications Board.[162]

Revealing light on official thinking came from *Censorship in South Africa*, published in 1987, and written by J.W.C van Rooyen, who was the Chairman of the Publications Appeal Board, to offer insight into its evaluations and decisions. The book was produced, according to van Rooyen, because a 'need arose for a comprehensive book to be written on the Publications Act.'[163] It was, in effect, a justification of the regime of censorship and banning. On the topic of *Kennis van die Aand*, Van Rooyen declared that the reason for its banning was due to its offensive religious attitudes and its handling of religious matter:

> 'In his novel...Andre Brink draws a parallel between the suffering of a coloured man, Joseph Malan, and the suffering of Jesus...Joseph falls in love with a white girl, Jessica - a relationship forbidden by the law at the time - ultimately murdering her... Joseph blames the Afrikaner for having caused him to become a non-believer.'[164]

Moreover, the overall text was found guilty of being laden with offensive imagery of religion and sex based on poems from St. John of the Cross, rendering Brink's novel objectionable due to its crude depictions of sex and religion.[165] Appeals against the ban on it were fruitless. In 1974,

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[160] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 36

[161] "Looking on Darkness", *Goodreads*, Last modified in 2016,
www.goodreads.com/book/show/399903.Looking_on_Darkness

[162] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p.46

[163] J.C.W van Rooyen, *Censorship in South Africa*: Volume 1 (Cape Town, Juta & Co., 1987), p. vii

[164] J.C.W van Rooyen, *Censorship in South Africa*: Volume 1 (Cape Town, Juta & Co., 1987), p. 92

[165] J.C.W van Rooyen, *Censorship in South Africa*: Volume 1 (Cape Town, Juta & Co., 1987), p. 92

the lawyer for the Publications Board, described the main theme of the novel in the October issue of *Die Transvale*r as 'the portrayal of the white section of the of the population as the ruling class which is sterile, destructive, spiritually dead against a virile, strong, creative non - white group'.[166] This, in its way, reflected the emphasis in reviews of the novel, where little mention was made of the religious aspects of the story which were considered a very minor element by critics.[167]

Afrikaner authors under actual or potential censure did not take things like the Brink decision lying down. The lack of any effective juridicial voice to counter the Board's draconian edicts on literature was a particular source of resentment, with some writers arguing that they were not being treated as responsible citizens and mature adults. That point of view was expressed very neatly by the highly-regarded poet, D.J. Opperman, in an article in *Die Burger*:

> "They (the National Party) have achieved the power they have thanks to our language
> movement and Afrikaans literature. And as a sign of gratitude we are not even allowed
> to appeal to a court of justice...they make laws that reduce us to a toddler literature."[168]

As the formerly easy relationship between the state and some Afrikaans writers began to unravel, other authors found themselves in agreement with Opperman.

One of those was the author of *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* Etienne Le Roux's novel was centred on the story of a film crew going to Magersfontein to recreate the famous Anglo-Boer War battle that had taken place there in October 1899. It went on to comment satirically on apartheid, on the South African War, and on leading Boer and other wartime figures such as De la Rey, Methuen and Cronje.[169] Le Roux had devised a creatively innovative way of looking at Afrikaners and their culture, but his sentiments and the unorthodox character of his work did not appeal to all. Many of the more conservative members of the Afrikaner establishment were enraged, as in their perception *Magersfontein's* mocking of the earlier years of noble Afrikaner history and struggle was intolerable. On the othjer hand, for critics of the censoring of this work,

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[166] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p.48

[167] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p.47

[168] *Die Burger*, 30 July, 1974

[169] www.goodreads.com/book/show/1165821.Magersfontein_O_Magersfontein_

the action represented a government attempt to repress the free interpretation of national memory. As Andre Brink put it, the episode evoked the Greek word, *alatheia*, which meant truth or, more literally, could be translated to 'that which is remembered', which was what was being suppressed by the apartheid regime in its censoring of Etienne le Roux's novel.[170]

The background to the action against *Magersfontein* was in itself interesting, for it reflected the moral pressure that could be exerted by right-wing pressure groups within Afrikaner society. As a 1977 *Huisgenoot* article noted, 'Ernstige skrywers het nou 'n probleem' ('Serious writers now have a problem') in its reporting of the public drama behind the banning of the novel.[171] The book's publication had in fact been tolerated initially, but a Christian group of moral and ethical vigilantes led by an Eddie van Zyl, called the *Aksie Morele Standaarde* (Action for Moral Values), had mobilised and launched a campaign to have the volume banned. The call for action against the work was that its satirical nature contained references to sex and immoral behaviour, as well as crude language which was offensive towards the general public. This outraged contribution to the debates surrounding Le Roux's work added further controversy, especially when *Magersfontein* was awarded its prestigious literary prize by the *Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*.[172]

Reportedly, Van Zyl had to read the book three times before being able to come to terms with its subject matter, but was apparently able to understand enough to enable him to draw up a list of inflammatory words that he considered to be immoral or blasphemous. This incriminating list was then sent to conservative supporters, mostly farmers, housewives, and church ministers, with a request that they lobby the Minister of Home Affairs, Petrus Cornelius 'Connie' Mulder (1925-1988).[173] This 'Action for Moral Values' lobbying proved to be an effective tactic for, to the delight of Eddie van Zyl and his group of supporters, in 1977 Connie Mulder asked the Board to reconsider *Magersfontein* for banning.[174]

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[170] Andre P. Brink, "The impact of the media on the international situation with specific reference to South Africa", *Geneve-Afrique*, 27, no. 2 (1989): 145

[171] *Die Huisgenoot*, 2 December, 1977, p. 9

[172] J.C.W van Rooyen, *Censorship in South Africa*: Volume 1 (Cape Town, Juta & Co., 1987), pp. 14 - 15

[173] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p.39

[174] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p.39

The Board then ruled the work undesirable on moral and religious grounds because it "[was] indecent or obscene or offensive or harmful to public morals [and] is blasphemous or is offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the inhabitants of the Republic"[175]

Interestingly, writers such as Margareet de Lange have pointed out that while the 1974 Publications Act provided a platform upon which there were many different ways in which to ban literary works, proscription on religious grounds was particularly adept. As in the example of Le Roux's novel, it enabled the censorship authorities to gloss over the issue of political content which may have been the real factor in motivating suppression.[176] Accordingly, it could certainly be argued that although the reasoning behind the undesirable classification of some books was ostensibly for religious, 'moral' or 'ethical' considerations, at a more fundamental, underlying level, the calculation was political. Or, when much was made of works which offended on religious grounds, it was invariably some combination of religion and politics.

Le Roux's reaction to the muzzling of his novel was, naturally, that of shock, a feeling shared by many others in South African society. This was a case of a literary work of great national merit being suppressed because of isolated words and phrases. Sections of a previously quiescent Afrikaans press now began to sound less quiescent, as censorship's regulatory system itself came under question. As a *Beeld* editorial declared on the the day following the banning order:

> "When a brilliant novel by what may be our geatest writer...is summarily banned, our censorship system has become a monster; a threat to the creative artist, our intellectual life and the Afrikaans press."[177]

In the aftermath of the *Magersfontein* furore, one creative project to come out of the freedom of expression clash with the Publications Act and the Nationalist government was the emergence of Taurus Press. Taurus was founded by a group of Afrikaans writers and critics such as Ampie Coetzee, Ernst Lindenburg and John Miles.[178] Its aim was to publish books that might otherwise

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[175] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under atack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. 162

[176] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 47

[177] *Die Beeld*, 22 November, 1977

[178] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 38

not have been able to appear publicly because of the likelihood of their falling foul of censorship. Cleverly, Taurus publishing exploited the legal protection provided by the rights of personal privacy and ownership. It made use of personal mail subscription lists to bypass the censorship board, and to get books distributed only to those subscribing as closed members.[179]

Other ways in which writers tried to skirt around the scrutiny of the censorship system included the use of 'dislocation' in the construction of setting and location, placing controversial South African issues and themes in parallel or similar non-South African contexts. Karel Schoeman's historical novel, for example, *By Fakkellig* (1966) was set in Ireland, with a narrative which revolved around the socio-political struggles of the Irish against the English. Louis Kruger's *Die Skerpskutter* (1981) was also based in Ireland, and thus authors such as these were able to write powerfully – and implicitly comparatively - about political and social issues relevant to the Republic by making their central plots 'foreign', and therefore unlikely to attract the attention of the censorship authorities.[180]

Slowly, but increasingly more evidently, the emerging situation was becoming one in which some major, highly reputable, Afrikaner authors were coming into direct conflict with those in charge of the censorship apparatus. On the face of things, a few well-written literary works were seemingly threatening to unravel the orderly power structure of National Party rule.[181] In this difficult context, the Republic's nationalist censorship powers could be turned against non-nationalist literature.

Thoughts on authoritarian censoring

Clearly, problems between the South African state and the country's authors arose principally because of the intrusive powers of the censorship regulations – here, one useful way of understanding the relationship between author and state is to see the circumstances of this period through the eyes of J.M Coetzee.

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[179] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under atack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. 176
[180] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p.75
[181] Willialm A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under atack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. 176

For Coetzee, the Republic's state censorship was in certain respects comparable to that of the Soviet Union. Making use of two examples, one from the Soviet Union and one from the Republic, Coetzee seeks to exhibit not merely the repressive nature of the censoring apparatus, but even more the feelings of anguish, hatred and hopelessness that affected how authors felt towards their own state.

In one illustration, he recalls the story of the Russian author, Osip Mandelstam, who in 1933 composed a poem about a tyrannical leader who orders executions at his every whim and even relishes the deaths 'of his victims like a Georgian munching raspberries.'[182] In the following year, Joseph Stalin's secret police ransacked Mandelstam's home in search of the offending poem. The poem, however, had never been written down, but had rather been recited by Mandelstam over and over to friends. The poet was arrested and, while imprisoned, one of his friends received a call from Stalin, asking whether Mandelstam was a master, or whether he was disposable. In other words, was he an asset or a threat?[183] His friend replied that he was, in fact, a master, and as a consequence Mandelstam was banished to the city of Voronezh where he was compelled to write a poem in honour of Stalin.

A parallel episode of a different kind, but with similar echoes, occurred in South Africa during the leadership of B.J. Vorster. In 1977, the eminent author, Breyten Breytenbach, published a poem, 'Letter to the Butcher from Foreign Parts' which was addressed to Prime Minister Vorster. At the end of the piece, the names of men who had died at the hands of the security police were listed. It was at the core of the poem that forceful lines were addressed to Vorster, asking what it was like for him to fondle his wife's intimate areas with his fingers, stained with blood. [184]

> "Does the heart also tighten in your throat
>
> when you paw its slippery limbs;
>
> with the very hands that will caress the secrets of your wife?" [185]

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[182] J. M. Coetzee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, university of Chicago press, 1996), pp. 38 - 39

[183] J. M. Coetzee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, university of Chicago press, 1996), p. 39

[184] J. M. Coetzee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, university of Chicago press, 1996), p. 40

[185] "Letter to Butcher from aboad," Lyrikline, Last modified 2016, http://www.lyrikline.org/en/poems/letter-butcher-abroad-4576#.V8LIDvl97IU

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Unsurprisingly, this personal attack was not ignored by Vorster. Two years after the poem was published, Breytenbach was charged and was subsequently forced to apologize to the National Party leader, and to accept that the tone of his own work was 'crass and insulting'.[186] The point for Coetzee is that an authoritarian state will attempt to break an author whom it judges to be thinking and acting independently, and in too challenging and radical a manner. The theory behind authoritarian rule and its relation to literary censorship and propaganda would support that supposition. No less interesting is the irony of South Africa as a political entity which condemned the Soviet Union and its policies as the enemy of freedom and human rights, ending up in an authoritarian position itself when it could be compared to the dictatorial U.S.S.R.

3.4: Concluding Remarks

As this chapter has set out to show, state censorship played a large role within the broad propaganda and manipulation machinery of the NP government. Aside from contentious works of literature that came from abroad, the apartheid state was facing perceived domestic threats to its prevailing 'world view'. The fact that some of this internal criticism emanated from within its own traditional Afrikaner constituency had to be taken particularly seriously, for it demanded a particularly firm response.

To cultivate and maintain the various spheres of Afrikaner Nationalism's ruling cultural authority and political power, the Publicity and Entertainment Acts of 1963 and 1974 were created. These stipulated, according to the influential Cronje Commission, that the white community in South Africa should be the cultural and spiritual torch bearer of civilization, and for the preservation and sustaining of that standard it would require the backing of a Publications Board.

This Board had the responsibility of imposing permissible limits on material, and of trying to control what the public was able to view, acting in a manner which resembled the creation of an 'authoritarian state' in a governmental approach to an independent mass media. It was an important link in the chain of developments leading up to the major apartheid nationalist propaganda efforts of the 1970s.

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[186] J. M. Coetzee, *Giving offense: essays on censorship* (Chicago, university of Chicago press, 1996), p. 40

The Publishing and Entertainment Act of 1974 was the cornerstone of later and intensifying censorship in the Republic, and could be viewed as a form of covert propaganda intervention. Censorship worked as a lie of omission, feeding the continuing official misrepresentation of South Africa during the 1970s and beyond. The next chapter will explore further the question of the interpretation of the country's state of affairs by its ruling party in its efforts to keep up the appearances of normality.

Equally, Afrikaner nationalist culture and power could not, however, avoid stimulating awkward contradictions. Division and opposition centred on a dissenting group of writers popularly known as the *Sestigers.* These authors were producing a universally 'modernized' body of literature which was far out of line with traditionalist nationalist Afrikaner values. Its significance was that it represented a new ideological fracture within Afrikaner society, adding a further layer to internal and external criticism of apartheid society and the increasingly authoritarian style of its NP rulers. Part of that style was the calculating construction of what might be termed a 'culture of misrepresentation' or of omission and distortion. It was within this context that the South African Broadcasting Commission and the Department of Information mounted their information empires in defence of the National Party Republic, as will be considered in the ensuing two chapters.

Chapter 4

Propaganda and the South African Broadcasting Commission

"Since 1948 the world has witnessed some 140 wars, coup de etat, civil wars, border clashes, revolutions, civil strife and economic collapse. In each instance more than 150 people have died with hundreds more injured. In more than fifty percent the death toll exceeded 500. Not one of these events occurred in South Africa"[187]

4.1: Introduction

As we have seen in preceding discussion, the ruling National Party was able to exploit censorship widely as it was able to use its controlling or dominating influence over Afrikaans publishing and its judicial powers to deal with nonconformity and to punish those who violated its imposed criteria of acceptability. This section will consider a more covert form of National Party government propaganda in the form of the manipulation and censorship of audio and visual media. It will try to show that propaganda manifests in various forms and as mentioned, censorship, half truths and omisions in reporting can be seen as an example of the classic 'lie of omission'.

