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A Literary Rebellion: How Activism and Censorship intersected in Apartheid Era South Africa
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A LITERARY REBELLION: How Activism and Censorship intersected in Apartheid Era South Africa

MA Thesis Book and Digital Media Studies

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48901 Words

Fig. 1, Cover: Artwork by controversial – and often censored – South African artist Ayanda Mabulo called *Itsikiz'eyonzake Leyo* (Translated from Xhosa to: It is his own fault), 2021. Source: < https://www.artsy.net/artwork/ayanda-mabulu-itsikizeyonzake-leyo >

'It is a beautiful thing, the destruction of words'[1]

[1] G. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, ebook. (resource found on 'PlanetEbook', but first published London: Secker and Warburg, 1949), p. 65 < planetebook.com/free-ebooks/1984.pdf > (29 April, 2022).

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[2] Main chapter titles refer to the songs: 'history has its eyes on you', 'who lives, who dies, who tells your story', 'cabinet battle #1', and 'the story of tonight' from popular Broadway musical *Hamilton: An American Story*. Source: L.M. Miranda, *Hamilton: An American Story* (New York: Atlantic Records, 2015), MP3.

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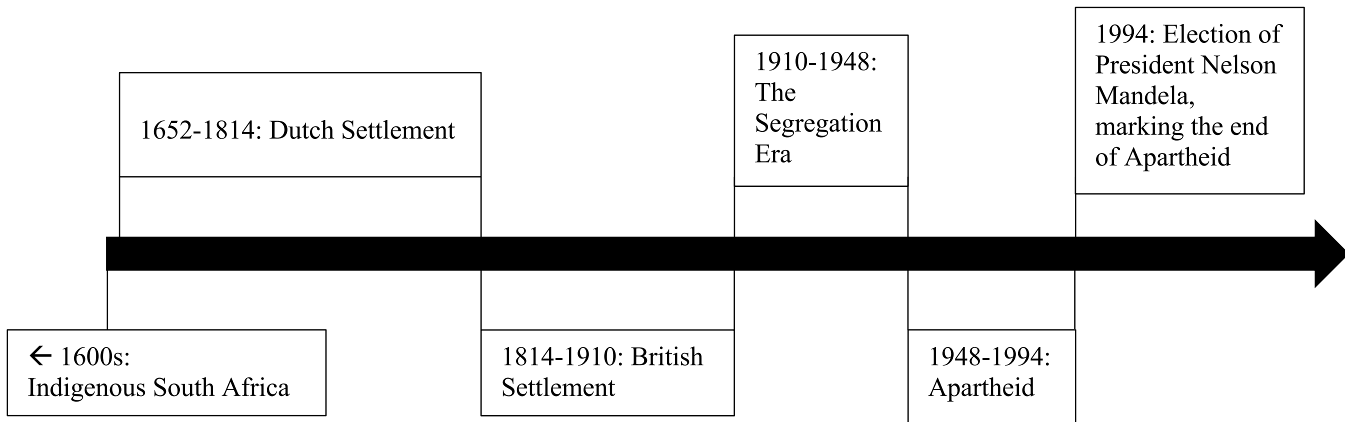
ABBREVIATIONS[3]

ANC	African National Congress
BC	Black Consciousness
BCP	Black Community Programmes
DOP	Directorate of Publications
NP	National Party
PA	Publications Act, 1974
PAB	Publications Appeal Board
PCB	Publications Control Board
PEA	Publications and Entertainments Act, 1963
SABC	South African Broadcasting Company
SACP	South African Communist Party
SASO	South African Students' Organization
VOC	*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, Dutch East India Company

[3] Most abbreviations based on T. Laros, *Literature and the Law in South Africa, 1910-2010: The Long Walk to Artistic Freedom* (Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018) and P.D. McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and its Cultural Consequences* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Timeline: Quick Overview of South Africa's History



Selection of Relevant Acts pertaining Censorship throughout Apartheid era[4]

Suppression of Communism Act, 1950

Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1953

Public Safety Act, 1953

Entertainment (*Censorship)* Act, 1963

Customs Act, 1964

Official Secrets Act, 1956

Extension of the University Education Act, 1959

Prisons Act, 1959

Defense Amendment Act, 1967

Terrorism Act, 1967

Publications and Entertainments Act, 1963

General Law Amendment Act, 1969

The General Law Amendment Act, 1969

Publications Act, 1974

Newspaper and Imprint Registration Act, 1971

The Internal Security Act, 1982

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[4] Detailed explanations regarding these acts found in J. Green and N.J. Karolides, *Encylopedia of Censorship* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2005), pp. 529-530.

INTRODUCTION

Who watches the watchmen?[5] asks the Roman poet Juvenal pondering the morality of man. While out of its original context, the phrase has remained relevant within political science to emphasize the most crucial pillar of democracy: power must be held accountable. People should be able to express their thoughts on governments without fear of persecution. It is for this reason that freedom of speech and freedom of expression are rights cemented within Human Rights Charters[6] around the world. One of the most crucial ways to exercise these freedoms is with the written word, and it is impossible to imagine a world in which the written word does not exist. Were our religious, political, literature and philosophical creations, ideas and thoughts merely passed down orally, the world as we know it now would not exist. History is a collective memory that is shaped through these cultural texts. The rise in literacy among the population as well as the distribution of influential texts have arguably catalyzed major events in history such as the Reformation, the Russian Revolution, the American Civil War and the so-called Humanitarian Revolution.[7] For authoritarian governments then, state control of the written, and consequently printed word is imperative for creating a narrative of a nation that complies to that government's control. In doing this, pre- and post-publication censorship is a primary tool.

It is with this knowledge in mind that the aim of this thesis is to understand how the use of censorship by a government on the media, and more specifically on literature, plays a role in the assembling and disassembling of a democracy. In order to showcase this with a concrete case study, the scope of this thesis is contained to South Africa's apartheid era (1948-1994). The reasoning for this particular case study will be explained further on, but first the next section will highlight the long and complicated history of censorship.

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[5] "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodies*?", *Satires,* Juventus.

[6] Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Art. 10, 11, 13 and 14. & The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 18 and 19.

[7] E.S. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change. Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1979); O. Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924*, ebook. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996), Chapter 3.1.; M. Puchner, *The Written World: How Literature Shapes History*, ebook. (New York: Random House, 2017), Chapter 12.; F. Douglass et al., *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave Written by Himself, Critical Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).; W. Kaufman, *The Civil War in American Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2006).; Pinker, Steven, *Steven Pinker at Singularity: A History of Violence*, video recording of conference, Machine Intelligence Research Institute (MIRI): Singularity Summit 2012, Vimeo Video, 14 October 2012, < https://vimeo.com/channels/379128/54714520 > (20 March 2020).

To the chagrin of many, censorship remains one of the most complex inventions of humankind. Its *current* definition, according to the Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English is that censorship is widely understood to be the act of 'removing anything that is **considered** offensive, morally harmful, or politically dangerous'.[8] With the use of the word 'considered', even this definition does not quell the complexity. Those who decide what is deemed harmful may well have ulterior motives. Rather than a definition, it is more useful perhaps look at a more descriptive approach to censorship. In doing so, this thesis will approach the definition of censorship by using key concepts explained by Sue Curry Jansen's book on the topic in which she deems censorship as 'the knot that binds power and knowledge'.[9] According to Jansen, there are four key concepts to censorship. Power-knowledge, constitutive censorship, regulative censorship and reflexive power talk.[10] Each concept comes with the understanding that knowledge can be used a tool for power.

The concept of censorship via the written and printed word is in no way a novel concept. In 443 BCE, the Romans had a so-called moral censor who had the role of being 'the portal standing between those who were and those who were not members of the community of values called Rome'.[11] Even further back in time, in early Sumeria, Egypt and ancient China, forms of speech were regulated by authorities on the basis of their social and political content.[12] All throughout history, civilizations have dealt with forms of censorship laws, even when only a small fraction of the population was capable of reading. Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press with moveable type in 1440, brought forth a democratization of knowledge and information.[13] This increase of available texts coincided with and contributed to the rise in literacy among lay people, including women and children.[14] More people being able to read, unsurprisingly, also produced an increase in controls and censorship by authorities 'as the power of the press in opposing authority by

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[8] *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 6th edition. (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2014), s.v. 'Censorship', p.273.
[9] S.C. Jansen, *Censorship: The Power that Binds Power and Knowledge* (Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press, 1991).
[10] Ibidem, pp. 3-13.
[11] M. Holquist, 'Introduction: Corrupt Originals: The Paradox of Censorship', *Papers of the Modern Language Association (PMLA)*, 109 (1994), p. 14.
[12] N. Moore, 'Censorship', *The Oxford Research Encyclopaedia*, 22 (2016), n.pag. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.71>
[13] L. Hellinga, 'The Gutenberg Revolutions' in *A Companion to the History of the Book,* 2nd edition, ed. by S. Eliot and J. Rose (Hoboken etc.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), p. 379.
[14] Ibidem.

spreading heresy and dissidence was recognized'.[15] As Jansen explains in her concept of power-knowledge, 'knowledge emerges out of human struggles, labors, interests, plans, passions, and amusements',[16] and that power-relations 'provide the groundings of knowledge whether that knowledge is profound or frivolous, evocative or austere, emancipatory or repressive.'[17] All this meaning that the 'powerful require knowledge to preserve, defend, and extend their advantage… the way the powerful say things are is the way they are, or the way they usually become because the powerful control the power to name'.[18] However, this knot that binds power and knowledge can go both ways.[19] The powerless have the ability to take the knowledge given to them and create their own findings.[20] The knowledge they are giving ultimately also encourage 'the powerless to think for themselves'.[21] For those in power, oftentimes the State, it is therefore imperative that they limit and reduce the distribution of knowledge.

There are countless examples that can confirm this power struggle. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, English writers were instructed to never write anything about the monarchy, even the most innocent remark, because of the government's fear of insurrection.[22] In Raphael Holinshed's preface to the 1577 edition of his *Chronicles,* he even acknowledged that the words he writes had a likely chance of being censored.[23] In that same time period, a famous playwright like William Shakespeare – who supposedly was inspired by *The Chronicles* – was constantly regulated by the government. Dialogues in his plays that jestingly referred to the Christian faith were cut and replaced following the introduction of the Profanity Act in 1606; every play Shakespeare wrote first had to be approved by the Master of Revels who combed it for political references.[24] In the nineteenth century, Gustave Flaubert's refusal to reduce the sexual content of his 1856 novel *Madame Bovary*, resulted in the author, his publisher and printer being put on trial for obscenity. Though they were eventually acquitted, the Flaubert trial has become a seminal point in history in the shift

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[15] R. Knuth, *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries: Extremist Violence and Cultural Destruction* (Westport: Praeger Publishing, 2006), p. 1.
[16] Jansen, *Censorship*, p. 6.
[17] Ibidem.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., p. 7.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] C.S. Clegg, 'Censorship', in *The Oxford Chronicles of Holinshed's Chronicles*, ed. by F. Heal, W. Archer and P. Kewes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), n.pag. < https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199565757.001.0001. >
[23] Ibid.
[24] Moore, 'Censorship'

towards modern Western perceptions of freedom of expression. In the same century, Fyodor Dostoevsky was writing at a time when Russian imperial censorship pervaded all aspects of book production. The Censorship Statute of 1804, prohibited 'publications that contravened Orthodoxy, autocracy or moral conscience'.[25] This first statute was updated in 1828 to prohibit works that had 'anything violating the inviolability of the supreme sovereign power', lacked 'respect for the Imperial House' and was 'contrary to indigenous government regulations'.[26] Many of his works were adapted to fit censorship rules before publication, which caused some of them, including meaning his first novel *Poor Folk*, several years to be published.[27] Later, in 1849, he was sent for four years to a Siberian prison for being involved in a club that discussed banned books critical of imperial Russia. In actual fact he was lucky, as the conviction normally meant the death sentence.

While these examples describe specific cases of censorship of dissident moral, religious and political expressions, wide scale censorship in the past has also led to large-scale cultural destruction. Perhaps most infamous are the Nazis book burnings in the 1930s and 1940s. These actions still have lingering effects today despite the historical distance. One case which exemplifies this, is the National Socialist Party's burning of the archives of the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (Institute of Sexology) in 1933.[28] Magnus Hirschfeld, its founder, had been working since 1897 on the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee that published many works aimed to socially recognize the LGBT community and fight against their persecution.[29] The archives were burned down to destroy so-called 'un-German' elements, references to homosexuality, independent inquiry and tolerance among others things.[30] With same sex marriage only having been recognized in Germany in 2017, one wonders if perhaps, had that centre not been burned down, LGBT communities in Germany might have had this freedom earlier.

Reiterating Jansen's concepts of censorship, looking back throughout history, regulative censorship has often been used to further ideologies, whether they be political or religious to name a few.[31] It is easy to look back in history and think these overly transparent

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[25] I. Zohrab, 'Censorship', in *Dostoevsky in Context*, ed. by D. Martinsen and O. Majorava (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 295
[26] Anon (1828 Statue on Censorship in Imperial Russia) qtd. in Zohrab, 'Censorship', p. 295.
[27] Zohrab, 'Censorship', p. 296.
[28] Knuth, *Burning Books,* p. 1.
[29] Ibidem.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Jansen, *Censorship,* p. 8.

forms of censorship are never to be seen again, but the pillars of censorship remain, even today.[32]

The practice of modern day censorship can be found in many countries. North Korea is an extreme example, as the whole country is completely cut off from the rest of the world. It is a country where all media are state-owned, and where anyone suspected of engaging with censored material is subjected to harsh punishments.[33] China's 'Great Firewall' legislative action on the regulating of the internet is another example, as it blocks access to all Western social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter, replacing them with Chinese platforms, which are controlled by the state.[34] Indicative of the Chinese censorship is the complete erasure of any reference to the 1989 Tiananmen Square students protests.[35] It is forbidden to even talk about them and Chinese university history textbooks totally omit the event. Furthermore, you can find examples of excessive usage of propaganda and censorship in countries like Russia, where all independent media is shut down and political opposition is jailed.[36] These countries are obvious examples to demonstrate contemporary uses of censorship due to their overtness. However, they are by no means exclusive. Governments that seem progressive and tolerant still practice forms of censorship.

One example that is relevant in the current political climate is the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States. A theory that Jansen rejects is this idea that liberalism eliminated censorship.[37] Instead, she argues, rather than some religious figure or overt authoritarian, the 'ultimate arbiter of Liberal power-knowledge' has become 'the marketplace'.[38] The separation of Church and State led to the creation of a capitalist society, and within this society, the only knowledge that is distributed is the 'in the worlds of Andy Warhol, "what sells!"'.[39] These so-called 'market censors' who are protecting the 'marketplace of ideas' inspect all art being created and then decide 'what cultural products

[32] Jansen, *Censorship,* p. 8.
[33] U.S. Embassy & Consulate in the Republic of Korea, 'Report on Serious Human Rights Abuses and Censorship in North Korea', < https://kr.usembassy.gov/102617-reports-major-publications-report-serious-human-rights-abuses-censorship-north-korea/ > (8 April 2022).
[34] Y. Wang, 'In China, the "Great Firewall" is Changing a Generation', *Politico*, 1 September, 2020 < https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/09/01/china-great-firewall-generation-405385 > (8 April 2022).
[35] K. Moskvitch, 'China bans Tiananmen Square-related web search terms', *BBC*, 4 June, 2012 < https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-18321548 > (8 April 2022).
[36] A. Troianovski, 'Russia Takes Censorship to New Extremes, Stifling War Coverage', *The New York Times*, 4 March, 2022, < https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/04/world/europe/russia-censorship-media-crackdown.html > (8 April 2022).
[37] Jansen, *Censorship,* p. 16.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

are likely to ensure a healthy profit margin'.[40] This is indeed shown in the handling of the Black Lives Matter movement in the US. At the inception of the movement, many in the corporate sector denounced and dissociated from any affiliation with the organization. However, with the rise of social media platforms such as Twitter, instances of systemic racism were being captured on camera and became so-called 'viral'. As public support for Black Lives Matters started to grow, so did corporate support. In light of the George Floyds protests in 2020 in the US, and around the world, it became a marketing strategy to lend support for the Black Lives Matter movement. While it can be argued that public awareness is always a positive means to an end, the large-scale protests were continuing well into the fall of 2020, but press coverage was not. Anti-racism protests were no longer profitable, so the corporate state stopped covering it. This links back to another Jansen concept, in which she states:

> Those who historically have been denied full access to the privileges of Liberalism – members of the lower classes, women, blacks, radicals, homosexuals, foreigners, etc. – have provided the most compelling testaments against abuses by the corporate state. But grievances filled by the walking wounded do not project healthy sales profiles.[41]

This concept is relevant for the findings of this thesis as it displays the hypocrisy in modern Western society and their approach to censorship legislation. Specifying this Western hypocrisy in the scope of this thesis, it is interesting to look at the dual role the Netherlands has played in their censorship practices. Since the seventeenth century, the Netherlands has been seen as being one of the most tolerant places in the world. As will be discussed more in the following chapter, political and religious refugees used to flee to cities like Leiden and Amsterdam because it was a place where they could freely discuss and publish their ideas. Concurrently, the Netherlands had already started colonizing parts of Indonesia and South Africa under the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC). As their rule expanded, the Netherlands used heavy censorship regulation in these countries to keep control of the colonies.[42] Censorship is always a complex concept to dissect and understand in any situation, but the knot that binds power and knowledge in modern day society, is heavily rooted in imperialism.

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[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., p. 17.
[42] N. Yamamoto, *Censorship in Colonial Indonesia, 1901-1942* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

To sum it up, censorship practices have long been tools that are used to incorporate ideology and principles that are in line with those in power. While the act of censoring has become increasingly difficult to identify, the precedent is still there. To end this section, it is therefore relevant to end with the essential question Sue Curry Jansen poses:

> [It] is not 'is there censorship' but rather 'what kind of censorship?'[43]

RESEARCH QUESTION, METHODOLOGY, AND STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The previous section sought to showcase the complexity and longevity of censorship, and its many examples throughout history. It is clear that censorship laws have been used by many governments –authoritarian and not – throughout centuries. In this thesis, the central question is how governments use state control of communication and freedom of expression, with the focus on literature, to silence entire populations in the pursuit of ideology. This will be done via a case study of one country and one period, South Africa during the Apartheid era. While by no means is the aim of this thesis to argue that censorship post-apartheid disappeared in South Africa, the apartheid era is a unique period in time that can be pinpointed with a 'start' and 'end' date, that has had countless scholarship on the legal practices used by the government at the time. Furthermore, the colonial history of South Africa created their complex linguistic environment, in which English has become one of their national languages. This has meant that their source material is accessible for a research like this. Indeed, I would not be able to write this thesis had the materials been written in Xhosa or Zulu.

I intend to research the relationship between censorship and democratization by arguing the power, and function of literature in a country with strong ideologies such as apartheid. To achieve this, I will examine a number of South African authors and works, reflect on the publication history in relation to changing publication and censorship legislation and show to reciprocity between these aspects. I will also close read the novels highlighted in the second and third chapter to reach a better understanding of how literature can critique politics and social realities, which can be understood as literary activism.

[43] Jansen, *Censorship*, p. 25.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. In chapter one, an overview of the history of South Africa will be given. While the focus of this thesis is primarily the period between 1948 and 1994, it is important to clarify the origins of Apartheid in order to understand and contextualize how a society can develop such large scale, institutionalized racial segregation. Chapter two will focus more in depth on the specifics of censorship legislation in the 1960s and 1970s, and the realities of writing and publishing under an authoritarian government. More specifically, this chapter aims to focus on two famous white authors, André Brink and Nadine Gordimer, who often had their works censored throughout the period of apartheid, because of their anti-apartheid commitments. It will be interesting to understand their legacy, and their activism throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, as they publicly opposed the National Governments' wishes for a white South African canon.

The third chapter will delve deeper into the other various forms of legislation the government used to employ censorship, and how these were used primarily to criminalize Black[44] South African authors. In doing so, I focus on the life and work of Alex La Guma, a prolific literary author and activist, as well as Steve Biko, the leader and founder of Black Consciousness. While Steve Biko is not a literary author per se, and falls slightly outside of the scope of this thesis, his ideology of Black Consciousness, and his non-fiction writing heavily inspired both Black and white authors in literature. Steve Biko's life and death, and the events of Sharpeville and the Soweto Uprising, which will be discussed as well, are prominent examples of how literature cannot be separated from actuality. Chapter four will discuss the gradual changes in legislation following much of the activism previously discussed, the seminal changes made to censorship laws following the ill-fated events of the *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* banning and further looks to the years leading up to 1994, as Black initiatives in literature create a stir in anti-apartheid activism. Furthermore, the effect of the censored circulated works as well as the cultural and social consequences of censorship on a changing South Africa going into post-apartheid will be discussed.

The conclusion will mainly reflect on the ways in which literature, activism and (changes in) censorship intersect. I argue the importance of literature into creating a cultural memory, and accurate historiographies in democratic societies whose origins have an authoritarian past. For South Africa specifically, my aim was to reflect that while the role of

[44] Throughout this thesis, I capitalized Black, and not white, in light of articles such as these: M. Laws, Why we capitalize "Black" (and not "white")', *Columbia Journalism Review*, 16 June, 2020, n.pag. < https://www.cjr.org/analysis/capital-b-black-styleguide.php > (30 April, 2022).; N. Coleman, 'Why We're Capitalizing Black', *The New York Times,* 5 July, 2020, n.pag. < https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/05/insider/capitalized-black.html > (30 April, 2022).

white authors and activists were important and should not be underestimated, the effects of works – as well as deeds – by Black authors and activists deserve more attention, and lead to a better understanding of changes in censorship.

CHAPTER ONE:

'HISTORY HAS ITS EYES ON YOU'

A Brief History of South Africa

The following chapters will primarily focus on the apartheid era in South Africa between 1948 and 1994, to explore how literary censorship was used within this period. While it is true that the era's regime is unique, it would be highly dismissive of the country's history to assume that this infamously large scale legal form of racial segregation is an aberration from the situation in the country prior to 1948.[45] It is important to acknowledge that South Africa – up until 1948 – had already witnessed a long history of racial oppression.[46] Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to identify the exact sources of racial discrimination in South Africa, this chapter will discuss key events that led up to white enfranchisement and the official beginning of apartheid. These key events include the start of white settlement at the Cape in the sixteenth century by the Dutch, the Xhosa Wars (also known as the African Hundred Years War, 1779-1879), British settlement in the nineteenth century, and the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. This would eventually lead into the segregation era, which in 1948 was succeeded by the apartheid era**.** In exploring the country's history, both culturally and politically, this chapter will contextualize the development of the nation's racial politics and describe how censorship, and particularly that of literature, became a prominent fixture in the apartheid government. In doing so, this chapter will serve as a backdrop for the following chapters, in which specific literary publications and related political events are brought to the forefront to understand the gradual breakdown of censorship and an establishment of democracy.

1500s-1910: TOWARDS THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The country that is now known as South Africa has a very rich history in terms of the different communities that have lived here, and of their cultures and languages. Prior to the Dutch settlement in the seventeenth century, the major indigenous ethnic communities included the Zulu, Xhosa, Bapedi, Batswana, Venda, Tsonga and Swazi, and Khoisan. These

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[45] P. Maylam, *South Africa's Racial Past* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company. 2001), p.6.
[46] Ibidem.

groups were settled in different parts across South Africa. Due to a lack of sources, the history of South Africa prior to the seventeenth century remains difficult to study. Furthermore, to understand the historical and cultural context that led to the apartheid era, and with it, its literary culture that was deeply defined by colonialism, this chapter will begin its history with the Dutch settlement in 1652.

Dutch Settlement: 1652-1814

Known as the Dutch Golden Age, the seventeenth century was a period of great wealth for the Netherlands. It denotes an era in which the Dutch were the foremost maritime and economic power of the Western world and enjoyed a flourishing period in art and science. At the forefront of this success, was The Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie - VOC[47]). Established as a trading corporation in 1602, the company had become a dominant European maritime power by the middle of seventeenth century.[48] In 1652, the company built a refreshment post, under the command of Jan van Riebeeck, at Table Bay by the Cape. The area was originally only supposed to serve as a stopover between the Netherlands and the Dutch colonial possessions in the East, with Batavia (modern Jakarta) on the Indonesian island of Java as its center.[49]

Initially, relations between the Company and the indigenous people known as the Khoikoi were cordial. To conduct trade with the Dutch, the Khoikoi developed Hottentot-Dutch, a pidgin Dutch language, picked up by hearing from those who stopped over in the Cape.[50] In this way, the indigenous and the merchants were able to maintain contact. However, the VOC slowly expanded its settlement at Table Bay to larger areas of the Cape, during which Khoikoi independence was increasingly violated. The Company seized their lands and their livestock, causing the Khoikoi economy to collapse.[51] The land previously owned by the indigenous inhabitants was given to employees of the Company after being recently been released from their contracts.[52] These ex-employees were given the status of *free burghers* (free citizens), and were ordered to produce grain and vegetables at a fixed

[47] *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*
[48] L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p.33.
[49] Ibidem.
[50] den Besten, Hans, 'Double negation and the genesis of Afrikaans' in *Roots of Afrikaans: Selected Writings of Hans den Besten*, ed. by T. van der Wouden (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012), p.232.
[51] Thompson, *A History of South Africa,* p. 33.
[52] Ibid.

price.[53] The Company saw this as the most economical form of food production for those who stopped over at the Cape. However, many of these early settlers came from the lowest classes in the Netherlands (and Germany), and had little to no experience or skills in intensive agriculture, so the operation yielded disappointing results.[54] For this reason, the VOC started transporting slaves into the Cape to work the fields[55] as well as employing the now displaced and desperate Khoikoi to work on their previously owned lands.[56] With more settlers coming into the newly established colony in the 1660s, the Cape Colony had become a 'complex, racially stratified society'.[57]

During this same period the influx of religious refugees and better and more accessible education in the Netherlands created a society rife with cultural and intellectual exchange.[58] Known as the 'bookshop of the world', the Dutch economy was flourishing, also in the sphere of printing and bookselling.[59] Many of the refugees brought with them skills relevant to publishing.[60] Because the political system of the Dutch Republic was not centralized, it was difficult to exercise effective censorship control in the individual provinces.[61] This meant that the country was a haven for authors whose works were forbidden elsewhere in Europe.[62]. In the second half of the 17th century, a new and large group of religious refugees began to arrive, the Huguenots, who were driven out of France by the Catholic king Louis XIV.[63] As the VOC started to recognize the economic benefits of discharging company employees on the Cape to grow grain and vegetables to the company to sell, many Huguenot refugees moved to the Cape – where their religious freedom was safeguarded – to provide for the VOC. In this period, the settlement continued to expand from Table Bay to the lands beyond the Cape into what would become Stellenbosch.

While European citizens in the colony enjoyed economic and religious freedoms, the displaced Khoikoi were subjugated to Dutch overrule and Dutch law, which effectively endangered the integrity of their culture. After numerous failed attempts at reclaiming their

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[53] Ibid, p.35.
[54] Ibid, p. 36.
[55] Ibid, p.36.
[56] Ibid, p. 33
[57] Ibid, p. 33.
[58] P.G. Hoftijzer, 'The Dutch Republic, Centre of the European Book Trade in the 17th Century', *European History Online,* (2015), n.pag. < http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/the-book-market/paul-g-hoftijzer-the-dutch-republic-centre-of-the-european-book-trade-in-the-17th-century > (15 May 2020).
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.

land and culture in the Khoikoi-Dutch Wars in the second half of the seventeenth century, many of the Khoikoi were either sent to the newly fortified prison island, Robbeneiland, or had to share the brunt of slave labor. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, they were considered a subordinate caste in colonial society, set apart by appearance and culture from both the Dutch descendants – now known as the Boers – and the imported slaves, in which they were free in status but not in their treatment.[64]

By the second half the seventeenth century, the free burghers, now known as the 'trekboers', migrated further eastward and into the region of the Great Fish River as the VOC was continuing to expand the borders of its colony. This region was the home of many Xhosa communities, whose land was now violently claimed by the VOC.[65] The expansion into the Great Fish River region and the brutal displacement of the Xhosa would eventually lead to Africa's 'Hundred Years War', which lasted well into the era of British occupation, and resulted in ending Black independence in South Africa.

Prior to British settlement, this 'racially stratified' society also went through a linguistic change throughout the eighteenth century.[66] The first colonists, as well as many of the Huguenots were speaking Dutch. The indigenous people were speaking their native languages. Half of the slaves brought in were also still speaking their native languages, while the Asian slaves spoke Portuguese Creole.[67] In order to better communicate with each other, slaves and 'Boers' started speaking a simplified form of Dutch, which dropped certain inflections and vocabulary, modified vowel sounds and integrated loan words from the various other languages – particularly the native Khoisan languages.[68] Ultimately, this dialect would become the distinct language of Afrikaans. As the mother tongue of colonial descendants, the Apartheid government aimed to make Afrikaans the lingua franca, serving as another symbol of South Africa's oppression.

