

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*

(April 3, 1990, p. A10), Wren loses all sense of journalistic responsibility: "The South African press speculated today that the [ANC] had pulled out of the talks because it was unprepared and wracked by internal disagreements." No names, no quotes, no rebuttals from the ANC, which said it had canceled the talks because the police were killing protesters. It should be noted that, editorially, the Times was even more scandalous. It said (April 6, 1990, p. A34), "Black politics also was the cause of Mr. Mandela's decision [to postpone the talks]. He was plainly sensitive to the outcry over police killings of black protesters..." Not sensitive to the killing of people, but playing politics, sensitive only to the outcry of over the killings.

Wren has reiterated his unsubstantiated claims of internal division the day before, in *A Hard Road For Mandela*. In the opening paragraph, he posited that "doubts persist about the readiness of the [ANC] to undertake serious negotiations...and about Mr. Mandela's ability to consolidate the widest black support." His definitive sources were: "speculation in the press here, as well as among diplomats and politicians." One can easily imagine what press, which diplomats, and which politicians Wren is referring to.

Other Times writers also reveal a pattern of vintage kowtowing to and promotion of this National Party propaganda which depicts the ANC as divided and with a soft base of support. John F. Burns's April 1, 1990 article (p. 4), *Understanding de Klerk: Party Man With a Twist*, just the latest in a series of flattering profiles on de Klerk, is a deft piece of propaganda. The story is superbly complimentary of de Klerk and his efforts to improve the National Party's image. It is at the same time highly schizophrenic in its characterization of apartheid, commenting that:

Mr. de Klerk's broad formula acknowledges that he considers apartheid a dead-end street and that majority rule in some form is inevitable. But Mr. de Klerk has left no doubt, either, that he will strive to protect what the five million whites here have built up...including their property rights.

This is an attempt to rationalize the machinations of the regime by posing a two-sentence contradiction. On the one hand it is intended to convey the complexity of emotions within the regime - a subliminal appeal for time to allow it to clarify its position. And on the other, it conveys a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of apartheid, which is, first and foremost, a system for the accumulation of wealth buttressed by the ideology of white supremacy, leading to staggering inequalities of wealth and power. The two are not separable, as the passage would suggest.

Dropping overt white supremacist themes has struck a sympathetic chord at the Times, which has been meticulously crafting an image of de Klerk as the reluctant administrator caught between two widely divergent poles, with the ANC on the left

and the white conservatives on the right. This white-knight theme is taken even further by Burns, who says it is de Klerk's "profound religious commitment to ideals of justice that sets him apart from his predecessors" and juxtaposes his position against that of Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement:

While Nelson Mandela and other black leaders have said that Mr. de Klerk's vision appears to encompass limitations on black political authority that they could not accept, many South Africans who favor far-reaching political change say they believe that the real hope for the future may lie not in Mr. de Klerk's current pronouncements but in his probing, pragmatic cast of mind and instinct for reaching out for new solutions.

The phrasing puts the ANC in the position of extremists asking for too much, too soon; and de Klerk as the religious man of justice, seeking the best practical route. It is lost on the Times that the real threat to peace in South Africa is any pragmatism that requires - in whatever form - the continuation of apartheid and its intolerable injustices. The passage also creates a strange division between "Nelson Mandela and other black leaders" on the one hand and "many South Africans who favor...change" on the other. If these unnamed "many" are from the white minority, that is one thing; but if they are black, the statement is simply untrue.

In *African Congress Faulted on Unrest* (March 9, 1990, p. A3), Wren featured numerous statements by South African government officials blaming the ANC for "orchestrating the rising violence" in South Africa's ethnic communities. A terse denial from the ANC is buried in the story. Indeed, Wren tends to accept government assertions of innocence at face value. In *South Africa Sends Army to Halt Strife* (April 4, 1990, p. A10), he says that "much of the violence that has erupted in the last two months has not directly involved government repression, but fighting between rival black factions." He notes that "South African police have denied that officers have taken sides in the conflict" and states that Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, the leader of the anti-ANC Inkatha, has charged that the police were - of all things - siding with the pro-ANC United Democratic Front in the violent clashes in Natal province. Wren never mentions the South African Council of Churches report (*Statement on Ad Hoc Crisis Meeting*, March 29, 1990) describing eyewitness testimony that the police were throwing boxes of ammunition over the sides of their trucks to Inkatha fighters in Pietermaritzburg. Even in an editorial, the Times has called the fighting "a virtual civil war rag[ing] between black factions" (April 6, 1990, p. A34), with no mention of police participation. Yet the *Washington Post's* Allister Sparks was able to meet with independent monitors of the violence and report their observation that "the police have openly colluded with Inkatha" (*Natal's "Valley of Death" Goes to War*, April 8, 1990, pp. A29, A35).

