

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE INFORMATION SCANDAL

DISSERTATION

by

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------|------------------------------------------|
| AAM | Anti-Apartheid Movements |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| BCM | Black Consciousness Movement |
| BOSS | Bureau of State Security |
| CFFT | Committee for Fairness in Sport |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| FAA | Foreign Affairs Association |
| HNP | Herendigde (Reunited) National Party |
| HNP | Herstigte (Reconstituted) National Party |
| ISSA | Information Services of South Africa |
| MK | Umkhonto we Sizwe |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NP | National Party |
| OAU | Organisation of African Unity |
| PAC | Pan Africanist Congress |
| SAAN | South African Associated Newspapers |
| SABC | South African Broadcasting Corporation |
| SACP | South African Communist Party |
| SAF | South African Foundation |
| SAFF | South African Freedom Foundation |
| UN | United Nations |
| UP | United Party |
| WCC | World Council of Churches |

PREFACE

The Information Scandal, also known as the Muldergate Scandal, was the result of South Africa's propaganda war against hostile international opinion. The National Party, (NP) and especially Connie Mulder, Minister of the Department of Information, perceived a growing call from the international sphere to dismantle the white minority regime during the 1960s and 1970s. In an effort to retaliate against anti-apartheid forces, Mulder appointed the ambitious Eschel Rhoodie to spearhead an unorthodox and unconventional propaganda offensive. With support from Prime Minister Balthazar Johannes (B.J.) Vorster, and the Minister of Finance, Nico Diederichs, Mulder and Rhoodie obtained confirmation to fund clandestine propaganda warfare, costing millions of rands. Money required for the execution of programmes was channelled through the Department of Defence. Methods applied for conquering the 'hearts and minds' of the international community, involved high-level diplomacy; disseminating deceitful information; bribery; and buying publications, influence, and allies. However, the propaganda campaign of the Department of Information was obstructed by the contrasting views of the liberal English press. In order to counter the English press, the Department of Information devised a plan to establish a pro-government English newspaper called *The Citizen*. Suspicious journalists from the English press quickly noticed that *The Citizen* was funded by the taxpayer, and initiated an investigation.

By early 1978, numerous commissions and investigations were probing the irregularities in the Department of Information. The leaking of the department's hidden activities to the public caused uproar among politicians. In September 1978, Vorster resigned as the Prime Minister of South Africa and inner-party politics became turbulent as Mulder and the Minister of Defence, Pieter Willem (P.W.) Botha, contended for the position of the next prime minister. Mulder was hampered by the Department of Information's irregularities, especially when Vorster confirmed that the department funded *The Citizen*, resulting in the loss of Mulder to the election. In the aftermath of the caucus elections, the National Party remained silent over the issue of irregularities taking place in the Department of Information. The silence was broken when Judge Anton Mostert and the English press revealed the purposes for which public funds were utilised. Under pressure of scrutiny, P.W. Botha ruled the matter completely *sub judice* and established a commission of enquiry to investigate the irregularities. The scandal led to the eventual demise of Vorster and Mulder's political careers.

Previous studies on the Information Scandal focused primarily on the political and journalistic spheres of the scandal. This study attempts to explore the scandal from a new angle by providing a more thorough look at the propaganda projects. The study also examines – with the benefit of hindsight – how secret projects influenced South Africa and the mass audience. Previous studies are mainly outdated or focus on a specific information project. A more notable feature of this master’s dissertation is the battle of a regime to keep itself in power through persuasion and deceit in a changing democratic world.

The Information Scandal originated from the perceived threat of a global onslaught, the implementation of unorthodox propaganda to counter the threat, and internal fighting among liberals and conservatives. The main research problem of this dissertation is to view the events of the Information Scandal as they unfolded, and to analyse the accounts of parties involved in the scandal in order to formulate an objective conclusion. Exploring the events and accounts of the scandal, allows this dissertation to answer two main questions. Firstly, the approach applied by the Department of Information, and the impact of the propaganda campaign on its target audience. The research will attempt to reveal if the campaign was initially successful or not. The second question to be addressed by the dissertation is the consequences of the scandal when it met public scrutiny. How did the scandal influence the political sphere of South Africa and the nation’s relationship with the international community?

The research methodology focus on the traditional historical narrative approach and a qualitative research methodology is used within the context of the interpretivist research paradigm. Historical sources is therefore critically analysed and selectively chosen to present an unbiased, factual dissertation. Throughout the Information Scandal, there were attempts to distort the truth with cover-ups and lies. The research critically examines and compares different accounts from stakeholders in order to offer an objective version of the Information Scandal. Furthermore, an inductive approach is used to formulate general findings and assumptions from researched data.

The research theme is of a contemporary nature. The benefit of such a theme is that many of the role players are still alive and could contribute information. Nonetheless, the researcher is aware of the limitations involved with a research topic of such contemporary nature and the challenges it may present. Sources are assessed with a critical approach, but are also tempered by a realisation of what these contemporary sources may contribute. Taking this

into account, the researcher applies the principle of historical criticism and all the information gained is assessed and confronted on the basis of the understanding that people interpret events and information differently.

The dissertation makes use of various primary and secondary sources. Primary sources benefiting this study include archival resources such as the House of Assembly debates (*Hansard*) and the collections of Japie Basson, P.W. Botha, Chris Heunis, and J.A. Hertzog, which are housed in the University of the Free State's Archive for Contemporary Affairs (ARCA). Other important primary resources include the Erasmus Commission of Inquiry, the Intermediary and Supplementary Report into alleged irregularities in the former Department of Information, Yearbooks of the Department of Information, and an interview with Dr Pieter Mulder. Secondary sources include numerous books, journals, newspaper reports and editorials, as well as electronic sources. The dissertation utilised a large number of newspapers that were directly involved in the affair, such as *The Citizen*, *Rand Daily Mail*, and *Sunday Times*.

Due to the secretive and elusive tactics used during the propaganda campaign and the Information Scandal, some prominent and notable sources employed in this dissertation need to be addressed. The dissertation makes use of the autobiographies of Eschel Rhoodie, *The real Information Scandal*, and Rhoodie's second in command, Les de Villiers' *Secret Information*. Although the accounts in these books are based on the views of the authors, they offer deeper insight into the inner workings of the Department of Information, and provide a better understanding of the motivation and implementation behind the propaganda projects. Books tracing the operations of South African propaganda and the Department of Information include *The story of the Information Scandal* written by the South African journalists Mervyn Rees and Chris Day, and the collections of international journalists who wrote *The Great White Hoax*. *The story of the Information Scandal* offers a comprehensive account of the investigation by the English Press into the Information Scandal. The Yearbooks of the Department of Information give a broad view of overt propaganda drives, while the Erasmus Commission of Inquiry provides insight into the irregularities and covert projects of the department. Although the Erasmus Commission clarifies mandates, decisions, and irregularities of secret projects, it remains a source subjected to scrutiny and is discussed critically later in the dissertation.

An examination of the Department of Information's activities on a domestic and international scale, gives a clear indication of the targets that were important to South Africa. Geographical areas of key importance were South Africa itself, Africa, Europe, the United States of America, and the UK. Many of the projects were aimed at Western nations, but attempts were also made by the National Party to start relations with African countries. The assessed period mainly range from 1973 until 1979. It examines the time when the propaganda campaign gained momentum in 1973 until the demise of the Department of Information in 1978. Thereafter, the study examines the immediate political consequences from 1978 until 1979. The dissertation also includes relevant history from the 1960s and the 1980s for historical context and for elucidation on the outcome of the study.

The nature of this theme is relevant to various fields of study. This dissertation explains the use and consequences of unorthodox propaganda from a historical point of view. Various academic fields of study, especially Communication Science, Journalism, and Political Science, will greatly benefit from the research initiative. The dissertation explores the role of propaganda communicated by the government to domestic and international audiences. Targets for propaganda campaigns range from high-level officials to the ordinary citizen. These analyses are critical for the study of Communication Sciences. Likewise, the dissertation is vital to the study of Journalism because it covers the role of the media in disseminating propaganda and, on the other side of the moral spectrum, examines the watchdog function of the press. Additionally, the study explores how the propaganda drive affected politics in South Africa, as well as its relationship with foreign countries.

The master's dissertation consists of seven chapters approached in a chronological way. In the first chapter, a theoretical background on propaganda is provided. This chapter is intended to inform the reader about the functions and history of propaganda as such. The second chapter provides South Africa's historical context before the 1970s. It covers, for example, South Africa's position in the Cold War, as well as the internal state of affairs such as white and black politics. The third chapter is based on the decisions taken within the National Party to initiate a global propaganda campaign, and some early projects. The chapter also takes a closer look at Rhodie's methods and the key role players in the Information Scandal. Chapter four comprises the major propaganda onslaught. Several operational geographical areas are covered, such as Africa, South Africa, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and European countries. The chapter also includes a specific subheading focusing on *The Citizen*, since the newspaper played a key role in the Information

Scandal. Chapter five explores the events after the projects became public. It analyses various investigations into irregularities that would lead to political clashes. Escalating fighting among politicians up to the dismissal of Mulder and Vorster forms the core of this chapter. The next chapter provides the state of affairs in South Africa in the aftermath of the Information Scandal. The chapter consists of South Africa's move away from traditional apartheid and the inner fighting among politicians, the Afrikaner, and the press. Propaganda activities in the early 1980s are also briefly discussed.

The contemporary value of this dissertation is largely relevant for modern democratic and – to an extent – authoritarian societies. The dissertation not only addresses covert and subversive techniques employed by governments to alter the authenticity of their image on a local and global scale, but also examines the manner in which the free press challenges the views of the government. In addition, the study addresses the power which a government has over the media and ultimately over mass audiences. It exposes the manner in which foreign governments are able to influence the perceptions of an audience via the media and through relations with another government, whether immoral or not. Lastly, governments frequently suffer from scandalous affairs and the dissertation demonstrates the opportunities and approaches that were utilised by the South African government to deal with public scrutiny.

The dissertation attempts to address both overt and covert propaganda drives by the Department of Information. However, many of the initiatives between 1973 and 1978 still remain elusive. Only the projects uncovered by the press and the commissions of inquiry were recorded. There are still the recordings by Rhodie that have not yet been exposed. On the political side, the dissertation seeks objectivity about the Information Scandal, but is at the same time confronted with multiple versions of the events that took place. Consequently, in light of the total vastness and complexity of the Information Scandal, the study should not be considered in any sense as a complete history or as the final word and opinion about the research questions at hand. Though this study has tried to give an account of the Information Scandal, it should not be regarded in any sense as a final history. The aim is not to provide answers, but to stimulate further debate and encourage future research on several aspects of the Information Scandal. It is not the full story, but provides a perspective on the Information Scandal which remains extensive and complex. Thus, rather than purporting to be the last word on this theme, it hopes to stimulate further investigation into this extensive historical event as information becomes available.

Aspects that require deeper investigation include the life span and direction of the propaganda campaign. Furthermore, this dissertation seeks debate regarding the discourse of South African politics, especially the manner in which P.W. Botha affected the outcome of the Information Scandal. In this regard, there are still unanswered questions; for example, was the Information Scandal a series of cover-ups, or was the truth about the irregularities distorted by all factions involved?

The study of the Information Scandal regarding the secret project is valuable for future research, in the sense that it provides a comprehensive study on the methods operated by the South African propaganda machine, its effect on international audiences, as well as on the politics of the country. Moreover, the study provides further insight into political anomalies in the 1970s, which influenced the 1980s.

The completion of this master's degree has been quite a journey, and during this time I learned new skills and acquired new abilities. It would not have been possible without the following entities, individuals, and institutions. First and foremost, I am grateful to the Lord for allowing me the opportunity to further my education. I am also grateful for the support of my parents, Trix and Hannes Haasbroek. A word of thanks goes to my supervisors, Dr Jan-Ad Stemmet and Dr Marietjie Oelofse, for their advice and supervision. I would also like to acknowledge the University of the Free State (UFS) and my employers, the Marketing Department at the university, for aiding me financially and administratively. A special thanks to Elize Gouws, for editing the dissertation; the staff of the UFS Sasol Library for obtaining relevant documents and sources from other universities, and lastly, the great service offered by the staff at the Archive for Contemporary Affairs, UFS.

1. PROPAGANDA DEFINED

Since the dawn of civilization, the development of man created a desire to change the perception of others, and thus, propaganda flourished. American linguist, philosopher, and cognitive scientist, Noam Chomsky, said: “There is massive propaganda for everyone to consume. Consumption is good for profits and consumption is good for the political establishment.”¹ Propaganda is mass persuasion that attempts to convince individuals, communities, and nations in a manner which progresses the propagandist’s agenda. This approach to changing perception is not always successful; it competes with counter-propaganda, totalitarian regimes, censorship, and other influences. This chapter will provide the reader with background knowledge about the different perceptions regarding propaganda, the theoretical functioning of propaganda, and the significant evolution of propaganda during the 20th century.

1.1. PERCEPTIONS ON PROPAGANDA

The concept of propaganda offers no unambiguous definition. The Oxford Dictionary defines propaganda as: “information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.”² Yet, this definition remains insufficient to completely explain propaganda. Propaganda derives from the Latin verb *propagare*, meaning to plant stems in the ground and starting their own life later on. The word 'propagate' means to breed; transfer to the next generation; and to increase publicity. The Roman Catholic Church was the first to use the term propaganda. In June 1622, the Vatican established the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Sacred Congregation for the propagation of the Faith) to transfer faith to the new world and to contest with the Protestant movement.³

Propaganda is studied in various disciplines. These disciplines include journalism, communication sciences, political science, sociology, psychology, and history. In Journalism and Communication Sciences, the emphasis is on the representation of news or the message. Political Scientists examine the ideology of a propaganda campaign’s cause; the means of

¹ BrainyQuote, “Noam Chomsky quotes”, <<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/n/noamchomsk447308.html>>, s.a. (Accessed on August 30, 2015).

² Oxford Dictionaries, "Propaganda", <<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/propaganda>>, s.a. (Accessed on August 30, 2015).

³ J.C. de Wet, *The art of persuasive communication: A process* (3rd edition), p. 85; Oxford Dictionaries, "Propagate", <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/propagare>>, s.a. (Accessed on August 31, 2015).

distribution and the campaign's overall effect on public opinion. Philip Taylor describes the study of propaganda in Sociology as analysing a 'germ warfare on the mind'. In the discipline of Sociology, propaganda is studied as social movement and the resistance to such movements. Psychology on the other hand, studies the effects of propaganda on the individual. All of these disciplines are also examined from an interdisciplinary perspective.⁴

In the discipline of History, historians examine the effect of propaganda, or the actions of the propagandist, on events. Historians are interested in the cause and effect of propaganda on a particular event or series of events, such as the degree of success British propaganda had on the United States of America's (USA) foreign policy before entering the First World War. The manner in which the German Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, utilised media and other forms of cultural activities to shape a new German culture, is a good example of propagandist practices in history. History also contributes to our understanding of how information circulates.⁵

The debate among scholars continues as to what propaganda truly is, although most agree on the basic elements of propaganda. French philosopher and sociologist, Jacques Ellul, contributed stimulating assumptions in the field of propaganda. He believed that propaganda is not produced by people with certain intentions, but that it is rather a social phenomenon. Ellul is also of the opinion that technological societies caused propaganda to flourish and is responsible for its endurance. He emphasised that propaganda does not merely serve to change attitudes, which offers only limited success. The important function of propaganda is to intensify existing trends and ultimately guide recipients into action. Ellul's theory argues that propaganda co-operates with 'education'. Education serves as 'pre-propaganda'. In this respect, Ellul points out that societies require propaganda to survive and to participate in memorials, elections, and other events.⁶

In 1948, Leonard Doop defined propaganda as "the attempt to affect the personalities and to control the behaviour of individuals towards ends considered unscientific or of a doubtful value in a society at a particular time."⁷ However, in 1989, Doop claimed that a "clear-cut

⁴ G. Jowett & V. O'Donnell, *Propaganda and persuasion* (5th Edition), p. 1; P.M. Taylor, *Munitions of the mind: A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present day* (3rd Edition), p. 2.