In contrast to the widespread printing culture in the Netherlands, the fear of promoting Europeanized intellectualism among Black and indigenous South Africans caused the Dutch colonial administration to prevent any importation of printing presses until in the last year of their control over the region.[69] However, the long-lasting effect of the Dutch government in

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[64] Thompson, *History of South Africa*, p.38
[65] Ibid., p. 50
[66] Ibid., p. 52.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] E. le Roux, 'Africa', in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, 2nd edition, ed. by S. Eliot and J. Rose (Hoboken etc.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), p. 355.

literary culture is evident in its creation of Afrikaans. South Africa's literary heritage is very much entwined with the national identity created by this linguistic identity.

British Settlement: 1814-1910

In 1795 France occupied the Dutch Republic, after which the British occupied the Cape peninsula to prevent French intervention. As the Dutch were weakened by the French occupation, the British began to steadily take control of the colony. By 1806 the English had fully annexed the area. [70] The official confirmation – in the eyes of Europe – of sovereignty to the English was marked by the peace settlement of 1814.[71] For the British, the Cape peninsula was –as it had been for the Dutch before them – a useful rest stop on the journey to Asia, where the English East India Company operated a highly profitable trade system.[72] Although the Cape itself did not add much economic value for the British, they still wanted to establish and expand British control over the colony up to the eastern frontier zone which was primarily inhabited by Xhosa farmers. To gain control, the British steadily instituted a system for segregation that stated that the white population and the Xhosa population should be kept absolutely separate 'until the former shall have increased considerably in numbers, and are also much more advanced in arts and industry'.[73] This was implemented in the 1811 and 1812 attacks on Black owned farms, in which the British military efforts drove off the Xhosa citizens, by burning their crops and villages.[74] Following these brutal attacks, the Xhosa attempted to reclaim their lands, but in 1819 they were driven to the border of the colony across the Great Fish River by a brutal British military which resulted in further annexations of African land.

The annexation was followed by the 1820 British settlement. The settlers were given the lands the Xhosa communities had fought over in 1811 and 1819. The lack of prior farming experience coupled with a high birth rate among the settlers led to an economic disaster for the area.[75] The Cape needed more labor but was forced to align with the British

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[70] Britannica, 'British Occupation of the Cape', < https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/British-occupation-of-the-Cape > (23 May, 2020).
[71] Thompson, *History of South Africa*, p.52.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., p. 54
[74] Ibid, pp. 54-55.
[75] Britannica, 'British Occupation', (23 May, 2020).

growing antislavery sentiment.[76] In 1828 Cape authorities issued Ordinance 49, which allowed Black laborers to work elsewhere in the colony as long as they were in possession of the English approved passes and documentation.[77] Ordinance 49 provided the footwork for the notorious pass laws of the twentieth century. Ordinance 50, issued in 1828, aimed to repeal the previous legislation and stated equality between the Black and white population. However, this new freedom was extremely limited. Black Africans were still disproportionally living in poverty as opposed to their white counterparts. For many, their only way of emancipation meant owning land, but land could only be legally owned by white people. Black Africans, as well as the former slaves and the Khoikoi – now collectively referred to as 'colored people' – had no choice but to work for white farmers or join the Cape military regiments and fight for the Empire.

Between 1811 and 1858 British colonial aggression disrupted Black and indigenous communities. Aside from Africans being forced to learn English, European missionaries set out to Christianize them, efforts which undermined 'African worldviews and contributed to the destruction of traditional African communities throughout South Africa'.[78] Despite their efforts to stay afloat, Black farmers encountered many difficulties in obtaining investment capital and competing with the colonial farmers due to legal and political discrimination. By the time the South African War began, many had lost their livelihood.

It was during this period of Black displacement and disenfranchisement that South Africa's modern literary culture began.[79] In Europe, the invention of the printing press had meant that texts were now accessible to a more diverse group in society. With the continual rise of new readers, this meant that many booksellers followed the colonies to set up a market there.[80] Aimed at a colonial readership, bookselling in South Africa specifically closely followed after the events of the British takeover of the Cape and the establishment of mission presses.[81] These booksellers, however, had to strictly adhere to pre-censorship laws on its imported goods.[82] This was on account of colonial powers being fearful of the introduction of

[76] O' Malley: The Heart of Hope, '1828. ORDINANCE NO 49', < https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01646/05lv01657.htm > (13 June 2020).
[77] Ibidem.
[78] Britannica, 'British Occupation', (23 May, 2020).
[79] P.D. McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and its Cultural Consequences* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 1.
[80] Roux, 'Africa', p. 354.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.

print in this new society.[83] While a wider readership was a new potential source of profit, more readers meant more possibility for the instigation of political unrest.[84] This meant that prior to 1824, literary works had to be imported into South Africa.[85] This changed with the launch of *The South African Journal*.[86] While the launch of *The South African Journal* can be seen as one of the cornerstones of South Africa's literary culture, it is also a distinct example of the beginnings of South Africa's modern censorship culture seen by its exclusion of indigenous languages.

Created by two Scottish settlers, Thomas Pringle and John Fairbarn, their mission was to make a journal that was quintessentially South African. Not Dutch nor British, but a journal that aimed to unify the two settler communities to create a distinct South African identity.[87] Though the two men acknowledged the existence of the languages of the indigenous communities, their idea of South African culture was an amalgamation of Boer and British culture.[88] This would only later change with colonialist initiatives in orthography for South African native languages.[89] However, this process was slow, and wholly dependent on the colonial powers in charge.[90]

Although the Boers and the British had banded together against Xhosa rebellions in previous decades and efforts were made towards unification, by the 1830s, anti-British sentiment was growing among Boers. Now under British control, they had lost the autonomy they had enjoyed under the VOC had ended. Furthermore, the Dutch colonial presence was very weak beyond Cape Town and Stellenbosch, whereas the British held control over the entire colony. All legislation made under Dutch rule was changed and by 1830 English had become the dominant language for education, law and government. Tensions reached a critical point in 1836 with the Great Trek, during which Afrikaners migrated from the Cape Colony into what would be known as the Boer sovereign republic Orange Free State. After a long period of discord between the British and the Boers, the question of who would be the main exploiter of the gold mine in the Witwatersrand resulted in the South African War, or Second Boer War in 1899. Despite being known as 'a white man's war', both the Boer and British sides extensively used Black labor. The indigenous and Black communities not

[83] Ibid, p. 355.
[84] Ibid, p. 554.
[85] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 2.
[86] Ibidem.
[87] Ibid, p. 3.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.

fighting in the war were suffering with many being displaced and fleeing. Many of those who fled, including Boer refugees, landed in British concentration camps. But even there, Black and white were separated, with conditions being significantly worse for those of color. The brutal war ended in 1902 with the Treaty of Vereeniging. While the British officially had won the war, they conceded heavily by promising reconstruction and limited self-governance for the Boers or Afrikaners as they were now known.[91] The enfranchisement of native and Black communities, on the other hand, was only to be considered if white government allowed it.

1910-1948: THE SEGREGATION ERA

May 31, 1910, saw the birth of the Union of South Africa under the leadership of the South African Party, led by Louis Botha and Jan Smuts. Owing its conception to mineral discoveries and a period of reconstruction for white Afrikaners, the Union of South Africa also originated out of more policies meant to ensure white minority rule.[92] The general sentiment was to close the gap between these two white communities and to consolidate political power between them. When 'whites talked about the 'racial question', they were referring to the ethnic cleavage between Afrikaners and English-speaking white South Africans'.[93] However, the Botha and Smuts government was steadily losing Afrikaner support with their policies of reconciliation, particularly within their own party, and in January 1914, Barry Munnik Hertzog, the Orange Free State leader left Botha's cabinet and founded the National Party.[94] The National Party was committed to the protection of the cultural, political and economic interests of the Afrikaners and the removal of British interests.[95]

Following World War I, the division between Afrikaners and the English became more strained. Botha and Smuts joined the English side in the war, but in the eyes of Afrikaner nationalists, the government had sold out to the Empire.[96] The British led government lost support of Afrikaners, as well as other working-class whites due to industrial disputes, and as a result the National Party, under Hertzog, won the election in 1924. Between 1924 and 1933, the Hertzog administration passed legislation that would make

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[91] Thompson, *History of South Africa*, p. 144.
[92] Britannica, 'British Occupation', (23 May, 2020).
[93] Thompson, *History of South Africa,* p. 157.
[94] Ibid., p. 158.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.

South Africa both politically and economically independent and it fulfilled its campaign promise of changing the official language from Dutch to Afrikaans in 1925.[97]

While white South Africans were focusing on the matters between the two white groups, Black South Africans were struggling to survive. The Botha and Smuts government were consistently policing and increasingly taxed Black communities heavier, while most Black citizens were not allowed to vote or be represented in Parliament.[98] In 1910, 85% of voters were white, 10% colored, and 5% black in the Cape.[99] Beyond the Cape there was even less representation.

In order to make a living, in 1910, African farmers were trying to still be able to practice farming on the reservations and lands not destroyed by white warfare. However, over the course of the Smuts and Botha administration, the state passed legislation that resulted in further racial segregation and discrimination. The Native Land Act of 1913 was a crucial law that destroyed African peasantry. Impoverished by land shortages and more heavy taxation, African farming eventually became a thing of the past. The only income left for many Black families was for family members to become wage or tenant laborers for white farmers where they were paid fifteen times less than their white counterparts. For Black communities after the Native Land Act, ‘at best, their lives were ameliorated by paternalist farmers; at worst they were victims of systematic exploitation’.[100] With many Africans also trying to find work within the cities, the government tightened pass laws to limit their movements into urban areas by passing The Apprenticeship Act of 1922 and The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924. As the former barred Africans from apprenticeships and the latter excluded them from overseeing their own working conditions, the aim of these acts was to reduce white poverty at the expense of Black workers.[101]

With most South Africans displaced to the reservations, the majority was not capable of receiving formal education. This was largely left to the missionaries, whose resources were insufficient. For most Africans, this meant that they could not receive more than a rudimentary education.[102] However, there were some who managed to receive higher education at the South African Native College at Fort Hare.[103] Still primarily white-oriented,

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[97] Ibid., p. 160.
[98] Britannica, ‘Labour and Taxation’, < https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/Resources-and-power#ref260131 > (23 May 2020).
[99] Britannica, ‘Convention and Union’, < https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/Reconstruction-union-and-segregation-1902-29#ref44081 > (23 May 2020).
[100] Thompson, *History of South Africa,* pp.165-166.
[101] Ibid., p. 169.
[102] Ibid., p.172.
[103] Ibid., p. 173.

the syllabus described the history of South Africa from a white settlement point of view with no regard nor mention of the African perspective. ZK Matthews, a student in Fort Hare and later a prominent Black South African academic, described the curriculum as erasing African culture:

> Our history, as we had absorbed it from the tales and talk of our elders, bore no resemblance to South African history as it had been written by European scholars [….] we struggled through the white man's version of the so-called Kaffir Wars, the Great Trek, the struggles for control of South Africa [and] we had to give back in our examination papers the answers the white man expected.[104]

In creating a white cultural identity for South Africa, white rulers erased Black and indigenous culture, controlled the education of Black South Africans and changed their language so that it was not even possible to refute this colonized history. In making a nation, this literary and non-literary censorship played a significant role in forming the identity and administration of what would become apartheid era South Africa.[105]

Those who did manage to receive an education, such as ZK Matthews, tried to unite Black communities against white hegemony and joined the African National Congress (ANC). Founded in 1912 – in response to the constitutional convention, from which they were excluded – mission-educated Africans Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Alfred Mangena, Richard Msimang and George Monstioa organized the South African Native Convention. This convention eventually conceived the idea and then formation of the ANC in 1912, which would become the symbol of resistance against white supremacy for nearly a century. To gain support from their white countrymen to fight against laws such as the Native Land Act, the ANC tried lobbied through sympathetic white missionaries, politicians and journalists who could write about their lived experiences. This at least was how the ANC operated until 1939.

In response to missionary education and the rise of the ANC, the government actively implemented censorship policies. Political expression was limited to support for the cause of white supremacy. [106] Justifying their censorship rulings, the government argued that

[104] ZK Matthews, *Freedom for my People: The Autobiography of ZK Matthews: Southern Africa 1901 to 1968*, ed. by M. Wilson (London: Rex Collings in association with David Philip, 1981), pp. 58-59.
[105] Moore, 'Censorship'
[106] J. Dugard, *Human Rights and the South African Legal Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 192.

"permissiveness leads to communism",[107] which was a foreshadowing of the infamous Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 that would imprison many anti-apartheid voices. The Entertainments (Censorship) Act of 1931 codified political censorship and heavily suppressed artistic license. Both local South African and imported films had to be submitted for approval by the Board of Censors, and books published within South Africa were subject to national and provincial legislation which introduced the sanction of criminal law on the distribution and display of so-called 'obscene' works.[108]

World War II would prove to be the catalyst for what has becomes known as the apartheid era, which would also lead to a period which saw the most restrictive censorship era. In 1939, the ruling party in South Africa was the United Party, a merger between Afrikaner nationalist Hertzog's National Party and British sympathetic Jan Smut's South African Party. When Britain declared war on Germany, this split the United Party. Despite attempts at reconciliation between the English white and the Afrikaner, many Afrikaners still felt deep resentment towards Britain and saw an alliance with them as a betrayal.[109] In spite of this, however, many Afrikaners joined the army alongside the English. With so many white men out of the country because of the Allied war effort, many Black people moved to the cities to take up the jobs left behind, ultimately outnumbering the number of white people living there. During, and shortly after World War II, Black South Africans formed trade unions, and protested for better wages and living conditions, most notably in the 1946 African Mine Workers' Union Strike.[110] Despite the government's brutal attempts to suppress the strikes, a series of reforms were set in motion. There was an increase in Black wages, pass laws were being eased and there was talk of the recognition of African trade unions.[111]

Afrikaners, particularly those from low-income families, felt threatened by the United Party's concessions. Wanting to maintain white supremacy and so-called racial purity, they set up organizations in support of preserving their interests. Furthermore, the white working classes did not want to lose their control over Black labor nor did they want Black Africans to constitute competition on the job market. These organizations pushed for even greater segregation between the races, and their ideas were popularized by books such as *Home for Posterity,* which advocated for racial separation to preserve economic stability, and op-eds in

[107] Ibid, p. 193.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Thompson, *A History of South Africa,* p. 183.
[110] D. O'Meara, "The 1946 African mine workers' strike and the political economy of South Africa', *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 13:2 (1975), pp. 179-235.
[111] Britannica, 'World War II', < https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/World-War-II > (23 May, 2020).

Afrikaner newspapers about the dangers of assimilation. It is under these conditions that the National Party won the elections by a small margin in 1948.[112]

1948-1994: THE APARTHEID ERA

As we have seen, racial segregation was already present in South Africa long before the modern era. However, with the National Party winning the election in 1948, it became an ideology by the name of Apartheid. Directly translating to 'separateness', South Africa was to embark on a 'policy of institutionalized and systematic racial discrimination and domination in which there would be no respect for human rights'[113] What set apartheid apart from other states that practiced forms of segregation was its legislative transparency. No attempt was made to conceal any discriminatory intent. Apartheid was honest in what it was – codified white supremacy.

The National Party government quickly set about translating apartheid into law. In order to ensure so-called racial purity, the first law to be passed was the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, which forbade marriages between white and non-white ('European and non-European) people. This was followed by the second Immorality Act of 1957 which also made sexual relations between different races punishable by law.

One of the cornerstones of the apartheid state was the Population Registrations Act of 1950. This required every South African to have an identity card on which their race was indicated. It divided the population into three basic classifications. These being white, colored, and Bantu, which was a term adopted by white supremacists to pejoratively refer to Black Africans. Later, an Asian classification was also added. Any disputes over race classification were government determined and settled by reference to a person's physical appearance and the social construct of what race was, rather than their ancestral information.[114] The disinterest in the advances in the field of sociobiology that decided on the meanings of race was due to the sole fact that the government was aware that many white families were of mixed descent.[115] The results of some of these disputes already showed the contradictions within the apartheid ideology. Families were torn apart as different members

[112] Thompson, *A History of South Africa,* p. 185.
[113] J. Dugard, *Confronting Apartheid: A Personal History of South Africa, Namibia and Palestine* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media Ltd., 2018), p.40.
[114] D. Posel, 'What's in a name? Racial categorisations under apartheid and their afterlife', *Transformations* 47 (2001), pp. 55-57.
[115] K. Breckenridge, 'The Book of Life: The South African Population Register and the Invention of Racial Descent, 1950-1980', *Kronos,* 40 (2014), p. 228.

were being classified in different racial groups, with all the ensuing consequences this had for their lives.[116] Once race was determined, so was someone's status in society.

Also in 1950, the Group Areas Act was passed to ensure residential segregation. With this law, the government determined where everyone was allowed to live. It was primarily used it to make the cities exclusively white and move out the colored, Asian and Black population to areas with no amenities far from Cape Town. This law also displaced many of the indigenous Africans from their ancestral homes just to be sent to reservations.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, the National Party largely succeeded in their goals of fulfilling Afrikaner ethnic goals, primarily through the party's triumph in 1961 when South Africa officially became an independent republic and disengaged itself from Great Britain.[117] The government made sure to 'Afrikanize' all parts of the state institutions, so that Afrikaners were favored in high positions in the civil service and state corporations, among other professions.[118] Even within the medical and legal occupations, Afrikaners increasingly filled leading roles.[119] With the economic gap closing between Afrikaners and the English-speaking white South Africans, the popularity of the National Party continued to rise because they managed to raise the standard of living for all white South Africans.[120] The National Party's main agenda was in the preservation of white minority rule and white supremacy in all areas of legislation and administration.[121] Much of this was achieved under the guidance of Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd (1901-1966),[122] who was initially the Minister of Native Affairs, but later the National Party Prime Minister and known as the 'Architect of Apartheid'. During his administration, from 1958 to September 1966, apartheid, in the world of historian L. Thompson, 'became the most notorious form of racial domination that the postwar world has known'.[123]

Apartheid was a rare phenomenon in the context of world politics. As other countries were moving towards decolonization and desegregation, South Africa implemented increasingly more severe control and restrictions over Black South Africans,[124] while Afrikaners and other white Africans became increasingly more prosperous.[125] In order to

[116] Dugard, *Confronting Apartheid,* pp. 40-41.
[117] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 188.
[118] Ibidem.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., p. 189.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., p. 193.
[125] Ibid., p. 200.

administer apartheid and its legal foundation, there was a large increase in bureaucracy.[126] To enforce apartheid, the government relied on multiple resources.[127] The state placed a great emphasis on the training and equipping the South African police force, which included the highly infamous Security Police, that was in charge of interrogation of supposed political suspects and primarily employed torture as their method of questioning its suspects.[128] Furthermore, most of the white population were licensed to possess firearms, whereas Black people were not.[129] Unsurprisingly, the years of apartheid during which white citizens thrived, were a period of Black trauma concealed by the government.

The resources that the apartheid government used, and their methods in the oppression and exclusion of non-white citizens, can be seen as the foundations for censorship. One of the most prominent examples of this is the suppression of Black voices in education. While schools were already largely separated by race, by right, Black children received by right the same provincial education as white scholars. However, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 took the control away from the provinces and brought it under a central government department. The aim was to ensure that the education for Black children and students was inferior to those of their white counterparts. Hendrik Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs at the time, but later the National Party's Prime Minister and 'Architect of Apartheid', expanded on it saying:

> The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the above the level of certain forms of labor […] It is abundantly clear that unplanned education creates many problems, disrupts the communal life of the Bantu and endangers the communal life of the European.[130]

Every part of society had to fall under the umbrella of apartheid and in the favor of white supremacy. The laws aimed to disenfranchise and discriminate against Black Africans sparked nationwide protests and demonstrations, primarily led by the African National

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[126] Ibid., p. 199.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., pp. 199- 200.
[129] Ibid., p. 199.
[130] South African History Online (SAHO), 'Hendrik Verwoerd: 10 quotes by Hendrik Verwoerd (Politics Web), 20 September 2016' < https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/hendrik-verwoerd-10-quotes-hendrik-verwoerd-politics-web-20-september-2016 > (15 May 2020).

Congress (ANC). To combat this, the National Party enacted more repressive laws to subdue dissident voices. Perhaps most severe, was the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950.[131]

From the outset, the National Party argued that its aim was to outlaw the Communist Party and prohibit and punish the advocacy for communism. However, in practice, this act was used against anyone who spoke out against the National Party. Communism was vaguely defined as any doctrine which aimed at bringing about 'any political, industrial, social or economic change in the Union by the promotion of disturbances or disorders, by unlawful acts or omissions or by the threat of such acts and omissions'.[132] The Suppression of Communism Act was progressively tightened up until 1968 to silence all opposition. In combination with the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1953,[133] civil disobedience protests were considered unlawful and anyone who was connected to or colluded with so-called communist parties such as the ANC, was subjected to banning orders.[134] These banning orders allowed restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, gathering, speech and movement of persons.

The Suppression of Communism and the Criminal Law Amendment Act also ensured the prohibition of publications that the state considered dangerous without any appeal. The Suppression of Communism Act ruled that the statements of banned individuals were to be suppressed and that these individuals were prohibited from writing for any publication published outside South Africa. In addition, newspapers suspected of communist leanings were given major fines.[135] The Criminal Law Amendment Act expanded upon this and made it a criminal offense for anyone to write letters or publications if they encouraged any behavior that could cause someone reading it to break the law. Those even just suspected of breaking the law were jailed and/-or whipped. Following the first major act of censorship during apartheid era, more censorship laws followed to silence opposition. These included, but were not limited to, the Customs Act of 1964, in which all publications considered immoral were banned from import, the Official Secrets Act of 1956, that made publications offering information relating to the military, police and state security offices as illegal, and

[131] J. Green and N.J. Karolides, *Encyclopedia of Censorship* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2005), p. 529.
[132] South African History Online, 'Suppression of Communism Act, No. 44 of 1950 approved in parliament', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/suppression-communism-act-no-44-1950-approved-parliament > (1 June 2020).
[133]Green and Karolides, Encyclopedia Censorship, p. 529.
[134] Dugard, *Human Rights*, p. 138.
[135] Green and Karolides, Encyclopedia Censorship, p. 529.

the extension of University Education Act of 1959 and Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963, which required any publication to go through pre-censorship.[136]

In the same period, a new phase of African resistance began, which saw the election of Nelson Mandela into the ANC and the founding of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), as well as the launch of a series of passive and non-violent campaigns against apartheid and its legal framework, primarily the pass laws.[137] The 21st of March 1960 was a critical moment for many Black activists and South Africa as a whole. Circumventing the ANC plans for a protest against the pass laws, the PAC announced they would have their own anti-pass campaign around police stations in the country on this date.[138] At the press conference during which he announced the campaign, the leader of the PAC, Robert Sobukwe (1924-1978) stressed that the campaign had to be conducted in the spirit of non-violence and that its aim was for the country to see that Black people deserved democratic representation and freedom.[139] In Sharpeville, however, in response to the protest, the police opened fire on almost five thousand marchers who had reached the police station, killing 69 people and leaving over 180 people seriously injured.[140] The news of the massacre spread quickly and gave rise to nationwide demonstrations, against which the government quickly retaliated by declaring a state of emergency.[141] In the following months, the police arrested over 10,000 people, most of whom were Black, including all the members of the effective leadership of the PAC and ANC. In addition, the government introduced legislation that banned both the ANC and PAC[142], causing them to go underground.[143]The Sharpeville massacre and the government's brutal response was a turning point in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.[144]

Censorship Legislation in the Apartheid Era

As will be discussed in the following two chapters, the events of Sharpeville showcase the strong relationship between the literary and the actuality, and how they cannot be separated.

[136] Ibid.
[137] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 207.
[138] South African History Online (SAHO), 'Sharpeville Massacre, 21 March 1960', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/sharpeville-massacre-21-march-1960 > (16 February 2021).
[139] Ibidem.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 210.
[142] T. Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 167.
[143] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 210.
[144] Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre,* p. 167.

Indeed, the authors that will be highlighted all were affected by the events that occurred in response to Sharpeville, and the State of Emergency that followed it. Many (Black) political activists were arrested in response, like prolific author Alex La Guma, and Sharpeville also induced Steve Biko (1946-1977) to start the Black Consciousness movement as will be discussed more thoroughly in a later chapter.[145] Not only were the events of Sharpeville horrifying to Black Africans, but many white South Africans as well. Sharpeville caused André Brink (1935-2015) to critically rethink his nationalist upbringing, as a result of which he became a staunch anti-apartheid activist.[146] Similarly, fellow author Nadine Gordimer (1923-2014), who was already an activist, became a member of the ANC.[147]

As will be seen in the following chapters in more depth, the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963 (PEA) were instrumental acts that the government used to enforce censorship. However, particularly in response to much of the coverage of the anti-apartheid movement, and in order to consolidate many of the acts of the previous decades, the National Publications Act of 1974 was issued. Its criteria and guidelines were described as follows in section 47(2), which stated 'that when a publication or object, film or public entertainment, or any part thereof

(a) [was] indecent or obscene or offensive or harmful to public morals;
(b) [was] blasphemous or is offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the inhabitants of the Republic;
(c) [brought] any section of the inhabitants of the Republic into ridicule or contempt
(d) [was] harmful to the relations between any sections of the inhabitants of the Republic
(e) [was] prejudiced to the safety of the state, the general welfare or the peace and good order;
(f) [disclosed] with 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.

[145] M. Graham, 'Why is Steve Biko's remarkable legacy often overlooked?', *The Conversation,* September 4, 2017, n.pag. < https://theconversation.com/why-is-steve-bikos-remarkable-legacy-often-overlooked-82952 > (16 February, 2021),

[146] C. Taylor, 'A life in writing: André Brink', *The Guardian*, 5 June, 2010, n.pag. < https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jun/05/writing-life-andre-brink > (16 February 2021)

[147] A. Greenblatt, 'Nadine Gordimer, Nobel-winning Chronicler of Apartheid, Dies', *NPR*, July 14, 2014, n.pag. < https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/07/14/331344899/nadine-gordimer-nobel-winning-chronicler-of-apartheid-dies?t=1613672517440 > (16 February 2021)

it [was] deemed to be undesirable'.[148] These rules were regulated based on morality and protected in legislation. The government decided what society's moral code was, and its own definition of morality was steeped in racial prejudice.

Since the victory of the National Party in the 1948 election and the start of apartheid era South Africa, censorship was a major tool used in the suppression of anti-apartheid voices in order to monopolize political power through the control of information.[149] However, as this brief history confirms, the use of censorship – both overtly and covertly – was a familiar tool for the oppression of South Africa's indigenous population beginning with colonial rule.

The censoring of Black voices and languages, and their exclusion from society, was further escalated during apartheid with Afrikaans becoming the dominant language in society, alongside English. During apartheid era, Afrikaans was fully standardized, had a wide range of its own literature as well as being the primary language in all official domains.[150] Afrikaans was a symbol of Afrikaner identity and supremacy, thus serving as a symbol of oppression for non-white South Africans.[151] It, notably so, is associated with events such as the tragic Soweto uprising in 1976, when the imposition of Afrikaans and the replacement of indigenous languages in African schools caused uproar.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the racial history of South Africa is complex, so is the country's literary and writing culture. Both are deeply intertwined with colonialism. Recognizing South Africa's deep-rooted past in racial oppression and segregation provides the necessary contextualization for the anti-apartheid voices that fought against their regime through their publications. Most scholarship regarding South African print culture starts at the Dutch settlement, and many influential works written by Black or indigenous African authors are written in English, rather than the eleven bantu or indigenous languages. Furthermore, the works of many prominent anti-apartheid voices, both white and Black, were originally written in Afrikaans. It is through this lens that the following chapters will explore the forms of literary and

[148] J.C.W. van Rooyen, *Censorship in South Africa* (Cape Town/Wetton/Johannesburg: Juta & Co., Limited, 1987), p. 7.
[149] G. Budlender, 'Preface', in Censored: Studies in SA's censorship laws by five leading writers, ed. by T. Coggin (Johannesburg: SA Institute of Race Relation, 1983), p.7.
[150] J. Weber, *Language Racism* (New York/Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 38.
[151] Ibid.

political censorship in South Africa. Even prior to mass media communication and the legislation to control it, censorship had its foundations in controlling indigenous education and language; the apartheid era just made this ideology transparent. However, the apartheid era also demonstrated how fragile white minority rule was. The four decades of apartheid, showcased increasingly harsher restrictions on media communications and literature, for both white authors and Black authors. Indeed, in the mid-1980s, white journalist and anti-apartheid activist Tony Weaver, photographed himself holding up a poster of his newspaper the Cape Times, which read 'What are the police afraid of?'.[152] The culture of censorship was pervasive throughout every facet of South African society. However, many writers with anti-apartheid sentiments, both Black and white, managed to have their work published and circulated. The next two chapters will highlight how these banned materials were instrumental in the eventual dissolution of apartheid.

[152] Found from image in Y. Kamaldien, 'Photographers fought apartheid with their cameras', *Wordpress*, 8 June, 2014, n.pag. < https://yazkam.wordpress.com/2014/06/08/photographers-fought-apartheid-with-their-cameras/ > (30 April, 2022).

