The South African Information Service and English-Canadian
Journalism, 1949-1960

by

Susan R. Hagborg Wildey

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Susan R. Hagborg Wildey

ABSTRACT

The Nationalist Government of South Africa, from its first days in office in 1948, was obsessed with its poor image on the world stage. Blaming the foreign press, the Nationalists established a program of propaganda aimed at addressing the issue. Canada was one of nine countries targeted by South Africa's Information Service from 1949. This thesis illustrates the efforts of the Service, operating under the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, to change the narrative of Canadian newspapers about South Africa, and the reaction of the Canadian journalists to those efforts. It examines how the Service, from its inception until the events following Sharpeville in 1960, confronted journalists at Canada's progressive English language newspapers, and moved against Norman Phillips, a Canadian foreign correspondent reporting from South Africa.

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ACRONYMS

AB	Afrikaner <i>Broederbond</i>
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CDN	Canadian
DEA	Department of External Affairs
G&M	<i>The Globe and Mail</i> [Toronto]
HC	High Commissioner
HoC	House of Commons
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
NP	<i>Herenigde Nasionale</i> Party. Also known as the National Party or the Nationalist Party (of South Africa)
OB	<i>Ossewabrandwag</i>
RDM	<i>The Rand Daily Mail</i> [Johannesburg]
SA	South Africa (Union of South Africa prior to May 1961/ Republic of South Africa after May 1961)
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SSEA	Secretary of State for External Affairs
TDS	<i>The Toronto Daily Star</i>
USSEA	Under Secretary of State for External Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

The Nationalist Government of South Africa, from its first days in office in 1948, was obsessed with its poor image on the world stage. Blaming the foreign press, the Nationalists established a program of propaganda aimed at addressing the issue. Canada was one of nine countries targeted by South Africa's Information Service from 1949.¹ This thesis illustrates the efforts of the Service, operating under the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, to change the narrative of Canadian newspapers about South Africa, and the reaction of the Canadian journalists to those efforts. It examines how the Service, from its inception until the events following Sharpeville in 1960, confronted journalists at Canada's progressive English language newspapers, and moved against Norman Phillips, a Canadian foreign correspondent reporting from South Africa.

Long before the infamous "Muldergate Scandal" drove John Vorster from the position of Prime Minister in 1978 and then toppled him from the Presidency in 1979, the Information Service in South Africa was attempting to alter the opinions of the outside world.² The "Information Affair," or the Muldergate Scandal as it became known (named after the Minister of Information who signed the cheques, Connie Mulder), involved huge sums spent around the globe to influence foreign newspapers, journalists, elections, politicians, and union bosses. The goal was to change the

¹ The Information Service was synonymous with the State Information Office and Information Services in South Africa. All three terms appeared in reference to the Government Office and all three are used in this thesis.

² "S.A. Appoints Information Attaches," *The Rand Daily Mail* [Johannesburg] (RDM), July 15, 1949, 9; Letter # 488, July 20, 1949, from Canadian High Commissioner in South Africa (CDN HC in SA) (Signed by E. Thibault for the High Commissioner) to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs (USSEA) in Ottawa, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Department of External Affairs Fonds, RG25 A-3-b, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1, "Information and cultural services of the Government of South Africa – Reports," 1949/07/20-1960/05/16; "Find World Press Hostile to South Africa," *The Star Phoenix* [Saskatoon], October 1, 1958, 1; "Senate Debate on South African Foreign Policy," Numbered Letter 260, July 8, 1959, from CDN HC to SA to the USSEA Ottawa, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.1, "Relations between Canada and South Africa," 1959/04/14-1961/07/05.

narrative of world opinion in favour of South Africa by whatever means possible, and at whatever cost. The efforts to conceal the scandal resulted in the apparent murder of two people within South Africa and more stringent restrictions on the press to limit its ability to investigate either the police or the government.³ Many secret propaganda initiatives were revealed during the South African Commission looking into the affair, but only those directly connected to the fraud were halted. The continuing secret work of the Information Department was implicitly condoned by the Commission.⁴ The activities of the South African Information Service that led to “Muldergate” can be traced back to the first appointments of overseas Information Officers in 1949, and the lack of success of those early efforts led to ever more elaborate and determined schemes from the Nationalists to control world opinion.⁵

Following the election in 1948, the new government of the National Party (NP) immediately felt the chill of negative world reaction.⁶ The Nationalists swiftly developed a plan of controlled information dissemination to win over world opinion. The autocratic doctrine of the Information Service was driven by a sense of

³ For a summary of “Muldergate” see David Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa—South Africa in Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 227-246, <https://archive.org/details/white-tribeofafri00harr>; Stanley Uys, “John Vorster resigned the State Presidency in the wake of the Erasmus report on Muldergate, Stanley Uys examines his mistakes: The Knife Thrust to the Heart of Afrikanerdom,” *The Guardian* [London], June 5, 1979, 23.

⁴ Elaine Windrich, “South Africa's Propaganda War,” *Africa Today*, 36, no. 1 (1989): 53, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4186533>.

⁵ “S.A. Appoints Information Attaches,” *RDM*, July 15, 1949, 9; Letter # 488, July 20, 1949, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1; Hendrik Johan van den Bergh eventual founder of the Bureau of State Security (B.O.S.S.) worked with Prime Minister Daniel F. Malan during the first term of the Nationalist Party to suppress “political dissidents,” creating spy networks at home and abroad, particularly targeting journalists. Evidence suggests that the eventual reach of B.O.S.S. included infiltration of overseas newspapers, creating false stories, and initiating events to destabilise Black governments. See G.H. Pirie, et al., “Covert Power in South Africa: The Geography of the Afrikaner Broederbond,” *Area*, vol. 12, no. 2, (1980), 79-98, www.jstor.org/stable/20001569; Hull, *Propaganda War*.

⁶ The *Herenigde Nasionale Party* (NP) “Reunified National Party,” also known as the National Party or the Nationalist Party, came to power in South Africa under the leadership of Daniel François Malan after the elections on May 26, 1948, defeating the Union Party (UP) under the leadership of Jan Christian Smuts, with a slim advantage of only five seats. The victory began the more than forty-year NP regime, and the implementation of Apartheid, the policy of racial separation that existed until the downfall of the NP between 1989 and 1994.

persecution that was already well entrenched in the Afrikaner mindset.⁷ Much of Afrikaner society effectively functioned under the *de facto* rule of the powerful secret *Broederbond* (AB) society, whose dominance came from the cultivation of distrust among their Afrikaner brethren of everything and everyone outside their culture.⁸ This aggressive defence against criticism from the outside world was to be an unofficial staple of NP foreign policy until at least the 1970s.⁹

The Nationalists closely linked their internal fight for power and support to the need to control the narrative in both the national and the international press. They understood the power of the press to influence people, organizations and ultimately governments. They feared the progressive opinions of the English language press of the world most of all, as those reports might influence their own English population.¹⁰

South Africa under the NP was both a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and a physically remote, and ideologically isolated country. It was a country with a culturally diverse population, living under the hegemonic rule of a xenophobic minority. All the members of the ruling party, including its first Prime

⁷ *Afrikaner* is the South African cultural group of citizens of Dutch and Huguenot descent.

⁸ "Constitution of the Broederbond," attached to Despatch 52, February 29, 1956, "'Die Broederbond' – a Secret Society in South Africa," from CDN HC in SA to SSEA in Ottawa, 1-7, LAC, RG25, volume 6775, file 1038-40, part 10, "Political Situation in South Africa," 1956/01/16-1960/10/27; Harrison, *The White Tribe*, 84-102, 218-219. Afrikaner Broederbond (AB), "brotherhood," was a right wing "purist," male only Afrikaner association with an affiliation to national socialist movements in Europe prior to and during the Second World War. The AB increasingly gained power and influence from its creation in 1918. Membership was secret and by invitation only. The AB was pervasive throughout Afrikaner society by the 1940s, with members occupying most senior positions, (including government, education, the Reformed Church, Unions, diplomatic posts, and social organizations). Members were drawn from the elite: the powerful, the accomplished, and the educated. The end game was political control of South Africa, –doctrine first presented in 1932, – and defence against outside influences. The AB sought to indoctrinate all white (non-Jewish) citizens into Afrikaner culture to expand their power base and reduce opposition. Control of education was an early key achievement towards this goal. Nearly one third of AB members were teachers by the 1950s and 1960s, and almost every teacher was a member. See Deborah Lavin, "The Dilemma of Christian-National Education in South Africa," *The World Today* 21, no. 10 (1965), 431-433, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40393676>; Walton R. Johnson, "Education: Keystone of Apartheid," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1982), 224-225, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3216635>.

⁹ J.E. Spence, "South Africa's 'New Look' Foreign Policy," *The World Today* 24, no. 4 (1968):139, www.jstor.org/stable/40394115.

¹⁰ Harrison, *The White Tribe*, 244.

Minister, Daniel François Malan, had been on the wrong side of the Second World War, complicit in their support of Nazi Germany and impeding South African efforts in the war on the side of the Allies.¹¹ The on-going implementation of their policies of Apartheid ensured that the Nationalists would continue on the wrong side of world opinion.¹² Technological advances meanwhile meant that South Africa had never been closer – in travel time or in the transmission of information – to the rest of the world. The purpose of the Information Service was somehow to put a stop to the negative international image of South Africa.

The progressive English Canadian newspapers were in the vanguard of the battle against both the ideology of Apartheid and against the efforts of the South African sponsored information program. Coverage of South Africa in Canadian newspapers doubled between 1950 and 1960. The average number of pages referencing South Africa each year that appeared in a select group of Canadian English newspapers between 1948 and 1950 was just under 1,300, while that average climbed to almost 2,800 pages between 1959 and 1961.¹³ The South African

¹¹ “Prominent Members of Herenigde Party (Nationalist Party),” Attachment to Air Mail # 323, June 2, 1948, from the CDN HC in SA, (signed by D’Arcy McGreer) to the SSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 8520, file 6605-Q-40C, part 1, “Personalities in South Africa,” 1941/05/24-1963/06/07; Harrison, *The White Tribe*, 85-100; Daniel François Malan was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, first editor of *Die Burger*, and a member of Prime Minister Barry Hertzog’s cabinet in the portfolios of Interior, Education and Public Health from 1924 to 1933. Malan split from Hertzog in 1933, joining the AB and taking 24 other members with him to form the *Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party* (Purified National Party) when Hertzog joined Jan Christian Smuts’s new Union Party (UP). –Malan had been the principal speaker at the assembly which initiated the AB in 1918. Hertzog left the UP to form an uneasy alliance with Malan in 1940, creating the NP. The schism in the NP remained apparent and problematic until Malan’s retirement in 1954.

¹² Apartheid is an Afrikaans word that translates literally as “Apart-ness.” Separation of the races had been a reality in South Africa prior to the formation of the Union in 1910, but the “Sauer Report,” which detailed the initial structure of Apartheid, institutionalized that segregation with harsh and oppressive laws far beyond what had previously existed. The Report was the work of a commission headed by Paul Sauer, Nationalist member of parliament for Humansdorp and later a cabinet minister, who was part of Malan’s inner circle and one of his closest advisors. Apartheid became synonymous with the increasingly severe and oppressive measures implemented by the minority white rulers.

¹³ This figure is based on the number of pages with articles or editorials on South Africa that appeared from January 1, 1948, to December 31, 1961, in English Canadian newspapers included in Newspaper Archive <https://newspaperarchive.com>.

Information Officer posted in Ottawa in 1961 termed the pile of Canadian daily articles on South Africa as a “crop,” – and implied that there was more attention paid to South Africa than to the superpowers in Canadian newspapers.¹⁴

The focus of this thesis is on the efforts of the South African Information Service to influence English Canadian journalism, and on the response from the Canadian press. The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter addresses the resources of the South African Information Service in Canada and the internal Canadian media battle against the aggressive tactics of that Service between 1950 and 1954. At the forefront is the confrontation between South African Information Officer Alexander H.W. Steward, posted in Ottawa and *The Ottawa Citizen*, under the auspices of Editor-in-Chief, Charles J. Woodsworth. The back-and-forth between these two poles reveals the ideologies of the Office of Information Services and the reaction it received from the progressive Canadian media.

The second chapter addresses the development of the structure of the Information Services under the direction of the South African Foreign Affairs department from 1948 through to 1960. The chapter examines the views of the main players in South Africa, the reports of Canadian foreign correspondents, and reactions of the staff of the Canadian High Commission in South Africa. The chapter highlights the vast chasm between the reports being written for Canadian newspapers and the extreme feelings of persecution and sense of righteousness of the Nationalists, who built up the foreign press as a scapegoat for all their woes.¹⁵

¹⁴ Les de Villiers, *Secret Information*, 1st edition. (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1980), 25, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/101945928>.

¹⁵ William A. Hachten and C. Anthony Gifford, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 55-56, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000330358>; Spence, *New Look*, 139.

The third chapter follows a potential diplomatic crisis between Canada and South Africa that stemmed from the bewildered Nationalists' inability to control the external narrative in the way that they had expected.¹⁶ The world reaction to the massacre at Sharpeville, when South African police fired guns into an unarmed crowd of Black protesters on March 21, 1960, surprised the South African government.¹⁷ The arrest of Norman Phillips, Canadian foreign editor for *The Toronto Daily Star* who was in South Africa to cover the massacre, was an information management mistake that came from a panicked need to bring the situation under control. It was poorly handled and, ultimately, all but put an end to any influence of the South African Information Service on the Canadian press.¹⁸ This chapter gives a preview of the much harsher restrictions on foreign journalism that came about as a result of the Sharpeville massacre, and of the less friendly relationship offered to Canadian journalists in the period following the Spring of 1960.

There is a body of work discussing South African propaganda efforts, most focusing on the period after 1960 and through the Muldergate Affair, and most of it written in the 1980s. Many works contain references to the earlier period of the NP government's tenure as background.¹⁹ Vernon McKay, who resigned from a research

¹⁶ Galen Hull, "South Africa's Propaganda War: A Bibliographic Essay," *African Studies Review* 22, no. 3 (1979): 81, doi:10.2307/523897.

¹⁷ Sharpeville was a township designated by the Nationalists for the forced relocation of Black citizens from their homes in Top Location in Vereeniging, an important South African industrial town, situated less than 60 kilometres south of Johannesburg. The Protests on March 21 were supposed to be peaceful Anti-Pass demonstrations, protesting the laws that required all non-Europeans to carry government-produced identification that restricted their employment and their mobility based on the colour of their skin, and threatened punishment and arrest.

¹⁸ De Villiers, *Secret Information*, 25-27; E.M.G., "Why Canada Wanted Us Out – A Letter from Canada," *RDM*, April 13, 1961, 4; Richard Leonard, *South Africa at War: White Power and the Crisis in Southern Africa* (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1983), 82, <https://jstor-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/stable/10.2307/al.sff.document.crp2b20031>; Michael Bueckert, "Boycotts and Backlash: Canadian Opposition to Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movements from South Africa to Israel," Ph.D. diss. (Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, 2020), 121-125, <https://curve.carleton.ca/2aeddef3-06a0-4b8e-8504-367caf8edd17>.

¹⁹ See Hachten, *Press and Apartheid*; Hull, "South Africa's Propaganda War"; United Nations Centre against Apartheid, John C. Laurence, *South African Propaganda: How the Contagion of Racism is Spread*, 1982, https://jstor.org/stable/10.2307/al.sff.document.nuun1982_17.

position in African affairs at the U.S. State Department in 1956 to become Director of the Program of African Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, detailed the efforts of the South African Information Service in the United States and provided a rebuttal to its propaganda in his article, “South African Propaganda.”²⁰ There are no works on the interaction between the South African Information Service and Canada, other than a very brief reference by Alexander Steward to his time as South African Information Officer in Canada from 1950 to 1955 in his book *The World, the West and Pretoria*, and a chapter from Les de Villiers’s book, *Secret Information*, on his experiences as Information Officer to Ottawa beginning in 1961.²¹

The information for this thesis was primarily retrieved from Canadian and South African English newspaper reports and editorials, and from the Department of External Affairs (DEA) Fonds, particularly in communications between the Office of the High Commissioner in South Africa and the DEA in Ottawa. Biographies, journal, and magazine articles written during or shortly after the period of the thesis, both in South Africa and Canada, were also helpful. Notable is Allister Sparks’s *The Sword and the Pen: Six Decades on the Political Frontier*, detailing his time as a journalist and editor with *The Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), and Norman Phillips’s book, *The Tragedy of Apartheid: A Journalist's Experiences in the South African Riots*.²²

²⁰ Vernon McKay, “South African Propaganda,” *SAIS Review* (1956-1989)1966, vol. 10, no. 3 (Spring 1966), 7, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45348390>.

²¹ De Villiers, *Secret Information*; Alexander Steward, *The World, the West, And Pretoria* (New York: D. McKay Co., 1977), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000213135>.

²² Norman Phillips, *The Tragedy of Apartheid: A Journalist's Experiences in the South African Riots* (New York: David McKay Company, 1960), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001260091>; Allister Haddon Sparks, *The Sword and the Pen: Six Decades on the Political Frontier* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2016), e-book, Kobo; Also see Albert Fick, “South Africa’s Ku Klux Klan,” *Macleans*, (February 1, 1952), 10, 11, 40, 41, <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1952/02/01/south-africas-ku-klux-klan>; and Ronald M. Segal, David Marais, et al., *Africa South In Exile*, Vol. 4. No. 4 (1960), <https://jstor.org/stable/10.2307/al.sff.document.asjul60>.

The Nationalists understood that the impact of the press on world affairs was powerful, especially with respect to the constant battles they were engaging in at the United Nations over South West Africa and over the Indian Resolutions placed before the General Assembly, which were critical of South African racial policies.²³ James Eayrs, a political science professor at the University of Toronto and a student of Canada's Department of External Affairs, addressed the power of modern journalism in a "talk" originally broadcast on CBC Radio in 1967: "With such inquiring reporters..., governments can less easily than hitherto protect themselves by lying. If truth is the first casualty of warfare, untruth is a principal weapon of warfare. It is a weapon no longer to be used with impunity. Great powers are being compelled to divest themselves of it by great newspapers."²⁴ In 1961 Eayrs quoted Lester B. Pearson on the influence that journalism had in world affairs, especially at a time when the transmission of newspaper reports could get to Ottawa earlier than diplomatic communications: "there are foreign correspondents of newspapers whose despatches can be as full, shrewd, and useful as any diplomat's. Sometimes they are based on an even greater knowledge and broader experience of the country – and its people – about which they are both writing."²⁵

²³ "In the House of Assembly: Smuts Urges Malan not to Cast Apples of Discord to UNO – Prime Minister Says He Will Not Have Domestic Affairs Interfered With," *RDM*, September 1, 1948, 11; The media began to run articles on South Africa's racial policies in 1946 primarily because of an Indian resolution brought to the first General Assembly of the United Nations. Indian resolutions protesting South Africa's racial policies were presented to the General Assembly every year until 1994. For the disputes at the U.N., see Peter Henshaw, "Canada and the 'South African Disputes' at the United Nations, 1946-1961," *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines*, 33, no. 1 (1999): 1-52, doi:10.2307/486386.

²⁴ James George Eayrs, and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Force and Impotence," in *Fate and Will in Foreign Policy* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1967), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007312018A>, 74.

²⁵ Lester B. Pearson, *Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age*, (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 16, quoted in James Eayrs, *The Art of the Possible: Government and Foreign Policy in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 146, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015031646238>.

Newspapers hold a collective archive of accessible information that could not be matched prior to the digital era. In 1974 Charles Woodsworth, the former editor of *The Ottawa Citizen*, caught the importance but also the suspect nature of the newspaper record:

No matter how reputable a newspaper may be, its reporters' versions of official statements, often stripped to the bone and possibly distorted by omission, do not constitute reliable documentation for historians or others. I might point out, however, that if there is to be a complete record, the use of press reports may at times be unavoidable. Official texts of ministers' addresses – and particularly their comments to the press which are sometimes highly significant – just don't exist. Often the only record is to be found in the newspapers. This is just one of the snags if you're trying to compile a record which is both comprehensive and authoritative.²⁶

Yet newspapers, with their need to focus the story, trim the excess, and get the story out, were a way to stay informed, even in government. Newspapers provided a ready index of the issues that were on the national and international agenda.

Great tomes of information regarding the situation in South Africa were regularly mailed in a diplomatic courier bag, air mailed, or transmitted via teletype from the Canadian High Commissioner's office in South Africa to the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa. Eayrs listed the number of documents that reached External Affairs in 1948 as being more than 22,500 despatches and letters and over 22,000 telegrams and teletype messages. Many of these documents were of considerable length and content.²⁷ Only a small percentage of these communications were passed up the chain to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and even fewer to the Prime Minister's Office. Those that did make it through did not always do so

²⁶ Charles J. Woodsworth, "A Canadian Foreign Affairs Record, Report #2: A report prepared for the Historical Division," Department of External Affairs, Toronto, September 10, 1974, 3. Global Affairs Canada Digital Library <https://gac.canadiana.ca/view/ooe.b1854471E/1?r=0&s=1>.

²⁷ Eayrs, *Art of the Possible*, 143; For an understanding of the volume of reports sent, see any document in LAC RG25 Volume 5235, file 7060-40, part, 3, "South Africa, Native Policy and Racial Conflict – Communications, 1960/03/22-1961/04/07."

swiftly.²⁸ John Hilliker and Donald Barry, in their second volume of the official history of the Department of External Affairs, indicated that the department made use of newspapers to supplement briefings to posts simply because there was not enough staff to prepare the information in a timely manner.²⁹ Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard Green in 1959 stated in the House of Commons that Parliament would be surprised at the number of despatches he received daily from Canadian posts abroad. Even then, he doubted that he received a tenth of the total volume.³⁰

Jagdish S. Gundara wrote a Master of Arts thesis in Economics and Political Science for McGill University in 1967, titled “Canadian Attitudes towards South Africa, 1957-1966.”³¹ Gundara’s study was a contemporary attempt to understand where Canada stood on the South African racial issue. Gundara chose, as his starting point, the year of Ghanaian independence in 1957 and of the first real threat from newly independent countries to the cohesion of the Commonwealth.³² The press made up only one of four sectors of Gundara’s study. He argued that the lack of a national newspaper, and the predominance of U.S influences in Canada, meant that the “comments and criticism” on the South African issue were sporadic and could often be tied to specific interest groups. Gundara’s sample was not large, and the sources

²⁸ See Chapter Three for an example of response times from the Canadian High Commissioner in South Africa, and the use of newspapers as sources for information during the events at Sharpeville.

²⁹ John Hilliker and Donald Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs Vol. 2, Coming of age, 1946-1968*, Institute of Public Administration of Canada (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 190, books-scholarsportal-info.proxy.library.carleton.ca/uri/ebooks/ebooks0gibson_crkn/2009-12-01/1/400371.

³⁰ Howard Green, Secretary of State for External Affairs from Canada, Parliament, House of Commons (HoC) Debates, 24th Parliament, 2nd Session, Volume 5, July 9, 1959, 5741, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2402_05/609?r=0&s=4, quoted in Eayrs, *Art of the Possible*, 148.

³¹ Jagdish S. Gundara, “Canadian Attitudes Towards South Africa: 1957-1966,” M.A. Thesis. McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, April 1967, 7-8. <https://escholarship.mcgill.ca/concern/theses/sx61dn49> v. Gundara, a Kenyan by birth, with only a short stint in Canada to pursue his MA, went on to become an expert in the field of human rights and education in multicultural societies, at the Institute of Education at the University of London and Chair of the UNESCO International Studies and Teacher Education program.

³² Gundara, “*Canadian Attitudes*,” 7-8.

chosen were exclusively conservative newspapers.³³ Gundara recounted the arguments made in the editorials of the various newspapers and pointed out that the papers used a headline news approach, lacking the background and the thread of the situation. His conclusion was that “there was only a partial acceptance in Canada of the fact that the South African situation had reached serious proportions.”³⁴

This was far from the whole story. The leading progressive newspapers in Canada, *The Toronto Daily Star*, *The Vancouver Sun*, and *The Winnipeg Free Press*, were newspapers that were well known for the breadth of their international outlook and their in-depth coverage. Many newspapers in Canada under the same ownership ran the same or similar articles, often appearing in numerous newspapers across the country. Newspaper groups such as the Southam Group, the Thompson Group, and the Bell Family would frequently share articles amongst their members, and in some cases the papers even had the same editors for a time.³⁵ Arnold Edinborough in 1962 argued that “The average provincial daily in Canada... carries far more international news than any paper in England except *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Guardian*. It will at all times, ... carry three times as much international news as, for example, *The Chicago Tribune* or *The Baltimore Sun*.”³⁶ There was a broad usage of news agencies by Canadian newspapers who regularly picked up articles from the

³³ Wilfred H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 78,85,91,102-103, <https://books-scholarsportal-info.proxy.library.carleton.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks3/upress/2014-09-29/1/9780773595163>; Gundara, “*Canadian Attitudes*,” 329. Gundara focused on *The Globe and Mail* as a centrally located Canadian paper with a large readership and acknowledged that he did not have access to many other newspapers: He listed additionally only *The Calgary Herald* (conservative – Southam Group), *The Financial Post* (conservative – MacLean’s), *The Hamilton Spectator* (conservative – Southam Group), and *The Montreal Gazette* (conservative – White Family) as his newspaper sources.