⁵ J. Auerback & R. Custronovo, *The Oxford handbook of propaganda studies*, p. 2; Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 1; C. Moore, *Propaganda prints: A history of art in the service of social and political change*, p. 105; N.J. Cull, *et al* (eds), *Propaganda and mass persuasion. A historical encyclopaedia, 1500 to the present*, p. 150.

⁶ J. Ellul, *Propaganda: The formation of men's attitudes*, pp. v-vi.

⁷ L.W. Doop, *Public opinion and propaganda*, p. 390.

definition of propaganda is neither possible nor derisible.”⁸ He believed that a concrete definition cannot describe propaganda in different societies and eras. David Welch define modern political propaganda as “the deliberate attempt to influence the opinions of an audience through the transmission of ideas and values for the specific purpose, consciously designed to serve the interest of the propagandists and their political masters, either directly or indirectly.”⁹

Conducting research for the U.S. Information Agency in 1995, Leo Bogart focused on the propagandist and the communicative aspect of propaganda. Bogart regards propaganda to be unscientific, but nevertheless considers it as an art that requires experience and awareness of presenting an argument to an audience. According to Bogart, a propagandist requires “a good mind, genius, sensitivity, and knowledge of how the audience thinks and reacts.”¹⁰ Political scientist and communication theorist, Herold Lasswell, describes propaganda as a practise to encourage social action by manipulating representation. Forms of representation include pictures, films, written and spoken word.¹¹

In Guido Fauconnier’s book, *Mass media and society*, he describes propaganda as mass communication. Propagandists attempt to influence the masses’ attitudes and behaviours by applying directive persuasive techniques. Johann de Wet points out that propaganda is a form of mass persuasion instead of mass communication, but Fauconnier’s reference to ‘directive persuasive techniques’ remains noteworthy. Directive persuasive techniques avoid using information of a rational nature. This technique, according to Fauconnier, wishes to restrict freedom of choice within society, for example ‘you must vote for him because he is remarkable’.¹²

Propaganda, as viewed by Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton, is the historical tradition of swaying opinion with political language. Facts are expressed in a systemic and selected manner. The objective of propaganda is to convince and to convert; therefore it must

⁸ L.W. Doop, “Propaganda” in E. Barnouw, *et al* (eds), *International Encyclopaedia of communications* Vol. 3, pp. 374-378.

⁹ Cull, p. 322.

¹⁰ L. Bogart, *Cool words, Cold War. A new look at the USIA's premises for propaganda* (Reviewed edition), p. 5.

¹¹ H. Lasswell, “Propaganda” in R. Jackall & A.J. Vidich (eds), *Propaganda*, p. 13; Bogart, pp. 195-196; Jowett & O’Donnell, pp. 4-5.

¹² G. Fauconnier, *Mass media and society*, pp. 133, 135; J.K. Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with J.C. de Wet*, 2015.3.25; De Wet, p. 88.

represent feasible and authentic information. Propaganda is not only a force that propagandizes the customs of a community, but also defines them.¹³

Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell offer a comprehensive definition of propaganda, which is centred on the communication process. They define propaganda as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”¹⁴ Their definition implies that propaganda is an intentional, preselected strategy to advance the agenda of the propagandist. Jowett and O'Donnell explain that governments and corporations create departments and agencies to disseminate systematic propaganda. It is important to note that propaganda campaigns are attempts to influence recipient's perceptions, thoughts and behaviour, but the initiatives are not always successful. The main objective of propaganda is to attain a certain reaction from the targeted audience that will benefit the propagandist.¹⁵

Although scholars' perceptions and interpretation of propaganda vary, they agree that it is a form of communication, it is an attempt to manipulate attitudes, and its purpose is to convince recipients to proceed with certain actions. An important aspect of propaganda is that it generates persuasive information for societies that will serve the goal of the propagandist.

1.2. THE THEORY OF PROPAGANDA

It is a well-known fact that propaganda is a division within the communication spectrum, but to what extent is propaganda a form of communication? Communication in its most fundamental sense is the process of using a channel to transmit ideas to a recipient. The ability to communicate is natural to human nature and we use communication to distribute meaning to others.¹⁶ To comprehend propaganda as a form of communication, it is important to differentiate between information, persuasion, and the mass media.

When communication is used for educational purposes to explain or instruct people, it is regarded as informative communication. Information is important to societies because it assists them in making sense of the world. It uses credible and accurate data based on facts to enlighten people. The purpose of informative communication is to create mutual understating between persuader and recipient in the facts presented. Propaganda also acts as informative

¹³ B. Taithe, & T. Thornton (eds), *Propaganda: Political rhetoric and identity, 1300-2000*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 13.

¹⁶ Taylor, *Munitions of the mind...*, p. 7; Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 30.

communication, but its purpose is not to create mutual understanding. Instead of creating mutual understanding between communicator and recipient, propaganda acts in the best interest of the propagandist. The recipient merely believes he or she is provided with trustworthy facts.¹⁷

Persuasion is the attempt to willingly change and influence an audience's beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviour through communication. Johann de Wet defines propaganda as "a process of communication in which a communicator succeeds in voluntarily forming, sustaining or changing the attitudes or behaviour of one recipient or a group of recipients in accordance with what the communicator intends by his or her message."¹⁸ Similar to propaganda, persuasion seeks to change or sustain the behaviours and attitudes of the audience. However, persuasion does not limit freedom of choice and recipients maintain their right to peruse their own decisions. When an audience's trust in the persuader is exploited, then persuasion is regarded as propaganda. Propaganda encourage and fulfils the needs of the recipients by supporting their prejudicial and self-serving needs, while the propagandist is pleased with the recipient's compliance.¹⁹

The role of propaganda in communication is the attempt to shape perceptions, but acts in the interest of the propagandist. In order for propaganda to be successful, propagandists resort to the concealment of their identity and purpose; control the flow of information; manage public opinion; and manipulate behaviour. Sometimes it is vital for a propagandist to remain unknown. The identification of the propagandists may obstruct their desired objectives. Propaganda is assigned as white, grey or black to determine the accuracy and source of information.²⁰

White propaganda's source is identifiable and the information is generally accurate. The aim of white propaganda is to be as accurate as possible in order to avoid undermining the credibility of the source. This type of propaganda is employed to assure the public of a regime's superior and just ideology. White propaganda is used to boost morale and may request support or contributions from the public. In 1933, the Nazi party seized power in Germany and established the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, which Goebbels openly stated would 'mobilise both the mind and spirit' of the German people. The

¹⁷ Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 31.

¹⁸ De Wet, p. 4

¹⁹ Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 39; De Wet, p. 4.

²⁰ Jowett & O'Donnell, pp. 17, 45-48.

German people were aware of the source that influenced them and the intentions of the propagandist.²¹

Black propaganda is situated on the opposite side of the spectrum. Black propaganda is the covert attempt to deceive an audience. The malevolent nature of black propaganda is not only intended to distribute fabricated information, but also claims to emanate from a different source, while concealing the true source of its identity. This type of propaganda is challenging to detect until all information becomes available. During the Second World War, the Germans established three phoney radio stations with a German-based representation, pretending to broadcast from Britain. The purpose of these radio stations were to demoralise the British people, especially during the Battle of Britain.²²

Grey propaganda consists of both white and black propaganda. The authentication of the source remains unclear and there is uncertainty about the factualness of information. Grey propaganda might be presented as valid arguments, but the source or information is rarely traced. This type of propaganda is more aggressive and assertive than white propaganda, but not as provocative as black propaganda. The British used grey propaganda to their advantage during the First World War. Unlike their counterparts, the Wellington House²³ avoided using direct propaganda to influence the United States of America's neutral stand during the war. Instead, they presented selected facts based in an objective way. The source of the information was sometimes disguised.²⁴

As mentioned several times in this chapter, the propagandist has a concealed purpose that acts in his or her own best interest. The needs of the recipient are not the primary concern of the propagandist. The propagandist may use the truth or deception to further his or her goals. A worthy question to ask is, does honesty or dishonesty promote the propagandist's goals?²⁵

The most effective propaganda campaigns are based on the truth and on credible arguments. Even though the propagandists use facts to propagandise their message, the information may suffer from omission. Propagandists have realised that they should avoid using deceit,

²¹ Cull, pp. 425-426; Knowledgenuts, "The difference between white, grey and black propaganda", <<http://knowledgenuts.com/2014/02/12/the-difference-between-gray-white-and-black-propaganda/>>, 2014.2.12. (Accessed on August 19, 2015).

²² Cull, pp. 41-42; The propaganda Project, "Types of propaganda", <<https://thepropagandaproject.wordpress.com/types-of-propaganda/>>, *s.a.* (Accessed on August 19, 2015).

²³ Also known as Britain's War Propaganda Bureau during the First World War. Cull, p. 151.

²⁴ Cull, pp. 151-152; Knowledgenuts.

²⁵ Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 45.

because it will damage the credibility of the source and will ultimately self-destruct. Individuals will most often regard the enemy's message as propaganda, while their own message is based on the truth. Revered by many historians as a genius of propaganda, Goebbels knew propaganda must frequently be grounded on facts, even if proof is limited. He also recognised that the use of fabrications would present the enemy with an opportunity to expose falsehoods. Except for the enemy, audiences have become more sophisticated as to fall prey to mendacities. When deceit must be exercised, it is best to use it in the form of black propaganda. In fact, Goebbels understood that using the truth is more efficient than cover ups. The German's defeat at Stalingrad was a massive blow, but instead of trying to cover up the truth with lies, Goebbels resorted to announcing Germany's fight for survival.²⁶

Since propaganda relies on the omission or adding of information and its purpose is to benefit the propagandist, could it be considered a good or evil phenomena? Propaganda is generally associated with negative connotations such as lies, distortion, mind control, psychological warfare and brainwashing. Undoubtedly propaganda has been used for evil deeds like genocide and war. Propaganda obscures audiences' viewpoints and limits independent thought. However, propaganda was regarded as a neutral phenomenon before the First World War. Propaganda becomes evil when devoted to the 'service of violence'. Propaganda could be utilised for decent deeds as well, for example using psychological warfare to persuade the enemy into surrendering before a battle, as Philip Taylor avers, "communication triumphs over violence."²⁷ Depending on values, some propaganda may be regarded as moral and other as immoral.²⁸

A key aspect in the success of propaganda is controlling the flow of information. Jowett and O'Donnell identify several methods to control information, including censorship of information; distributing news at scheduled times; releasing information with other associated information that affects public opinion; the fabrication of information; informing selected audiences; and altering information. The nature of propaganda is to limit alternative choices and is accomplished by establishing an information dissemination monopoly. Propagandists pursue domination over the media, such as in Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union.

²⁶ The War File, *Propaganda: The war of the mind* (Documentary); Taylor, *Munition of the mind...*, pp. 3, 4-5, 15; Ellul, pp. 52-53; Doob, "Goebbels' principles of propaganda" in Jackall & Vidich, pp. 197, 199-200, 205.

²⁷ Taylor, *Munition of the mind...*, p. 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 3, 5; Jowett & O'Donnell, pp. 2, 212.

Alternatively, some propagandists are unable to control an entire media channel and therefore seek to communicate their propaganda from a source that appears to be reliable.²⁹

Censorship and propaganda is recognised as companions of each other. David Welch describes censorship as “the process of suppressing the circulation of information or opinions offensive to the values of those representing the censor. Without some form of censorship propaganda in the strictest sense of the world would be difficult to imagine.”³⁰ He explains that censorship holds little value if no propaganda campaigns are actively involved. Censorship requires propaganda in order to represent facts selectively with the intent of influencing an audience. Welch identifies two forms of censorship. Firstly, censorship presents information in a way that supports certain viewpoints and secondly, to purposefully tampers with information, intending to form an alternative impression to the original. It should be noted that censorship is used in war times to protect valuable information from the enemy. The South African apartheid government, the NP, used severe censorship to silence liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC).³¹

The innovation of mass communication created mass audiences. Mass audiences in free democratic societies have private opinions they wish to express. The accumulation of these opinions creates public opinion which has become a political force. The absence of public support from an organization could affect its overall success; therefore it is crucial for the propagandists to administer public opinion. Governments focus on the modification of an individual’s behaviour in order to gain or maintain support for an ideology. Propaganda regarding public opinion is ‘the politics of information’.³²

It becomes apparent that propaganda plays an important role in democratic societies, but there is a difference between the practice of propaganda in democratic and totalitarian states. In totalitarian states, propaganda has a centralised propaganda machine and unwanted propaganda is simply censored. Totalitarian states do not approve of freedom of expression. Propagandists in totalitarian states are highly skilled individuals who attempt to manipulate its population into adopting a similar way of thinking. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were reasonably successful in forming a mutual feeling under its populace. Johann de Wet

²⁹ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with J.C. de Wet*, 2015.3.25; Jowett & O’Donnell, pp. 45-46.

³⁰ Cull, p. 70.

³¹ Beacon for Freedom of Expression, “The long history of censorship”, <http://www.beaconforfreedom.org/liste.html?tid=415&art_id=475>, 2010. (Accessed on August 22, 2015); Cull, p. 70.

³² K. Robins, *et al.*, “Propaganda, information and social control” in J. Hawthorn (ed.), *Propaganda, persuasion and polemic*, pp. 5, 7, 8; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with J.C. de Wet*, 2015.3.25.

points out that the use of force and terror and the non-existence of counter propaganda within a closed state, contributed to the success of the Chinese and Italian dictators, Mao Zedong and Benito Mussolini.³³

Unlike totalitarian states, democratic societies are bombarded with various forms of propaganda. According to Terence Qualter the number of propaganda consumed in democratic societies outweighs the propaganda initiatives of totalitarians regimes. Rival propagandists such as political, labour, and business organisations competes for public support. Ellul identifies the following opposing types of propaganda within a democracy: political and sociological; agitation and integration; vertical and horizontal; rational and irrational. Political propaganda is deployed by governments to alter the behaviour of its populace, while sociological propaganda is difficult to grasp. Ellul defines sociological propaganda as “the penetration of an ideology by means of its sociological context.”³⁴ It is not deliberate propaganda, but it is practised coincidentally.³⁵ An example of this type of propaganda is an American film producer who expresses certain ideas in the film. The propaganda is embedded in the American way of life which the producer expresses through his film.³⁶

Agitation propaganda is produced to attract attention and is subversive in nature. It has the intention of creating hostilities and plays a role in revolutions and wars. Integration propaganda, on the other hand, seeks to develop, unify, stabilise or reinforce nations and societies. Vertical propaganda is when leaders influence citizens, and horizontal propaganda is when a group of people without a leader is influenced. Rational propaganda reasons with logic and facts, which can be manipulated or distorted to fit the agenda of the propagandist, while irrational propaganda concentrates on the individual’s emotions.³⁷

Even though democracy believes in the notion of freedom of choice, the danger exists that democracies might become unstable and fall into anarchy. Governments cannot solely rely on reason or ‘abstract liberalism’. Propaganda in democratic societies is vital for spreading ideas and doctrines; therefore it’s an integral part of a democratic system. With numerous ideas

³³ De Wet, pp. 90-91.