CHAPTER TWO:

'WHO LIVES, WHO DIES, WHO TELLS YOUR STORY'

The Legal Landscape surrounding White Authorship in Apartheid South Africa

As was highlighted in the previous chapter, after the victory of the National Party in 1948, publishing in South Africa became a political game of chess. Leading into the 1960s, the National Party was so concerned with preventing local and international protests, particularly considering the Sharpeville Massacre, that there were severe clampdowns on distribution of media and communications, including literature. Indeed, clearly there was something to be feared of in these often-fictional works considering the efforts of the government to suppress anything in which the content did not completely match their ideology. Interestingly, despite the proclamations of white supremacy and Afrikaner nationalism, the government also did not look kindly upon white authors who did not conform. This following chapter will highlight works of anti-apartheid authors André Brink and Nadine Gordimer – first mentioned in Chapter One – as well as the legal circumstances in which they found themselves in, with their works being banned throughout their careers.

A SOUTH AFRICAN (WHITE) LITERARY CANON

As was discussed in Chapter One, the Sharpeville Massacre is a historical event in apartheid-era South Africa that marked a turning point in anti-apartheid sentiment, not only for Black South Africans, but also for white South Africans. To understand the significance of an event being as publicized as Sharpeville, it is important to recognize how the government sheltered its white citizens, particularly Afrikaners, from the ideology of its opposition. Prior to 1960, and due to its increasingly repressive laws into the 1970s, the Nationalist regime was relatively successful in isolating the Afrikaner from the other races, as well as in conditioning them to believe the relative normalcy of white supremacy within their country.[153] They had a unique language were taught the version of history approved by the Nationalist government in schools.[154] What happened following the May Day parade in 1950, when police opened fire and murdered ANC protesters, further illustrates how the government isolated

[153] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 198.
[154] Ibidem.

Afrikaners.[155] The following day, liberal newspapers and magazines, such as *The Guardian*, reported on the event. Shortly after, the government passed the Suppression of Communism Act, and with this new act, all leftist papers were barred from operating, and anyone who opposed would receive banning orders or other forms of punishment.[156] In 1952, the Defiance Campaign Against Unjust Laws, one of the ANC's first large scale non-violent protests, was ultimately met with the Criminal Law Amendment and Public Safety Acts, which criminalized any defiance of apartheid.[157] The publication of articles in *The Rand Daily Mail* in 1965,detailing the abuse and torture political prisoners had to endure, resulted in a police raid on the office building and many legal repercussions for the company under the amended Prisons Act.[158] Publishing in South Africa had effectively become a political minefield impossible to navigate.[159]

Scholarship on South Africa's publishing history begins in the 17th century, under Dutch colonialism.[160] Similar to Western book history, the earliest publications were primarily Christian in nature. As the publishing industry grew, published works were disseminated under strict control of its production by the colonial State, Dutch or British, as well as the Church.[161] In this regard, the presence of State intervention on writing was applicable to all languages in South Africa, to protect minority rule.[162] However, throughout the decades, English and Afrikaans literature by white writers was encouraged[163] while Black authors were confined to writing works that did not interfere with Christian values.[164] With the missionary presence being the only form of formal education many Africans on the reservations received, there were 'gross inequalities' between Black and white authors in 'access to information, research, literary expression, commentary and criticism'.[165] Despite this and many other systematic disadvantages, moving into apartheid post-1948, a wide array of Black authors who found underground success in English writing that opposed the white -

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155 J.M. Phelan, *Apartheid Media: Disinformation and Dissent in South Africa* (Connecticut: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1987), p. 31.
156 Ibidem.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 P. Mpe and M. Seeber, 'The Politics of Book Publishing in South Africa: A Critical Overview', in *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa*, ed. by N. Evans and M. Seeber (London/Scottsville: Holger Ehling Publishing Ltd./University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 15.
160 A. Oliphant, 'From Colonialism to Democracy: Writers and Publishing in South Africa', in *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa*, ed. by N. Evans and M. Seeber (London/Scottsville: Holger Ehling Publishing Ltd./University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 110.
161 Ibidem.
162 Ibid., pp. 110- 111.
163 Ibid., p. 110.
164 Mpe and Seeber, 'The Politics of Book Publishing in South Africa', p. 15.
165 Oliphant, 'From Colonialism to Democracy: Writers and Publishing in South Africa', p. 110.

Afrikaner – minority rule.[166] However, by 1966, many of their works were banned and the writers were jailed and exiled.[167]

Interestingly, 1966 also marks the year in which Hendrik Verwoerd delivered one of his infamous infamous speeches regarding the so-called accomplishments of the Nationalist Government. With the country's disengagement from Britain, Verwoerd made a plea to Afrikaner writers to revel in this new nation to create art of political commemoration.[168] To quote:

> Now I want to give expression to the often unexpressed longing of our people, that writers and poets may come into existence who can and will sing the praises of their own generation such as those of other nations in their hour of wonder. Oh, if it could also be granted to us as it was granted in the past to great nations in their hour of fame that those would come forward who do not ask hesitatingly, "what is a nation", but who will cry out: "*This* is my nation, my nation is like *this*, thus i[t] can do wonders, *thus* it can create its own future". The writer and poet who can sing the praises of what is happening now will be quoted as long as the people of the Republic of South Africa remain. If out our midst someone would come forward to sing the praises of the life of a nation, without hesitating to pay homage to patriotism, love of country, without following modern patterns which are the fashion elsewhere with nations who are already old, someone who in accordance with the fixed pattern of paying homage to his own people, could push aside what is carnal and ugly and see the spiritual, the beauty and the greatness in modern history and sing their praises! If only we could find such writers and poets of our time, how rich would we not feel? How rich would our people of the future be if they were told by such interpreters how the heart of the nation feels today, five years after this miraculous event, this great milestone in the history of our people.[169]

Afrikaner, and other white, authors were called upon to create a literary canon that celebrated apartheid and nationalism in the languages of the colonial oppressor. While there were many that complied, there were also many who were radicalized in the face of Black suffering.

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[166] Ibid., p. 117.
[167] Ibid., p. 110.
[168] L. Engle, 'The Political Uncanny', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, vol. 2, no.2 (1989) pp. 103.
[169] H. Verwoerd qtd. In L. Engle, 'The Political Uncanny', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, vol. 2, no.2 (1989) pp. 103-104.

These protest authors, such as those highlighted in the following sections, were in a unique position as they created a literary canon that opposed apartheid and nationalism in the languages of the colonial oppressors.

'WAT IS EEN VOLK?'[170]
THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE IN 1960s SOUTH AFRICA

In 1963, while lobbying for the eventual Publications and Entertainments Act, the Minister of Interior, J. Klerk remarked that:

> Let us realize that we are the guardians, and the responsible guardians, of the people outside: we must give them the necessary protection, particularly those who are weak. You and I can judge for ourselves whether we should read this rubbish or not and that is our affair, but we must protect the weak from themselves, otherwise they will fall by the wayside.[171]

The Publications and Entertainments Act (PEA), as mentioned in Chapter One, was introduced as a method for censorship in Afrikaans writing in 1963. Internationally, prior to 1963, the legal treatment of literature underwent several momentous changes. Most notably, the Supreme Court case of *Roth v United States* in 1957 and the Obscene Publications Act of 1959 in England introduced the *exceptio artis*[172] – meaning 'utterances that in principle constitute an offence can be judged otherwise when they occur in literary work'[173] – for literature. However, under the leadership of Hendrik Verwoerd, South Africa did not follow this international trend of growing tolerance. After two failed bills, the final act was supposedly aimed to protect its citizens. Section 5 (2) of the Act states that:
'A publication or object shall be deemed to be undesirable if it or any part of it –

a. is indecent or obscene or is offensive or harmful to public morals;
b. is blasphemous or is offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section or inhabitants of the Republic;
c. brings any section of the inhabitants of the Republic into ridicule or contempt;

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[170] *What is a nation?*
[171] J. Klerk qtd. in T. Laros, *Literature and the Law in South Africa, 1910-2010: The Long Walk to Artistic Freedom* (Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018), p. 53.
[172] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 53.
[173] R. Grüttemeier and T. Laros, 'Literature in Law: Exceptio Artis and the Emergence of Literary Fields', *Law and Humanities*, 7, no. 2 (2013), p. 204

d. is harmful to the relations between any sections of the inhabitants of the Republic;
e. is prejudicial to the safety of the State, the general welfare or the peace and good order'.[174]

Rather than following the developments in England and the United States, the PEA deemed that literature was allowed to be considered indecent based on an isolated passage ('any part of it').[175] This would be investigated by a board of so-called literary experts, called the Publications Control Board (PCB). Ultimately, the purpose of the bill as stated by the South African government was to ensure the protection of the 'weak' members of society and to promote purely Afrikaner literature.[176] However, the supposed need for the codification of censorship 'represents a strong indication that the institutional autonomization of a literary field has reached an advanced stage'[177] and therefore the PEA unknowingly acknowledged the fact that literature was considered a threat to government. This became exceedingly obvious during the landmark trials in 1965 regarding Wilbur Smith's *When the Lion Feeds* and Cat Themba's short story 'The Fugitives'. Most importantly, these trials illustrated to the public that the literary field had gained a substantial degree of (internal) institutional autonomy[178] as well as obtaining a considerable degree of (internal) institutional development.[179]

To provide context to the criteria which eventually determined the censorship of André Brink's *Kennis van die Aand*, it is useful to explore the landmark trial of Wilbur Smith and the legal landscape of 1965 when the PEA was first challenged in a substantial way. *When the Lion Feeds*, published in 1964 by William Heinemann Ltd., a London based publisher, revolved around a white family during the Anglo-Zulu War in the late nineteenth century. When it was imported into South Africa, it proved to be a very successful novel and sold over 10,000 copies. That is, until July 10th, 1964, when the PCB banned it on the basis of obscenity and blasphemy. The PCB claimed that the book:

> [has] the tendency to deprave or corrupt the minds of persons who were likely to be exposed to the effect or influence thereof; to be offensive or harmful to public morals; to

[174] Publications and Entertainment Act, 1963, p. 282, from Statutes of the Republic of South Africa found on < https://theliteraturepolice.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/publications-and-entertainments-act-1963.pdf > (20 April, 2022).
[175] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 86.
[176] Ibidem., p. 56.
[177] Ibid., p. 55.
[178] Ibid., p. 81.
[179] Ibid., p. 81.

> be likely to be outrageous or disgusting to persons who were likely to read it; and to be dealing in an improper manner with promiscuity, passionate love scenes, lust, sexual intercourse, obscene language, blasphemous language, sadism, and cruelty.[180]

Appealed by William Heinemann Ltd., the case was brought before the Cape Provincial Division of the Supreme Court (CPD) and judged on five criteria introduced by the PCB. These criteria included literary expertise, contextualism, likely readership, freedom of expression, and the relevance of literary merit or value.[181] The case was decided in the favor of *When the Lion Feeds* and showcased a growing judicial benevolence regarding literature.[182] The most important isolated outcomes of the 1965 case include the CPD's demand for literature to be reviewed as a whole rather than in isolation and resulted in the creation of an independent space for literature to safeguard the freedom of expression.[183] It is within this political climate that the literary trial of André Brink's controversial *Kennis van die Aand* took place in 1974.

ALL GREAT ART IS OFFENSIVE: ANDRÉ BRINK AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE

Published in 1973, *Kennis van die Aand*, or known internationally as *Looking on Darkness*, is famously known as the first novel written in Afrikaans to be banned by the South African government. André Brink, born in 1935 in Vrede, South Africa, was one of South Africa's most prominent anti-apartheid writers and member of the *Sestigers.*

Like *When the Lion Feeds,* much of the literature that circulated in apartheid era South Africa and was submitted under the PEA for judgement was overwhelmingly written in English.[184] The *Sestigers,* which translates literally to 'Writers of the Sixties', were the exception. These consisted of a young generation of writers, its most notable writers being André Brink and Breyten Breytenbach, who aimed to challenge taboos in South African society. Inspired by the *Dertigers*, and particularly N.P. van Wyk Louw's concept of *volkskritiek*, the *Sestigers* made a name for themselves promoting Afrikaner literature and their strong anti-apartheid sentiments. Despite Louw's personal political stances, in the early

[180] cf. L. van der Poll in T. Laros, *Literature and the Law in South Africa, 1910-2010* (Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018), p. 58.
[181] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 59.
[182] Ibidem., p. 81.
[183] Ibid.
[184] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 42.

1930s, he cultivated a culture of criticism within Afrikaans intellectual life.[185] This was known as *volkskritiek*[186]: 'criticism of, for and from the *volk*'.[187] Initially written to establish a separation from European cultural hegemony,[188] Brink and Breytenbach incorporated this concept to create works in Afrikaans that heavily criticized apartheid as well as censorship. While the 1960s and 1970s saw an escalation in censorship laws, the *Sestigers,* and particularly Brink, spearheaded the opposition.[189] Similar to van Louw, Brink demonstrated the prime example of the so-called 'dissident Afrikaans intellectual'.[190]

Going into the 1970s, it had become increasingly clear that Brink was publishing pieces specifically aimed at denouncing and criticizing the apartheid regime.[191] In the anti-apartheid newspaper Rand Daily Mail, he stated that:

> Is it true that Afrikaans writers do have greater freedom vis-à-vis censorship than others … what have they done with this freedom? How have they used it? The depressing answer is: no Afrikaans writer has yet tried to offer a serious political challenge to the system … we have no one with enough guts to say: NO…. [I]f Afrikaans writing is to achieve any true significance within the context of the revolution of Africa (of which we form part) and within the crucible in which this country finds itself, it seems to me it will come from those few who are prepared to sling the "NO!" of Antigone into the violent face of the System.[192]

In his writing, Brink frequently mentions Antigone as the standard for writers. She is the 'citizen who rebels against the state in the name of "the truth", in the name of a "higher Order" [and] is prescribed only be her conscience'.[193] While Brink was always one of the most controversial authors for the PCB throughout the 1960s, he seemed especially interested in testing those boundaries in *Kennis van die Aand*.[194]

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[185] M. Sanders, '"Problems of Europe": N.P. van Wyk Louw, the Intellectual and Apartheid', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 25:4 (1999), p. 610.
[186] *Criticism of Society*
[187] Sanders, 'Problems of Europe', p. 610.
[188] Ibidem.
[189] J.M. Coetzee, 'André Brink and the Censors', *Research in African Literature*, 21:3 (1990), p. 59.
[190] Ibidem.
[191] Laros, *Literature and the Law*, p. 86.
[192] André Brink qtd. in Laros, *Literature and the Law*, p. 86.
[193] Coetzee, 'André Brink and the Censors', p. 64.
[194] Laros, *Literature and the Law*, p. 86.

Josef Malan, censored:
A look inside Kennis

Kennis van die Aand is told from the perspective of Josef Malan, a colored man waiting for his death sentence in a prison. Following his trial, his lawyer argues that the sentence would have been the same regardless of what they would have done because ‘we had all the facts of the case before us’. Upon hearing this, Malan ponders:

> His words remained with me, and I still can’t get rid of them. The facts of the case. Everybody was so concerned about that, and so sure about that. That’s what I now have to sort out and weigh again. Because one forgets, one forgets, even a body forgets. And yet it must remain hidden somewhere, secret in the blood. That is what I must rediscover to find its arcane meaning. But where does it lead one? Truth is not a collection which can be narrated but a landscape through which one travels in the dark. And my particular journey has its origin far beyond Bain’s Kloof, beyond Jessica, immensely far beyond myself. I am really an almost incidental moment in a pattern fulfilling itself over generations and centuries and in infinite space.[195]

It is with this that Josef Malan starts his memoir. In the first part of his personal history, Malan recounts the stories his mother told him about his forefathers starting with the arrival of the Dutch East India Company. The stories share the connective tissue of tragedy; all Malan’s ancestors suffered violence, both sexual and non-sexual, exploitation and murder at the hands of white people.[196]

Interspersed with Bible imagery and symbolism, even before his birth and his eventual death, Josef Malan’s life is marked by generational trauma. At some point, Malan even acknowledges this when he recalls the life of his father: ‘And then Jacob. My story is becoming monotonous, I know’.[197] As with all the ancestors before him, Josef’s life ends in brutal tragedy:

> For Jacob that was the final deliverance from all the paradoxes of his pilgrimage, the end of his own futile life and the long history behind it: the slave girl Leah and her Huguenot;

[195] A. Brink, *Looking on Darkness* (London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd., 1979), p. 34.
[196] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 87.
[197] Brink, *Looking on Darkness,* p. 68.

> and Adam killed because he'd dared to avenge the humiliation of his wife; the dark prophet of freedom, Moses, who'd engendered his son for the sport of his white masters; the wanderings of Dlamini/Daniel until he died in Bain's Kloof; Rachel's struggle to bring up her white child, her long sufferings, her death in the burning hut at the seaside; Abraham galloping in search of history, executed as a Cape rebel on his way home; David growing bitter after his childhood love for Katryn, and his end at the hands of the strikers; and then he, Jacob, who had to die for imitating his superiors, a clown who'd dare to ape the king. Done; all done. And yet handed down, beyond his death, to my mother and me. And now my own chapter is added to it. Then it will be over, for I have no son to go on after me. That is my one comfort. And that is the anguish I have to suffer all these nights.[198]

The novel continues to detail the life of Malan prior to his eventual trial and death sentence. This includes his illegal romantic relationship with Jessica, the white woman he supposedly murdered, the years of career anguish and the experience of a colored man following (real-life) events such as the Sharpeville massacre. Much like his ancestors, Malan's life ends in brutality at the hands of white minority rule.

NO!:
The 1974 Trial of Kennis van die Aand *and Brink's Subsequent Activism*

Prior to 1974, the censors of the PCB had an unspoken pact that literary titles written in Afrikaans would not be put under scrutiny.[199] Not only was *Kennis van die Aand* scathing in its portrayals of the violence against Black and colored people during the apartheid regime, Brink explicitly tackled taboo subjects such as sex and religion.[200] While Brink and other writers of the *Sestigers* were already on the radar of the PCB,[201] *Kennis van die Aand* marked a significant increase of notoriety for the group. This was evident from the start as Brink had immense difficulty in finding a publisher for the novel. Despite Brink being a successful and known author, his previous publishing houses were reluctant to publish a novel that was pushing the boundaries on multiple controversial topics, [202] but most relevantly on the

[198] Brink, *Looking on Darkness,* pp. 73-74.
[199] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 54.
[200] Ibidem., p. 42.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 87.

oppression of Black and colored people at the hands of the government.[203] Eventually, the publisher Buren, under the assessment of Ampie Coetzee, an Afrikaans Marxist critic, decided to publish the book deeming it of utmost relevance while recognizing its potential to be banned.[204] Coetzee argued that:

> this is a document of oppression, exploitation, abuse, murder; this is a document of the story of the [Colored] in South Africa. This is enough motivation for publication already; because the time has come that an Afrikaans novelist presented an image of what is really happening to a part of his people.[205]

Five months after its publication, on January 29th 1975, *Kennis van die Aand* was banned by the PCB. The core of their argument was based on political, religious and moral objections.[206]

According to the PCB, the contents of the novel formed a danger to the likely reader and their public morals. The objections ranged from mild concerns of profanity, to bigger concerns of blasphemy and alleged prejudice against the State. The PCB further claimed that *Kennis* would incite violence and create division between different classes of citizens within South Africa. Moreover, the PCB argued that Brink's fame and position in the *Sestigers* meant that the likely readers of the book would comprise of the general public, rather than just the intellectual circle. For the purposes of the PCB's argument, this meant that banning the book would be in the public's best interest because the PEA was created to protect the 'weak' reader from themselves.

While looking over the entirety of the PCB argumentation, the appeal to ban *Kennis* was wholly political in nature. With the drafting of the PCB bill, the Commission of Inquiry into Undesirable Publications, chaired by Geoffrey Cronje, justified their interest in a strict censorship law, which would eventually become the PEA, because of their skewed definition of literature.[207] The Commission stated that books not deemed desirable by a control board (PCB), would form "'spiritual poison" and […] lead to a degeneration of the "white" South African'.[208] However, books that were deemed appropriate would raise the (white) South African morale.[209] The Commission felt that a successful literary work had to follow the

[203] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 42.
[204] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 87.
[205] A. Coetzee qtd. in Laros, *Literature and the Law in South Africa,* p. 87.
[206] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 89.
[207] Ibidem., p. 51.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.

principle that would transform concepts people can recognize based in reality into a strictly fictional piece.[210] This principle proved to be very relevant in the Brink trial.

According to the PCB, Brink failed to create a literary work that transformed reality into art.[211] Seen in subsequent cases as well, any type of criticism toward the police or any member in the field of law and order, would be deemed an adequate offense for the work to be considered 'undesirable'.[212] Furthermore, when applied, the criterion in section 5(2) of the Act is presented in such ambiguity that the PCB can censor publications critiquing government and favor works supporting government policies.[213] In the case of *Kennis,* not only does the main storyline revolve around a relationship between a colored man and a white woman, many excerpts in the book depict white brutality. In a close reading of the reporting around the case, the PCB took issue with the novel's supposed demonization of white South Africans[214] and particularly had objections to how the novel deals with graphic scenes of interrogation and torture by the Security Police.[215] Ultimately, the PCB therefore claimed that *Kennis* was unsuccessful in the application of the transformation/fictionality principle.[216] It did not adhere to the definition of literature that the Commission drafted and was not a piece that '[succeeded] in transcending reality [and] failed to transform reality into a work of art'.[217]

Kennis van die Aand was unanimously deemed an 'undesirable' work and became the first Afrikaans novel to be banned. Despite Brink et al.'s defense, in which they argued against the patronizing approach of assuming all readership would be weak-minded and aimed to focus on the principle of contextualism,[218] the judges agreed with the religious and political objections made by the PCB. The results of the trial resulted in major consequences for Brink himself and within the Afrikaner literary world.[219]

For Brink, following the banning of *Kennis van die Aand,* he became a staunch anti-apartheid and anti-censorship writer. Before the end of 1974, Brink had written a translation of *Kennis*, called *Looking on Darkness*, that performed well in other countries because of its

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[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid., p. 93.
[212] A.S. Matthews, *Freedom, State Security and the Rule of Law: Dilemmas of the Apartheid Society* (Cape Town/Johannesburg: Juta & Co., Ltd. 1986), p. 122.
[213] Ibidem.
[214] Laros, *Literature and the Law*, p. 90.
[215] Ibidem.
[216] Ibid., p. 93.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid., p. 94.
[219] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 57.

controversy.[220] In the initial Afrikaans edition, he had included a prefatory note, most probably to protect himself from the PCB, that the novel was a work of pure fantasy and fiction.[221] In the English edition, that prefatory note was changed to:

> Nothing in this novel has been invented, and the climate, history and circumstances from which it arises are those of South Africa today.[222]

While he reiterated points that the characters themselves were fictional, he made it very clear that the 'power of fiction lay not in its capacity to reveal universal truths about the human conditions [..] but in the distinctively literary way in which it represented the forces at work in history'.[223] Considering Brink became the subject of harassment by the Security Police after the trial,[224] it appears the government feared his rising fame and his fervor followed by the ban. Indeed, the ban and the surveillance radicalized Brink.

In 1979, he wrote an article titled 'Censorship and Literature', in which he explains the importance of writers in a well-functioning society, and why censorship is, therefore, a dangerous tool.[225] In the article, Brink refers to censorship as a 'sickness',[226] and part of the 'institutionalized violence employed by the state to keep itself in control'.[227] He argues that there is no such thing as a reasonable form of censorship. By definition, censorship is a threat to free thought that the government employs to suppress the real state of the country.[228] Even so, he acknowledges that it is near impossible to point to any society in modern history in which censorship was not present in one form or another.[229] Writers such as Shakespeare and Chekhov managed to thrive despite the threat of censorship, and it speaks to the creativity and will power of writers who manage to find ways to express their thoughts on the human condition within repressive societies.[230] Similar to Brink, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn also openly criticized and challenged his government, and the drastic attempts to silence him by the Soviet government only made him one of the most renown writers in the world, and led to

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[220] Ibidem.
[221] Ibid., p. 56.
[222] Brink, *Looking on Darkness,* p. 4.
[223] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 56.
[224] Ibidem., p. 57.
[225] A. Brink, 'Censorship and Literature', in *Censored: Studies in SA's censorship laws by five leading writers,* ed. by T. Coggin (Johannesburg: SA Institute of Race Relations, 1983), p. 39.
[226] Ibidem., p. 38.
[227] Ibid., p. 43.
[228] Ibid., p. 48.
[229] Ibid., p. 50
[230] Ibid.

widespread underground distribution within Russia.[231] Censorship in South Africa underwent a similar trajectory after 1974. The *Kennis* trial was the last case put before the Supreme Court under the PEA before being replaced with the Publications Act No. 42 of 1974.[232] The strong reaction, both internally and internationally, to the ban was the final draw for the government. The rise of political movements such as Black Consciousness and the uncontrolled distribution of the works of Black writers proved to be enough rationale for the state to enact a stricter and more repressive censorship rule.[233]

However, following the *Kennis* case, it seemed as though censorship laws were largely starting to fail.[234] Brink's other novels became more commercially successful within South Africa, and the threat of censorship in Afrikaans prompted him to start writing all his future novels in English as well.[235] Not only could these books now be read by the international community, they were also now accessible to Black South Africans.[236] Furthermore, Brink's fame increased awareness of other South African writers within the international community.[237]

While the state intended for censorship to isolate and alienate, the *Kennis* case instead proved counterproductive to their goals.[238] For many Afrikaans writers, the *Kennis* case was to be a turning point for the relationship they had with government and censorship and was the catalyst for the establishing of the Afrikaans *Skrywersgilde* (Writers' Guild).[239] The Guild was vehemently against the conservatism, parochialism and racial discrimination present within the Afrikaans Writers' Circle and oppression and exploitation of the writer by the state which they deployed in the form of censorship.[240] Furthermore, the case was also the impetus that led to the formation of the Afrikaans publishing imprint Taurus.[241] Taurus was funded by the public, in response to their dismay at the result of the trial, and was started as a publishing house aimed at publishing any work that runs the risk of being targeted by the PCB.[242] In reality, this meant that Taurus ensured the censors could never truly bury or ban any book,

[231] Ibid.
[232] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 118.
[233] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* pp. 57 -59.
[234] Brink, 'Censorship and Literature', p. 50
[235] Ibidem., p. 51.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid., p. 52.
[239] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 57.
[240] ESAT, 'Afrikaans Skrywersgilde', < https://esat.sun.ac.za/index.php/Afrikaanse_Skrywersgilde > (6 February 2021).
[241] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 57.
[242] Brink, 'Censorship and Literature', p. 52.

because they would print and distribute a considerable amount of copies prior to the ban, 'so by the time the censors pounced [...] there were enough copies in circulation to ensure a long clandestine existence'.[243]

Another example of this in Brink's own life is the publication and ban of *A Dry White Season*. Published in 1979, *A Dry White Season* was yet another example of how Brink had become radicalized in his opposition to the apartheid government.[244] In the book, Brink depicted yet more instances of torture and murder by the Security Police using actual court documents.[245] Despite the book being banned for its portrayal of the security forces, the government lifted the ban after becoming aware of its wide underground circulation.[246] According to Brink, while the aim of censorship is to constrain free thought, its execution actually works to stimulate free thought instead.[247] This was proven by the impact of what occurred after his trial in 1974. He argues:

> The writer does not primarily direct himself in 'changing the system' but at awakening the individual consciousness in such a way that eventually a change in the 'system' becomes not only possible but inevitable. And the existence of censorship is aiding the process by lending greater resonance to words of writers.[248]

Despite Brink's own experiences in life and his works showcasing the failures of the censorship regime in South Africa, he acknowledged throughout his activism that he was afforded privileges due to the color of his skin. As he states:

> Until that time [the 1974 trial], however much I had presented myself as an antagonist to the regime, I was still regarded -because of my language and [color] of my skin -as one of the family. It was a kind of benign tolerance: I was allowed to say and do certain things because I was Afrikaans, until I'd overstepped an imaginary line.[249] [...] There was a strange ambiguity about the whole function I fulfilled. […] The security

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[243] Ibidem.
[244] M. Schudel, 'André Brink, South African novelist whose works were banned, dies at 79', *The Washington Post*, 14 February 2015, n.pag. < https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/andre-brink-south-african-novelist-whose-works-were-banned-dies-at-79/2015/02/14/4f1fe050-b15a-11e4-886b-c22184f27c35_story.html > (10 February 2021)
[245] Ibidem.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Brink, 'Censorship and Literature', p. 52.
[248] Ibidem., p. 53.
[249] Taylor, 'A life in writing: André Brink' (12 February 2021)

police wouldn't take me with a pinch of salt, but for some people in positions of power, I remained acceptable, and that gave me room to maneuver.[250]

Being highly aware of the limited knowledge he has of the Black experience, Brink spent much of his career during apartheid acknowledging Black writers who he considered 'one of the most important factors pushing for change [and directing that change] in South Africa'.[251] Furthermore, he made sure his books were also translated into indigenous languages. In his article on censorship and literature, Brink makes an assumption that the introduction of codified censorship overlaps with the infamous clash between poet Van Wyk Louw's play *Die Pluimsaad Waai Ver* and architect of apartheid Hendrik Verwoerd.[252] The conflict sprang from Verwoerd's displeasure with a writers asking: *Wat is 'n volk? – what is a nation?*.[253] In a functioning society, the answer to this question is consistently changing and adapting, as individuals are stimulated to ponder questions by reading many and diverse works and authors. Brink dedicated his opus to filling this need in a system that deprived its citizens from this basic tool needed for a society to evolve and its citizens to thrive. It was because of this core principle that Brink considered continuing to write – especially in the face of systematic adversity – the strongest weapon against censorship.[254]

TO KNOW AND NOT TO ACT IS NOT TO KNOW:[255] NADINE GORDIMER, LIVING IN THE INTERREGNUM

Even prior the Brink trial, the government had been discussing the supposed inadequacy of the 1963 Publications and Entertainment Act (PEA).[256] As the political climate was changing, both internationally as well as in South Africa – between the rise of Black Consciousness, the continuing fight for Black trade unions and the rising anti-colonial sentiment because of Angola and Mozambique – conservative Afrikaner groups insisted on the need for stricter

[250] Ibidem.
[251] Brink, 'Censorship and Literature', p. 53.
[252] Ibidem., p. 39.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid., p. 54.
[255] Quote ascribed to multiple people, I found it ascribed to Wang Yang Ming here: Quotefancy, < https://quotefancy.com/quote/1553948/Wang-Yangming-To-know-and-not-to-act-is-not-to-know > (30 April, 2022).
[256] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 127.

censorship laws.[257] With the development of a new bill, the cabinet and judicial elite considered the Publications Control Board (PCB) to be in a better position to enforce publications control than any of the courts.[258] J.J. Kruger, the Chairman of the Commission at the time, claimed that with the drafting of the new bill he could recognize the value of art but remained firm in restriction. He claimed:

> Even if art should be judged by purely artistic norms, care must be taken not to [absolutize] art: L'art pour l'art at the expense of true morality and decency.[259]

On September 11, 1974, the Publications Act 42 of 1974 (PA) was adopted, replacing, and repealing the PEA. The new act replaced the PCB with a Directorate of Publications (DOP), which in combination with the Minister of Interior were to form censorship committees that would ultimately make the decisions.[260] Furthermore, the Minister had the jurisdiction to refer any finding of the committee to the Publications Appeal Board (PAB), rather than the Supreme Court.[261] The right to appeal against censorship decisions essentially being abolished, the act ensured that only the committee, the Minister and the Appeal Board could now decide what publication was deemed undesirable and what is not.[262] In doing so, 'the commission's intent was to further tighten government control over the public sphere and gratify the more conservative elements within the Afrikaner community, particularly the religious elite, at the expense of the Afrikaans literary elite'.[263] The PA aimed to completely remove any degree of autonomy that literature had. It is within this legal landscape that Nadine Gordimer's heavily political novel *Burger's Daughter* was banned.

by the time *Burger's Daughter* was published in 1979, Nadine Gordimer – born in 1923 in Johannesburg – had already had all her novels scrutinized, three of which were banned[264] and all of them were put under embargo to prevent export.[265] Finding early success with short stories that gave her international traction, she had struck a deal with major publishing company Penguin by 1961, which solidified her position as one of the literary

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[257] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 58.
[258] Laros, *Literature and the Law*, p. 127.
[259] Kruger et al., in Report of the Commission Inquiry qtd. in Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 129.
[260] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 129.
[261] Ibidem., p. 130.
[262] Ibid., p. 131.
[263] Ibid., p. 128.
[264] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 219.
[265]N. Gordimer, E. Mphalele and A. Brink, 'South African Writers Talking: Nadine Gordimer, Es'kia Mphalele, André Brink', *English in Africa*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1979), p. 2.

authors to watch during the 20th century.[266] Her international success and many awards were a testament to her work being worth of the title of 'literature',[267] but within the framework of the PCB and its vague definition of literature, Gordimer's work was consistently seen as dangerous to the public. Interestingly, Gordimer never saw herself as being a political person, nor as a protest writer. She would reiterate often in her later life that her writing was just an honest reflection of what life was like in South Africa, stating 'I don't suppose, if I had lived elsewhere, my writing would have reflected politics much, if at all'.[268] Reconciling her own very English upbringing with her identity as an African writer,[269] Gordimer used her novels to let an international readership understand the effects of apartheid by basing them on specific narratives.