First, the history of the South African Broadcasting Commission requires some brief discussion. The role of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the eventual decision to create a national television service was another exemplification of the processes through which the National Party authorities laid another – or further embedded the - foundation for the dissemination of sustained and serious political propaganda. It is widely acknowledged today that the SABC served as a mouthpiece of NP rule and that, after radio, television became a primary means of conveying and shaping information:

'The SABC is seen as a defender of the apartheid state and propagator of its separate development strategies...The SABC programming became increasingly characterized by

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[187] Margreet de Lange, *The muzzled Muse: Literature and censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Co.), p. 45

anti-communist propaganda, the promotion of Afrikaner nationalism, and the concept of separate development.'[188]

Television made a valuable channel through which approved information and, perhaps more importantly, opinions, could be imparted to an increasingly wide viewing audience. This was, arguably, especially so if one takes into account the exceptional lateness of its introduction into South Africa, three decades after the end of the Second World War. By the time that the television service was introduced, the National Party had already accomplished some extensive socio-political apartheid engineering. Then there was also the simple fact that it would be a novel new medium, and therefore its impact on a fresh audience could be potentially enormous. If power over the print media was necessary, then even more direct control of the SABC was a logical development for the NP in the underpinning of its power and the pursuit of its policies.

4.2: SABC and the Broederbond

The original declared purpose of the country's national broadcasting corporation, established in 1936, was to encourage the growth of both the English and the Afrikaner community's culture and language; in the terms noted by Horwitz (2001), 'broadcasting, is an important site for the production of culture, identity and nation building'. This section will first sketch a summary history of the SABC, and then the involvement in it of the *Afrikaner Broederbond* as well as its scope of interest and influence. For, from its early formation, personnel of the SABC had links with the secretive *Broederbond*, assisting this nationalist body to expand its influence into the broadcasting sphere in South Africa.

Short history of the SABC

Before the SABC created a television service, it had merely been a wireless radio service, with an institutional history located in white conflict and accommodation between the Afrikaners and the English, with language use and language rights always a critical issue. By the interwar years,

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[188] Robert B. Horwitz, *Communication and democratic reform in South Africa* (UK, University of Cambridge Press, 2001), p. 69

the Afrikaner people's language and culture had become more secure, and in those strengthened circumstances there was a campaign for equal language broadcasting. [189]

The SABC was established in 1936, based on the 'public broadcaster' model of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), as a bilingual service to foster and advance the English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking cultures of the dominant white minority. Under the Union's 1936 Broadcasting Act, the Governor-General appointed the SABC's Board of Control, which was to compromise nine Afrikaans- and English-speaking members. After the 1948 election, the Nationalists began to move Broederbond members into key positions at the SABC in order to further their goals. Gradually, after 1948, information programmes by non-Nationalist presenters were replaced by documentary broadcasts that were sympathetic to the NP, and particularly its apartheid policies.

Still, the mutually supportive ties between the NP government and the SABC were not as close in the earlier years as they would become later. The reason was the Corporation's head, the former Springbok rugby captain, Gideon Roos, who believed in a notion, however narrow, of impartiality in public service provision. This did nothing to endear him to the highly partisan politics of the advancing Broederbond. Often clashing with an extreme-Nationalist- dominated Board, Roos was once quoted famously as having said that the SABC provided 'a service to the public and is therefore a servant of the public, not the government.' He was eventually forced out in the 1960s and replaced by Piet Meyer. [190]

After this, the relationship between the NP and the SABC became very much closer. Meyer would prove to be the man for the present as well as the coming job, which would be facilitating the link between NP - Broederbond politics and the control of a new television service. Under Meyer, the SABC could now become a handmaiden of the Broederbond and its nationalist propaganda ideals. Predictably, this was undertaken initially by surrounding himself with fellow Broederbond members, and by placing them in key positions. Crucially, Meyer would later also be responsible for the investigative *Inquiry into All matters Relating to Television,* when the question of a television service emerged with a more serious intent in the country.

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[189] Robert B. Horwitz, *communication and democratic reform in South Africa* (UK, University of Cambridge Press, 2001), P.70

[190] David Harrison, *The white tribe of Africa: South Africa in perspective* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981), p. 207

By the 1960s, the SABC had become a vigorous defender of the NP's apartheid state, evident, for example, in the way that Meyer used the critical national and hostile international reactions to the events around Sharpeville to emphasise that what the Republic needed was not reform nor a change in the manner in which it was being governed, but stronger protection against its enemies abroad and its enemies at home. The slanted nature of radio programming ensured regular airtime for productions that were anti-communist as well as sympathetic to the policies of the NP.

The racial segmentation of public radio services meant the ever more systematic splitting of audiences. Radio-programming for the African population (overseen by an all-white Bantu Programme Advisory Board) was characterized by a mix of ethnically-directed productions designed not only to maintain 'traditional' values, but also to instil a sense of the 're-birth' of 'tribal' identities and traditional values that could only be lived in the rural Homelands of apartheid South Africa. By comparison, on white radio channels, programming was increasingly Americanised in style and tone, and kept staunchly Christian and conservative. [191]

The structure of African language radio also reflected apartheid ideology strongly in other ways, as all African languages had distinctively separate programming, an approach which attempted to deflect *African* nationalism by reinforcing ethno-linguistic divisions between various groups of Black South Africans. This fitted into the explicit Verwoerdian doctrine that the various peoples of South Africa could only develop to full maturity if their languages and cultures were separated and cultivated as separate 'nationhoods'. [192]

Bantu Radio was broadcast on high frequencies that could be picked up on inexpensive FM transistor radios which were more accessible to the poor African majority, enabling the average black South African to listen to SABC productions tailored to ethnically-differentiated audiences, while independent longer-range radio broadcasts remained out of reach as they required more expensive short wave equipment to be picked up. [193]

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[191] Ron Krabil, *Starring Mandela and Cosby: First Edition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 44
[192] Ron Krabil, *Starring Mandela and Cosby: First Edition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010)*,* p. 45
[193] Ron Krabil, *Starring Mandela and Cosby: First Edition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 45

In the view of the 1967 SABC Annual Report, Radio Bantu had helped black African peoples to appreciate that separate development was positive self-development in their own languages.[194] This, in effect, was the 'educational' purpose of radio services for black South Africans, and it could be concluded that, given the absence of a dedicated television service, and a limited press readership, radio was a major tool in disseminating a government-approved picture of life and how it ought to be lived by the inhabitants of South Africa.

SABC and the Broederbond

As already noted in prior discussion, a key aspect of the SABC's formative history was the involvement and influence of the *Broederbond,* which had been established as a male 'club' in 1918 to advance the nationalist ideals and aspirations of the Afrikaner *Volk* and their Calvinist morals and ethics. Initially, not clandestine and secretive (as it would later become), by the end of the 1920s the society had achieved a breakthrough with the establishment of the *Federasie vir Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK), the aim of which was to elevate and affirm the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner culture.

The Broederbond's aims were, firstly, the maintaining of a separate, white Afrikaner *Volk*, secondly, the achievement of Afrikaner-dominated rule in South Africa, thirdly, the 'Afrikanerization' of assimilable English-speaking white South Africans and, finally, consolidating its strategic position as the political foundation of the *Volk*. The fact that Piet Meyer, for instance was not only Chairman of the Broederbond but also chairman of the SABC was, of course, a very happy and useful coincidence. So was the fact that any consideration of Broederbond membership was also, by implication, a consideration of the leaders of the National Party and some of its selected leading backers and influential followers.[195] In the period covered by this study, notable members included former prime ministers, D.F Malan and Dr. H.F Verwoerd, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha. Others included the billionaire businessman, Anton Rupert.

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[194] Robert B. Horwitz, *communication and democratic reform in South Africa* (UK, University of Cambridge Press, 2001), p. 64

[195] Robert B. Horwitz, *communication and democratic reform in South Africa* (UK, University of Cambridge Press, 2001), p. 64

One of the more striking aspects of the SABC and its role as a purveyor of National Party ideals, is exactly how television came to be an acceptable medium in South Africa. Very late in comparison with much of the rest of the world, it was only in 1976 that South Africa eventually launched a television service and approved the local sale of television sets. For the National Party government had waited longer, and had debated more fiercely the positives and negatives of television, than virtually any other industrialized country before adopting a service.

Almost instinctively, the government viewed television as negative and undesirable for the health of Afrikaner nationalism in terms of the perceived potential threat it posed to cultural independence. Nationalist elites were already wary of the popular influences of 'English' and 'American' ways of life that were seeping into the country through press, radio and cinema.[196] A fear was that the effects of television and what accompanied it would break down an idealised cultural and religious way of life that had been so laboriously created.[197] There was also particular concern that imported programming might depict racial mixing and colour contact in liberal ways that would undermine the strict goals of the apartheid order.

Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, who reportedly once likened television to something as noxious as poison gas or as dangerous as the atom bomb, stalled for as long as he lasted as prime minister. He stuck to the convenient notion that the introduction of a television service and the importation of any material and devices should be delayed until such time as South Africa could learn lessons from the example of other countries that had already accumulated television experience. This was just a matter of blocking any introduction of television. Ultimately, it was the first moon-landing in 1969 that finally forced the beginnings of a government re-consideration. One of the effects of the American space project was that it brought home to South Africans that they inhabited one of the very few countries in which inhabitants were unable to witness such live historical events. Curiosity and interest was overwhelming. For instance, the screening of film

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[196] Robert B. Horwitz, *communication and democratic reform in South Africa* (UK, University of Cambridge Press, 2001), p. 64

[197] Robert B. Horwitz, *communication and democratic reform in South Africa* (UK, University of Cambridge Press, 2001), p.65

footage drew six thousand people to a five-hundred-seat theatre in Johannesburg, creating a public scramble in which eager viewers had to be dispersed by the police.[198]

By the end of the decade, it had become clear that something needed to be done to avoid the Republic being perceived as non-modern or anti-modern. People in South Africa, notably those who made up its white electorate and citizenry, were increasingly aware not only of the fact that they were not on the same media level as other countries, but were discontented with the lack of technological movement into the modern era.[199] Both within and outside the government, there was an awareness of falling behind nationally in a global technological environment. Leading on from this, we will turn next to some consideration of the post-1970 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Television. This commission would, as its title indicated, examine whether there was a need for a television service, if so, how it ought to be planned and implemented, and what its role and impact would be in national life.

The move towards television and the Meyer Commission.

Despite television emerging as a classic visual information tool in the modernization of propaganda and in political manipulation strategies, the Broederbond and various echelons of the National Party were, as noted, initially against its use, only relenting in the course of the early 1970s.

In customary fashion, the National Party mounted a commission of inquiry, culminating in the 1971 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Television. The individual in charge, Piet Meyer, was in fact one of the NP members who were ideologically opposed to a television service.[200] The ensuing report would form the foundation of the Republic of South Africa's television services, as part of the continued refining and separation of broadcasting services on the basis of apartheid. Starting with its fledgling years in the mid- to late-1970s, television would in due course become a new medium through which to reflect the ideals of an apartheid racial order, and to foster the desirability of a separate development South Africa.

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[198] Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African culture and the world beyond* (NYC, Routledge, 1994), p. 131

[199] Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African culture and the world beyond* (NYC, Routledge, 1994), p. 132

[200] Ron Krabil, *Staring Mandela and Cosby: First Edition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 48

Interestingly, from as early as 1952 the debate surrounding the possible introduction of television had been engaging the House of Assembly, with Minister J.F Naude stating that television was a project for the future owing to various reasons such as economic consequences, insisting that it would be too costly to reach all of the Union on the basis of costly quality programming. Other arguments included that of the capacity of geographic coverage. [201] In 1954, Naude stated that 'there would be a great dissatisfaction if we provided this service to the Rand only…I sincerely hope that it will not be undertaken unless it is provided on a Union-wide basis.'[202]

Later in the 1950s, the charge against the implementation of a television service changed to the problems of skilled manpower or that of quickly-changing technology. Minister J.J Serfontein, Naude's successor, for instance proclaimed that 'we do not know what science may discover tomorrow.'[203] As we will see below, however, the most prominent argument against television was that it could lead to the moral and ethical corruption of the then Republic, alongside the opposing idea that television would unite a country which was living in conditions of apartheid. This, as has been argued, was in effect actually a defence mechanism, in which the value of television was that it could be used as a shield against an unwelcome modernity.[204]

Controlled television was at last seen as an acceptable development, and as a managed move into a media modernity, This was thusly made possible during a time of reformist versus right-wing or *Verligte* versus *Verkrampte* splits within the National Party, with the creation of the Herstigte Nasionale Party following the exclusion of the ultra-conservative Albert Hertzog from the Cabinet in 1969.

Albert Hertzog, as the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs from 1958 had been bitterly opposed to the idea of a television service; indeed, in his view this specific invention would be the ruin of South African society. For Hertzog, the television was no more than an 'evil black box' that would lead to 'dangerous liberalistic tendencies'.[205]

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[201] *Union of South Africa, Hansard, 1952 – 05 – 09, col. 5539*
[202] *Union of South Africa, Hansard, 1954 – 05 – 11, col. 4984*
[203] *Union of South Africa, Hansard, 1957 - 06 – 10, col. 7709*
[204] Carin Bevan, "Putting up screens: a history of television in South Africa", (Masters dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2008) p. 179
[205] Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African culture and the world beyond* (NYC, Routledge, 1994), p. 120

Under the portfolio of Posts and Telegraphs, the creation of a television service would clearly have fallen under his jurisdiction. Thus, when Hertzog was removed by Vorster in 1968, the idea of television now became a feasible reality.[206] His ministerial replacement, Matthys 'Basie' van Rensburg, was the individual who appointed Piet Meyer to the crucial television commission of inquiry in December 1969.

Naturally, there could be no question of authorising and licensing an independent and commercial television operation in the Republic. Moreover, by the later-1970s, one of the problems that the NP had with any such service was that with advanced technology readily available to the middle classes, not least a well-off Afrikaner population, 'any South African who could afford to purchase a satellite dish and television set would soon have access to the wonders and debauchery of television', with this being a possibility whether or not the state had its own television service.[207]

For, as early as 1975-1976, expanding global television capacity was stretching to the introduction of satellite viewing. In response, the government needed to get out in front to control these circumstances, because South Africans could, hypothetically, end up having access to content which had not been approved for official viewing by the Republic's authorities.[208] Hertzog was, then, perhaps the classic mouthpiece for the National Party's old fears of 'foreign' imperialism, and its potential to weaken the status quo. As Rob Nixon has suggested recently:

> 'the Afrikaner nationalist association of TV with foreign domination can only be understood in terms of a longer history of inter-colonial rivalry for control over black territory, labour power, and economic resources…it has to be seen, too, in terms of rival white imaginings about how the inception of TV in South Africa would change the balance of power.' [209]

Thus, there was increasing concern that the impact of foreign visual media influences could endanger the painstaking work of the conservative Nationalists.

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[206] *Republic of South Africa, Hansard, 1966 – 19 – 09, Col. 2406 - 2408*
[207] Ron Krabil, *Starring Mandela and Cosby: First Edition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 48-49
[208] Ron Krabil, *Starring Mandela and Cosby: First Edition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010), p.50
[209] Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African culture and the world beyond* (NYC, Routledge, 1994), p. 123

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The caution of conservatism was a notion that Verwoerd emphasised when speaking about television in the House of Assembly. In 1960, drawing on analogies, he declared that simply because something was modern and wonderful, it did not mean that it was good for a nation without at least first probing into the matter, 'That applies to poison gas, for example; it applies to the atom bomb for example…however wonderful and modern the invention may be, the physical danger attached to it makes it perfectly clear that you cannot us it.'[210] That call for an investigation to weigh up the consequences of using a modern technological medium would manifest itself a decade later as the Meyer Commision in 1971.