³⁴ Ellul, p. 63.

³⁵ Read Ellul’s book, *Propaganda: The formation of men’s attitudes*, from page 61-87 to acquire an overall understanding of the different categories.

³⁶ Ellul, pp. 62-64; T.H. Qualter, *Propaganda and psychological warfare*, p. 139; De Wet, pp. 90-91.

³⁷ Ellul, pp. 71, 73-75, 79-81, 84-86.

circulating in a free country, the government emphasises the regulation of public opinion.³⁸ Ellul observes the manner in which democratic governments operate to modify public opinion:

“Even in democracy, a government that is honest, serious, benevolent, and respects the voter cannot follow public opinion. But it cannot escape it either. The masses are there; they are interested in politics. The government cannot act without them. So, what can it do? Only one solution is possible: as the government cannot follow opinion, opinion must follow government. One must convince this present, ponderous, impassioned mass that the government’s decisions are legitimate and good and that its foreign policy is correct ... the citizen must be tied to decisions of the government. This is the great role propaganda must perform. It must give people the feeling – which they crave and which satisfies them.”³⁹

The ultimate objective of propaganda is the manipulation of behaviour and behavioural patterns. Behavioural patterns, verbally and non-verbally, are observable through the response of an audience’s actions, such as voting, joining organisations, enlisting for a war, and using national symbols. Harry Triandis, in his *Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour*, claims behaviour becomes a habit when recipients are exposed to a system of triggers in reaction to a particular situation. As behaviours develop into norms and the thinking process decreases to perform these behavioural patterns, the recipient’s actions change into routine. Recipients confronted with comparable stimuli do not require much consciousness to complete a behaviour pattern. Propaganda acts as a trigger to transform an audience’s behaviours into habits. It starts off with an attempt to manipulate behaviour. As time progresses it becomes easier for propagandists to manipulate an audience, because the behaviour does not require much consciousness. When propagandists expose an audience to forms of hatred against a group, nation or race, loathing towards a vilified group will develop into an accepted behaviour, such as seen in Nazi Germany during the extermination of the Jews.⁴⁰

Propagandists’ efforts to change behaviour are not unconditionally successful. Triandis notes that audiences with predetermined habits are difficult to sway to different behaviours or

³⁸ Hawthorn (ed.), p. 7.

³⁹ Ellul, pp. 126-127.

⁴⁰ The War File (Documentary); M.E. Roloff & G.R. Miller (eds), *Persuasion: New direction in theory and research*, p. 50; H.C. Triandis, *Interpersonal behaviour*, p. 25; GSR Behaviour Change Knowledge Review, “Reference report: An overview of behaviour change models and their uses”, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140305122816/http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Behaviour_change_reference_report_tcm6-9697.pdf>, 2008, pp. 22-23. (Accessed on August 22, 2015).

opinions, especially when behaviour is controlled by emotions. The propagandist is aware that changing an audience's opinion is challenging. Recipients are not at the mercy of the propagandist; they can decide to accept or reject a message, especially if propaganda is detected. Surprisingly, intellectuals are most prone to be affected by propaganda. Ellul argues that intellectuals are exposed to a considerable amount of second-hand, uncorroborated information and have a need to formulate opinions on important matters, making them vulnerable to the opinions of propagandists.⁴¹

The wits of a propagandist also contribute to the success rate of a propaganda campaign. Lasswell explains the propagandist's main duty: "is to intensify attitudes favourable to his purpose, to reverse obstructive attitudes, to win the indifferent or at least to prevent them from becoming antagonistic."⁴² While some manipulators prefer to be clandestine in their operations, skilled propagandists invite publicity. They stimulate affairs in order to attract attention to their propaganda. This results in the spread of the propagandist's message through other sources, free of charge. It is vital for propagandists to have constant contact with policy makers and intelligence, a principle Goebbels knew very well. Propaganda must be deployed at the correct time, it must work on a schedule, but the propagandist must be equally opportunistic. Predicting the outcome of a campaign is a crucial element. When the situation is out of the propagandist's control, he or she must be able to adapt to the state of affairs. There will be difficult obstacles such as the lack of communication networks, differences within the audience's customs, and insufficient resources.⁴³ The propagandist must resort to creativity in order to adjust his representation for a specific community, such as using radio communication for African rural societies.⁴⁴

In 1937, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis identified seven common propaganda devices. These devices include name-calling, glittering-generalities, transfer, testimonial, plain-folks, card-stacking, and bandwagon. Name-calling is a technique that gives an idea or group a negative image without considering the facts. Glittering-generalities appeals to the emotions of a group by associating them with positive aspects such as freedom, brotherhood, and

⁴¹ Ellul, p. vi; Triandis, p. 25; Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 49; Taylor, *Munition of the mind...*, p. 9.

⁴² Lasswell, "Propaganda" in Jackall & Vidich, p. 18.

⁴³ Not even a well-funded propaganda campaign is guaranteed for success. The audience's attitude may be bent against the agenda of the propagandist. Jackall & Vidich, pp. 21-22.

⁴⁴ Lasswell, "Propaganda" & Doob, "Goebbels' Principles of propaganda" in Jackall & Vidich, pp. 16-19, 193; P.J. Fourie, *Media studies: Media history, media and society* (2nd edition), p. 72; J.C. Malan, *Propaganda en oorreding* (Unpublished Honours thesis), pp. 118-119; L. J. Martin, "Effectiveness of international propaganda", *The annuals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 398, November 1971, p. 1.

honour. Transfer is a method of allocating prestige and respect for something we love and revere to something the propagandist wants us to accept; for example, when a propagandist uses the church to approve a budget. Testimony is a method which uses a respected person to accept or reject an idea, product, or person. Plain-folks is a technique used by politicians to convince the public that they perform ordinary activities just like other people. This technique is especially used during elections. Card-stacking is a technique where the propagandist utilises most of the arts of deception to win support for his cause. Bandwagon is used to ensure support for the propagandist because ‘everyone is doing it’. Studies reveal that people tend to follow the group even if it goes against their own values. An example of this is a politician hiring a hall and protesters to create the illusion that everyone is participating in an event.⁴⁵

Jowett and O’Donnell reject the propaganda devices of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, since they believe that the subject is far too complex for such a short list. Propaganda needs to be seen, absorbed, remembered, and action must be taken. Techniques used to achieve this goal are: repeating the message; employing symbols; language styles; staying in line with pre-existing opinions and beliefs; face-to-face contact by using local organisations; a reward and punishment system; slogans; the arousal of emotions; scapegoating; and making use of myths and legends. An important technique employed by the propagandist is to maintain opinion leaders. Opinion leaders are credible and respected sources for communities. Propagandists exploit these leaders for their status and influence.⁴⁶

Controlling the monopoly of the communication source is imperative to a propaganda campaign’s successful execution. Communication sources appear in a variety of forms. These forms include private conversations, mass rallies, architecture, songs, radio, cinema, television, the internet, paintings, flags, and speeches. Goebbels states that propaganda must be transmitted from an ‘attention-getting communication medium’. The innovation of mass communication gave life to modern propaganda and also gave access to the masses. The mass press played a significant role in the transmission of ideas during the twentieth century.

⁴⁵ Institute for Propaganda Analysis, “How to detect propaganda”, *Propaganda Analysis*, Vol. 1(2), November 1937, cited in Jackall & Vidich, pp. 217-222; De Wet, p. 89; M. Karlins & H.I. Abelson, *Persuasion: How opinions and attitudes are changed*, pp. 41-67; A.R. Pratkanis & E. Aronson, *Age of propaganda: The everyday use and abuse of persuasion* (2nd edition), pp. 167-173.

⁴⁶ Jowett & O’Donnell, pp. 299-304; Malan, pp. 123, 128, 131, 141.

Although readership has waned, newspapers and books continue to be a prime source of propaganda.⁴⁷

It was not until the invention of radio that propaganda became a formidable medium, having the ability to broadcast to other nations with its long range. Unlike the printing press, radio has not experienced a decline in listeners. Propagandists are able to persuade millions of people with literally the speed of light. According to Clyde Miller, radio is the most effective medium to avert or to encourage social change. Radio made it possible to inform listeners as events unfold. Adolf Hitler utilised the full potential of radio to manipulate a mass audience's fears and hopes. During the Cold War, both the USA and the Soviet Union employed international radio communication to broadcast propaganda in neighbouring countries such as Romania and Cuba.⁴⁸

Motion pictures, first believed to be the perfect propaganda weapon, fail to propagate information explicitly. However, movies as a form of propaganda are most effective when presented in a subtle fashion. Goebbels believed newsreels and feature films must rather be used as entertainment to evoke an audience's feelings and subtly influencing them by the atmosphere of the movie. Movies are an excellent means of appealing to recipients' emotions. This form of propaganda will only have an effect on a society's norms after years of exposure to movies; for example, Hollywood projecting the notion of freedom, racial equality, and sexual freedom to societies.⁴⁹

Television serves as a perfect medium to reinforce cultural propaganda. It functions best when the propaganda is disguised as entertainment. As Alia Hoyt points out: "Even television shows such as *The West Wing* and *The Daily Show* can blur the lines between fictional scenarios, comedy and serious politics."⁵⁰ A more recent development in communication technology is the internet or World Wide Web. The internet not only accelerates spreading messages, but also connect propagandists to a worldwide audience. It's perfectly suited for disseminating disinformation, making the censorship of unwanted messages challenging. The internet is free from gatekeepers and allows anyone to publish propaganda on the web.

⁴⁷ Ellul, p. 102; Malan, p. 6; Jowett & O'Donnell, pp. 106-108; Doob, "Goebbels' Principles of propaganda" in Jackall & Vidich, p. 198; Taylor, *Munitions of the mind...*, p. 7.

⁴⁸ Jowett & O'Donnell, pp. 128-129, 123-133; C.R. Miller, "Radio and Propaganda", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 213, January 1941, pp. 69-74.

⁴⁹ Doob, "Goebbels' Principles of propaganda" in Jackall & Vidich, p. 198; Jowett & O'Donnell, pp. 110-111.

⁵⁰ A. Hoyt, "How propaganda works", <<http://people.howstuffworks.com/propaganda2.htm>>, s.a. (Accessed on October 1, 2015).

People are using the internet more frequently as a source of information. Barack Obama mustered the power of the internet in 2008 to gain an advantage over his opposition. Using social media and the internet with his slogans of ‘hope’ and ‘yes, we can!’ to his advantage, he gained 70% support from younger generations.⁵¹

Another phenomenon similar to propaganda, though different, is advertising. Advertising is basically notices which people pay for to be published. It is not necessarily propaganda, because advertising does not always attempt to persuade; sometimes it merely gives information about a new product or is just informative. Janice Hirota describes advertising as “a guiding theme symbolically linking the product to the needs, desires, or fantasies of the targeted marketed audience.”⁵² Philip Taylor considers advertising as ‘economic propaganda’. He explains that the marketing of products and services advances the profits of a company, but audiences receives benefits as well, and a more appropriate phrasing would be ‘publicity.’⁵³

However, a combined propaganda and advertising effort is potent. In the 20th century, the collision created a massive consumer culture. During the First World War, advertisers and propagandists co-opted their messages. Commercial advertisers would use patriotism as a means of promotion for audiences to buy their commodities or advertisers would use their advertising to vilify the enemy.⁵⁴ For example, companies such Greys Cigarettes would print images that romanticise the war. The potential dangers of a joint effort between propaganda and advertising could be that they market unfair governments or political figures; hazardous products; or ideologies. The Soviet Union employed a technique where household commodities such as lighters, perfume, and biscuits all advertised the state.⁵⁵

Propaganda plays an undeniable role in the international political domain. Ellul argues that aiming propaganda at foreign audiences should make use of alternative techniques than would be used in one’s own interior sphere. Foreign publics have different allegiances to

⁵¹ Cull, pp. 182, 389-391; Jowett & O’Donnell, p. 148; S. Dutta & M. Fraser, “Barak Obama and the Facebook Election”, <<http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2008/11/19/barack-obama-and-the-facebook-election>>, 2008.11.19. (Accessed on October 2, 2015).

⁵² J.M. Hirota, “Making products as heroes: Work in advertising agencies” in Jackall & Vidich, p. 334.

⁵³ Taylor, *Munition of the mind...*, p. 7; Malan, p. 15.

⁵⁴ The vilification of an enemy is usually done by using atrocity propaganda. Atrocity propaganda is the creation of an illusion that your enemy is barbaric in their actions such as burning down churches, raping women and butchering the wounded. This propaganda technique is mostly exaggeration or deceit. Jowett & O’Donnell, pp. 225-226.

⁵⁵ Jowett & O’Donnell, p. 185; D. Clampin, “Commercial advertising as propaganda in World War One”, <<http://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/commercial-advertising-as-propaganda>>, s.a. (Accessed on October 3, 2015).

alternative forms of government, physiology, historical background, and counter propaganda. In most cases, populations will rather be loyal and believe their own state than listen to the facts of a foreign nation. Ellul also noted that the myth of democracy is a powerful propaganda weapon, even if democracy is propagandised by a country that does not practice a genuine form of democracy. He points out communist regimes using democracy as a propaganda platform. Josef Stalin used the technique of freedom and democracy after the Second World War.⁵⁶

Both allies and enemies aim propaganda towards foreign nations. Ally nations will demonstrate friendship by exchanging professors; fellowships; statues or artists; and chief executives will visit other nations. In times of war, countries will use atrocity propaganda to muster support from neutral countries. Enemy countries will receive psychological propaganda. As mentioned before, the British used atrocity propaganda during World War 1 to vilify the Germans as a way of encouraging Americans to join in the war. Even though wars are commonly caused by clashing interests, Arthur Larson believes that propaganda is a dangerous source of international friction and that international propaganda should be considered illegal. In March 2015, South Korea launched balloons containing money and leaflets over North Korea. After the incident, North Korean and South Korean troops exchanged fire. Larson argues that there should be global laws to prohibit states from deploying warmongering, subversive and defamatory propaganda, and if they do, they should be held responsible.⁵⁷

Propaganda is a complex form of communication that utilises both persuasion and information. Whether propaganda is overt or covert; truthful or outrages deception; good or evil; transmitted by word of mouth or the radio, it serves the purpose of furthering the goals of the propagandist. During the 20th century, propaganda reached new peaks in its attempts to persuade millions of people.

1.3. PROPAGANDA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

It could be argued that propaganda is as old as the earliest civilisations. Around 2550 BC, the ancient Sumerians, under the leadership of King Eannatum of Lagash, crushed their rivals

⁵⁶ Ellul, pp. 242-243; Bogart, p. 82.