In a land of fear: Burger's Daughter *and the place for white South Africans in the Apartheid struggle*

Much of *Burger's Daughter* is told from the perspective of Rosa Burger, a white Afrikaner who is the daughter of the fictional famed anti-apartheid activist Lionel Burger. The story begins shortly after Lionel passes away in prison, leaving Rosa orphaned as her mother had also died while incarcerated twelve years earlier. Rose spends her early childhood with parents who were active in the anti-apartheid struggle as members of the South African Communist Party (SACO) and with a Black boy, Baasie, who was raised as her brother. After being sent away and separated from Baasie after her father's prison sentence, Rosa eventually grows up feeling far removed from her parents and their legacy. Conflicted by her desire to live her own life, trying to live up to her father's legacy, and understanding her role as an activist with the rise of Black Consciousness, Rosa escapes to France to live with her father's first wife. It is through her experiences there, as well as in her following trip to London, that she starts to recognize the role she wants to play within the movement and returns to South Africa.

A recurring concept in *Burger's Daughter*, as well as many of Gordimer's other novels is her idea of 'living in the interregnum', that she details in *The Essential Gesture*.[270]

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[266] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 219.
[267] Ibidem., p. 220.
[268] N. Gordimer qtd. in H.T. Verongos, 'Nadine Gordimer, Novelist who took on apartheid, is dead at 90', *The New York Times,* 14 July, 2014, n.pag. < https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/15/books/nadine-gordimer-novelist-and-apartheid-foe-dies-at-90.html > (13 February 2021).
[269] N. Gordimer et al., 'A Conversation with Nadine Gordimer', *Salmagundi*, no. 62 (1984), p. 10
[270] N. Gordimer, *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics & Places*, ed. by S. Clingman (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988).

The idea of this concept is the ‘juxtaposition between confinement and movement, inside and out’ in which the interregnum ‘is a crisis of extraordinary circumstances between two social orders that deeply affect social life. Between the old dying order and the new that cannot yet be [realized] is a traumatic, chaotic state of contradictory in-betweenness and [indefinability] that causes a rupture with a stable social economy’.[271] For Rosa, this is showcased physically in her movement between South Africa, France, London and back to South Africa, but also in her political mindset. One of the reasons Rosa moves away from her home country is that she feels unsure in what space she should occupy now after listening to a Black student’s, Dhadla, exchange with a white man at a party she attends:

> All collaboration with whites has always ended in exploitation of blacks. –
> -Do you believe that was always the whites’ object? All whites? -
> [….]
> -Yes it was! It is! We must liberate ourselves as blacks, what has a white got to do with that?-
> Orde Greer was pressing. -Whatever his political ideas?-
> -It doesn’t matter. He doesn’t live black, what does he know what a black man needs? […] -You don’t believe there is any political ideology, any system where the beliefs of a white man have nothing to do with his being white?-
> -I don’t say that. I’m talking about here. This place. Where Vorster sits. Some other country perhaps the white man’s political ideas can have nothing to do with white. But here, he lives with Vorster. You understand?-
> -And if he goes to jail? – Orde Greeg was possessed, inspired.
> So it was all for my benefit, this interrogation.
> -To jail with you?-
> -In jail!- A splutter of accusing laughter. -He goes for his ideas about me, I go for my ideas about myself [...]
> Orde Greer produced me. -He died in jail. This girl’s father. You know that? -it was irresistible, inevitable. I don’t know how I look when I’m being used [...]
> -He knows what he was doing in jail. A white knows what he must do if he doesn’t like what he is. That’s his business. We only know what we must do ourselves.[272]

[271] Gordimer’s concept explained and condensed in S. Gunne, ‘Prison and Political Struggle in Nadine Gordimer’s *Burger’s Daughter*’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 42, no. 6 (2016), p. 1072.
[272] N. Gordimer, *Burger’s Daughter* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), pp. 159-160.

The character of Dhadla is used here to showcase newer voices in apartheid opposition, namely the rise of Black Consciousness ideology. Unlike the ANC, with which Lionel Burger managed to work very closely, members of Black Consciousness' ideology leaned more towards Black separatism as a means to amplify Black voices within the anti-apartheid struggle.[273] Initially, Rosa's response to hearing this perspective is to run away from her own country, doubting her place and that of her father's legacy in it. Her return to the country comes after a conversation with her childhood friend with whom she reunites in London. Known as 'Baasie' to her, but actually named Zwelinzima Vilundlela, Rosa learns in their exchange that despite their shared history, they are not the same:

> -Everyone in the world must be told what a great hero he was and how much he suffered for the blacks. Everyone must cry over him and show his life on television and write in the papers. Listen, there are dozens of our fathers sick and dying like dogs, kicked out of the locations when they can't work anymore. Getting old and dying in prison. Killed in prison. It's nothing. I know plenty blacks like Burger. It's nothing, it's us, we must be used to it, it's not going to show on English television. –
> -He would have been the first to say- what you're saying. He didn't think there was anything special about a white being a political prisoner.- […] You knew him! You know that! It's crazy for me to tell *you*.-
> -Oh yes I knew him. You'll tell them to ask me for television show. Tell them how your parents took the little black kid into their home, not the backyard like other whites, right into the house [...] And then the little bastard was pushed off back to his mud huts and tin shanties.
> […]
> -I'm not your Baasie, just don't go on thinking about that little kid who lived with you, don't think of that black 'brother', that's all.-
> [...]
> -There's just one thing I'm going to tell you. We won't meet, you're right. Vilundlela. About him and me. So long as you know I've told you. I was the one who was sent to

[273] E. Powell, 'Equality or unity? Black Consciousness, white solidarity, and the new South Africa in Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter* and *July's People'*, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 54, no.2 (2019), p. 226.

take a fake pass to him so he could get back in from Botswana that last time. I delivered it somewhere. Then they caught him, that was when they caught him.-
-What is that? What is that for me? Blacks must suffer now. We can't be caught although we are caught, we can't be killed although we die in jail, we are used to it, it's nothing to do with you. Whites are locking up blacks every day. You want to make the big confession?- why do you think you should be different from all the other whites who've been shitting on us ever since they came? You want me to know in case I blame you for nothing. […] Who cares whose 'fault' – they die because it's the whites killing them, black blood is the stuff to get rid of white shit.-
-This kind of talk sounds better from people who are in the country than people like us. –[274]

The exchange between them is a damning critique of the problems within the apartheid struggle and the unconscious way the legacy of Lionel Burger impedes the liberation of Black people.[275] It is ironic that the most revered figure in the movement is white,[276] and that arguing about his activism both left the country. After this, Rosa moves back to South Africa. While working in Soweto she becomes involved in the protests following the brutal events of the Soweto Uprising in 1976, and ultimately her story ends the same way her parents did.

'Nothing factual that I write or say will be as truthful as my fiction':[277]
Banning Burger's Daughter *and understanding Gordimer's Legacy*

A month after the publication of *Burger's Daughter*, the book was banned in South Africa for being "undesirable" under moral, religious, and political objections.[278] The report claimed that the book was fuel for Black revolution and was written to spread communism and Gordimer's personal political views.[279] Gordimer had anticipated the ban. She had

[274] Gordimer, *Burger's Daughter*, pp. 320-322.
[275] Powell, 'Equality or unity?', p. 223.
[276] Ibidem.
[277] N. Gordimer, < https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1991/gordimer/lecture/#:~:text=For%20myself%2C%20I%20have%20said,that%20the%20imagination%20transforms%20both. > (12 February, 2021).
[278] The File Room, 'Nadine Gordimer Fights Censorship', <http://www.thefileroom.org/documents/dyn/DisplayCase.cfm/id/1151#:~:text=In%20June%201979%20%22Burger's%20Daughter,%2C%20religious%2C%20and%20political%20grounds.&text=As%20a%20result%20of%20their,one%2Dsided%20to%20be%20subversive. > (12 February, 2021).
[279] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 233

secretly dedicated the novel to Bram Fischer, the famed Afrikaner anti-apartheid lawyer, who defended many Black activists during the Treason Trial, and on whom the character of Lionel Burger was based.[280] Furthermore, Gordimer incorporated actual testimony of Fischer in Lionel's trial, as well as the transcript of a pamphlet by the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) that had also been banned previously. Following the ban of her novel, many writers and organizations rallied behind Gordimer and heavily critiqued the decision[281], which ultimately led the Appeal Board to review the case. Acknowledging that their own viewpoint would never be unbiased, the Appeal Board determined that the ban could be overturned.[282]

Gordimer herself reflected negatively to the whole ordeal of banning and unbanning in her work *What Happened to Burger's Daughter? How South African Censorship Works*, which was then published by Taurus. She felt she was being used as a pawn that the government could use to appear in the international sphere as becoming more lenient in their censorship. Furthermore, she felt the unbanning of her novel, a white author, as opposed to the unbanning of many of the novels written by a number of Black authors was preferential treatment aimed at increasing the racial divide between the races that she vehemently opposed.[283] Indeed, both within the novel and in her engagement with Black Consciousness, Gordimer is trying to reconcile between white and Black people in the opposition against apartheid. More so than any other white writer, Gordimer 'sympathized with the movement's [Black Consciousness] critique of liberal whites, who were accused of paternalism, complacency, and a lack of genuine commitment to pursuing meaningful change in South Africa'.[284] This is also why the reference to Bram Fischer is significant in understanding Rosa's relationship to her father and the anti-apartheid movement, because Fischer is an example of how white ally ship could be an important tool.[285]

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[280] Ibidem.
[281] The File Room, <http://www.thefileroom.org/documents/dyn/DisplayCase.cfm/id/1151#:~:text=In%20June%201979%20%22Burger's%20Daughter,%2C%20religious%2C%20and%20political%20grounds.&text=As%20a%20result%20of%20their,one%2Dsided%20to%20be%20subversive. > (14 February, 2021)
[282] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 238
[283] The File Room, < http://www.thefileroom.org/documents/dyn/DisplayCase.cfm/id/1151#:~:text=In%20June%201979%20%22Burger's%20Daughter,%2C%20religious%2C%20and%20political%20grounds.&text=As%20a%20result%20of%20their,one%2Dsided%20to%20be%20subversive. > (12 February, 2021)
[284] E. Powel, 'Equality or unity?', p. 227.
[285] Gunne, 'Prison and Political Struggle', p. 1074.

In the wake of many of the Black authors essentially being removed from canon in the 1960s, English writing was left to the so-called white liberal sensibilities.[286] While Gordimer was heavily involved in activism, her allegiance was to the 'fundamental autonomy of arts and its responsibilities to itself'.[287] She believed that the 'dual impulses of the writer -towards social obligation, on the one hand, and the loneliness of an inner truth, on the other – are form of entwinement so complex that she tended to represent it as a battle, but one which sparks crucial energies'.[288] Gordimer believed that if she wanted to identity herself as a South African, that meant writing the honest truth about the situation in the country she loved. In doing so, she wrote complex works about the realities of apartheid that resonated with her readers.[289] Acknowledging the work she herself had done to move away from the racist beliefs she grew up with,[290] she used her literature to appeal to those reading of the 'unnatural habit' that is apartheid.[291] Gordimer was able to occupy spaces where Black voices were not allowed, due to the color of her skin and her fame, and it was in those spaces that she expressed a radical stance against censorship and apartheid. It is unclear if Gordimer's reach would have been successful had she not had the guarantee of overseas publishers.[292] Nonetheless, in light of the reach she did have, she used her fame to bring international recognition to Black voices and the conditions in South Africa. Her position was uniquely advantageous for her to be a successfully ally to the cause of Black people and activists.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter aimed to contextualize the severe censorship legislation leading into the 1970s that white authors, and particularly those with anti-apartheid sentiment, were faced with. However, it is important to understand that it was primarily white authors who were scrutinized under the specificities of censorship legislation. While Brink and Gordimer faced many difficulties in the process of having their books published, ultimately, it was only their work that was banned, and not their actual person. However, when it came to Black authors, oftentimes when a work was deemed 'undesirable', they were criminalized for it. Works

[286] Oliphant, 'From Colonialism to Democracy: Writers and Publishing in South Africa', p. 118.
[287] D. Medalie, 'Nadine Gordimer 1923 – 2014', *English in Africa,* vol. 41, no.2 (2014), p. 10.
[288] Ibidem.
[289] Ibid., p. 9.
[290] Nobel Prize, *Nadine Gordimer on racism*, online video recording, YouTube, 3 October 2007, < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWcxSsd8N2M > (12 February 2021).
[291] Medalie, 'Nadine Gordimer 1923 – 2014', p. 9.
[292] Oliphant, 'From Colonialism to Democracy: Writers and Publishing in South Africa' p. 118.

written by Black authors were scrutinized under much broader legislation, in which the person could be criminalized under various charges. Knowing this, the following chapter will explore censorship in relation to Black South African authors.

CHAPTER THREE:

'LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS'

Resources on the Black experience in South Africa

The previous chapter explored the distinct way in which art, and by extension artistic freedom, was judged legally under the Publications Act of 1974 and its amendment in 1978. The discussed cases are relevant as they lent credence to the overall autonomy of literature and showcased the criteria by which the Publications Control Board (PCB) policed anti-government literature. However, it is important to recognize that these cases only reached the courts – and therefore such high profiles – because the authors of the offending literature were white. The treatment of Black activists was much more severe, and their cases much less public. Certainly, writers like André Brink and Nadine Gordimer were penalized for their works that undermined apartheid. Nonetheless, they could continue to live and work freely in South Africa, a country that ultimately still served them. Most Black authors were not afforded the same privileges. Indeed, the men who will be discussed in this chapter suffered much more severe retaliation at the hands of the law. Steve Biko's outspokenness resulted in his death at the hands of the police and Alex la Guma's novels were written while he was under house arrest – one of the many restrictive punishments he would be subjected too. White authors such as André Brink were – and still are – the face of the movement to many international observers when discussing the period of 1948-1994 in South Africa through a lens of its media. It becomes obvious that even protest literature was made to be an activity by white people, for white people.[293]

While undoubtedly there were authors and journalists in South Africa who produced work that turned a blind eye to the racial inequality, there were many more who recognized that to be silent was to be complicit. Novels like *Looking on Darkness, Burger's Daughter* and *A Dry White Season*, as mentioned in the previous chapter, were valuable works that helped change perspectives on Black struggles. However, inevitably, it is only through the works of Black authors that readers can truly understand the experience of being Black in South Africa. It is, therefore, unsurprising, that many of the works written by Black authors were censored under the apartheid government.

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[293] G. Berger, 'Publishing for the People: The Alternative Press 1980-1999', in *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa*, ed. by P. Mpe and M. Seeber (London/Scottsville: Holger Ehling Publishing Ltd./University of Natal Press, 2000), pp. 73-74.

Apartheid, the segregation of literature, and the language barrier along ethnic lines created a fine filter that let very few Black South African voices through. Indeed, the recounting of lives and histories of Black South Africans is limited to few sources of those who were capable of writing in English and, perhaps more importantly, were able to be published at all. Before discussing Black writing throughout apartheid era specifically, the following section will briefly examine the earlier history of Black authorship, and particularly African authorship, to recognize that there was a writing culture that has often been overlooked throughout history prior to colonial efforts.

BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN BOOK, PUBLISHING, AND SCRIPT HISTORY

The history of South African publishing is fraught with white gatekeeping. Scholarship on the history of written communication in African history is often centered around the work of European colonists and missionaries from the eighteenth century onwards with the rise of mission presses.[294] However, this Eurocentric framework negates the African people who actively engaged with writing, texts and the exchange and circulation of texts for nearly two thousand years,[295] even prior to the invention of the printing press with moveable type. While the European mission presses that introduced print to Africa, were a direct result of the printing revolution caused by Gutenberg, the indigenous African population had a wide diversity of languages, cultures, and scripts. This is exemplified by the texts found written in Ge'ez, an old Ethiopian language, the most notable example being the *Kebra Nagast.*

Written in the fourteenth century, the *Kebra Nagast* is a distinct work of African textual culture that narrates the history of Ethiopians emperors being descended from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.[296] Interestingly, after European explorers came across the work, *Kebra Nagast* was translated into Portuguese, Spanish, and French in the mid-sixteenth century.[297] The King of Ethiopia at the time demanded the return of all copies and translations of the *Kebra Nagast,* arguing that 'a people do not only defend themselves with their arms, but with their books'.[298] The *Kebra Nagast* is not an example from South Africa specifically; the lack of South African examples is most likely caused by a lack of research into pre-missionary texts and manuscripts from African countries. Nevertheless, the history

[294] Roux, 'Africa', p. 349.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid., p. 351.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.

of the *Kebra Nagast* disproves the notion that prior to colonization, African countries were without books and their inhabitants illiterate. While the Eurocentric narrative around the history of publishing in South Africa revolves around the missionary presses, it ignores the existence of pre-colonial African script and the influence its presence in neighboring countries had on the people in South Africa. After all, African people prior to colonization were vastly interconnected through trade. The limited research done so far shows the potential existence of ideographs as an example of script culture. In South Africa, specifically, Ditema tsa Dinoko, a form of litema ideography seems to have been a widely elaborated on system for writing.[299] However, the overwhelmingly Eurocentric narrative has completely erased the opportunity to study these African influences, as evidence was discounted or erased by white colonial rule. History is often written by the oppressors.

In terms of contemporary history, much like white African publishing, the origins of Black publishing are tied to the introduction of missionary presses. From the outset, the missionary presses displayed the relationship that publishing had with the political landscape of South Africa. The precensorship of writers who criticized political institutions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, primarily Black writers, foreshadowed much of the censorship laws during the apartheid era.

As was mentioned in Chapter One, the displacement of African people to the reservations starting in the nineteenth century, meant that Black education was only available to those who sought it out via the missionary presence. Three important institutes active education and evangelisation, Lovedale, the Berlin Missionary Society and Marianhill would later branch out into publishing as they aimed at accessibility for all Africans by providing translations of the Bible.[300] Noticing the scarcity of African language books on the market, Lovedale, and later Berlin and Marianhill as well, aimed to also accommodate literary works by African writers in their native tongue.[301] Black writers were increasingly encouraged to write by these missionary presses, but only insofar as it did not interfere with Christian values[302] or was apolitical.

This policy is best exemplified by the fraught process it took for Sol Plaatje to publish his magnum opus, *Mhudi*. Lovedale, deeply concerned about the book's subject matter, had *Mhudi* undergo heavy editorial work, with the final result undermining much of the subject

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[299] Atlas of Endangered Alphabets, 'Ditema Tsa Dinoko', < https://www.endangeredalphabets.net/alphabets/ditema-tsa-dinoko/ > (21 March 2021).
[300] Mpe and Seeber, 'The Politics of Book Publishing in South Africa', pp. 15-16.
[301] Ibidem, p. 15.
[302] Ibid.

matter in the book. Scholars, such as Michael Green, acknowledge the fact that *Mhudi* may have been subject to heavy editorial, but feel ‘that it [is] important to respect Plaatje’s decision to go into print with the version he did, and not treat him as the passive victim of the mode of production available to him’.[303] However, recognizing the role of a Black South African in the context of twentieth century South Africa, it is not difficult to imagine the extent of the concessions of censorship Plaatje was willing to accept in order to have *Mhudi* published.[304] While *Mhudi* is perhaps one of the first most well-known instances of conservative editing, it was not the only one. Other notable authors include Mqhayi and Archibald Jordan,[305] but one is left to wonder how many authors did not become well-known, simply because their works were lost due to the censorship on subject material by a missionary institution.

Despite the duplicitous nature of the missionary presses, it was ultimately the only outlet for Black writing and its survival. With the National Party coming to power in 1948, and the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, the government actively tried to undermine the work of the missionary schools by not allowing them to continue providing Black students with formal education in the native language and English. Instead, as already mentioned in Chapter One, they were to receive education in their respective vernacular and learn only the tools and level of English necessary for service jobs. While in theory, this could have meant a surge in African language publishing, the NP ensured strict rules regarding African language and the dissemination of their books, which meant, according to Mpe and Seeber, ‘that much of the adventurous, creative writing in African languages produced by missionary presses, which was critical of racist policies and practices of the government was rendered unsaleable’.[306] By severely reducing and regulating the works that the missionary presses could feasibly publish, the apartheid government employed yet another method to censor criticism and encourage propaganda.[307] It speaks to the strength of Black South Africans, and to the writers among them, that not only did they endure the day to day realities of apartheid, but that they managed to find ways to thrive and write and be published in the face of it.

[303] M. Green qtd. in B. Wilan, ‘What ‘Other Devils’? The Texts of Sol T. Plaatje’s Mhudi Revisited’, *Journal of South African Studies*, 41:6 (2015), p. 1334.
[304] S. Gray qtd. in Wilan, ‘What ‘Other Devils’? The Texts of Sol T. Plaatje’s Mhudi Revisited’, p. 1332.
[305] Mpe and Seeber, ‘The Politics of Book Publishing in South Africa’, p.16.
[306] Ibidem, p. 18.
[307] Ibid., p. 19.

Political fiction in Apartheid South Africa:

In dissecting apartheid, there seems to have been an almost daily endeavor of its government to attempt to uphold it. The many laws to maintain the notion of and belief in white supremacy, that would eventually entrench all aspects society, were updated with great frequency. The result was that it affected every single person, of every race. The popular contention of whether or not all art, intentionally or not, is inherently political, is not even a point of debate in South African literature prior to 1994. This is a point frequently touched on by many South African authors and journalists, but it is perfectly summarized by Brian Bunting, in his foreword to Alex La Guma's *And A Threefold Cord,* where he states that:

> [...] it is difficult to propound the cult of 'art for art's sake' in South Africa. Life presents problems with an assistance which cannot be ignored, and there can be few countries in the world where the people, of all races and classes, are more deeply preoccupied with matters falling generally under the heading of ['political']. The doctrine of apartheid permeates every sphere of life, and whether you be a member of Parliament, businessman, worker, priest, sportsman, or artist you cannot escape its consequences. If art is to have any significance at all, it must reflect something of this national obsession, this passion which consumes and sometimes corrodes the soul of the South African people.[308]

It is in the works of Black authors where the overlap between art and politics is particularly unavoidable, as this was an inescapable relationship for the Black South African population. The political backlash and repression of essays that detail ideology of what one man feels and thinks, and a novel that details the mundane, everyday life of a Black man living in the ghetto, is an indication that the government was both aware of their wrongdoing and feared the repercussions of these works in the mainstream channels of literary publishing. Despite its writers being branded as criminals by their governments, the works that will be discussed in the following sections, are instrumental in the understanding of the realities of what apartheid meant for its Black citizens and how they continued to persevere in the face of it.

[308] B. Bunting, 'Foreword', in A. la Guma, *And a Threefold Cord* (Berlin: Seven Seas Publisher, 1964.), p. 9.

'BUT HOW CAN ONE BE WARM ALONE?'[309]
EARLY ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENTS

As previously mentioned, the political climate for Black authors, such as Alex la Guma and Steve Biko, was distinctly different than the one for white authors. Whereas white writers would have to contend with specific acts such as the PEA or the PA, Black writers were being criminalized under draconian acts that banned their person. In the previous chapter, it was therefore relevant to explain the legal landscape regarding censorship in order to understand the role of a white activist author. However, for the following sections discussing Black activist writing, it is important to recognize the broader legal climate of South Africa in the twentieth century.

During World War II, primarily many white Afrikaners and Englishmen would join the Allied forces to fight against the fascist rule of Hitler and Mussolini. Despite actively participating in the war effort against fascism, defined as 'a movement that promotes the idea of a forcibly monolithic, regimented nation under the control of an autocratic ruler'[310], South Africa abstained from the upsurge of left-winged progressive, socialist movement that was happening around the world following 1945. As World War II was ending, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was gaining traction, because of their involvement in the trade-union movements, particularly in their support of Black workers unionizing.[311] Because the CPSA specifically set out to represent the working class, and aimed to align themselves with 'national liberation' movements, they also formed an alliance with the ANC.[312] As all Communist parties, the CPSA was invested in the removal of the social classes of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In South Africa, this also meant that communists were increasingly aligning themselves with the struggle of non-white South Africans for equal rights. Following the 1946 African Mine Union Workers' Union Strike, that was partly organized by the CPSA, it seemed like reform was on the verge of happening.[313] Therefore, no socialist movement, including the CPSA 'was prepared psychologically or organizationally to confront the post-war smashing of the [Black labor] movement and the brutal imposition of

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[309] Ecclesiastes 4:11 (King James Version)
[310] O. B. Waxman, 'What To Know About The Origins of Fascism's Brutal Ideology', *TIME,* 22 March, 2019 < https://time.com/5556242/what-is-fascism/ > (10 March, 2021).
[311] A. Drew, 'Introduction', in *South Africa's Radical Tradition: A documentary history'*, ed. by A. Drew (Cape Town: UCT Press, Buchu Books, Mayibuye Books, 1997). vol.2, p. 13.
[312] Ibidem.
[313] SAHO, 'South African Communist Party (SACP)', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/south-african-communist-party-sacp > (19 March, 2021).

apartheid'.[314] Aware of the impact of the CPSA, and anxious over its members joining other anti-apartheid organizations,[315] the National Party passed the Suppression of Communism Act (SCA) in 1950.