From this brief review of the *Times*' coverage of the ANC and the anti-apartheid movement generally, it appears quite clear that the paper has very little consideration for those opposing the system. It considers the custodians of apartheid sufficiently acceptable to work closely with them and to promote their new, softer image. This was also evident in its beguiling treatment of the apartheid election in which the great majority of the population was not permitted to vote.

The liberation of South Africans from apartheid cannot be achieved by the creators of that system. That was made clear in de Klerk's remarks to Parliament April 17. Wren's article on the speech, with the wildly misleading headline *De Klerk Endorses Sharing of Power*, and the subhead *But South African President is Adament in Opposing Domination by Blacks* (April 18, 1990, p. A5), opens: "President F.W. de Klerk said today that his government would not agree to majority rule..." (Other papers have more honest headline writers; the same day's *Washington Post* (p. A1) said: *De Klerk Rejects Majority Rule*, with the subhead *Detail Offered on "Power Sharing"; Plan Seen Unacceptable to Blacks*; the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (p. 2) said: *De Klerk Rejects Rule by Majority*.) So much, incidentally, for Burns' statement two weeks earlier that de Klerk acknowledges "majority rule in some form is inevitable."

To suggest, as the *Times* continually does, that de Klerk be highly rewarded for being less repressive than his predecessors is to fail or refuse to grasp the fundamental implications of the continuing absolute economic, political, and social domination of the majority by the minority, which is apartheid.

This article originally appeared in the May 1990 issue of *Lies of Our Times* and was reprinted with the permission of the author and the publication. In its editorial note "To Our Readers" *Lies of Our Times* describes itself as:

...a magazine of media criticism. 'Our Times' are the times we live in but also the words of the *New York Times*, the most cited news medium in the U.S., our paper of record. Our 'Lies' are more than literal falsehoods; they encompass subjects that have been ignored, hypocrisies, misleading emphases, and hidden premises - the biases which systematically shape reporting. We can address only a sampling of the universe of media lies and distortions. But, over time, we hope *Lies of Our Times* will go a long way toward correcting the record.

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DATELINE: SOUTH AFRICA

The following documents are reprinted here in order that the voices of South Africans working within the anti-apartheid movement might be heard as they speak to us on the issue of sanctions. The first is a message sent by the ANC's representative to the United Nations and discusses claims made by Robert Wedgeworth that his visit to South Africa had the backing of the ANC. The next documents are excerpts of statements made by the primary anti-apartheid organizations on sanctions immediately following the unbanning of the ANC and the release of several prominent political prisoners. The last document comes from an academic librarian at the South African University of Natal and is a response to the partial lifting of some censorship regulations.

ANC MEMORANDUM

TO: Midwinter Conference of the American Library Association
ATTN: E.J. Josey (Guest, from University of Pittsburgh)
FROM: Tebogo Mafole, Chief Representative, African National Congress
Observer Mission to the United Nations

The African National Congress (ANC) has been following with great interest the activities of the American Library Association (ALA) as well as those of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). Of particular concern to the African National Congress, as can be expected, has been the activities of the above named organizations in relation to South Africa. In this regard, the ANC along with all the peoples of conscience the world over seek to ensure that such relations help to promote the struggle against apartheid and the creation of a non-racial democratic struggle against apartheid and the creation of a non-racial democratic South Africa.

More specifically, we are concerned that the organizations outside South Africa should, in their dealings with South Africa, adhere strictly to the letter and spirit of the culture and economic boycott of South Africa imposed by the international community including the United Nations.

In this connection, a matter of grave concern has been brought to our attention. Namely, that Mr. Robert Wedgeworth who recently travelled to South Africa has come up with proposals to the ALA and IFLA and that in promoting such proposals, Mr. Wedgeworth had suggested that they enjoy the support of the ANC. This is presumably based on the fact that prior to his trip to South Africa Mr. Wedgeworth called in at the ANC office to discuss his trip.

We wish to state categorically that the meeting between Mr. Wedgeworth and