⁵⁷ C.C. Havighurst, *International control of propaganda*, pp. 1, 13; Lasswell, "Propaganda" in Jackall & Vidich, p. 15; Vice News, "Launching balloons into North Korea: Propaganda over Pyongyang", <<https://news.vice.com/video/launching-balloons-into-north-korea-propaganda-over-pyongyang>>, 2015.3.18. (Accessed on October 3, 2015).

and erected a limestone slab which graphically depicts the battle. The stone not only showed the king's dominance, but acted as a warning for anyone who dares to challenge him. As civilisations developed into empires, propaganda adapted in order to propagandise the populace they govern. The ancient Egyptians constructed the pyramids to bolster the appearance of their ideology, wealth, and power. The Roman Empire used coins to spread propaganda throughout its vast territory and orchestrated massive celebrations to convince inhabitants of the prestige of the empire.⁵⁸

In the time of revolutions such as the American and French Revolution, the printing press was a powerful weapon for change. Napoleon Bonaparte understood the potential of the printing press and the manipulation of information, using powerful symbols and black propaganda techniques in foreign countries. Napoleon, considered a master of modern propaganda, glorified himself through paintings such as the heroic painting of 'the man on the white horse'. Before the 20th century, propaganda was a neutral term.⁵⁹

The 19th century saw the rise of a new audience. Technological advances improved communication methods. These inventions included the rapid production of newspapers, photography, transport systems, electricity, and the telegraph. Early 18th century presses were only able to produce 200 newspaper per hour, but as soon as the press were driven by steam or electricity, they were able to produce around 10 000 newspapers per hour. The result was the 'penny press,' which was mass newspapers on a daily basis. Audiences consumed international and local news and entertainment on a daily basis. The massive circulation of newspapers improved literacy standards. Societies became dependent on information distributed by newspapers and allowed propaganda to directly reach specific target groups. The mass media developed into such a powerful force that it became the fourth estate (the media). The newspaper was the first form of true mass media. It was followed by the cinema and radio in the next century.⁶⁰

The extent of World War I (1914-1918) was a war never experienced before in history. It was a 'total war' on an industrial stage, which pitted entire nations against one another. In order to defeat the enemy, nations broke the rules of war and developed new machinery that would define wars in future. The machinery included tanks, submarines, gas, and the extensive use of propaganda. In fact, propaganda would have a negative connotation onwards. As soon as

⁵⁸ C. Moore, pp. 15-16; Cull, p. 91.

⁵⁹ Cull, p. 260; Moore, p. 63; Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 89.

⁶⁰ Taylor, *Munition of the mind...*, pp. 158-160; Moore, p. 72; Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 99.

the war erupted, Great Britain gained a massive advantage by snipping undersea cables that connected Germany to the USA. Germany lost the moral high ground in executing its plan to invade 'poor little Belgium' in order to gain the upper hand, offering ammunition for British propaganda.⁶¹

Both Germany and Britain competed for support from the USA during the war. German propaganda was overt and ineffective, while Britain depended on covert propaganda. The British government organised a secret propaganda bureau directed by Charles Masterman, known as the Wellington House. The Wellington House used discrete propaganda methods and pro-British Americans to influence the masses. This technique proved to be extremely effective, as American journalist and writers could interpret British messages and write suitable messages for the American audience. Two decisive events fuelled British propaganda efforts in the USA which led to the end of its neutrality, namely the sinking of the Lusitania and the Zimmermann Telegram. On 7 May 1915, the British liner RMS Lusitania was torpedoed by a German U-boat, killing an estimated 1 100 people, including 120 Americans. Although the ship's captain was warned of a possible attack and carried wartime ammunition, the British were quick to exploit the sinking for propaganda ends. The propaganda campaign would play a massive role in turning public opinion in the USA against Germany. However, it was the Zimmermann telegram that would finally bring America into the war. Arthur Zimmermann sent a telegram to the Mexican ambassador, requesting Mexico to enter the war as a German ally. In January 1917, British cryptographers decoded the telegram and soon used it as propaganda. The USA, perceiving the telegram as a direct threat, made it possible for President Woodrow Wilson to acquire public support for entering the war.⁶²

After Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917, he established the Committee of Public Information (CPI). Journalists, publicists, academic scholars, novelists, advertisers, and other experts were recruited to commit the American people to the war. All nations that participated in the war implemented atrocity propaganda. The First World War employed atrocity propaganda on a universal scale in order to foster hatred against the enemy, to encourage patriotism for a just cause, and to obtain assistance from allied and neutral countries. Examples of this are Germans cutting off children's hands or burning down churches. However, after the war it was concluded that most atrocity propaganda were

⁶¹ Taylor, *Munition of the mind...*, pp. 176-177.

⁶² Cull, p. 453; Moore, pp. 102, 104-105; History, "Lusitania", <<http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/lusitania-event.html>>, s.a. (Accessed on October 8, 2015).

fabricated. Another notable propaganda technique was psychological propaganda. Its main function was to demoralise the enemy. Leaflets, booklets, and brochures were sent over the enemy lines via balloons, aeroplanes, and mortars. In 1918, around 60 million leaflets were delivered by the Entente to Austria-Hungary troops, resulting in mass dispersion. After the war, the Germans believed they were defeated by propaganda and not on the battlefield. World War I changed the meaning of propaganda to something of a sinister nature.⁶³

World War II was the deadliest conflict in human history and propaganda was extensively used during the war. After the First World War, Germany was ruined and humiliated and this created a vacuum for radical politics. The man to fill this vacuum was Adolf Hitler, who promised to crush Germany's enemies and to establish an empire that would last 1 000 years. Hitler admired British propaganda during the First World War and considered it a 'weapon of the first class'. Hitler had a powerful voice which he successfully exercised to arouse audiences' emotions at mass rallies, such as the annual Nuremberg Rallies. A key feature at these rallies were flags with the swastika symbol. The Nazis organised 34 000 public meetings in the election year of 1932.⁶⁴

On 13 March 1933, the Nazi's came to power in Germany and Goebbels immediately established the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. This position gave him power over all of Germany's media, as well as other cultural activities such as architecture. Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, which contains his ideology and hate for the Jews, was found in most German households. Radio was an effective propaganda medium. The Germans produced a cheap radio called the Volksempfänger and by the start of World War II, 70% of households owned this device. Goebbels seized all private German film companies and produced propaganda films such as *Triumph of the Will*. According to Z.A.B. Zeman, German propaganda infiltrated both public and private life: "The work of the Germans, their holidays, the new buildings in their towns, the education of their children, the newspapers they read, the films they saw, and the radio programmes they listened to bore the Nazi

⁶³ Cull, pp. 24-25, 324-325, 440; Taylor, *Munition of the mind...*, p. 190; Jackall & Hirota, "America's first propaganda ministry: The Committee on Public Information during the Great War" in Jackall & Vidich, p. 137.

⁶⁴ Z.A.B. Zeman, *Nazi propaganda*, pp. 11, 15, 34; A. Hitler, *My struggle*, pp. 83-84; Moore, pp. 146-147.

stamp.”⁶⁵ Between 1933 and 1938, Hitler and Goebbels were preparing the German people for war.⁶⁶

The main task of propaganda during the Second World War was to maintain morale. Not only for the soldiers fighting on the frontlines, but for the civilians who were severely exposed to occupation, bombers, famine, and death. It was important for propaganda to reach its targeted audience on a daily basis. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) played an important role during the Battle of Britain to sustain morale, especially with Winston Churchill’s speeches. Welch divides German propaganda initiatives in four phases, namely the Blitzkrieg, Russian campaign, total onslaught, and the revenge weapon phase. The Blitzkrieg phase utilised the German army’s success in 1940 to motivate its population. Blitzkrieg propaganda was useful at the start of the Russian campaign, but quickly lost effectiveness when the Germans failed to capture Moscow. In 1943, with Allied bombers and the defeat at Stalingrad, Goebbels changed his propaganda techniques by announcing that Germany is fighting a total onslaught. This technique was aimed at conserving the Germans’ will to fight due to hate and fear. The last phase promised that the war will be won through the deployment of ‘super weapons’ such as the Vengeance 1 and 2 rockets.⁶⁷

When the USA entered the war, they enlisted Hollywood’s best personnel to produce propaganda films; for example, the *Why we fight*-series were disseminated to allied nations. For the Soviet Union, it was the Great Patriotic War which was complemented by film and cartoon propaganda. Psychological propaganda was used by all major powers to discourage the enemy from fighting. The Allies deployed ‘psywarriors’, special units fitted with audio devices to demoralise the enemy in fighting. Radios broadcasting black propaganda were frequently used; for example, the British set up radio stations that pretended to be German officers saying how futile the war was.⁶⁸

The end of the Second World War marked the start of a new war. The world entered its atomic age with the bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. Trust quickly deteriorated between the Western and Eastern allies. This war, which would become known as the Cold

⁶⁵ Zeman, p. 52.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-14, 39, 47-52; R. Taylor, *Film propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*, p. 70; D. Welch, *Nazi propaganda: The power and the limitations*, p. 47.

⁶⁷ Welsch, pp. 195–201; Cull, p. 38.

⁶⁸ Cull, pp. 328, 448, 445-446; J.A. Meyerson, “Theatre of war: American propaganda films during the Second World War” in Jackall & Vidich, pp. 226-227; Headquarters, Department of the Army, “Psychological operations”, <<http://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-05-30.pdf> 6-14>, 2015.4. (Accessed on October 10, 2015).

War, was different from previous wars. Even though the two superpowers with opposing ideologies, the USA and the Soviet Union, would never engage in direct conflict, the fighting continued through other countries⁶⁹ and with international politics. In the domain of international politics, propaganda was an essential strategy for foreign policy. Both superpowers were required – at the expense of vast money, time, and human resources – to project a certain image of themselves to the other and to neutral countries.⁷⁰ Jowett and O'Donnell assert that propaganda initiatives took new forms during the Cold War:

“Since the end of World War II, there has been a tremendous increase in the growth of new forms of propaganda activities, ranging from the traditional foreign policy announcements to more subtle but no less effective activities such as travel bureaus; sporting events; international trade exhibitions and word expositions; achievements in space and other technologies; and cultural phenomena such as art, fashion and music. In fact, it would not be inaccurate to say that almost every aspect of human activity can be propagandized in the international arena. The Russians claim to have the oldest people in the world, the Scandinavians the lowest infant mortality rates, and the Americans the most automobiles per capita. All of these claims are used in one form or another as propaganda.”⁷¹

The invention of the thermo-nuclear bomb created fear of total annihilation. Both superpowers' propaganda exploited this fear in order to stockpile nuclear arsenals. USA and Soviet propaganda portrayed the enemy as a serious threat to peace and freedom. The Soviet Union had a state-controlled media which made it easier to control the thoughts of its citizens. The USA's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Soviet's Committee for State Security (KGB) implemented several disinformation campaigns. The Russians would often place news articles in foreign newspapers so that it could circulate within a country's borders. In 1971, the Soviet Union tried to stir up racial tension between Jews and black communities. The CIA on the other hand, fabricated stories of Cuban soldiers raping girls. The Cold War ended in 1989 when the Soviet Union collapsed.⁷²

After investigating the use of propaganda in the 20th century, it becomes apparent that propaganda is here to stay and that it will play a prominent role in shaping our perceptions,

⁶⁹ These wars included the Korean War (1950-1953); war in the Middle East (1967 and 1973); Vietnam War (1963-1975); and Afghanistan (1979-1988). See Taylor, *Munitions of the mind...*, p. 251.

⁷⁰ Moore, p. 162; Jowett & O'Donnell, pp. 280-281.

⁷¹ Jowett & O'Donnell, p. 281.

⁷² Cull, p. 105; Taylor, *Munition of the mind...*, pp. 252-253.

especially with current international politics and communication mediums for reaching the masses. South Africa also attempted to influence international politics and public opinion with its apartheid laws. The next chapter will focus on South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. The chapter will examine how South Africa affected the international domain and vice versa.

2. SOUTH AFRICA: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, 1950 – 1970

The aftermath of the Second World War ushered in a new era for the world. The rise of Afrikaner Nationalism and its legitimate racial segregation policies were in conflict with the viewpoints of the superpowers, Russia and the USA, on human rights. South Africa faced the beginning of the end for white rule in Africa. Even though 1950 – 1960 were progressive years for South Africa, pressure was rapidly starting to amass inside and outside the country. This chapter will explore influences on South Africa's state of affairs during the 1950s and especially the 1960s. Only when the events of the 1950s and 1960s are placed into historical context, will the discourse of the 1970s be coherent. Driving forces which had an impact on South Africa include the policies of the NP and events occurring within the state; resistance and opposition within the country; Anti-Apartheid Movements (AAM) and sanctions; as well as the Cold War. This chapter also includes South Africa's propaganda schemes during the two decades. It becomes apparent that propaganda was required during this time to secure alliances and trade.

2.1. SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICS

Few observers expected the National Party's victory in the 1948 election. Prior to the elections, Daniel Francois Malan's Herenigde (Reunited) National Party (HNP) only consisted of 48 seats, while the ruling United Party (UP) under the leadership of Jan Smuts, had a total of 89 seats in the House of Assembly. Smuts' influence declined during the Second World War years when he was concentrating on the war effort and neglected struggling farmers. The Second World War also triggered the urbanisation of black people, which deprived farms of their labourers and whites feared the inundation of cities by the black populace. Afrikaners dreaded the idea of being absorbed and exploited by the 'British from above and the native majority from below', depriving Afrikaners of their identity. The HNP assured Afrikaners of the protection of race purity by implementing a dogma of race separateness and the control of black migration. The HNP and its allies gained 79 seats to the UP's 71 seats – even though the NP received 100 000 votes less than the UP.⁷³ After the

⁷³ M. Wilson & L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford history of South Africa: Volume II. South Africa 1970-1966*, p. 387; S. Terreblanche, *A history of inequality in South Africa, 1652-2002*, pp. 298-300; C. Saunders (ed.), *Illustrated history of South Africa: The real story*, p. 370.

elections, Malan stated: “Today South Africa belongs to us once more. South Africa is our own for the first time since Union, and may God grant that it will always remain our own.”⁷⁴

During the 1948 election campaign, the HNP and the UP appointed two separate commissions to find a solution for the native question. The HNP team was headed by Paul Sauer. Sauer recommended that South Africa could either convert to a multi-racial society based on equality or follow a policy of extensive separation. The latter approach would protect white dominance and present natives with the opportunity to develop in their own areas. The Fagan Report concluded that the urbanisation of black people was inevitable and that they could provide cities with labour. Malan and the nationalists favoured the findings of the Sauer Commission and soon started implementing racial laws. For the greater part of the next 50 years, the NP would remain in power and exercise its separate development programme.⁷⁵

Apartheid was not only a set of laws designed for separate development, but also to suppress black people by discriminatory and oppressive means. According to Hermann Giliomee, apartheid was a product of Western racism, “Apartheid was not based on the failed racial ideology of Nazi Germany, but on mainstream Western racism, ranging from a superficial colour preference to a pathological abhorrence of race mixing, which was still widespread in both Europe and the USA.”⁷⁶ The first racial law introduced by the NP was the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949. Extending the 1927 marriage ban between black and white, the new law had forbidden marriages between whites and non-whites. The Immorality Amendment Act was enforced in 1950, outlawing intercourse between racial groups. Some 11 500 people, including ministers in churches and schoolteachers, faced charges of immorality.⁷⁷

The next step by the NP was the adoption of the Population Registration Act of 1950. This act served to classify the population of South Africa according to race and physical appearance. A person was identified as white, coloured, Indian or black and the race type was reflected on an identity card. The act determined the status and privileges of particular groups. Afterwards, the Abolition of Passes Act came into effect. The purpose of the act was

⁷⁴ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people* (Expanded and updated edition), p. 487.