As previously mentioned in Chapter One, the SCA was one of the most oppressive and all-encompassing acts that the apartheid government passed. Not only did it ban the CPSA from existing, the act defined communism in rather vague terms, and instated the infamous banning orders, in which the Minister of Justice was free to ban any organization or person he felt was '[furthering] any of the aims of communism'.[316] The right to publish, the right to be a member of an organization, the right to freedom within your own home were all restricted, despite the fact that the minister had not obligation to provide an explanation for their policy as well as the victim having no legal grounds on which to resist it.[317] Furthermore, a banning order meant that publications were not allowed to quote or publicly refer to the banned person as well as to the 'forced resignation'.[318] Effectively, the banning order was used to erase the victim from public awareness.[319]

Following the dissolution of the CPSA as result from the SCA, the party reinvented itself in 1953. Now called the South African Communist Party (SACP), they operated as an underground entity, and formed even stronger bonds with other non-white organizations such as the ANC, and the rest of the coalition parties in the Congress of Alliance.[320] It was in the partnership between all these organizations that the Freedom Charter was drawn up in 1955, and it was this Charter that ultimately became the catalyst for the 1956 Treason Trial.[321] One of the accused, was journalist and author Alex La Guma. La Guma, President of the South African Colored People's Organization (SACPO), member of the SACP and the ANC, was a contentious political figure, but is considered one of the most relevant resources for scholars wishing to understand the realities of life under apartheid.

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[314] Drew, 'Introduction', p. 13.
[315] SAHO, 'South African Communist Party (SACP)', (19 March, 2021).
[316] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 198.
[317] Ibidem, p. 199.
[318] Editors of Encyclopaedia, 'Banning.', *Britannica*, 1 May 2017 < https://www.britannica.com/topic/banning-South-African-law > (18 March, 2021).
[319] Ibidem.
[320] A. Drew, 'Introduction', pp. 13-14.
[321] SAHO, 'South African Communist Party (SACP)', (19 March, 2021).

'And if one prevail against him' [322]

The Infamous 1956 Treason Trial, and legislative Action against Black activists

Following months of cooperation and planning between the members of the Congress of Alliance, the Freedom Charter was adopted between June 25th and 26th of 1955 in Kliptown, Johannesburg. The thousands of people who gathered were from all races in South Africa, and the document was drafted by individuals across entire color spectre. The purpose of the Charter was concretely explained in the introduction to the document, in which is stated:

> WE, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people; that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality; that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities; that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of [color], race sex or belief; And therefore we, the People of South Africa, black and white together – equals, countrymen and brothers – adopt this Freedom Charter.[323]

The Charter states in ten articles the universal human rights that were deemed deserved for every single South African, whatevers their race. The articles and their argumentation overlap with the rights in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, which was drafted in 1948. The second article of the Universal Declaration deems that 'everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, [color], sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status'.[324] The reason it is interesting to note this particular article, is that the Declaration was disseminated to all of its member states in 1948, which included South Africa, one of its 51 founding

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[322] Ecclesiastes 4:12 (King James Version)

[323] Congress of the People, 'Document 23: The Freedom Charter adopted at the Congress of the People at Kliptown, Johannesburg on 25 and 26th June 1955' in *South Africa's Radical Tradition: A documentary history'*, ed. by A. Drew (Cape Town: UCT Press, Buchu Books, Mayibuye Books, 1997). vol.2, p. 121.

[324] United Nations, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, p.3 < https://www.jus.uio.no/lm/en/pdf/un.universal.declaration.of.human.rights.1948.portrait.letter.pdf > (13 March, 2021).

members. Contrary to what they shared with their international relations, the response to the Freedom Charter was police violence to break up the Kliptown manifestation and charge the 156 people involved in the Congress of high treason in December of 1956.[325] The accused were arrested on the basis of the Suppression of Communism Act.

According to the authorities, the accused had incited an insurrection. As the prosecutor of the case explained it in the preparatory examination: '[t]he case of the high treason charge will be the incitement preparation for the overthrow of the existing state by revolutionary methods involving violence and the establishment of the so-called Peoples' Democracy on the basis of the Eastern European Communist Satellite States, and China'.[326] The government wanted to gain public support by interpreting the Freedom Charter as a document and a movement to transform South Africa into a Communist state, in the midst of the Cold War. According to the prosecution, there was adequate proof of this in the works of the accused, but they did not provide the evidence of the works in question. Furthermore, the government claimed the purpose of the Freedom Charter was to generate more hostility between white and non-white races.[327] The defense, led by Vernon Berrangé, discredited all arguments of racial antagonism, referred to the significant lack of evidence of the prosecution to name a particular author or be able to show the court a particular work that proved their claims of violent insurrection.[328] Berrangé ended his defense by stating:

> A battle of ideas has indeed been started in our country; a battle in which on the one side – the accused will allege – are poised those ideas which seek equal opportunities for, and freedom of thought and expression by, all persons of all races and creeds and, one the other side, those which deny to all but a few the riches of life, both material and spiritual, which the accused aver should be common to all. […] The [defense] will therefore contend that this case is a political plot of the type which characterized the period of the Inquisition and the Reichstag Fire Trial. We believe that, in the result, this trial will be answered in the right way by history.[329]

Ultimately, the case ended with the court in favor of the defendants. However, despite the eventual outcome, the trial was ongoing for years, which preoccupied the leadership, and

[325] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 209.
[326] L. Forman and E.S. Sachs, *The South African Treason Trial* (London: John Calder, 1957), p. 60.
[327]Ibidem, p. 66.
[328] Ibid., pp. 66-67.
[329] Ibid., p. 69.

only in March 1961 were the last few found not guilty.[330] The trial was an early example of apartheid's structural failings. Accounts of the victims explained the expenses and efforts the police had to undertake in order for the separation of its white and non-white prisoners.[331] Furthermore, despite the government using the treason trial to gain support from the public by branding those in support of the Freedom Charter as traitors, a broad movement was started in support of the prisoners instead.[332] As would become the norm for the apartheid government, following the trial, they censored the works produced by the prisoners and shut down and arrested all those who had been in support of the prisoners during the trial.

It was during these politically tumultuous events, that Alex La Guma started his illustrious writing career.

'TWO SHALL WITHSTAND HIM'[333] *ALEX LA GUMA: LIFE AND LITERATURE*

The above account of some of the major events in the early South African anti-apartheid movement provides the necessary background to understand Alex La Guma and his work. The Suppression of Communism Act, which was followed by a multitude of other repressive acts, speaks to the difficulty of protest prior to the digital age. The intense censorship of the press, of documents related to the Congress of Alliance, or works written by its members, as well as the scrutiny anti-apartheid works had to go through in the publishing industry demonstrates the tools the government used to shield their actions. Particularly, it highlights the effectiveness of these tools. Their draconian approach to censorship was so effective, that not only were their white citizens not exposed to the conditions of the non-white community, but also that internationally, they maintained a seat at the table at organizations like the United Nations. Men like Alex La Guma, who were under banning orders, were essentially stripped from public life, and it speaks to the perseverance of him, and those like him, that they found ways to be able to expose the damage done by the apartheid government.

Alex La Guma, born in 1925 in District Six, South Africa, seems to have been destined to be a political figure. The son of James La Guma, a prominent member of the CPSA, he grew up with values relating to oppressive 'class politics' and the 'national

[330] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 209.
[331] Forman and Sachs, *The South African Treason Trial,* p. 23.
[332] Ibidem, p. 27.
[333] Ecclesiastes 4:12 (King James Version)

liberation struggle'.[334] As an active member of the Young Communist League and the CPSA, following the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950, La Guma was consequently put on the list of 'known [Communists]'.[335] Undeterred, he later joined the SACP, be a founding member and President of the SACPC, and form a lifelong working relationship with the ANC. Furthermore, in 1957, La Guma became a prolific writer for the leftist newspaper *New Age*. In *New Age,* La Guma spoke openly about the oppression of non-white South Africans, and his own experiences growing up in the notorious District Six and as a political activist. Unsurprisingly, *New Age* was shut down in 1962 by the government. His political leanings and anti-apartheid activism and writing meant that throughout the 1950s and 1960s, La Guma was arrested and detained numerous times. First, for his involvement in the Congress in 1956, then because of the State of Emergency in 1960 following the Sharpeville Massacre, and again as a protestor in the three-day strike against Hendrik Verwoerd's inauguration in 1961.[336] As a response to the violent protests by the ANC in 1961, the apartheid government passed the Sabotage Act in 1962, which was an amendment to the SCA. Under this act, La Guma was placed under a 24-hour house arrest for five years, and received a banning order.[337] In 1963, he was arrested under the '90 Day Solitary Confinement Clause'.[338] Together with his wife, he was incarcerated for 90 days without trial. Following their release, they were once again placed under house arrest.[339] It is during his time in house arrest that he wrote *And A Threefold Cord*.

'And a threefold cord is not quickly broken'[340]
 Unity and Hope in Black Fiction

And A Threefold Cord follows the Pauls family, particularly its eldest son Charlie, in their daily routine living in the ghetto next to Cape Town. In the 160- page novel, La Guma paints an almost mundane picture of people who are just trying to survive and provide for their families. Throughout the novel, we learn details about the Pauls and other members of their community and in recounting their life experiences, and though it is not explicitly mentioned, there is the permeating experience of apartheid. It is a novel that grounds the Black South

[334] SAHO, 'Alex La Guma', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/alex-la-guma > (13 March 2021).
[335] Ibidem.
[336] Bunting, 'Foreword', p. 13.
[337] Ibidem, p. 10.
[338] SAHO, 'Alex La Guma', (19 March 2021).
[339] Ibidem.
[340] Ecclesiastes 4:12 (King James Version)

African experience down to one community and shows the dehumanization inflicted by the South African government.

The effects of apartheid in the novel are demonstrated both consciously and subconsciously. On a more subconscious level, the language used in the novel is a telling factor. As was discussed in Chapter One, English and particularly Afrikaans as a lingua franca served as a stark reminder of South Africa's colonial history. By 1948, however, linguistically, Afrikaans became part of a Black national identity as well. Indeed, the characters in *And A Threefold Cord* speak and switch between English and Afrikaans almost effortlessly. Whether this was intentional on La Guma's part can be debated, but it highlights the broader phenomenon of code-switching in post-colonial and white-minority societies. Indeed, scholarship on Alex La Guma himself speaks to the relative ease in which he was capable of switching between languages depending on his environment. As Roger Field argues in his biography of La Guma, linguistic code switching 'is a necessary condition for group identity, fluid social interaction and performative storytelling' and for La Gum specifically, this contributed to more realistic 'descriptions of [coloreds] and expressions of [colored] identity in his journalism and fiction'.[341]

The story's last chapters begin with a traumatic event. The character of Freda loses her two children because of a faulty stove. Faulty appliances and broken houses that need to be fixed with whatever scrap materials they can find is a reoccurring, daily part of the lives of the characters in shanty-towns. Race and poverty seem to be never-ending, generational cycles. However, as Charlie tells Freda in consolation:

> Words came from him now, suddenly, as if a blocked pipe had been cleared. He said: "Hell, man, maybe we is both to blame. Maybe it was all just put out like that, the way some people say. Maybe is God. Uncle Ben and *ou* Brother Bombata talk like that. I don't know, for sure, Freda." He cleared his throat and took her hand. It wasn't cold, as he had expected it to be, but rough and warm with life. "Listen," he said. "There was this *rooker* I worked with when he we was laying pipe up country. A *slim* burg, I reckon. A clever fellow. Always was saying funny things. He said something one time, about people most of the time takes trouble hardest when they alone. I don't know how it fit in here, hey. I don't understand it real right, you see. But this burg had a lot of good things in his head, I reckon." He paused, and then stumbled on, his voice

[341] R. Field, *Alex la Guma: A Literary and Political History* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), p.28.

> a little sad. “Like he say, people can’t stand up to the world alone, they got to be together.[342]

Despite the conditions and the situation in which they find themselves in, both on a personal level as well as within the confines of apartheid, Charlie reignites his community with hope.

The Circulation of Banned Materials and the Legacy of Alex La Guma

La Guma’s banning order had obvious consequences for the circulation of his books in South Africa. With his person essentially removed from public knowledge, his work was not allowed to be published or imported into South Africa. For La Guma, and many of his contemporaries, this meant publishing abroad. His first novel, *A Walk in the Night* was published in 1962 in Nigeria and *And a Threefold Cord* was published in Berlin in 1964. La Guma found moderate success in international publishing as well as an underground following in South Africa following its illegal import. While La Guma’s success overseas is indicative of the universality of the themes in his book, it also proves the failure of the apartheid government’s censorship. Similar to Nadine Gordimer’s sentiment on being a distinctly South African author, La Guma felt that it within the contemporary political landscape, it was impossible for a writer to separate their literature with the realities of South African life.[343] As La Guma would later state at a congress – after being forced into exile in the UK in 1966 – he felt strongly that his international recognition was only relevant if it brought attention to the systemic racism and racial abuse in his country. As he said in his address:

> When I write in a book that somewhere in South Africa poor people who have no water must buy it by the bucketful from some local exploiter, then I also entertain the secret hope that when somebody reads it he will be moved to do something about those robbers who have turned my country into a material and cultural wasteland for the majority of the inhabitants. But this is already being done in South Africa, and I would be satisfied to know I had something to do with it.[344]

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[342] A. la Guma, *And A Threefold Cord* (Berlin: Seven Seas Books, 1964), pp. 167-168.
[343] S.O. Asein, ‘The Revolutionary Vision in Alex La Guma’s Novels’, *Phylon,* 39 (1978), p. 74.
[344] A. la Guma qtd.in Asein, ‘The Revolutionary Vision in Alex La Guma’s Novels’, p. 75.

La Guma's work was published via a wide range of networks, which meant that outside of South Africa, more attention was being given onto the workings of the government. Furthermore, because of this network and the fact that La Guma wrote in English, it meant that his novels were often smuggled into South Africa. Indeed, multiple copies of his first novel, *A Walk in the Night*, were brought into the country where it 'passed from hand to hand'.[345] Particularly among Black youth, La Guma found an audience.

Reiterating a point made by André Brink, as discussed in chapter two, the literary factor most responsible for the changes in South Africa throughout apartheid era was Black writing. The failure of censorship lies in the fact that in response, people found innovative ways to circumvent laws. La Guma's work found its way into South Africa via a myriad of ways. Because of his grounded stories of the Black and colored experience in South Africa, and his refusal to position non-white people into a role of the inferior, gave him prolific readership. Indeed, the concept of 'self-consciousness' that La Guma instills into his characters,[346] is one that overlaps with much of the ideology behind the Black Consciousness movement that would follow a few years after the publication of *And a Threefold Cord*. La Guma's legacy is perhaps best summed up by his own account of what the impact of art can be within a society, and how art can direct change:

> [B]y deepening our consciousness, [and] widening our feeling for life, it reminds us that all ideas and all actions derive from realism and experience within social realities… Literature, art, culture, civilization, these are not abstract conceptions as some would imagine. They define the direction and basis of our actions at a particular time. They must be therefore be understood and interpreted on their revolutionary paths as the ethos which drives man forward or retards his progress according to the dynamism of that civilization.[347]

To sum up the relevance of La Guma's legacy within contemporary South African history, most simply, his literature showed the perseverance of the oppressed by means of their community and he lent them humanity that his government would not, but his readership might.

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[345] Bunting, 'Foreword', p. 14.
[346] W. Carpenter, 'The Scene of Representation in Alex La Guma's Later Novels', *English in Africa*, 18 (1991), p. 1.
[347] A. la Guma qtd.in Asein, 'The Revolutionary Vision in Alex La Guma's Novels', p. 76.

A SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE STATE
NO: 46: STEVE BIKO

The death of Steve Biko on the 12th of September, 1977 marks an important turning point for South Africa and the world's perception of the country during the apartheid era. It is important to note that understandably, within the scope of this thesis and its focus on literature, Biko's presence is unusual. However, Biko's Black Consciousness movement, was the cornerstone of many of the efforts in the Black writing and publishing industry.

As has been reiterated multiple times throughout this thesis, the South African state used various forms of enforcement to uphold their strict and repressive rule against non-white, and particularly Black, citizens. Within this whole bureaucratic system of repressive legislation and systemic racial inequality, the daily fear of apartheid for Black people was rooted in the severe policing of Black and colored neighborhoods, as well as their organizations. Even from its inception, it was disproportionately aimed at the policing of Black, and non-white citizens. Therefore, to understand the significance of the impact of Steve Biko's death, it is important to briefly recount the history of the South African police force.

The inception of the South African Police came after a few decades of police force development following the introduction of new investigative technologies in South Africa such as photography and fingerprinting. The conceptualization of these two technologies have colonial origins. [348]

Similarly to other countries with a colonial past, the photographic tradition in South Africa began because of an anthropological interest of imperialists in native communities.[349] For many colonial researchers, the photographs and portraits were primarily taken out of a fascination with so-called 'racial types' rather than in trying to understand the individuals.[350] 'Racial type photography' was in 1863 being established as a genre of photography, though it had its origins a decade earlier when Louis Agassiz, a scientist from Harvard, wanted to use portraits of those with African heritage to prove polygenesis – 'the theory that humans had descended from different evolutionary ancestors'.[351] Furthermore, this concept of 'racial types' continued to play an important role in developing eugenic theory, such as the concept

[348] J. Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police* (London/Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020), p. 35.
[349] Ibidem, p. 25.
[350] Ibid., p. 26.
[351] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

of ‘the fit vs. the unfit’, [352] which reinforced racial hierarchies. Internationally, the introduction of photographs into the police force was the result of new ‘scientific’ methods of tracking and tracing down criminals, as well as a more efficient way of archiving.[353] These so-called ‘scientific methods’ were based on notions that a person’s biology could determine whether or not they would commit a certain crime.[354] Simply put, ‘biology begat criminal conduct’.[355] It is under this theoretical framework that police force used photography as a means to prevent crime. Needless to say, this framework of the relationship between biology and misconduct had a strong racial bias. Ultimately, the origins of photographic traditions in South Africa are deeply rooted in theories such as eugenics and polygenesis, and formed the earliest relationship between racial perceptions and policing. Non-white, and particularly Black so-called ‘racial types’ had strong associations with criminal conduct. Following into the 20th century and the increase in media outlets, such as television and radio alongside newspapers and magazines, state-sponsored media heavily accentuated this association.

Apart from photographing, the other important tool that aided the development of the police force in South Africa was the usage of fingerprinting. The concept of fingerprinting was initially developed as the solution for colonial powers around the world to be able to keep track of native citizens who were not literate, and who would supposedly use that anonymity for criminal conduct.[356] Fingerprinting was soon after implemented as the South African police force was developing, and was used in combination with the photographic tradition as a foundation to police non-white communities. This man-made, racist concept that there is a relationship between someone’s genetic profile and their ability to commit crime was already heavily supported well into the nineteenth century. However, this eugenic line of thinking, that was widely accepted by colonial powers, was interspersed with the rise of technological progress. Following the Union of South Africa in 1910, despite differences between the provinces, all were united in its belief of upholding colonial, and white supremacist, sentiment. So, as the South African Police officially being instated in 1913, it was already defined by its colonial roots and its standard that ‘as a rule, Africans could not be trusted’.[357]

[352] Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc., *Race and Membership in American History: The Eugenics Movement* (Massachusetts: Harvard Facing History Project/Facing History and Ourselves, 2002), p. 140 < https://www.facinghistory.org/sites/default/files/publications/Race_Membership_0.pdf > (29 March, 2021).
[353] Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*, p. 28.
[354] Ibidem.
[355] Ibid.
[356] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[357] Ibid., p. 33.

It is with the development of these two practices that the South African police force was established. Considering the touchstones of the police force were racially biased and interested in the upkeep of colonial power, it is unsurprising that law enforcement would become synonymous with terms such as racism and bigotry. Indeed, throughout apartheid era, the police force was expanded upon with the idea that it silences whoever opposes the State. In practice, this often meant severe control over its Black citizens specifically. Most notoriously, the police established the South African Police Security Branch (Security Police). As briefly mentioned before in correlation with André Brink's experiences and writings, the Security Police force was a specific unit primarily aimed at silencing and interrogating those who opposed the State, using whatever methods it deemed necessary.[358] Furthermore, using the tools of photography and fingerprinting the Security Police created the so-called 'Terrorist Album', which archived the names and faces of those who opposed apartheid, and therefore were enemies of the state.[359] The whole practice was legal under the guise of the Terrorism Act of 1967 (No. 83 of 1967).

The Terrorism Act stated that participation in so-called terrorist activities was punishable by law. However, the act used vague terminology to define these terrorist activities and gave the accused very little legal room to defend their actions.[360] As a continuation of the Sabotage Act, '[s]ection 6 of the Terrorism Act [allowed] any officer of the police over a certain rank to order the arrest without warrant, and the detention for interrogation, of any person who he [had] reason to believe [was] a terrorist, or [was] withholding information relating to terrorists or to offences under the Act'.[361] The accused could be detained without trial for an unforeseen period, and was not allowed visitation from anyone except the Minister of Justice or someone acting in his stead. Under the Act, the accused would be detained 'as the Commissioner of Police or the Minister of Justice may determine, until the Commissioner is satisfied that he has replied adequately to all questions asked at his interrogation, or that no useful purpose will be served by his further detention, or until the Minister orders his release'.[362] For many prisoners, their detention ended with their deaths at the hands of the police force.

Arrested under the Terrorism Act and detained under the no-trial detention law, Steve Biko died in police custody at the age of 30. He was the 46th detainee to have died in custody,

[358] Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, pp. 199-200.
[359] Dlamini, *The Terrorist Album*.
[360] H. Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko* (London: International Defence & Aid Fund, 1978), p. 18.
[361] Ibidem.
[362] Ibidem.

but he was the first to receive an attention from the international press. Because of banning orders on individuals, the illegality of Black-led organizations, and intense censorship of Black voices within the State approved sphere of media, the names and faces of the other 45 'sink into the obscurity of legal proscriptions. Steve Biko was different'.[363]

Black is Beautiful:
Steve Biko's Life and Black Consciousness

The early 1960s were a period of political turmoil in the fight against apartheid. The ramifications of the Sharpeville Massacre meant that the ANC, PAC and other similar parties were forced to go underground, and 1963 brought the Rivonia Trials, in which prominent Black activists were arrested and convicted of sabotage against the state and subsequently given life sentences. By the mid-1960s, it seemed the anti-apartheid movement had stagnated, and the only – legal – movements left were white-led. It is during this time that Steve Biko would enroll into Natal University to study medicine at the non-white campus in Durban. During his first year, Biko would become a member of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). However, he quickly grew frustrated at the dominance of white members of the union, in which their voices were amplified within the anti-apartheid movement, rather than those affected. Indeed, while arguing for the need of the creation of a 'Black-only' student association, Biko explained in a letter to the Students' Representative Council (SRC) that 'the [Blacks] are tired of standing at the touchlines to witness a game that they should be playing. They want to do things for themselves and all by themselves'.[364] For Biko and his peers, while they believed that South Africa was capable of becoming an integrated country, within their current political landscape, white people benefited from a regime whatever their individual feelings on it. Therefore, it was important to raise awareness on Black issues from actual Black people. All of this culminated in 1968, when Biko and other like-minded Black members of NUSAS, would form the South African Student Organization (SASO). Within this organization, Biko was named President. The aims of SASO were the cornerstones of what would become the concept of Black Consciousness. As he explained himself in a paper produced for a SASO training seminar:

[363] Ibidem, p. 5.
[364] S. Biko, 'Letter to SRC Presidents (1970)' in S. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: The Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd., 1996), p. 15.

> Black Consciousness is in essence the [realization] by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the "normal" which is white… Liberation therefore, is of paramount importance in the concept of Black Consciousness, for we cannot be conscious of ourselves and yet remain in bondage.[365]

Black Consciousness was less about 'confrontation', and more about 'introspection' of the self.[366] In this sense, BC was a fragmented movement within SASO where there were no specific practical goals, but in which Black South Africans were encouraged to look within themselves and reject the notion of Black inferiority and start embracing ethnic heritage.

For Biko, this personal development was paramount in the fight against white-supremacy rule. His personal ideas came from his belief in the theory of dialectics. Initially a concept made by philosopher Georg W.F. Hegel, dialectics was defined the history in the development of human beings. According to Hegel, there is a logical cohesion through dialectical development. While history does not repeat itself, each stage of it is unstable. This instability is caused by contradiction, which is an internal pressure, in the central ideas that shape that particular stage of history. For Hegel, these contradictions are resolved dialectically through the concepts of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Hegels' concept of dialectical theory was further on adopted by Karl Marx in communist political theory – a common submovement within anti-apartheid, which put a focus on material dialectics. In the case of South Africa, according to Biko, because the thesis is strong white supremacy, the only possible antithesis is the core of Black Consciousness: Black nationalism. For Biko, only with this radical opposition can South Africa be a country 'where [Black] and white live together in harmony without fear of group exploitation [and] it is only when these two opposites have interplayed and produced a viable synthesis of ideas'.[367]

As SASO vehemently rejected the (white) press, SASO had their own publications. One of them, their monthly SASO newsletter included a column called 'I Write What I Like', in which Biko, under the pseudonym of Frank Talk, would write about Black Consciousness

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[365] S. Biko, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness (1971)' in S. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: The Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd., 1996), p. 49.
[366] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 14.
[367] S. Biko, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness (1971)', p. 51.

ideology and philosophy.[368] The opinions expressed in his newsletter were scathing on the effects of colonial powers in African countries and honest about the brutal realities of being non-white in apartheid South Africa. The ideas and philosophies expressed in his column were the same he, and other members of SASO, would present to non-white students all over the country.[369] It is in this role, and with the popularity of Black Consciousness, that Biko would start becoming a prominent political figure in the anti-apartheid movement. It is also during this period that his political activities put him on the radar of State officials and the Security Police.

The Censored Black Resistance:
I Write What I Like

From his speeches, his columns and other papers written during the short period following the inception of SASO and his ultimate passing, it was clear that Biko was a prolific writer and orator. Following the inception of SASO, Biko would tour with other members to Black universities and introduce students to the concept of Black Consciousness and SASO's other goals.[370] As he wrote himself in an article titled 'Black Campuses and Current Feelings', students, and their respective delegations, were positively responding to this emerging ideology that placed themselves as active members within their emancipation.[371] Biko's aim for these tours was to instill belief into Black students that they were 'worthy of the claim that they [were] leaders of tomorrow'.[372] Through his outspoken pacifism, oratory, letters and various articles he wrote for 'I Write What I Like', Biko brought his ideas and concepts in ways that gave him a certain form of acceptance among white liberals and Western government officials.[373] Indeed, despite breaking of from NUSAS and starting SASO, Biko held a level of respect for NUSAS that gave him a life-long positive relationship with their (white) leadership.[374] Furthermore, SASO and Black Consciousness as a fragmented movement were capable of operating within apartheid laws, unlike movements such as ANC

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[368] S. Biko, 'Black Souls in White Skins? (1970)' in S. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: The Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd., 1996).
[369] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 8.
[370] Ibidem.
[371] S. Biko, 'Black Campuses and Current Feelings' in S. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: The Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd., 1996), p. 17.
[372] Ibidem, p. 18.
[373] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 15.
[374] Steve Biko, 'Letter to SRC Presidents', p. 8.

and PAC.[375] During the period of 1968 to 1972, Biko would write many articles regarding the importance and the meaning of Black Consciousness, as well as papers regarding the state and history of South Africa. Biko would highlight the corruption and brutality done in the name of white supremacy as well as write scathing remarks on the effects of colonialism in Africa. As seen in 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', he states:

> The surge towards Black Consciousness is a phenomenon that has manifested itself through out the so-called Third World. There is no doubt that discrimination against the [Black] man the world over fetches its origin from the exploitative attitude of the white man. [Colonization] of white countries by whites has throughout history resulted in nothing more sinister than mere cultural or geographical fusion at worst, or language [bastardization] at best. It is true that the history of weaker nations is shaped by bigger nations, but nowhere in the world today do we see white exploiting whites on a scale even remotely similar to what is happening in South Africa. Hence, one is forced to conclude that it is no coincidence that [Black] people are exploited. It was a deliberate plan which has culminated in even so-called [Black] independent countries not attaining any real independence.[376]

Furthermore, Biko reiterates in many of his articles that the necessity of Black unity within Black Consciousness is because of the detriment that is 'White Racism'. As he writes in 'White Racism and Black Consciousness':

> "No race possesses the monopoly of beauty, intelligence, force, and there is room for all of us at the rendezvous of victory." I do not think Aimé Césaire was thinking about South Africa when he said these words. The whites in this country have placed themselves on a path of no return. So blatantly exploitative in terms of the mind and body is the practice of white racism that one wonders if the interests of [Blacks] and whites in this country have not become so mutually exclusive as to exclude the possibility of there being "room for all of us at the rendezvous of victory". The white man's quest for power has led him to destroy with utter ruthlessness whatever has stood in his way, In an effort to divide the [Black] world in terms of aspirations, the

[375] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 14.
[376] S. Biko, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', p. 49.

powers that be evolved a philosophy that stratifies the [Black] world and gives preferential treatment to certain groups.[377]

When taking into consideration that the above two excerpts, are just small snippets of the plethora of articles and papers Biko wrote, it is not hard to imagine that he would fall on the radar of the State. Initially, the government saw no issue with the conception of SASO, as they encouraged associations that were racially segregated.[378] However, leading into the 1970s, as Biko was writing his articles denouncing the apartheid government, his radical philosophy of Black Consciousness was gaining traction.