³⁴ Gundara, “*Canadian Attitudes*,” 10, 321.

³⁵ Kesterton, *History of Journalism*, 77-78,88,95,98,100-101,130-133; Pierre Berton, “The Southams,” *MacLean’s*, June 15, 1950, 62, www.macleans.com. An example of newspapers with the same editors for a time were *The Winnipeg Free Press*, *The Regina Leader-Post*, and *The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, while all under the Sifton family.

³⁶ Arnold Edinborough, “The Press” in John Irving, *Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1962), 19, quoted in Kesterton, *History of Journalism*, 131.

Canadian Press (CP), which was organized and supported by the same Canadian newspapers, the British United International Press (BUP), Reuters, and the Associated Press (AP). Kesterton argued that this broad coverage fulfilled the role of a national paper in Canada.³⁷ While U.S. news stories did appear in Canadian papers, it was not apparent that U.S. opinions dominated the headlines. Canadian content was significant.

Journalists penning their stories in the 1950s were in their heyday. Television was not yet mainstream, and telegraph, teletype, transcontinental flights, and telephone cables meant that journalists could publish stories with minimal delay.³⁸ Newspapers were the main source of information for most Canadians. Circulation of daily papers were at their highest level yet and included most parts of Canada. These levels continued to climb towards an apex in the early 1960s, when television began to cut into the dominance of the newsheet.³⁹ When television first appeared in 1952, 146,000 Canadian households owned televisions, out of 3,632,915 total Canadian households. By 1961, this rose to 3,650,000 households out of 4,554,736 households. In contrast, in 1952, daily circulation of Canadian newspapers was 3,570,498 (2,961,901 English) papers, which rose to 4,064,461 (3,329,762 English) in 1961.

³⁷ Kesterton, *History of Journalism*, 159; BUP became United Press International (UPI) in Canada in 1964.

³⁸ "World Phone Link Plan: SA. Included," *RDM*, Sept 26, 1958, 7. Parallel cables sending communications in opposing directions between England and North America were inaugurated in September 1956, and plans were to lay a two-way cable around the world including a direct communication link from South Africa to North America. Completion was delayed until 1968 with South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961.

³⁹ Daily and weekly newspaper and televisions per household figures come from Statistics Canada. "Canada Yearbook, 1947-1962," 1947, 753-754 / 1948-49, 788-789 / 1950, 833-834 / 1951, 824 / 1952-53, 860-861 / 1954, 895, 906 / 1955, 931-932, 950 / 1956, 889, 904 / 1957-58, 903, 917-918 / 1959, 866, 880-881 / 1960, 903-904, 917-918 / 1961, 882-883, 874-875 / 1962, 855-856, 864-865, www66.statcan.gc.ca/acyb_000-eng.htm); Household numbers from Statistics Canada. "A248 1941, 1951, 1956, 1961," www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectiona/A248_253-eng.csv. Other years extrapolated using population estimates from Statistics Canada, "A1," www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectiona/A1-eng.csv.

Television surpassed English newspaper circulation in 1960. Radio provided a quick recap of event, but it was the newspapers that provided the details.

In 1950 the number of newspapers sold daily in English Canada accounted for more than one newspaper for every household, while the number of French newspapers sold daily accounted for about sixty five percent of French households. The total national average was close to one hundred percent of households in 1950.⁴⁰ In 1954 national newspaper circulation set a record of combined dailies at 3,786,406, a four percent increase from 1953.⁴¹ Articles and editorials, from both sides of the South African argument, were available to almost every Canadian.

Prior to 1948, South Africa was viewed as an ally of the West, and condemnation of its racial policies was not common in the traditional power centres of the world. South African Prime Minister Jan Christian Smuts was a leader few would condemn, despite the expanding ideal of the equality of all peoples that came with the end of the Second World War.⁴² Smuts, an Afrikaner himself, had fought against the British during the Boer Wars from 1899 to 1902, and had negotiated a very appealing settlement from a position of weakness. He had been instrumental in moderately leading South Africa away from British power. In doing so, Smuts remained a friend to the British. Smuts was the credited author for much of the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, signed in 1945, and was instrumental in the establishment of that forum.

⁴⁰ "Sixty Years of Daily Newspaper Circulation Trends 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 Canada United States United Kingdom Numbers Trends Public Policy Will There Be a Plateau?" (Communications Management Inc, May 6, 2011), media-cmi.com/downloads/Sixty_Years_Daily_Newspaper_Circulation_Trends_050611.pdf. A logical assumption is that many French households in 1950 were reading English newspapers, and not necessarily that French households read fewer newspapers. Household coverage for both languages in 2010 was thirty percent.

⁴¹ "More Canadian Newspapers Sold," *RDM*, April 25, 1955, 15.

⁴² Smuts was admired in Canada to the degree that he was even proposed as a possible contender for Governor General. "Smuts for Rideau Hall?" *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 20, 1950, 40.

Smuts was in a difficult position in South Africa following the Second World War. He had to contend with the increasingly powerful National Party, a party built by Afrikaners with fervent ideas of racial purity and of the superiority of the white man. The English population was in a minority position vis-à-vis the Afrikaners, but they acted like the majority. Furthermore, there were sizable groups of non-Europeans living in South Africa, –Africans, Indians, and “Coloured” citizens, who might use their majority numbers to rise up against white rule.⁴³ South Africa had a population of between ten and twelve million Africans or people of Indian or mixed descent, compared to a ruling group of about two million white voting citizens.⁴⁴ Smuts had to tread carefully to maintain his government and his policies. He was a master of the balancing act, having spent his career trying to please everyone, but believing that, while all people deserved respect, they were not all fundamentally equal, or equally capable. Despite all his calls for human rights, Smuts did not see non-segregated equality as a possible future for South Africa.⁴⁵

It was one thing to have Smuts at the helm in South Africa. He was a man seen as a reliable ally and world statesman, who had fought beside and supported Britain and was a bulwark in the face of the rising popularity of the Nationalists. It was

⁴³ “Non-European,” was synonymous with “non-white” in Apartheid South Africa, applied to any person who did not qualify as a white. This included all “Coloured” and Black persons. “Coloured” was a legal term used for anyone of mixed-race descent who generally was not accepted as a white person. The criteria for the “Coloured” classifications were as much social as they were physical, and a person’s status could be changed by how their community viewed them.

⁴⁴ A.J. Christopher, “The Union of South Africa censuses 1911–1960: An incomplete record,” *Historia* 56, 2, (November 2011), 1–18, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262656133_The_Union_of_South_Africa_censuses_1911-1960_an_incomplete_record. The official South African census until at least 1960 was not an accurate portrayal of the ‘non-white’ populations, and the original raw data that was collected has since been destroyed, so no re-evaluation of the data is possible. The 1960 census showed that the Union’s population had increased by twenty-five per cent in nine years to 15,841,000 – made up of 3,067,638 Whites, 1,488,638 Coloureds, 477,414 Asiatics and 10,807,892 Africans; “Year of Wind of Change,” *RDM*, December 31, 1960, 7.

⁴⁵ Smuts’s character has been much debated. See Willem H. Gravatt, “Jan Christian Smuts (1870–1950) in Context: An Answer to Mazower and Morefield,” *The Round Table*, 106, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 261–77, doi:10.1080/00358533.2017.1327202.

another thing completely once Dr. Malan's Nationalist Party came to power in 1948.⁴⁶ The NP was never a democratic group. They had openly supported Hitler's Germany during the war and wanted a German victory. Acts of sabotage and bitter fights between South African soldiers and Afrikaner nationalists were common. The South African Army had been forced to introduce censorship for the first time during the Second World War when their soldiers were sent authentic looking letters concocted by the *Broederbond* and the *Ossewabrandwag*, – a militant, people's version of the Broederbond, bent on hindering the Allied War effort, – in an effort to demoralize the troops.⁴⁷ Intelligence services were part of the Information Office of the South African Military, the forerunner of the service that later became the NP's Information Service attached to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Malan himself was investigated for his ties to Germany during the war by a select committee, convened by Smuts.⁴⁸ Once in power, the Nationalists perverted the tools of government to ensure their hold on the reins of South Africa, twisting laws to gain their goals.⁴⁹ The NP leadership came from Broederbond membership, with

⁴⁶ Smuts's narrow defeat in the 1948 elections was, in part, attributed to the Indian Resolutions at the U.N., which helped to alienate South Africa and to place her on the defensive. J.E. Spence, "The Origins of Extra-Parliamentary Opposition in South Africa," *Government and Opposition* 1, no. 1 (1965), 64, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44482806>; Colin Rhys Lovell, "Afrikaner Nationalism and Apartheid," *The American Historical Review*, 61, no. 2 (1956): 327, doi:10.2307/1844173.

⁴⁷ Harrison, *The White Tribe*, 120-137; Albert Fick, "South Africa's Ku Klux Klan," *Maclean's*, February 1, 1952, 11, <https://archive.macleans.ca/>. The *Ossewabrandwag* (OB.), literally the "Ox-Wagon Fire Guard," was open to all Afrikaners (inspired by the Great Trek from Cape Town to Pretoria that had been mythologized by Afrikaners). Prime Minister Hertzog's decision to join Britain in the war against Germany pushed Afrikaners towards the OB, which held an estimated 400,000 members at its height, almost one third of the Afrikaner population. Christoph Marx, "The Ossewabrandwag as a Mass Movement, 1939-1941," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1994), 195-219, www.jstor.org/stable/2637387.

⁴⁸ "Select Committee Exonerates Malan," *RDM*, June 18, 1946, 1.

⁴⁹ "Interpretive Review of the Past Year's Events," Air Mail # 102, February 22, 1950, from the CDN HC in SA in Cape Town to the SSEA in Ottawa, 1-6, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 2494, file 10463-AE-40, "Annual Review of Political and Other Events in South Africa compiled by High Commissioner – Pretoria," 1948-1959.

almost all of Malan's Cabinet members belonging to the secret society.⁵⁰ In fact, every Prime Minister, President, and all but a few Cabinet ministers in the NP until its downfall in 1994 were members of the secret society. Many had also belonged to the even more militant sect of the Ossewabrandwag, which lost its battle with the NP over how to achieve power, but not over what power should look like. Members of the defunct OB were absorbed into the NP, but a bitter feud within its ranks strengthened the sense of persecution and mistrust in the make-up of the new NP Government.⁵¹

While the English retained a stronger tie to their British homeland, the Dutch descendants, the Boers, had created their own separate culture, religion, and language.⁵² They did not feel as if they were conservators of a land not their own; the Boer way of life had become lore, filling history books with epic tales of hardship and bravery. They had lived through British subjugation and were only now regaining the stature to which they felt entitled. Identification as Afrikaners (of Africa) left no mistake about their beliefs. Malan easily used a fear of the outside as a political motivator to sway the two million European voters, reminding potential supporters of the threat posed by the twelve million non-Europeans. Malan played on their portrayal as violent and "savage" invaders —, who were encroaching on the Afrikaner way of life.⁵³

Almost immediately following the election in 1948, Malan was at odds with the world press. Smuts, now the leader of the opposition United Party, had worked

⁵⁰ G.H. Pirie, et al., "Covert Power in South Africa: The Geography of the Afrikaner Broederbond," *Area*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1980), 79-98, www.jstor.org/stable/20001569; Hull, *Propaganda War*.

⁵¹ "Appointment of Governor General," Letter #466, December 10, 1959, from CDN HC in SA to USSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 8520, file 6605-Q-40C, part 1. "Personalities in South Africa," 1941/05/24-1963/06/07; Harrison, *The White Tribe*, 128.

⁵² *Boer* is synonymous with Afrikaner. It was not considered offensive but fell out of usage and is associated with the era of the "Great Trek" and a more rural, nomadic life.

⁵³ European was a term for those in Apartheid South Africa whose origins were from nations in Europe. They were often generations removed from Europe. "White" was synonymous with European.

diligently to maintain good relationships and support despite the unpopular nature of many of South Africa's policies. Malan, however, would not condone any sign of weakness or of compromise. He had a plan, and he would not tolerate interference from outside. Malan saw every external complaint as an infringement of South Africa's right to control its own affairs. He was not interested in Smuts's plan to "not rush this matter too much" so that "they will more and more appreciate our point of view." Instead, Malan felt that they "must see to it, in the first place, that in international affairs South Africa shows a united front – that we do not in the eyes of the outside world, especially in the matter of attacks on us, stand divided." He was not willing to alter his plan. "If South Africa is attacked again, we will protest even more strongly than in the past. We will protest with all our strength."

Malan argued that there would be no acceptance of South Africa's policies in the world; bowing to their will even slightly would be pointless and unsatisfactory for all sides. There was a "limit beyond which we cannot – and will not go," so why start down that path.⁵⁴ Malan and his NP government were immediately into a defensive mode. They felt misunderstood and misrepresented, and they wanted this to change. To accomplish their goal, they determined that they needed to control the dialogue regarding South Africa – at home, but also abroad.

Canadian print journalists have rarely contended with significant constraints on their work, be they government-mandated censorship or concerted efforts to impose views by publishers, supporters, advertisers, specific interest groups or religious groups. Each newspaper has its individual bent and is apt to align with a given political ideology, but the editorial and writing staff are usually hired in accordance with those ideologies. While influence certainly comes into play,

⁵⁴ "In the House of Assembly," *RDM*, September 1, 1948, 11.

publishers generally balance ideology with what stories will sell papers and favourably affect their bottom line.⁵⁵ In the 1950s, Canadian newspapers were relatively free to publish any opinions or beliefs. They were “the independent critic of government.”⁵⁶

The same cannot be said of newspapers in South Africa, where there existed a high level of self-censorship of newspapers through the means of governmental intimidation long before any official censorship measures came into place. There were sufficient laws on the books that explicit censorship legislation was not required for the government to be able to ban individual articles, journalists, or entire publications.⁵⁷ There were five specific acts that were very broadly interpreted and used to control journalism by the Nationalist Government: the Bantu Administration Act of 1927 was used to ban journalists from writing stories of Africans who went against the government’s policies; the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 used a very broad definition of Communism to include many journalists; the Public Safety Act of 1953 allowed the government to declare a state of emergency at any time and to close down newspapers without consulting Parliament; the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1953 outlawed campaigns or protests against any law, including written articles about planned protests, and permitted postal authorities to open and confiscate any correspondence suspected of assisting protests; and, finally, the Official Secrets Act of 1956 outlawed the publication of information about military,

⁵⁵ Klaus Petersen, and Allan C. Hutchinson, *Interpreting Censorship in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 304, books-scholarsportal-info.proxy.library.carleton.ca/uri/ebooks/ebooks0/gibson_crkn/2009-12-01/6/417941.

⁵⁶ Kesterton, *History of Journalism*, 131, 250.

⁵⁷ “Board of Censors List of Banned Publications,” *RDM*, December 9, 1953, 1; “South Africa’s Censorship Laws,” *Index on Censorship* 4, no. 2 (June 1975): 38–40, Taylor & Francis Online <https://doi.org/10.1080/03064227508532421>.

police or security matters, or any “circumscribed” area designated by the Minister of Justice.⁵⁸

Editors and publishers feared reprisals should anything be deemed inappropriate by the government. The ideological division between the Afrikaner and the English newspapers was stark. The South African press was divided on linguistic lines. The more insular, conservative, and pro-Apartheid Afrikaaner papers were the defenders of Afrikaaner nationalism and the Dutch Reformed Church. The more progressive, although in general still conservative leaning, English newspapers were frequently condemned for disloyal reporting and for stirring up trouble.⁵⁹ All papers included copious coverage of the nation’s leaders and pro-government reporting was common. Often papers were filled with full page spreads featuring releases from the government.⁶⁰

The “racial conflict” spoken of in South Africa in 1950 was between the two “European” races. Those acknowledged as South Africans were the “white” English-speaking citizens, or the “white” Afrikaans speaking citizens. “Many times, when people here speak of the ‘race problem’ they are not thinking of Black versus white, but of English versus Dutch,” wrote Hilton Kolbe.⁶¹ Mainstream South African journalists were almost exclusively white until the 1970s. Jack Scott, foreign

⁵⁸ “South Africa’s Censorship Laws,” 38–40. Bantu means ‘people’ in many sub-Saharan languages and is a word that today describes a large linguistic grouping of Southern African peoples. In Apartheid South Africa Bantu replaced the term Natives and was usually used in a derogatory fashion grouping together all Black South Africans.

⁵⁹ Hilton Robert Kolbe, “The South African Print Media: From Apartheid to Transformation,” Ph.D. Thesis, School of Journalism and Creative Writing, University of Wollongong, 2005, 42, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/429>; Bryan Trabold, “A Willingness to Put a Knife in Its Own Back: Advertising, Self-Censorship, and the Weekly Mail’s Resistance in Apartheid South Africa,” *African Journalism Studies*, 38: 2, (2017): 159-177, DOI: 10.1080/23743670.2017.1332661; Jack Scott, “Walks Alone Unsafe,” *The Vancouver Sun*, April 14, 1953, 2, <https://www.newspapers.com/>.

⁶⁰ “Malan States Union’s attitude towards World Crisis,” *RDM*, January 26, 1951, 11; “Malan Blames U.N. for Great Deal of World’s Unrest,” *RDM*, May 4, 1954, 11.

⁶¹ Hilton Robert Kolbe, “The South African Print Media: From Apartheid to Transformation,” Ph.D. Thesis, School of Journalism and Creative Writing, University of Wollongong, 2005, 42, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/429>

correspondent for *The Vancouver Sun*, wrote in 1953 about a “Coloured” reporter hired against the rules by *The Cape Times* and not permitted to interact with any white South Africans. Mainstream journalists benefitted personally from Apartheid and their support came from advertisers who catered to the European population.⁶² Many of them supported and voted for the NP. While a few papers, or individual journalists, rebelled and overrode the propaganda of the government, for the most part South African papers were considered by critics at best, “weak,” and, at worst, “a mouthpiece of the regime.”⁶³

An exception was *The Rand Daily Mail* (The Daily Mail), established in September 1902 and by the 1960s the most progressive of the English mainstream daily newspapers. *The Daily Mail* did not begin as a contentious organ. There was no real opposition to government policies until Laurence Gandar was hired as editor in 1957. Allister Sparks, sub-editor of *The Daily Mail* in 1957 (and editor when *The Daily Mail* broke the Muldergate Affair in 1978), described Gandar as the person who “transformed what had been a moderately good daily newspaper into an excellent one that won international acclaim for its bold opposition to Apartheid and exposure of human rights violations by an abusive police state.”⁶⁴

Newspapers were the only universal media source for South Africans. South Africa had 22 daily newspapers and 24 weeklies, as well as local papers in most small towns.⁶⁵ While the medium of television was developing in other areas of the world,

⁶² Jack Scott, “‘District Six’ Held Dangerous Area,” *The Vancouver Sun*, April 15, 1953, 3.

⁶³ Kolbe, “South African Print Media,” 10.

⁶⁴ Sparks, *The Sword and the Pen*, Chapter 8. Prior to Gandar’s tenure, *The RDM* had “conformed to the prejudices of its time.” During the first 55 years, no editor had dealt with the racial question in any “insightful way.” *The RDM* did eventually gain a mostly Black readership, before it was closed in 1985. It ceased to appeal to advertisers and to be viable because it was seen as reaching “too many Black readers.” Trabold, “Willingness,” 162.

⁶⁵ “The Post-war Press,” No. XVIII, February 1950, South Africa, Extracted from the Foreign Press News, N.Y., LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 8165, file 5872, AC-40 part 2, “Press in South Africa – reports,” 1950/02/10-1963/09/26. Sixteen of the dailies were English and six Afrikaans. English papers

South Africa banned television before it could even begin, and only reversed this decision completely in 1976.⁶⁶ Radio too was struggling in South Africa, essentially restricted by geography, climate, and finances to all but urban areas. The small population of South African listeners was so sparsely distributed throughout the country that the license model of funding for radio was not sustainable.⁶⁷ Moreover, the same programming did not appeal to the two divergent white cultures, even when it was presented in both their languages.⁶⁸ It would take until the late 1950s for radio to effectively reach across the nation.⁶⁹

After 1948, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), always an arm of the government, was run exclusively by Broederbond members. In October of 1948, only months after the election of the NP, the SABC board stopped broadcasting the BBC feed in Afrikaans, and by 1950 it had stopped BBC broadcasts altogether.⁷⁰ There was little need for censure of the SABC as their goals fell closely in line with government policies: “The role of the South African broadcaster...is to report on ‘positive achievement,’ to prevent dissention among South Africa’s different nations and to counteract the negative criticism of the English language Press and of the outside world. We cannot cast doubt on the rulers of the country. No useful purpose can be served by causing the public distrust of our leaders’ policies”⁷¹ In 1951, the NP introduced a Radio Bill that would give the government the power to ban people from

were supporters of the United Party along with a few Afrikaans papers. No English Papers supported the NP.

⁶⁶ Television first started to make an appearance in South Africa in 1971.

⁶⁷ Individual licences were required by each customer to access radio services. These licences provided funding for the service without the requirement of advertisements.

⁶⁸ Ruth Tomaselli, Keyan Tomaselli and Johan Muller, *Broadcasting in South Africa* (Chicago: Lake View Press), 1987, 32, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015025290738.

⁶⁹ Tomaselli et al., 45-48.

⁷⁰ The BBC did not end the transmission; the SABC simply stopped picking it up.

⁷¹ Douglas Fuchs, retired Director General of the SABC, quoted in Harrison, *The White Tribe*, 208; Tomaselli et al., 54-55, 59-60. Private radio licences appeared in the 1950s to allow for advertising revenue. Springbok Radio began in 1950, but licences went to supporters of the AB and all operations were under the purview of the SABC, with no independent newscasts before 1957.

listening to broadcasts “which they are not authorized to receive,” and from disseminating any of the information they had heard from such a source.⁷² These were the first salvos in the attempts at controlling the dialogue in South Africa.

It soon became clear to the Nationalists that the controls they were framing over domestic information dissemination were not sufficient. As news of Apartheid policies spread, the world reports on South Africa worsened, describing racial discrimination, segregation, and poor treatment of the “Coloured” and Black populations. Stories painted South Africans as “Nazis” and South Africa as a totalitarian state. The Nationalists determined that they would need to control foreign journalists in South Africa, as well as newspaper stories authored and published abroad.

François Christiaan Erasmus, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs for South Africa, “aroused wide interest in Britain, Canada and Australia” with his statement in November 1949: “I would remind those people who send messages abroad besmirching South Africa that in Britain and Holland there is legislation against fouling your own nest.” Erasmus’s statement held little truth and was roundly denounced as hyperbole, based on certain national security measures that had been agreed to during the war. The sentiment, though, prompted a reaction, published in *The Daily Mail*, from B.M. McKelway, president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He said: “if Mr. Erasmus tried to censor news from South Africa to other countries, he would probably find that the remedy for the ills he feels is more unbearable than the ills themselves.”⁷³ Erasmus followed up the next day, responding

⁷² John Kidman, “Letter from South Africa,” *The Montreal Gazette*, April 18, 1951, 8; Norman Phillips, *The Tragedy of Apartheid*, 202. Transmission to white South Africans was on the FM band, while services for non-white South Africans was on the AM band and non-white South Africans were prohibited from owning FM radios.