In due course, with the commencement of the Meyer Commission, the so-called *verkrampte*, anti-television troika fell. As the American scholar, Ron Krabil, has pointed out, Prime Minister Verwoerd, Minister Albert Hertzog and Broederbond chairman, Piet Meyer, had formed an ultra-conservative troika which was wholly opposed to television.[211] It is thus interesting that Meyer himself would go on to head a commission into the feasibility of television, and would subsequently come to a pro-television conclusion.

The Meyer commission as the facilitator for adaptation signalled a radical communications change, a shift that could be largely attributed to three factors. The first was that of political fissures within the ruling party, secondly, there was the threat posed by access to satellite television, and, lastly, there was the troubling issue of citizens' continuing dissatisfaction with their exclusion from the internation media and their country's apparent inability to embrace a world of modernity. [212]

The introduction of the the Meyer Commision promised – as it conceived a new viewing age - to bring South Africa's two worlds into existence on local screens, one experienced by the white population, the other the nature of life as experienced by other races within the Republic's borders.

4.3: The commission of inquiry into all matters relating to television

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[210] *Republic of South Africa, Hansard, 1960 – 03 – 09, col. 3002*
[211] Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African culture and the world beyond* (NYC, Routledge, 1994), pp. 56 - 58
[212] Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African culture and the world beyond* (NYC, Routledge, 1994), p. 58

A few months after the moon landing in 1969 the government appointed the commission of inquiry into 'all matters relating to television', in order to delve into the desirability, nature and feasibility of television within the Republic. Saul Dubow, revealingly, suggests that governments often appoint commissions to postpone decisions or to 'buy time' even though the prognosis of such a commission might already be anticipated or even known.[213] This would be distinctly reminiscent of the commission created by the Botha regime in the 1980s, chaired by De Klerk, in order to make recommendations concerning the so-called Bantu-question.

The Meyer Commission paved the way for South Africa to move into the modern technological era with mass media technology. This Inquiry can be viewed as having provided the definitive official justification for the use of the medium to try to influence and mould the perceptions, ideas and sentiments of the South African public under the banner of a social and cultural education for its various 'communities':

> 'This television service should form a supplementary and an integral part of the country's pattern of education and should be founded on such principles as will ensure the Christian system of values of the country, the national identity, and that the social structure of its various communities will be respected, strengthened and enriched.' [214]

Given that the Commission's figurehead was a prominent member of the ruling political elite, a member of the Broederbond and the head of the SABC, the direction taken by the report was bound to be coloured by a number of established convictions. The Inquiry laid heavy emphasis on a benign-sounding notion of education and on the sharing of information to help to foster and to protect the Republic and what it was considered to represent. The other aspect that the Commission focused on, was control. When it came to recommending where oversight and authority ought to lie, it was principally with the SABC. The report thus stated that:

> 'this television service should be subject to proper control to ensure that the service will at all times meet the requirements set forth in the commission's terms of reference and the requirements contained in the preceding chapters of this report, and that the

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[213] Saul Dubow and Alan Jeeves, eds., *South Africa's 1940s: world of possibilities* (Cape Town, David Philip, 2007), p. 10

[214] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 55

necessary control should be exercised by the SABC, the viewer community itself and ultimately Parliament.'[215]

As can be seen, control was crucial to Meyer, and in reality served as the justification of a state-owned and controlled television service. This will now be considered in more detail, as well as how the educative function of a television service in South African society was envisaged, particularly the ends which it would be serving.

Underlying theory

The Report was written in an academic style, firstly discussing underlying theories and comparative international examples, before getting to the South African question. Not restricted in readership, it was also printed and made public and could be purchased, although at a relatively costly price.

The Commission focused on various aspects of life in a society with a television service, but, for present purposes, only some of the more important facets will be touched on. These were, firstly, its theoretical component. Secondly, there was the Commission's heavy emphasis on two main aspects of a possible television service, those being control and purpose.

The only body proposed by the commission to control the television service was to be the SABC, and the supposed purpose was to be an educative. The word 'education' or 'informative' was often used in an anodyne style, in a sense using education and information as a euphemistic terminology to camouflage a project which could be interpreted as a further fostering of NP goals and ideals.

Before South Africa was discussed, television in the international community was probed in order to address any possible management difficulties that might arise. One of the major questions was the obvious one of control:

'Undoubtedly the fundamental question of control of the medium retarded its development in many countries. By 1950 about 30 countries were wrestling with the problems of television, and practically without exception it was this, i.e. the question of

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[215] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 55

how the medium should be controlled, that was one of the basic problems to which solutions were being sought.' [216]

The above observation made it clear that the commission was attempting, first, to deal with potential blocks and difficulties, and also to establish what it considered to be the best form of 'governance' for a new television service. It further stated that only a handful of the countries that were studied used complete government control, while the remainder made use of semi-controlled or private institutions. In a country such as South Africa, given the context of its socio-political landscape, the control of such a communication medium was an immensely important consideration.

Continuing with its 'abstract' tone, the report analysed the nature of television, and how it generally influenced community life. In simple terms, it summed up the notion that society could be shaped by television or the dominant media to which it subscribed, while emphasising strongly that any such impact should be moulded by the values of the society in question:

'The direct effect of television on the morals and morale of a particular society depends primarily on the system of values and beliefs of that society. If a society were to allow television to function outside and above this system, it would be exposing its moral fibre and its morale to forces over which it has no control. Probably this would happen only if the moral strength and the morale of the community was on the decline.' [217]

In other words, television could build or break down a society's social and cultural foundation, but only if the community allowed it to do so. However, if a community was made from a strong moral fibre and could hold its own against the impact of a new form of mass communication, such as television, the positives of reinforcing existing beliefs and values could definitely outweigh the negatives:

'As a positive growth factor television can have a powerful influence and effect on community life in so far as it upholds the accepted norms, values and standards of the

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[216] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), p. 2
[217] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), p. 11

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community in its program policy and is positive in reflecting and strengthening these things in its programmes.'[218]

Clearly then, the NP government would be interested in such a system if it was implemented in the correct manner. Many important facets of the implementation of a television service were still to be discussed, chiefly those of education and control. Satisfaction over these would then prove to be the justifying rationale behind the Meyer report's pro-television recommendation.

Education and authoritarian control

Education and control were the chief topics of the Meyer Report. The report listed various reasons why strict control would be needed. Before anything could be controlled, however, the decision to actually introduce a television service had to be justified.

Beyond the rhetoric of television poisoning the Calvinistic minds of society and exposing the Afrikaner community to all kinds of unwelcome foreign ideas, the question within the report moved away from whether a television service was needed and rather focused on the justification behind the proposed decision.

The question was phrased in another manner, 'does South Africa need an additional medium of communication?'[219] One logical argument was that the longer the Republic of South Africa waited for this medium, the longer the Republic would be struck in stagnation. South Africa was expected to resemble a modern, technologically advanced country which would be able to stand alongside the likes of the United States or Britain – that standing mattered, especially if one considered the positive outward image that the NP was attempting to project.

Such considerations aside, the commission came to the conclusion that the Republic should finally accept the desirability of creating a television service specifically for the sake of education, for the furthering of 'national' goals, and additionally for the encouragement of the growth of the various cultures within the country. The manner in which it should be implemented and, more importantly, managed or controlled, was the question that then loomed large.

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[218] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 12

[219] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 14

Raising the flag of responsible, ethical socio-economic management, the view of the Meyer inquiry was that the service would have to remain the responsibility of the SABC as it could be vested in the untrustworthy hands of any private corporation. The reasoning was that a private enterprise might show material of a sensational, provocative and misleading nature for the sake of profit.[220] This could lead to others attempting the same thing on the principle of free market capitalism, and this could in turn lead to the unravelling of the Republic.

Taking another account of the role of the market, a further aspect on which the report put emphasis was that no annual government grants would be made to a television service because it would, firstly, impose a heavy indirect burden on tax payers and, secondly, because it might encourage the growth of competition based on advertising and other avenues of profiteering.[221]

One of the other recognised problems with the introduction of television in a fledgling country such as South Africa was that the daily newspaper press might suffer from a new mass mode of propagating information.[222] It would have also have to be carefully controlled in order to protect the position of print and radio media. Although the proposed television service was not being created for as a source of financial revenue, certain other restrictive measures were considered in the report in order to prevent harmful effects on the press.[223]

It is worth bearing in mind that many of the Afrikaans newspapers in circulation were controlled by the same individuals who were attending Broederbond meetings and who were exercising an influential managerial presence within the SABC. Thus the natural assumption was that if one had two modes through which to circulate news and information, the educative national message could be made more effective.

The Meyer commission's report concluded that television could be used effectively as a tool to further the education of South African society and to uphold its system of Christian morals and ethics. This could be achieved by:

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[220] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 6

[221] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 6

[222] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 7

[223] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 7

 a:Providing wholesome and edifying entertainment;

b: by supplying reliable, objective and balanced information;

c: by reflecting and projecting the cultural assets of each community;

d: by stimulating indigenous creative talent; and above all,

e: by constantly striving to foster good relations between all the people of the county.[224]

Much emphasis throughout the report was placed upon the idea of using television as an educational tool in South Africa, a country "where knowledge is a prerequisite for survival".[225] In theory, it could serve as an aid to formal education and to tertiary education institutions, and it could be made to be 'multi-cultural' so as to empower the various groups within the Republic, within their own communities. Thus, television could be harnessed to the service of creating and fostering multiple ethnic nationalisms, along the premise of innate cultural differences, within the fabric of broader civil nationalisms in South Africa.

As noted, the commission's recommendation was that the television service be controlled by the SABC in a statutory fashion. This control should be exercised by the officials of the SABC, its viewers, and would be overseen ultimately by parliament as a state entity. It was also suggested that a local advisory committee be appointed to advise the government on television matters for cycles of three years. This board would consist of people from various fields of expertise, such as the areas of Christian religion, culture and education. [226]

This advisory board was reminiscent of the one suggested in the Commission of Inquiry into Undesirable Publications, taking into account the credentials of those who were likely to volunteer for such a position.[227] By and large, selected individuals were likely to be adherents of

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[224] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 15

[225] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 16

[226] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 16

[227] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 15

National Party dogma and would hardly have been representative of all the Republic's inhabitants.

The report recommended that from the outset programming appropriate to the advancement of South African society should be made available for white schools, even though this would be faced with some logistical and technical problems. Programming should also be made in the form of courses in association with universities and colleges. This could be shaped to supplement education provision in fields with critical shortages of skilled labour. [228]

Proposed implementation

Television would be implemented in two phases, the first of which would consist of the planning and approval of programming for the various population groups. For the white population there would be one bi-lingual channel in which Afrikaans and English would both be given equal representation. This would be undertaken by erecting technical services in Cape Town and Johannesburg, as well as mobile units for live programme actuality. [229]

For the so-called 'Bantu service', a single channel would be created for a television service in Zulu and Sotho only for the Witwatersrand. The reasoning behind this was partly due to the cost involved in reaching all of the "various Bantu areas...and afterwards extending to the respective urban areas", as well as to uncertainty over whether a sufficient segment of the black population would actually be able to afford television sets.[230]

For the second phase, the commission recommended that at soon as it was possible to do so, separate channels for English and Afrikaans should be created for whites. For the Bantu service, the commission recommended that the service be extended to Durban and into the Eastern Cape region.[231]

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[228] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 15

[229] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 17

[230] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 17

[231] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 18

As envisaged, television would be introduced over time with gradual effect in order to cater to the differential needs of all the people of the country. There would be a service for whites in both languages on only one channel for a number of years. The service "intended for the Bantu will initially be limited to the Witwatersrand."[232] Importantly, the proposed television service should also place emphasis on reading newspapers, books and periodicals, not only to encourage literacy but also to counter any losses the press might feel from the advent of television.

4.5: South African television service in practice

The television service that was established "could be described as bland, innocuous and safe, clearly designed to be unoffensive to the moral and religious values of the Calvinistic Afrikaners."[233]

This is how Hachen and Giffard have described the character of the initial television service. In this section we simply examine the difference between what the commission appeared to be suggesting and what was subsequently put into effect.

The idea that television could be exploited as a political tool is quite evident in the ties between the SABC and the NP, especially if one examines the parliamentary elections which were held every five years. The SABC's monopoly ensured that National Party candidates and policy positions received proportionately more mention in relation to those of their opposition. Television entered the realm of media on the 1st of January 1976 as a powerful new agency of political and electoral campaigning and the NP used this to the best of its ability.

As soon as the board of trustees, as advised by the establishing commission of inquiry, was chosen, the Broederbond inserted its interest into the new communication proceedings and then started to canvass for opinions about what type of programming would be best suited for the advancement of South Africa and its perceived national needs. Significantly, at this level SABC-TV news often included no overseas news and the service only had only one representative overseas in its early years.

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[232] R.S.A. Department of the Interior, *Report of the commission of inquiry into matters relating to television* (Pretoria, Government Printers, 1971), 5

[233] William A. Hachten and C. Anthony Giffard, *Total onslaught: The South African press under atack* (USA, Wisconsin University Press, 1984), p. 40

News programmes invariably featured Nationalist spokesmen or politicians who had been thoroughly briefed on the various questions and points of the coming interview. Those from opposing positions did not receive such latitude and independent critical voices from the black population enjoyed no airtime at all. Unsurprisingly, a notable study by the Department of Journalism at Rhodes University found that 80 per cent of its political coverage was devoted to government or National Party viewpoints.[234]

When it came to censorship, television broadcasting was governed not only by political demands but also by the dictates of Calvinist sexual morality. An example of the latter can be found in the case of the popular American television soap opera series, *'Dallas'*. There, a *'Dallas'* episode featuring homosexuality was not shown, just as news coverage of the 1976 Soweto riots was restricted in what it showed of the reality of violence and the death toll in black townships.

The programming offered was not only censored, but it also conveyed a completely different picture of South Africa from what the great majority of its inhabitants would have considered to be its everyday realities. For the most part it conveyed the image of a white and western republic, a bastion of modernity within the African continent with a contented population of so-called non-whites.

In the morning newspaper, *The Citizen* (to be discussed in the following chapter) an interview was conducted with some of the heads of department within the SABC such as Pieter de Bruin, Hennie Human and Robin Knox-Grant to consider the question of 'Blacks on T.V?'.[235]

The interview started off by asking whether it was the policy of the SABC to reflect the South African way of life. One of the examples that was used in the discussion was that of *The Villagers*. This was one of the first English television drama series produced by the SABC, about life in small mining community on the Rand. This question was answered by a counter question by Pieter de Bruin, 'what do you think is the South African way of life?' [236]

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[234] Robert B. Horwitz, *communication and democratic reform in South Africa* (UK, University of Cambridge Press, 2001), p.64
[235] *The Citizen*, 17 March, 1972, p. 7
[236] *The Citizen*, 17 March, 1972, p. 7

The Villagers, according to an article in *Die Burger,* was quickly becoming one of the SABC's most popular programmes amongst South African audiences.[237] The basis of this was a study undertaken by interviewing a sample group which consisted of white South Africans who owned television sets.

On the face of it, had the study been a credible representation of the country's television watching habits, the black population would also have been included. That said, the African majority could not have been included in any inclusive screen portrayal of the 'South African way of life', due to the technical-legal provision that they were not recognised citizens of the Republic but rather citizens of their own homelands. In that sense, De Bruin's response displayed a kind of strictly technical validity – clever, in however narrow a way

The interview concluded that although African or coloured people may not have been represented in the programming offered on English and Afrikaans channels, it was merely because their presence was not relevant to any of the specific programmes.