In the light of all this advancement that Biko was making in Black unity as a form of anti-apartheid activism, by 1972, he was expelled from university and under constant watch from the Security Police.[379] Despite this, within that year, he would continue with his community work in the establishment of the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC), which was 'an umbrella political movement for groups sharing the ideas of "Black Consciousness"'.[380] In the name of the BPC, Biko would continue his writings and became the main author of *Black Review*, which highlighted and analyzed the current political field.[381] Unsurprisingly, *Black Review* was banned and would also lead to Biko's own banning order.[382] Stripped from public life and under constant surveillance, Biko would spend the rest of his life in cycles of arrest and release throughout the 1970s. Interestingly, throughout his political career, Biko himself was never as widely known throughout the country in ways that Nelson Mandela or Robert Sobukwe were.[383] He was known among certain circles, particularly throughout his community work, but never as someone who was nationally known.[384] This changed in light of the strikes happening throughout the 1970s when the international press started to have a renewed interest into the workings of the apartheid government. International attention on

[377] S. Biko, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness (1972)' in S. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: The Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd., 1996), p. 61.
[378] S. Jacobi and W. Shoki, 'How We Remember Steve Biko: An Interview with Dan Magaziner', *JACOBIN,* 18 September, 2020, n.pag. < https://jacobinmag.com/2020/09/steve-biko-south-africa-black-consciousness-movement > (4 April 2021).
[379] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 8.
[380] Ibidem.
[381] Ibid.
[382] Ibid.
[383] D. Magaziner in Jacobi and Shoki, 'How We Remember Steve Biko: An Interview with Dan Magaziner' (4 April 2021).
[384] Ibidem.

Black activists, and particularly on Steve Biko, culminated with the Soweto Uprising in 1976.[385]

The repercussions of the Soweto Uprising, particularly in the way the media responded, will be explained more significantly in the following chapter, as it relates to an important moment that led to the eventual dissolution of the apartheid government. SASO and BPC, as well as other grassroots movements related to Black Consciousness, were actively supporting and backing up the Soweto protests.[386] As the events of Soweto and ongoing protests continued to unfold, international news reporters and progressive politicians would travel to South Africa, where they would start interacting with Biko.[387] As Biko started gaining international recognition, he would forge further working relationships with white activists around the world.[388] Therefore, when he was murdered in detainment in 1977, it created an almost immediate furor internationally in the press.[389]

Steve Biko's Death & Legacy

As Steve Biko's prominence grew following the series of protests in 1976, so did the police force's interest in him. For the government, even just by the sheer fact of him being alive, Biko 'was a dangerous enemy of apartheid'.[390] For Black Africans, he was the personification of the values they fought for, and his longstanding stance of non-violence, meant that he was highly respected by white peers. Indeed, as his friend, and pastor Fr. Aelred Stubbs would later write of his reputation following Soweto, Biko was a force to be reckoned with. As Stubbs writes:

> It became clear to many that the Soweto uprising had altered the balance of Black political forces and Steve, who would be 30 at the end of the year, was emerging as the new national leader, with good connections with the older generation who had

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[385] Ibidem.
[386] C. Gaffey, 'South Africa: What You Need to Know About the Soweto Uprising 40 Years Later', *Newsweek*, 13 April, 2021, n.pag. < https://www.newsweek.com/soweto-uprising-hector-pieterson-memorial-471090 > (5 April 2021)
[387] D. Magaziner in Jacobi and Shoki, 'How We Remember Steve Biko: An Interview with Dan Magaziner' (4 April 2021).
[388] Ibidem.
[389] Ibidem.
[390] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 17.

> moved up into the position of elder statesmen, and a natural role as the head of the new generation of idealistic but untutored school boys and girls.[391]

In the meanwhile, apart from the Soweto backlash, white South Africans were grappling with the news following out of Mozambique and Angola. Following protracted struggles in the fight against Portugese colonial rule, both Mozambique and Angola achieved independence. Identifying with their anti-colonial struggle, the BPC and SASO organized rallies in celebration of Black liberation.[392] In response, the Minister of Police banned all forms of assemblies, and the many who did protest were met with violent police. As a result, SASO and BPC leadership would then get indicted into the longest running trial under the Terrorism Act. Despite neither organization 'participating in terrorist activities'[393], the Minister of Police alleged that 'Black Consciousness' as an ideology was terrorism.[394] The nine accused would eventually be convicted on basis of terrorism. The SASO-BPC trial would prove to be the precedence for Biko's eventual arrest, as even the idea of Black Consciousness and criticism of white supremacy was now considered an act of terrorism.[395] Initially detained for over a 100 days under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act, he was eventually released without charge.[396] However, both the government and Security Police were aware of the fact that after release, and despite banning orders, most Black activists, including Biko, would return to their political activities.[397] It is within this context, that Biko was arrested for the final time under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act again on the 18th of August, 1977.

The actual circumstances around Steve Biko's death have been widely reported on, so no extensive account will be given here. More relevant for the purposes of this chapter is the role the media played into the eventual unveiling of the inquest and how it 'elevated [Biko] to the pantheon of South Africa's great anti-apartheid leaders'.[398] The initial cause of death, as confirmed by the Minister of Justice, J. Kruger to the *Rand Daily Mail*, was the cause of a seven-day hunger strike, imposed on by himself.[399] Kruger did not release the medical

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[391] A. Stubbs, 'Martyr of Hope' in S. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: The Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd., 1996), p. 194.
[392] H. Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko* (London: International Defence & Aid Fund, 1978), p. 16.
[393] SAHO, '1967 Terrorism Act, No. 83 of 1967' < https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/1967-terrorism-act-no-83-1967 > (6 April 2021).
[394] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 16.
[395] Ibidem, p. 17.
[396] Anon, 'Biographical Summary' in S. Biko *I Write What I Like* (London: The Bowerdean Publishing Company Ltd., 1996), p. 1.
[397] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 17.
[398] Jacobi and Shoki, 'How We Remember Steve Biko: An Interview with Dan Magaziner' (4 April 2021).
[399] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 17.

reports. He followed his explanation with an address at a National Party Congress where he stated that Biko's death 'leaves him cold', which was met with the laughter of the audience.[400] For many of his followers, and peers, the explanation was insufficient. In response, various national newspapers, including the *Rand Daily Mail*, set out their own investigations and would subsequently publish front page news stories detailing the intense assault and torture Biko endured at the hands of the Security Police before dying of brain damage as a result.[401] Kruger's attempt to silence the *Rand Daily Mail* by reporting them to the South African Press Council, was just met with even more coverage of Biko's death by other national papers, such as *The Star*, *The World* and *Weekend World*.[402] The last two would also use this opportunity to investigate other murders that had happened under police custody.[403] Biko's death became a source of international outrage as the foreign press picked up the story as well. Indeed, the story galvanized the international public so much the *British Medical Journal*, after its own research into the autopsy, would condemn the South African Medical Association for their role in publishing falsehoods.[404] In response, *Die Burger*, a government-supporting newspaper released an editorial condemning the public's so-called unfounded claim of police brutality as well Kruger refuting the claims in a *New York Times* interview.[405] Moreover, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) released an international statement reiterating the cause of death as a hunger strike as well as asserting that:

> Police say it is virtually impossible to stop a man determined to commit suicide from doing so and, in any event, the suicides are sometimes totally unexpected. To their critics the police point out that so far a court of law has never established that the police have been responsible for torturing or killing a single detainee, although all cases are thoroughly investigated. For any reasonable person confronted with this type of anti-South Africa propaganda the question must arise: where South Africa is spending millions and moving mountains to improve her image would she willfully

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[400] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 21.
[401] SAHO, 'Biko's imprisonment, death and the aftermath', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/bikos-imprisonment-death-and-aftermath > (5 April 2021).
[402] Ibidem.
[403] Ibid.
[404] M. Elnaiem, 'The Death of Steve Biko, Revisited', *JSTOR DAILY*, 17 September, 2020, n.pag. < https://daily.jstor.org/the-death-of-steve-biko-revisited/ > (5 April 2021).
[405] Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 22-24.

and purposefully allow something like this to happen to destroy all the good work that has been done? The answer must be: No.[406]

Despite refuting all claims of police brutality, the press had already seemingly convinced the public otherwise, both within South Africa and internationally. The story of his death would continue to dominate news cycles throughout the rest of the year. One of the most widely spread editorials, would be a tribute written by Donald Woods, a white friend of Biko, that would reach much of white suburbia and its student body in South Africa.[407]

As previously mentioned, Steve Biko was never particularly well-known during his lifetime. For much of the white community within South Africa, he would have delved into oblivion were it not for the media coverage following his death. Even as the government managed to suppress some of the voices and international outrage in the years following, Steve Biko and his philosophy of Black Consciousness had become a permanent fixture into people's mind. Indeed, his name became so well-known, his writings eventually got published posthumously and circulated heavily among students, both Black and white. Furthermore, *I Write What I Like* is considered a seminal piece of work into understanding the activism and cultural identity of the younger generation of Black resistance during apartheid. Indeed, *I Write What I Like* also contextualizes the South African landscape in literary works written by apartheid activists following his death. Ultimately, Steve Biko's legacy is twofold. On the one hand, he serves as a tragic reminder of the violence and brutality done at the hands of the State and a police force that serves it and not the people, and on the other hand he has remained a symbol for liberation of the mind.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter served as an insight into the marginalized voices throughout the apartheid era. Furthermore, it meant to detail how Black authors were criminalized for their works, and subjected to much harsher punishment and legislation, as opposed to their white peers. However, despite this, the works of Alex La Guma and Steve Biko – to name a few – were instrumental in anti-apartheid literature and protest leading into the next few decades. The following chapter will show how their influences translated into real substantial change.

[406] SABC Statement (1977) found in in Bernstein, *No. 46~Steve Biko*, p. 22.
[407] T. Karon, 'Remembering the Death of Steve Biko, 35 Years Later', *TIME*, 12 September, 2012, n.pag. < https://time.com/3791503/remembering-the-death-of-steve-biko-35-years-later/ > (7 April 2021).

Moreover, the specific censorship legislation, as explained in the previous chapter, will also be highlighted in the next chapter, as I chronicle the changes leading into the 1980s that will lead to the end of apartheid in the 1990s. The developments from the last two chapters will converge in the following.

CHAPTER FOUR:

'TOMORROW THERE WILL BE MORE OF US'

Marking the shifts into democratic South Africa

In analyzing the relationship between censorship and literary works as well as their relevance towards the dissolution of apartheid in 1994, the previous two chapters focused on individual banned authors and activists. By examining why their specific works were censored, the chapters showcase the societal and political ramifications of individual censorship. Obviously, it would be an oversimplification – and falsehood – to attribute the growth in anti-apartheid activism solely to these particular individuals and literary works. However, these individuals, their works and their influence, were contributory to a changing political landscape. In addition, the 1980s and 1990s were accompanied by a growing media presence, i.e. the rise of technological advances in television, radio and the internet. To understand 'politics in a media saturated world', it is important to recognize that the 'pervasiveness of literacy, television and radio in the industrialized world has allowed for the creation of a fluid, ever-changing political spectacle'.[408] This means that the media – used here as an umbrella term for literature, tv, radio and the press – is ultimately responsible for how the public perceives political leaders and their ideologies. Within this framework, this chapter will discuss the broader effects of the circulation of banned literary works, the reform in censorship laws in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the impact the press had on the anti-apartheid movement following the Soweto Uprising in 1976. By focusing on these specific developments leading into this time period, this chapter will serve to contextualize how the slow dissolution of political censorship helped transition South Africa into a democracy and explore the profound influence of the media on the foundations of political reality.

[408] T.A. Moriarty, *Finding the words: A Rhetorical History of South Africa's Transition from Apartheid to Democracy* (London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), p. 5

THE LITERARY LEGAL LANDSCAPE LEADING INTO THE 1980s

To understand the growing literary autonomy during the 1980s and 1990s, it is important to explain the changing legal landscape regarding South Africa's censorship laws during this period. To this end, this section will revisit T. Laros' *Literature and the Law in South Africa* discussed in Chapter Two and reference J.C.W. van Rooyen's *Censorship in South Africa* to establish the historical context.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the consequences of the 1974 Publications Act, No.42 (PA) meant that any decision by the Directorate of Publications (DOP) and its Commission – the appointed censors – could not be appealed to the Supreme Court.[409] Instead, all appeals went to the Publications Appeal Board (PAB), which would function as the 'sole authority' on what could be deemed an 'undesirable' publication.[410] Parliament justified its omission of the Supreme Court in the process by claiming that it enabled a more transparent system.[411] However, in reality, the introduction of the 1974 Publications Act (PA) marked the government's most brazen effort in its censorship regulation.[412] In practice, As P.D. McDonald explains in *The Literature Police*:

> As far as publications were concerned, it empowered the committees to ban the entire output of a particular publisher and publications on any specified subject. It also criminalized the possession, and not just the distribution or printing, of an 'undesirable' publication [and] gave the Directorate significant powers of seizure[.][413]

Furthermore, anyone who would publish negative press about the censors on the PAB would face legal repercussions.[414] Ultimately, Parliament aimed to 'reduce the degree of institutional autonomy that literature had come to attain under the previous act'.[415] It is also relevant to specify that the 1974 Act used 'Publications' as an umbrella term for all media during that period, including newspapers and television, with the sole exception being the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

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[409] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 129.
[410] J.H. Snyman qtd. in T. Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 131.
[411] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 60.
[412] Ibidem.
[413] Ibid.
[414] Ibid.
[415] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 131.

The first DOP was J.L. Pretorius and the first chairman of the PAB was J.H. Snyman. The tenure of these two men marked the "most repressive era in the history of the system".[416] In the period of 1975-1980 following the implementation of the new Act, there was an increase of almost 50 percent of works presented to the censor committee, 86 percent of which were submitted by government bodies and state police.[417] Concurrently, the Publications Act did not have any jurisdiction over newspapers produced by members of the press union as well as over the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).[418] As these institutions had their own code of conduct that were under compliance – and in support of the government, it was unnecessary to add control via the PA.[419]

This meant that for the average South African, all forms of media that were directly accessible to them were those in support of the apartheid government's views on morality, politics and religion. Indeed, as with every other aspect of apartheid, news outlets were segregated as well. The distribution of news to the white South African came from a white-owned, white-run company, and news sources available to Black South Africans came from the smaller, Black-run companies.[420] The Black newspapers had strict regulations on its publications. As Sam Nzima, a prominent Black photojournalist, would explain it: 'we were only allowed to interview [Blacks], and we were not allowed to write about whites'.[421]

Furthermore, this period continued the precedent set by the banning of Brink's *Kennis van die Aand*, namely that Afrikaner books were not exempt from being reviewed by a censorship committee.[422] This had particular consequences for the evolution of the growing Afrikaner literary canon.[423] The 1970s brought forth successors to the *Sestigers*, as a new band of authors were playing with various literary devices to further question apartheid as well as the concept of an Afrikaner '*volk'*.[424] Not only were individual works consistently put under scrutiny, any other printed media that they were associated with were also being submitted to a censorship committee.[425] If a newspaper, journal or magazine, particularly those with anti-apartheid sentiment, had an association with the Sestigers, it was immediately

[416] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 61.
[417] Ibidem.
[418] van Rooyen, *Censorship in South Africa,* p. 4.
[419] Ibidem, p. 4.
[420] A. Baker and TIME Staff, 'This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid. Here's the Story Behind It', *TIME,* 15 june, 2016, n.pag. < https://time.com/4365138/soweto-anniversary-photograph/ > (12 August, 2021).
[421] S. Nzima in Baker and TIME Staff, 'This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid. Here's the Story Behind It', (12 August, 2021).
[422] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 68.
[423] Ibidem.
[424] Ibid.
[425] Ibid.

banned upon review.[426] The ease with which the censors and the PAB were able to ban so many works, was the result of a very distinctive change from the previous act. Whereas the appeals in the 1963 Publications and Entertainment Act (PEA) were still being judged with the criteria of the 'likely reader' in mind, the PA explicitly removed this.[427] All works were now to be judged on the basis of the so-called 'average' South African.[428] While this rule proved to be controversial, it was often directed towards authors and publications that did not have particular public influence within the nationalist sphere. However, this changed after the infamous ban of Etienne Leroux's *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!*.

Etienne Leroux's Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!

Etienne Leroux, born in 1922, was supposedly an avid Nationalist, having grown up as the son of the Nationalist Party's then-Minister of Agriculture.[429] While Leroux initially struggled to make a name for himself within the literary elite, his eventual long-standing partnership with the publishing company Human & Rousseu would ultimately make him a highly awarded author.[430] Together with André Brink and Breyten Breytenbach, Leroux was a part of the *Sestigers*.[431] However, while working together on the Afrikaans literary magazine *Kol* in 1968, Leroux would prove to constantly be at odds with the other two.[432] This was primarily because Leroux chose to be apolitical in his work.[433] Within the Afrikaner elite, Leroux was praised, even by van Wyk Louw himself, as someone who was reinventing Afrikaner fiction and further exploring the concept of '*volk*'.[434] For most of right-wing South Africa, and indeed its apartheid government, Leroux was therefore an acceptable model for the evolution of the Afrikaner literary identity. While his work was not without its controversy, as exemplified by the response of Afrikaner church groups to sex in his novels, Leroux's work was rarely submitted to the PAB by state or police, unlike his contemporaries.[435] This implied that, Leroux was seemingly safe from censorship.

[426] Ibid.
[427] Laros, *Literature and the Law*, p. 131.
[428] Ibidem.
[429] Ibid., p. 133.
[430] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 262.
[431] Ibidem, p. 258.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.
[434] Ibid., p. 259.
[435] Ibid., p. 265.

Published originally in 1976, *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein* chronicled a satirical story of a television crew that attempted to reconstruct the 1899 Battle of Magersfontein, in which the Boer forces bested the British. After its initial release, the general reception seemed to agree that the story was aimed at entertainment, and not to be construed as a historical document. Indeed, the novel seemed less invested in the accuracy of its historical events and more in the (absurd) antics of the two men leading the crew, the British aristocrats: Lord Seldom (who is mostly deaf) and Lord Sudden (who is mostly blind).[436] Despite its sexual innuendo and crude language, Afrikaner readers made the book a great success.[437] Arguably, this was because of longstanding anti-British sentiment among Afrikaners, and Leroux's novel appealed to Afrikaner identity by focusing on a story where the Boers won.

Despite the novel effectively bolstering Afrikaner identity, in 1977, the novel was submitted to the Directorate of Publications by an individual citizen.[438] Similar to the case of Brink under the PEA act, the new act still judged media publications based on whether their contents interfered with the religious, moral and political provisions of the state.[439] The censorship committee in charge of its judgment argued that the book was not deemed undesirable, because the more compromising aspects were considered 'satire'.[440] The Directorate approved the judgment of the committee and *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* would receive further critical and commercial success, even winning the highly acclaimed South African literary CNA award.[441]

Its success brought more visibility to the book and spawned the *Aktie Morele Standaarde* (AMS)[442] group that heavily campaigned for Leroux's novel to be submitted to the DOP again. It is relevant to note that the AMS group was heavily tied to a wealthy Afrikaner church that had lobbied in the past for stricter censorship laws prior to the Publications Act of 1974.[443] Ultimately, AMS' successful campaign led to a renewed interest into the book, and November 1977 saw the case open up again.[444]

[436] Ibid., p. 268.
[437] C. Murphy, 'The Censorship of a Novel about a Boer War Battle', *The Washington Post,* 5 March 1978, n.pag. < https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1978/03/05/the-censorship-of-a-novel-about-a-boer-war-battle/db7720d3-5644-4431-952f-3a35029c7f99/ > (13 May 2021).
[438] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 134.
[439] Ibidem, p. 135.
[440] Ibid.
[441] Ibid.
[442] Action Moral Standard
[443] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* pp. 135-136.
[444] Ibidem, p. 136.

Presenting their defense in front of the Publications Appeal Board, the publishers Human & Rousseu urged the committee to uphold their previous decision.[445] According to their defense, it was important to recognize this book as one of the first instances of satire in Afrikaans literature. To ban it, would be harmful for the evolution of this literary genre in South Africa.[446] Furthermore, they presented testimonies of witnesses and, while conceding that community leaders were important figures for 'establishing community standards'[447], they argued that when it comes to establishing of literary value, the only relevant opinions should come from literary experts.[448] Most importantly, the defense, knowing that the PA only evaluated works on the 'average' reader and no longer the 'likely' reader, tried to appeal that the so-called 'average person' would be able to recognize that this work is outside of their scope of expertise and would therefore trust the experts – the thirty-five community leaders who had testified that the book should not be banned – to have made an accurate assessment.[449] As Cilliers, Human & Rousseu lawyer stated:

> He [the average reader] has an average degree of knowledge; he has an average degree of humility, also with respect to his own limitations and prejudices, and an average degree of tolerance towards others who think differently than he does; and above all, he has an average degree of appreciation for the fact that there are leaders, thinkers, artists, in our community, and that they are cultural pioneers—each in a style of their own…. With *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* The average reasonable reader will say to himself: This work is so deep and so difficult and directed at such a limited circle, that I accept that the banalities occurring in it are incidental, and functionally incidental, in relation to the artwork, and not the other way round……And if he simply does not want to read or understand the work, he will, as a reasonable person, say: it would be unreasonable if I, who do not want to read or do not understand this, should judge whether or not this is offensive in the name of those who do want to read and who can understand this.[450]

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[445] Ibid,
[446] Ibid., p. 137.
[447] Ibid., p. 136.
[448] Ibid.
[449] Ibid., pp. 138-139.
[450] S.A. Cilliers qtd. in Laros, *Literature and the Law*, p. 138-139.

However, this definition of the so-called 'average person' failed to convince the PAB. Ultimately, the book was banned on the 21st of November, 1977 on the basis of religious and moral objections, brought on by the PA's 'average' reader provision.[451] Interestingly, even the PAB acknowledged that under previous legislation, Leroux's work would not have been reproached.[452]

Considering the book had previously obtained critical success, the backlash was almost immediate. JCW Van Rooyen, the Chairman of the PAB following Snyman, would later coin the events surrounding *Magersfontein* as the catalyst for changes to the PA.[453] The banning of *Magersfontein* would coincide with the National Party winning another election. However, the NP would see a decrease in popularity because of the ban, which created a 'damaging rift among the Afrikaner elite'.[454] As a large group of Afrikaner literary elite saw it, *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* was an important addition to the furthering of a distinct Afrikaner literary canon. In their point of view, the PAB rejected Afrikaner canon and 'sided with moral pressure groups, the Church and the politicians'.[455]

The initial censors who had previously deemed the book not undesirable, would also publicly denounce the ban. This large group of the elite continued to support the publishers Human and Rousseu's futile effort to overturn the decision at the Supreme Court, and lead a successful attempt for the book to win the highly prestigious Hertzog Prize.[456] This would make it the first banned work to do so.[457] These groups would also express their disdain for the ban of the book in many literary editorials. Because of this strong campaigning from the Afrikaner elite, the banning of *Magersfontein* would not only attract national press, it made international headlines. Indeed, in 1978, *The Washington Post*, a highly respected newspaper in the United States, published an article titled 'The Censorship of a Novel About a Boer War Battle'.[458] As the article highlighted, the banning of *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* would prove to be one of the first known instances of publishers "challenging a book banning in South Africa's highest court".[459] But more importantly, the article would indicate that South Africa's increasingly oppressive censorship legislation was becoming more difficult to sustain. *Magersfontein's* ban would prove to alienate a large chunk of the conservative group

[451] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 143.
[452] Ibidem, pp. 140-141.
[453] van Rooyen, *Censorship in South Africa,* p. 4.
[454] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 271.
[455]Ibidem..
[456] Ibid., p. 272.
[457] Ibid.
[458] Murphy, 'The Censorship of a Novel about a Boer War Battle' (13 May 2021).
[459] Ibidem,

that the National Party relied on.[460] In response, the judicial bodies in charge would change the PA's extremely restrictive censorship laws to more lenient ones to gain back the support of its *volk.*

The events of *Magersfontein,* which happened concurrently with the international backlash from the Soweto Uprising as will be explained below, would lead to important changes in censorship legislation that resulted in the unbanning of many works of anti-apartheid activists.

THE SOWETO UPRISING: A CENSORSHIP FAILURE

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the previous chapters have discussed censorship primarily in relation to specific literary works. However, the PEA and the PA were all-encompassing laws over all forms of media. The judicial bodies in charge attempted to ensure that every form of media that was to be consumed – both nationally and internationally – was approved prior to distribution. Indeed, as showcased in Chapter 2, Black protests and any display of the anti-apartheid struggle in fiction and non-fiction works was met with an ever-growing number of retributionary laws. While much of the apartheid struggle was intentionally kept silent, there were certain events where the government failed to do so. One of these, as mentioned previously, was the Sharpeville massacre. The impact of the news coverage on Sharpeville spurred on many anti-apartheid activists we know of today. Sharpeville was a turning point for national opposition to the Nationalist regime– particularly from previously sheltered white Afrikaners. One of the other major catalysts for international condemnation of the South Africa regime was the Soweto Uprising, which was heavily covered in the press.

To contextualize the situation, it is important to know the sociopolitical landscape of South Africa in the 1970s, in particular the countries' language and education policies. Due to the segregation, Black children in their daily lives were minimally exposed to apartheid and the white-minority rule during this period.[461] The communities in which they lived and went to school were exclusively Black. Indeed, during this time period, a lot of these children probably rarely even saw a white person, until entering the workforce[462] and within their own

[460] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 271.
[461] Baker and TIME Staff, 'This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid. Here's the Story Behind It', (12 August, 2021).
[462] Ibidem.

communities and school, the languages they spoke were either English or one of the various vernaculars. However, despite white-minority rule being somewhat of a vague concept for Black children, its impact was very prevalent in their upbringing.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 decreed that all Black students would receive lesser education than their white peers, with the aim that they would only be educated enough for low-level menial jobs that supported the white workforce. It put Black education solely into the hands of the government and ensured that independent Black schools would be closed.[463] Prior to the Bantu Education Act, many Black students were able to receive a good education from various missionary schools, which were to systematically be shut down after 1953.[464] These missionary schools were responsible for the education of many Black anti-apartheid activists such as Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe and Steve Biko.[465] Furthermore, whereas study fees and school supplies were fully funded for white children, Black parents had to pay tuition and supplies themselves.[466] In response to the apartheid legislation, between the period of 1953 and 1976, Black students would form and join student organizations in the fight against apartheid and education inequality. Most prominently, the 1960s saw the creation of the South African Students Organization (SASO), led by Steve Biko. The origins of SASO also brought with it the Black Consciousness Movement, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, Biko's university tours would resonate with many Black students.

The emergence of SASO and Black Consciousness would '[raise] the political consciousness of many students'.[467] Therefore, when the government issued the Afrikaans Medium Decree in 1974, a decree that stated that from January 1975 onwards, all African students in their final year of primary school and higher were to be taught bilingually Afrikaans[468], it proved to be the breaking point for many Black students. As was previously highlighted in Chapter One, the Afrikaans language served as a stark reminder for Black South Africans of its colonial roots and continuing oppression. It was a language synonymous with the white South African experience.

[463] M. Alexander, 'The 16 June 1976 Soweto students' uprising – as it happened', *South Africa Gateway*, n.pag. < https://southafrica-info.com/history/16-june-1976-soweto-students-uprising-as-it-happened/ > (21 August 2021).
[464] Ibidem.
[465] Ibidem.
[466] A. Boddy-Evans, ' The Afrikaans Medium Decree', *ThoughtCo.* < https://www.thoughtco.com/the-afrikaans-medium-decree-43416 > (25 August 2021).
[467] SAHO, 'The June 16 Soweto Youth Uprising', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/june-16-soweto-youth-uprising > (24 August, 2021).
[468] Boddy-Evans, ' The Afrikaans Medium Decree' (25 August 2021).

In response to the governments intentions, there was immediate backlash, primarily organized by the African Teachers Association (ATASA),[469] who were not consulted on the matter. Before its implementation, the then-deputy minister of Bantu Education, Punt Janson, responded with '[no], I have not consulted the African people on the language issue and I'm not going to'.[470] According to Janson, the decree was necessary because the so-called "big boss" would speak Afrikaans.[471] Furthermore, its implementation would mean that a lot of students would not be able to receive an education anymore. The majority of Black South Africans did not know Afrikaans, so by having it as the language they were being tested on, it would ultimately ruin their chances of education. With various student organizations, and an ever-growing anti-apartheid sentiment, students would mobilize themselves and organize a – peaceful – protest against the Afrikaans Medium Decree. On June 16th, 1976, over 20,000 people, most of whom were students from Soweto's various Black high schools protested throughout the city. Law enforcement responded violently with tear gas and bullets, which would kill and injure up to 700 people, most of whom were minors.

The Press and Responses

While the role of the press is not analyzed within this study, in this particular case it is important to highlight. Similarly to its discussion in chapter three regarding the press response to Biko's death, their role in the Soweto Uprising indirectly affected South Africa's literary culture. Prior to the protest, several organizers had reached out to the press to ensure coverage of the day. The press coverage that would come out covering this day, later to be called The Soweto Uprising, would prove to have lasting repercussions that would lead to the end of the apartheid regime.

