

And, furthermore, that students are "routinely and randomly detained and questioned about the MDM for indefinite periods." Did the authors actually talk with some of the students who suffer the consequences of participating in the MDM?

Finally, there is no indication that the authors talked with spokespersons from the large umbrella organizations that constitute the progressive movement such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the United Democratic Front (UDF) or the Mass Democratic Movement itself. There is also no indication that they discussed the boycott with any of the constituent bodies that form these umbrella organizations, such as local unions, church organizations or community groups.

In their conclusions, the authors state that "even those who support the economic sanctions and the general cultural boycott...oppose the boycott on books". Even though it is illegal to publicly endorse the international boycott, almost all recognized polls have shown that the majority of South Africans support isolating the apartheid system even if it might hurt them personally. It is puzzling that the authors picked the above phrase to support their position.

Finally, it is startling that the Wedgeworth/Drew report quotes the African National Congress position paper to promote a laissez-faire approach to the book trade. A recent statement by Tebogo Mafole, Chief Representative at the ANC Observer Mission to the United Nations (see page 29), notes that when Mr. Wedgeworth called at the ANC Mission before his trip to South Africa, he was told that elaborate consultations should be undertaken with the movement at every step. Mr. Mafole reiterated that the ANC did not endorse the trip or the project, and furthermore that the ANC has not been apprised of the project itself.

The international boycott is helping to create the desired effects. The South African economy is hurting, the anti-draft movement is burgeoning, and massive resistance to the system continues unabated. Recent government concessions such as the unbanning of the ANC should be seen in this context. Proposals for establishing a book trade must therefore be addressed to the South African organizations that are in the forefront of the struggle. Our actions can have the most serious consequences.

Guidelines

When Ms. Woo discussed the *Guidelines for Librarians Interacting with South Africa*, she confused two separate but related issues. The *Guidelines* are for librarians, not publishers. They are an attempt to "balance our methods to promote the free flow of information with work activities that are morally and politically responsible" (point 2.6). The *Guidelines* are in concert with the selective boycott policy adopted by the South African movement. They stress service to the mass democratic movement, aid to the oppressed, and responsible ways to do our professional work. As of this writing the following bodies have adopted the: Social Responsibilities Round Table, Association of College and Research Libraries, Black Caucus of ALA, International Relations Committee, International Relations Round Table.

INTERVIEW WITH SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY USERS

by Joseph Reilly

The system of apartheid in South Africa acts as an agent of disunity in all areas of library activity. The nation's ability to acquire the information that it needs and wants is fragmented in two major ways, as shown by South African scholar Mokobung Nkomo: 1) an inequitable allocation of resources, with the tiny white minority receiving a disproportionately large share and the great majority of the population's Blacks, Coloureds, Asians receiving little or no funds and 2) a censorship system that keeps a broad range of books (materials) out of public reach (see *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, v. 16, no.5/6).

Though the apartheid regime has released Nelson Mandela and unbanned the African National Congress, and though some works and some authors are now legally available, the situation described by Nkomo remains the same for the average library patron. What follows are excerpts from a series of interviews conducted during the summer of 1989 with two South Africans about their past experiences in gaining access to materials through libraries and other means and what their expectations are for the library's role in a post-apartheid information order.

Joan is a white South African woman who was exiled in the mid-1980's for her community work done on behalf of the South African Council of Churches. Thabo is a young black South African man from Soweto who, like many other children who survived the Soweto Uprising of June 1976, joined the African National Congress. Because his political work eventually endangered his life, he was forced into exile in Tanzania where the ANC was in the process of developing their prototypical education facility known as the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (or SOMAFSCO). After graduating from SOMAFSCO, Thabo began his undergraduate degree in the United States where he is currently residing. These interviews were conducted by Joseph Reilly.

JR: How did you get your hands on works that are banned. My experience with South Africans in the U.S. is that the first thing they do when they arrive is go out and get *The Struggle is My Life* by Nelson Mandela.

JOAN: That was literally the first thing I did when I got to this country. But at home we would get those books from the neighboring states, from people that were travelling. The procedure was that they would mail them in, they didn't actually carry them in when they returned home. We used to have these bizarre expeditions into the neighboring states where we would fill up the motorcar tires, the tubes, with books.