⁷³ “Erasmus’s Censorship Statement Arouses Wide Interest Overseas,” *RDM*, November 29, 1949, 1.

to this and other world reactions to his statement. He denied that censorship existed in South Africa, but then warned that “the besmirching of South Africa” would not be tolerated:

I referred to the present campaign of slander against South Africa and warned correspondants of newspapers abroad that they should not expect all their articles of an offensive nature slandering South Africa to reach their destination... In terms of the Post Office Act of 1911 the Postmaster-General has the right to intercept and detain certain postal articles... It is, and always has been the custom of the department to take possession of such an article with a view to prevent its distribution through the post, and to submit it to the Minister for such action as he might think fit.⁷⁴

Edgar D’Arcy McGreer, the Canadian High Commissioner to South Africa at the beginning of 1950, wrote in a report to the Department of External Affairs that, with few exceptions, the members of the National government’s Cabinet were “extremely sensitive to public and press criticism.” McGreer quoted Theophilus Ebenhaezer Donges, Minister of the Interior, as saying, “The Government’s main objective is against misrepresentation of South Africa, not in South Africa, but in foreign countries by South African correspondents.” McGreer noted that this attitude was “in striking agreement” with views expressed in a brochure distributed by the NP prior to 1948, calling for steps to “discipline and control the Press.”⁷⁵

The South African Information Service was expanded in 1949. The re-organization linked the Department of the Interior to the Department of Foreign Affairs in an effort to control the South African narrative outside its borders. New posts were created for Information Attachés to Canada, Great Britain, the United States, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, the Argentine, and the Belgian

⁷⁴ “State Won’t Censor Press Says Erasmus,” *RDM*, November 30, 1949, 1.

⁷⁵ Letter #77, February 10, 1950, from the CDN HC in SA (D’Arcy McGreer) to the SSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25 A-3-B, volume 8165, file 5872-AC-40, part 2, “Press in South Africa – Reports,” 1950/02/10-1963/09/26. McGreer pointed out that these sensitivities had been mentioned from “time to time” in his previous despatches since the Nationalists had come to power in 1948.

Congo.⁷⁶ The posts were five-year terms and were to function together as part of the establishment of the State Information Office, while being attached to diplomatic missions. The objective was to, “disseminate information abroad, and... combat ignorance about and propaganda against South Africa.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Now the Argentine Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo, respectively.

⁷⁷ “S.A. Appoints Information Attaches,” *RDM*, July 15, 1949, 9; Letter # 488, July 20, 1949, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SOUTH AFRICAN INFORMATION SERVICE IN CANADA AND *THE OTTAWA CITIZEN*, 1950-1956.

Terence William Leighton MacDermot replaced Edgar D'Arcy McGreer in August of 1950 as the Canadian High Commissioner to South Africa. While MacDermot seemingly held views a bit more to the right than McGreer, and at times excused racist attitudes in South Africa as being understandable given the circumstances that prevailed in that country, he also felt that there was "much concern about the threat to civil liberties implicit in NP policies," such as the Suppression of Communism Act, which gave the government a free pass to enact any restrictive legislation in the name of fighting communism, and the Commission of Enquiry into the Press.⁷⁸

MacDermot attached a copy of the Annual Report of the State Information Office for 1950 to a despatch in May of 1951. He characterized the Information Service as working extensively outside South Africa and having purposes beyond those of a normal Information Service. He quoted the Report as mandating a "somewhat aggressive, not to say belligerent attitude towards its task." The task was "to state the point of view of South Africa abroad and continually to combat propaganda against the Union" and "to defend against attacks from outside." MacDermot mentioned, with a trace of sarcasm, that "the office is assisted in its work

⁷⁸ "Annual Review of Events – South Africa 1950," Circular Document # 30/50, March 24, 1951, from the CDN HC in SA to the Heads of Canadian Missions Abroad, 1, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Department of External Affairs Fonds, RG25 A-3-B, volume 2494, file 10463-AE-40, "Annual Review of Political and Other Events in South Africa compiled by High Commissioner – Pretoria," 1948-1959. See also despatches from High Commissioner to South Africa T.W.L. MacDermot to Secretary of State for External Affairs in Ottawa, particularly "Treatment of Indians in South Africa," Letter # 377, September 18, 1951, from the CDN HC in SA (signed by T.W.L. MacDermot) to the USSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25 G-2, volume 8441, file 5600-40, part 4.1, "Treatment of persons of East Indian origin in the Union of South Africa," 1950/01/25-1953/10/23.

by a ‘most remarkable occurrence’: the spontaneous establishment of organizations abroad which help in combating propaganda against South Africa.”⁷⁹

The South African Information Service was created at a time when many nations were creating such services. Yet, while Canada’s Service, for instance, dealt with sending maps to school children, South Africa’s service had a different agenda, as pointed out by the Canadian High Commission in South Africa in July 1949:⁸⁰

The appointment of nine information attachés may mean that South Africa is only coming into line with other countries who have in recent times set out to “educate” foreigners – but here is one significant difference in South Africa’s case. Few other countries, with the exception of totalitarian States, lay such emphasis on alleged “propaganda” against them. It is an unhealthy emphasis. What exactly is meant by the term that the State Information Office will “in future concentrate mainly on disseminating information abroad?” Does this mean that what foreigners learn about events in the Union is to reach them increasingly through this official channel? The outside world at present gets its South African news through a variety of channels. What happens if their picture and the State Information Office’s picture happen to conflict? Will they be told to conform or stop? These are very important questions, and they should be answered.⁸¹

The Canadian High Commissioner forwarded documents to Ottawa to help explain the Service, including a talk, “Explaining South Africa to the World,” given by J.H. Otto du Plessis, Director of the State Information Office, and an article “How South Africa’s Information Service Works,” also by du Plessis.⁸² In his article du Plessis

⁷⁹ “Annual Report of the State Information Office, 1950.” Despatch # 192, May 9, 1951, from CDN HC to SA in Cape Town (signed by MacDermot) to SSEA, 1, LAC, RG25 A-3-B, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1, “Information and cultural services of the Government of South Africa – Reports,” 1949/07/20-1960/05/16.

⁸⁰ LAC, RG25 G-2, volume 3592, file 2727-AC-40, part 2/3, “Canadian Publicity in South Africa, Cultural Relations between Canada, and South Africa,” 20/02/1949-14/12/1962. Documents produced by the Canadian Information Office with the Canadian Mission in South Africa show that the information officer’s time was spent fulfilling requests from schoolteachers, cultural groups, journalists and libraries for maps, photographs, and information pamphlets, and responding to questions on trade. They collected articles appearing in South African papers that mentioned Canada. They did not pen articles, or letters to the editor, or speak extensively to community clubs and organizations.

⁸¹ Letter # 488, July 20, 1949, from CDN HC in SA, (Signed E. Thibault for the High Commissioner) to the USSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1.

⁸² J.H. Otto du Plessis – Director of the State information Office, “How South Africa’s Information Service Works,” attached to Air Mail No. 821, December 9, 1949, from CDN HC in SA to the SSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25 A-3-B, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1. Otto du Plessis was an ardent nationalist and a known Nazi sympathizer who lost his post as Ambassador to the Netherlands because

outlined the need for the Service: “The Union of South Africa, with its special problems and its great calling on what is still regarded as the ‘Dark Continent,’ dare not lag behind in this important development; still less if we bear in mind the hostile, sometimes malicious, propaganda directed against the Union, especially during the last few years.”⁸³ Du Plessis explained further that the task ahead would be difficult. He complained that South Africans were addressing an audience that “simply will not listen... and who have no notion of the struggle” that existed in South Africa. He classified outsiders as “busybodies and mischief makers,” not willing to see the truth.⁸⁴

Du Plessis argued in his speech that while all points of view must be covered in a democratic state, once decisions have been made it was South Africans’ duty to inform the world of these decisions and “defend them against all attacks.” The aim of the Service was to “make friends for South Africa in the dislocated and troublous [sic] world of today.” The tone of du Plessis’s speech was one of inspiring patriotism and service to the government. He added that the task at hand inspired “loyalty and dedication to duty,” while warning that the “greatest evil” came from those who “deliberately besmirch their own country abroad.”⁸⁵ Du Plessis’s first concern was the need to have the “right” people in place to be able to make an impact.⁸⁶

of his support of the Nazis and was given the post at the Information Office instead. “Previous Appointments,” *RDM*, February 28, 1950, 9.

⁸³ Du Plessis, “How South Africa’s Information Service Works,” 1.

⁸⁴ Du Plessis, “How South Africa’s Information Service Works,” 2.

⁸⁵ J.H. Otto du Plessis – Director of the State Information Office, “Explaining South Africa to the World” Address to the annual meeting of the Johannesburg Branch of the South African Institute of International Affairs, September 26, 1949, attached to Air Mail No. 821, December 9, 1949, from CDN HC in SA to the SSEA in Ottawa, 12-13, LAC, RG25 A-3-B, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1. Les de Villiers, when approached to join the Information Services, “was so enthralled with the prospect of taking up the cudgels on behalf of my beleaguered homeland that not even starvation wages could have made me change my mind.” See Les de Villiers, *Secret Information*, 1st edition. (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1980), 19, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/101945928>.

⁸⁶ Du Plessis, “Explaining South Africa,” 12-13.

This first chapter of the thesis will look at the interaction of one of those “right” people, Alexander H.W. Steward, in his role as Information Officer at the South African High Commission in Ottawa, with journalists and editors from progressive Canadian newspapers, primarily *The Ottawa Citizen*. It will examine how the editors at *The Citizen* contended with the aggressive actions of the South African representative of the Information Service.

Alexander Steward, the first Information Officer appointed to the South African Mission in Ottawa, took his instructions literally. He was to leave quite an impression on those he encountered during his term in Ottawa. Steward was an English South African, born in 1917 in what became KwaZulu-Natal Province. He grew up with Zulus and spoke their language, maintaining a respect for them throughout his life. Steward was an advocate of separation policies long before the name and policies of Apartheid came into existence. He believed that each racial group should occupy the land that they had traditionally held.⁸⁷ While Steward never “acknowledged the fundamental injustices of Apartheid,” he did not strictly agree with the policies as set out by the NP, and later argued for a third type of segregation area with mixed cultural backgrounds. Steward’s job was nevertheless to explain and defend his government’s position, no matter his own beliefs.⁸⁸

Steward arrived in Ottawa in March 1950 with his young family.⁸⁹ His previous experience was as a journalist for *The Rand Daily Mail*, and as a diplomat in Nairobi, Kenya. Steward’s responsibility in Kenya had been information gathering, especially information pertaining to the progress towards independence of former

⁸⁷ Alexander Steward, *The World, the West, And Pretoria* (New York: D. McKay Co., 1977), 13, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000213135>; David Steward, e-mail to author, July 29, 2021.

⁸⁸ David Steward, e-mail to author, July 29, 2021.

⁸⁹ *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 31, 1950, 124.

colonies and their status in relation to South Africa.⁹⁰ Steward was approached following the election of the NP by the minister of Economic Affairs, Eric Louw, to work within the new Information Service. Steward, throughout his life, produced works on South African policies, works that were influenced strongly by his time as an information officer. These books were written in a similar vein to his newspaper comments, his pamphlets, and his speeches. He specialised in often un-supported, one-sided arguments that incited a reaction.⁹¹ His writing skills were less than stellar and his enthusiasm for his cause in most cases supplanted any rational thread that might have been the basis of an argument. The preface to his book, *The World, the West and Pretoria*, was a sarcastic “thank you” to those Steward saw as having aligned against his homeland:

My thanks are due (in alphabetical order) to the academics, broadcasting systems, communists, cosmopolitans, demonstrators, egalitarians, foundations, ‘freedom fighter,’ governments, humanists, ideologues, newspapers (and particularly The Rand Daily Mail, The Guardian and the New York Times), the Organisation of African Unity, politicians, protesters, pseudo-liberals, radicals, rationalists, revolutionaries, sportsbusters, students, television networks, the United Nations and all those others who in their opposition and challenge to this nation have fortified its power of purpose.⁹²

⁹⁰ *The Ottawa Citizen*, August 2, 1949, 12; Steward, *The World*, 57.

⁹¹ Steward’s books were: *South Africa: Its Peoples, Its Problems, Its Policies. The Condition of Race Relations*, 1950; *A single Soul*, 1956; *You are Wrong Father Huddleston*, 1956; *The Challenge of Change*, 1962; *South West Africa, – The Sacred Trust*, 1963; *The World, the West and Pretoria*, 1977. Reviews of Steward’s work described his inability to reason in a convincing manner and his inability to portray characters: “Churchman Challenges Writer of State Book: Huddleston Not Wrong but Reply Not Accurate,” *RDM*, August 3, 1956, 5; “Fighting Talk,” *RDM*, November 10, 1956, 14; *RDM*, August 21, 1956. Steward’s son, David, was to go on to become head of the South African delegation at the United Nations, Chief Information Officer for South Africa, Chief of Staff for Frederik Willem DeKlerk, State President of South Africa from 1989-1994, Deputy President until 1996 under Nelson Mandela, and a key person in the dismantling of Apartheid in South Africa between 1990 and 1996. David Steward is the current Director of the DeKlerk Foundation.

⁹² Steward, *The World*, ix, 202. Steward randomly placed overseas news clippings through his book. He wrote that the reader might not read them, and might find them annoying, but this was by design as this was how South Africa found them, – annoying, intrusive, and seldom supportive of South Africa: “...the persistent, unrelenting and remorseless pressure of world opinion that has been brought to bear against it. Day after day for some 30 years without interruption, a flood of indignation, anger, abhorrence and condemnation of its policies has poured from the presses of the world, as also incessant predictions of doom and disaster.”

Following Steward's first year on the job, the South African Information Office produced an annual report that indicated there was a wide interest in South Africa and that a "large number of articles on South Africa" appeared in Canadian newspapers at a rate of "well over 1,000 a month."

There is great enthusiasm among Canadians for the "fair-deal-for-all" type of political thought. There is thus an almost instinctive opposition to any discrimination based on race or colour...: The "newsy" presentation of South African affairs coupled with this kind of thinking, has led to severe criticism of the Union. A considerable proportion of the 1,000 articles each month consist of critical comment, much of which is written in Canada itself by editors, columnists and others.⁹³

Steward was assisted by visiting ministers and industrialists who would speak at social gatherings, such as church assemblies. A favourite complaint was that Canadians simply did not understand South Africa. They were too willing to listen to the stories from liberals in the Canadian press and were not educated in the "real facts" affecting South Africa and their struggle to make "a decent life" for all. "Canadians show a lack of knowledge of South Africa which should not go unchallenged" was the comment of one such visitor.⁹⁴

Steward became well known among the parliamentary reporters in Canada. His propaganda pamphlets earned him the reputation of a fanatical nuisance more than a respected diplomat. "He showers newspapermen in the Parliamentary Press Gallery with mailed propaganda. Our waste baskets bulge with the stuff." While other

⁹³ "Annual Report of the State Information Office 1950," from the Director of the State Information Office to the Minister of the Interior (South Africa), Pretoria Government Printer, Minerva Printing Works for Government Printer, Part three: Activities Abroad, included in Despatch No. 192, May 9, 1951, from the CDN HC in SA (T.W.L. MacDermot) to the SSEA in Ottawa, 44-46, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, Volume 2494, file 10463-AE-40, "Annual Review of Political and Other Events in South Africa compiled by High Commissioner – Pretoria," 1948-1959.

⁹⁴ "Finds Canadians Lack Knowledge of South Africa," *The Edmonton Journal*, March 19, 1948, 14.

embassies produced information pamphlets, Steward set “a bit of a record in volume and manages to be offensive, dull and silly at the same time.”⁹⁵

The Ottawa Citizen (*The Citizen*) under Editor in Chief Charles J.

Woodsworth, whose approach, Kesterton writes, was generally described as a little left of liberal, was the Canadian newspaper that most directly confronted Steward and held a tough editorial line against South Africa’s racial policies.⁹⁶ *The Citizen*, one of seven newspapers belonging to the Southam chain, was described by journalist Pierre Berton as a “maverick” paper in 1950.⁹⁷ The Southam papers were recognized as independent and autonomous entities. Unlike newspaper chains in the United States, Southam papers kept their individuality, down to political philosophy, layout, and print type. The Southam brothers (and their associates), were very individual in their approach. Four of their papers in 1950 supported the Liberals and three the Conservatives.⁹⁸

Two Southam brothers, Harry and Wilson, had overseen *The Citizen* since 1897.⁹⁹ They changed the focus of the once conservative paper to a broadsheet that their father would not have read, and one that their fellow publishers referred to as “that screwy paper in Ottawa.”¹⁰⁰ Under Woodsworth’s leadership, hard-hitting

⁹⁵ Dillon O’Leary, “Ottawa Report—Man with Mission,” *The Vancouver Sun*, March 21, 1953, 27.

⁹⁶ Wilfred H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 95, <https://books-scholarsportal-info.proxy.library.carleton.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks3/upress/2014-09-29/1/9780773595163>

⁹⁷ Pierre Berton, “The Southams,” *MacLean’s*, June 15, 1950, 62. The Southam holdings increased from seven to eight papers in 1956.

⁹⁸ Berton, “The Southams,” 62. “Don’t call us a chain,” says John Bird who heads the Southam Ottawa bureau. “That’s a fighting word! Unlike the Hearst Press in the U.S., which use identical type faces and syndicated features and runs many machine-made editorials, Southam papers grind no common axe and all look and act quite differently.”

⁹⁹ Wilson Southam died in 1947 leaving Harry Southam to run the paper alone.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Bruce. *News and the Southams* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), 90, <hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b4598369>; Berton, “The Southams,” 63-64, 66. In 1912, after a few tense years of disagreements on policy between the Southam brothers and the Conservative party, and many editorials that disagreed with Sir Robert Borden’s policies, William Southam cancelled his subscription to *The Ottawa Citizen* in disgust. When Harry and his late brother, Wilson, took over *The Ottawa Citizen* it was, in Harry’s words, “a narrow bigoted Tory organ.”

editorials on South Africa began to appear.¹⁰¹ Woodsworth's predecessor, Arthur Clement Cummings, served as editor through to his retirement in January of 1949, never quite finding his place at *The Citizen*.¹⁰² During Cummings's mandate, the number of editorials that appeared concerning South Africa's racial issues could be counted on one hand. Following the rise to power of the National Party, Cummings's *Citizen* worried about the situation the English minority would find themselves in far more often than worrying about the circumstances of the Black and Coloured peoples of South Africa.¹⁰³ On the pivotal election day, in May of 1948, there was only one small mention on the front page of the election results, and that was a contribution from the Associated Press.¹⁰⁴

In a 1950 MacLean's article, Pierre Berton wrote that Harry Southam disagreed with his editors often, but that he allowed them to dictate the direction of the newspaper, so long as they were not too cautious.¹⁰⁵ It appeared that Southam may have found Cummings's approach a bit too cautious. He chose as his replacement Charles James Woodsworth, son of James S. Woodsworth, founder of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) Party. Charles Woodsworth was known for his socialist agenda and actions.¹⁰⁶ He had been with *The Vancouver Daily* from

¹⁰¹ Bruce, *News and the Southams*, 408. The long serving, unorthodox editor of *The Ottawa Citizen*, Charles A. Bowman, left the paper in February of 1946. Bowman was replaced by Arthur Clement Cummings, the much lauded, but heavily opinionated, former bureau chief for the Southam Newspapers in London during the war. Cummings was never happy at *The Ottawa Citizen*, never feeling that he had enough rein in Ottawa to promote his opinions.

¹⁰² *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 3, 1949, 1; Arthur Clement Cummings, *Full Many Strange Places* (Sidney, B.C.: Peninsula Printing Company, 1967), 108-109, <https://archive.org/details/fullmanystrangep0000cumm>

¹⁰³ "S. Africa Votes on Racial Issues," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 26, 1948, 32.

¹⁰⁴ "S.A May quit U.N.," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 29, 1948, 1, 4.

¹⁰⁵ Berton, "The Southams," 66.

¹⁰⁶ Blair Fraser, "The Sainly Failure Who Changed Canada," *Maclean's*, November 1, 1951, 52. Woodsworth's father encouraged pacifism in his sons, discouraging their enlistment in the military during the war. In 1935, to get a story, Woodsworth, disguised as a transient, rode-the-rails with protestors from Vancouver to Regina in the On-To-Ottawa Trek protesting unemployment. Woodsworth also embraced the Kibbutz system of collectivism in Israel and made a trip to Israel in 1949 to see the efforts for himself but made clear that this system could not be compared to the Soviet

1941 until he began at *The Citizen* in 1948, except for a short stint from 1944-46 with the British Ministry of Information and Research Division in India, Ceylon, and Singapore.¹⁰⁷ Woodsworth assumed the editor-in-chief position in January of 1949, and immediately pointed the newspaper in a new direction. The layout began to change. The number of headlines and stories that spanned more than one column gradually increased, while the editorial page switched almost immediately to two column editorials. The result was a much more appealing page to read. It was perhaps not quite the direction Southam was expecting, as Woodsworth's *Citizen* was described in *Maclean's* as one that "no longer espouses the causes which Harry Southam still held dear to his heart."¹⁰⁸ A description, quoted in the House of Commons, portrayed Woodsworth's *Citizen* thus: "The seven money-making newspapers of the Southam Group cover a wide arc of the political spectrum, but none edges further leftward – on the editorial page, if not in the news columns – than the lively and unpredictable *Ottawa Citizen*."¹⁰⁹

Woodsworth's socialist standing also meant he would never be the most popular journalist with certain members of the House of Commons.¹¹⁰ In November 1952, George Drew, leader of the opposition Conservative party, attacked a Woodsworth broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Drew criticised both the government and the CBC for permitting the broadcast.¹¹¹ The

system. He embraced the economic development encouraged by the Israeli system. "The Harsh Land of Israel," *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 17, 1949, 36.

¹⁰⁷ Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Appointment of C. J. Woodsworth as Canadian Commissioner to The International Supervisory Commission for Vietnam*, Press Release # 16, (February 24, 1960), https://gac.canadiana.ca/view/ooe.sas_19600224EP.

¹⁰⁸ "The Southams," *MacLean's*, 66.

¹⁰⁹ "Ontario: Editor Ousted," *Time Magazine Canada*, February 21, 1955, quoted in Canada, Parliament, *HoC debates*, 22nd Parliament, 2nd Session: Vol. 3, (April 6, 1955), 2885, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2202_03/591?r=0&s=4.

¹¹⁰ "Writer and Radio Speaker Abused Privilege: Gardiner," *The Globe and Mail*, March 21, 1951, 2.

¹¹¹ "Backstage at Ottawa," *MacLean's*, March 15, 1953, 74. The criticism was that Woodsworth had said "George Drew is no Eisenhower," implying that he did not have the popularity to pull off an election win as Eisenhower had recently done in the United States.

Liberal government was very quick to call out and mock Drew's attempt to suppress or censor the press.¹¹² Woodsworth was also accused of being a Communist many times during his stint as editor-in-chief at *The Citizen*.¹¹³ "Communist sympathiser" was an easy tag to throw at a socialist, knowing it would have traction, despite Woodsworth's own documented opinions to the contrary.¹¹⁴ Parliament spent some time debating his politics in 1954, trying to decide whether he should be given the right to speak on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and accusing him of broadcasting Communist beliefs.¹¹⁵ During a Special Committee on Broadcasting in 1955, the witnesses were questioned over implications that Woodsworth and his political perspective were getting too much air time.¹¹⁶

The Citizen's approach to the topic of South Africa shifted under the auspices of its new editor. The number of articles on racial issues in South Africa appearing in *The Citizen* increased markedly. On January 15, 17 and 18, 1949, articles appeared on disturbances happening in Durban, including graphic photos of the events, and inflammatory headlines such as "Families Burned Alive."¹¹⁷ There was also an

¹¹² "Backstage at Ottawa," *MacLean's*, March 15, 1953, 74.

¹¹³ Canada, Parliament, *HoC Debates*, 22nd Parliament, 1st Session: Vol. 6, (June 10, 1954), 5823-5825, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2201_06/139?r=0&s=3; Canada, Parliament, *HoC Committees*, Special Committee on Broadcasting, 22nd Parliament, 2nd Session: Vol. 1, (March 31, 1955), 88-90, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.com_HOC_2202_10_1/1?r=0&s=1; Canada, Parliament, *HoC Debates*, 22nd Parliament, 2nd Session: Vol. 5, (June 17, 1955), 4938-4943, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2202_05/320?r=0&s=2; "Must Beat Reds: Citizen Editor Shows Ways to Assist Asians," *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 8, 1952, 14. Woodsworth encouraged the 'West' to do more for the developing world as a means to stopping Communism. He clearly was not a follower of Soviet doctrine. "Socred Accuses Editorial Writer of Red Leanings," *The Globe and Mail*, June 11, 1954, 2.

¹¹⁴ "Urges Economic Means to Combat Communism," *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 6, 1952, 8. The article quoted Woodsworth from a speech to The Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Citizenship Council in Montreal.