One of the most prominent images to come out of the day was from Sam Nzima, then working for the Black newspaper *The World*, in which apartheid activist Mbuyisa Makhubo carried the fatally shot 13-year-old Hector Petersen in an attempt to save him.[472] *The World* knew that publishing the photo and recounting the events would lead to dire consequences for the publication, but ultimately decided that 'there was no better illustration of what was

[469] Ibidem.
[470] P. Janson qtd. in Boddy-Evans, ' The Afrikaans Medium Decree' (25 August 2021).
[471] Ibidem.
[472] Figure 2, found in Appendix A, p. 136.

happening in Soweto. Children had been killed by apartheid police'.[473] *The World* published the story the same evening, and sent Nzima's photos to all their international contacts.[474] The following day, the Soweto Uprising was front-page news all over the world.[475] As *TIME* would describe it in their article recounting the importance of this one photo:

> Almost overnight, international opinion hardened against South Africa's apartheid regime. The U.S. government condemned the shooting, and activists worldwide began lobbying for economic sanctions, which eventually brought the apartheid government to its knees. In South Africa the picture helped launch a civil uprising and emboldened the [Black] liberation movement.[476]

In the immediate aftermath, the government attempted to swiftly censor all coverage of the Uprising. Journalists, including Sam Nzima, were wanted by the (Security) Police, and newspapers such as *The World's* offices were closed down with all their materials destroyed.[477] However, it became increasingly clear that the government could no longer quell the backlash. As the anti-apartheid activist Richard Welch, who was radicalized by Soweto, would later recall:

> The events of 1976 generated a popular culture of resistance to Bantu education and apartheid which spread from the highly [politicized] township students into almost every sphere of South African life[.][478]

And indeed, originally the news of what transpired at Soweto would lead to more student protests across the country. After June 16th, students had founded the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC), with its function being to "coordinate student action in the face of increasing police brutality and threatened chaos."[479] After a few months, the SSRC

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[473] Baker and TIME Staff, 'This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid. Here's the Story Behind It', (12 August, 2021).
[474] Ibidem.
[475] Ibid.
[476] Ibid.
[477] Ibid.
[478] R. Welch qtd. in B. Cummings, M. Holmes and Guardian reader, ''My activism started then': the Soweto uprising remembered', *The Guardian,* 16 June 2016, n.pag. < https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/16/my-activism-started-then-the-soweto-uprising-remembered > (25 August, 2021).
[479] A. Mafeje, 'Soweto and Its Aftermath', *Review of African Political Economy*, 11 (1978), p. 18.

reached out to the working class as well, and the organized protests became even more frequent and bigger.[480] With the success of the SSRC, the news would continue to spread across the country, and organizations such as ANC would return after being pushed underground. With the workers on strike, and continuing protests, the government faced economic difficulties. Not wanting to give in to the protesters, the aftermath would be an "all-out effort by the police to crush the student movement – random killings, mass arrests and frequent raids in the African townships. To create greater insecurity among the workers, employers took the opportunity to get rid of 'undesirable elements' or 'trouble-makers'".[481] By the end of 1976, the government seemed to have the physical protests under control, but the economic instability, and the continuing press coverage – nationally and internationally – ensured that lasting damage was being done to the apartheid government.

As was the case for the Sharpeville Massacre, many people were radicalized by the events of Soweto. The literature made by South African authors following 1976, including previously mentioned Andre Brink and Nadine Gordimer, were heavily influenced by the political landscape South Africa found itself in in post-Soweto. Internationally, South Africa was now under constant scrutiny, and interest in the South African literary canon grew. Indeed, *A Dry White Season,* written by Brink, staunchly political, and influenced by Soweto, would become a massive international success in the United States, despite banned within South Africa, even receiving film adaptation. Literature, film, radio and the press are not entities that can be separated from actuality, as the apartheid government had intended with their various censorship legislation. The failure of censorship regarding the Soweto press coverage led to the economic sanctions, international disdain and ultimately the dismantling of apartheid.

While the *Magersfontein* crisis and the Soweto Uprising are not comparable in terms of their circumstances, they were two major events that contributed to a changing political climate. From a judicial point of view, the *Magersfontein* crisis would prove to be the catalyst for changing legislation, despite these changes only being enacted after a group of conservative, white Afrikaners were affected. Concurrently, the initial responses to the event of the Soweto Uprising would prove to be extremely harmful to the government due to the subsequent press coverage. This in turn would lead to societal repercussions and derision, and unsurprisingly, this would translate into the literary canon. Right as the consequences of

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[480] Ibidem, p. 19.
[481] Ibid., p. 21.

Magersfontein, O Magersfontein! slowly dismantled censorship legislation, more literature was being published that described the brutal and overt reality of life in South Africa. The following section will cover the 1980s and the 90s, during which these two developments would eventually overlap, and highlight the aftermath of this period of tumultuous political strife within the country. The changes that would occur throughout this period aided to the eventual dissolution of apartheid in 1994.

MARKING THE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES INTO THE END OF APARTHEID

As mentioned previously, 1975-1980 marked the most repressive period in censorship jurisdiction during the apartheid era. However, the controversy surrounding the ban on *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* in 1978 would greatly alter censorship legislation throughout the period of 1980 to 1990.

In order to repair the rift that the ban caused between the PAB – and subsequently the NP – and the Afrikaner literary elite, [482] the cabinet appointed a new Minister of Home Affairs (Interior), Alwyn Schlebusch.[483] Schlebusch replaced Connie Mulder, as part of a cabinet reshuffle in which many members of ministry were forced to resign after 'Muldergate', a political scandal in 1978 regarding the withholding of information on the usage of government funds.[484] Tasked with gaining back political favor in the wake of not only the *Magersfontein* ban but multiple other scandals, Schlebusch would enact the Publications Amendment Act of 1978. The main component differentiating it from the 1974 Act, was that it made it 'in principle possible to grant literary (socialized) readers more freedom once again by allowing the board to release books under age and/or distributional restrictions'.[485] Furthermore, Schlebusch would instate into the legislation a literary Committee of Experts, that was supposed to counsel the PAB on the literary value of a publication.[486] However, initially, the amendment had little effect on the workings of the Board.[487] Under the then-Chairman of the PAB, Snyman, 'despite the changed statutory framework and despite the fact that the majority of the cultural, judicial, and political elites

[482] K. van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2011), p. 55.
[483] Ibidem.
[484] U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs, 'Muldergate Scandal – South Africa', < ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/muldergate-scandal-south-africa#:~:text=SOUTH%20AFRICA'S%20MULDERGATE%20SCANDAL%2C%20IN,SCANDAL%20AND%20PREVENT%20JOURNALISTS'%20INVESTIGATIONS. > (12 April, 2022).
[485] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 156.
[486] van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tal*e, p. 55.
[487] Laros, *Literature and the Law in South Africa,* p. 166.

apparently held that the literary field should be granted a relative autonomy vis-à-vis the law, the board chose to continue its restrictive approach'.[488] Indeed, this was highlighted when the PAB was presented with its first literary work after the legislative change: John Miles' *Donderdag of Woensdag*[489].

Published in 1978, the overarching plot line of *Donderdag of Woensdag* centers around a group of Afrikaner elites who, together with the head of the Security Police, plan to kidnap the President, take his identity and make constitutional amendments and ratifications.[490] Ultimately, the plan fails and the story is narrated by one of the elites who survived the ordeal, ten years later.[491] While this is the framework throughout the novel, it is not 'a linear, straightforward, realistic account. It is a picaresque novel, a satire and a thriller with a cyclical time structure and changing perspectives'.[492] Miles used profanities, particularly in relation to religion and employs the use of irony by openly playing with common strategies South African writers used to avoid censorship.[493] Indeed, in the preface, Miles addresses the (potential) censors, and notably, he begins by subverting the 'all persons fictitious' disclaimer by opening his book with: 'alle gebeurtenisse is waar; ook 'n koekblik met kiekies is waar, maar nog is dit nie die werklikheid nie' ('All events are true; a cookie jar with cookies is also true but still it is not reality').[494]

Donderdag of Woensdag was undoubtedly a highly-charged political novel, and therefore it is unsurprising that it was presented as a case to the PAB. Even Miles himself had seemingly anticipated a ban, having it published by Taurus, a publishing imprint previously discussed that was set up primarily for so-called 'at-risk' books.[495] However, in light of the *Magersfontein* crisis and the recent Amendment act, presenting a satirical novel would always have been controversial regardless of this precaution. Primarily, the book was presented to the Board on the basis of religious objection, and not on political grounds. In response to these particular objections, the newly appointed Literary Committee of Experts, consisting of thirteen members, advised that the book not be deemed 'undesirable' on religious grounds. While the Committee conceded to the immense profanity used in the

[488] Ibidem, p. 156.
[489] Thursday or Wednesday
[490] M. De Lange, *The Muzzled Muse: Literature and Censorship in South Africa* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1997), p. 60.
[491] Ibidem.
[492] Ibid.
[493] Ibid.
[494] Ibid., pp. 60-61.
[495] Ibid., p. 63.

novel, they argued that those should be read through a 'literary prism'[496] that is deemed as 'an attack on despotism and not on religion – obviously the South African apartheid system'.[497] However, the Board, under Snyman, instead took on the advice of one theologian, and *Donderdag of Woensdag* was banned. Van Rooyen would later recount:

> I must concede: on face value, the book was blasphemous. However, once one read the motivation of the Committee of Experts, one understood the reasoning from a literary perspective. But would the ordinary person read the book in this manner? Of course, the ordinary person did not read it. At the time it emerged that only some hundred persons had purchased the book and that the convoluted style would limit to an extremely small, informed readership. But the limited likely readership was not regarded by the pre-1980 Appeal Board as having any special weight and it banned the book's distribution.[498]

Snyman's unwillingness to cooperate with the new amendment came at the same time as the end of his tenure as Chairman of the PAB. Snyman's position as Chairman was solidified because of his long-term friendship with former Prime Minster and then State President John Vorster.[499] However, the staunchly pro-censorship and pro-apartheid Vorster was forced to resign after being implicated in 'Muldergate'. Having lost his closest political ally and the support under the Board, Snyman's tenure was not renewed.[500]

The beginning of the end of censorship legislation:

On the 3rd of October 1979, JCW van Rooyen took over as acting chairman of the PAB.[501] This tenure as chairman of the PAB would start a period that would ultimately dismantle much of the totalitarian approach of South Africa's censorship legislation, in which Van Rooyen with 'an acute legal mind and a passion for the arts, believed that this was one war which could only be won from the inside, using the weapons the system itself had placed at his disposal'.[502]

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[496] van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale,* p. 55.
[497] Ibidem.
[498] Ibid., p. 56.
[499] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* p. 167.
[500] Ibidem.
[501] van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale*, p. 58.
[502] A. Brink in van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale,* p. 12.

As acting chairman, Van Rooyen almost immediately started 'implementing new guidelines for publications control in general and the handling of literature in particular'.[503] Unlike Snyman, Van Rooyen valued the judgments of the Committee of Experts, and was supportive of the idea of reconciliation with the Afrikaner literary elite. Indeed, within four months of being appointed acting chairman, *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* was unbanned. Shortly after, in April 1980, his position as chairman was solidified. Van Rooyen's appointment was closely followed by the instatement of a new Director of Publications, Abraham Coetzee, and their tenure together would mark the beginning of the end of apartheid-censorship legislation.[504] The initial transition from Snyman to Van Rooyen however, proved to be tenuous.

The unbanning of *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* is an event which Van Rooyen would later describe as the first step:

> [T]aken towards what would become our hallmark: freedom for adults to read literature and watch films of their choice and liberty to the disenfranchised majority to write, agitate for and read about a future unitary and democratic state governed by the majority.[505]

The most notable aspect of Van Rooyen's early tenure was his shift away from the PAB being heavily influenced by society's conservatism and the strong pervasiveness of religion. As has been explained throughout this thesis, while many banned works were strongly opposed on political grounds, most of the eventual rulings were done under religious and moral objections. Indeed, as Van Rooyen states, this is also because the apartheid government strongly relied on Christianity and the Bible as justifications for white supremacy and racial segregation.[506] There was no separation of Church and State, and the government saw itself as a 'Christian government'.[507] Any work, even when employed with humor, that would take the 'Lord's name in vain', was expected by society to be immediately banned. Indeed, these 'Christian ideals' were even specified in section one of the Publications Act.[508] However, following the *Magersfontein* crisis, Van Rooyen and the Appeal Board no longer banned

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[503] Laros, *Literature and the Law,* pp. 167-168.
[504] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 76.
[505] van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale,* p. 62.
[506] Ibidem, p. 92.
[507] Ibid.
[508] Ibid.

works on religious grounds without contextualizing how it scandalized God's name, which proved to be a 'lenient test'.[509] This meant that books now banned under religious objections, a tactic used primarily to shift focus from the political groundings, as discussed further, were now unbanned and from 1980, available to the wider South African public. As Van Rooyen would later remember this moment:

> The unbanning by the newly-chaired 1980 Board of *Lady Chatterley's Lover, Memories of a Woman of Pleasure, Kennis van die Aand, Donderdag of Woensdag, Portnoy's Complaint* and other works of merit followed soon after the unbanning of *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* in 1980. Literary merit had, at last, won the day.[510]

While it is true that in these early days Van Rooyen's tenure were instrumental in the changing tides of censorship legislation, there was a great initial societal disconnect in comparison to other forms of government legislation.[511] Namely, as the government was implementing many aggressive anti-protest policies in the light of the Soweto Uprising, it was also seemingly becoming more lenient in their censorship policies. To illustrate this supposed 'failed' reform, it is interesting to highlight the circumstances surrounding unbanned novels such as André Brink's *A Dry White Season*. The novel was released, and banned, during the period of the 1978 Amendment Act, and also subsequently unbanned during the beginning of Van Rooyen's tenure.

As mentioned briefly in Chapter Two, *A Dry White Season* details an apolitical, middle-aged white Afrikaner schoolteacher, Ben Du Toit, who entangles himself into the details of the apartheid justice system when a Black cleaner, and his son, working for his school is murdered in police custody.[512] Brink found inspiration for the novel after reading the reports surrounding the death of the Black Consciousness activist Mapetla Mohapi, who after being arrested under the Terrorism Act, supposedly committed suicide while in detention.[513] After discontinuing the book following the death of Steve Biko, Brink

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[509] Ibid., p. 93.
[510] Ibid., p. 79.
[511] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 77.
[512] J. Goodwin, 'Novel for foreigners who want to understand the Afrikaner; A Dry White Season, by Andre Brink. New York: William Morrow & Co. $10.95', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 10 March, 1980, n.pag. < https://www.csmonitor.com/1980/0310/031052.html > (12 December 2021)
[513] R.J. Jolly, *Colonization, Violence, and Narration in White South African Writing: André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and J.M. Coetzee* (Athens/Johannesburg: Ohio University Press, Witwatersrand University Press, 1996), pp. 21-22.

eventually resumed his writing in order to shed light on the brutality of the security police.[514] Written against a clear backdrop of the Soweto Uprising, and partly narratively told through classified documentation Du Toit found and his testimony, the book bluntly showcases the many horrors enacted by government bodies in the name of apartheid.

Despite few efforts at 'narrative displacement',[515] using similar tactics as John Miles in *Donderdag of Woensdag,* narratively, '[t]he story of *A Dry White Season* unfolds in a manner similar to the actual history of the Biko case, in that …. the inconsistencies in official reports were/are brought to light through the presentation of physical medical evidence'.[516] Furthermore, 'Brink describes the methods of torture in a matter-of-fact tone that takes advantage of a readership familiar with the methods of torture and interrogation such as were used in the Biko case and have been documented elsewhere, and who would recognize many of the violations that he takes pains to enumerate'.[517] To the average South African, it was clear Brink was referring to actuality. Indeed, as one newspaper summarized:

> For one who has lived in South Africa and reported on that country's society, [*A Dry White Season*] seems not to be fiction at all -- but rather straight facts with names changed and characters merged to protect both the guilty and the innocent.[518]

It is therefore unsurprising that upon release, *A Dry White Season* was banned. The book was banned primarily because of its supposed wrongful accusations, that as a government body, the security police was responsible for 'dishonesty', 'torture', 'victimization' and 'maltreatment'.[519] The initial reaction from the censors was so severe, that one censor even wanted it 'banned for possession'[520], meaning ownership of the book would be criminalized. However, considering Brink's status within the Afrikaner literary elites, and the government's efforts at reconciliation with this group, the Director of Publications recognized 'the novel's literary merits',[521] and allowed for the book to be appealed by the PAB as Van Rooyen's first ever case as acting chairman.[522]

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[514] Ibidem., pp. 22-23.
[515] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 76.
[516] Jolly, *Colonization, Violence, and Narration in White South African Writing,* p. 23.
[517] Ibidem, p. 24.
[518] Goodwin, 'Novel for foreigners who want to understand the Afrikaner; A Dry White Season, by Andre Brink.' (12 December 2021)
[519] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 75.
[520] Ibidem.
[521] Ibid., p. 76.
[522] Ibid., p. 77.

For the Literary Committee of Experts, the main concern was whether or not the novel constituted properly as 'literature' for it to be allowed to chronicle such political subject matter. Especially as the contents were deemed particularly damaging.[523] In their report, as was the case of *Kennis van die Aand*, the experts contemplated that *A Dry White Season* had not fulfilled the transformation/fictionality principle.[524] According to the experts, *A Dry White Season* also failed to transform reality into art. Furthermore, unlike *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* Brink's work was not deemed 'a significant contribution to the art of the Afrikaans novel'.[525] However, ultimately, the experts voted against banning it, because, as explained by Van Rooyen, Brink's novel's 'approach to South African political affairs was so one-sided that the book was more counter-productive than propagandistic'.[526]

There are two main reasons why this particular case is noteworthy. First and foremost, there was a pattern already prevalent during the Snyman period in which the PAB would very sporadically publicly ban publications on the basis of political grounds. Even with Brink's previous work, *Kennis van die Aand,* the PCB report tried to shift focus away from the more politically incentivized aspects of the novel and focused primarily on the supposed religious irreverence.[527] Another example of this trend is the ruling on *Donderdag of Woensdag*. By banning a novel on religious grounds, the censors wanted to avoid possible widespread discussion on the political subject matter within these novels.[528] However, a novel such as *Donderdag of Woensdag*, that had such a specific likely readership, it was arguably only brought into mainstream discourse because of the PAB case. In the case of unbanning *A Dry White Season*, knowing Brink's history and his activism, it was likely the best course of action to minimize debate about the content. Secondly, the case of *A Dry White Season* and the unbanning of a work by such a controversial author such as Brink, exemplifies the leniency Brink was awarded that many Black authors were not. Just as Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter* was unbanned following the 1978 Amendment, '[m]ost works, particularly by [B]lack writers, did not get a second consideration'.[529]

Indeed, this difference is particularly highlighted when we compare it to the treatment of a Black author's work that was put to review around the same period. In December 1980, Oswald Mbuyisena Mtshali's second work of poetry, *Fireflames* was put up

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[523]Ibid., p.76.
[524] Ibid.
[525] PAB Report on *A Dry White Season* qtd. in McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 76.
[526] Ibidem.
[527]de Lange, *The Muzzled Muse: Literature and Censorship in South Africa,* p. 48.
[528] Ibidem.
[529] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 74.

for review. The poems of Mtshali, writing in Zulu and English, reflect on the harsh and brutal circumstances of what it was like living as a Black person under apartheid.[530] His second body of work, *Fireflames* included mentions of Nelson Mandela, Bram Fischer, and Robert Sobukwe, who at the time were all deemed 'terrorists', as well as reference to other political prisoners.[531] Furthermore, as a Soweto native himself, Mtshali starts *Fireflames* with:

> Dedicated to all our heroes, especially the brave school-children of Soweto, who have died, been imprisoned and persecuted in the grim struggle for our freedom.[532]

Particularly because of the obvious reference to the Soweto Uprising, the security committee almost immediately banned *Fireflames* on the grounds of sedition.[533] However, Es'Kia Mphahele, one of the most prominent Black South African writers and critics whose works were also almost all banned, had stated that he found the work to be essential to the African literary canon.[534] Because of its supposed literary value, the then-Director of Publications decided to appeal *Fireflames'* ruling.[535] The Committee of Literary Experts, however, almost immediately abandoned any pretense of the work being unbanned. Indeed, according to the Committee, Mtshali's work was a self-serving, propagandistic, anti-white work that threatened the safety of the state. With statements pertaining to Black Consciousness, the PAB also ultimately felt that Mtshali was furthering the divide between white and Black South Africans.[536]

Van Rooyen, signing off on this decision, and basing it off old, ethnographic, colonial attitudes, concluded in the report that because African languages are 'particularly rich in imagery',[537] poetry would appeal to Black people more and therefore agitate and encourage them (into violence) more than regular prose would.[538] Despite the fact, that similar to Brink, Mtshali was a widely known and internationally respected poet, whose first volume of poetry, *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* (1971), had performed critically and commercially successful in

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[530] Britannica, 'Oswald Mbuyisena Mtshali: South African Poet', < https://www.britannica.com/biography/Oswald-Mbuyiseni-Mtshali > (4 January 2021).
[531] Anon., 'Oswald Mtshali Two Poems', Index on Censorship 1/88 South Africa', n.pag.< https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03064228808534351 > (4 January 2021).
[532] O.M. Mtshali qtd. in Anon., 'Oswal Mtshali Two Poems' (4 January 2021).
[533] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 81.
[534] Ibidem.
[535] Ibidem.
[536] Ibid.
[537] JWC van Rooyen qtd. in McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 81.
[538] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 81.

South Africa as well as in the United States, and the United Kingdom,[539] *Fireflames* would remain banned. After the change in Director of Publications to Abraham Coetzee, *Fireflames* was put up for review two more times throughout the 1980s.[540] In both instances, the Afrikaner literary readers appealed to the work's literary merit. In both instances, they were ignored. While in its first review in 1985, *Fireflames* continued to be banned under sedition, in 1988, it was allowed to be released but only under strict conditions and limited readership in select university libraries.[541]

For most Black South African authors, as was previously mentioned in chapter three, the circumstances around *Fireflames* was not unusual, as their works – regardless of the content – were often immediately scrutinized and seen as a security risk. However, throughout the 1970s and '80s, as tensions were growing more erratic and anti-apartheid movements were getting stronger, any book criticizing South African white nationalism, or its police culture was banned. The South African Police were instrumental in ensuring not only the segregation of the races, but also in keeping the non-white population, particularly its Black citizens under 'control'. It is therefore no surprise that those who supported apartheid, had a strong reverence for the police.[542] This meant that any work that even slightly criticized security forces, or made light of their abusive practices against Black people were put under appeal. Indeed, this was the case with Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter*, which was supposedly a 'risk to the security of the state',[543] André Brink's *A Dry White Season* as well as many works by Black authors that barely made it to publication.

However, in light of the novel *The Covenant* being banned, Van Rooyen and Coetzee, the Director of Publications, aimed to re-evaluate certain sections of the Publications Act. *The Covenant,* published in 1980, was written by acclaimed American author James A. Michener. The book chronicled the perspective of Afrikaners, from early colonial times up until the twentieth century. The book was critical of white South African fundamentalism, nationalism and 'questioned the integrity of the Afrikaner in its 1838 covenant with God and also sharply criticized its policy of apartheid'.[544] The novel was immediately banned, and when the appeal had been filed, Van Rooyen suspended the ban prior during the appeal period, because he

[539] Anon., 'Oswald Mtshali Two Poems' (4 January 2021).
[540] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 81.
[541] Ibidem.
[542] Ibid., p. 108.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Ibid., p. 110.

'simply could not believe that a Michener novel could be banned'.[545] In the aftermath of this event, Van Rooyen recalls thinking: 'what had become of freedom of expression?'.[546]

In Van Rooyen's memoir, he strikes the banning of an American white author as the tipping point in the extremities surrounding South Africa's censorship legislation. Indeed, the previous works mentioned that Van Rooyen quoted as having 'saved' literary merit, were all written by white authors, some of them not even South African authors, while many works by Black South African authors, such as *Fireflames* – that were also critically acclaimed as literary works of art – were still being forced into self-censorship, had their books embargoed, and banned permanently. In the light of increasingly aggressive anti-protest and anti-dissent laws, such as the Internal Security Act of 1982 and the lack of support for Black authors, it is clear the novels unbanned in the early 1980s were tactics primarily to gain back favor with the Afrikaner literary elite.

While the *Magersfontein, O Magersfontein!* unbanning did set a precedent that would ultimately lead into the end of apartheid censorship, Van Rooyen and Coetzee's progression into the dismantling of repressive legislation for all South African authors was not without the help of many Black initiatives that have not been heavily credited. Therefore, the following section will highlight a number of Black publishing houses, and their efforts in the South Africa publishing culture in general that contributed to the anti-apartheid movement.

BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLISHING INITIATIVES DURING APARTHEID

In the discourse surrounding South Africa's censorship legislation, often JCW van Rooyen's involvement is lauded to the point where his tenure as Chairman of the PAB seemingly singlehandedly ended censorship under apartheid. While his tenure was instrumental in many ways in the dismantlement of the censorship system, it was accompanied by many other initiatives. Though, on a legislative level, the *Magersfontein* unbanning did set unintended precedent leading into the end of apartheid censorship, Black-led initiatives were also very instrumental, but widely underreported.

Throughout the period of the 1970s and 1980s, there was a definitive increase in publishing output, by both Black and white authors, contributing to a growing South African print culture.[547] However, as was often mentioned in previous chapters, while the

[545] Ibid.
[546] Ibid.
[547] P. Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa." *African Book Publishing Record* 1, no. 3 (1975), p. 219.

government supported a South African literary canon, it wanted so exclusively for white authors. Indeed, as Peter Randall, the director of prominent opposition publishing house Ravan Press, would attest to plainly in 1975:

> This development [of a profitable South African print culture] must be seen against the background of contemporary South Africa. This is a repressive society in which power, both economic and political, is firmly concentrated in the hands of the white minority. The power structure of this minority has firm control over all the media of communication, and the government in particular has sought to shut out views unacceptable to itself and to limit the free exchange of views and ideas, an activity which all authoritarian regimes regard as pernicious and dangerous. There is, after all, only one official version of the truth, and this is assiduously pumped forth by the state-controlled South African Broadcasting Corporation and the government-supporting Afrikaans press.[548]

This so-called 'truth' was supported by the Publications Control Board, and the various acts instated throughout the years. Coercive measures such as pre-censorship was rampant for Black authors, and those who did get published, were faced with post-publication censorship.[549] Furthermore, apart from the Publications Act, oppositional voices, such as Alex La Guma and Steve Biko, were threatened and penalized under the Suppression of Communism Act, which even criminalized any writer who would reference or quote them. Under these circumstances, Black South African prose was a difficult effort to sustain, but despite the authoritarian measures, Black South Africans managed to find ways to publish works and distribute them.

While the consequences – and danger – of censorship is often seen as a problem that exclusively lies with writers, the 'challenge of testing the limits of public discourse under apartheid', was also heavily impacted by the publishers.[550] Per work that was brought in, a publisher would have to decide if this was worth the potential repercussions. For publishing houses that actively produced anti-apartheid works or works by Black authors, 'these publishers contested the attempts by the government and its allies to monopolize control of

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[548] Ibidem.
[549] W.A. Hachten and C.A. Giffard, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p. viii.
[550] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 83.

the public sphere and held open a space in which alternative visions of South Africa could be articulated and debated'.[551]

Oppositional (Black) Publishing

For both writers and publishing houses, since 1948, navigating the literary landscape in South Africa was a minefield. Any indication of anti-apartheid sentiment by newspapers, publishing houses or journal was swiftly followed by police raids, and arrests based on the multitude of ever-growing criminal acts. Therefore, in the 1950s and early 1960s, it is unsurprising that most South African writers, both white and Black, chose to be published in other countries. Particularly for Black authors, this was a necessity because of the many banning orders. Following the events of Sharpeville, the government doubled down on segregation, and dissenting voices. While white South Africa shared 'many characteristics with other Western societies – parliamentary democracy, an independent judiciary, a tradition of press freedom, and an educated and affluent populace', Black South Africa shared 'many attributes of much of the third world – impoverished, illiterate, malnourished, and politically powerless'.[552] However, both were affected by the consequences of government censorship. White students would be indoctrinated in schools, learning a false retelling of history and confirmation of their supposed supremacy, while Black students were mostly incapable of receiving any form of higher education outside of the Bantu Education.[553] In order to keep this 'official truth', the PCB ensured that all media that was distributed or broadcast fit this particular narrative,[554] including banning Black literature from the rest of Africa to ensure it would not be imported.[555] For the National Government, these measures were 'essential to this endeavor [to mold] people's thoughts and attitudes'.[556] It is in this environment that most South African publishing houses were right-wing conservative businesses.[557]However, the rise of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in the 1960s and 70s created a

[551] Ibidem.
[552] Hachten and Giffard, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa*, p. viii.
[553] D. Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', in *The Politics of Publishing in South Africa*, ed. by N. Evans and M. Seeber (London/Scottsville: Holger Ehling Publishing/University of Natal Press, 2000), p. 45.
[554] Ibidem.
[555] Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa.", p. 219.
[556] Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 45.
[557] Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa.", p. 220.

shift, and inspired more Black South Africans to write, and more confidence for Black publishing.[558]

As prominently discussed in chapter three, the Black Consciousness Movement was the pillar of the South African Student Organization (SASO), both founded by Steve Biko. As they refused any white publishers or publications, SASO had their own publications that they distributed that was a space for Black students and writers to 'write what they liked'. Knowing the 'limitations' of SASO being primarily 'student-oriented', BCM expanded into various other organizations, to further mobilize all Black South Africans.[559] One of these was the Black Community Programmes (BCP),[560] which took on the role of publisher. They were responsible for a myriad of different publications, one of which was the journal *Black Review*, and also working together with the cornerstone for probably the most contentious and known oppositional publishing house, Ravan Press.[561]

Black Review, as mentioned in chapter three, was a political journal mostly authored by Steve Biko, and ultimately the publication that led to his banning order. However, *Black Review* was also responsible for highlighting Black authors and Black literary works into their cultural sphere. One of their recommendations was Oswald Mtshali *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum*, which was published by Renoster Books, a small publishing house ran by white intellectuals.[562] Surprisingly, the book of poetry turned out to be a great bestseller, which put Mtshali on the radar of the Publications Control Board. Another one of their recommendations was Gladys Thomas's work of poetry *Cry Rage*.[563] These are just two examples of works mentioned in *Black Review*, but the main point is that upon review, it became clear that because of the wide distribution network BCP had, and because of their followers from the Black Consciousness Movement, it turned out that the publications recommended were selling 'much more widely in the [B]lack community than any other publications of literary value'.[564]

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558 Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', pp. 45-46.
559 South African History Online (SAHO), 'Black Community Programmes (BCP)', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/black-community-programmes-bcp > (27 January, 2021).
560 Ibidem.
561 Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 45.
562 Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa.", p. 220.
563 Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 46.
564 B. Khoapa qtd. in Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 46.