As De Bruin underlined further, the television brief was simple in scope, in that 'we have a service in English and Afrikaans, primarily for the English and Afrikaans sections. There is in the making a second channel, chiefly for Black people and that is the status quo at the moment.[238]

If the television service functioned in a propagandistic way, it is important to note the manner or style of communication. Rather than providing a viewing diet of obviously outright lies and crude misinformation, much of what appeared on television tended to reinforce – in an indirect or even 'embedded' manner, commonplace or everyday portrayals of an apartheid society under white domination, a 'natural' world governed by NP policies which should be taken for granted. In other words, a white television production such as *Die Avonture van Kuifie* was not necessarily a hardline, crudely racist or politically propagandistic programme, but served rather to reinforce the approved attitudes and behaviour of the apartheid Republic.

During 1976 and 1977 programming was divided in such a way that both the Afrikaans-speaking population as well as the English- speaking population received roughly a quarter of the

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[237] *Die Burger*, 19 August, 1976, p. 2
[238] *The Citizen*, 17 March, 1972, p. 7

allotted programming time. In comparison, the Black population received only 2. 0 to 2. 1 percent of the available programming allocation. The rest of the programming time was used for programmes about nature or other activities where specific racial groups could not be targeted.[239]

This is quite evident if one simply examines what actually featured on television at the time. For example, in September 1978 a day's programming featured the likes of The *Hardy Boys*, *The Villagers*, and news in both Afrikaans and English separately. Other programming thoughout that week featured programming such as *Eight is Enough*, *Sport in Afrikaans*, *The Money Game* and *Die Avonture van Kuifie*.[240] These Afrikaans and English programmes varied in content and quality, and catered appropriately to a fledgling viewing audience, in the general view of press reviewers.

The question that some questioning writers asked, whether the programming reflected the totality of the Republic, was a matter of judging whether exclusiveness was more valid than inclusiveness, a matter that lay at the very heart of Afrikaner nationalism.[241]

That notion – raised, interestingly, by a writer in *Die Huisgenoot* in 1978, made sense if one took into account that the white population made up the largest segment of the 'television-population', constituting almost 90 percent of viewership between 1967 and 1977. [242] That virtual exclusiveness aside, it was, however, also noted at the same time that the local news represented a broader available programming, justifying an appeal to a more 'inclusive' viewing audience.[243]

Criticism of the manner in which television was being implemented was often opposed by nationalist press opinion, in articles such as that found *in Die Burger* of October 1978, 'TV geen problem vir bruin leeraar'. [244] Drawing on a form of apartheid logic, it briefly described a coloured pastor as having no issue with the way in which television was being organised, as he

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[239] Hendrina van Rooyen, *Swartes in die SAUK se televisieprogramme van 1976, 1979* (Pretoria, Suid Afrikaanse raad vir geesteswetenskaplke navorsing, 1981)*, pp. 15 - 16
[240] *Die Huisgenoot*, September 1978, p. 38
[241] See chapter 2, the theoretical aspects of nations and their nationalisms line up with this idea of inclusiveness versus exclusiveness as a mechanism to foster and protect a 'people'.
[242] Hendrina van Rooyen, *Swartes in die SAUK se televisieprogramme van 1976, 1979* (Pretoria, Suid Afrikaanse raad vir geesteswetenskaplke navorsing, 1981)*, pp. 15 - 16
[243] *Die Huisgenoot*, September 1978, p. 38
[244] *Die Burger*, 11 October, 1978, p. 12

would have been the first person of colour hosting a religious programme church service aimed at the black community.

The observation has been made that SABC television services imported many shows as at the start it was cheaper than establishing production facilities for the creation of local works. Nonetheless, early programmes such as *The Villagers* were local if also limited in the range of life that they depicted. Only in the second series of the programme was there slightly more recognition of, and emphasis on, the life of black workers in the mining industry.[245] And in that respect, the brief representation of life for the black mining community was conveyed as an immensely positive experience – an implausible depiction.

One can then see that early television was firstly aimed at a very specific audience, that being Afrikaans and English speaking white South Africans, and the nature of the programming revealed that heavily propagandistic 'documentary' television was not necessarily a standard feature. Rather, when it came to coverage of what might be termed the spectrum of national life, manipulation that did take place was at the level of misrepresentation or omission.

4.5: Concluding Remarks

When discussing conventional propaganda and manipulation in the modern era, the use of television would make up a large part of any discussion. Since its introduction, it has made the process through which a particular political entity distributes its ideas easier and simpler. Today, public life is packed with overt and covert 'propagandising' of ideologies and value systems in the form of advertisements, government-supporting news programmes, documentaries and other broadcast material.

What holds true for the previous chapter on censorship and literature is also true for this chapter, in terms of the so-called authoritarian theory of mass media. A strong and centralised government instinctively makes use of programming that is beneficial to its notion of the well-being of a designated national culture. In effect, this meant that the approved depiction of the nation internally had the effect of making many within the Republic as well as in the outside world critically aware of the nature of apartheid policy.

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[245] "The Villagers," Vintagemedia, Last Modified in 2015, http://www.vintagemedia.co.za/television/the-villagers

In the case of South Africa, as we have seen, the foremost decision was not whether television should be used for such goals, but rather whether it should be made available at all.

The second important point stemmed from the nature of the programming at the inception of the service in the 1970s, which reflected the recommendations set forth by the Meyer Commission in most of its suggestions. The programming was to be supportive of Afrikaans and English white culture, and was at the same time not to be offensive towards anyone or other groups in the country.

In practice, what was being attempted was the underwriting of a dominant white minority's consolidation of a position of 'European' superiority and power. Seen at its simplest, programmes such as *The Villagers*, *Die Avonture van Kuifie* and *The Hardy Boys* sustained the image of a white and Western way of life, to the exclusion of any meaningful sense of the surrounding presence of an African, or more multi-cultural socio-political landscape. Arguably, the narrowness of television coverage aided in the fostering of the idea of a white South Africa, a 'hermit – kingdom' for its ruling minority.

Ultimately, apartheid South Africa was little different from other modern authoritarian or authoritarian-minded states which established state broadcasting monopolies. The operation and programming of both major radio and 'public' television was the responsibility of the SABC which conveyed the Nationalist interests of the ruling party.[246]

This chapter seeks to complement the previous chapter in considering the close relationship between media and the government, from newspaper and magazine interests through to radio and television. At the same time, given the growing pressures on the country's apartheid order, for the authorities there was an increasing need for a more vigorous and, possibly, unconventional approach to try to improve the picture of South Africa both internally and externally. This, then, brings one to the following and final chapter which examines the role of the Department of Information and its role in attempting to shape national and international public opinion about South Africa's political circumstances.

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[246] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phill, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p. 65

Chapter 5:

Department of Information: actions and reactions.

'The late Dr. Verwoerd once said that South Africa was involved in a war on two fronts: on the one against hostility abroad which has often been deliberately created, for reasons which will be set forth in this book; on the other against subversion and communism in South Africa.'[247]

5. 1: Introduction

The above quote is from the book, *The Paper Curtain*, written by Eschel Rhoodie in 1969 and it gives one a clear indication of the thought pattern of those in power at the time. Rhoodie's book will be used throughout this chapter to demonstrate the sense of confidence that certain members of the National Party government had in their convictions.

Rhoodie's views exemplified not only the stance of the National Party towards mounting political criticism from abroad, but they also capture quite well the defensive rhetoric of certain NP leaders in justifying their actions as a political party as well as confronting foreign criticism from outside the so-called laager. In that respect, the *Paper Curtain* might almost be seen as a sort of personal blueprint for broad pro-apartheid propaganda activities, while also serving as a justification for later, irregular actions.

At the centre of this phase of the 'hearts and minds' NP struggle were, clearly, some of the early programmes, actions and ideas of the Department of Information. *The Paper Curtain*, Eschel Rhoodie's testament, will then be examined as forming part of the background to the Department of Information's activities with regard to foreign movements and interventions.

Leading on from this, the Department's activities under the Rhoodie administration will be considered, in addition to an examination of the activities of the Club of Ten, a London-based pro-South Africa lobbying organisation, the creation of *To the Point* magazine, the founding of the newspaper, *The Citizen* and the attempted takeover of the *Washington Star*.

It should be mentioned at this point that although exposure of the so-called 'Muldergate' secret government propaganda campaign scandal sent shockwaves through the country in the late 1970s, the purpose of this chapter is not to revisit the information scandal again in its popular

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[247] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 7

Muldergate or Rhoodiegate manifestations. It is more to explore the Department of Information 'hearts and minds' actions which landed them in the courts in the first place.

That event was the culmination of a brief era of breakthrough government propaganda efforts to try to condition local and foreign public opinion. For a window on the manner in which this was undertaken, use is made of Eschel Rhoodie's other book, *Die Ware Inligting Skandaal* (1984), as well as his 1969 *The Paper Curtain*, recent *Wikileaks* reports and the proceedings of the *Erasmus Commission.* One fairly obvious consideration with sources is the question of the reliability or trustworthiness of records in a world of study marked by subterfuge, lies, and half-truths, depending on individual motivation.

Early beginnings

The Sharpeville massacre as it is known today has been studied in great detail by many leading historians, recently by the likes of Tom Lodge and Sarah Harris. One wider reaching impact of the shooting crisis lay far beyond the immediate law and order rhetoric of the NP and the authoritarian nature of the police. For if it was a turning point for the anti-apartheid struggle movements, at the same time it also signalled a shift in NP reactions to opposition actions after March 1960. What the government faced was an unprecedented level of critical media coverage of events at Sharpeville and other disturbed townships, like Langa in the Western Cape. Foreign criticism came from a wide range range of quarters, including the Christian voices of American civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King Jnr., and the usually conservative evangelist, Billy Graham. Both spoke out angrily against the South African government. [248]

This section will survey several of the more substantial 'opinion moulding' operations that the Department of Information launched with the sympathetic assistance of both national and international interests. Among the first of these were the overtures towards American public opinion through the medium of literature and film.

Initially, the Foreign Minister from the later 1950s, Erik Louw, travelled to the US to personally help to try to polish the image of South Africa. One avenue involved employing the Hamilton

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[248] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 33

Wright Organization, a public relations firm which had also assisted in trying to improve Communist China's image in the recent past. [249]

The Hamilton Wright Organization utilised photographic essays in popular magazines such as *National Geographic* and *Life,* as well as various information articles which were distributed amongst various newspaper groups.

Thousands of these 'inserts' were distributed within and beyond the borders of the continental USA. The contracted local firm also produced newsreels and short films of high technical quality to show the natural beauty of South Africa and to display the general friendliness of its inhabitants. Africa. The 'touristic' short films and newsreels were distributed to American movie theatres and were released through cinemas associated with major Hollywood production companies such as 20th Century Fox, MGM, Paramount and Warner Brothers. They were also distributed internationally in Germany, Spain and France and other overseas countries.[250]

The funding behind this activity came from the government's information division and its role was kept discreet. As a form of low impact conditioning of foreign public opinion, it avoided any explicit apartheid stance or attempt to justify the policy, in favour of focusing on a healthy, positive depiction of the stable and secure Republic and its natural and human assets

While these actions came to represent what could be seen as some of the lower scale propaganda endeavours of the nationalist government's foreign 'hearts and minds' crusade of the 1960s, it was during the 1970s that the apartheid propaganda machine really got its stride - both locally and abroad. The scope of the NP propaganda effort and how far reaching this endeavour actually was, is considered below. An obvious start to understanding this aspect of the 'hearts and minds' picture is Eschel Rhoodie's *The Paper Curtain.*

5.2: South Africa's Paper Curtain

Before working as the Secretary of the Department of Information (1972-1977), Eschel Mostert Rhoodie wrote and published *The Paper Curtain* at the end of the 1960s. It has been

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[249] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 34
[250] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, johannesburg, 2015), pp. 34-35

characterised as the "basis and blueprint of South Africa's world-wide secret propaganda war"[251].

This depiction has been backed very recently by the *New York Times* journalist, Ron Nixon, who has likened Eschel Rhoodie to the Joseph Goebbels of the apartheid government and *The Paper Curtain* as the *Mein Kampf* of the NP propaganda machine.[252] This may be an extreme example of hyperbole, although this polemical comparison does provide some idea of the impact of Rhoodie's book on the policies and programmes of the Department of Information in the eyes of American anti-apartheid observers.

The title of the book referred to the 'paper curtain' being drawn across South Africa by foreign countries in the form of negative, critical press and and other literature. As Rhoodie stated in the prologue:

> 'The Prime Minister, Mr. Vorster, has appealed to all South Africans to help combat the hostility against South Africa abroad. In fact, the Prime Minister went so far as to observe that the Government considers the threat to South Africa from abroad greater than any threat it currently faces from within... If we are to counter world hostility and ignorance about South Africa then let us know about our enemies.'[253]

In his book, Rhoodie was adamant that the international world's foreign policies were being unfair and overly critical towards South African politics at the time, the political landscape of the 1960s, commencing with Sharpeville, the turn to the armed struggle by the ANC and the PAC, the death of H.F. Verwoerd and other convulsions. As the National Party state grew increasingly more repressive in its responses to acts of resistance, Rhoodie sought to reassure his readers that the international world, especially countries such as the United States of America and Great Britain had faults of their own and had no reason to interfere with South African domestic policies.

For instance, turning to the example of Sharpeville, he observed:

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[251]Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phil, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p.73

[252] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 9

[253] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 9

"the Sharpeville shootings in 1960 receive[d] more prominence in the British press than the death of 33 members of the 'freedom movement' in Manila…during the week of May 1967…compare the plight of the small police force of Sharpeville…with that of the 500 police in Manila who stood ready." [254]

This was just one example of the defensive rhetoric to be found in his book, an argument that the NP-ruled South Africa was being singled out unfairly for hostile criticism, whereas questionable conduct in many other states was either receiving minimal attention or was being glossed over. Little serious account was taken of the prevailing political realities of a 1960s Western world dominated by ideas of freedom and equality, boosted by civil rights campaigns and anti-colonial movements. Not surprisingly, in this period of social change critical eyes were directed towards the actions of South Africa, which was seen to be violating the Western world's general liberal norms.

In this difficult climate, Rhoodie sought to change the manner in which the international and domestic community viewed criticism of the Republic. Importantly, he stressed that it was according to world opinion, a subjective factor, that the path that the Republic was following, was wrong. For it was 'a myth just like the "international community" is a myth and more and more people are beginning to admit this freely.' [255] In this oddly optimistic equation, if those who were criticising did not exist, there might in fact not be real criticism.

The argument for the position and rights of whites in South Africa was made along several lines of reasoning. Firstly, the white population was far from being 'settlers' and their history in the country was rooted so deeply that – in the case of the Afrikaner white majority – a native language had been born from it which was not spoken outside South Africa. Secondly, there was the notion that these inhabitants had greater moral, legal and historical rights to the country than the colonists of North America. Then there was the claim that there were several ethnically distinct Black nations within the borders of the Republic who were discrete from one another and who were following paths to separate nationhoods, with their own citizenship, distinct from that of South Africa. Lastly, Rhoodie pointed out that some Africans had risen to become judges, professors and cabinet ministers, serving their own peoples in their home states, thanks to the

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[254] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 50
[255] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 64

development made possible under the apartheid policy. [256] The models for this were the independent homelands, such as Bophutatswana and the Ciskei, which were held up as some of the Crown jewels in defence of the apartheid system.