¹¹⁵ Canada, Parliament, *HoC Debates*, 22nd Parliament, 1st Session: Vol. 6, (June 10, 1954), 5823-5825, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2201_06/139?r=0&s=2.

¹¹⁶ Canada, Parliament, *HoC Committees*, Special Committee on Broadcasting, 22nd Parliament, 2nd Session: Vol. 1, (March 31, 1955), 88-90, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.com_HOC_2202_10_1/1?r=0&s=1.

¹¹⁷ "Families Burned Alive," *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 15, 1949, 9; "Race Riots Spreading," *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 17, 1949, 1; "Refugees Problem in Durban," *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 18, 1949, 8.

editorial blaming the racial mandates of the new South African government for the strife between two groups that were suffering under South Africa's oppressive regime. The editorial referred to Canada's own less than stellar record on racial issues, citing both the plight of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia and the internment of Canadian Japanese during the war. References to the Torch Commandos, white South African war veterans protesting Apartheid, gave a human face to those targeted by South African policies.¹¹⁸

In 1949 *Citizen* editorials were vocal in their calls on the United Nations to stand for human rights, not just in Eastern Europe, but for minorities around the world, including in Canada, the United States and in South Africa, while still recognizing the limitations on the power of the United Nations.¹¹⁹ There were no less than ten editorials in *The Citizen* dealing with the politics of race issues developing in South Africa, and at the United Nations, during Woodsworth's first year as editor. There was, however, only one editorial in 1949 that related directly to the actual incidents of racial discrimination in South Africa.¹²⁰ Once South Africa began to ramp up their rhetoric against the press, the editorials in *The Citizen* began to change. The fact that this change aligned with the arrival of the first South African Information Officer posted to the High Commission in Ottawa could only have heightened awareness of the issue.

Alexander Steward was a zealous man. His flurry of letters-to-the-editor, countering any perceived slights against South Africa, blanketed Canadian newspapers. From 1950 through 1954, many exchanges appeared in newspapers,

¹¹⁸ "Riots in South Africa," *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 17, 1949, 28.

¹¹⁹ "Debating War and Peace," *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 29, 1949, 32; "Racial Discrimination a Challenge to the U.N.," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 12, 1949, 40; "The U.N. Debates Freedom," *The Ottawa Citizen*, April 15, 1949, 24.

¹²⁰ "A Harvest of Hate in Africa," *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 19, 1952, 32.

particularly in *The Citizen*, between the South African Information Officer and the writers and readers referencing opinions that had been expressed in editorials or letters. Steward penned more than 100 letters to the editor, or articles, in his capacity as Information Officer for South Africa during his term. His name also appeared in information articles advertising or summing up Steward's radio spots and his public speaking engagements or mentions of his life in Ottawa in the social pages.¹²¹

Steward made a habit of finding one small item that hinted at any agreement with the South African regime. He would then spin the information into a defence of the "logic" and "rationalism" he saw as the basis of the Apartheid system.¹²² While many Canadians opposed Steward's views, a good number would inevitably write in his support.

In early May 1950, South African Prime Minister Malan's approach caused a stir that was felt throughout the Commonwealth. Malan's hold on South Africa was tenuous; his position was made possible through a difficult coalition with Nicolaas C. Havenga's Afrikaner Party. Malan was also dealing with fissures within his own Herenigde Nasionale Party (NP) between his supporters and the more right-wing members of his party. In a pronouncement in Parliament, Malan used what was likely a deliberate misinterpretation of Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's view of the King's role in the Commonwealth to his own advantage.¹²³ Malan advanced his

¹²¹ Steward's letters appeared in the following Canadian newspapers: *The Calgary Herald*; *The Edmonton Journal*; *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto); *The Leader Post* (Regina); *The Lethbridge Herald*; *The Montreal Gazette*; *The Ottawa Citizen*; *The Ottawa Journal*; *The Star Phoenix* (Saskatoon); *The Times Colonist* (Victoria); *The Toronto Daily Star*; *The Vancouver News Herald*; *The Vancouver Sun*; *The Windsor Star*; *The Winnipeg Free Press*. He also published in *Maclean's*.

¹²² Steward, *The World*, 202.

¹²³ "Canada's Premier Replies to Malan's Remarks," *RDM*, May 3, 1950, 1; "Change in King's Title to be discussed," *RDM*, May 2, 1950, 9; "Malan on Title of King," *RDM*, May 2, 1950, 11. Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's denial appears in the *RDM* in response to Prime Minister Malan's words.

goal of South Africa's eventual transformation into a republic with the argument that Canada, the senior member of the Commonwealth, was on the same track.

Steward and *The Citizen's* editors squared off on this issue. There was an initial *Citizen* editorial, "Dr. Malan's View of Canada," in which there were subtle insinuations that Malan was twisting the words of St. Laurent to appeal to his fellow South Africans.¹²⁴ These views were followed the next day by a response from Steward, "Dr. Malan's Reference to Canada."¹²⁵ Steward's letter refuted the editorial and denied that there was anything intentional in Malan's words. Printed alongside the denial was another *Citizen* editorial entitled "Dr. Malan and the Press": "Any misunderstanding on Dr. Malan's part, however, or on the part of a news service, pales in comparison with the misunderstandings that would result if the South African government controlled the press as it gives signs of desiring."¹²⁶ The editorial recalled events such as the banning of the rebroadcasting of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News, the "threatened censorship and reprisals against correspondents who sent 'slandorous' reports abroad," the threat of deportation of foreign journalists, and the establishment of an enquiry into the press.¹²⁷ The commentary warned that the "new order in South Africa prefers propaganda to news."¹²⁸

No longer was South Africa a friendly Commonwealth sibling. The opinions expressed in *The Citizen* were taking on a more adversarial role, describing South Africa in darker terms, and insinuating dark deeds. An editorial in June of 1950 warned of consequences for South Africa, Africa, the Commonwealth, and the United Nations should South Africa continue along its path of segregation. It warned of the

¹²⁴ "Malan's View of Canada," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 5, 1950, 40.

¹²⁵ A.W. Steward, Letter to the Editor: "Dr. Malan's Reference to Canada," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 6, 1950, 36.

¹²⁶ "Dr. Malan and the Press," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 6, 1950, 36.

¹²⁷ See chapter two for more information on the South African Press Commission, established in 1950.

¹²⁸ "Dr. Malan and the Press," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 6, 1950, 36.

disenfranchised turning to Communism, and of a divided white population. The editorial ended with, “To liberal opinion throughout the world, it seems like a wilfully retrograde policy that will lead to bitterness and strife.”¹²⁹

Steward’s second tussle with *The Citizen* came in November of 1950. A recent immigrant family from Scotland who had spent a year in South Africa had been interviewed by a *Citizen* reporter for a story describing their experiences living on a farm in South Africa. Steward took it upon himself to track down the woman quoted in the article to convince her to recant her previous words and to claim she had been misquoted. The article was altered for the Evening edition of the newspaper, and so we cannot read it today.¹³⁰ Steward followed up a week later with a letter to the editor to make public the fact that he had approached this woman over the story and how, being “certain that some mistake had been made,” he had convinced her to contact the newspaper and ask it to change the story.¹³¹ *The Citizen* fired back with an article that decried the attempt by the Information Officer to influence and undermine the press in Canada. The journalist in question, Ralph Vickers, stood behind the original quote. In the view of his colleague, Austin Cross, the larger issue was not the story but the attempts to control the story:

...the easy way out, Is [sic] to say: “I was misquoted.” ... In this instance, one can see that Steward is doing his job. But project this a little further. What this really means is that every time anybody says anything unfavorable about Prime Minister Malan and his government, Public Relations Officer Steward will hustle out, and try to secure a denial, a renunciation “I was misquoted.” If that Is [sic] to be his policy, let us be aware of It [sic]. Let us then recognize that the South Africans do not want a free press, a free expression of opinion. What they want is that Canadians must not dare express any opinion contrary to that held by the present government. Steward et al have been plugging “Apartheid,” the ideology of giving Blacks a different place in South African society. To a

¹²⁹ “Apartheid in the United States,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 9, 1950, 40; “Thundercloud over South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 16, 1950, 36.

¹³⁰ Ralph Vickers, “Wee Laddies in Africa Dinna Like Pipes’ Skirl,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 16, 1950, 18.

¹³¹ A.W. Steward, Letter to the Editor: “Treatment of African Natives,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 23, 1950, 40.

degree, we have co-operated, printing their viewpoint. To some, this viewpoint might or might not be repugnant. But they had a right to it. Prime Minister Malan has a right to do as he likes, think as he likes, print what he likes. In Canada, under this regime, *The Evening Citizen* has a right to print Its [sic] own opinions too. The lady gave a quote. Then apparently “persuasion” was used to get her to recant. All right, so now we know what the South Africans want.¹³²

Steward maintained a busy schedule. He was writing pamphlets for distribution to Members of Parliament and other influential organizations. He was distributing two pamphlets each month with a starting circulation near one thousand, “calculated to correct what may be described as ideological misunderstanding, and to fill out the Canadian’s general knowledge of the country.”¹³³ He was also providing articles and interviews for publication in newspapers, and letters-to-the-editor in response to editorials across the country.¹³⁴ Twice a year he would leave Ottawa for about a month, heading first West and then East on speaking tours. In a letter to his wife, Steward addressed the magnitude of his efforts: “What an incomprehensible contrast all this is! The seemingly endless train journey through prairie and mountain... and the editor’s office in town after town, with the explanations, the arguments, the discussions about Apartheid going on and on each day like a gramophone repeating itself.”¹³⁵

Steward was also active in the social life of Ottawa. He attended numerous society events and delivered speeches and radio addresses.¹³⁶ He was repeatedly invited to speak at Rotary Clubs, women’s clubs, and church clubs, and his words were duly reported in local papers, although it can be assumed that he lobbied for

¹³² Austin F. Cross, “Grand Old Diplomatic Dodge: I Was Misquoted,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 25, 1950, 2.

¹³³ “The Annual Report of the State Information Office 1950,” 45, LAC, RG25 A-3-B, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1. The two pamphlets were “South Africa, the Complex Country,” and “Light on the Dark Continent: South Africa – In Fact.”

¹³⁴ “Believes Africa Will Avoid Violence in Solving Problems,” *The Edmonton Journal*, May 17, 1952, 26; “Malan’s Race Bars ‘Save’ Civilization,” *The Vancouver Sun*, May 9, 1952, 3.

¹³⁵ Steward, *The World*, 17. Letter from Steward to his wife written in 1952.

¹³⁶ “Listening Highlights,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 1, 1952, 31.

those invitations. His talks contained the prejudices and justifications of Apartheid that the editorials in *The Citizen* were condemning. Steward's words were quoted by a reporter for *The Citizen*:

... racial discrimination was the only basis upon which harmonious relations between the various races could be maintained. Without discrimination, the white man, who is expected to set the example of civilization, would have to depress drastically his standard of living; the backward people would have full access to the liquor and armament which had caused so much trouble among other primitive peoples; the land guaranteed the natives would be bought up by the white men overnight; the Blacks' voting power would cost the whites control of a country which only they are capable of controlling at this stage.¹³⁷

The coverage of Steward's talks in Canadian newspapers was usually couched in terms such as "Mr. Steward attempted, in his address, to explain the problem of South Africa to his audience, so that they might have a somewhat better understanding of the situation." Or, "A number of husbands joined the group to hear a talk by A.W. Steward, information officer with the office of the High Commissioner for South Africa, which was illustrated with a color film on South Africa," and "Mr. Steward gave an interesting description of the geography, history and peoples of South Africa."¹³⁸ The reports rarely portrayed Steward as anything other than just another guest speaker, and did not mention any outspoken or controversial reactions or that his audiences were offended. In the annual report of the South African Information Office for 1950, Steward explained that he sought to "correct the Canadian's attitudes," while persuading them "that ours is not an isolated, backward country governed by a reactionary, 19th century-thinking, white minority, but that it is

¹³⁷ *The Ottawa Citizen*, Dec 11, 1950, 6.

¹³⁸ "A.W. Steward Guest Speaker," *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 26, 1950, 15; *The Ottawa Journal*, December 11, 1950, 10; "St. Patrick's LA [Ladies Auxiliary]," *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 23, 1953, 13.

among the most modern countries in the world and the leader of civilisation in Africa.”¹³⁹

In 1951 there was a continuing theme in editorials related to South Africa in *The Citizen*. The underlying argument linked South Africa’s oppression of its non-white population to a distrust of the West in the newly emerging African and Asian countries that could drive these fledgling nations towards the Soviet Union and Communism.¹⁴⁰ Polls showed that Canadians were fearful of Communism and the threat of another war, perhaps a nuclear war. They were likely more responsive to arguments against racism when the security of their world was in play.¹⁴¹

Steward’s campaign against the Canadian media intensified during the second year of the decade. In an editorial on the Christian opposition to Apartheid in South Africa that ran in *The Citizen* in January, there was an acknowledgement that many supporters of Apartheid also wanted decent treatment of the Black people of South Africa. The editorial went on to denounce Apartheid.¹⁴² Steward picked up on this line and wrote a lengthy letter to the editor in defence of Apartheid.¹⁴³ A chain of letters-to-the-editor followed from readers who called Steward out, as well as from readers who supported him.¹⁴⁴ An editorial made *The Citizen*’s position clear. South Africa was a totalitarian regime. The Nobel Prize winner, Ralph Bunche, was quoted:

¹³⁹ “The Annual Report of the State Information Office 1950,” 45.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Non-White’ in Apartheid South Africa applied to any person who did not qualify as a white. This included all “Coloured” and Black persons. Exceptions were made for certain persons visiting South Africa who could be granted “Honorary White Status”.

¹⁴¹ “A New Commonwealth Partner,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 27, 1951, 40; Gallup Canada, 2019, *Canadian Gallup Poll*, March 1954, #235, <https://doi.org/10.5683/SP2/USVTY9>; Gallup Canada, 2019, *Canadian Gallup Poll*, July 1954, #237, <https://doi.org/10.5683/SP2/TTLCA6>. By 1954 almost sixty percent of Canadians were worried about a serious threat of Communism to Canada, and ninety four percent of respondents said that a possible war was the country’s biggest concern.

¹⁴² “Christian Influence in South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 11, 1951, 32.

¹⁴³ Alexander Steward, Letter to the Editor: “The Basis of ‘Apartheid,’” *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 16, 1950, 28.

¹⁴⁴ Anne Garbett, Letter to the Editor: “‘Apartheid’ in South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 5, 1951, 30; “Black and White in South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, 40; S.D. Kalelkar, Letter to the Editor, *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 8, 1951, 34.

“Equality can only be real if it is practised on the basis of the individual, rather than on the basis of the collective group to which a person belongs through an accident of birth.”¹⁴⁵

In 1952 the coverage in *The Citizen* included over thirty editorials addressing the racial strife in South Africa.¹⁴⁶ *The Citizen*’s editorials followed Malan’s increasingly undemocratic actions, and the internal conflict they were promoting within South Africa, encouraging resistance to Malan’s actions, and predicting a fraught resolution that could take a long time to play out.¹⁴⁷ *The Citizen* quoted from *The Times* of London: “the issue between the races in South Africa is at the heart of a controversy in which the conscience of the world is interested.”¹⁴⁸

Steward’s responses included his usual arguments for Apartheid, that it was best for all and he also attacked those who “seek to create race harmony” but were

¹⁴⁵ A. W. Steward, Letter to the Editor: “South Africa’s ‘Model Civilization,’” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 16, 1951, 40; Anne Garbett, Letter to the Editor: “‘Apartheid’ in South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 5, 1951, 30; David S. Christie, Letter to the Editor: “The Pendulum Swings Slowly,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 01, 1951, 36; “Developing Democracy in Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 26, 1951, 34; Ernest Osborne, Letter to the Editor: “Not Ready for Equality,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 8, 1951, 32; Edward E. McCullough, Letter to the Editor: “Whitewash,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 19, 1951, 30; F. E. Malherbe, Letter to the Editor: “Oppression in South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 16, 1951, 36; George Marshfield, Letter to the Editor: “‘Equality’ In South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, Jan 23, 1951, 25; Jack Alexander, Letter to the Editor: “Where we’re Vulnerable,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 26, 1951, 32; Letter to the Editor: “‘Phony’ Talk of Equal Rights,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 12, 1951, 34; Lloyd Williams, Letter to the Editor: “South Africa’s Apartheid,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 25, 1951, 34; S.D. Kalelkar, Letter to the Editor: “Black and White in South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 8, 1951, 40; “South Africa’s Totalitarianism,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 5, 1951, 30.

¹⁴⁶ “International: Blow Dealt to Racial Segregation,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 22, 1952, 17; “Malan Court in Session,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, August 25, 1952, 1; “South Africa Rule of Force”; J.P. Nieuwenhuysen, “African Attitudes to South Africa,” *The Australian Quarterly* Vol 37., No. 2 (June 1965), 60, doi:10.2307/20634046; “South African Crisis,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 29, 1952, 17.

¹⁴⁷ “Domestic Affairs at the U.N.,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 4, 1952, 34; “The Dragon’s Teeth,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 22, 1952, 34; “Freedom’s Cause in South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 28, 1952, 32; “The Rule of Force in South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, April 29, 1952, 32; “South Africa Before the U.N. Bar,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, August 30, 1952, 28.

¹⁴⁸ “A Harvest of Hate in Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 19, 1952, 32; “A Momentous U.N. Assembly,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 14, 1952, 40; “The U. N’s Appeal to South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, Jan 18, 1952, 32.

instead “doing so much to destroy it.”¹⁴⁹ Steward’s responses to *Citizen* editorials were personalized.

You, sir, during my two and a half years in Ottawa, have persistently discredited the South African government, and you have justified your frequent comment on South Africa’s domestic affairs – far removed in distance and nature from Canada’s – by the assertion that South Africa’s attitude toward race policy has implications that extend beyond the country’s borders. On several occasions I have placed before you the facts of our race policy but they have had little effect on your point of view.

I intend in this letter, to meet you on your own ground (which has less to do with fact than argument) and to consider some of the implication of the worldwide attitude towards Africa which you share. For it is these implications that provide a deeply underlying cause of much of the present unrest.¹⁵⁰

Steward continued, describing Africans as incapable of ruling themselves and being “like children.”¹⁵¹ The editorial comment that addressed this letter called Steward’s assertions “rubbish.” The reply laid out the errors in Steward’s logic and indicated that such reactions only proved that the pressure from the world press was having an effect: “Premier Malan and his supporters have in recent months become extremely sensitive to the criticism of South Africa that is widespread throughout the free world’s press. This alone seems justification for continuance of the criticism.... Until there is a modification of policy to report, the duty of the world’s free press is clear.”¹⁵²

The Information Service in 1954, obviously pleased with Steward’s efforts in Canada, promoted him to the Information Officer post in London. Steward departed Ottawa in August, enjoying a few months leave prior to taking up his new post, where

¹⁴⁹ A.W. Steward, Letter to the Editor: “South Africa’s Race Policies,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 23, 1952, 32; “Communism at Africa’s Door,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, Jan 18, 1952, 30; Letter to the Editor, *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 1, 1952, 30 (response to Letter to the Editor, *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 22, 1952).

¹⁵⁰ Letter to the Editor: “Communism at Africa’s Door,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 1, 1952, 30.

¹⁵¹ Letter to the Editor: “Criticism of South Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 1, 1952, 30.

¹⁵² “Communism at Africa’s Door,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 1, 1952, 30.

he remained for another five-year term.¹⁵³ His replacement was Hendrick C. Momberg, who arrived in May of 1955 from his previous post as Information Officer in Brussels.¹⁵⁴ Momberg remained as Information Advisor in Ottawa for barely a year. By August of 1956, Momberg was installed in a new position as the first head of the Public Affairs and Press Liaison Section of the State Information Office in South Africa. The purpose of this newly created position was to “assist” foreign journalists who were visiting South Africa.¹⁵⁵ Momberg’s tenure in Ottawa was quiet. His words did not have the same tone as those of Steward, but, while less strident, they carried the same type of message, and the same unwavering belief in NP policies.¹⁵⁶

One of the regular brochures that was produced by the Information Services in Ottawa was “South Africa, The Complex Country.” The notation on the footer of the front page of the brochure read: “A regular commentary on South African affairs distributed by The South African Information Officer, 15 Sussex Drive, Ottawa.” This brochure was sent out to government officials, the press, and anyone else whom the Information Officer thought could be influential. First published in 1950, by 1951 this pamphlet was sent to over 1000 addresses.¹⁵⁷ In a July 1955 issue, there was a verbatim transcription of a CBC interview with South Africa’s High Commissioner to

¹⁵³ “Bigger Staff for State information Office,” *RDM*, January 20, 1955, 9; “Gov’t Steps up its Foreign Publicity,” *RDM*, August 11, 1961, 1; “Social and Personal News,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, August 10, 1954, 13. Steward’s new job is described in Cassandra, “Citizens Risk Arrest to Reveal Abominations of Apartheid,” *The Vancouver Sun*, January 4, 1960, 5: “The man with the most uphill task connected with the printed word in London is Mr. A. W. Steward, the director of information at South Africa House. It is his thankless task to apply the brush of whitewash to the dark deeds that are going on in the Police State of the Union of South Africa.” Steward was removed from his position in 1961 after writing a controversial article in *Die Burger* which earned the censure of Eric Louw. Steward’s article suggested parliamentary representation for “Coloureds”. His removal was included in another round of Information Service expansions. Steward answered the inquires about his censure in “I Asked for it, Says Steward,” *RDM*, May 17, 1961, 61.

¹⁵⁴ “Bigger Staff for State Information Office,” *RDM*, January 20, 1955, 9.

¹⁵⁵ “Momberg Has New Position in Pretoria,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, August 11, 1956, 27.

¹⁵⁶ “U.N.O. and South Africa,” Pamphlet from the South African Information Officer in Ottawa, October 1955, 1-4, LAC RG25, volume 7046, file 7060-40, part 4, “Racial Conflict,” 1955-56. Sent to the DEA in Ottawa as part of a mass mailing.

¹⁵⁷ Despatch No 192, May 9, 1951, LAC, RG25, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1.

Canada, Wentzel Christoffel du Plessis. Du Plessis explained that Canadians simply did not understand the situation in South Africa or the positive concept of Apartheid.¹⁵⁸

Woodsworth was fired from his position at *The Citizen* in early 1955 by Harry's son, Robert (Bob) Wilson Southam, for his "incompatible views."¹⁵⁹ Woodsworth claimed he was let go because of "his affiliation with left-wing politics," his socialist views, and his association with the C.C.F.¹⁶⁰ He eventually served as Canadian Ambassador to South Africa from May 1965 to July 1969. Woodsworth was replaced by Marshall D. Yarrow as editor of *The Citizen* in February of 1955. Yarrow remained editor until 1960, but the editorial section did not maintain the same aggressive reporting style on South Africa that it had under Woodsworth.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ "C.B.C. Interviews High Commissioner," in *South Africa, The Complex Country*, sent to the DEA from the South African Information Officer in Ottawa (Momborg), July 1955, 1-4, LAC, RG25, volume 7046, file 7060-40, part 4, "Racial Conflict," 1955-56; Wentzel Christoffel du Plessis, the South African High Commissioner to Canada from October 1953 to July 1956, had defeated J.C. Smuts in his own riding in 1948. He later became Ambassador to the United States until 1960 and then Secretary for Information for South Africa from 1960-1963. "W.C. du Plessis, South African High Commissioner Delegate to Canada," Letter 98 from the Acting CDN HC in SA in Cape Town to the USSEA in Ottawa, March 11, 1954, LAC, RG25, volume 8520, file 6605-Q-40C, part 1, "Personalities in South Africa," 1941/05/24-1963/06/07.

¹⁵⁹ When asked about Bob Southam in later years, Woodsworth replied with disdain that "You will find that your publisher reads nothing but Reader's Digest," Daniel Drolet, "Chapter 6, Across the Table" in "Ottawa Newspaper Guild History," *Ottawa Newspaper Guild*, Section III, October 2007, "You Say You Want a Revolution." http://ottawanewsguild.ca/website/?page_id=522.

¹⁶⁰ Bruce, *News and the Southams*, 404; "Ontario: Editor Ousted," *Time Magazine Canada*, February 21, 1955, quoted in Canada, Parliament, HoC debates, 22nd Parliament, 2nd Session: Vol. 3, April 6, 1955, p 2885, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2202_03/591?r=0&s=4; Christina Jane Howorun, "Is influence illusionary? the effects of ownership on political coverage in Hollinger and CanWest-owned newspapers," Order No. MR13181, Queen's University (Canada), 2005, 29. <https://proxy.library.carleton.ca/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/dissertations-theses/is-influence-illusionary-effects-ownership-on/docview/305393162/se-2?accountid=9894>.