⁷⁵ Wilson & Thompson, p. 409; Saunders, pp. 372-373.

⁷⁶ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, p. 495.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 504-505; Terreblanche, p. 313.

to control the movements of black people.⁷⁸ None-white people were obligated to carry identity cards containing details of an individual and where he/she was employed. Thousands of black people were incarcerated for pass offenses and were victims of police harassment.⁷⁹

During 1950, the NP government accepted the Group Areas Act. The purpose of this act was the separation of races into their own designated areas, limiting ownership and occupation of land to specific races. The forced removal of 65 000 coloureds from District Six in the 1960s was the most notorious action associated with the Group Area Act. The Act became even more discriminatory with the introduction of the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953. Business owners were allowed to separate black people from whites in public facilities. Whites were entitled to separate seats, beaches, cinemas, swimming pools, theatres, toilets, hotels, and entrances. Non-whites were forbidden to use facilities reserved for whites.⁸⁰

Fearing the demand for equality from educated black people, the NP established a commission of enquiry to determine a new state-controlled education system. The commission recommended that the Department of Native Affairs acquire control over African education. In 1950, Malan appointed Dr Hendrik Verwoerd as Minister of Native Affairs, who endorsed apartheid laws such as the Abolition of Passes Act, and introduced the Bantu Education Act of 1953. Africans received an inferior education system that would, according to Verwoerd, meet their opportunities in life. More troubling for black pupils were the lack of funds received for Bantu Education, compared to their white counterparts.⁸¹

The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 was devised to establish reserves for African ethnic groups, with their own local and territorial tribal authorities. White intellectuals were keen on creating self-sufficient reserves and controlling the flow of black people into urban areas. The reserves, mostly populated by women, the elderly, and children, were dependent on men employed in white areas for an income. Lacking infrastructure and mineral deposits, and the possession of eroded land, made a self-sustaining economy impossible. In 1950, the government established a commission of inquiry headed by Frederik Tomlinson to authenticate potential economic growth in the reserves. The report was handed to Verwoerd in 1954. The Tomlinson Report was convinced that the 'homelands' were economically self-

⁷⁸ The Abolition of Passes Act was an effective measure to control the inflow of black people into urban areas. Wilson & Thompson, p. 409.

⁷⁹ C. Clifton, & T.V. McClendon (eds), *The South Africa Reader: History, culture, politics*, pp. 281-293; Wilson & Thompson, p. 409; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, pp. 503-504; Saunders, p. 376.

⁸⁰ Saunders, pp. 376-377; Wilson & Thompson, p. 410; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, p. 505.

⁸¹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, pp. 507-509; A. Sparks, *The mind of South Africa: The story of the rise and fall of apartheid*, pp. 195-197.

sufficient, but required investment from white and state capital. Nevertheless, Verwoerd rejected crucial aspects of the Tomlinson Report.⁸²

Prime Minister Johannes Gerhardus Strijdom's (1954-1958) illness left Verwoerd as the firmest candidate for prime ministership. Verwoerd used the Tomlinson Report to strengthen his support among Afrikaners and to justify his ambition of creating homelands for Africans. He consolidated his power over the NP in September 1958. The year before, Ghana was granted independence from colonial rule, setting Africa's decolonisation process in motion. In 1959, Verwoerd announced his new scheme of separate development, also known as Grand Apartheid. The new policy would grant black reserves the opportunity to govern their own homelands and would in time lead to full independence. The agenda of this policy would skew the image of apartheid as a decolonisation process within the borders of South Africa. In a bid to crush any hope of black representation in parliament, Verwoerd dismissed the four white African representatives appointed to represent black people.⁸³

Verwoerd's new homeland policy caused misery among millions of Africans. A total of 75% of the country's population was forced to live on 13% of South Africa's surface. Few whites witnessed the harsh conditions in the homelands. Around 3 million people were forcefully removed from their homes and resettled in the homelands. The massive social engineering project had dire consequences for millions of black families. The policy was supported by the majority of white Afrikaners and some dissolute African leaders. By 1964, stricter influx control from homelands into white zones was imposed, especially for women and children. Work opportunities in the homelands were scarce, with less than 45 000 available jobs. The homelands would remain a dumping ground for excess Africans. The international community never recognised the homelands as sovereign states.⁸⁴

The leader of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Robert Sobukwe, organised a non-violent campaign to disobey the pass laws in the early 1960s. Africans would invite arrest by leaving their passes at home to ultimately fill up prisons, grinding the country to an economic halt. On 21 March 1960, nervous police lost their calm and fired into a protesting crowd in the township of Sharpeville, killing sixty-nine and wounding 180 fleeing demonstrators. The black and international community was shocked by the massacre. On 30 March 30 000 black

⁸² Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, p. 516; H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *Nuwe geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, p. 323; Saunders, p. 378.

⁸³ Giliomee & Mbenga, p. 324; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, p. 517; Sparks, p. 192.

⁸⁴ Terreblanche, p. 322; Sparks, p. 197; Clifton & McClendon, p. 280; Giliomee & Mbenga, p. 342.

protestors, led by Philip Kgosana, marched on Parliament in Cape Town. Stay-at-home actions and civil unrest ensued in the country and the NP announced a state of emergency, which lasted for several months. Many businesses were hurt by African employees who boycotted their employers; the Johannesburg Stock Exchange's value decreased as investors withdrew; and whites were terrified of the unrest. The strike diffused after police arrested 1 500 people on 7 April. The government banned the ANC and the PAC on 8 April. The following day, a mentally-disturbed man, David Pratt, shot Verwoerd in the head. Remarkably, Verwoerd survived this critical wound. Outlawing the ANC and PAC meant the death of black politics in South Africa for the remainder of the decade. It left black people demoralised and depressed, while Verwoerd continued his plans for Grand Apartheid. The chaos of the early 1960s added to Verwoerd's status as steadfast leader among both white Afrikaans and English speakers.⁸⁵

Verwoerd and white Afrikaner nationalists revered the idea of transforming South Africa into a republic. A republic would establish independence and unity among whites. After visiting several African states, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan addressed parliament on 3 February 1960. His 'Winds of Change speech,' favouring African Nationalism, encouraged British settlers to support a republic. In October 1960, 52% of whites voted in favour of a republic with ties in the Commonwealth. After receiving criticism at a Commonwealth conference on the discourse of apartheid, Verwoerd broke ties with the Commonwealth. The republic faced isolation from its former allies. On the home front, Verwoerd managed to foster a degree of unity between old enemies, the Afrikaners and English-speaking whites.⁸⁶

In the 1960s and 1970s, South Africa effectively became an institutionalised police state. The banished ANC and PAC opted for violent methods of liberating the masses. The ANC established its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and the PAC formed Poqo (Xhosa word for Pure) to fight an armed struggle. The MK's guerrilla tactics mainly resorted to sabotage. The PAC preferred to kill whites indiscriminately in order to achieve freedom. On 5 February 1963, Poqo attacked and killed five policemen and three women. Verwoerd appointed Balthazar Johannes (John) Vorster as Minister of Justice in 1961 and commissioned him to maintain state security. The government had the authority to place suspects under house arrest and the right to ban individuals or organisations. In 1963, Vorster

⁸⁵ F. Pretorius (ed.), *A history of South Africa: From the distant past to the present day*, pp. 341-342; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, p. 522; Saunders, pp. 401-403, 408; Sparks, p. 274.

⁸⁶ Pretorius (ed.), pp. 340-342; Saunders, p. 409.

put the General Law Amendment Act into action. This act allowed police to capture suspects without a warrant and to keep them in confinement for ninety days. Later, detainment was increased to 180 days. In the same year, a Publications Control Board was established to censor any material that may pose a threat to national security. By 1963, the liberation movements were crushed by the NP government. Most of the underground organisation's leaders were either forced into exile or residing in prison.⁸⁷

The NP was at the pinnacle of its power by 1966. The state managed to recuperate from the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre and by 1963 the economy had recovered. The eradication of internal opposition to the state meant investors felt secure to invest in South Africa. Even though international pressure was growing, investors could not refuse the opportunity to invest in South Africa's growing economy. From 1963 to 1972, foreign investment had risen from R3 billion to R7 billion. The economy strengthened by 6% between 1960 and 1970, with an inflation growth of only 2%. The success of South Africa's wealth was credited to cheap black labour and a currency supported by gold reserves. The booming economy indicated that the state was able to afford well-equipped military and security forces. During the 1960s, most white people achieved an economical feat and lived comfortably, whereas most black people were shackled to a life of poverty.⁸⁸

Verwoerd was at the apex of his career in 1966. In the general election of 1966, the NP won 126 out of the 166 House of Assembly seats. Verwoerd seemed to be invincible. A few months later, on 6 September 1966, Verwoerd was murdered in parliament before delivering a speech by Dimitri Tsafendas. A week after the assassination, the NP's caucus concurred that B.J. Vorster should take over the position of prime minister. Vorster earned the reputation of resilient leader during his time as Minister of Justice. Just like his predecessor Verwoerd, Vorster continued to apply policies for separate development and self-governing homelands. Vorster sought to create homelands for all ethnic African groups such as the Xhosa, Zulu and Tswana. Vorster realised the increasing hostilities of the outside world and attempted to start relationships with African states and eventually the rest of the capitalist world. During Vorster's first term in office, the initial cracks started to appear in the NP between the 'Verligtes'⁸⁹ and the 'Verkrampes'.⁹⁰ The two groups did not reach agreement

⁸⁷ Pretorius (ed.), pp. 245-346; Giliomee & Mbenga, p. 340; Saunders, pp. 410-412; Terreblanche, p. 314.

⁸⁸ Pretorius (ed.), pp. 345-347; Giliomee & Mbenga, p. 343; Saunders, p. 421.

⁸⁹ 'Verligtes' are Afrikaners that supported liberal trends in politics. The Free Dictionary, "Verligtes", <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/verligtes>>, *s.a.* (Accessed on January 12, 2015).

on why Afrikaners should build relationships with English speakers, Africans, and neighbouring countries.⁹¹

Apartheid survived the first two decades of its existence, but faced serious opposition. The radical reforms of the NP caused a liberation movement from within the borders of South Africa. As time passed, Africans intensified their fight for freedom.

2.2. THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

ANC president Albert Luthuli stated in his autobiography *Let My People Go* that the election of 1948 was of little concern to black people, who had endured white rule for decades. Even though black South Africans knew there would be hard times, they did not foresee the rapid deterioration of rights for non-whites when the NP came into power. Since its formation in 1912, the ANC's task was to uphold the rights of black people and to protect African lands from the Native Land Act of 1913. Up until 1948, the leadership of the ANC focused on improving the rights of Africans through negotiation with whites in power, but the demands and resolutions put forward fell on deaf ears.⁹²

The 1940s witnessed the rise of Black Nationalism in Africa and a younger generation of black South Africans seized the moment to contest white domination. The ANC established the Youth League (YL) in 1944 under the leadership of Anton Lembede. He advanced the idea of black pride, known as Africanism. Lembede rejected the traditional ANC way of politely persuading white authorities. Among the Youth League were future icons of the struggle, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Nelson Mandela. Old, hesitant leaders of the ANC were replaced by people like James Moroka. The ANC took a new stance in favour of a revolutionary struggle to oust white oppression and fight for black political rights. They approved a campaign that included stay-at-home actions, civil disobedience, boycotts, non-cooperation, and strikes. This strategy focused on a peaceful means to persuade the government of black discontent.⁹³

Moroka directed the first Joint Planning Council of anti-apartheid movements, including non-black groups such as the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), and the coloured organisation Franchise Action Council (FRAC). This

⁹⁰ Opposite of 'Verligtes'. More conservative Afrikaners. The Free Dictionary, "Verkrampes", <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/verkrampes>>, s.a. (Accessed on January 12, 2015).

⁹¹ Pretorius, pp. 349-351; Giliomee & Mbenga, pp. 344, 349.

⁹² A. Luthuli, *Let my people go*, p. 99; Clifton & McClendon, pp. 346-347; Saunders, p. 371.

⁹³ Clifton & McClendon, p. 301; Terreblanche, p. 346; Sparks, p. 239.

cooperation with other races was an important new direction for the ANC in its struggle against apartheid. Africanists within the ANC openly detested the idea of working with white communist and other races. In 1950, the government passed the Suppression of Communism Act. Prior to the act, the CPSA was disbanded and would secretly be relaunched as the South African Communist Party (SACP). In response to the ban on communism, stay-at-home actions were executed. As protest and unrest continued in 1950 and into 1951, the relationship between the ANC and SACP strengthened.⁹⁴

The Defiance Campaign was a collaborative reaction by the ANC to the discriminative laws of the NP. The campaign demanded the abolishment of six specific laws, namely the pass laws; the separate representation of voters; suppression of communism; the group areas; Bantu authorities; the reserves for natives; and stock collecting. Failure to adhere to the demands would result in a nationwide campaign of peaceful civil disobedience, similar to Gandhi's approach to the struggle for independence in India. The NP disregarded the ultimatum. On 6 April 1952, mass rallies took place. The Defiance Campaign commenced on 6 June. Demonstrators, known as volunteers, infringed selected discriminatory laws such as entering white areas without passes, ignoring curfews, and using white-only entrances. The aim of defying these laws was to be taken into custody, burdening the police, and overcrowding prisons.⁹⁵

By 8 November, 326 volunteers were arrested, mainly in the prominent Eastern Cape. In some cases, violence surfaced between the police and protesters. At first, sentences for breaking the law was relatively light, but later the government introduced the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Public Safety Act. Defying or challenging any race laws became a serious offence. Offenders could be sentenced to five years in prison, pay 500 pounds, or receive 10 lashes. The introduction of more severe laws affected the overall performance of the campaign, and in early 1953 it came to an end. The leadership of the programme, including Mandela, Moroka, and Sisulu, were apprehended and tried under the Suppression of Communism Act. Even though the Defiance Campaign did not succeed in altering the rights of black people, it did however, raise awareness for resistance against the minority government; it created unity among black people; the membership of the ANC increased in thousands; and the campaign received attention and support from the international world, in particular the United Nations (UN). Afterwards, more non-violent protests, strikes, and stay-

⁹⁴ Giliomee & Mbenga, p. 326; Pretorius, pp. 374-375; Saunders, pp. 382-383.