JR: You mean the spare?

JOAN: And the running ones!

JR: What, in the hubcaps?

JOAN: No, right into the tires. The tube was there but it would be cushioned by the books! [Lots of laughter] So there were ways of getting things in and out.

JR: Did you all loan your books to each other?

JOAN: Oh, yes. Books are dog-eared there. They get a lot of mileage.

THABO: One thing that used to happen was that if you knew someone had a book, you'd make a point of it to get your hands on that book. And when you were told to read it in two nights, you read it! When I got my hands on *No Easy Walk to Freedom* [an early collection of Mandela's work], I had it for two nights and I had to sacrifice two nights of school work to finish it, because other people were on a waiting list. It was not like you had a book and it was your book. It became a people's book. It would circulate.

Secondly, you'd make the point to get it out of your hands because if the police should catch you with it then you're in trouble. You couldn't get books in the library. But I remember that there was this bookstore in Bloemfontein called Raven Press. Those guys would tell you - Hey, this is hot stuff. Avoid the police because this stuff is not permissible.

For education purposes when I was a student organizer, we used to get some stuff that would be smuggled into the country by the ANC. In other cases, instead of distributing *Sechaba* [the official journal of the ANC] as *Sechaba* we'd photocopy some articles and give them different titles and distribute them. But there were also cases where you'd distribute it as is. If we knew that there was a public gathering or something, you see, people would go there earlier and put whatever publications you had there. And whoever arrived first would grab whatever they could! The same thing happened later with the letter of Mandela's smuggled out of Robben Island.

Some city libraries did have stuff. When I was a student outside of Johannesburg, one of the things we did was to politicize students. We'd run seminars and different political books were there. There was a time when we wanted some of these books that were banned. We went to the library and discovered some of these books were actually there. It was the first time that anyone had discovered that these materials were there! When they were refusing us access, we said: You want drama in this library? You'll have drama soon!

There was another problem. There were also secret agents or what you'd call police informants. They used to hang around this big park that was by the library. There we used to have discussions at lunch time. And these guys would be there to

see who was who and what was up. And they checked on the materials we were taking out!

But that was the city library. Back at our locations [ie. the black townships], I mean, I could never tell you how to locate a book or what the things written on a catalog card meant. It was not a part of my education. The first time I went to a library was in high school. There was a book on relativity that I had to read for my physics class and even then you were only allowed to read it in the library. There was nothing like checking it out, taking it home and reading it. We didn't know much about the library and our teachers didn't know much about library systems. Nobody ever, ever explained to our class how a library functioned. You'd go there and there'd be somebody working there who was not even able to explain what the hell was going on in the place.

For the general people, for the public, the libraries meant nothing. Libraries meant nothing! It was only when one became politically conscious that certain things began to become clear. You knew, hey, there's a thing called the library where you can get newspapers to read, certain books.

JR: Could each of you describe to me what you'd expect from libraries in post-apartheid South Africa?

JOAN: Firstly, it needs to have a history section that reflects the history of South Africa. You see, the history in South Africa now, its written history, is a history which reflects white people's interaction with the oppressed people, and it never reflects what happens to the oppressed people. Somehow we have to get the history sorted out so that people can have access to it.

I would like to think that the library in post-apartheid South Africa would also need to encompass some sort of progressive reading development program, because we are dealing with a high degree of illiteracy. So that what you would need are not only history books that are advanced academic reading, but also ones that make simple reading, encouraging people to learn how to read while teaching them the truth of the situation.

Where there has been revolution, there also must be a social revolution as well. So we must have lots of books on other countries that have gone through some of these experiences so that we could learn from them and so that we could help people create an ideal situation.

I would also make the library a forum for drama and art productions and poetry readings, poetry of the people. A place for people's art and people's drama. That would be really great if a library could have those things.

THABO: If the library is going to function for us at all, it has got to be broken down into special programs that take into account different levels of people in society. If someone comes into a library we have to be able to guide them to

different programs that are going to help them to advance. I was there during the construction of the ANC's school in Tanzania [ie. SOMAFSCO] and already we were talking about the different programs that the future library would have. We wanted language programs with tapes and maybe even computer assistance that could help build language skills.