¹⁶¹ "Ottawa Citizen Names Editor," *The New York Times*, February 13, 1955, 10.

CHAPTER TWO: THE INFORMATION SERVICE AND “BAD PRESS,” 1950-1960

The State Information Office of South Africa operated within the jurisdiction of the Department of Foreign Affairs until 1962, when the Nationalists believed the situation necessitated the elevation of State Information to a “fully fledged Department, equal in status to foreign affairs.”¹⁶² Controlling the South African narrative abroad was among the main tenets of South African foreign policy during the 1950s and the 1960s.¹⁶³ “Bad Press” had become the politically expedient excuse for most of South Africa’s woes, and fighting it gave South Africans a foe on which they could focus their anger and frustrations. South African leaders used negative press as the scapegoat for all their ills: the bad economy, public discontent, and poor international relationships were blamed on “bad press.” The Information Service Office as well as the Press Commission of 1950 were both employed to reinforce this argument, producing evidence by way of investigations into the foreign press that substantiated that it was biased against the South African government.¹⁶⁴

The Nationalists were unwilling to face the failure of the Information Service to bring about any significant improvements to South Africa’s image abroad. Instead, they intensified their efforts. This chapter will illuminate South African government efforts to control the narrative through the Information Service in the 1950s and the reactions to these efforts of Canadian foreign correspondents and Canadian representatives in South Africa.

¹⁶² Les de Villiers, *Secret Information*, First edition, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1980), 19, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/101945928>.

¹⁶³ J.E. Spence, “South Africa’s ‘New Look’ Foreign Policy,” *The World Today* 24, no. 4 (1968): 139, www.jstor.org/stable/40394115.

¹⁶⁴ William A. Hachten and C. Anthony Gifford, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 55-56, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000330358>.

In addition to increasing the scope of the Information Service, with the creation of a new post in Germany, the National Party launched the Commission of Enquiry into the South African Press in March 1950, billed as an investigation to ensure accurate and unbiased reporting.¹⁶⁵ During the debate leading to the creation of this Commission, Eric Hendrik Louw, Minister of Economic Affairs and advisor to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs, argued that “much harm” had been done by “slandorous” reports.¹⁶⁶ He decried the reach of false reports that were being repeated at the United Nations as facts. He threatened to deport any foreign journalist with whom the government “took displeasure.”¹⁶⁷ The English press of South Africa and the reporting by foreign correspondents, he said, were “sensationalist” and “misrepresented” South Africa. The inquiry was also directed to determine who held financial and editorial control of the various press assets that existed in South Africa.¹⁶⁸ The Commission dragged on for fourteen years, finally producing two reports: the first in 1962 and the second in 1964.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Air Mail # 657 from the CDN HC in SA in Pretoria (signed by McGreer) to the SSEA in Ottawa, September 24, 1949, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1, “Information and Cultural Services if the Government of South Africa – Reports,” 1949/07/20-1960/05/16.

¹⁶⁶ “Dr. Malan and the Press,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 6, 1950, 36; Eric Hendrik Louw was Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1955 to 1962. He attended Commonwealth Conferences in the place of Prime Minister Verwoerd. He was described as unpleasant and determined with a lot of passion, a bad temper, and not a lot of oratory skill. He was a strong supporter of Apartheid and had been South Africa’s trade representative to Canada and the United States from 1925-1929. “Foreign Affairs Debate,” Numbered Letter 209, from Canadian Ambassador in South Africa (signed by C.C. for the Ambassador) to the USSEA in Ottawa, June 7, 1963, LAC, RG25, vol 8520, file 6-605-Q-40-C, part 1, “Personalities in S.A.,” 1941/05/24-1963/06/07; “Pugnacious Afrikaner – Eric Hendrik Louw,” *New York Times*, October 13, 1961, 4.

¹⁶⁷ Hachten, *Press and Apartheid*, 53-54. “No Censorship of Letters in S.A., says PMG,” *The Rand Daily Mail* [Johannesburg] (RDM), May 4 1950, 11.

¹⁶⁸ “Commission of Inquiry into South African Press,” Despatch 474, October 26, 1950, from the CDN HC in SA (signed by MacDermot) to SSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 8165, file 5872 AC-40, part 2, “Press in South Africa – reports,” 1950/02/10-1963/09/26; Telegram A-86, Oct 25, 1950, from HC in SA in Cape Town to SSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 8165, file 5872 AC-40, part 2. No Source was given; “The Postwar Press – No. XVIII – South Africa,” extracted from the Foreign Press News, N.Y., February 1950, LAC, RG25 A-3-b, volume 8165, file 5872 AC-40, part 2.

¹⁶⁹ “Louw Details Grouse Against Gallery Correspondants,” *RDM*, May 4, 1950, 9; “South Africa Press Commission,” Numbered Letter 141, from the CDN HC in SA (signed by J.C.G. Brown for the HC) to the USSEA in Ottawa, March 9, 1961, LAC, RG25 A-3-B, volume 8165, file 5872-AC-40, part 2.

The latter half of 1950 brought another expansion of the Information Service with the addition of two new overseas posts.¹⁷⁰ Soon after the Nationalists determined that a similar focus was needed within the country to ensure that foreign visitors gained the desired impression of South Africa. Information Officers would “entertain” guests and in the case of journalists, “show them the country.” The Information Service was adapted to “co-ordinate the State’s publicity sources; arrange publication of official statements; provide the Union’s overseas representatives with information; assist State departments with the work of enlightenment; and advise the Government on information and publicity matters.”¹⁷¹

One of the most frequent names associated with South Africa in Canadian newspapers was John Kidman. Kidman was a retired penal reform advocate and journalist for the conservative paper, *The Montreal Gazette (The Gazette)*.¹⁷² Kidman left Canada in May 1948 to join his twin brother in retirement in South Africa and to send occasional reports back to *The Gazette* about his new home.¹⁷³ His voyage by chance coincided with the general election in South Africa of 1948 and the somewhat unexpected victory by the National Party. Kidman’s first missive, while detailing the country as he found it, also expressed his fear of what was to come under this new and “unexpected” leadership.¹⁷⁴ Kidman’s letters were printed in *The Gazette* at a rate of about one per month, and continued consistently until October 1958, when they stopped appearing.

¹⁷⁰ “Expansion of South African Information Services,” Despatch # 423 from the Acting CDN HC in SA in Pretoria (Signed A.S. McGill) to the SSEA in Ottawa, September 27, 1950, 1, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1.

¹⁷¹ “S.A. Information Service Battling Along on £300,000 A Year,” *RDM*, August 12, 1957, 5.

¹⁷² Wilfred H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 91, <https://books-scholarsportal-info.proxy.library.carleton.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks3/upress/2014-09-29/1/9780773595163>

¹⁷³ “Norden Docks at N.Y; Montrealers Aboard,” *The Montreal Gazette*, May 19, 1948, 25.

¹⁷⁴ John Kidman, “South African Picture,” *The Montreal Gazette*. July 1, 1948, 8.

Kidman's articles began by telling stories of general life in South Africa and mixing in the negative impact of the policies of the National Party. As Kidman's articles progressed, so too did his opposition to the Union government's policies, often referring back to what the Smuts government had been planning in comparison to the aggressive racial policies of the NP and pointing out the effect it was having on South Africa's place in the world.¹⁷⁵ Kidman recounted his encounter with a group of reporters in Cape Town, including Horace Flather, the editor of *The Johannesburg Star*, who had attended the June 1950 Empire Press Conference in Ottawa. Flather remarked that the reception he had received in Ottawa was far different from the one he had enjoyed two years previously in Geneva. "One gets the impression that the world has turned sour against us. Countries that were friendly two years ago are today hardly tolerant."¹⁷⁶ Kidman also quoted *The Cape Times* as condemning the government, which "suffers from the grievous mental and moral defect of thinking that if a policy is legal, it must automatically be expedient as well. But no country can afford in these days to flout world opinion with contempt."¹⁷⁷

Kidman wrote in April 1950 that the "government of the day is extremely sensitive to criticism, both from the internal and the external press, so much so that some threat of censorship for the latter has been mooted several times."¹⁷⁸ He argued that the Unlawful Organizations Bill of 1950 was unlike other anti-Communist legislation in the Commonwealth because it "includes communists but also other unnamed bodies, thereby leaving it open to the government to decide what

¹⁷⁵ John Kidman, "Letter from South Africa," *The Montreal Gazette*, November 17, 1949, 8.

¹⁷⁶ John Kidman, "Letter from South Africa," *The Montreal Gazette*, August 23, 1950, 6.

¹⁷⁷ John Kidman, "Letter from South Africa," *The Montreal Gazette*, December 8, 1950, 6.

¹⁷⁸ John Kidman, "Letter from South Africa," *The Montreal Gazette*, April 21, 1950, 6.

organizations may be brought under condemnation.” The power in this act was left in the hands of ministers and not the courts. Journalists were a possible target.¹⁷⁹

Kidman’s columns lost some of their bite after about eighteen months. His descriptions were detailed, but he took a step away from criticism, and away from a more international perspective. A critical tone returned somewhat during the elections of 1953, when he mentioned a threat to journalists under the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and in the following year when Kidman began to criticize the Nationalists’ constant paranoia.¹⁸⁰ Kidman wrote that the government regularly complained that it was “slighted by the press,” despite government reports taking up large swaths of South African newspapers.¹⁸¹ In 1955 Kidman again addressed the issue of South African aversion to the world press, reporting that it was “frequently asserted here that news correspondents transmit messages that are false or distorted.”¹⁸² But Kidman usually focused on the actions of the government instead of their implications, and took their justifications at face value in his stories.

A prominent columnist for *The Vancouver Sun*, Jack Scott, was sent to South Africa in March of 1953 to cover the “race question” during the elections.¹⁸³ Scott’s award-winning series of articles on South Africa ran in *The Sun*, with some of the articles appearing in other Southam papers across Canada, including *The Ottawa Citizen*, from March 31 to April 24, 1953. His articles delved into the everyday lives

¹⁷⁹ John Kidman, “Letter from South Africa,” *The Montreal Gazette*, May 26, 1950, 6; John Kidman, “Letter from South Africa,” *The Montreal Gazette*, July 13, 1950, 6.

¹⁸⁰ John Kidman, “Letter from South Africa,” *The Montreal Gazette*, March 16, 1953, 8.

¹⁸¹ John Kidman “Letter from South Africa,” *The Montreal Gazette*, May 15, 1954, 6.

¹⁸² John Kidman “Letter from South Africa,” *The Montreal Gazette*, July 19, 1955, 6.

¹⁸³ Kesterton, *History of Journalism*, 100-101. Jack Scott, *The Vancouver Sun* editor and columnist from 1945 through 1958, had served in the Intelligence Corps during the war, and as a news announcer for both the BBC and the CBC. He had a regular column, “Our Town” which ran five days a week from 1946 through 1958 *The Vancouver Sun* had many similarities to the *Toronto Daily Star*, in that both papers were nominally liberal, but not opposed to criticizing a Liberal government; both papers tended towards the flashy and gimmicky, and both looked for aggressive coverage from their reporters. *The Sun* had some very well known and talented columnists and was known for strong national as well as international coverage.

of South Africans more than the actions of the politicians. Scott visited Africans and “Coloureds” at home and toured the mines and the bunk rooms where they toiled and slept. He examined the issues and consequences of forbidden multi-cultural marriages, and the necessity of “carrying a pass”: How to renew it, how to lose it, and the implications of not having it. Passes were required documentation for all non-white residents of South Africa, detailing what job they could and did hold and where they could be. To be caught without a pass meant monetary fines and possible imprisonment. Scott, not surprisingly, soon came to the attention of Information Officer Steward in Ottawa.¹⁸⁴

Steward issued an eight-page pamphlet, titled “In Reply to Mr. Scott,” that accused Scott of going to South Africa “simply to offer facts and fancies which supported a particular point of view.”¹⁸⁵ Steward said that Scott had read a book by a labour activist, who was “bitterly opposed” to the NP government. Scott did not deny reading the book in question but listed the rest of his reading list, including Steward’s own pamphlets. Scott noted that “Of all these writers only Mr. Steward was able to see any hope for the future of Dr. Malan and the policy of ‘Apartheid’ and Mr. Steward, of course, is hired for that purpose.”¹⁸⁶

Steward accused Scott of not giving enough attention to the “harmonious arrangement of relations between black and white.” Scott replied that he had given his attention “to very little else except that” and that he and other correspondents had “found those relations not all harmonious, but degrading, cruel, explosive and intolerable.”¹⁸⁷ He described Steward’s writing as “tortured” and accused him of

¹⁸⁴ Dillon O’Leary, “Ottawa Report – Man with Mission,” *The Vancouver Sun*, March 21, 1953, 27. See the series of articles by Jack Scott in *The Vancouver Sun*, from March 31 to April 24, 1953, 1,2.

¹⁸⁵ Jack Scott, “Our Town: Facts and Fancies,” *The Vancouver Sun*, June 25, 1953, 19.

¹⁸⁶ Scott, “Facts and Fancies,” 19.

¹⁸⁷ Scott, “Facts and Fancies,” 19.

taking whole paragraphs out of context to turn the argument around. Steward's words revealed an "aggrieved astonishment" and a "resentment" that anyone, at any level, would dare to question South Africa's policies.¹⁸⁸

Scott reduced Steward's arguments of complexity to one simple explanation. "In reality, the broad issue is not complex at all, but a simple matter of brutally keeping the native in economic serfdom." Scott wrote of "the oppressed" – in Steward's words the "primitive people" – and those who opposed "a ruthless doctrine of white supremacy" – to Steward the "sentimentalists." Scott critiqued Steward's detachment from actual events:

In Johannesburg, as he wrote, thousands of white citizens were sleeping behind battled windows with guns under their pillows. Tens of thousands of "primitive people," tolling for their white masters, were living in degradation and the fear of segregation laws enforced by the lash. Union leaders such as Mr. Sachs were being oppressed, or, like Mr. Sachs, driven from their native land. The jails were full. The government was drawing up new edicts to "keep the native in his place," including the withdrawal of the franchise from a hundred thousand second-class citizens. If these are "facts and fancies" merely to support a point of view I suggest that the point of view is a more realistic one than that of Mr. Steward in his ivory tower.¹⁸⁹

Scott criticized Steward for writing from his safe "office in Ottawa" while the painful effects of the policies he endorsed played out in South Africa.

After Otto du Plessis won a seat during the 1953 elections, the running of the Information Service was passed to Piet G.J. Meiring, a former sports journalist.¹⁹⁰ Canadian High Commissioner T.W.L. MacDermot described a "certain amount of soul searching in South Africa about its Information Service" at the time:

¹⁸⁸ Scott, "Facts and Fancies," 19.

¹⁸⁹ Scott, "Facts and Fancies," 19.

¹⁹⁰ "The South Africa State Information Service," Despatch # 463, from the CDN HC in SA (signed by MacDermot) to the SSEA in Ottawa, December 10, 1953, 1, LAC, RG25, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1.

There is some disappointment that the fairly extensive staffs here and abroad have somehow done little to stem the tide of criticism of the Union.... The Bureau itself has frequently extended itself to obtain interviews and tours, etc. for visiting newspapermen and others, and it emits a creditable volume of mimeographed information sheets. But it too is baffled by the insignificance of the results of all this effort.¹⁹¹

MacDermot did not foresee great success for Meiring in his new role. The ample supply of press releases and information pamphlets distributed by the Service to all foreign representatives in South Africa were not seen as reliable or useful material. The “seductive brochures” and “unsubstantial speeches,” said MacDermot, “did not provide the information that was being sought.”¹⁹²

According to MacDermot, the South African Government’s response to world press coverage emphasized the hyper-sensitive nature and isolationist policies of the NP Government. He reported “continued resentment of uses of overseas press criticism and little change in the tendency to concentrate on internal affairs at the expense of international co-operation.”¹⁹³ MacDermot, however, maintained that the bilateral relationship remained strong: “There was some evidence of the consciousness the South African government feels about Canadian government criticisms and the bad press their country has in Canada... not falling under the category of criticism, but rather a hurt feeling that Canada, for whom they have the friendliest feelings, should be unsympathetic.”¹⁹⁴

MacDermot’s successor as Canadian High Commissioner to South Africa, Evan William Thistle Gill, arrived in 1954. Gill reported that the South African

¹⁹¹ “The South Africa State Information Service,” 1.

¹⁹² “The South Africa State Information Service,” 2. Les de Villiers, a young recently recruited member of the Information Service, later commented that Meiring and Louw had a strong working relationship and that Meiring’s pleasing personality won him many admirers. De Villiers, *Secret Information*, 18.

¹⁹³ “Annual Review of Events in the Union of South Africa – 1954,” 3, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1.

¹⁹⁴ “Annual Review of Events in the Union of South Africa – 1954,” 5.

Nationalists caused their own headaches. They invited criticism by holding no regard for international opinions and yet craving international friendships. He noted that “Criticism from abroad is one of the few unifying influences at work today. It could help turn this country inward, or it could exert a wholesome moderating influence. On balance, I think that South Africa’s bad press abroad does more good than harm.”¹⁹⁵

In early 1956, Gill was given a confidential report from Douglas Brown, a former *Daily Telegraph* correspondent of his acquaintance. The report detailed the experiences of Brown, who had been called before the still sitting Commission of Enquiry into the Press. Gill confirmed that in the past year “all or nearly all of the foreign correspondents in South Africa have been summoned to appear before the Commission.” He recounted a wide spectrum of experiences from a “not unfriendly” interview to a “Star Chamber technique.” Gill stated that the purpose of the Enquiry was widely believed to be to curb the foreign press.¹⁹⁶ Brown’s report stated that the interviews were *in camera* so the interviewers had free rein and could pick and choose answers as they saw fit. The interviewers set traps and hinted at evidence given by other correspondents to elicit the answers they were seeking. In general, the questions centred around Brown’s motive for coming to South Africa and his preconceived opinions on the country. The Commission had obtained, without consent, all his cables over the past five years from the South African Post Office, through which he had dispatched them. Brown warned that “everything points to an intention by the Commissioners to use South Africa’s ‘bad press’ abroad for an internal political

¹⁹⁵ “Annual Review of Events in the Union of South Africa – 1954,” 5.

¹⁹⁶ “The South African Commission of Enquiry into the Press,” Despatch # 74 from the CDN HC in SA, (signed by E.W.T. Gill) to the USSEA in Ottawa, April 3, 1956, LAC, RG25, volume 8165, file 5872 AC-40, “Reports Re Press in S.A,” 1950-63.

purpose... they have an ominously totalitarian approach to the whole subject of journalism.”¹⁹⁷

The 1956 annual report from Gill to Ottawa reported a further distancing of South Africa from the West. Gill attributed the worsening relations to the movement towards even more restrictive measures by the South African government and the increasingly negative press in the West. The isolationist tendencies of the Nationalists “were enhanced” by the sensitivity to criticism from a world that was moving in the opposite direction from South Africa. Relations with Canada were still friendly, but there was “a certain amount of pique expressed about the adverse publicity South Africa occasionally received in Canada.”¹⁹⁸

When Ken McTaggart, an award-winning journalist for *The Toronto Telegram*, visited South Africa in 1956, he penned a series of articles that won him a National Newspaper Award in 1957.¹⁹⁹ MacTaggart’s articles were never too provocative and fell short of directly criticizing the government, but when he was asked by a South African journalist about the accusations of “bad press” in Canada, his response earned a three-column headline in *The Rand Daily Mail*: “Union Returning to 17th Century as Rest of World Progresses – Canadian Journalist.” In the article, MacTaggart was quoted as saying, “When you try to turn back the clock in the middle of the 20th century you must expect to make news.” To the insinuation that the

¹⁹⁷ Confidential Report from Douglas Brown attached to Despatch # 74 from the CDN HC in SA, (signed by Gill) to the USSEA in Ottawa, April 3, 1956, LAC, RG25, volume 8165, file 5872 AC-40, “Reports Re Press in S.A,” 1950-63. A copy of the report from Douglas Brown of *The Daily Telegraph* of report to his editor, detailing his interview with the Commission of Enquiry into the Press on February 9, 1956.

¹⁹⁸ “Annual Review 1956,” Despatch #49, from HC in SA in Cape Town (signed by Gill) to the USSEA in Ottawa, February 15, 1957, 5-6, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 2494, file 10463-AE-40, “Annual Review of Political and Other Events in South Africa compiled by High Commissioner – Pretoria,” 1948-1959.

¹⁹⁹ “Human Progress in S Africa Halted By Atmosphere Of Fear,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, July 14, 1956, 17; “Kenneth W. MacTaggart was Honored Journalist,” *TDS*, November 3, 1986, A18. MacTaggart wrote for *The Globe and Mail* until 1956 and prior to that for *The Toronto Daily Star*.

Canadian journalists were falsifying and distorting the news to sell newspapers, MacTaggart responded, “Every time the country introduces laws to kick the Black man around, well then, every newspaper in the world will report it. All we’ve done is our jobs as newspapers – and that is to report the facts and events as they happen.”²⁰⁰

The Information Service grew to fourteen foreign posts by 1957.²⁰¹ According to Vernon McKay, who wrote about the influence of the South African Information Service in the United States, its budget rose from \$146,000 in 1949-50, to \$4,459,000 in 1966, and the number of personnel rose from 59 to 378 in the same time span.²⁰² McKay also spoke to the enormous mountains of documentation produced by the Service.²⁰³

A survey designed to “determine factors affecting attitudes toward South Africa” was conducted by the Information Service and presented to the South African Parliament in late 1958. The survey determined that press criticism was increasing in countries of all political stripes, but it singled out “the United Kingdom, Holland, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, Australia, and Italy” as the “principal enemy.” The report stated that Canadians who had heard of South Africa’s racial policies “do not like them at all,” but attributed such attitudes to a lack of understanding of the issues: South Africa was being “abused by the prejudiced and denounced by the ignorant.” It was a “victim of a hostile world press” and a “neurotic

²⁰⁰ “Union Returning to 17th Century as Rest of World Progresses – Canadian Journalist,” *RDM*, June 16, 1956, 11.

²⁰¹ “S.A. Information Service Battling Along on £300,000 A Year,” *RDM*, August 12, 1957, 5.

²⁰² Vernon McKay, “South African Propaganda,” *SAIS Review* (1956-1989) 1966, vol. 10, no. 3, (Spring 1966), 7, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45348390>. To put this in perspective, \$146,000 in 1950 is equivalent to about \$1.6 million in 2021, while \$4,459,000 in 1966 is equivalent to about \$37 million in 2021. “Inflation Calculator.” U.S. Official Inflation Data, Alioth Finance, July 19, 2021, <https://www.officialdata.org/>.

²⁰³ McKay, “Propaganda,” 7-8. McKay tallies the bulk of propaganda documentation produced by South Africa both in South Africa and in the United States and the rates of distribution of the documentation.

concern over the color problem.”²⁰⁴ The Information Service determined that an adjustment to their overseas policy was again needed. The current campaign overseas was not having the desired impact. Minister of Foreign Affairs Louw said in reply to a question in the House of Assembly on May 26 that it would be necessary for the Information Service to “intensify its work.”²⁰⁵ Louw spoke regularly on the topic of the foreign press and included at least a mention of it in almost every foreign affairs debate. Louw referred to Canada in 1959 while attacking “South Africa’s critics abroad” during a Senate debate on foreign Affairs, earning him “great exuberance” from his “supporters.”²⁰⁶ A new “positive policy” of the Information Service was designed to “widen the country’s circle of friends.” The overseas Information Officers would now “concentrate their activities on people who are responsible for influencing public opinion.” Radio and Television would also play a larger role.²⁰⁷

Articles in the Information Services Publications sought to pummel their audience with the idea of an “evil” foreign press. “Why do Journalists Attack the Union?” was the title of an article published in *Digest of South African Affairs* in September of 1959. The leading paragraph asked, “Why do certain foreign journalists, after having been shown the extensive schemes to develop the Bantu in the Union, blacken the name of South Africa by false reports in their mass-circulation papers?” The *Digest* found a willing journalist from Austria to answer this question, while he was on a tour of the Union as a guest of the South African Information Service:

²⁰⁴ “Find World Press Hostile to South Africa,” *The Star Phoenix* [Saskatoon], October 1, 1958, 1.

²⁰⁵ Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports, “Information Policy,” Johannesburg, Daily Report, Foreign Radio Broadcasts, FBIS-FRB-59-105, (May 26, 1959), 12, SQN: 12DF6BB41B1E2F38.