⁹⁵ Pretorius, p. 374; Sparks, p. 240.

at-homes actions would follow throughout the 1950s. For example, on 9 August 1956, pass legislation was introduced for African women. As a result, they gathered in masses and marched to the Union Buildings to hand their petition to the prime minister.⁹⁶

After the failure of the Defiance Campaign, the ANC adopted a new strategy. In 1953 the ANC leader in the Cape, Z.K. Matthews, proposed a people's conference that included all population groups. The following year, officials of the ANC, SAIC, South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), and the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) met to establish the Congress of the People (COP). COP assembled on 26-27 June 1955 in Kliptown. Three thousand multiracial delegates from all over the nation met in an open field. COP's main intention was to draft a document that reflected the political desires of all South Africans. Anyone interested could submit their proposals for potential inclusion in the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter stipulated that South Africa belongs to everyone who lives in it, both black and white. The non-racist document demanded a democratic system and a society of equality. ANC leaders only viewed the final document the night before the mass gathering. The clauses of the Freedom Charter was read and discussed one by one by leaders of the organisations. All sections were accepted.⁹⁷

While the Freedom Charter was discussed, the police was monitoring the meeting. On the second day, armed police confiscated documents and dispersed the crowd under the pretext that treason was being plotted. The State responded the following year by arresting 156 organisers of the Freedom Charter. The entire ANC executive, some whites, and the organisers of the women protestors were charged with high treason. The trial would drag on for five years before the suspects were finally acquitted. In 1956, the ANC accepted the Freedom Charter as a mandate to pursue.⁹⁸

ANC members devoted to the Africanist ideology disliked cooperation with other groups, particular whites, communists, and Indians. They believed liberal whites would force the liberation struggle to suit their ideals. The disagreement between the multiracial ANC and the Africanists led to the formation of the PAC in 1959. Robert Sobukwe was elected to lead the PAC. Unlike the peaceful ANC, the PAC would achieve liberation through more radical strategies. Sobukwe was only able to recruit 25 000 members of the targeted 100 000. The results of the Sharpeville massacre crippled the PAC. The Unlawful Organisations Act, which

⁹⁶ Sparks, pp. 240-241; Pretorius, pp. 376-377; Clifton & McClendon, p. 347; Giliomee & Mbenga, p. 327.

⁹⁷ Pretorius, pp. 241, 378-379; Giliomee & Mbenga, pp. 328-329; Saunders, pp. 387-389.

⁹⁸ Terreblanche, p. 347; Giliomee & Mbenga, p. 329; Sparks, pp. 242-243.

outlawed the PAC and arrested its leaders, including Sobukwe, constrained the organisation's effectiveness. The PAC's armed wing, Poqo, still used the initiative of terror to fight for the liberation of black people. In 1962, Poqo – with 200 men – attacked a white community, but the attack was repelled by police. Two whites were left dead and 18 were wounded. The attacks on civilians in February 1963 caused a state of emergency and many PAC and Poqo members were arrested. In 1964, the PAC moved to Tanzania, but was too far from South Africa to organise any immediate campaigns.⁹⁹

After the violence of Sharpeville and the Unlawful Organisations Act, the ANC realised that peaceful protests were futile and that violence would be the only way to bring the 'government to their senses'. The ANC arranged a three-day strike for 31 May 1961, but it was suppressed by the government. Realising that the strike was a failure on the first day, Mandela called it off. Mandela and other leaders of the ANC then established MK. The ANC would embark on a guerrilla insurgency with the intent of sabotaging targeted economic and political infrastructure, for instance the bombing of Bantu Administration offices and railways. MK first attacked on 16 December 1961 in Johannesburg, Durban, and Port Elizabeth. MK avoided the loss of life during its two-year campaign of sabotage, but some cadres attacked policemen and suspected informants. The terror campaign ended when the NP introduced harsher legislation.¹⁰⁰

It was during the sabotage campaign that the ANC considered Operation Mayibuye. The strategy was to infiltrate South Africa's rural regions with 40 elite insurgences and take control of the area. During the occupation, MK forces would muster, train, and arm civilians.¹⁰¹ In January 1962, Mandela left the country to receive training in guerrilla warfare and to form relationships with African states in order to obtain support for the operation. He attended a conference with African leaders in Ethiopia and managed to acquire military training in Algeria. Mandela was wanted by the police and arrested for unlawful activities on his return from Britain. On 11 July 1963, the MK headquarters in Rivonia were raided by the police. Key leaders in the planning of the operations, such as Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki, were present on the farm when the police conducted the raid. Mandela and other MK leaders were charged with high treason and the government opted to exercise the death penalty. The state decided to withdraw the charges of high treason, but the ANC leaders were

⁹⁹ Terreblanche, pp. 347-348; Pretorius, pp. 282-284, 381-385; Clifton & McClendon, p. 339.

¹⁰⁰ Clifton & McClendon, p. 345; Pretorius, p. 383; Saunders, pp. 409-408.

¹⁰¹ Giliomee & Mbenga, pp. 337-338.

convicted of sabotage and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. The fate of the ANC's future rested in the hands of its members in exile to gain foreign support against the apartheid regime.¹⁰²

The banishment of the ANC and PAC meant that black people were deprived of political activities. Black university students joined the multiracial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) to communicate their political desires. NUSAS was mainly white and in 1964 the student organisation became more radical. Frustration was caused among black people due to the more 'right views' of NUSAS. A medical student from the University of Natal, Steve Biko, started the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in South Africa. He stated that white standards of exquisiteness is forced upon black people and resulted in them feeling inferior. Biko encouraged Africans to be proud of their distinctiveness. He also argued that white liberals do not understand the black peoples' struggle against apartheid and should spend their time persuading other whites to change. In July 1969, Biko left NUSAS to establish the South African Student Organisation (SASO) in order to spread the concept of BCM. The BCM ideology had an impact on thousands of Africans and would prosper into the 1970s.¹⁰³

While pro-apartheid forces and anti-apartheid movements were brawling in South Africa, the superpowers were confronting each other on a global level. South Africa, including most other third world countries, was a pawn in the two superpowers' standoff.

2.3. SOUTH AFRICA AND THE COLD WAR

Peace did not endure after the brutality of the Second World War. In 1946, Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union, gave a facade electoral speech, accusing the capitalist system for the outbreak of World War II. The Soviet Union therefore had to prepare for future wars. In response, Winston Churchill delivered the Iron Curtain speech the following month, pointing out the divided world between East and West and comparing Stalin to Hitler. Both the Soviet Union and the Western allies accused each other of being Nazis.¹⁰⁴ Stalin deemed the USA as a country on the path to Fascism and the USA observed the Soviet Union as a totalitarian regime. It was the discourse of ideologies between the 'Free World' and 'Socialist Bloc' that

¹⁰² Pretorius, pp. 383-384; Terreblanche, p. 348; Giliomee & Mbenga, pp. 337-338.

¹⁰³ Saunders, p. 443; Giliomee & Mbenga, pp. 353-354; Pretorius, p. 386; Sparks, p. 265.

¹⁰⁴ P. Melvyn, *et al.* (eds), *The Cambridge history of the Cold War: Volume I, Origins*, pp. 34-35.

would fuel the Cold War. The superpowers would never directly engage in combat, fearing total annihilation due to advances in nuclear weaponry.¹⁰⁵

David Engerman defines four features of the Cold War. First, both superpowers attempted to gain new states supporting their ideology. Secondly, the Cold War was fought as conventional wars in Third World countries such as Africa, Asia, and South America. The Cold War developed into a global war with the eruption of the Korean War. Third, the USA and the Soviet Union had a rivalry in economic production and technological development. These advances were securing influence in other countries. Lastly, both the USA's and Russia's perception of the enemy was engraved into the ideology of each side.¹⁰⁶

The emergence of the Cold War triggered a unique and complicated relationship between apartheid South Africa and the Western allies. Although apartheid was condemned by the Western allies, South Africa was a crucial strategic and economic associate. The NP's election victory in 1948 was troubling for the British government, but went unnoticed by the American government. South Africa's aid in the Second World War and Prime Minister Daniel Malan's anti-communist stance fostered a friendly relationship with the USA. Pretoria's strategic value to the West was its attitude to contain the threat of communism in Africa and its geographical region. The decolonisation process in Africa resulted in many countries turning to the Marxist-Leninist ideology or descending into unstable forms of government. Washington DC's foreign policy aimed to recruit strategic allies in locations that were once deemed unimportant. South Africa proved to be the most stable country in Africa for Western commitments, such as continuing to follow capitalistic principles and opposing communist forces. The ANC's association with Moscow and the SACP resulted in Washington DC's preference for the white minority to remain in control. Losing South Africa and its indispensable resources would deal a serious blow to the Western economy. South Africa's geographical location proved essential, especially to protect the ocean trade line off Cape Town. It is estimated that 2 300 ships travelled this route on a monthly basis. Naval

¹⁰⁵ Melvyn, pp. 31, 33-35; History, "Cold War history", <<http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history>>, s.a. (Accessed on December 18, 2015).

¹⁰⁶ Melvyn, pp. 33-34; A. Thomson, *U.S. foreign policy towards apartheid South Africa 1948–1994: Conflict of interest*, p. 17.

facilities in Simon's Town and Durban became key strategic harbours for the USA from 1968, when the Soviet Union deployed a patrol fleet in the Indian Ocean.¹⁰⁷

South Africa's mineral wealth was vital for manufacturing in Western countries. The Soviet Union possessed a large portion of the world's chromium, manganese, platinum, and vanadium reserves. At the time, Pretoria served as the fourth major exporter of minerals, including valuable uranium ore for the production of nuclear technologies. Natural resources such as gold, platinum, chrome, manganese, and vanadium contributed considerably to the overall nonfuel mineral imports of the USA and its allies. The reliable mining sector of South Africa attracted USA investors. Investment in South Africa's mining sector was more profitable than similar international investments. By the 1980s, 500 USA industrial firms were investing directly in the economy, particularly in the profitable mining sector, totalling \$2.5 billion in direct investment and shares in companies amounting to \$7.6 billion.¹⁰⁸

The horrors of human rights violations during the Second World War denounced racial ideologies and encouraged ethnic integration. The USA's ideology, tradition, and culture believed that all men are equal and have the right to overthrow an oppressive regime. As a leader of freedom and democracy, it was important for America to apply the notion of liberty to its foreign and domestic policies. South Africa's segregation and oppressive laws towards non-whites denied the republic economical and alliance securities within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The international world started to notice the difference between wealthy whites and the mass of poverty-stricken black people who were exploited by the system. The USA was itself struggling with complex race relations and had to cater for African-Americans fighting for civil rights. Racist affronts by Western leaders in the 1950s were not surprising. America was a largely segregated society in the 1940s, especially in the southern states. Pressure from the UN and recently independent countries, such as India, prevented a close-knit alliance between South Africa and the USA. Openly supporting a racist regime would jeopardise and invite criticism for the USA's foreign policy, resulting in the decline of international influence.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Thomson, pp. 6-9; Giliomee & Mbenga, pp. 312-313; A. Guelke, "Southern Africa and the super-powers", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 56(4), Autumn, 1980, p. 650.

¹⁰⁸ Thomson, pp. 8-9, 12; P. Rich, "United States containment policy, South Africa and the apartheid dilemma", *Review of International Studies* 14(3), July 1988, p. 182.

¹⁰⁹ Giliomee & Mbenga, pp. 312-313; Thomson, pp. 5, 12-15; Guelke, p. 659.

Before the Second World War the USA preferred to remain isolated, but after the war Washington DC emphasised foreign policy. This change of attitude can be seen in the 1948 Marshall Plan, aiding the devastated economies of Europe. A major focus for the USA was to combat the new threat of communism. For Malan, an alliance with the USA was critical to deflect increasing calls for sanctions. To demonstrate South Africa's commitment to fighting communism, Malan dispatched a squadron of pilots to partake in the Korean War. The Truman Administration was sympathetic towards the new NP government, and in 1951 South Africa in return received military equipment with the signing of the Mutual Defence Assistance Act of 1949. South Africa was also given access to British and USA intelligence. USA foreign policy towards Pretoria included building friendly relationships and encouraging economic development and trade. This policy would continue into the Eisenhower administration. However, concerns about South Africa's discriminatory laws were concerning to Washington DC.¹¹⁰

The Sharpeville massacre of 1960 was strongly condemned by the international community, and Pretoria's racial laws made headlines in the American media. Foreign investors started questioning the stability of South Africa. It seemed that South Africa was slipping deeper into isolation. A press release by the State Department, which deplored the violence, was met in anger by President Eisenhower, who accused the department of attacking an ally. Pretoria received an apology from Eisenhower and the Department of Defence. However, in April 1960, the UN Security Council drafted Resolution 134, insisting that South Africa abandon its apartheid policies. The USA voted in favour of the resolution, but France and Britain abstained from voting.¹¹¹ The Kennedy administration's approach to apartheid was 'benign neglect'. Even though JF Kennedy overtly opposed apartheid and concentrated on improving human rights, especially African-American civil rights and African independence, the young president took little action against Pretoria. Martin Luther King met with Kennedy in the Oval Office in 1962 to request sanctions, but Kennedy declined, considering the value of South Africa's position in the Cold War. After the assassination of Kennedy, the Johnson administration continued in the Kennedy administration's footsteps, opposing apartheid openly, but avoiding any direct action.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ R. Nixon, *Selling apartheid: South Africa's global propaganda war*, pp. 14-15; Thomson, pp. 17-20; Guelke, pp. 179-180; Giliomee & Mbenga, p. 313.

¹¹¹ Nixon, pp. 32-33; Thomson, pp. 28-29; Guelke, p. 649.

¹¹² Nixon, p. 46; Thomson, p. 31; Melvyn, p. 390.

The discourse of the Cold War and the threat of communism did offer some key advantages to the NP. Yet, it became more difficult for Western countries to associate themselves with a racist regime. The advantages of the Cold War could not thwart mounting international condemnation.