These were positive developments that critical world powers were refusing to accept or to understand. Instead, the Republic's experience was unfairness, and that, in Rhoodie's terms, of being 'picked on'.

There was great concern with what was considered to be a lack of balance in the international approach to South Africa's affairs. The BBC, for instance, had purportedly covered political news in South Africa more thoroughly than any other country in the 1950s. Its newsreels and short film and other documentary footage all displayed a negative approach towards the system of apartheid. In fact, 31 varied BBC programmes about the Union were produced and broadcast between 1948 and 1953.[257]

Against this, *The Paper Curtain's* perspective was that within South Africa, things were nowhere near as terrible as a hostile United Nations would have people believe during the 1960s. Even Sharpeville wasn cited as an example of this. As Rhoodie observed, there was little reason for South Africans to be fearful after what had been a relatively minor disturbance, as after all, "the action at Sharpeville….[does] not even begin to compare with the turmoil which was underway in dozens of other African, Latin American and Asian countries."[258] Thus public political life in South Africa was comparatively far more stable and far more peaceful than in many parts of the developing Third World.

For Rhoodie, it was essential for South Africa to coordinate efforts in a national attempt to "tear down th[e] curtain [and] possibly pull it aside sufficiently to allow those who are sincerely interested in South Africa…to find out what it's really like."[259]

In other words, he was advocating opening a door to reliable outsiders, those judged to be 'sincerely interested' in South African affairs.

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[256] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 46
[257] Howard Smith, "Apartheid, Sharpeville and impartiality: The reporting of South Africa on BBC television 1948 - 1961" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 13, no. 3 (1993), 253
[258] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 176
[259] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 186

The South African Foundation, mentioned in chapter 1, was one of the bodies which played a key role in the propaganda initiative to try to tear down the so-called paper curtain. Its purpose was to publicise the opportunities that South Africa offered and to inform the wider world about the high standard of living, its vast market potential, and the tangible benefits awaiting tourists, investors and traders who embraced the country.[260]

The SAF, as envisaged in the chapter entitled 'Prognosis and Suggestions', would have to be helped firstly by the local business community with financial assistance, and secondly, a book foundation could be established to sponsor pro-South African literature in key countries such as the US, Britain,, France and West Germany.

Then, in a proposal somewhat reminiscent of official guided tours behind the Iron Curtain, the notion of an approved Speakers Foundation was floated, an agency through which to take picked people abroad, to "take speakers young and old to the United States, Britain and France." [261] There, through these non-governmental publicists, audiences would be able to understand for themselves what positive life and opportunities lay within the Republic.

Such ventures, according to Rhoodie's prescriptions, could greatly influence and improve the image of apartheid South Africa, and could sway the foreign crusade against it through positive counter-measures. He also suggested, lastly, that an educational foundation be created in order to assist South African universities in the exchange of professors and intellectuals from abroad. These and other more minor recommendations were meant to break through the wall, to fend off the wrongful accusations of the international community. Drawing on the myths and hopeful illusions of Verwoerd, Rhoodie declared:

> 'the late Dr. Verwoerd predicted that if we could break through this barrier of hostility and misunderstanding and if we could convince the outside world of the bona fides of our intentions and achievements, we in South Africa will enter a golden century of prosperity.'[262]

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[260] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 190
[261] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 190
[262] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 14

Rhoodie's volume was clearly the work of a man who was coming to the defence of the South African order and who believed deeply in that cause. It was meant to be read as a persuasive treatise, one which sought to make its readers feel, as if alongside the author, that the world was indeed unfairly prejudicial towards the Republic and that it ought to begin to 'stand up for itself' in a rightful way. *The Paper Curtain* was also very well written, and its facts and figures were represented in a skilful way to play upon both emotion and logic around questions of fairness and reasonableness. As a skilled exercise in manipulation, Rhoodie's work can be seen as a fair precursor or unofficial 'blueprint' for later overt and covert government activities through its Department of Information.

5.2: Maintenance and defence from behind the Paper Curtain

By the era of 1960 to the early 1970s, the earlier, mild criticism of the Republic had become magnified, encapsulated in the image of a paper curtain being drawn across the country. In a post-colonial world, opinion had moved far beyond the kind of disapproval voiced by British papers like the London *The Times* which had already observed in 1948 that if apartheid was a system where one section of the population was to be subordinated for the power and success of another 'it is contrary to the spirit of the Empire.' Defenders of incoming apartheid at the end of the 1940s may have pointed to the hypocrisy of such assertions on behalf of a segregationist British Empire, but the tide was already turning against South Africa.

What did the NP government and its Department of Information do to fight back in later decades and how was it projected as forming part of Afrikaner nationalism's struggle for survival.

Selflessness was one claim. As C.P. Mulder, a pragmatic and patriotic Afrikaner nationalist pointed out in 1978, white South Africans virtually deserved a Nobel prize for all that they had done for other races in the Republic.[263] Again, there was no shortage of publicly-proclaimed conviction.

The other side of the coin was the regularly-repeated public message that the Republic was under growing threats, as could be seen in an October 1978 article in *Die Burger*, copied from a Broederbond appraisal which had been delivered to parliament earlier in that week, entitled *Suid*

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[263] *Die Burger*, 12 October, 1978, p.17

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Afrika se vyande het geen total-plan nie.[264] The article stressed that as South Africa faced a wide array of critics and enemies with an equally wide array of strategies and motivations, foreign and domestic opponents, however uncoordinated, ought not to be underestimated.

Les de Villiers, whom was at the time the right hand man of Eschel Rhoodie during the height of the Department of Information's campaigns, recorded that he himself never doubted the ideological need for a propaganda offensive, such as the establishment of *To the Point* magazine or the morning newspaper, *The Citizen*:

> 'I did not question the ideological need for a secretly-backed magazine. Those among us who had some experience abroad of the devastating effect on the image of South Africa by endless reams of unfavourable copy in the world media knew that something drastic had to be done.'[265]

After all, he had himself seen the reaction to apartheid and its laws when he was stationed abroad in both the United States as well as in Canada. It was in Canada where a man had rather sneeringly told him that, "Sir, I think your country stinks."[266] Similarly, in the United States, de Villiers described a situation where he and other government officials were faced with hostility when angry students protested against South Africa during a conference. Writing in contemptuous terms, for De Villiers:

> 'They presented a fearsome sight. An odd mixture of beardos and weardos, black and white, small and large – a seething headless swarm of killer insects seeking for revenge. The audience was caught between ourselves on stage and the murky flood of flotsam behind them.'[267]

A propaganda offensive had begun in earnest after Eschel Rhoodie's appointment as Secretary of the Department of Information early in the early 1970s, following groundwork for such programmes that had already been laid earlier in the rising era of Afrikaner Nationalist power. This all amounted to the construction of a favourable climate for the dissemination of the messages of an apartheid counter-offensive.

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[264] *Die Burger*, 12 October, 1978, p. 17
[265] Les de Villiers, *Secret Information* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1972), p. 14
[266] Les de Villiers, *Secret Information* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1972), p. 26
[267] Les de Villiers, *Secret Information* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1972), p. 40

Examples of overt and covert actions by the Department of Information included an indirect attempt to buy a major interest in the British publishing company, Morgan Grampian, in order to try to secure a foothold in the US where it owned a major publishing house.[268] The Department ultimately failed in gaining a controlling share, although through its intermediary it managed to pick up a notable 28 per cent stake in the company.[269] Perhaps one of the more successful programs was that *To the Point* magazine.

To the Point

A prime example of the Information Department's secret dealings in trying to condition public opinion was the weekly news magazine titles, *To the Point and To the Point International*. This was one of the projects in which Rhoodie was involved even before he became Secretary of Information, as revealed in his supposedly tell-all-book, *Die Ware Inligting Skandaal* (1984) *"To the Point* was the first secret operation I was involved in, even before I was Secretary of Information".[270]

This magazine was an example of the Department of Information's extensive reach into the international arena and it merits particular consideration, especially considering not only the number of copies printed and distributed, but also how long it lasted. It could be argued that up to the point where the Department of Information was found out, *The Point* project was one of the more successful endeavours of the Department's hearts and minds strategies.

Initially, Rhoodie was asked to return to South Africa from the Netherlands to become the magazine's deputy editor. The magazine was spurred on by Herbert Jansen who had experience of directing and editing 'national outlook' publications, with such publications as *Verenigde Nederlandse Uitgewery*, *De Telegraaf* and *Elseviers Weekblad* to his name.[271]

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[268] Morgan Grampian was a British publishing company that the Department of Information bought and subsequently used for their own purposes. It was fairly successful as the company owned and published various magazine and journals thoughout Europe and America.

[269] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p.69

[270] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 250 (own translation from Afrikaans)

[271] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phil, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p. 76

Funding for the magazine was secured through the underwriting of large-scale subscriptions to approved opinion makers around the world by the government, an initiative endorsed by both Mulder as well as Prime Minister Vorster. [272]

When Rhoodie was first contacted by Mulder, the Minister of the Department of Information, he was told that he would play a vital and secret role in the new project. In 1971, one of the first things he had to see to was that the ideological character of the magazine's articles was properly crafted, as well as that the mass subscription drive was effectively implemented. [273]

In its ideal conception, the nature of the publication had to be 'objective' and 'non-political' in its representation of South Africa and should not engage itself with the politics of the NP, in relation both to the South African version of the magazine as well as to an international edition, a version which had to be abandoned in 1977 when British journalists refused to take overbearing instructions from editorial offices in Johannesburg.[274] According to sources such as the Public Library of US Diplomacy, it was also suspected in North America at the time that *To the Point International* magazine had underhand financial backing in South Africa from both private groups and its government, due to its implicit pro-white minority bias and its negligible attention to apartheid in its articles and especially in editorials.[275]

Key figures involved in this project included not only Mulder and Rhoodie, but also Vorster, Martin Dayzings who would be serving as chief editor, Gordon van der Merwe, the assistant editor, the influential security chief, General Hendrik van den Bergh, the foreign minister, Pik Botha.[276]

The magazine described itself as 'South Africa's first international news magazine' with an independent opinion and a unique image for a discerning audience.[277] De Villiers wrote that the purpose of the magazine would be not only to inform foreigners but also South Africans themselves 'in a more sober and accurate fashion', thus helping South Africa to finally move in

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[272] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 60
[273] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 61
[274] Alex Hepple, *Press under apartheid* (London, London International Defence and Aid Fund, 1974), pp. 235-236
[275] "To the Point International," Wikileaks, Last modified April 4th, 2014, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1977STATE162910_c.html
[276] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 255
[277] *To the Point*, February 12, 1972, p. 39

the same directions as so many other countries such as the USSR and the USA concerning their image in the global community. [278]

However, from a study of the slant of the articles, editorials, interviews and advertisements carried in *Point* issues, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that only small blemishes on the good 'character' of the the Republic were written about, and adverse news events from both Africa and the rest of the world were focused on in elaborate detail. Meanwhile, the whole publishing operation had to function under the gaze of a watchful, non-government press. This was, predictably, viewed as a worryingly disloyal factor.

In the words of Rhoodie's former Deputy Secretary of Information, Les De Villiers:

"It was clear that the whole edifice of lies on which we had tried to launch South Africa back into the world was in imminent danger of demolished by the Press"[279]

Concerning the position of the press, one New Year edition of the magazine carried a four-page long interview with ex-prime minister, B.J Vorster, about press freedom in South Africa. One of the topics was Vorster's insistence that South Africa enjoyed the most press freedom, considering its circumstances, in the world. On the issue of the banning of some literary works he conceded that, in principle, "No government has the right, in my opinion, to ban or condemn criticism of its actions". [280]

Nonetheless, action would be a necessity in any publication in which circumstances led to what in the view of his government concerned the provocation of feelings between the races, for "given the situation in South Africa...it is reckless, irresponsible and unpatriotic to incite feelings between colour groups or language groups in South Africa...then I protest".[281]

In further emphasis on the idea of South African press freedom in the earlier 1970s, a *Point* editorial in a May 1973 edition of the magazine, *Two Threats to Freedom,* even advocated that the press should always be vigilant against interference because in the rest of the world, in the United Kingdom for example, the press was subject to being controlled.

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[278] Les de Villiers, *Secret Information* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1972), pp. 14 - 15
[279] Marlene Breytenbach, "The manipulation of public opinion by state censorship of the media in South Africa" (D.Phil, Stellenbosch University, 1997), p.77
[280] *To the Point*, February 12, 1972, p. 49
[281] *To the Point*, February 12, 1972, p. 49

Ironically, this appeared at a moment well before numerous restrictive laws had already been implemented in order to restrict the liberties of the domestic press. These included, for example, the Official Secrets act of 1956, the previously discussed Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963, and the Newspaper and Imprint Act of 1971.[282]

While the advertisements in *To the Point* magazine naturally centred on South Africa, the nature of the advertising stood out because they were explicitly educative and harmonious, underlining the legitimacy of the presence of foreign firms in apartheid society. For instance, an advertisement by the German Siemens electronics company, featured a group of African, white and coloured people smiling with the words, 'Siemens has a big stake in South Africa'.[283]

On another level, an equally typical response to the international offensive against the Republic came from a *To The Point* editorial from August 1972, which was not only critical towards the spending habits of the UN, but also the biased manner in which it conducted its work:

"The United Nations...have sent yet another team on a month-long field mission to investigate alleged violations of human rights in Southern Africa. The cost of the mission...is estimated at between $25 000 and $30 000. To an organization which is virtually bankrupt, this is no insignificant figure [to] those states that are footing the bill [whom] will expect a balanced and well -documented assessment. They are in for a disappointment." [284]

The reason for their disappointment lay in the UN's lack of even-handedness, its disregard of deplorable circumstances in other states:

"[the] the persistent failure of the UN to investigate the human state of affairs in the Sudan, in Burundi, in the Central African Republic (where thieves have their ears cut off), in Uganda and elsewhere...seal-clubbing in Canada last year evoked more reaction from the UN and protest amongst students in Holland, England and Germany...than the recent clubbing to death of human beings in the Central African Republic [and] after the massacre in Burundi...the UN did send a commission to Burundi, but only to find out

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[282] Alex Hepple, *Press under apartheid* (London, London,International Defence and Aid Fund, 1974), p .14
[283] *To the Point*, 15th May, 1973, p. 6
[284] *To the Point*, 12th August, 1972, p. 20

what sort of aid the government, which was largely responsible for the massacre - required from the UN." [285]

The above perspective provides a perfect example of the message that the magazine was trying to convey to the international world. A further instance was that of an earlier April 1972 *Point* editorial dealing with the UN's approach to combatting discrimination. In being critical of the UN proposal to conduct a worldwide study of racial discrimination, the magazine's argument was not that the investigation itself was a problem. The problem lay in the terms upon which the study would be conducted. Discrimination would only be examined in the form that it took against peoples deemed as 'black', instead of considering all types of racism or discrimination on the African continent and elsewhere. Therefore, for the General Assembly:

"The resolution would have been of greater value and picked up more support had it also included all other races. The fact is that in Africa there is also discrimination against people of Indian, Chinese and European descent, and not necessarily in white citadels such as Rhodesia or South Africa"[286]

Examples were then given of ethnic inequalities, racism and discrimination in other countries such as Tanzania, Liberia, Burma, Japan, Australia and Pakistan, where no 'white man' could be granted citizenship. Typically, *To the Point* made consistent use of attack – exposing the faults of the rest of the African continent as well those of Europe and North America – as a means of mounting a propagandist defence of South Africa.