²⁰⁶ “Senate Debate on South African Foreign Policy,” Numbered Letter 260, from CDN HC to SA to the USSEA Ottawa, July 8, 1959, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.1, “Relations between Canada and South Africa,” 1959/04/14-1961/07/05.

²⁰⁷ Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports, “Information Policy,” Johannesburg, Daily Report, Foreign Radio Broadcasts FBIS-FRB-59-155, (August 8, 1959), 14, SQN: 131BB5E33A2CE9F0.

“Thousands of people in Europe and America today want that type of story....

Publications built their circulations on the technique of supplying sensation, seldom based on facts. Half-truths were taken and distorted beyond recognition....”²⁰⁸ In the same copy of the *Digest* were claims of “wildly exaggerated reports that were published overseas.”²⁰⁹ A recently returned South African journalist was quoted, “The world’s press does not want to know the straightforward, illuminating, but unsensational facts about South Africa.” All “they want is dirt, as much as they can scrape up.”²¹⁰

The South African Information Service issued its annual report, for 1958 and 1959, again accusing the foreign press of biased treatment of South Africa. “Time may heal the wounds thus inflicted on South Africa’s fair name, but nothing can erase the stain left upon the record of the journalistic profession by the hands of those who engage in this foul traffic.”²¹¹ James Joseph Hurley, the Canadian High Commissioner to South Africa, reported that the Information Service claimed success in “bringing about a marked difference in popular attitudes towards the Union and a ‘positive, if hesitant, rethinking’ about the situation in this part of the world.”²¹²

²⁰⁸ “Why Do Journalists Attack the Union?” *Digest of South African Affairs*, Vol 6. No. 18, South African Information Service, Pretoria, (September 4, 1959), 13, attached to “Bantu University Colleges,” Numbered Letter 374, October 6, 1959, from CDN HC in SA (signed by James Joseph Hurley) to the SSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 7047, file 7060-40, part 7.1, “South Africa – Native and Racial Conflict,” 1959/09/03-1959/12/08.

²⁰⁹ “Germans Protest,” *Digest of South African Affairs*, Vol 6. No. 18, South African Information Service, Pretoria, (September 4, 1959), 13, attached to “Bantu University Colleges,” Numbered Letter 374, October 6, 1959, 12, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 7047, file 7060-40, part 7.1; “Reports Wildly Exaggerated,” *Digest of South African Affairs*, Vol 6. No. 18, South African Information Service, Pretoria, (September 4, 1959), 13, attached to “Bantu University Colleges,” Numbered Letter 374, October 6, 1959, 12, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 7047, file 7060-40, part 7.1.

²¹⁰ “The World Press Does not want Hard Facts about South Africa,” *Digest of South African Affairs*, Vol 6. No. 18, South African Information Service, Pretoria, (September 4, 1959), 13, attached to “Bantu University Colleges,” Numbered Letter 374, October 6, 1959, 12, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 7047, file 7060-40, part 7.1.

²¹¹ “Annual Report of South African Information Service,” Numbered Letter: Cape 96, from the CDN HC in SA, (signed by Hurley) to the SSEA in Ottawa, March 28, 1960, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, Volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1. This annual report covered two years, 1958 and 1959.

²¹² Colonel James Joseph Hurley was a veteran of both World Wars and served as Canadian Counsel in Detroit and High Commissioner in Ceylon prior to taking the position of High Commissioner to South

However, “at no time has the freedom of the press suffered so much debasement as in some of the reporting – both pictorial and textual – on South African events in 1959.”²¹³

The Information Service in Ottawa was meanwhile boasting about personal and television appearances by its Information Officer, Wynand van Eyssen, and other South African visitors to Canada. They reached, it was claimed, over six million Canadians.²¹⁴ Hurley said of the Ottawa Information Service’s report:

One page is devoted to a report on the activities of the Union Information Officer in Ottawa and to the nature of reporting of South African events in the Canadian Press. The “continued existence of negative feelings about South Africa” is attributed to the bad press which the Union receives in Canada. The bad press, in turn, is attributed to “biased or slanted reporting from South Africa and to the propensity amongst certain Canadian editors... to publish most of the negative things they hear... and little or nothing of the positive side.”²¹⁵

Hurley pointed out that one Canadian journalist, Russell Elman, who stayed far away from any political issues and published inoffensive stories of Canadian business and religious connections in South Africa, was praised for his “honest and objective account.” “It is a sad commentary on the state of mind of the South African authorities,” Hurley remarked, “that only this – or the even more innocuous – kind of reporting is considered ‘honest and objective.’”²¹⁶

Africa in June of 1958, replacing E.W.T. Gill. His position became that of Ambassador to South Africa on May 31, 1961, following South Africa’s departure from the Commonwealth to form a Republic. Hurley left the position in October of 1963, two months before his death at the age of 65.

²¹³ “Annual Report of South African Information Service,” Numbered Letter: Cape 96, March 28, 1960, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, Volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1.

²¹⁴ “Extract from Annual Report 1958-1959: South African Information Services,” attached to Numbered Letter: Cape 96, “Annual Report of South African Information Service,” from the CDN HC in SA, (signed by Hurley) to the SSEA in Ottawa, March 28, 1960, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, Volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1.

²¹⁵ “Annual Report of South African Information Service,” Numbered Letter: Cape 96, March 28, 1960.

²¹⁶ “Annual Report of South African Information Service,” Numbered Letter: Cape 96, March 28, 1960.

In early 1959, van Eyssen became embroiled in a scandal when he gave a speech written for the South African Ambassador. The speech argued that a white South Africa was vital to the fight against Communism, but it also included a comparison of the Apartheid system with Canadian treatment of Indigenous peoples. The speech caused a flurry of articles and condemnation across Canada, including a veiled threat from Prime Minister John Diefenbaker to diplomats who abused their privilege, and the controversy finally settled down only when the Nationalist government apologized for any misunderstanding that came from the comments.²¹⁷ The matter was picked up and broadcast by the Afrikaner media in South Africa. Criticism of Canada was not absent from Afrikaner newspapers, where comparisons of the kind made by van Eyssen in his speech in Canada were not uncommon.²¹⁸ It was another way to blame the issues of South Africa on the outside world, and particularly on the overseas media.

In early March of 1960, Carel de Wet, National Party member of parliament, put forward a private member's bill in parliament to expand the Foreign Affairs department and the Information Service to help stop the "malevolent propaganda

²¹⁷ De Villiers, *Secret Information*, 27. De Villiers indicated the incident ended with an apology from the South African government; "Eskimo, Indian Apartheid Seen in Canada," *The Globe and Mail*, May 26, 1959, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2; Letter # 208, May 26, 1959, from the CDN HC in SA to the USSEA, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2 included a translated article from *Die Burger* which quoted Kirsten's speech indicating that Canada practiced Apartheid and included an indication from Hurley that the Speech was broadcast on the SABC with the same message. "Speech by the High Commissioner for South Africa" (Robert Kirsten), and summary from G. P. de T. Glazebrook, May 22, 1959, 1-10, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2, "Relations between Canada and South Africa," 1959/04/14-1961/07/05; "Undiplomatic Diplomats," a Memorandum from the SSEA to the Commonwealth Division, May 29, 1959, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2 communicated Diefenbaker's "cautionary words," following his reading of a *Globe and Mail* Article condemning world diplomats, including the South Africans, for their abuse of their welcome in Canada.

²¹⁸ "South Africa in Fortifications Against Famished Blacks," Translated from *Die Transvaler*, June 8, 1961, attached to Numbered Letter 290, June 20, 1961, from the Canadian Ambassador to SA in Cape Town (signed by Hurley) to the USSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25, volume 5206, file 6230-40, part 3, "Diplomatic Relations between Canada and South Africa," 1960/08/01-1962/04/27. The article called Canadians hypocritical for their coverage of South Africa, because of Canada's treatment of its own racial minorities.

against South Africa.” De Wet’s bill called for the registration of all foreign journalists with the Information Service. Failure to do so would become a punishable offence. The bill made the news across Canada as an attempt to limit free press. A Progressive member of the South African parliament, John Cope, accused de Wet of nothing more than intimidation tactics, and pointed out that foreign journalists already “know that... stories written by every foreign correspondent in South Africa are sent to the press commission as soon as they are filed with the post office.”²¹⁹ The Acting High Commissioner for South Africa in Ottawa, Charles Fincham, told the Department of External Affairs at the same time that “criticism from abroad tended to harden” South African attitudes. Even so, and even within the ranks of the NP, there were increasing doubts about whether the work of the Information Service was having the desired effect.²²⁰

²¹⁹ “Charges Newsmen Intimidated,” *The Edmonton Journal*, March 19, 1960, 2; “South Africa Would Compel Correspondents to Register,” *The Vancouver Sun*, March 2, 1960, 44.

²²⁰ G. P. de T. Glazebrook, “Political Factors in South Africa,” Memorandum for the Under Secretary, March 3, 1960, 1, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 6775, file 1038-40, part 11.2, “Political Situation in South Africa,” 1960/03/03-1960/07/05.

CHAPTER THREE: SHARPEVILLE RESPONSES, 1960.

The South African government was losing the battle for positive world opinion, despite the concerted efforts of its Information Service. The global attention provoked by the violence of the shootings at Sharpeville, on March 21, 1960, placed a magnifying lens over all of South Africa's troubles.²²¹ Once the bodies had been counted, the toll was sixty-nine African protestors, armed with only sticks and stones, shot dead, and a further one hundred and eighty seriously injured and sent to hospital. Most of the victims had been shot in the back as they fled the gunfire of the fully armed South African Police Force.²²² The event acted as a trigger point for the outrage and frustration that had been compounding on all sides. Foreign journalists swarmed into South Africa to cover the aftermath.²²³

This final chapter examines how the intense focus of the Nationalist Government on its need to control information in a crisis influenced the press in Canada. The chapter shows the Information Service message becoming the overriding preoccupation of the NP during a time when the world press spotlight was centred on South Africa and examines how the activities of one Canadian foreign correspondent threatened a diplomatic crisis between Canada and South Africa.

²²¹ Department of External Affairs, *Report of The Department of External Affairs 1960*, (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1961), 25, https://gac.canadiana.ca/view/ooe.b4266304E_003/1?r=0&s=1; Ronald Hyam, "South Africa, Cambridge, and Commonwealth History," *The Round Table* (2001), 360, 406-407.

²²² "Shot from Behind," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 3, 1960, 1.

²²³ Allister Haddon Sparks, *The Sword and the Pen: Six Decades on the Political Frontier* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2016), Chapter 9, e-book, Kobo. March 21 is now a national holiday in South Africa and is seen as a "tipping point" in its history; "Anti-Pass demonstration leads to Vereeniging, Langa bloodshed: 54 Dead, 191 Hurt in Riots: Army called out in Cape outburst," *The Rand Daily Mail* [Johannesburg] (RDM), March 22, 1960, 1. A photo from the scene of the riot showing police officers with guns walking among the fallen appeared beside a banner headline. According to Sparks, there was much debate at *The RDM* as to whether the picture they had should run in the paper on March 22. He stated that it was decided the picture would not run, ostensibly so as not to rile up protestors, but more likely due to pressure from the newspaper's board which found the editor's choices too liberal for their taste. The RDM archives, however, show that the picture did run – unless there was a revision after the fact. See Sparks, *The Sword and the Pen*, Chapter 9.

Norman Phillips, a thirty-year veteran reporter, correspondent and, most recently, foreign editor of *The Toronto Daily Star*, arrived in South Africa on March 24 to report on the events surrounding Sharpeville. Phillips had boarded a plane in Canada on the day of the massacre, but had missed a connection in London. Gerald Clark, correspondent for *The Montreal Star*, arrived on the same flight and was Phillips's companion over the next few days.²²⁴ In little more than a fortnight, Phillips was to become the first foreign journalist to be arrested and detained by the Apartheid regime. A freelance photographer, Henry Barzilay, had previously been deported, without arrest, in September 1959.²²⁵

Phillips's arrest on April 9, 1960, came as a shock. Unknown to Phillips, his latest transmission to *The Toronto Daily Star* was opened, read, and forwarded to the Ministry of Justice. Phillips was held, without charge and incommunicado, for just short of four full days in the men's section of the Durban jail. It wasn't until the second day that he was told that his transmission had been suppressed, and his submitted article confiscated. He was not questioned until the final day, and then it was, by Phillips's own description, not an intense or very long session. While he was at the Durban jail, the facility housed between 1,600 and 1,900 men depending on the day, with never more than a hundred white men. He was put in a seven by ten-foot cell with two other "political prisoners" in cell block 'A,' which was exclusively for

²²⁴ Norman Phillips, *The Tragedy of Apartheid: A Journalist's Experiences in the South African Riots* (New York: David McKay Company, 1960), 147, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001260091>.

²²⁵ "South African Actions Against Foreign Correspondents," Numbered Letter 355, September 21, 1959, from the CDN HC in SA in Pretoria (signed by Hurley) to the USSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25, volume 8165, file 5872-AC-40, part 4, "Reports Re Press in South Africa," 1950-63. Stanley Uys, political correspondent of *The Johannesburg Sunday Times*, had advised the Canadian High Commission at the time of Barzilay's deportation that the move was intended to "cow journalists generally in South Africa." The British government had left the matter to the jurisdiction of the Union government, which the Canadian High Commissioner, James Hurley, had worried might set a precedent of allowing the Nationalists to indirectly censure the press.

white men and was segregated from the rest of the prison.²²⁶ The prisoners were allowed out of their cells for two hours each day providing opportunities for Phillips to observe the other detainees. Phillips detailed these experiences in a book he published later that year. In *The Tragedy of Apartheid: A Journalist's Experiences in the South African Riots*, Phillips told his story and reported on the conditions in the jail both for Black and white occupants.²²⁷ At first it looked like the Nationalists were intent on hanging on to Phillips. Eric Louw “gave no promise that he would help in the matter or that he would offer any advice to the Minister of Justice,” but a combination of world pressure and the ardent efforts of the staff of the Canadian High Commission to win Phillips’s release made his stay relatively short. The trade off for his release was that Phillips was to be immediately deported from South Africa.²²⁸

An event of the magnitude of Sharpeville had been predicted by those who followed South African events closely, and the reaction of the world press was seen as inevitable.²²⁹ The narrative was damning, and the pictures that were taken were disturbing and provocative. It was a story that was told around the world.²³⁰ There

²²⁶ Phillips’ cell mates were Dr. Michael Hathorn, a medical researcher, and Errol Shanley, a bookmaker’s clerk, who had been jailed ten days prior to Phillips’s arrival. Both were held without charge and without access to a lawyer or outside communications. Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 191.

²²⁷ See Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 191-204.

²²⁸ “Interview with Mr. Louw,” Numbered Letter 105, April 13, 1960, from the CDN HC in SA in Cape Town to the USSEA in Ottawa, 2, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 8, “South Africa – Native policy and Racial Conflict,” 1960/03/22-1960/04/14.

²²⁹ “Anatomy of Apartheid,” Numbered Letter 537 from the Office of the High Commissioner for Canada, Canada House, London to the USSEA in Ottawa, March 11, 1960, 2, LAC, RG25, volume 7047, file 7060-40, part 7.3, “South Africa-Native policy and racial conflict,” 1952/12/05-1961/01/26; John Bird, “South African Predicts Violent End of Regime,” *TDS*, February 15, 1960, 5; “The Troubled Journey,” *The Montreal Gazette*, January 6, 1960, 6.

²³⁰ “34 Die in African Riots: Police Fire on Mob of 12,000,” *The Evening Standard* [London], March 21, 1960, 1. Despite being only an hour behind Johannesburg, *The Standard* managed to get the story out on March 21; “50 Killed in South Africa as Police Fire on Rioters,” *The New York Times*, March 22, 1960, 1; “56 Killed in Riot Near Johannesburg,” *The Times* [London], March 22, 1960, 12. *The Times* of London still followed a layout which placed advertisements on the front page of the paper. News headlines first appeared on page one in 1966. Page 12 was the front page of the News section in 1960 and was equivalent to the front page; “62 Africans Die in Race Law Protest: Jets and Tanks Called by Police to Quell Fighting,” *The Washington Post Herald Times*, March 22, 1960, 1. “Police Fire Kills 63 Africans: Armoured Cars and Sten Guns Used Against Crowd Protest at Pass Law European Women Injured, Buildings Ablaze,” *The Guardian* [London], March 22, 1960, 1; “Police Shoot 30 Africans in Demonstration,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 22, 1960, 3; “South Africa

was little surprise at the violence of Sharpeville. There were instead high expectations that the situation in South Africa would quickly escalate into something much worse.²³¹

For those in the government in South Africa, however, the unprecedented attention of the world press in reaction to Sharpeville was unforeseen. The Nationalists responded with hurt and disbelief. The insular self-validating nature of the Nationalist government, and the fear of majority Black rule, ensured that they clung to their faith in the Apartheid narrative. They trusted that their story, if understood, was a worthy story. The problem was “bad press” and “sensationalist” reporting.²³² William Hachten, in his book, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa*, concluded that Nationalists saw the increased disapproval on all sides as resulting from the “lies and distortions” of the press rather than as a censure of their policies.²³³

Sharpeville plainly exposed the failed labours of the Information Service overseas. But rather than awakening the regime to the sentiments of most of the world, the result was instead a steeling of its resolve. The reaction to the after-effects of the reporting of events at Sharpeville was a haphazard, almost panicked, attempt to

Police Kill 62 Rioting Natives,” *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 22, 1960, 5. The articles from the U.S. papers did not have the broad headlines and were limited to one column.

²³¹ “Apartheid’s Yawning Gulf,” *TDS*, March 30, 1960, 6. Fears were of a repetition of the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya, a very dark episode in British history in 1952, when the Kikuyu peoples of Kenya chose to fight back against their colonial aggressors in an attempt to regain land and societal traditions taken from them. See Louis Leakey, *Mau Mau, and the Kikuyu*, (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/lib/oculcarleton-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1539347.

²³² Ronald M. Segal, “Sunshine and Sharpeville,” *Africa South in Exile*, Vol. 4. No. 4 July 1, 1960, 2-4, <https://jstor.org/stable/10.2307/al.sff.document.asjul60>; “The South African State Information Service,” Despatch 463, December 10, 1953, from the CDN HC in SA in Pretoria to the SSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 3749, file 7116-AC-40, part 1, “Information and Cultural Services if the Government of South Africa – Reports,” 1949/07/20-1960/05/16.

²³³ William A. Hachten and C. Anthony Gifford, *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 60, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000330358>. See chapter three of Hachten’s book for details of the Nationalist response to the world media following Sharpeville.

control the narrative, while using a heavy hand to suppress the sources of the “bad press.” The Nationalists’ behaviour implied that they were “anxious more about the nature of the reactions abroad than the African’s state of mind,” according to an anonymous Cape Town Correspondent writing of the reactions following Sharpeville in *Africa South in Exile* in July 1960. The author frequently references articles in *The Cape Times* and the Assembly Debates of the South African parliament, prompting the conclusion that the anonymous author was likely a parliamentary correspondent for *The Cape Times* who was too fearful to write the account for his own paper, or under his own by-line.²³⁴

The Rand Daily Mail, in the days following the massacre, wrote that South Africa had once been a popular country, but that the insecurities and fear of the Nationalists had caused the world to reassess its opinion. The Afrikaner Nation was so concerned with maintaining purity and dominance that, instead of seeing opportunity, it saw threat. Smuts had not scared the world, despite the racial policies of his government. The Nationalists, on the other hand, alarmed the world.²³⁵ “They have isolated us,” wrote *The Mail*, “Even our best friends have turned their backs on us, or are, with fortunately a few exceptions, busy doing so.”²³⁶

News of the shootings at Sharpeville reached Canada within hours, and brief newspaper articles with large provocative headlines dominated the front page of most of the mainstream Canadian newspapers on March 21.²³⁷ Canadian coverage, while at first sparse in detail, if not prominence, grew as more information arrived.

²³⁴ An Anonymous Cape Town Correspondent, “The Nineteen Days,” *Africa South in Exile*, Vol. 4, No. 4, July 1, (1960), 7, www.jstor.org/stable/al.sff.document.asjul60.

²³⁵ “South Africans were once so loved...,” *RDM*, March 26, 1960, 8.

²³⁶ “TV,” *RDM*, May 31, 1960, 6; “World Tensions,” *RDM*, April 4, 1960, 9. Canada was considered one of South Africa’s leading antagonists following the Sharpeville Massacre.

²³⁷ “Bullets Mow Down Angry Negroes – S. African Police Shoot at Demonstrators,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, March 21, 1960, 1; “Like World War Battlefield: Jets Dive on Negroes in South African Riots – Police Fire on 12,000,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 21, 1960, 1. *The Citizen* banner headline

The tone of *The Toronto Daily Star* (*The Star*) editorials in the days following the Sharpeville massacre, and upon hearing of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's rebuke of South African racial policies, was one of frustration with the Canadian government's stand:

If the prime minister of the senior nation in the Commonwealth could protest then, surely Mr. Diefenbaker is evading his responsibility now by clinging to the feeble excuse that he cannot protest the blood bath in South Africa. This is a time when mere protocol cannot be allowed to stifle an expression of human decency. We cannot be silent.²³⁸

The Canadian government would state their views in private, but the Prime Minister was too afraid to offend South Africa, even when he was trailing behind world opinion.

The Star was the newspaper with the largest circulation in Canada in 1951, exceeding 420,000 daily subscribers, and still outpacing its competitors through the 1960s.²³⁹ It was known as a flashy broadsheet, with "huge" headlines and full-page photographs. The editors liked to startle their audience and were known to pursue "causes." Their liberalism was about social welfare and concern for the underprivileged or the victims of injustices, and not necessarily about supporting the Liberal Party. From 1958, with new private ownership of the paper and a new editor in Beland Hugh Honderich, the paper became known for strong, well-researched news stories of significance, with knowledgeable and specialized writers, especially on international stories. Wilfred Kesterton described *The Star* as "perpetually indignant" and socially conscious.²⁴⁰ He cited an American survey on the merit of non-U.S.

was the largest of any of the papers listed. "South Africa in Turmoil: 12,000 Negroes Riot 34 Killed, 100 Shot – Jets Swoop on Mob," *The Toronto Daily Star*, March 21, 1960, 1. In both *The Toronto Daily Star* and *The Winnipeg Free Press*, the headlines were three times the size of the articles.

²³⁸ "Let Canada Denounce Massacre," *TDS*, March 23, 1960, 6.

²³⁹ Wilfred H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 131, <https://books-scholarsportal-info.proxy.library.carleton.ca/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks3/upress/2014-09-29/1/9780773595163>

²⁴⁰ Kesterton, *History of Journalism*, 87.

based newspapers. *The Star* ranked fourth on the list after only *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires, *The Times* of London, and *The Manchester Guardian*.²⁴¹ *The Star* was strong in its efforts to get to the story first. It was the first Canadian newspaper to fly reporters to stories and would use any technological or other means available to get the story back quickly and exclusively. It was known for reporting the facts as soon as it received them and saving the editorial for a following edition to ensure the news got out in a timely manner.²⁴²

The Star correspondent Norman Phillips became the target of the Nationalist government. Why did Eric Louw choose to arrest Phillips and stubbornly to persist in making an example out of him? Why did he choose a Canadian, when the Nationalists had always considered the British press the worst thorn in their side, and the Americans were the first to issue a negative statement on Sharpeville?²⁴³ Why a Canadian when the Canadian government was one of only a few governments that could be considered somewhat friendly towards South Africa, and when Canada regularly abstained on votes against South Africa at the United Nations?²⁴⁴ Phillips attributed the decision to the “topsy turvy” nature of a paranoid government that “sped the growth of what they feared most.”²⁴⁵ The Canadian High Commissioner’s recounting of the events, detailed later in this chapter, back-up the argument that the Nationalist government was acting more from emotion than policy through this period.

²⁴¹ *The Manchester Guardian* officially changed its name to *The Guardian* on August 24, 1959 and began producing a southern edition (London) in 1960. Printing in London began on September 8, 1961, before the entire paper moved to London in 1964.

²⁴² Kesterton, *History of Journalism*, 88, 90, 119, 131.

²⁴³ “U.S. ‘Takes a Better View of S. Africa,’” *RDM*, March 9, 1961, 9.

²⁴⁴ See Peter Henshaw, “Canada and the ‘South African Disputes’ at the United Nations, 1946-1961,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines*, 33, no. 1 (1999): 1-52, doi:10.2307/486386.

²⁴⁵ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 207.