In an attempt to create an extensive publishing house together with SASO, the BCP requested help from Spro-Cas (the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society). Sponsored by the South African Council of Churches and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa, Spro-cas was developed with 'the aim of analyzing the South African socio-political order and proposing radical alternatives in the direction of a just, free and non-discriminatory society'.[565] The findings made Spro-cas, were then published in-house, and although it was never the intention for it to develop into a larger publishing production, the popularity of Spro-cas among academia meant it in a short period they had published over thirty titles.[566] The subjects of their publication covered various aspects of South African culture. Almost by accident, Spro-cas, now rebranded into Ravan Press, had become a refuge for beginning Black and white authors[567] under the leadership of Peter Randall. As Randall would describe Ravan Press in 1975:

> [Ravan Press] is committed to a policy of producing socially relevant material, whether literary or academic, and thereby assisting in social change in South Africa. As part of this quest, *it actively seeks to publish the work of [B]lack writers*.[568]

Unsurprisingly, the inclusion of all different types of works, from all different authors put Ravan into the spotlight of the Publications Control Board.[569] Having faced a multitude of book bannings throughout the 1970s, and highlighting voices of banned individuals, the government charged the directors of Ravan under the Suppression of Communism Act in 1973, and subjected the offices to multiple raids by the Security Police.[570]

Among the many works published by Ravan, they published J.M. Coetzee's first novel *Dusklands.* Furthermore, they were also the first to publish a work by a South African Black woman.[571] While heavily edited to avoid censorship, Miriam Tlali's *Muriel at Metropolitan,* published in 1975, was a story about the experiences of a Black woman in a

[565] Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa.", p. 220.
[566] Ibidem.
[567] Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 47.
[568] Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa.", p. 221.
[569] Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 47.
[570] Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa.", p. 221.
[571] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* pp. 137-139.

white-dominated society.[572] Although her debut novel managed to avoid censorship for over four years, after the release of her second novel, *Amandla* in 1980, both books were banned on the basis of political grounds.[573] *Amandla,* a love story set during the Soweto Uprisings, was almost reconsidered for unbanning because of the changes in the PCB following *Magersfontein* incident.[574] However, interestingly, it was Etienne Malan, the author of *Magersfontein,* who ultimate advised the Director of Publications, Abraham Coetzee, against it, calling her unimpressive as an author and her work not salvageable as literary work, and the book remained banned.[575]

Following the murder of Steve Biko, and the further suppression of all those associated with Black Consciousness, and the Black Community Programmes, Peter Randall was forced to step down as director of Ravan, due to a banning order.[576] In his stead, he was replaced by Mike Kirkwood, an alumni from the University of Natal.[577] Prior to his directorship, he was a lecturer at Natal, as well as part of an editorial team for various magazines such as *Bolt*[578] and *Contrast*, a literary magazine who actively refrained from solely publishing white authors to highlight Black voices.[579] His tenure at *Bolt* and *Contrast* left him with contacts in the Black writers' community,[580] and therefore he was able to '[build] on the foundations established by Randall as opposition to apartheid mounted'.[581]

As a result of the mounting tensions surrounding the Soweto Uprisings, Ravan Press was targeted by the government. As mentioned earlier, because of the banning orders within South Africa itself, many writers, particularly Black authors, decided to be published abroad. This was made possible because of the linguistic nature of South African society. As a result of colonialization, the official languages were Afrikaans and English, and many authors chose to write in English for better publishing opportunities. Because of rising globalization, English became the most prominent tool in global and intellectual communication.[582] Black students were primarily being taught in English, which meant there were opportunities for them abroad. However, for the government this was a complication that should be rectified

[572] Ibidem., p. 139.
[573] Ibid., pp. 139-141.
[574] Ibid., p. 141.
[575] Ibid.
[576] Ibid.
[577] Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 47.
[578] McDonald, *The Literature Police* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 141.
[579] Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 48.
[580] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, p. 141.
[581] Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 47.
[582] Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa.", p. 219.

by switching the official language in schools to Afrikaans.[583] Therefore, in light of the Soweto Uprisings, and the success of Ravan and their growing inventory of Black and white authors with anti-apartheid sentiment, the government sought ways to shut down the publication house.

However, furthering the message of Ravan, Kirkwood instead spearheaded another Black-led project: *Staffrider.*

Staffrider, Skotaville - Success and Legacy

One of the more problematic aspects that haunted Ravan throughout the years, was the fact that this leading Black publishing house was owned and run by white South Africans. Kirkwood, wanting to address this issue, wanted to create something in which the 'decisions about what constituted publishable literature [was devolved] to writers themselves, or, more particularly, to the numerous Black Consciousness-inspired community arts groups that emerged in the townships in the 1970s'.[584] To reach this goal he enlisted the help of Jaki Seroke and Mothobi Mutloatse, Black activists and editors, to find artists willing to contribute to what would become the arts magazine *Staffrider*.[585]

In order to cater to the intended readers of Black creatives, Seroke was tasked with finding and developing artists who could contribute to the magazine.[586] As *Staffrider* was intended to be for the townships, and by the townships, this required a lot of workshops, writing assistance and editorial help because of the 'Bantu' education many Black contributors received.[587] After completing an issue, Black Community Programmes would produce and distribute the copies expeditiously, to avoid PCB awareness and eventual bannings.[588] As *Staffrider* was not only a literary magazine, it became the leading publication for Black arts in general. Unsurprisingly, despite measures, many issues were banned nonetheless. Throughout the 1970s, *Staffrider* embraced the censors, and would even publish the various letters they had received from them, including those of JCW van Rooyen.[589] Despite *Staffrider* never being a 'commercially viable' endeavor, it started the writing careers

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[583] Ibidem.
[584] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 143.
[585] Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 48.
[586] Ibidem.
[587] Ibid.
[588] Ibid.
[589] McDonald, *The Literature Police,* p. 147.

of many prominent Black South Africans,[590] as well as be the origins of another oppositional publisher, Skotaville Publishers

Founded by Jaki Seroke and Mothobi Mutloatse, Skotaville Publishers was a publishing and printing house located in Soweto, independently run by Black South Africans.[591] Named after ANC's Secretary General, Dan Mweli Skota, Skotaville set out to produce books that were inexpensive and accessible to all South Africans.[592] Because of Seroke and Mutloatse's reputations, Skotaville Publisher became a cultural and commercial success, and 'as a [B]lack owned publishing house in apartheid South Africa, Skotaville was able to participate in international events such as the Frankfurt Book Fair that were closed to mainstream South African publishers'.[593] Like their predecessors, Skotaville was met with repeated banning orders, but did not cease in their production of politically charged works.[594] The Nelson Mandela biography, *Higher than Hope*, was published in 1988, while Mandela was still imprisoned, and ultimately became a bestseller.[595]

Ravan Press, *Staffrider* and Skotaville Publishers are just minimal, and the most known, examples of the initiatives outside of the narrative within the legislative change in the Publications Act that occurred throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The emergence of Black Consciousness, and the Black Community Programmes, as well as the introduction of Black ownership within the publishing field, provided many Black South Africans with a creative outlet as well as bringing the voices of resistance politics into the cultural consciousness of all South Africans despite the National Governments' indoctrination. The importance of Black publishing or 'minority' publishing, is further well-explained by Peter Randall's essay in 1975, in which he states:

> To dismantle racial oligarchy and replace the whole system of white domination… [o]ne of the most desperate needs in our situation is effective communication between the divided sectors of the community, and this is where minority publishing can play an important role. At present the lines of communications are in the control of white hands, including the radio, the press, and the large old-established publishing houses. It is vitally important that [B]lacks should begin to share in that control, in order that

[590] Ibidem., pp. 146-147.
[591] Cloete, 'Alternative Publishing in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s', p. 51.
[592] Ibidem.
[593] Ibid.
[594] Ibid.
[595] Ibid.

their aspirations and their values can be more effectively transmitted and in order to counteract the negative self-image that [B]lacks gain from reading about themselves though the white-controlled media…. [B]lack control over at least some of the communications [in] media is vitally important in the process of liberation, both self-liberation and the liberation of the society from its bondage of prejudice, hostility and racial fear.[596]

THE END OF APARTHEID: THE INFLUENCE OF BLACK INITIATIVES ON THE LEGAL LITERARY LANDSCAPE

Circling back to Van Rooyen and the judicial role, it is clear these Black initiatives were crucial in helping the PAB towards further leniency in censorship legislation leading up to 1994. Throughout the tenure of Van Rooyen and Coetzee as Chairman and Director of Publications, respectively, they were met with this long list of (banned) materials from Black authors, and Black publishers. As described previously, these works were pro-democracy, anti-apartheid, and fighting for their right to be heard as a Black South African. In response, Van Rooyen set up a meeting with Es'kia Mphahlele as well as Professor Nkabinde from the University of Zululand. In response to the meeting, Van Rooyen recalls:

> The advice was clear: African literature and newspapers posed no real risk to security and the voice of the majority needed to be heard so as to ensure that the suppressed voice would not be pushed into revolution and violence. My own view was much clearer after this meaningful meeting: only when material posed an actual danger of violence or amounted to a real contribution to violence, would we ban the distribution. And this was seldom the case. *Staffrider, Learn and Teach* and many other voices of deep anger [by Black authors] against the apartheid regime were unbanned by the Appeal Board.[597]

Subsequently, many anti-apartheid works were now freely being distributed. Throughout the 1980s, despite the Security Committee denouncing Van Rooyen and the Publications Appeal Board, the Board continued unbanning and distributing Black authors.[598] Indeed, in 1984, the

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596 Randall, "'Minority' Publishing in South Africa.", p. 221.
597 van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale*), pp. 111-112.
598 Ibid., p. 114.

PAB unbanned the infamous *Freedom Charter*, which not only meant free distribution, it was now also legal to use the document in government debate.[599] This would prove to be instrumental in the ruling that released Nelson Mandela from prison.[600]

A State of Emergency, Cry Freedom *and the End of Apartheid*

The PAB's ongoing leniency with their censorship legislation throughout the 1980s, would happen concurrently with growing tensions throughout society, and an increase in anti-apartheid protests. While the protests were in response to a myriad of different factors, it is no surprise that in response to free distribution of Black, suppressed voices as well as the works of many white anti-apartheid activists, many felt compelled to join and organize in the fight against anti-apartheid. In response, the government issued a partial State of Emergency in 1985, which would become a four-year nationwide State of Emergency.[601]

This State of Emergency would prove to be the catalyst that ended the final apartheid government. Even though the government demanded tighter censorship laws on all publications, including newspaper, Van Rooyen and the PAB refused.[602] As news was capable of being spread, South Africa was met with international condemnation.[603] Furthermore, this lack of censorship also meant it was becoming increasingly more difficult to shelter the white population within South Africa[604], who had by then already have had access to the works of many lauded white anti-apartheid authors. As Van Rooyen would later describe the decision of the PAB during this period in 1985, he stated 'the government had to hear and see how the suppressed majority felt. That suppression by the police state had to stop. It was in the interest of the security of the state to free Nelson Mandela and move into a new, democratic dispensation.'[605] It was during this State of Emergency that in 1988, Van Rooyen allowed the Steve Biko autobiographical film *Cry Freedom* to be released in cinemas. This decision was to be the end of his tenure as the Chairman of the Board, and made him subject himself to the Security Police. However, despite the governments last

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[599] Ibid., p. 120
[600] Ibid.
[601] SAHO, 'State of Emergency in South Africa: the 1960s and 1980s', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/states-emergency-south-africa-1960s-and-1980s > (14 March 2022).
[602] van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale,* p. 125.
[603] SAHO, 'State of Emergency – 1985', < https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/state-emergency-1985 > (15 March 2022).
[604] Ibidem.
[605] van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale,* p. 126.

efforts, the movie only solidified the national and international contempt against apartheid, and their methods in maintaining that ideology.
Apartheid officially ended on the 27th of April, coinciding with the date in which Nelson Mandela was elected. President. However, this was the result of a slow and tumultuous decline of apartheid support throughout the 1980s and 1990s, which ended with the official end of the State of Emergency in 1990, and Mandela's release in the same year.

Documenting the end of the apartheid regime is to essentially dissect almost fifty years of anti-apartheid activism. It is to recognize countless figures and people who gave their lives in marches and protests, it is to understand the allyship of those in power, and the organizations that rallied people together. In the grand scheme of this political landscape, literature might not have been the driving force behind the dissolution of the apartheid system, however it did significantly contribute to the growing anti-apartheid sentiment. The period of 1960 to 1980, in which South Africa had its most severe censorship legislation, the apartheid government is considered to have been at its most repressive. However, with the circulation of these banned materials, the appeals against these judicial decisions, and the groundwork of ideology done by men like Steve Biko and Alex La Guma, supported by authors like André Brink and Nadine Gordimer, meant that change was on the precipice of happening. These works, and these voices proved to be loud enough to reach those in power, which meant that in the period of 1980 to 1990, censorship legislation became more lenient under the Chairmanship of Van Rooyen and the advocation of activists like Es'kia Mphaphele.

If we return to Sue Curry Jansen's *Censorship* – as mentioned in the introduction – we can corroborate these points further. As she states: '[t]hroughout history the great victories of heterodox thought have been by equivocation',[606] meaning the concept of 'writing-between-the-lines'.[607] This use of equivocation 'allows a writer to tell deadly serious jokes, to say one thing and mean another, to use praise-to-blame or blame-to-praise. It allows the devil to play devil's advocate….Domination, repression, and the stale cake of custom constrict the range of univocal discourse. They force emancipatory ideas between-the-lines'.[608] Literature is a tool that can be used to change mindsets and bring empathy. The research question I aimed to answer was essentially how literature can provide a role in the

[606] Jansen, *Censorship,* p. 192.
[607] L. Straus qtd. in Jansen, *Censorship,* p. 192.
[608] Jansen, *Censorship*, pp. 192-193.

dissolution of such strong ideologies like apartheid. Its most basic answer: if literature was not seen as a threat, governments would not work so hard to censor it.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to identify and understand the importance of the written word, and specifically literature, for the creation and functioning of a free society. In order to do this, I specifically limited the study to dissect South Africa's censorship practices on literature throughout the period of apartheid. This choice was made on the basis that South Africa's apartheid period had a distinct beginning and ending date, namely 1948 to 1994. By analyzing censorship legislation throughout this period and focusing on specific events, authors and novels, this thesis explained the critical role of literature into the end of apartheid and into the beginnings of a democracy.

As was stated in the introduction, censorship is a complicated concept, with a definition that fluctuates depending on the context. However, it is a tool strongly associated and used by colonial powers throughout history. In a 2012 essay titled 'Facts are Sacred', author Nicholas Owens tries to explain why British anticolonial movements did not – and still does not – have widespread support of the British people, despite reports of colonial violence and the consequences it had on native societies. In his research, he argues this is because colonial Britain used propaganda and the tightening of censorship legislation as the printing press became more mainstream.[609] An important factor Owens argues about colonialism in general is that:

> [c]olonialism, it suggests, did not simply regulate the flow of an independently generated truth but also sought to construct truth itself, through a system of meanings and representation – a colonial discourse – that was constituted by and served to perpetuate colonial rule.[610] (Owens, p. 644.)

Indeed, this point can be supported by another essay: 'Power, Freedom, and the Censorship of History' by Antoon de Baets. As de Baets argues, for a (colonial) power to endure, they rely on two justifications.[611] The first is the need to create a 'collective identity' that is based upon a very human feeling of a person's need for 'community'.[612] The second justification is

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[609] N. Owens, '"Facts are Sacred": The *Manchester Guardian* and Colonial Violence, 1930-1932', *The Journal of Modern History*, 84 (2012), pp. 643-644.
[610] Ibidem, p. 644.
[611] A. De Baets, 'Power, Freedom and the Censorship of History', *Frame* 21.2 (2008), p. 12.
[612] Ibidem, p. 13.

related to the need to argue legitimacy. This is because a community desires an 'acceptable biography and a venerable genealogy'.[613] To create these justifications, the powers in charge employ the usage of propaganda and censorship. These concepts were used in most colonial powers, including South Africa.

The first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to this colonial history. While 1948 to 1994 is known distinctly as the period of 'Apartheid', institutional racial segregation was already a way of life for most South Africans before 1948. This also means that recognizing and dismantling censorship in a country like South Africa, means accepting that in a general historical context, most of the information has either been whitewashed or destroyed. Furthermore, historiography is further influenced by factors such as educational policies, sexism, and racism,[614] which means many important voices went unheard. As De Baets further argues, the transition to democracy occurs simultaneously with the end of systematic censorship. This in turn can lead to the 'development of an independent historiography'.[615] This thesis aimed to contextualize this period from authoritarian 'truth' to free thinking society. The end of legislative censorship was the result of many activists, who continued to publish and continued to circulate their materials, despite fear of being penalized. In this thesis, the activists highlighted were white authors, Black authors and their publishing houses.

Understandably, the history of South Africa, and its centuries long road to independence, cannot be explained by just one focus. This thesis focused its history by limiting it to the necessary knowledge for understanding the literary impact on the end of apartheid. However, obviously, there were so many factors, organizations, and activism that had significant impact on the end of white minority rule that are not mentioned in this thesis. For example, while the press played a significant role, and fits within the scope of the written word and the theme of creating a historiography, it was not the main focus in this research. An exception was made for the inclusion of Steve Biko, considering his inadvertent contributions to the South African literary canon. Therefore, the results will be based on what I have done within the limitations of my thesis. However, there are many other resources that can provide further context or a different focus, some of which I have listed in appendix B.

This thesis primarily aimed at the literary, because literature it has a distinct way of informing history. The 2013 book *History, Literature, Critical Theory* explains this

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[613] Ibid.
[614] Ibid., 13-15.
[615] Ibid., p. 11.

relationship between literature and historiography in depth, but for the purposes of this thesis, the importance of literature can be condensed by a few key arguments. Literary texts can serve as a guide to the 'larger sociocultural and political context' of its time and it also offers a 'mirror image […] of some sociohistorical or perhaps transhistorical process or structure such as capitalism, colonialism [and] the rise of the individual [...] The text thus becomes a document of the times or perhaps of transhistorical forces'.[616]

At its core, perhaps the ultimate need for literature, and art like it, is its ability to breed empathy, and convey information and experience through a localized experience. The specific authors that were highlighted in this thesis were based both on bringing a voice to the marginalized, as well as advocating for a democratic South Africa by writing literature distinctly anti-apartheid.

The second chapter was primarily dedicated to highlighting prominent white South African anti-apartheid authors whose works were systematically banned throughout their careers. In this case, I highlighted André Brink and Nadine Gordimer, who were routinely affected by the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963 as well as the notorious Publications Act of 1974. The reason I chose to highlight white authors before Black South African voices, was because legislatively, the biggest censorship changes came in response to white anti-government literature. Furthermore, and perhaps more relevant, the legislation specifically surrounding censorship legislation, the PEA and the PA, were primarily used in response to white authors. These legislations were considered repressive, but it primarily affected the work, and not the author. On the contrary, as will be seen in the following chapter, the legislation used in response to Black South African authors criminalized the author as well as the work, and covered much wider legislation, from authors falling under the Suppression of Communism Act, Internal Security Act and even the Terrorism Act. As chapter four will also late highlight, JCW van Rooyen made many legislative changes for the autonomization of literature, and was a driving force behind anti-apartheid media being distributed in South Africa, but initially, he primarily limited these broader opportunities to white voices. While André Brink was capable of writing a staunchly anti-apartheid novel like *A Dry White Season,* and have it become unbanned and distributed to the masses, Miriam Tlali, a Black woman, had her works banned. While I disagree with the notion that Black South Africans voices were only heard because of white anti-apartheid activists, many of the secondary sources I read seemed to have a primary focus on white literature in regard to anti-

[616] D. LaCapra. *History, Literature, Critical Theory*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), p. 13.

apartheid activism and in the dissolution of censorship legislation.[617] Ultimately, the aim of the chapter was to provide the dichotomy between the literary canon the government wanted versus the canon it became. Hendrik Verwoerd, the so-called 'architect of apartheid' had a vision for a South African literary canon written by white Afrikaners in support of white supremacy. However, ironically, the literature still known to this day, and distinctly part of the current literary canon, is written by staunchly anti-apartheid voices.

The third chapter was dedicated to Black South African efforts in literature, as well as the importance of Black-led activism into the dissolution of apartheid. As per the previous chapter, undoubtedly, there are many prominent authors and activists that had a significant impact in anti-apartheid efforts, but I limited myself to the select few I personally found contributed to this case study. The first half of the chapter is dedicated to the works and activism by Alex la Guma. Not only was La Guma a prominent member to an organization like ANC, he was also a prolific writer during the 1950s and 1960s, and a very famous example of the consequences of being subjected to the Suppression of Communism Act. Unlike many white authors, Black authors often found their works banned on the basis of Communism, which affected not only their works, but also their public and personal life. Furthermore, the work that is mentioned, *And a threefold cord,* speaks to another important point in South Africa's complex linguistic history. The characters in the novel effortlessly code-switch between English and Afrikaans depending on who they are with, which is a distinct acknowledgement to the country's colonial history. Indeed, La Guma's work is indicative of how Black South African authors often resorted to writing in English, rather than any of South Africa's indigenous languages. Furthermore, La Guma is one of the more prominent and early examples of a Black author who published his works outside of South Africa, and had it then smuggled back in and distributed. The reason why I personally wanted to highlight La Guma's because, considering he writes based on his own personal experiences, works like *And a threefold cord* are distinctly personal and affecting in a way that it can breed empathy with its readers. If, as Voltaire states, 'those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities', then it should also be true that those who can make you believe in injustice, can make you fight for change.

The second half of the chapter is dedicated to Steve Biko. It is understandable that in terms of the focus of the thesis, his presence seems unusual, seeing as how Biko did not write fiction. However, his non-fictions work, as well as the ideology of Black Consciousness, was

[617] E.g. Laros, *Literature and the Law;* van Rooyen, *A South African Censor's Tale.*

an important part in the future of South African literature. As is later reiterated in chapter four, Biko and his organizations were instrumental in the development of the Black book and publishing industry, not only serving as an inspiration for many young Black authors, but also in providing the tools for Black creative writing. Not to mention, Black Consciousness became such an important part of South African society, that it is even vehemently mentioned in works of white authors, like Nadine Gordimer. Within the South African literary canon, both Black and white, Steve Biko has played an important role.

Throughout these chapters, I referenced specific events, and legislation throughout the apartheid era, which was then discussed and analyzed by specific cases of individual censorship. Between chapter two and three, it was important to recognize the legal discrepancies between white and Black authors. In chapter four, the aim was to continue on the relevant politics and legislation, as well as showcase the key events and efforts that led to the end of apartheid. This meant also touching upon globalization, the relationship between the press and literature, as well as recognizing the important role of the publishing industry in the book industry as a whole. One very important facet of this I wanted primarily to highlight was the efforts of Black writing and publishing leading up to the end of apartheid. In many of the sources I consulted, there seemed to be a tendency to relate the 'end' of censorship and the beginnings of democracy, with just the changes made in response to the *Magersfontein* crisis, and the activism of the Afrikaner elite thereafter. However, this completely ignores so many of the efforts that were equally as responsible in the disassembling of authoritarian structures. The latter half of chapter four is therefore dedicated to bring light to the efforts that are often misrepresented or forgotten, and hence to paint a more balanced picture of the literary and cultural initiatives that led to a more democratic society.

As has been often reiterated throughout this thesis, authoritarian regimes have used censorship – and subsequently propaganda – to oppress their citizens by keeping them uninformed. This concept is almost *cliché,* considering the popular remark that 'history repeats itself' is well applicable to the use of censorship by governments throughout history. Indeed, one search on Google, and one will find a plethora of fiction and non-fiction that helps to explain these concepts. For example, in Ray Bradbury's influential work *Fahrenheit 451,* written in 1950, the protagonist Guy Montag learns from his superior Beatty the so-called importance of book burning and censoring of information. He says:

> A book is a loaded gun in the house next door. Burn it. Take the shot from the

> weapon. Breach man's mind. Who knows who might be the target of the well-read man?[618]

It seems to be that information is power, and that power is dangerous.[619] While the book was written in response to the early days of the Cold War, It is perhaps no surprise that in a somewhat ironic turn of events, *Fahrenheit 451* was banned in South Africa, and subsequently also apart of routine book burnings by the National Party throughout the period of 1950-1970.[620] South Africa's history, particularly up till 1994, has been clouded in countless examples like this one. This historical evidence of South Africa, and regimes like it, support the idea that literature is an important factor and tool in cultural understanding, historical awareness.

South Africa's history has been gatekept by white minority rule to create their version of society, in which Black South Africa was erased. This thesis used literature to piece together the version of censorship and literary history that was more indicative of the reality of the political and social culture, by highlighting the importance of the marginalized. Dissecting the fiction of authors like André Brink, Nadine Gordimer, and Alex La Guma as well as the works made in response to the cultural role that Steve Biko played in the South African literary canon, brings new insight into the power of literature. Their influence, as well as many other authors and publishers, should be seen as an instrumental part in the dismantling of the system of apartheid.

[618] R. Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (New York: Del Rey Books, 1950), p. 58.
[619] Points reiterated from earlier essay for New Media and Society; E. Elsen, 'Reading to Freedom: An historical look at the importance of literacy on society', Essay New Media and Society (2019).
[620] E. Huang, 'The South African Apartheid and the burning of books', *Melville House,* 1 November, 2018 n.pag. < https://www.mhpbooks.com/the-south-african-apartheid-and-the-burning-of-books/ > (10 April 2022).

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Appendix A

Figure 2: Sam Nzima photograph of Mbuyisa Makhubo carrying Hector Pietersen during the Soweto Uprising in 1976. This photograph led to international outrage at the then-South African apartheid government, and has become a symbol of its brutality. Source: Baker and TIME Staff, 'This Photo Galvanized the World Against Apartheid. Here's the Story Behind It', (12 August, 2021).

Appendix B

A Selection of Further Reading:

More in-depth look at the use of censorship over all media, and the dissemination of banned literature:

- Matsha, Rachel M., *Real and Imagined Readers: Censorship. Publishing and Reading Under Apartheid* (Pietermaritzburg: The University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2019).

Focus on role of the press during the apartheid era:

- Hachten, William A. and C.A. Giffard, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

Focus on the cultural history and censorship the South African film industry has gone through:

- Balseiro, Isabel and Ntongela, Masilela, *To Change Reels : Film and Culture in South Africa* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press , 2003).

Focus on the author-publisher relationship in activist publishing (particularly on Miriam Tlali as the first Black woman to publish in South Africa):

- Le Roux, Elizabeth, 'Miriam Tlali and Ravan Press: Politics and Power in Literary Publishing During the Apartheid Period', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 44: 3 (2018), pp. 431–446 < https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2018.1450007 >

Focus on anti-apartheid publishing, using Ravan Press specifically as case study:

- Le Roux, Elizabeth, *Publishing Against Apartheid South Africa: A Case Study of Ravan Press*, ed. by S. Rayner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Focus on a close-reading methodology to understand the relationship between colonization and literature in white South African literature:

- Jolly, Rosemary J., Colonization, Violence, and Narration in White South African Writing: André Brink, Breyten Breytenbach, and J.M. Coetzee (Athens/Johannesburg: Ohio University Press, Witwatersrand University Press, 1996).