

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.

Lies of Our Times (ISSN: 1046-7912) is a monthly publication. Subscriptions are \$24 (U.S.); \$32 (Canada, Mexico, W. Europe); or \$36 (all other countries). Subscriptions can be ordered from: Sheridan Square Press, 145 West 4th Street, New York, NY 10012.

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

the ANC did indeed take place at Mr. Wedgeworth's insistence and that at that meeting the ANC views on both the trip and its objective were clearly spelt out to Mr. Wedgeworth. These can be summarized as follows: that on matters pertaining to contacts, academically or otherwise, with South Africa, it is of fundamental importance that the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) be involved at every step. This, for instance, includes elaborate consultations regarding the project and visit to South Africa. It is only on this basis that the MDM and the ANC can endorse any such ventures.

It is, therefore, important to underline the fact that the said meeting between Mr. Wedgeworth and the ANC in itself should not be construed as constituting an endorsement of his project. In any event, the ANC has not been apprised of the project itself. It is our hope that this communication will clear any doubt that may arise with regard to the above mentioned issue.

INTENSIFY THE STRUGGLE!

African National Congress- 2/2/90

"We welcome the lifting of the bans on the ANC and other organizations. We also welcome other positive measures announced by F.W. de Klerk such as the suspension of the death sentence, the release of some political prisoners, the ending of media restrictions and the lifting of restrictions on ex-detainees.

We are, however, gravely concerned that the Pretoria regime has taken the decision that some political prisoners will not be released, that the State of Emergency is not lifted in its entirety and that the practice of detention without trial will continue...

The normalization of relations between South Africa and the rest of the world must continue to depend on ending the apartheid system. We therefore expect that **no country committed to ending white minority domination in South Africa will do anything to lessen the isolation of the apartheid regime.**"

Congress of South African Trade Unions - 2/2/90

"The struggle of the people of our country has always been to completely end apartheid and build a non-racial, united and democratic South Africa. We are now seeing the death throes of apartheid, and the birth pangs of a new South Africa struggling to be born.

...Today's announcements fall short of what was needed. While the decisions of de Klerk to unban the ANC, the SACP and other organizations is significant, and a victory for the people of SA, it still falls short of the fundamental steps needed to end the political conflict in our country.

The cornerstones of apartheid still remain intact. The Group Areas Act, the Land Act, Population Registration Act, etc. still remain on the statute books. The Internal Security Act, the Public Safety Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, and many other repressive pieces of legislation still prevent free political activity in our country.

The retention of the State of Emergency, albeit in an amended form, will still be used to crush peaceful democratic protest. This was seen in Johannesburg today when the SAP [police] used dogs, tear-gas and batons to crush the joyful demonstrations of our people, thereby making a mockery of de Klerk's announcement.

De Klerk still has enormous powers under the repressive apartheid laws to rule us by edict and even re-impose some of the measures which he lifted today.

...We believe that it is only a democratically elected constituent assembly which can legitimately usher in this SA we are all longing for.

There cannot be half measures at this critical time. What our country needs is a bold comprehensive initiative to meet these objectives.

We call on de Klerk to release not only Nelson Mandela but to release all political prisoners...

We call on de Klerk to create the conditions of free political activity as enshrined in the Harare Declaration...

Until then we call on South Africans and the international community not to relax the pressure. Step up the struggle against apartheid so that the momentum of change in SA is not arrested. If we fail to do so, we will have tragically missed a historical opportunity to end the suffering and conflict in our country."

United Democratic Front- 2/2/90

"...We happily welcome the present steps which have been taken by the State President...These steps are a direct result of the struggles which have been waged by our people particularly in the past few years.

...On an occasion such as today it is important for us in welcoming the return of the African National Congress to South African political life that we must address our Afrikaner compatriots in particular but the whites in general. We urge our white compatriots to shed the fears of the past, to welcome the return of the ANC to our political life as a public participant...

To the mass of our people we want to say that freedom is now in sight. Now more than ever before there is greater urgency to intensify the struggle on all fronts...we also call on the international community to provide material support for the struggling people of our country. Now is the time to pressurize the de Klerk government to move rapidly towards democracy. To this end the sanctions campaign must be maintained and indeed intensified. To lift sanctions now would be to run the risk of aborting the process to democracy..."

CENSORSHIP ON THE RETREAT

by Christopher Merrett

President F. W. de Klerk's 2 February 1990 speech to the opening session of Parliament contained important implications for the University Library. The unbanning of the ANC, PAC and the SACP, and the unbanning and delisting of 175 of their supporters, enabled the library to abolish its "Banned-3" and "Banned-4" categories overnight and return to general circulation material which has been locked up for decades. Among many writers involved are Alex La Guma, Helen Joseph, Ruth First and Harold Wolpe. Some of their work is currently on display in the Main Library foyer.

Well before these measures were announced subscriptions had been placed for *Sechaba* (ANC) and *African Communist* (SACP) in the interests of a free flow of information in an era of *glasnost* and negotiation. Copies of these periodicals will be held in the Short Loan Collection.

Amendments to the Emergency regulations also suggested that the Library's ability to deliver information to its users would improve in future. The media regulations relating to the printed word have been abolished, as has the power to restrict individuals. Most restrictees were prevented from communicating information and ideas via any media.

These reforms represent an undoubted setback for the State security apparatus in which its power to control ideas and information has been considerably lessened. At the same time most of the Library's banned book collection remains intact, condemned to a locked cupboard by the Publications Act. In our case this amounts to over 200 titles mainly in the disciplines of History, Political Studies, English, Fine Arts and Psychology. The greatest irony of the present situation lies in the fact that while Nelson Mandela addresses the nation at mass rallies, and through the SABC, his published work is locked in banned book cupboards, and cannot be bought legally in bookshops.

Other forms of statutory censorship remain in force, while powers under the Internal Security Act will continue to encourage self-censorship of various types. A small amount of space has been created for academic freedom, but the struggle for its fulfillment still has a long road to travel. Lessening the impact of censorship on academic work is one of the urgent tasks facing the University of Natal in the 1990s.

PLG TALKS TO THE FUND FOR FREE EXPRESSION

In March of this year, Progressive Librarians Guild members Peter McDonald and Elaine Harger called on the Fund for Free Expression (FFE) to discuss the Fund's endorsement of the Wedgeworth/Drew report *The Starvation of Young Black Minds*. We met with Executive Director Sophie Silberberg at the Fund's Fifth Avenue office overlooking the front steps of the main facility of the New York Public Library.

While the meeting was cordial, little of substance was accomplished in part because Ms. Silberberg said she could not speak on behalf of the FFE Board. She did say, however, that Board members had been divided over the request of the American Association of Publishers' request that the FFE fund the Wedgeworth/Drew trip to South Africa. She suggested that PLG write a letter to the Fund's board (on which Robert Wedgeworth sits) and present our position (which is clearly set forth elsewhere in this journal). Ms. Silberberg said she would pass the letter on to the full board at their April 15th meeting for discussion.

As it turned out, this apparently was not really the Executive Director's intention. When she had our letter in hand, she decided not to present it to the board as a whole but to a committee which duly decided "it will not be discussed at the full meeting of the board." In her letter of response dated May 18th, she never mentions who sat on this committee, but said in a phone conversation that it consisted of a few individuals interested in the issue.

Not to be outdone, PLG circumvented this wall of intransigence and mailed the original letter off to members of the Fund's board directly, with a cover letter. No response has been received to date, but doubtless the board's next meeting will have some small measure of *new* business to handle.

Reported by Peter McDonald