The haphazard actions of the South African government in the days after Sharpeville and into those first days of April 1960 were an attempt to shape the narrative and absolve Apartheid policies of the blame by attributing guilt to the sensationalism of journalists both at home and abroad. Instead, the imposition of the Emergency Regulations on March 30, and the heavy-handed powers given to the police force, served to highlight to the world the brutality of the South African regime.

Phillips's reports from South Africa prior to his arrest certainly gained some notice from the readers of *The Star*, but his reports and his own story after his release were printed and read internationally. He had been just one of a flood of foreign correspondents in South Africa. Now he was "that" foreign correspondent in South Africa.²⁴⁶ The story of his arrest was capitalized on by newspapers around the globe, and the event was used to signify South Africa's descent into a police state.²⁴⁷ Phillips was busy with requests for columns from Canadian and foreign papers, including *The London Daily Telegraph*, which asked for a series of four columns, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, which published Phillips's key article across the entire top half of the page.²⁴⁸ Phillips was greeted by television cameras when he landed in London as

²⁴⁶ "TV, Radio Bids Pour in for Phillips," *TDS*, April 14, 1960, 1.

²⁴⁷ "Durban Arrest of Editor from Canada," *The Observer* [London], April 10, 1960, 1; "No 'Immediate Operation': Dr. Verwoerd moved to a Pretoria Hospital Condition Satisfactory," *The Guardian* [London] April 11, 1960, 1; "South Africa Jails Newsman, Canada Files Strong Protest...", *The Washington Post, Herald Times*, April 10, 1960, A4; "Toronto Star Editor Held in South Africa," *The New York Times*, April 10, 1960, 20.

²⁴⁸ Letter 833, April 26, 1960, from the CDN HC in SA to the USSEA in Ottawa, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2, "Relations between Canada and South Africa," 1959/04/14-1961/07/05; "Similar to Sicilian Mafia – 'Big Brother' Keeps Watch in Strife Torn S. Africa," *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 18, 1960, 8.

well as by television interviews back home.²⁴⁹ The letter-to-the-editor pages were now replete with comments about his arrest, about South Africa, and about his columns.²⁵⁰

Compared to the outraged reaction of Canadian newspapers, the Canadian Government was among the slowest administrations to condemn South Africa following Sharpeville.²⁵¹ The first “official” news on Sharpeville received by External Affairs in Ottawa came from the South African High Commission. A report rapidly prepared by the Information Service in Ottawa was distributed on March 22. The five-foolscap-page report gave a Nationalist-constructed history of their position regarding the African National Congress (ANC), the most populist political organization representing Black South Africans, and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the more radical anti-Apartheid movement.²⁵² It also gave a justification of why the government held the pass system to be a fundamental part of their policy. Then came a paragraph detailing the government’s view of the incidents at Sharpeville. Under a section entitled “Parliamentary Statement,” the first sentence quoted Prime Minister Hendrik F. Verwoerd as blaming the events on the “propaganda of the past years.”²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Blair Fraser and Pierre Berton, with Norman Phillips, *Close-Up*, CBC, April 17, 1960, www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/sharpeville-massacre-sparks-international-condemnation.

²⁵⁰ See page six (Editorial Page) of any issue of *The Toronto Daily Star* during this period, “Voice of the People,” *TDS*, March 26-April 30, 1960, 6.

²⁵¹ “Notes to the Prime Minister on World reactions,” attached April 9, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 7046, file 7060-40, part 8, “South Africa-Native policy and racial conflict,” 1960/03/22-1961/04/07. Including a note from each of the following: Great Britain (March 24, 1960), India, Belgium and Congo, Norway, the United States (March 22, 1960), Yugoslavia (March 28, 1960), The Netherlands (April 5, 1960), Liberia, Malaysia (April 5, 1960), Australia (March 31, 1960), and from Trinidad and Tobago. At the Accra Conference, all independent African States were urged to sever all relations with South Africa (April 10, 1960); “S. Africa Brutality Deplored,” *The Montreal Gazette*, March 22, 1960, Press Clipping Service DEA for File, March 23, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 8, “South Africa – Native policy and Racial Conflict,” 1960/03/22-1960/04/14.

²⁵² The African National Congress (ANC) was established in 1912 and did not condone violent protest. The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) came into existence after the ANC adopted the Freedom Charter of 1955, which accepted that all racial groups should be part of an ideal South African government. The ANC was seen by the PAC as not standing strongly enough against the Nationalist government. Both Groups were banned in April of 1960 until 1990. In 1994 the ANC transitioned into the ruling party of South Africa.

²⁵³ B.S., “Stunned Disbelief then Cold Anger,” *RDM*, March 17, 1961, 15; “Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd,” October 1963, from the CDN HC in SA, (signed by Hurley) to the SSEA in Ottawa, 1-2, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 8520 file 6605-Q-40, part 1. “Personalities in South Africa,” 1941/05/24-1963/06/07; “News by Radio,” South African Press Service No. 13/60, South African Information Service, Ottawa,

Another five-page Information Service report on the events of March 21 arrived from the South African High Commission to the Department of External Affairs the next day, stating that the attacks had nothing to do with the Pass Laws, but rather were part of an environment of uprising, caused by the “sensationalism” of the press, which “engendered a spirit of resistance among the Bantu.”²⁵⁴

At the first opportunity in the House of Commons, on March 22, Hazen Argue, the acting leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) party in the House of Commons, asked for condemnation of South Africa’s government. Argue referenced accounts in the newspapers, which were often the first source of information for the government and especially for the opposition parties. Prime Minister Diefenbaker took refuge in previous statements made by himself and by the government condemning racism instead of addressing the current issue.²⁵⁵ He refused to pronounce a view as to fault, one way or the other, until he had received a brief from High Commissioner James Hurley on the matter. Diefenbaker stated that it would be “inappropriate” to make a statement before he had enough information.²⁵⁶

March 22, 1960, 1-5, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, 7060-40 part, 8. Hendrik F. Verwoerd moved to South Africa as a boy and studied psychology at Stellenbosch University. He was editor of *Die Transvaler*, an “extreme” Afrikaner newspaper in Johannesburg. He was a member of the extreme wing of the NP but was considered not a part of Die “Volk” because of his foreign birth. His approach bordered on the fanatical and he was so sincere in his belief that he was right that he considered any who disagreed “unreasonable” or “prejudiced.”

²⁵⁴ “Daily South African News Bulletin,” from the South African Information Service Ottawa, No. 41/60, March 23, 1960, 1-5, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 9, “South Africa-Native policy and racial conflict,” 1960/03/22-1961/04/07.

²⁵⁵ Canada, Parliament, *HoC Debates*, 24th Parliament, 3rd Session: Vol. 2, (March 22, 1960), 2299, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2403_02/1071?r=0&s=1. Hazen Argue, acting house leader for the C.C.F., addressing Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker.

²⁵⁶ Canada, Parliament, *HoC Debates*, 24th Parliament, 3rd Session: Vol. 2, (March 23, 1960), 2349, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2403_02/1121?r=0&s=1; “Summary record of a telephone conversation between Ignatieff at Canada House in London and David Stansfield in Ottawa, 11:30 am,” March 23, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 9, “South Africa – Native policy and racial conflict,” 1960/03/22-1961/04/07. A telephone conversation between High Commissioner Ignatieff in London and David Stansfield, Officer in the Commonwealth Division of the DEA in Ottawa, indicates that British Prime Minister Macmillan was refusing to answer the concerns of the critics until he had been able to get more information from Britain’s representatives in South Africa. It would appear this conversation happened prior to Diefenbaker’s own statement in the House of Commons to the same effect.

Two telegrams were sent to Hurley on March 23 asking for information, urging him to reply post-haste: "There is urgent concern here about latest outbreaks of violence. Assume telegram giving your assessment of situation is already on way. While situation remains tense, please despatch your messages with sufficient priority to ensure fastest delivery."²⁵⁷

The employees of the Canadian High Commission in South Africa, while closer to the events, were not witnesses to, or involved with, the events, and were obliged to rely on intelligence provided to them from local sources, or officially supplied information. In April of 1956 the High Commissioner in South Africa, E.W.T. Gill, along with the Heads of other missions, had received a letter from the South African Department of External Affairs requesting that all official business be conducted through recognized diplomatic channels, those channels being through South African External Affairs, and that the missions were no longer to go directly to the originating department or agency for their information. Gill gave the example of no longer being able to obtain a police report from the South African Police, and the delays that the new procedure entailed.²⁵⁸ Much of the information forwarded from the mission was also drawn from local newspapers. All these sources from South

²⁵⁷ Three telegrams were sent to the Canadian High Commissioner in South Africa on March 23. Telegram K-87, from the DEA in Ottawa to the CDN HC in SA, March 23, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 9, "South Africa-Native policy and racial conflict," 1960/03/22-1961/04/07. The first telegram quoted Prime Minister Diefenbaker's initial response to Argue's demands for a reaction to the Press Reports coming out of South Africa in the House of Commons. "Racial Violence," Telegram K-89 from the DEA in Ottawa to Cape Town CDN HC in S.A, March 23, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 9, "South Africa-Native policy and racial conflict," 1960/03/22-1961/04/07. The second telegram let the High Commissioner know that information was required immediately and that he should take whatever actions necessary to ensure the information was sent by the fastest means possible. Telegram K-90, sent from Stansfield to the CDN HC in SA, March 23, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 9. The third telegram communicated the exchange that had occurred in the House of Commons.

²⁵⁸ "Channels of Communication between Heads of Mission and South African Authorities," Numbered Letter 77 from the CDN HC in SA in Cape Town (signed by Gill) to the USSEA in Ottawa, April 10, 1956, LAC, RG25, volume 3238, file 5710-G-40, part 1, "Reports re: organizations of and personalities of diplomatic representation in South Africa," 1944/02/28-1961/05/24.

Africa were clearly more partial or censured than the reports printed in the Canadian newspapers from Canadian foreign correspondents in South Africa or from news agencies.

Hurley's reaction was delayed, either due to a lack of information or because of an attempt to gain the most accurate information.²⁵⁹ His initial reply by telegram was date stamped March 24, from Cape Town, and was received in Ottawa on March 25. There was a time difference of six hours. Brief descriptions were given of the concerns of the government in South Africa and of the police and government reactions to the violence, but not much detailed information that Diefenbaker could use to create a statement that would meet his critics. Hurley wrote that it was "much too early to give you sound opinion which must wait for result of inquiries." Hurley concluded that the situation was "fairly normal" and that he would continue to report daily.²⁶⁰ Hurley next reported on March 26, with a telegram relayed separately to advise that information was being sent via air mail. The package consisted of two reports Hurley had received "by personal arrangement with director... Meiring" from the Information Service of the South African Government. These reports made the government and police actions sound necessary and reasonable.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ It should be noted that in the case of the Cato Manor Riots in South Africa of January 24 of the same year, the reply from Hurley was sent four days after the events had occurred. See "Cato Manor Riots – Durban," Numbered Letter 21, from the CDN HC in SA Cape Town to the USSEA in Ottawa, January 28, 1960, LAC, RG25 A-3-B, volume 7047, file 7060-40, part 7.3, "South Africa-Native policy and racial conflict," 1952/12/05-1961/01/26; Reports of any urgency were either transmitted by teletype, or by air mail. Only non-critical reports were sent by ground in the mail bag.

²⁶⁰ Telegram Cape 10 from CDN HC in SA in Cape Town to the DEA in Ottawa, March 24, 1960, LAC RG25-A-3-B, volume 7047, file 7060-40, part 7.3, "South Africa-Native policy and racial conflict," 1952/12/05-1961/01/26.

²⁶¹ "Disturbances in South Africa," Numbered Letter 94, March 26, 1960, from the CDN HC to SA to the USSEA in Ottawa, with attachments, "Hellschreiber Report on Riots," – Factual Report by Information Services Investigator, 5, and "'Cable to Daily Mail, London,' – Reply to Questions Submitted by *The Daily Mail* from the Director of South African Information Service, Cape Town," 1-3, LAC, RG25-A-3-B, volume 7047, file 7060-40, part 8.

Diefenbaker did not issue a formal diplomatic protest following the events of Sharpeville. He alluded to his own past statements on human rights and his general condemnations of racism and violence, saying that no benefit could come from a diplomatic protest and that “outspoken criticism” might do more harm. Diefenbaker felt his government had exercised “a sense of restrained responsibility.”²⁶² *The Winnipeg Free Press* catalogued the missed opportunities to condemn South Africa’s race policies and called Phillips’s arrest a slap in the face to a Canadian government that “bent over backwards” in efforts at friendship and “correct behaviour.” How would Diefenbaker avoid censuring the South Africans at the upcoming Commonwealth Conference?²⁶³

Canadian foreign correspondents were writing stark reports about the events in South Africa, while Canada’s government was playing the waiting game before directly criticizing South African events and policies. Meanwhile South Africa’s Information Service was working overtime to get their story heard by the Canadian Government. It would logically follow that Louw would not want to push Canada into taking a stand against South Africa. When he met with the First Secretary of the Canadian High Commission, Gordon Brown, following Phillips’s arrest, Louw claimed that the Canadian’s reporting “would poison union of South African-CDN relations.” Louw also admitted that he expected that there would be a “stink” about the arrest, but felt “something had to be done to stop false press reports.”²⁶⁴

In *The Tragedy of Apartheid*, Phillips explained the background of the Sharpeville massacre as well as his experiences in South Africa as the country

²⁶² Dan Hanright, “Ottawa Debates Apartheid Before End of the Month,” *The Red Deer Advocate*, April 12, 1960, 1; “Ottawa Rules Out Protest,” *The Edmonton Journal*, March 25, 1960, 1.

²⁶³ “It Takes Only One to Make a Quarrel: A Slap in the Face for Ottawa,” *The Winnipeg Free Press*, April 12, 1960, 21.

²⁶⁴ Telegram Cape-31 from CDN HC in SA in Capetown to SSEA in Ottawa, April 9, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2.

suffered under Emergency Regulations imposed by the government to grant themselves and the police ever widening powers. Phillips's narrative was angry and aggressive, which, given his incarceration by the Special Branch of the South African police for doing his job and his subsequent ejection from the country, was an expected response. The tone of Phillips's book was nevertheless one that would appeal to his audience and was in line with his reports in *The Star*.²⁶⁵

Phillip's pre-arrest reports to *The Star* were also in line with other reports coming out of South Africa.²⁶⁶ His first report was printed on the front page of *The Star* on March 25, 1960. It was a straightforward report on his experiences during his first day in South Africa, his interaction with the police forces in his effort to gain access to Sharpeville, and his dealings or discussions with the many non-white South Africans he encountered and with the police. He described an environment and a society with which he was unfamiliar.²⁶⁷ Phillips's next reports told the stories of two Pan Africanist Congress members, William Jolobe and Robert Sobukwe, the founder and leader of the PAC, who was already imprisoned at this point.²⁶⁸ Phillips described South African Prime Minister Verwoerd as the weakest of the Afrikaner Prime

²⁶⁵ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*; A review of Phillips *Tragedy of Apartheid* sums up his work: "A halo of absolute sincerity illuminates Mr. Phillips' work, and this precludes any suggestion that the bitterness with which he wields his verbal sword may be due to his brief imprisonment by the South African Police on undisclosed charges." Ian Todd, *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 17, 1960, 19.

²⁶⁶ See Leonard Ingalls in *The New York Times*, Gerald Clark in *The Montreal Gazette*, and correspondents writing for *The Guardian* [London], *The Observer* [London], and *The Washington Post and Herald* during the two-week period from March 24, 1960, to April 9, 1960.

²⁶⁷ Norman Phillips, "No White Safe in Black Africa – 'Dealing with Savages' Police Tell Star Writer," *TDS*, March 25, 1960, 1.

²⁶⁸ Norman Phillips. "Monday is 'A'-day for Johannesburg," *TDS*, March 26, 1960, 3. Robert Sobukwe was the founder of the Pan Africanist Congress, the anti-Apartheid movement that rose to prominence when the African National Congress was seen as not standing strongly enough against the nationalist government. Sobukwe and the PAC were the organizers of the Pass Law Protests that occurred at Sharpeville and Langa. Sobukwe was never a completely free man after his arrest in 1960. See "Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe: 1959 Pan Africanist Congress Inaugural Speech." *Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 10, no. 9, 2017, 163. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A517879858/LitRC?u=ocul56>.

Ministers.²⁶⁹ Phillips's reports also described witnessing violence against protesting Africans.²⁷⁰

Phillips contacted Piet Meiring at the Information Service Office when he first arrived in South Africa to request an interview with Prime Minister Verwoerd through government channels, but after several follow up inquiries, he was told that no interview would be possible.²⁷¹ Phillips travelled instead to hear the Prime Minister speak on March 26, at a town called Meyerton, just a little outside Johannesburg. Verwoerd addressed a crowd in Afrikaans, switching to English only at three strategic points to address the English press and the outside world: "We in South Africa are the best allies the Western World can have. We are in the forefront of Western Civilization. Do not throw your friends away."²⁷²

Phillips's recap of the speech at Meyerton in his book took a slightly different angle, providing more background on Verwoerd's words. Verwoerd put the blame for the recent protests and for African resistance in general on those trying to remove his government from power, especially journalists who "concentrated on sensationalism above all else." Phillips, in hindsight, saw this as a recurring theme amongst the Nationalists, remarking that he had heard the same "smug theory" trotted out by Eric Louw after the assassination attempt on Verwoerd on April 9, when he claimed that the gun attack by a white English man was "inspired by reading sensational newspaper reports."²⁷³ Phillips quoted Verwoerd in Meyerton: "We don't intend to be

²⁶⁹ Norman Phillips, "Monday is 'A'-day for Johannesburg," *TDS*, March 26, 1960, 3. Phillips reported that Verwoerd had been born in Holland and had only "toyed with Nazi philosophies during the war," whereas the former Nationalist Prime Ministers had all come from strong and proud "Boer" backgrounds.

²⁷⁰ Norman Phillips, "Rioter Smashes Car's Windshield: Bitter Fruits of Apartheid Show White Supremacy Futile," *TDS*, March 29, 1960, 1, 3.

²⁷¹ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 128.

²⁷² Norman Phillips, "South Africa bows to Blacks: Apartheid's Solid Wall Cracks," *TDS*, March 28, 1960, 3.

²⁷³ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 128.

perturbed about what is done and said in the outside world in all ignorance.... We are not the oppressors we are made out to be.” The speech left Phillips with the impression of a lonely man seeking friends and asking the world for support.²⁷⁴

The Star correspondent’s non-governmental welcome in South Africa, while not unfriendly according to Phillips, usually began with a reproach of the world press for not telling the South African story correctly. Most white South Africans seemed to earnestly want to set the correspondent straight. Recognized as a foreigner, Phillips was advised that “ninety-nine per cent of what was written about the country was false.” Phillips found he frequently came across information that had been “managed” by the Information Services, including the exaggeration of crowd sizes for the Prime Minister’s speaking engagement at Meyerton. Phillips’s recollection of the crowd did not align with that of the government information: “The crowd filled the field – about fifteen thousand men, women, and children, and by no means the palpable exaggeration of sixty to eighty thousand.” Phillips also saw the control of the government over education as a clear strategy to “deprive English-language newspapers of their readership,” and to indoctrinate all white South Africans into the Afrikaner fold.²⁷⁵

Phillips mentioned throughout his articles the problems that foreign correspondents were having in getting their stories out. He reported that Gerald

²⁷⁴ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 132-34.

²⁷⁵ David Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa– South Africa in Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 198, <https://archive.org/details/whitetribeofafri00harr>; Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 131-132, 141. By mandating the teaching of Afrikaans and the reduction of instruction in English in the South African education system, the government was able to limit access to the outside influences the Nationalists so feared. Harrison backs this up: “For all the Apartheid energy that went into reorganising Black education, yet more was devoted to resolving once and for all the way young whites should be taught. Above all, the gurus of the Broederbond, who dominated Nationalist thinking on the issue, insisted that impressionable Afrikaners of school age must be removed from the influence of English language and thought.... ‘We want no mixing of languages, no mixing of cultures, no mixing of religions,’ said the Broederbond blueprint on education in 1948. Bilingualism was an evil to be avoided at all costs.”

Clark's radio broadcast to the U.S. for the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) had been stopped, and that Clark was told by a "broadcasting official" that "We don't have to care about the outside world."²⁷⁶ Phillips commended the bravery of *The Daily Mail*, which risked the penalties threatened by the new Emergency Regulations for "subversive publications."²⁷⁷ He wrote that South Africa was "now a land where the government can arrest anyone any time and hold him incommunicado."²⁷⁸ He lamented the failure of South African media, apart from *The Daily Mail*, to faithfully report the events as they happened, blaming the Emergency Regulations that prevented them from publishing anything that might "incite" the African population. He encountered persistent difficulties in getting stories. He was not permitted to know the names of anyone arrested, and the sources he managed to track down were afraid to talk. Phillips described his inability to visit the areas where troubles occurred and the continuing violence by the police that came to him through second hand reports.²⁷⁹ These restrictions, "unimaginable" to Canadians, had become the norm in South Africa.²⁸⁰

Phillips submitted what was to be his last report from South Africa, a summary article on violence at Nyanga – another Black township that had

²⁷⁶ Norman Phillips, "Port City of 250,000 Scene of New Outbreak," *TDS*, March 31, 1960, 1,3; "South Africa Bars Reporter," *The New York Times*, April 1, 1960, 5.

²⁷⁷ Norman Phillips, "Port City of 250,000 Scene of New Outbreak," *TDS*, March 31, 1960, 3; Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 153-54. A subversive statement was defined as "any statement calculated or likely to have the effect of causing panic, alarm or fear among the public or weakening the confidence of the public in the successful termination of the state of emergency unless the statement is proved to be a true and complete narrative." The pre-existing 'sub judice' laws, (prohibiting the publication of any information which might prejudice an action before the courts) were used extensively by the Nationalists to control information, and in conjunction with the Emergency Regulations, prevented anyone from giving the names of those arrested, and from printing, distributing, speaking of, or displaying anything that was considered subversive, and denied detainees access to legal counsel.

²⁷⁸ "Blood Runs, Police Club All Blacks," *TDS*, April 3, 1960, 1; Norman Phillips, "Tinder Dry Situation: One Spark, Africa Will Blaze," *TDS*, April 1, 1960, 3; "Shoot Three Negroes Marching on Durban Jail," *TDS*, April 1, 1960, 1.

²⁷⁹ Nathan Phillips, "South Africa Silences 'Massacre Probe' Bishop," *TDS*, April 4, 1960, 3.

²⁸⁰ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 184.

experienced violence on March 21, and where continuing clashes occurred between the Black population and the police – to the Durban Post Office on April 8 for transmission to Canada. This was the first report that Phillips had submitted through the Durban Post Office, having only just arrived in that city.²⁸¹ He was arrested at his hotel early on the morning of April 9 under the Emergency Regulations. Under these regulations, Phillips had neither the right to know of what he was accused, nor the right to counsel. He had no right to a hearing in a courtroom and was not permitted to contact the Canadian High Commission.²⁸² Not only had his submitted article been seized, but also any notes, pages or literature that were found in his hotel room were confiscated.

Eric Louw, in his capacity as head of the South African Government Information Service, had earlier that week berated a group of correspondents for their reports on the police brutality at Nyanga on April 4. Louw accused them of providing “wildly exaggerated and in many cases completely untrue reports to their newspapers and agencies,” Phillips’s first reaction to his arrest was to link it to Louw’s outburst.²⁸³ Phillips, on reflection after his release, gave three probable reasons for his arrest: as “a warning to all foreign correspondents and a threat to their sources of information;” as a “vindictive action” by insecure police officials; or as an attempt to put a halt to his on-going investigation into the Broederbond.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 189. The fact that Phillips was submitting his report through a different post office than previously may explain why Phillips’ transmissions were now suppressed, when they had not been previously, but was not mentioned in Phillips’ recounting of the events.

²⁸² Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 187.

²⁸³ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 185-186. “Dr. Verwoerd himself was squeamish about admitting interference with press messages. Some hours after his government or his police had suppressed entirely my last dispatch on Nyanga (without advising me), the Prime Minister was asked whether it was his intention to impose press censorship in respect to the actions of police or Citizens’ Force Units. Dr. Verwoerd’s reply, read for him in his absence from Parliament, was that the Government would take whatever it deemed necessary from time to time.”