Rhoodie maintained that the magazine did good work in showing the rest of the world what was going on the African continent and, in particular, in enlightening an international readership which included cabinet ministers, businessmen and figures from the medical field. The magazine was trumpeted as a success, as it "was a window into the paper curtain other countries tried to close in front of South Africa ". [287]

We turn next to the formation of a pro-South Africa lobbying organisation which had a different reach from that of a public image magazine like *To the Point*.

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[285] *To the Point*, 12th August, 1972 p. 20
[286] *To the Point*, 20th April, 1972, p. 17
[287] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 259 (Own translation from Afrikaans)

The Club of Ten

One of Rhoodie's first and perhaps most shadowy propaganda organisations was the establishment of The Club of Ten, based in both the United Kingdom and in the continental European spheres. Initially, the body was supposed to have been made up of sympathetic British, South African and US businessmen. At first glance it appears that the Club was mostly the initiative of a former International Court judge, Gerald Sparrow, although it becomes clear that above him – or behind him at the top – it was the Department of Information and Eschel Rhoodie that was in charge. [288]

The Club, according to Sparrow, was a private group of wealthy businessmen with a committed South African interest which was concerned with ensuring that positive views of South Africa received a proper airing in the Western press.[289] This grouping, according to Rhoodie himself, cost approximately R 800 000 of government funding by 1978 to become established.[290]

Sparrow himself had the past experience of having written many books on the topics of travel and tourism, and was treated to an extended tour of South Africa on his first visit, sponsored by the South African Tourism Corporation and the national airline, South African Airways. Supposedly, in 1972 he was then put together with both Rhoodie and Mulder to discuss ideas for a pro-South Africa Club, with the personal knowledge and consent of the prime minister. Subsequently, he also received $600 000 as a cash payment over a three year period from Vlok Delport who was then the ambassadorial director of information at South Africa House in London.[291] With Rhoodie, plans were made to buy full-page advertisements in leading British broadsheet dailies which was considered to be 'the only way to counter negative publicity.' [292]

According to hostile observers such as David Sibeko, an ANC representative in London, the Club was composed largely of pro-South African right-wingers, with Gerald Sparrow as the

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[288] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p.66
[289] "Department of Information scandal: Club of ten links revealed," Wikileaks, Last modified May 18, 2015, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978PRETOR03582_d.html
[290] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 179
[291] "Department of Information scandal: Club of ten links revealed," Wikileaks, Last modified May 18, 2015, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1978PRETOR03582_d.html
[292] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p.67

group's spokesman as he was the most respectable member of the English Conservative establishment among the Club's members.[293]

The official publically stated purpose of the club was to be:

> '…tackling the global media for their bias, and the United Nations and the British and American governments for double-dealing and hypocrisy in their treatment of South Africa.' [294]

The press advertisements and article inserts were overseen either by Rhoodie himself or by his deputy, Les de Villiers and were factually heavy in a crusading tone of exposing inaccuracies. The paper advertisements exposed graphic instances of violence, blatant racism and other human rights abuses in various parts of the world, and urged readers to send the advertisements themselves to their governments to encourage them to be just as censorious and righteous as they usually were in critical reaction to South African's policies of which they disapproved.[295]

When *The Guardian* published a series of articles condemning South African's race policies and low wages for black workers, the Club took out advertisements in *The New York Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* as well as in *The Guardian* itself. These asked why the paper did not write critically of those British companies that were paying low wages in Hong Kong, Ceylon and India.[296]

That line – of charging South Africa's critics of hypocrisy - set the general tone of the Club of Ten's message, critical and defensive yet not necessarily untrue or factually incorrect in its assertion of examples of poor human rights conditions in many parts of the world. Its approach chimed with views to be found in Rhoodie's *Paper Curtain*, and their propagation in the 1970s would cost about $100,000 in one year alone.

The Club of Ten was later publicly unmasked as a paid subsidiary of Pretoria, although the direct Pretoria link had been kept effectively under wraps for some years by the outward appearance of its seemingly independent identity – sympathetic to the apartheid order, but as an external

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[293] "Club of ten ad in Washington Post," Wikileaks, Last modified April 4, 2013, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1973LONDON13625_b.html

[294] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 67

[295] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 180

[296] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 67

'friend' with a London postal address. It was only after Sparrow was legally obliged by British authorities to supply details of sourcing and membership that the true background to the Club of Ten began to emerge.[297]

After this unravelling, and unfavourable reports of the South African government attempting to sway political views abroad by means of covertly-placed advertisements and press articles, Sparrow reportedly changed his mind about the policy of apartheid and claimed that he wanted to expose the underhand dealings of the South African government, but was by then too deeply implicated himself. Significantly, in one of its July 1979 issues, the British weekly periodical, *The Spectator*, reported that Sparrow's wife, who happened to be Thai, had been less than impressed by what she encountered on a visit to the Republic.

The following section, an exploration of the saga of *The Citizen* English daily newspaper was one of the last failing attempts by the Department of Information to prolong the ongoing propaganda push by the apartheid state.

The Citizen

The tangled story of *The Citizen* started with an Afrikaner business tycoon named Dr. Louis Luyt and the South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN) and ended with the establishment of a brand new conservative English-language newspaper. We will examine *The Citizen* within the context of its political function - that the newspaper was, in fact, a propagandising medium for the large scale dissemination of information which served the interests of the ruling party. This newspaper was not a blunt or crude apartheid propaganda tool but rather more mainstream in character. It built on material and approaches broadly similar to that of *To The Point*.

In tandem with this, the writings of Aida Parker will also be examined here. Parker, a journalist for *The Citizen* was born in Britain and educated in South Africa and Australia. She wrote mainly political pieces, which invariably cast a positive light on the NP. Some of her *Citizen* pieces on an alleged 'secret US War' against South Africa were also published in booklet form,

The Citizen, according to Rhoodie, was committed to the same editorial manifesto that made it as independent of the government as *To the Point*, and as such it served as a vital defensive agency

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[297] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesaburg, 2015), p.68

against the onslaught on the Republic. He also maintained, improbably, that if Prime Minister Vorster had decided to make their plans for such a press project known to the public, he would have been supported by a patriotic public and business community alike.[298]

Birth of the Citizen

The SAAN which was in the 1970s the leading newspaper publishing conglomerate held various papers, including *The Rand Daily Mail*, *Sunday Express*, and the *Sunday Times*. The Department of Information attempted to acquire or to gain some control of such titles to try to exercise influence over the position of liberal English newspapers within the Republic. It should be noted that it was not the SAAN stable as a whole which was seen as a hindrance by the NP but mostly *The Rand Daily Mail* specifically.

Rhoodie claimed to have studied the writing and publishing patterns as well as the readership of the-above-named newspapers and came to the conclusion that 80 percent of the information used by foreign journalists and publishing outlets, came from the local daily English-language press. Supposedly, some of the journalists did not even attempt to scrutinise or to rewrite information in their own words.

This, according to Rhoodie, meant that what was being read by millions of people in many countries was being based on a few anti-NP newspapers. What was needed was a 'moderate' English newspaper which would serve a Witwatersrand readership which was non-Afrikaans. as well as overseas journalists overseas seeking more accurate information.[299]

Luyt, a millionaire who had made his money in the fertilizer business, was chosen by Vorster to lead this government project. Initially, his holding was provided with R2 million by the Department of Information to buy out the majority shares in the company[300].

Once it had got wind of what was envisaged, the SAAN rejected the bid for control of the company as what it represented- an attempted NP takeover- and the Department of Information was obliged to regroup in to get another contingency plan into action.

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[298] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 260
[299] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 260
[300] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 262

This was to be the establishment of a 'respectable' and independent-looking English newspaper which would not act blatantly as an openly propagandist mouthpiece of the National Party and its politics. As Mulder himself realised, 'If the newspaper is simply going to be an English version of *Die Transvaler*, then we are wasting our time, money and energy.'[301] To be effective, a new paper would have to be free of any obvious display of Nationalist ties.

It was estimated that it would take two to three years for a venture such as this to fully get off the ground, with the idea that once realised, it could be compared with a paper such as *The Sunday Times*, and would subsequently act as a countervailing press rival. The newspaper project would become known as 'Project Annemarie', which was the name of Rhoodie's daughter.[302] The title of the proposed morning paper, *The Citizen,* was also Luyt's idea, squashing other proposed titles, such as *The Morning News*, *The Guardian* or *The Republican.* [303]

A brief editorial in the first 1976 edition of *The Citizen* by its chief editor, Martin Spring, entitled, 'What does The Citizen stand for?' declared that the new paper stood very simply for all that was best for and best about the Republic. Louis Luyt and others who had personally invested in the paper, had done so from high-minded motives, as there was a need for a publication that encouraged 'political reconciliation between English and Afrikaans, moderate whites and blacks' and that would serve as a catalyst for healthy reform and change.

The grounds for this were encouraging for, after all, the white population was comprised mostly of 'decent, humane and Christian people - not racist ogres', and the vast majority of the black population was restrained and sober-minded, and did not want to be 'stampeded into disastrous confrontation.' [304]

Rhoodie created an editorial manifesto for *The Citizen*, and it is worth noting a few of its fundamental assertions as they sought to suggest that the paper and its correspondents would be independent of any government direction, but would at the same time uphold South African 'values' and support the national interest.

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[301] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 262 (own translation from Afrikaans)
[302] Les de Villiers, *Secret Information* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1972), p.126
[303] Les de Villiers, *Secret Information* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 1972), p.127
[304] *The Citizen*, 7 September, 1976, p. 29

The following points (1, 3 and 4) affirmed that the paper would be independent and objectively 'factual' in all of its coverage. [305]

1: *The Citizen* is to offer an independent newspaper whose staff to the best of their ability will report to the public on the basis of established and reliable information sources as well as current and background facts in a proper context not under any bias.

2: *The Citizen* and its staff rejects the manipulation of information in all forms and will not tolerate attempts to influence readers by offering regular news through personal bias or own opinions.

4: Editorial staff will at all times uphold the traditional journalistic codes and maintain them, namely the truth, accuracy, thoroughness, balance, proper perspective, simplicity and efficiency of expression and distancing of reporting.

Then further points (5, 7 and 8) proclaimed the purpose of the newspaper and announced what its code of conduct would be regarding South Africa's security and values: [306]

5: The publisher and the editor will uphold the editorial policy of the newspaper based on what is regarded as generally accepted values essential for the future survival and prosperity of South Africa and all its people.

7: The Citizen will try to investigate and report on all matters in the public's interest, regardless of controversy, where it is not prohibited by the law, in the belief that a well-informed community is the best defence against those who seek to undermine the country's fundamental values while at the same time being the assurance of competent, fair and responsible behaviour by public and private figures and institutions. However, no one who is employed by the Citizen will deliberately say or write something that does not promote the security of the Republic and its constitutional elected government or will cause disputes between the different national groups.

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[305] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 268-269 (Own translation from Afrikaans)
[306] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 268-269 (Own translation from Afrikaans)

8: *The Citizen* opposes Communism, Fascism and Marxism as ideologically incompatible with a just government and its prosperity. The Citizen supports free enterprise.

Any overview of a sample of the articles, editorials and advertisements from the paper reveals that the version of South Africa that was being portrayed by *The Citizen* was one that exemplified NP leadership as wise and just, the apartheid system as an effective and essential means of governing the Republic, that those critical of the country's domestic political order were unpatriotic or virtually criminal, and that time was needed for NP policy to evolve positively in the face of the various threats to endangered white civilisation in Southern Africa.

News reporting in practice

Examples from two years of *Citizen* issues have been selected, from 1976 when it was started and in 1977 in order to secure an idea of the character of the magazine's articles, and also to consider it against the later years of the 1970s, a charged period marked by a change in white South African experience within a rapidly changing world. Regional war efforts around South Africa were intensifying, an armed struggle led by black liberation movements was gathering in momentum, and the issues of a potential majority-rule Rhodesia and a post-colonial Angola were looming in front of white-ruled South Africa.

In terms of 'op-ed' advertising, the example of a full-page NP spread in the 19th November 1977 issue, under the pen of F.W de Klerk, was a classic illustration of *The Citizen* at work. Emblazoned in large letters, 'English speakers it's time to let your conscience speak' and 'below the words', it then quoted previous prominent Afrikaner leaders, such as D.F. Malan, J.G Strydom and H.F. Verwoerd about the desired relationship between the white groups in South Africa.

Furthermore, it highlighted some of the socio-economic and political difficulties that the Republic was going through in the later 1970s, such as civil unrest and the threat of sanctions. One of the leading exclamations was, 'Black unrest is NOT the National Party's fault' and asked the question whether the unrest in Black townships and the constant international barrage of criticism could all be blamed on the policies of the NP. The answer to such questions lay in the simple notion that the 'Red menace' was to blame, and that it was communist groups which were

evoking violence and stirring up unlawful civil protest which was exposing the Republic to outside hostilities.[307]

An earlier September 1976 article by Aida Parker, '10 years in Africa's hot seat', set a standard for *The Citizen's* glowing view of NP leaders as anti-communist crusaders. Parker's piece extolled Vorster's achievements since coming to power in fighting communism and in keeping not only the Republic but the surrounding region safe. Almost heroically, he was 'probably one of the top enemies of the Kremlin...he holds in his hands the fate of some 30 million South Africans, Rhodesians and South West Africans.' [308]

Another instance of the near-glorification of Nationalist political leaders and their policies was another Aida Parker article in March 1977, 'The Voice of the Prophet'. In a far-fetched analogy, this was about how Verwoerd had introduced a balkanising system similar to the Swiss Canton structure over which the liberal author, Olive Schreiner, had pondered in the segregationist late-nineteenth century, in her famous, *Story of an African Farm* (1883).

Thus, Parker quoted from Schreiner's book in defence of the Bantustan-minded Verwoerd and the NP that, 'If our people are so mingled that our states cannot become the foundation of healthy national life, would it not be possible in such a large and sparsely peopled country to redivide the races, giving each its own territory?'[309]

One other article that stood out in March 1977 was particularly relevant to the scope of this present study, 'Minister defends press watchdog'. This documented Connie Mulder's defence of the press censorship bill of 1977. Mulder defended the Bill as a necessary safeguard against the spread of pornography, declaring, "In countries where there was virtually no restraint on the press it led to gross abuse of the press. It went and in hand with the spread of hardcore porn in a spirit of 'anything goes'. Therefore, lack of control was not press responsibility and an absence of accountability was irresponsible.[310]

Furthermore, in Mulder's reassurance, complete state regulation of the press would be unacceptable in South Africa because of its special Western tradition of freedoms, whereas by

[307] *The Citizen*, 19th November, 1977, p. 4
[308] *The Citizen*, 18th September, 1976, p. 18
[309] *The Citizen*, 10th March, 1977, p. 10
[310] *The Citizen*, 12th March, 1977, p. 2

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contrast, in 'Africa, all but 5 countries' newspapers have been taken over to become instruments for propaganda purposes.' For its part, the Pretoria government rejected such extremes in favour of the desirability of 'press freedom with responsibility'.[311]

The Press Bill created a considerable stir both nationally and internationally, and yet again in March 1977 Mulder's voice was again out in *The Citizen*, in defence of the intentions of the Bill:

> 'I expect of the press to act like any loyal patriotic citizen, to make public what has happened...there is no restriction in reporting the truth. I think that it is necessary that the truth be reported for the sake of the public and also for those in authority...But at the same time my feeling is that the press must report but must also ensure that South Africa's image is not prejudged.' [312]

Other such pro-government material tended, invariably, to reflect the stance of *The Citizen's* opening editorial manifesto – such as, to select just one random example, an early article by the Minister of Bantu Administration, Andries Treurnight, in 1976, 'Homelands are the Key':

> 'To get separate development or national self determination of the different people in South Africa to succeed, there was no alternative to imaginative development of the homelands and the settling of large numbers of black citizens in their homeland...one could be thankful for all that has already taken place, but the pace would have to be quickened.'[313]

We turn, next, to the work of the staff writer, Aida Parker, who published a series of articles on the so-called secret war against South Africa, touching directly on themes contained in *The Paper Curtain.* Interestingly, and revealingly, Parker on more than one occasion in *The Citizen* pointed to the need for the government to go on a major propaganda offensive against its adversaries in the very near future.