Also, we don't look at our struggle in isolation from others that have taken place in the world. We want books from all over the world so that we can learn what happened in Vietnam, in Nicaragua, in Cuba. We can learn their successes, their weaknesses and strengths and use those things to help us build our strategies for consolidating the country after independence.

Part of the process is to make education relevant to our own situation. The library must provide materials that make people's contributions relevant to our society. It does no good to learn something that will not be able to contribute to the progress of the country. We did these studies of other countries of similarities and differences. And all of the books that we did this with were from our library.

Some people that go to SOMAFSCO get surprised when they see things such as *Das Kapital* and they start waving fingers saying - SOMAFSCO is communist. They always say this but, hey, we want to know the two sides of the coin. We'd say, - You guys don't know what is best for the country. We want our system to be a workable one. We study other African countries and we pick the relevant parts of their developments. We are, of course, fortunate that we have these other countries that are changing before we can. And we will surely use the best of these changes for us. That is how I see the future library work in South Africa being relevant to our own situation.

Our people don't really have any idea of what a library is. And all this should be seen in the context of how we're educated.

JOAN: Yes, that's the underlying factor in all of this.

THABO: If libraries were to be a source of information, the people would treasure them. It means that if you give people the right education, they can go there and locate whatever information they want. But the existing education system is not designed for that purpose, especially for black people. Everyone is protected from other countries. They just want to see other countries in a stereotype. In our history books, when we studied Mozambique the freedom fighters of the country were still referred to as terrorists even after they won their independence from Portugal!

JOAN: That phrase of Mokubung Nkomo's from the conference has stuck with me. He kept talking about compulsory ignorance. Black people in our system are just educated towards ignorance. White people are pushed in a certain direction which is also ignorance!

THE TIMES MISCOVERS THE ANC

by Dennis A. Mumble

Reprinted from *Lies of Our Times*

Through decades of brutal repression, the South African apartheid regime has developed its own truth - a truth that consigns the African National Congress and all other anti-apartheid forces to shadowy basements where terrorists and communists plan devious deeds against the law-abiding and god-fearing white master race.

Historically the South African government utilized Cold War rhetoric, gaining tacit support from the West for its world view, which required cloaking the anti-apartheid movement in red flags. With very few exceptions, its western allies and their media were all too eager to accept the apartheid myth and actively helped maintain this structure for almost two generations.

But the explosive growth of the South African liberation movement and its powerful worldwide counterpart elevated the struggle from apartheid's basement to the top floor of international popular legitimacy through sanctions and defiance campaigns.

The subsequent exposure of apartheid rocked the regime to its very foundations. The ANC and other organizations were "unbanned" in a futile attempt to temper their militancy.

In a highly paternalistic fashion, the National Party leader, F.W. de Klerk, has belatedly sought to restore authority by developing a five-year plan to discard the old-style system while retaining its material and political privileges. De Klerk's entire 1989 election platform pivoted on the establishment of this alternative path.

While the reality of a failed system has engulfed the ruling party, this fact has apparently escaped the *New York Times*, which still covers South Africa through the prism of apartheid's view. Journalistic balance and objectivity assume new meanings in the *Times'* coverage, which considers the apartheid infrastructure (police, army, security personnel, journalists, etc.) as primary sources for information on the rebellion while minimizing exposure to the forces opposing the system.

Anti-apartheid organizations are constantly depicted as eerie and "shadowy" bodies. For example, in *A Hard Road for Mandela* (April 5, 1990, p. A1), Christopher Wren actually quotes the traditionally anti-ANC *Business Day*: "The ANC remains, despite its unbanning, a shadowy organization of uncertain stature and questionable authority."

Another theme that has been constant in Wren's coverage of the ANC is one of perceived deep divisions among its members, at a time when the ANC's unity is at its highest. He constantly harps on divisions between a generation of "impatient" youths and an older generation of leaders out of touch with the ideals of the youth. Every story he has written about the ANC in the last year touches on this theme. In a recent article, *Mandela Agrees to Talk With de Klerk on Violence in Townships*