²⁸⁴ See also P.B. Orlik, *The South African Broadcasting Corporation: An Historical Survey and Contemporary Analysis*, 1968, (Order No. 7027042), 40, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, (302400979). ProQuest proxy.library.carleton.ca/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library

Phillips had yet to issue any reports on his probe into the Broederbond, but he believed that he had raised some hackles, and that his enquiries had hit a little too close to home for the thin-skinned National Party members. He revealed in an interview with *The Daily Mail* in mid-April that his research had been discovered upon his arrest and that he was questioned during his imprisonment primarily about his knowledge of the Broederbond and the source of his information.²⁸⁵ Phillips expanded on the effects of his investigation in *Tragedy of Apartheid*, divulging that he believed that his investigation was “likely” a main factor that led to his arrest. His jailors wanted to know why he sought his information from the “wrong people.”²⁸⁶

News of the arrest of Phillips was broadcast on CBC radio on the morning of April 9, quoting a United Press report that stated Phillips had been arrested at his hotel room and was being detained, and that Eric Louw had asked a member of the Canadian High Commission to call him to discuss the matter. *The Star's* Ottawa correspondent made requests at the Department of External Affairs for information on Phillips's health, asking for a “stiff protest” to the South African government, and for Phillips's release.²⁸⁷

The news of Phillips's arrest had to share the front page of *The Star* on April 9 with the news of the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Verwoerd.²⁸⁸ An

.carleton.ca/dissertations-theses/south-african-broadcasting-corporation-historical/docview/302400979/se-2?accountid=9894; Orlik provided corroboration that the South African government heavily “discouraged” investigations into the Broederbond.

²⁸⁵ “Why I was jailed – by expelled Newsman,” *RDM*, April 15, 1960, 2.

²⁸⁶ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 136-138. Phillips wrote of the strangle-hold this association had over South Africa, and how it dominated cultural, religious, and political life. The Nationalist government was “riddled with Broers.” (The term “Broer” means brother and was used to identify members of the Broederbond.) Phillips claimed that while the police confiscated all his notes, they did not find a photostatic copy of a “top-secret” report from Smuts’ government on the Broederbond. He was able to smuggle this document out of South Africa upon his release, despite not being able to properly finish his investigation.

²⁸⁷ “Arrest of the Toronto Star Correspondent in Durban,” Note from Mr. G.F. Bruce (Duty Officer) to Glazebrook (Assistant USSEA), April 9, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2.

²⁸⁸ “Canadian Envoy in South Africa Seeks Release of Norman Phillips,” *TDS*, April 9, 1960, 1; “White Man Shoots Africa’s Verwoerd,” *TDS*, April 9, 1960, 1.

editorial defended the correspondent, calling his work “in the best tradition of Western journalism.” The editorial stipulated that Phillips’s efforts had gone “against the grain of the Union government, which – despite all its stubborn disclaimers – has felt the sting of aroused opinion abroad.” The arrest “was made almost inevitable by his thorough reporting of the racist repression in South Africa.” Phillips’s reports “in the past few weeks have been a searing indictment of the Apartheid system.”²⁸⁹

An Emergency Telegram was sent from Ottawa, following news of Phillips’s arrest on April 9, including a press release from Prime Minister Diefenbaker:

Instructions from the Prime Minister have been sent to the Canadian High Commissioner to inform the South African Government that the arrest and detention of Mr. Phillips cannot but add to the widespread public indignation already felt in Canada at the measures which have given rise to the recent violence and loss of life in South Africa. The High Commissioner has been instructed to make strong representations to the South Africa Government with a view to securing Mr. Phillips’ release from custody.

The Acting High Commissioner for South Africa in Ottawa has been called in by the Department of External Affairs to receive similar representations.²⁹⁰

Diefenbaker recounted for Parliament his reaction to Phillips’s arrest, stating that he had taken up the matter personally.²⁹¹

Two further telegrams were received by External Affairs in Ottawa on April 9. The first stated that First Secretary Brown had asked how long the Nationalist government planned to detain Phillips. Brown was not provided an answer other than “not soon,” and that deportation was likely.²⁹² The second telegram was sent to

²⁸⁹ “Star Man Detained,” *TDS*, April 9, 1960, 6.

²⁹⁰ Press Release, Office of the Prime Minister, April 9, 1960, 1-2, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2.

²⁹¹ Canada, Parliament, *HoC Debates*, 24th Parliament, 3rd Session: Vol. 3, (April 11, 1960), 3087-88. https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2403_03/645?r=0&s=3.

²⁹² Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 198; Telegram Cape-32 from CDN HC in SA in Capetown to USSEA in Ottawa, April 9, 1960, LAC, RG25, volume 6482, file 6230-40, part 2.2.

inform Ottawa that Prime Minister Verwoerd had been shot and had sustained “serious injuries.”²⁹³

Complaints came in about Phillips’s arrest from J.P Hogue, the President of the Canadian Daily Newspaper Association, and Charles H. Peters, the President of the Canadian Press, both expressing “concern and alarm.” Hogue protested that “Phillips’ despatches to Canada would indicate that Phillips has observed the best traditions of a free press in reporting facts as he has observed them, without prejudice. His arrest is a startling negation of freedom of reporting as generally understood within the Commonwealth of Nations.” Peters protested the infringement of Phillips’s ability to do his job and “strongly urged his release.”²⁹⁴

High Commissioner James Hurley had a meeting with Eric Louw on the morning of April 10 to discuss the release of Phillips. Hurley wrote in his report to Ottawa of April 13 that he had pointed out that Phillips’s continuing detention and questioning would only worsen relations between the two countries and would encourage Phillips to strike back once he was released. Hurley felt his words had very little effect. Louw accused Hurley of “interfering in the affairs of the Government of South Africa” and “telling them what to do.” Hurley described Louw as a beligerent and defensive bully, blaming all journalists, and Phillips in particular, for South Africa’s woes.²⁹⁵ Louw “criticized vehemently” the Prime Minister of the United

²⁹³ Telegram Cape-33, from CDN HC in SA in Capetown to USSEA in Ottawa, April 9, 1960, LAC, RG25-A-3-b, volume 6775, file 1038-40, part 11.2, “Political Situation in South Africa,” 1960/03/03-1960/07/05.

²⁹⁴ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 199.

²⁹⁵ “Interview with Mr. Louw,” Numbered Letter Cape 105, April 13, 1960, from the CDN HC in SA (signed by Hurley) to the USSEA in Ottawa, 1, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 8, “South Africa – Native policy and Racial Conflict,” 1960/03/22-1960/04/14; “Mr. Eric H. Louw,” Memorandum from E.W.T. Gill to Commonwealth Division, April 13, 1960, 1-2, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 8. The memo gave a personality profile of Eric Louw, describing him as anti-Semitic, with “a rather volatile or mercurial temperament” and obsessive over liberals and foreign correspondents whom he viewed as sensationalists. “He likes to have the last word and does not know when to be silent,” but “is articulate without being persuasive.”

Kingdom for daring to allow a resolution to condemn South African violence to pass unanimously in his House of Commons, and Diefenbaker for the news release he had issued over Phillips's arrest. Both, Louw claimed, were based on "completely false and distorted reports." Hurley described Louw as a "ranting, raging bore" and "one of the most intolerant and abusive men I have ever met."²⁹⁶

Phillips spent just under four full days in a Durban jail cell.²⁹⁷ He was released on April 12 into the custody of the High Commission's Gordon Brown. He was given no conditions for his release other than to leave the country immediately. All but the first page of his confiscated article was returned to him, but much of his research was not.²⁹⁸ Hurley confirmed with *The Star* that Phillips had made no agreements with the South Africans not to print his despatch once he was free. There had been no apology from South Africa. Hurley did not expect one, given that the South Africans felt entirely justified in their actions.²⁹⁹

The Star did not take the arrest of its foreign editor lightly. Stories of South Africa following Sharpeville were both more plentiful and less polite than had been the case in the past.³⁰⁰ Phillips's seized story ran in *The Star* on April 14. It was published on the front page with a banner headline and the following statement: "The South African government, April 8, imposed press censorship. This dispatch from Norman Phillips, *The Star's* foreign editor, was suppressed and Phillips was arrested.

²⁹⁶ "Interview with Mr. Louw," Numbered Letter Cape 105, from the CDN HC in SA (signed by Hurley) to the USSEA in Ottawa, April 13, 1960, 1-2, LAC, RG25, volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 8. ²⁹⁷ Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 183.

²⁹⁸ "Interview with Mr. Louw" Numbered Letter Cape 105, 2.

²⁹⁹ "Surrender Star Story! Canadian Envoy to Ask," *TDS*, April 12, 1960, 1-2.

³⁰⁰ *The Toronto Daily Star* published more than three times the number of front-page articles on South Africa in the ten months that followed Sharpeville, and more than four times the number of editorials than they had in the previous ten months. (Ten-month span instead of twelve to avoid the news from the Commonwealth Conference of March 1961.) "South Africa" referenced in, *Toronto Daily Star*, May 21, 1959-March 21, 1960, and March 21, 1960-January 21, 1961, 1,6. *The Star* Editorials appear on page 6.

Police confiscated the first page, but he has reconstructed it.”³⁰¹ Phillips’s infamous report was critical of the government, the Prime Minister, the Police, and the ineffectual white opposition in South Africa. He pointed out the increasing fear of the internal press that effectively silenced its voice. The story was no worse than his other reports.³⁰²

Phillips saw his detention as a “brief, if harrowing experience” that “...served better than anything I could write to rouse the attention of the outside world to what was happening in the land of Apartheid.”³⁰³ Phillips used his new fame, while appearing on the CBC’s *Close-Up* program on April 17, to argue that, despite their claims, South Africa was very sensitive to outside criticism. Canada was in a unique position to exert influence, because a statement from Canada would come from a country still more friendly than the U.S. or Britain.³⁰⁴

In a full-page layout on April 22, 1960, *The Daily Mail* ran several articles on press censorship in South Africa and the desire for the implementation of further censorship by the National Party. The articles framed a large photo of Phillips and quoted government sources who were focusing their attack on *The Daily Mail* and Phillips as examples of writing that would not be tolerated. There were also articles on the wisdom of arresting Phillips, instead of just sending him home, and the reaction that the move would cause.³⁰⁵

³⁰¹ “The Story That Sent Phillips to Jail,” *TDS*, April 14, 1960, 1.

³⁰² “I Knew Too Much for Boer ‘KU KLUX,’” *TDS*, April 14, 1960, 1, 4; “The Story that Sent Phillips to Jail,” *TDS*, April 14, 1960, 1, 4.

³⁰³ “Philips Home, Faces News Quiz,” *TDS*, April 16, 1960, 1; Phillips, *Tragedy of Apartheid*, 183.

³⁰⁴ Phillips, *Close-Up*; “South Africa: Land of Big Brother,” *TDS*, April 16, 1960, 3. Phillips expressed his view that his seized report on Nyanga was no worse than any of his previous reports, but the last straw for the Nationalists, who had not appreciated his earlier report on beatings in Cape Town.

³⁰⁵ “Row over Jailed Journalist,” *RDM*, April 22, 1960, 2. One article quoted Mr. Harry Lawrence, Progressive Party Member of Parliament for Salt River, as questioning the arrest.

On April 20, Hurley sent a report to Ottawa outlining what he knew of suppression of the press happening in South Africa. The Nationalist government had been controlling foreign correspondents through the denial of visas to any reporter whom they thought would produce stories unsympathetic to South Africa. This policy became more stringent following the arrest of Phillips. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) went so far as to threaten to pull their not insignificant share of business from the United Press if it did not replace its two members of staff in South Africa, due to complaints that their coverage was harmful to South Africa's interests. Hurley pointed out the intangible restrictions that came from vague regulations that were open to interpretation. Many stories were not published because the newspapers, particularly the smaller and less mainstream ones, did not know if the stories were acceptable and were hesitant to risk arrest or closure of their papers. Hurley sympathised with the weight of the government restrictions that the press was having to deal with during the Emergency and indicated that the South African government's approach had not been well judged or organized.³⁰⁶

Louw's crusade against Phillips did not end with Phillips's release. While speaking to foreign journalists at the Prime Ministers Conference in London in May of 1960, Louw once again went after Phillips, reminding everyone present of his accusation that *The Star* gave specific instructions to Phillips to procure news stories with "blood and guts."³⁰⁷ In a press conference at South Africa House, an already irritated Louw took a question from a representative of *The Star*: "If you feel that the

³⁰⁶ "Interference with the Press in South Africa," Numbered Letter Cape-115 from The CDN HC in SA in Cape Town (signed by Hurley) to the Under-Secretary for External Affairs in Ottawa, April 20, 1960, 1-3, LAC, RG25 A-3-B, volume 8165, file 5872 AC-40, part 2, "Press in South Africa – reports," 1950/02/10-1963/09/26.

³⁰⁷ "Address by Mr. Eric H. Louw, Minister of External Affairs of the Union of South Africa," The South Africa Club, London, Tuesday May 10, 1960, 8, LAC, RG25 volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 9.1, "South Africa – Native policy and Racial Conflict," 1960/03/22-1960/05/23.

almost universal condemnation is based on distorted press reports, can you say why your colleagues PMs have seen fit to approach you on this? Are you suggesting that the entire system of diplomatic info in the commonwealth has broken down?" Louw's response was antagonistic: "No, but I think some of the diplomats are not doing their homework. If you continually read statements in the press, naturally and subconsciously you are influenced by them. It is quite clear by statements that are made by some of the leaders that they are not aware of the conditions."³⁰⁸ The editorial in *The Star* that referenced this press conference read: "Mr. Louw is impenitent, unregenerant and defiant of all criticism.... He insists, in effect, that all the world is out of step but South Africa: that all the protests against Apartheid from abroad are based on nothing more than malice or on misinformation about the true state of affairs in South Africa."³⁰⁹

The control over the media in South Africa was really only beginning. In May, the President of the South African Society of Journalists, Hendrik Wannenberg, protested that "South Africa revealed to the world that it has no free press and that is worse than anything Phillips could have written." Critiquing "a 'neurotic sensitivity' to critical comment," Wannenberg said that the degree of control now being exercised on the English press in South Africa meant the Nationalists were only one step away from "complete government control."³¹⁰

The harsh international criticism that followed Sharpeville and its aftermath moved the Nationalist government, under a recovered Verwoerd, significantly to increase the scope and efforts of the Information Service.³¹¹ Meiring stated that the

³⁰⁸ "South Africa: Mr. Louw Press Conference," Telegram from the CDN HC in London to SSEA in Ottawa, May 5, 1960, LAC, RG25 volume 5235, file 7060-40, part 9.1, "South Africa – Native policy and Racial Conflict," 1960/03/22-1960/05/23.

³⁰⁹ "Mr. Louw is Impenitent," *TDS*, May 5, 1960, 6.

³¹⁰ "S Africa Press under Iron Curtain Tactics," *Star Phoenix* [Saskatoon], May 2, 1960, 7.

³¹¹ Hull, *Propaganda War*, 81; McKay, "Propaganda," 6.

“tempo of information work [would] be stepped up on all fronts,” and that the foreign offices would “function on a bigger and more effective scale.” In addition, an Information Officer was posted to the permanent staff at the United Nations.³¹² In 1962, following South Africa’s departure from the Commonwealth, and the subsequent creation of a Republic, a separate Ministry, the new Department of Information, was created with a further increase in funding, in personnel, and with greater powers to control the press.³¹³

In Ottawa, the Information Officer attached to the South African High Commission, Wynand F. van Eyssen, while not as prolific or caustic as Steward, had been a regular guest of service and church groups, and he submitted his fair share of letters-to-the-editor, as well as making appearances on radio and television. The prevailing argument through van Eyssen’s tenure was that support of South Africa constituted a strong defence against Communism.³¹⁴ Following the events of Sharpeville, there was a dearth of references to van Eyssen in Canadian media, other than in the social columns, until he departed Canada in October of 1960, ostensibly for a four month vacation, from which he never returned.³¹⁵ Les de Villiers, the South African Information Officer in Ottawa from 1962 to 1966, wrote in his 1980 recollections of his time with the Information Service of South Africa that he had held conversations with van Eyssen prior to assuming the role himself. He was told that

³¹² “Gov’t steps up its foreign publicity,” *RDM*, August 11, 1961, 1; “Two Press Attaches Posted,” *RDM*, June 9, 1960, 2.

³¹³ Hull, *Propaganda War*, 81.

³¹⁴ “Racial Plan Keeps out Communism,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, December 11, 1959, 11.

³¹⁵ “Person to Person,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 19, 1960, 35; The last mention of van Eyssen in his role as Information Officer prior to his departure was a reference to a public appearance in early February 1960, “Fellowship Hears Talk on S. Africa,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 9, 1960, 21.

Canada had been on the verge of ejecting van Eyssen in 1960, but that Louw himself had removed van Eyssen from his post.³¹⁶

During de Villiers's term, there were only a handful of letters-to-the-editor to be found, and notably all in the conservative *Globe and Mail*. De Villiers did make a valiant effort to promote South Africa, claiming that he attended at least 50 public receptions each year.³¹⁷ De Villiers recounted one of his first interactions in Canada at a formal gathering. After introductions were made, de Villiers heard the words, "Sir, I think your country stinks!" He thought this comment representative of the reception he received during his time in Canada, where he had been "told to keep a low profile and stay out of trouble."³¹⁸ Canada was not again targeted in any significant way by the South African Department of Information until at least the late 1970s.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ Les de Villiers, *Secret Information*, (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1980), 25, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/101945928>.

³¹⁷ Les de Villiers, Letter to the Editor: "Fear of the Truth," *The Globe and Mail*, October 30, 1962, 6.; Les de Villiers, Letter to the Editor: "South Africa," *The Globe and Mail*, August 30, 1965, 6; Les de Villiers, Letter to the Editor: "South Africa," *The Globe and Mail*, October 22, 1966, 6; De Villiers, *Secret Information*, 26.

³¹⁸ De Villiers, *Secret Information*, 22.

³¹⁹ De Villiers, *Secret Information*, 22; Richard Leonard, "The Propaganda War," in *South Africa at War: White Power and the Crisis in Southern Africa* (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Company), 1983, 161-197, <https://jstor-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/stable/10.2307/al.sff.document.crp2b20031>. Leonard's chapter lists in detail the efforts and the targets of the Information Service that formed the basis of the Muldergate Affair and Canada had only one small mention, regarding articles placed in Canadian newspapers; See also Michael Bueckert, "Boycotts and Backlash: Canadian Opposition to Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movements from South Africa to Israel," Ph.D. diss. (Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, 2020), 119-125, <https://curve.carleton.ca/2aeddef3-06a0-4b8e-8504-367caf8edd17>. Bueckert showed that Canada was on the fringe of South African propaganda efforts until after Muldergate.

CONCLUSION

The Nationalists were preoccupied with world opinion throughout their forty-six-year regime. Their efforts to modify or control that opinion only intensified through those years. Canada was among nine countries that were targeted in 1949 by the regime's Information Service as countries where the Service could have the most impact on how South Africa was portrayed in the world press. The Information Service was one of the main tools of those crafting South Africa's foreign policy during the 1950s. At the time, South Africa was still a strong member of the Commonwealth, and Canada and South Africa had much in common despite their differences.

The Nationalist South African regime exercised power ruthlessly and promoted an absolute belief in its supremacy. By contrast, it was also a regime that craved validation and respect from the world. The Nationalists' great confidence in the rectitude of their policies blinded them: it took a long time for them to realize that simply getting their version of the truth out to the world would not alter the belief of the world that South Africa's Apartheid policies were wrong. They were working from a position of anger and hurt feelings instead of from a position of strength, and subtlety was not in their playbook.

In Canada, the preliminary efforts of the Information Service were blunt and aggressive, targeting journalists and newspapers by attempting to whitewash their narrative. The actions of the Information Officer to Ottawa were not in line with the task at hand. South Africa used a sledgehammer where they needed a stiletto. Canadian journalists and editors refused to be bullied and called out the South Africans on their tactics. The persistent and zealous nature of the propaganda salvos were never going to win over the progressive Canadian media. The attempts were

more often mocked with derision than accorded any credibility. The result was a diminishing tolerance for the words of the Information Officer in Ottawa, more frequent editorials on South Africa in the newspapers, and a growing distrust of the regime.

The Nationalists increased their efforts both at home and abroad in the early 1950s, manipulating the democratic structure of the government in an attempt to prevent stories that did not follow their narrative. Yet the Nationalists still wanted South Africa to be seen as a democratic country; therefore, the controls they implemented were vaguely drawn. The Nationalists were consistently trying to maintain a façade of a “free press” and democratic principles.

“Bad Press” became the scapegoat to explain South Africa’s woes. The Nationalists were successful in convincing their supporters that the foreign press was South Africa’s enemy. The country was being lied about in the world press. The Canadian press was mentioned and targeted by the Nationalist Government often during the 1950s, and both the Canadian High Commission and Canadian correspondents who visited South Africa constantly heard about “bad press” abroad, and “bad press” from Canada. Canada’s progressive newspapers maintained and intensified their focus on South African racial issues through these years, with coverage of South African issues outpacing many other current issues of the day, and with Canadian correspondents regularly visiting South Africa to provide Canadian coverage. South Africans were described as feeling “hurt” by the treatment from Canadian newspapers: Canada had always been seen as a ‘friend’ to South Africa. The Canadian government’s mild treatment of the Nationalists even after Sharpeville kept Canada as one of the few in the world still in those ranks.

The Nationalists were aware that their efforts were not delivering the expected outcomes. Instead of rethinking their base strategy, they chose to intensify their efforts. They lessened their broad swath approach and targeted people and organizations of influence, still with newspapers at the top of their list, but the substance of the “propaganda” that they were peddling did not change. They were still swinging that sledgehammer. The Nationalists apparently so believed in what they were selling that they could not appreciate why others did not see their truth. The distraction provided to their supporters at home was also undoubtedly too powerful to abandon.

Nor was there much change in the approach immediately following Sharpeville. While busily creating a totalitarian society, the Nationalists still wanted to be viewed as democratic and were loath to enact outright censorship of the press in South Africa. Their biggest mistake was to try to control the narrative through the declaration and enforcement of the Emergency Regulations in 1960 following Sharpeville. The efforts to cover up Sharpeville did so much more to expose the nature of South Africa’s regime on the world scene than the tragic event itself.

For Canada, these regulations meant the arrest of one of their foreign correspondents, who, like many of the world’s press, had continued to pursue his stories in South Africa despite the restrictions placed on him under the Regulations. He refused to accept the information being provided to him through the Information Service. The Foreign Affairs Minister of South Africa chose a Canadian journalist to hold up to the world as an example of “bad press.” The reasons behind the choice seem ill thought out. Canada was one of the only nations that had as yet not issued a condemnation of Sharpeville, and the British and U.S. press were recognized as more of a problem at the time. It is possible that there was little thought behind the decision.

The other possibility is that the Nationalists thought Canada would not cause as much of a ruckus as Britain or the U.S. would and the reaction to the arrest took them by surprise.

The effects of the arrest on the world press were significant, confirming for many that South Africa was now a Police State. The reaction of the Canadian press, especially the reaction from *The Toronto Daily Star*, Canada's most successful newspaper with the largest daily circulation, was striking. Following Sharpeville, *The Star* took a gloves-off approach to all stories regarding the South African regime. The number of editorials on South Africa in that paper exploded. The media coverage of Phillips arrest and release was also noteworthy. Phillips appeared on radio and television across Canada and the book he released in August about his adventure was publicized widely.

There was little to no coverage of the South African Information Officer in the Canadian press following the events surrounding Sharpeville, and in the years that followed. The Information Officer post, once vacated in August of 1960, was left empty for over a year. In the meantime, South Africa became a Republic, and its relationship with Canada changed. Once an Information Officer was returned to Ottawa, he was not warmly welcomed in Canada and was warned by the South African Ambassador to keep his head down. In the new Republic of South Africa, the efforts of the Information Services were once more increased with the establishment of a full Ministry to direct their efforts, and with significant new endeavours to control the press. Yet, while Canadian foreign journalists in South Africa had to contend with the ever-increasing suppression of the press in general, Canada was no longer a primary target of the Department of Information.

The South African Information Service put forward an intense effort in the 1950s to alter the view of South Africa that was presented to Canadians through the newspapers. Canada's progressive English newspapers met that intense effort with their own strong beliefs in a free press, countering the South African propaganda with their reporting and opinion. The Information Service never truly understood the antipathy of the external press to their policies and were therefore never in a position to reverse it. The climax came following Sharpeville, when the arrest of Norman Phillips – an attempt by the South Africans to deter foreign journalists, and to control the narrative – instead drove home the difficulties faced by journalists trying to report on South Africa. The Phillips incident clearly revealed the controlling nature of the Nationalist Government and the lengths it was willing to go to preserve white South Africa's cruel way of life and politics.

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