2.4. INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION

International affairs were important features during the apartheid era. Even though South African prime ministers sometimes preferred isolation, interaction with external communities was essential for the import and export of commodities. Security from the Western powers was imperative to fend off the communism threat. South Africa's seclusion was undesired by Western powers, since the country was of strategic and economic importance. As time progressed and stricter apartheid policies were implemented, it became a propaganda liability for Western powers to form a solid alliance or being associated with South Africa. The emergence of new independent countries in Africa and Asia were committed to root out inequality. Worldwide public opinion became more critical to the nationalist state bent on racial discrimination.¹¹³

Disputes between the UN and South Africa over human rights violations and the question of South-West Africa (modern day Namibia) started in 1946. Pretoria's treatment of Indians in South Africa forced Indian delegates to register a complaint with the UN for the first General Assembly. Smuts attempted to negotiate political representation for Indians, but his party was replaced by the NP in 1948. The NP's response to India's criticism and the intervention of the UN was that the UN had no authority to interfere with domestic affairs. India argued that the issue was a threat to international security. However, many Western countries disagreed that South Africa's race relations placed international peace in peril, but agreed that discussions should continue over Pretoria's segregation policies. The Defiance Campaign in 1952 prompted thirteen Arab and Asian countries to instigate a new resolution against Pretoria's apartheid ideology. The USA succeeded in protecting Pretoria from UN scrutiny by raising concerns of human rights violations occurring in most member states, including the USA. By

¹¹³ Thomson, p. 23; Melvyn, pp. 478-479; South African History Online, "South Africa's foreign relationships during apartheid, 1948", <<http://www.sahistory.org.za/20th-century-south-africa/south-africas-foreign-relations-during-apartheid-1948>>, *s.a.* (Accessed on January 21, 2016).

the late 1950s, the USA was obligated to approach South Africa more critically due to the civil rights movements at home, and African countries gaining independence.¹¹⁴

South Africa received a great deal of unfavourable global attention after the Sharpeville Massacre. Before 1960, resolutions were generally confined to verbal indictments which had no concrete impact on Pretoria. On 1 April 1960, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 134, which deplored the Nationalist government's apartheid policies and requested them to abandon apartheid. For the first time, the General Assembly favoured action against South Africa. More African countries hostile to South Africa joined the UN at this time. Even Pretoria's paramount ally, the USA, approved the resolution. Even though the USA's rhetoric changed in regard to apartheid, economic and strategic cooperation between Pretoria and the USA continued. The General Assembly considered South Africa a threat to international peace in 1962, and implored optional sanctions. The UN considered sanctions as a peaceful means of persuading Pretoria to abort racial segregation, but Pretoria's main trading partners, the USA and Britain, declined the approval of sanctions.¹¹⁵

Pretoria remained undeterred by private persuasions and external public condemnation to change its policies. In order to compensate for the requests by civil rights movements and African and Asian countries, the Kennedy administration decided to impose an arms embargo against Pretoria. This was done to promote an image of America as taking the lead in the fight for freedom and democracy. On 7 August 1963, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 181, prohibiting states to provide South Africa with military arms, ammunition, and vehicles. The arms embargo was essentially a political compromise. The USA found the embargo undesirable. The arms embargo was centred on a voluntary basis. Britain and the USA's embargo only applied to weaponry that imposed apartheid and not weapons used to defend the nation from external attacks, such as tanks and submarines. Only in 1977 did the arms embargo become mandatory.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Thomson, pp. 24-27; Wilson & Thomson, pp. 512-513.

¹¹⁵ Wilson & Thomson, pp. 512-514; South African History Online, "South Africa's foreign relationships during apartheid, 1948"; United Nations, "The United Nations: Partner in the struggle against apartheid", <<http://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/apartheid.shtml>>, *s.a.* (Accessed on January 12, 2016); Thomson, pp. 28-29; C. Barnes, "International isolation and pressure for change in South Africa", <http://www.cr.org/downloads/Accord%2019_8International%20isolation%20and%20pressure%20for%20change%20in%20South%20Africa_2008_ENG.pdf>, *s.a.* (Accessed on January 14, 2016).

¹¹⁶ Wilson & Thompson, pp. 514-515; Thomson, pp. 35-38; United Nations, "The United Nations: Partner in the struggle against apartheid".

Another effective means of making white South Africans aware of international disapproval over apartheid, were cultural, sports, and educational boycotts. These boycotts displayed global support for black people. In 1965, British University personnel started academic boycotts. The aim was to deny South African scholars international research and cooperation opportunities or publishing papers. South Africa was excluded from cultural activities such as music performances and art exhibitions, unless multi-racial audiences could attend. Sports boycotts started having an effect during the 1960s. Sport was an important activity for white South Africans, and sports boycotts most notably increased awareness of international condemnation among whites. South Africa was banned from the 1963 Tokyo Olympic Games and fifty countries refused to participate in the 1968 Mexican Olympic Games should South Africa entered. Needless to say, South Africa was excluded from the Olympics. The rugby tour to Britain in 1969 – 1970 was disrupted by Anti-Apartheid Movements (AAM). South Africa's segregated sports policy resulted in more isolation in different categories of sport, such as cricket and tennis. On 2 December 1968, the General Assembly called for governments and associations to break off cultural, sporting, and educational exchanges with South Africa or any institution that supported apartheid.¹¹⁷

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was formed on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (at present called the African Union - AU). A mission of the OAU was to assist liberation struggles on the African continent and restore African dignity. After the formation of the OAU, the organisation moved against South Africa and the Portuguese colonial colonies. By 1968, the OAU largely failed to change the situation in Southern Africa and persuading the superpowers in the UN. In April 1969, officials from fourteen African states assembled in Zambia to converse and sign the Lusaka Manifesto. The manifesto called for the abolishment of apartheid and declared that African states should be governed by the black majority. The states signing the manifesto preferred to negotiate with Pretoria instead of using force. Both the OAU and UN accepted the Lusaka Manifesto. The exiled ANC and PAC were unhappy with the manifesto, because it was drafted without their perceptions on the matter. Pretoria's rejection of the Lusaka Manifesto led to the Mogadishu Declaration in 1971, which approved the use of force to achieve liberation.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ South African History Online, "South Africa's foreign relationships during apartheid, 1948"; Barnes, "International isolation and pressure for change in South Africa".

¹¹⁸ Wilson & Thompson, p. 496; Pretorius, p. 350; South African History Online, "South Africa's foreign relationships during apartheid, 1948".

The presence of AAM was a thorn in the side of the NP government. The most notable AAM came from the USA, United Kingdom (UK), Scandinavian countries, and Holland. AAM worked with organisations such as the exiled ANC, the UN, and allied governments. The goal was to create a worldwide consciousness of apartheid and, through unified campaigns, crush South Africa's economy and persistence to continue racial discrimination by means of sanctions, boycotts, and propaganda. For instance, on 25 February 1960, 15 000 people rallied at Trafalgar Square for a march against apartheid. As the 1960s progressed, the efforts of the AAM increased in scope and latitude.¹¹⁹

South Africa did not stand idly by as international pressure continued to accumulate. In cooperation with pro-apartheid organisations, they hit back with propaganda and ruthless diplomacy.

2.5. SOUTH AFRICA'S EARLY PROPAGANDA EFFORTS

In the 1940s, there was little concern for concentrated propaganda initiatives with respect to other nationalities, as most of Africa and Asia were still colonised by European countries replicating closely related racial policies to South Africa. Even the USA was still a largely segregated society, especially in the south. However, the NP government still utilised its propaganda agency, the Information Office, to spread their message, particularly to the USA and the UK. The Information Office was established during the Second World War and later became a sub-department for External Affairs. The Information Office was tasked to distribute information about South Africa and the NP; bolster the representation of the country; and dissuade apartheid critics. Maintaining relationships with the USA and UK was essential in order to deter the hostile UN General Assembly from intervening in Pretoria's affairs. The Information Office received a budget of \$146 000 to spread booklets and other propaganda material.¹²⁰

One of the main themes exploited by South African propaganda was the threat of Communism. The statement usually was, 'if the white government should fall to communist black rule, the Western allies would lose a crucial strategic and economic associate'. In 1950, much to the NP's convenience, they acquired an ultraconservative anti-communist black

¹¹⁹ Pretorius, p. 386; South African History Online, "The British Anti-Apartheid Movement", <<http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/british-anti-apartheid-movement>>, s.a. (Accessed on January 24, 2016).

¹²⁰ J. Siko, *Inside South Africa's foreign policy: Diplomacy in Africa from Smuts to Mbeki*, pp. 203-204; Nixon, pp. 13-15.

American to support the apartheid regime. Max Yergan, originally a Christian missionary, came to South Africa to improve the lives of Africans. During his time in South Africa, he would meet renowned individuals such as the future president general of the ANC, Alfred Xuma. Yergan resorted to communism after realising that his efforts to change the conditions of black people were futile. He and co-founder Paul Robeson started the anti-colonialist organisation, Council on African Affairs (CAA), which were committed to fight for human rights in Africa. The CAA received attention from both Pretoria and the Federal Investigation Bureau (FBI). Under government surveillance and fearing prosecution for his involvement with communism, Yergan left the communist movement and became an American patriot. Until his death in 1975, Yergan would venture on tours to South Africa, the UK, and the USA to promote apartheid as a system that restored the dignity and respect of black people.¹²¹

In 1955, Strijdom selected South Africa's most experienced foreign diplomat, Eric Louw, as Minister of Foreign Affairs. His assignment was not only to represent South African diplomacy, but also to combat the negative image of apartheid. Louw was well-known within the NP and abroad. He had a brusque approach to diplomacy, was a proud Afrikaner, and was loyal to the apartheid regime. Louw was committed to defend South Africa against foreign criticism. He secured additional funds and staff to create a better representation of South Africa. Louw was aware that the Information Office on its own would not suffice in transforming Pretoria's image abroad; therefore he enlisted the services of advertising and public relations firms. The NP government would hire six public relations firms by the late 1950s. Louw further employed the services of the short feature film distributors, Films of the Nation Inc. The film company produced movies for American viewers that depicted South Africa in a more favourable light. Various lobbying firms were also commissioned to attract American businessmen and politicians.¹²²

As previously mentioned, the Sharpeville massacre drew sharp criticism on South Africa and its apartheid policies. The government immediately defended itself through public statements and attempted to restore the impaired image of South Africa by means of a public relations campaign. High-ranking government officials were sent to European and American universities and political-social associations were defending apartheid. Louw also contributed personally to inform foreigners about the 'truth' of South Africa. Louw stated at the National

¹²¹ BlackPast.org, "Yergan, Max (1892-1975)", <<http://www.blackpast.org/aah/yergan-max-1892-1975>>, *s.a.* (Accessed on January 26, 2016); Nixon, pp. 14, 16-17, 19, 20, 42-43.

¹²² Nixon, pp. 26-28; Siko, pp. 201-203.

Press Club in Washington that Americans would be forced to take similar measurements regarding security when encountering black hostilities. When confronted by condemnation, Louw and his staff raised the dangers of communism and South Africa's strategic importance to the West.¹²³

A more discrete method was required to repair the tarnished image of South Africa. Therefore, the company Hamilton Wright Organisation (HWO) was employed by the government. The budget was \$350 000 annually and the project continued for several years. HWO had experience in public relations campaigns for unpopular countries such as Communist China. The agency wrote articles and spread pictures of smiling Africans to an estimated 24 000 newspapers in the USA and abroad. HWO produced sophisticated short propaganda films on South African mines or wildlife that were displayed at USA movie theatres and on television. Audiences were not aware that they were being exposed to South African propaganda and in 1963 this conduct clashed with USA legislation. After HWO was investigated regarding several lobbying efforts and public relations campaigns for foreign governments, they were found not guilty. However, the American public noticed the immoral demeanour of HWO. With HWO's reputation damaged, they went into decline for six years before dissolving.¹²⁴

Besides government's initiatives to fend off criticism or boosting the image of the country, South African businesses took matters into their own hands. The South African Foundation (SAF) was established in December 1959 by 25 leading businessmen, including Harry Oppenheimer from Anglo American Corporation; Piet Meiring from the Department of State Information, which was established in 1961 by Verwoerd; the mining magnate Charles Engelhard; and Eric Gallo, a businessman in the South African black music market. The foundation was led by Major-General Sir Francis de Guingand. His personal friendship with Franklin Roosevelt gave him access to some of the highest government officials in Washington DC. Engelhard also had access to high state officials and was known for influencing USA policy towards Pretoria. He managed to persuade the Kennedy administration to lend South Africa \$18.8 million dollar to help the country after the Sharpeville disinvestments.¹²⁵ The objective of the SAF was to "formulate and express a coordinated view on macro-economics and other national issues and to promote the interest

¹²³ Nixon, pp. 33-34.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-38; S.M. Cutlip, *The unseen power: Public relations. A history*, pp. 85-87.

¹²⁵ Nixon, pp. 29-30, 40-41; Siko, p. 139.

and further growth of South Africa's private sector" and to present "a true picture of South Africa to the world."¹²⁶

Both Afrikaans and English speakers resided within the SAF. The businessmen functioned separately from the government and often criticised it, but the ideology of apartheid was never censured. The SAF had contact with high public government officials in the USA and UK, whereas South African diplomats struggled to access these officials. The foundation funded expensive trips for American and European businessmen so that they could form a convinced opinion about South Africa's economic advantages and take their favourable perceptions back home. By 1963, the SAF had representatives in various capitals such as London, Washington DC, Paris, and Bonn. The SAF successfully forestalled the implementation of sanctions promoted by the AAM.¹²⁷

The 1950s and 1960s pitted African Nationalism against Afrikaner Nationalism, freedom and equality versus oppression and separation. Caught between the old colonial world and the independence movements across the globe, South Africa's obstruction to world peace quickly escalated into international affairs. Even though Pretoria enjoyed alliances with Western powers, their days were numbered as more countries developed a hostile stance against apartheid. Both the freedom movement and the NP understood the importance of international support for their cause. The conditions before the 1970s set the stage for an all-out propaganda war between those who supported and opposed apartheid. The next chapter will view the formation and the start of South Africa's ultimate propaganda war.

¹²⁶ L. Gerber, *Friends and influences: The diplomacy of private enterprise*, p. 17.

¹²⁷ J. Burgess, *et al.*, *The great white hoax: South Africa's international propaganda machine*, pp. 24-25; Siko, pp. 139-140; Nixon, pp. 29-30, 42.

3. THE NEED FOR A PROPAGANDA WAR: THE ORIGINS

By 1970, South Africa managed to avoid severe sanctions although international hostilities continued to escalate. During this time, Prime Minister B.J. Vorster took notice of Pretoria's ever growing isolation. To counter South Africa's increasing seclusion, Vorster converted the Department of Information into a state propaganda organ. Early efforts to influence African, European, and North American countries through hidden diplomacy and propaganda initiatives, would later form the foundation of South Africa's ultimate propaganda war. This chapter explores South Africa's situation internally and externally during the early 1970s; provides a short profile on key role players who had a direct impact on the discourse of the Department of Information; analyses Eschel Rhoodie's propaganda strategy and the challenges that confronted Pretoria; examines the Department of Information's pre-info diplomacy and propaganda campaigns; and lastly, examines the clandestine meetings that approved South Africa's propaganda war.

3.1. SOUTH AFRICA AND THE EARLY 1970s

In 1970 the NP, under the leadership of Vorster, entered its third decade of power. The priority for the Vorster administration was the rapid implementation of Verwoerd's segregation policies, with Vorster determined to set up the homelands as sovereign states. Transkei was the only self-governing homeland when Vorster came into power in 1966. The South African economy was booming in 1970 and living standards for whites continued to rise. White dominance seemed secured for the time being, with the ANC, PAC, and other forms of black resistance crushed. Enjoying the illusion of peace and prosperity in the 1970s, Alex Mouton commented "for the overwhelming majority of whites, South Africa was the country of sun, rugby and 'braaivleis'."¹²⁸ An area of concern for whites was the intensification of sport boycotts. Verwoerd banned the mixed-race New Zealand rugby team from competing in South Africa, resulting in resentment from sporting bodies. Vorster proved to be much more pragmatic than his predecessor. In order to ward off increasing international pressure, Vorster introduced new policies to the caucus. The new sport and African 'détente'¹²⁹ policies instigated more friction between the 'Verkramptes' and 'Verligtes'.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ A. Mouton, "Reform from within", *Historia* 45(1), May 2000, p. 169.

¹²⁹ The outward policy of the South African government towards countries in Africa will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

¹³⁰ *Nat80's*, 1982.5, p. 3; Pretorius, pp. 349-350; Thomson, pp. 64-65; Mouton, p. 169; South African History Online, "South Africa's foreign relations during apartheid, 1948".