The secret U.S war against South Africa

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[311] *The Citizen*, 12th March, 1977, p. 2
[312] *The Citizen*, 14th March, 1977, p. 2
[313] *The Citizen*, 30th September, 1976, p. 3

Aida Parker, as already mentioned, wrote not only a considerable series of polemical articles aimed at rectifying negative press views of the Republic from the United States, amongst other targets, but was also one of the few English-speaking journalists who enjoyed the privilege of regular interviews with government leaders such as Vorster, Mulder, and Pik Botha.

At one level, the almost passionate drive of Parker's journalism suggests that it was all the work of a fervent follower, the work of someone who truly believed in the NP and its policies. Equally, it was later established that Aida Parker was actually a government agent of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), identified by Gordon Winter who was himself an agent of the South African authorities.[314]

In October 1976, in the early aftermath of the outbreak of the Soweto crisis, in Aida Parker's 'South Africa prepares for battle against propaganda', she wrote with a sense of relief and encouragement, 'It's happening at last. After years of being a sitting duck, in the world-wide barrage of words targeted at this country, South Africa is going to start girding itself to fight back'.[315]

For Parker, a strong counter-offensive was long overdue, given what the Republic was increasingly having to confront. During that very week of writing and publication, the volume of anti-South African radio programmes alone, both from within Africa itself as well as from outside the continent, was reaching an intolerable level. According to Aida Parker's obsessive counting, in radio-broadcasting certain words that had politically biased or simply negative South African connotations were being aired up to 500 times in certain instances. Those included words such as racist (250 times), imperialism (57), puppets and stooges (27), and Vorster (173).[316]

The collection of articles that Parker wrote on the alleged secret war against South Africa was published in August 1977 by a grouping called the Americans Concerned about South Africa (ACSA) Foundation. Here, the ACSA goals were, obviously, of predictable note. This organization declared its role to be that of educating Americans about Southern Africa, of

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[314] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 170
[315] *The Citizen*, 2nd October, 1976, p. 4
[316] *The Citizen*, 2nd October, 1976, p. 4

providing continuous and unbiased information, and, lastly, of working to 'influence governing opinion, though public opinion, towards securing Western interests in Southern Africa'.[317]

The US booklet consisted of ten Parker articles published in *The Citizen* during June 1977. In tone, it amounted to what might best be characterised as educational propaganda or propagandistic education, aimed at a general public readership. Much of the focus fell upon what were depicted as the misdemeanours or dirty dealings of the USA in its relations with South Africa

The first excerpt started off by making three claims. These were that the Carter presidential administration was waging an undeclared war against South Africa in which opinion against the Republic was being mobilised, overseas companies and foreign nations were being pressurised by the U.S to withdraw or to reduce investments, and to reduce links, and, lastly, that the U.S government was attempting to destabilise the region by assisting the prospects for majority black leadership.[318]

Parker declared, 'South Africa is now No 1 on the American liberal "hit list", ranking even higher than Rhodesia or Chile.' The apparent agenda behind this was a strategy for ending white minority rule, so that the U.S would then be able to shape the political leanings of a Southern African ally in Africa:

> 'These elements have decided that the Whites of South Africa are finished. The war now being waged is to ensure that the end of White rule, and the substitution of Black majority rule, is achieved as speedily as possible - and that when the Blacks take over, the U.S will have a special and friendly relationship with them, whether they are pro - or anti - Marxist.'[319]

It was, according to her article, chiefly the underhand workings of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which was channelling funds from the US State Department into various 'black power' movements, unknown to their recipients. These organizations included the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC), the South African Students Organization (SASO) and the Soweto

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[317] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), P. 1
[318] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), P. 2
[319] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), p. 1

Students Representative Council (SSRC). The claim was even made that Robert Sobukwe's earlier Pan African Congress (PAC) had been created as part of this plan.[320] By implication, in that respect, it was the US State Department and the CIA which were to blame for provoking the shooting at Sharpeville.

Furthermore, Parker argued in her second article, that the Africa-America Institute (AAI) based in New York, was to blame for the spread of many of the delegations and movements against the Republic. For instance, in December 1976, the AAI had held a meeting in the Lesotho capital, Maseru, ostensibly to discuss problems in Southern Africa, but in reality behind closed doors the purpose was to consider plans to either violently or peacefully overthrow South Africa's 'white minority regime'. [321]

The AAI had also supposedly spent R20 million since 1962 on black educational programmes which helped refugees from liberation movements to further their education, whereas in reality the purpose was radical political socialisation and later military training. Citing a report issued after one of its educational workshops, Parker produced incriminating evidence:

> 'It is of vital importance to provide education and training for refugees from Southern Africa...because they are symbols of the struggle against racism and for the majority rule in their countries, and because they will be needed in the fight for freedom and in the subsequent process of nation-building. The objectives of such training should be ...to prepare students to participate effectively in the struggle for freedom.' [322]

A third article concentrated on the question of black consciousness and its growing influence in South Africa during the later 1970s. As Aida Parker concluded, 'Black power was being imported deliberately from the US'. Thus, Black Consciousness was not an authentic ideological construction born of the local need for radicalising black people to overcome feelings of racial inferiority and to realise ethnic pride and self-reliance, but was instead a   phenomenon imported from the US to stir up racial hostilities in the Republic:

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[320] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), pp. 1 - 2

[321] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), p. 6

[322] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), p. 7

'It was cynically introduced as a means of inflaming racialist passions and creating a Black-White polarization, to achieve social change in the present factual situation, in other words to bring about confrontation or 'Black Blitzkrieg' '[323]

The American figure most implicated in this imported alien ideological construction, in Aida Parker's eyes, was Stokely Carmichael, whose writings and oratory formed part of the centre of the American Black Power movement, not least his insistence that it was only through revolution that it would be possible for 'the Black man' to achieve full power.[324]

In the final article of the set, Parker urged her readers, 'South Africans must now recognize the face of their true enemy, since their country's future may depend on their doing so.'[325]

This series was then also published by the 'sunshine' colour organ, *S.A. Today,* and was later also printed by Perskor in the format of a book.[326]

By the late 1970s' *The Citizen* claimed to have a circulation of more than 70 000 copies, but by then, questions about its true strength and funding were increasingly spreading. When sceptical journalists from *The Rand Daily Mail* investigated its bold readership claim, as well as the stealthy links between the Department of Information and the paper, the nature of this press enterprise became exposed to public gaze. The financing of *The Citizen* was later one of the main topics of the string of legal enquiries and hearings and the subsequent local and international scandal popularly referred to as Rhoodie - or Muldergate, or as the Information Scandal.

The Star project

Having dipped into the world of the domestic print media, the Department of Information decided to try its hand abroad, by looking to an operation inside the United States. This project was deemed the 'Star Project', after the conservative *Washington Star* newspaper which had an established record of sympathy towards Pretoria and its policies.

The South African government decided in the later 1970s to try to buy the *Washington Star*, in an effort to try to counter the negative publicity coming from the liberal *Washington Post* as well

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[323] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), p. 8

[324] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), p. 8

[325] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), P. 36

[326] Aida Parker, *The secret U.S. war against South Africa* (Johannesburg, SAtoday publishers, 1977), p. 37

as from the *New York Times*. This episode in the history of the Department of Information was not unlike the saga of the failed *The Citizen* – on that was full of controversy, and was to be later vigorously investigated by the 1978 judicial Erasmus Commission into 'Muldergate'.

For its foreign agent, Pretoria relied on a conservative American Republican entrepreneur and fund-raiser, John McGoff, who was friendly towards the South African authorities and had been suggesting they should esatablish a sympathetic contact in the USA independent of diplomatic channels and other official offices. This was to be the start of the Republic's relationship with the publications firm, Sydney Baron. [327] It was the same individual, McGoff, who was to be entrusted with the task of attempting to purchase *The Washington Star*.

McGoff had an established small press baron background, being a publisher of various medium-sized newspapers in Michigan, and he reportedly frequently did favours for South Africa's image in America without requesting payment, such as making sure that articles of a pro-South African nature were published in his mid-West daily papers.[328] To such a conservative sympathiser, Pretoria's doors were always wide open.

Early in 1974, McGoff informed the Department of Information's Deputy Secretary, Les de Villiers, that the *Washington Star* was in financial trouble and that it would be a convenient moment to mount a buy-out of the title. With an injection of funding and stronger direction, it would make a useful acquisition for South Africa's interests, as the *Star* had a national mark in the US and would provide an alternative to the critical coverage to be found in other large newwspapers:

'According to witnesses, the influence of the *Washington Star* was not confined to Washington, but extended countrywide. In Washington itself, there was another big newspaper, viz The *Washington Post*, which was very unsympathetic towards the RSA. *The New York Times*, which is also in circulation in Washington is....basically anti-South Africa.' [329]

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[327] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, johannesburg, 2015), p. 132
[328] RSA Government*, Report of the commission of inquiry into alleged irregularities in the former department of information* (Pretoria, Government printer, 1978), p. 44
[329] RSA Government*, Report of the commission of inquiry into alleged irregularities in the former department of information* (Pretoria, Government printer, 1978), p. 45

The ownership and control of a paper at the heart of Washington itself would be useful in fighting the onslaught from the USA, and the case for exploring the possibility of buying it was compelling.

The cost of buying the paper would be $ 25 Million, of which the South African government would supply $10 Million secretly from a Special Defence Account of the Department of Defence, while the remaining $15 Million would be raised by McGoff himself. [330]

The attempted takeover of *The Washington Star* was unsuccessful because of competition from a Texan multi-millionaire, Joe L. Allbritton, who was interested in buying not only the newspaper but also two television stations owned by its controlling families. McGoff claimed that his rival was trying to set up a news monopoly, and tried to prosecute a case against him with the aid of an expensive public relations company. But McGoff lost, and subsequently also lost the chance of getting hold of the *Washington Star*. [331] The fees of the public relations company amounted to $10 million, and as McGoff considered this action part of the takeover of the newspaper, he used the clandestine South African government funds made available to him to pay for his failed lobbying expenses.[332] In the early 1980s, he faced court charges for having accepted millions of dollars from Pretoria for a buy-out of the *Star* without having registered himself as a foreign agent of the South African goverrnment – McGoff had, in effect, accepted payment illegally.

Operation Blackwash

The attempts at 'conditioning' a mass public, to use Rhoodie's terminology from *The Paper Curtain,* were scarcely successful in the long term, but propaganda projects persisted stubbornly for a few short years, during which time the Department of Information worked exhaustively to try to undo at least some of the damage inflicted by local civil unrest and the foreign criticism which it generated. Up to a point, flare-ups such as the mass wave of textile and other factory workers' strikes in the earlier 1970s could be weathered – they may have worried some overseas

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[330] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 276

[331] RSA Government*, Report of the commission of inquiry into alleged irregularities in the former department of information* (Pretoria, Government printer, 1978), p. 46

[332] RSA Government*, Report of the commission of inquiry into alleged irregularities in the former department of information* (Pretoria, Government printer, 1978), p. 46

industrial investors, but they did not grip the political imagination of onlookers outside the country, nor did they foster mass popular hostility towards Pretoria's governing conduct.

This, however, changed dramatically after the explosive Soweto uprising of 1976. In a similar fashion to the Sharpeville massacre, the domestic situation immediately started to get away from the NP government's apparent capability of restoring peace and stable order. Moreover, economic and social conditions were now far worse than had been the case in the growth decade of the 1960s. Externally, then, 'the apartheid government needed to counter, even more strongly than before.'[333]

Once again, the Department of Information hired an outside firm to help it with the Republic's image problem. The firm was from New York, called Sydney Baron as noted earlier. According to Rhoodie, Baron had excellent political contacts, including even the American president between 1977 and 1981, Jimmy Carter. By 1978, the Department of Information had already paid more than R1 million towards the polishing up of the Republic's image.[334]

Sydney Baron hired an African-American named Andrew Hatcher, founder in 1963 of 100 Black Men of America, as vice-president of international operations and to serve as the face of the pro-South African campaign. On the face of it, it was a tactically shrewd recruitment. Hatcher himself was a significant person in the African-American community as one of the first black staff members in the White House, and had been a former deputy press aide to President John F. Kennedy. His position in South Africa's campaign in the US was viewed as being vital - if the Department could get a black person to be positive about the NP government it would surely provide the boost that Pretoria urgently needed. [335]

Hatcher, as the leading face of the campaign, was assigned to set up various trips sponsored by the South African government for black journalists and legislators so that they could see the good conditions in the Republic for themselves and report back favourably to audiences at home. Another responsibility was press conferences on South African matters, as well as live appearances on morning television and radio talk shows. A key appearance by Andrew Hatcher as a spokesperson for the Republic was when he appeared on the NBC's 'Today Show', and

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[333] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 84
[334] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 132
[335] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 84

debated with the Methodist minister and civil rights activist, George Houser, a white activist for racial equality and integration, who had founded the American Committee on Africa.[336]

During the progamme, Hatcher asssured the audience and his opponent that levels of violence in South Africa were dropping due to reforms in government policy, that these were being favourably received by the majority of South Africa's peace-loving people, and that what he wanted more than anything was to protect the world against the views of misguided liberals such as Houser, who 'was one of those white liberals who knew what was best for blacks.' [337]

Hatcher also helped to check a Congressional investigation by the House of Representatives into the lobbying activities of the South African government, oversaw the monitoring of popular anti-apartheid activities, such as rallies in New York, and and also monitored the content and views of the American press. With Baron's Hatcher in place, the Department of Information also went on to engage various other public relations firms to help in trying to lift the image of South Africa, on these occasions using money channelled through the so-called 'independent' Transkei. Granted its 'independence' by Pretoria in 1976, the government tried to sell the idea to the rest of the world that the Transkei homeland had become an autonomous and independent black African state outside of the rule of the white government, but no country outside of the Republic recognised its legality, and it ended up all being to no avail. [338]

By then, in any event, it had already become ever more clear, as Ron Nixon has emphasised, that the 'overall propaganda war wasn't working either and although they did not know it, things were about to get worse for Rhoodie and the South African Government.'[339] For one thing, the pressures of the modern era were closing in on apartheid and its defenders, and the rearguard actions of the state and its Department of Information were proving to be ultimately unsuccessful in checking anti-apartheid hostilities. For another, within South Africa itself, the excesses of the country's propaganda operations were about to land some of the key personalities involved in it, in serious trouble – an issue we will turn to next.

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[336] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 86

[337] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, johannesburg, 2015), p. 86

[338] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 89

[339] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 90

5. 3: The 'true' information scandal

The information scandal of 1978-79 has, as we well know, been studied and written about in great depth and detail, especially by one of its key figures, Eschel Rhoodie, as well as by Les de Villiers, his dutiful deputy. This section will merely discuss the events surrounding the information scandal as well as the controversy surrounding it. Of documentary relevance is the Report *of the Commission of Inquiry into Alleged Irregularities in the Former Department of Information* (1979), commonly referred to as the Erasmus Commission as well as Eschel Rhoodie's book, *Die Ware Informasie Skandaal* (1984).

The Information Scandal, or 'Muldergate', named after Connie Mulder as head of the Department of Information, was the exposure of the use of taxpayers' money for purposes for which there had been no parliamentary authorisation, and on the basis of no public knowledge.[340] Initially, stories and speculation about government spending irregularities were brought to light by the press. An initial plan to evaluate and make remedial recommendations in the course of a month was prolonged due to mounting evidence of ever more irregularities that came to the fore during the investigation.[341] These included, but were not limited to, the establishment of *To The Point*, *The Citizen* and the failed attempt to buy *The Washington Star*.

The core charge was that the above-mentioned people, amongst others, had misused government funds to establish a secret slush fund to further the aims of the governing party's interests within the borders of South Africa as well as outside those borders in the international world. These three culpable figures then very quickly became notorious and wanted men in South Africa. Later, in 1984, Rhoodie produced a 'tell-tale' volume entitled *Die Ware Infligting Skandaal* (The Real Information Scandal), in which he detailed all of the government's secret programmes, as well as the 'information scandal' in which he, De Villiers and Mulder had been implicated. The fact that such a 'confessional' book was written by one of the insider figures of the National Party government of the 1970s spoke volumes of the government's slide into clandestine dealings, starting well before the Soweto crisis and its fallout in the middle of the 1970s.

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[340] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 1
[341] RSA Government*, Report of the commission of inquiry into alleged irregularities in the former department of information* (Pretoria, Government printer, 1978), p. 1

In February 1974, the Department of Information had had a crucial meeting with Prime Minister Vorster. During this meeting, Rhoodie sketched in great detail the pressure on South Africa from the outside world.[342]

As already noted, Rhoodie's feelings about the growing hostile pressures against South Africa had by then already been described in The Paper Curtain. Therein, he declared that, "not since WWII (perhaps never in peace time) has any country been subjected to such a barrage of vehemently hostile criticism and so many attempts to force change."[343] Indeed, he listed no fewer than seven factors which were joining together to culminate in something like a despicable 'holy crusade' against South Africa.

These included the alleged anti-white racism of the United Nations, as could be judged by the reaction towards 'Black' Africa in the early 1960s USA-Belgian airlift in the Congo, the exploitation of complex race relations problems in the West by communists, the blatant communist propaganda campaign against the Southern end of Africa, and the efforts of hostile and radical dictatorial African states to mount a military campaign "to annex the riches of South Africa and drive the white man out of Africa".[344]

In an attempt to deal with these pressures and perceived threats, Rhoodie formulated a secret five-year plan to try to influence highly-placed individuals, and to create new channels though which positive information about South Africa could be disseminated routinely and independently without arousing suspicion – in other words, in a politically non-compromising manner. This could be achieved, for instance, by paying off journalists and editors to put out pro-South Africa messages. To launch this nationally and internationally would cost approximately R75 Million .[345] While mindful of the fact that such a clandestine 'psychological' propaganda war conducted externally was liable to flout the regulations or laws of foreign countries, the prime minister was, according to Rhoodie, in full agreement.[346]

5.4: Post-Muldergate

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[342] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 65
[343] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 82
[344] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), pp. 83 - 84
[345] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 65
[346] Eschel Rhoodie, *Die ware Inligting skandaal* (RSA, OrbisSA, 1984), p. 66

Although it falls outside of the scope of this dissertation, the apartheid government did not end its attempts at propagandist outreach after the mess and political embarrassment of the Muldergate scandal. It simply took on a new form. For example, the *Aida Parker Newsletter*, was one of the later attempts by the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) and the Department of Information to cultivate a constituency of right-wing sympathisers.[347] For the most part, the *Newsletter* was a continuation of the polemical rhetoric which characterised her articles for *The Citizen* and the later booklet compilation.[348] It is noteworthy that material from the *Aida Parker Newsletter* can still be found on certain websites, such as *dienuwesuidafrika.blogspot.co.za*, which is a right-wing nationalist Afrikaner website, carrying her articles on Nelson Mandela from the late 1990s.[349]

Another example of post-Muldergate propaganda activity was an effort to check the growing influence of the anti-apartheid movement in the United States. After its Muldergate debacle, the government set up the South African Bureau of Information to replace the previous Department of Information; its main task was the same as that which had been undertaken by Mulder and Rhoodie, improving the South African image.[350] Its chief target audience was the United States, from where there were new and growing threats of sanctions and disinvestment.[351]

William Keyes, a conservative African-American politician who had risen in Republican ranks under President Ronald Reagan, was engaged by the newly-formed Bureau of Information to spread goodwill in the name of South Africa, for which the initial rewards were free trips and lavish entertainment.

Keyes was invited to South Africa under the 'educational' auspices of the South Africa Foundation, and while there met up with Louis Nel, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director of the Bureau of Information. Thereafter, there were various further meetings involving Nel as well as Pik Botha, aimed at setting up an arrangement whereby Keyes would serve as a kind of informal South Africa lobbyist, primed by the South African embassy. In addition to his role as a Washington lobbyist, Keyes was also given the responsibility of

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[347] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 170

[349] "Aida Parker Newsletter," Dienuwesuidafrika blogspot, Last modified August 25, 2008, http://dienuwesuidafrika.blogspot.co.za/

[350] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jakana media (Pty) Limited, 201), p. 130

[351] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jakana media (Pty) Limited, 201), p. 130

organising South African friendship tours for African Americans, and generally to act to 'stop the rise of black American opposition to the South African government.'[352]

The deeply compromised basis on which these pro-South Africa activities were organised were, naturally, denied, and running on into the 1980s there were numerous stories and disputes over covert political arrangements. Ultimately, though, for all the paid energies of American sympathisers such as Keyes, with their insistence that the quality of life for black South Africans was improving and that positive change was in fact happening, the general crisis of the apartheid order, with its violence, repression, states of emergency and acts of daily disorder, could neither be concealed from critical observers nor be explained away.

5.5: Concluding remarks

What this chapter set out to suggest is that Eschel Rhoodie's *The Paper Curtain* represented not merely an enthusiastic personal blueprint but also as a justification for later irregular actions by Pretoria's Department of Information. In its tone, it perfectly captured the thought pattern of many Nationalists of the time, a view that the international world was being unreasonably critical of, and downright hostile towards, the apartheid order Republic.

Given that uncomfortable premise, the remedy advocated by the book and its author was one of being pro-active and of hitting back by shifting the focus to the serious flaws in other societies and states. For South African was being singled out unfairly for condemnation by enemy forces which had no understanding of its best political and social interests. The menacing *Paper Curtain* being drawn across the face of Southern Africa to isolate the Republic was a clumsy attempt to force it to make drastic and wholly unreasonable and unrealistic domestic changes.

For Rhoodie, the phenomenon of 'world opinion' was no more than a myth created for the sake of various American and British interests in Southern Africa. Moreover, the 'world's opinion' was still something to which an appeal could be directed, for if what constituted world opinion could be changed, those particularly on an international front could be convinced of the Republic's sincerity. That mattered for the fate of South Africa, for its isolating 'wall' was being imposed externally – it was not a screen that was being erected from inside:

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[352] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), pp. 130 -131

'the paper curtain differs in one important respect from that of the Russian "Iron Curtain", East Germany's infamous "wall" and Red China's "Bamboo Curtain" in that it is being drawn not by the people held responsible for all the "evil deeds" of "apartheid" but by the very people who claim that they wish to introduce sanity and reason into South Africa' [353]

In this perspective, blame lay with the international arena which was seemingly frustrating the Republic's peaceable open dialogue with the rest of the civilised free world.

For its author, the political treatise or programme embodied by *The Paper Curtain* and the direct and indirect consequences that flowed from its suggestions – *The Citizen*, the *Aida Parker Newsletter*, the Club of Ten, to take three examples - were arguably all a manifestation of a defensive spirit of nationalist altruism. The motives behind propaganda initiatives were those of defending and prolonging the way of life of the dominant Afrikaner, and of white people as a minority group in South Africa, as well securing the time and space for the working through of the apartheid ideas of separate development, including the development of the Republic's traditional ethnic 'national' homelands into their eventual independence. Crucially, to secure and to protect a stable *status quo*, the Afrikaner people were rightfully in political control, and were governing by just conviction. For Rhoodie, it was a conviction that deserved to be acknowledged and respected by outsiders. Thus, as *The Paper Curtain* declared:

One's message is quite simple. The great powers, the press and the United Nations have not - despite all that they have said and done - been able to deflect South Africa from her course or her conviction. Surely this conviction is worth the most careful, impartial and objective consideration.[354]

For its part, the ideological defence mounted by the Nationalist Republic came to be inextricably bound up with the business of subterfuge as its propaganda efforts, especially after the 1960s, rested more on more on shadowy dealings and clandestine arrangements of various kinds. The following and concluding section will attempt to round off this study by returning to some of the questions which were raised in the introductory discussion.

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[353] Ron Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war* (Jacana, Johannesburg, 2015), p. 81

[354] Eschel Rhoodie, *The Paper Curtain* (Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1969), p. 195

Chapter 6

Conclusion

'The grave problem of our times cannot be solved by exorcising nationalism, but by patiently educating its more virulent varieties to live peacefully together in a world that has become too small for military conflicts. This is by no means a hopeless task...nationalism, observes Rupert Emerson, is not only a builder of unity within each of the peoples it has touched; it has also the potentiality of freeing peoples to join voluntarily for the salvation of all of us'.[355]

6.1: The need and justification for propaganda

As we have noted, historically propaganda appears in various forms. It is characterised by action in which "the expressions of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with the view to influencing the opinions and actions of other individuals or groups for predetermined ends."[356] With the twentieth-century rise of Afrikaner nationalism to eventual ascendancy in resentful response to Anglo socio-political power and economic domination, and

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[355] Konstantin Symmons-Symonolewicz, *Nationalist Movements: a comparative view* (Meadville, PA, Maplewood Press, 1970), p. 155

[356] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the formation of men's attitude* (New York, Vintage Books, 1973), P. xii

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the fear of black encroachment, the 'predetermined end' was to maintain, adapt and put over the fanciful claims of the apartheid system.

Apartheid was purveyed, especially internationally, as a more positive and just ordering of race relations, an advance over the segregationist era, and a supplanting of European colonialism and imperial racism in Africa in favour of progressive political conditions which would allow for ethnically distinct 'communities' and 'peoples' to achieve self-realisation – even nationhood – and to exercise control of their 'own affairs'. Such circumstances would, ultimately, be for the beneficial peaceful development and co-existence of both black and white populations of South Africa.

When the ugly underbelly of apartheid was ripped open by angry resistance and state violence at the beginning of the 1960s and once again in the earlier 1970s, international opinion changed sharply and grew more intensely critical of conditions under apartheid. Internally, meanwhile, part of the white South African population feared a major black uprising backed by communist forces, and weapons sales jumped as many panicky white civilians armed themselves.

Within the dominant laager itself, the 1960s community of white Afrikaans authors known as 'Die Sestigers' grew increasingly tired of what they considered to be cramping cultural parochialism, and looked outwards towards challenging social and political topics and radical literary styles to assert artistic freedom. This was met by banning and censorship, pushing some *Sestigers*, such as the novelist, Andre P. Brink, actively into the anti-apartheid activist. For the ruling National Party, some intellectual 'hearts and minds' were being lost from within the Afrikaner community itself.

For the apartheid state, the need for defensive propaganda became increasingly inescapable and increasingly urgent. Warding off harsh criticism was an imperative, and if need be by any means necessary.

Methods of manipulation

The methods employed by the state to uphold and to try to promote a positive apartheid story were, as we have seen, both wide-ranging and many-layered. These included literary censorship as securing 'lies of omission', legislative acts to police what the populace would be permitted to

read, listen to and watch – like the 1963 Publication and Entertainment Act and the 1974 Publication and Entertainment Act - the highly controlled workings of the SABC, the stealthy operations of the Department of Information and its national and international propaganda campaigns, all designed for the purpose of taking the ideological fight to enemy critics, not merely passively standing up against the voices which were so critical of the Republic's government.

In essence then, the larger picture was one in which apartheid South Africa's rulers went from 'defensively' defending to a stage where they shifted position and 'offensively' defended their political order.

As far as the question of the effectiveness or success of these costly 'hearts and minds' pushes is concerned, it is a clear enough argument that they were not. They did nothing to keep at bay the deepening international isolation and intensifying sanctions and other economic pressures which played their part through the 1980s in worsening the crisis of the apartheid order and in hastening the collapse of apartheid, so that today its inhabitants live in a multiracial, democratic South Africa. Even in the the short term, liberal American publications such as the *New York Times* and even conservative British publications like *The Spectator* labelled the Republic's pro-apartheid system propaganda crude, unconvincing, and even laughable. That said, in a way it remains more surprising that the 'opinion' shaping and 'opinion' guarding endured in the way that they did. The bumbling propaganda campaigns of the Department of Information were only derailed due to the eventual outbreak of the 'Information Scandal', and South Africa's censorship legislation remained in force on the statute books right through the end of the 1980s.

Final remarks

In chapter one, the notion of 'integrated history' is introduced to explain the manner in which some historians of WWII and the Nazi Holocaust have used various points of view, from both those who were in power as well as from those who were their victims, to create a wider context within which the history of Germany's Nazi era could be more fully grasped.[357]

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[357] Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948 - 1994* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 301

As Saul Dubow has suggested, it might still be too early for South Africa to completely distance itself from its forms of history – partisan of one or other kind - within its own writings.[358] Does one nationalist history – overcome and condemned – simply have to give way to another version, now based on a post-apartheid political triumphalism? One that might, in time, come to consign the unjust apartheid past to the proverbial 'dustbin' of history, or just recall the domestic harshness and repressiveness of apartheid laws and their enforcement.

 Studies of this kind, might, however, might be a modest step in the direction of eventually creating a more integrated history, placed within a framework within which one might justifiably reflect upon the embattled mind of the apartheid government in relation to its Afrikaner nationalist convictions, and its determined resilience in the post-Sharpeville and later post-Soweto battle to uphold its legitimacy.

In the world of current secondary school education, within which the present writer works, South Africa's apartheid era has become a topic which is touched upon repeatedly, but now rarely if ever in terms of getting to grips with its 'mentality' on its own terms, as projected by its assorted protaganists. The motives for the 'hearts and minds' propaganda drive – however murky its execution and however doomed its outcome – merit sober examination in order to understand everything that has gone into the making of South Africa's twentieth-century historical and national consciousness.

Perhaps then, at the risk of using a cliché, South Africans may learn from the past in a more dispassionate manner than is so often the case today, and reconcile on the basis of a fully shared collective understanding of South Africa's troubled political development.

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