During Vorster's first term in office, skirmishes between the 'Verligtes' and 'Verkramptes' would escalate. Their battles would mainly be waged through Afrikaans newspapers. The 'Verkramptes' preferred isolation and believed that interaction between black and white should remain minimal, fearing the disintegration of 'Afrikanership'. They felt that changes in Verwoerd's traditional policies would lead to the downfall of the NP. On the other hand, the 'Verligtes' viewed the conservative Afrikaners as a far greater threat to Afrikaner Nationalism. To them, interaction with other races and nationalities offered more advantages. The 'Verkrampte' group was influenced by Dr Albert Hertzog, Dr Piet Meyer, and Dr Andries Treurnicht, while the 'Verligte' group was led by Piet Cillié and Schalk Pienaar. Vorster viewed South Africa's isolation and minimal cooperation with English speakers as the downfall of the Afrikaner, but did not depart from the NP's core values, for instance that no black man would have political rights in South Africa. In 1967, Vorster announced that Pretoria would partake in international diplomacy by inviting relationships with fellow African states. In April of that year, he declared that South Africa would no longer prescribe race policies in sports to other countries. While the 'Verligte' camp rejoiced in this decision as a step to a more progressive future, the 'Verkramptes' greeted it with strong criticism.¹³¹

In response to Vorster's decision, the 'Verkrampte' group expressed their objection by instigating attacks on liberal views. During 1967, Vorster warned 'liberal hunters' to discontinue mounting suspicion on fellow Afrikaners. In August 1968, Vorster demanded loyalty from the 'Verkramptes', stating that if they did not comply, they could start looking for another political party. After Hertzog supporters disseminated letters presenting Vorster as a liberal, and Hertzog's speech opposing the relaxation of racial policies and offending English speakers, Vorster removed Hertzog, Jaap Marais, and Louis Stofberg from the cabinet in 1969. Hertzog formed the Herstigte National Party (HNP) on 28 October 1969. In a bid to crush the organisational endeavours of the HNP, Vorster moved the election from 1971 to 1970. The virulent arguing between the parties became a feature of the election campaign. The 1970 election proved to be a devastating defeat for the HNP, unable to win a single seat in parliament. Surprisingly, the liberal UP took advantage of the bickering and won more seats. After three decades in power the NP's seats decreased, leaving Vorster disappointed. Ironically, the NP lost more seats to the liberals than to the conservatives. After the elections,

¹³¹ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*..., p. 557; D. du Bruyn, & A. Wessels, "Vrees as faktor in die regse blanke politiek in Suid-Afrika: Die eerste fase van die era van volwaardige politieke partye, 1969-1975", *Journal for Contemporary History* 33(3), December 2008, pp. 24-25; Pretorius, pp. 351-352.

the rip in the NP led to Vorster focusing on Afrikaner unity and neglecting his vision of reforming policies.¹³²

Vorster's status as a leader increased during his second term in office (1970-1974). Not only did he attract support from the 'Verligtes', but also gained approval from the 'Verkrampste' camp as a result of his strict stance on state security. Security laws included the detainment of anyone suspected of being a terrorist, and offenders would only be released when the police received the answers they were seeking. The demand for the abolishment of 'Petty Apartheid'¹³³ from the increasingly liberal 'Verligtes' put strain on Vorster. Nevertheless, the popularity of the NP increased among Afrikaners and conservative English speakers. During the 1974 elections, Vorster was able to regain previously lost NP seats at the expense of the UP. In the same year the Publications Act of 1974 was introduced, allowing the government to ban unwanted books and magazines.¹³⁴

Vorster remained resolute to implement the homelands policy. The Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1971 prepared the way for the rest of the homelands to be granted self-governing power. As part of the homelands policy, the government forcefully removed entire black, white, coloured, and Asian communities. However, forced removals did not stay dormant and news soon reached the international sphere. Black people living in white South Africa were resettled in the homelands. It is estimated that 1.5 to 2 million black people were deported during the Vorster administration. When black people arrived in their homelands, they were confronted by a harsh reality of poverty, lack of housing, and unemployment. The surplus of inactive black people living in the homelands was a massive burden on the homeland's economy. By 1972, only 85 444 jobs were created in the homelands. The homelands became dependent on money from the government. In short, the homelands became a dumping ground for cheap black labour. In the following decade the South African black population would increase by 57%. Black people were able to exercise political rights in homelands with little power, subservient to white South Africa.¹³⁵

¹³² Pretorius, pp. 351-352; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, pp. 557-558; Du Bruyn & Wessels, pp. 25-27; *Nat80's*, 1982.5, p. 3; J. Barber, "Afrikanerdom in disarray", *The World Today* 38(7/8), July-August 1982, p. 288.

¹³³ 'Petty Apartheid' was segregation policies that denied certain races to use public facilities. About Education, "Grand Apartheid", <<http://africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheidterms/fl/Grand-Apartheid.htm>>, *s.a.* (Accessed on March 3, 2016).

¹³⁴ Du Bruyn, & Wessels, p. 31; Pretorius, pp. 352-255; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, p. 551; P. Fourie, "n Terugkeer na die onderdrukking van vryheid van spraak? Ooreenkomste tussen die apartheidsregering(s) en die ANC se optrede teen die media", *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe* 49(1), March 2009, p. 67.

¹³⁵ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, pp. 561-562; Pretorius, pp. 355-357; Saunders, pp. 425-426, 430.

Few white people expected black resistance in the early 1970s. Even though the insufficiently funded ANC was effectively nullified, they remained devoted to isolate South Africa from international diplomacy. Internally, black homeland leaders accepted white domination, except for Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the KwaZulu homeland. The rise of the BCM fostered a younger generation of confident black opposition leaders on campuses and in schools. From January to March 1973 black labourers, unsatisfied with their exploitive working conditions, started a series of strikes in the Durban area. These protests soon made its way to the rest of South Africa. In total, there were 160 strikes attended by 61 000 black workers. The strikes resulted in the formation of African trade unions. General support for the BCM among non-whites, together with the strikes, served as a warning for the Nationalist government about impending mass resistance. The strikes unnerved the white population and continued to escalate until the Soweto Uprising in 1976.¹³⁶

In the international realm, South Africa maintained good relationships with Western countries due to Vorster's successful diplomacy strategies. Vorster viewed international cooperation as key to dealing with the threat of communism and it was important for him to be associated with the 'Christian Western' civilization. Pretoria had strong links with Britain, France, Portugal, and the USA. Britain remained a strong political and economic partner, despite some discomfort within the British government. France traded military equipment and nuclear technology to South Africa in exchange for uranium. South Africa's relationship with Portugal's Marcelo Caetano government relied on projects protecting white power. South Africa also formed ties with other countries experiencing isolation and irrational attitudes from western dogma, such as Greece, Paraguay, Taiwan, and Iran. For example, Taiwan provided military equipment and training. Pretoria also established bonds with Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, inter alia to make them dependent on the South African economy.¹³⁷

Keeping close ties with the USA was vital to Vorster. In 1969, South Africa obtained an important ally in the White House. Richard Nixon instated a policy toward South Africa that invited negotiation and collaboration as a means of transformation. The Nixon administration condemned apartheid in public, but in reality relaxed economical restrictions and political isolation. By the end of 1973, USA investments increased from \$964 million to \$1.4 billion. The phrase 'the whites are here to stay' from a leaked document in 1969, gave the impression that the USA was in favour of the apartheid regime. This document drew strong criticism both

¹³⁶ Pretorius, p. 354; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, pp. 563-564.

¹³⁷ Pretorius, pp. 354, 369; Siko, pp. 20-23.

domestically and internationally. In 1972, Nixon became involved in the Watergate Scandal and was forced to resign in 1973. His successor, Gerald Ford, maintained a good relationship with South Africa.¹³⁸

Although South Africa successfully silenced internal opposition, it was problematic to keep external opposition quiet. AAM activities intensified in the 1970s. In Britain, the AAM called for economic sanctions and boycotts on South African goods. In 1970, they successfully stopped the all-white SA national cricket team from competing in Britain, which effectively promoted the AAM's efforts. Propaganda initiatives from the AAM was also strengthened by the *Anti-Apartheid News* circulating 7 000 copies per month. The USA was not excluded from AAM groups applying pressure on Pretoria and its associates. In 1972, the American Committee on Africa set up office in Washington DC. This enabled the committee to have institutional power in the capital. In the same year, the Interfaith Committee on Corporate Responsibility was established to target USA businesses interacting with South Africa.¹³⁹

A threat to Pretoria was the rise of black representatives in the USA Congress. Nine black congress members joined to form the Congressional Black Caucus in 1971 to apply pressure on Pretoria. Charlie Rangel threatened to cut the funding of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for their involvement in South Africa. The most prominent black man in Congress applying pressure on South Africa was Charles Diggs, who was selected as Chairman for the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee. Diggs raised the issue of American investment in South Africa during a range of public hearings. As a result, Diggs was banned from entering South Africa. Despite the actions of the Congressional Black Caucus, the USA Senate was reluctant to take any legislative action. However, AAM was a factor in the removal of South African representation from the UN in 1974.¹⁴⁰ In April 1974, a coup d'état in Portugal resulted in the independence of Angola and Mozambique. After independence the two countries were under the control of communist movements, resulting in South Africa losing its buffer zone against the communist threat. The

¹³⁸ Nixon, pp. 53-55; Thomson, pp. 63-64; J. Church, "Access to information: The hallmark of democracy with reference to the protection of information bill and the historical incidents", *Fundamina* 17(2), 2011, pp. 38-39.

¹³⁹ J. Sanders, *South Africa and the international media 1972-1979: A struggle for representation*, pp. 87-89; Nixon, pp. 58-59.

¹⁴⁰ Nixon, pp. 59-60; Thomson, pp. 65-66; Sanders, pp. 87-89.

events in Portugal placed South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in a new strategic position.¹⁴¹

As the decade progressed, AAM groups gained more support for disinvestment in South Africa. Against this background, it was imperative for Vorster to assemble a propaganda crew to fight for the hearts and minds of the masses.

3.2. THE INFO-CAST

The Department of Information, previously known as State Information, originated from a supplementary subdivision in the Department of Foreign Affairs. Its director, Piet Meiring, reported to Foreign Secretary Gerhard Jooste and Minister Eric Louw. On 27 November 1961, Verwoerd converted State Information into an independent department headed by politician-diplomat Wentzel (Wennie) du Plessis. Respected for his determination and intelligence, Du Plessis transformed State Information into a reputable department. Different opinions regarding the best means to manage international pressure generated friction between the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information. Foreign Affairs tended to avoid confrontation, while Information craved altercations with South Africa's foes. Du Plessis was followed by Brand Fourie, a man who Vorster considered an expert in foreign affairs. After Fourie, Gerald Barrie became Secretary of Information in 1966.¹⁴²

Individuals contributing to the propaganda war consisted of both high-ranking officials and public servants. This subchapter will provide the reader with the profile and traits of individual personalities who played a decisive role in the Information Scandal. In addition to everything that has already been said about Vorster, he was the force that made the propaganda war possible. Except for Vorster's position in the approval of a propaganda war, he also actively participated in some areas of the propaganda campaign. Vorster was exceptional in delivering speeches and made an impressive impact on Western leaders, who regarded him as honest, reliable, and straightforward. Another awe-inspiring feature was Vorster's ability to cultivate favour with international and English newspapers. Except for meeting frequently with newspapers, he also made himself approachable, unlike other

¹⁴¹ Du Bruyn & Wessels, pp. 35-36; Nixon, pp. 59-60; Thomson, pp. 65-66; Sanders, pp. 87-89.

¹⁴² L. de Villiers, *Secret information*, pp. 17-18, 22-23, 38. D. Geldenhuys, *The diplomacy of isolation: South African foreign policy making*, p. 107.

ministers. The *Randy Daily Mail* described Vorster as one of the most popular Prime Minister in the history of South Africa.¹⁴³

In 1968, Vorster appointed Cornelius (Connie) Petrus Mulder as Minister of Information. Born in 1925, he obtained his Doctorate degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. After completing his studies, Mulder entered a career of politics. Serving as the mayor of Randfontein, Mulder's status increased within the NP and he ascended through the party's hierarchy. He was an expert negotiator and public communicator. Mulder's ability to negotiate with 'natives' earned him the position of Minister of Bantu Administration (later renamed Plural Relations). This expertise allowed Mulder to explain South Africa's 'separate development' policy to foreign audiences. Mulder emanated a conservative image which appealed to whites, especially Afrikaners, who were confident about his leadership. Mulder also served as a board member for the Perskor newspapers in Transvaal. His reputation made him the second most influential person in the NP after Vorster. During the time, ministers from the Transvaal province were expected to automatically become prime ministers, since Transvaal offered more constituencies.¹⁴⁴ Hence, Mulder was referred to as the 'crown prince'. Mulder explained the disadvantages of being proclaimed the crown prince to his son, Pieter Mulder, by comparing his situation to a circus, "you are forced to walk on a rope in the air with a spotlight directed at you, while in the shadows, there are men waiting to push you off."¹⁴⁵

Three years after Connie Mulder was appointed as Minister of Information, he sallied forth on an excursion to witness international opinion concerning South Africa. Displeased with the unfavourable attitude of international newspapers, political debates, and calls for sanctions against South Africa, he set out to enlist a crew eager to combat these views aggressively. Mulder felt that Foreign Affairs and his own Department of Information were incompetent to defend his country. Secretary Gerald Barrie was out of place in the Department of Information. He completed his studies in Agriculture and lacked the requirements of an Information officer. Barrie had no experience with newspapers and never served abroad as a representative. Mulder considered Barrie to be old-fashioned. Information projects were merely serving the tourist industry, with the production of expensive films about Khoisan paintings and wild flowers in Africa. Mulder required staff that would be

¹⁴³ Siko, p. 78; Giliomee, *The Afrikaner...*, p. 551; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1983.9.12, p. 6.

¹⁴⁴ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; *Evening Post*, 1978.12.12, p. 9.

¹⁴⁵ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8.

effective in persuading international audiences about South Africa's 'progressive' policies. The book entitled *The Curtain Paper* fascinated Mulder. It suggested that, instead of responding to opponents' attacks, South Africa should rather retaliate with a counter propaganda offensive.¹⁴⁶

Mulder met the author of the book, Dr Eschel Mostert Rhodie, for the first time in 1970 at his home in the Netherlands. Rhodie, born on 11 July 1933, played provincial rugby and pursued academics at the University of Pretoria after he left school. He obtained a PhD in Philosophy and his second doctorate in Political Science at the University of Leiden. Rhodie briefly worked for the *Vaderland* newspaper before being employed at the Department of Information. The young Rhodie only desired to see the world. In 1957, Rhodie was posted in Australia where he worked for three years. In the early 1960s, Rhodie befriended an operative of the USA's CIA, code-named 'Brownie'. Brownie shared with Rhodie secret CIA tactics used in foreign countries to manipulate audiences through the media and political manoeuvring. Rhodie's propaganda methods were influenced by Brownie. When Rhodie returned to South Africa in 1965, he was sophisticated and experienced in the news media, people skills, institutions, and politicians. While posted in the USA in 1966, Rhodie became increasingly frustrated with South Africa's reluctance to aggressively defend the country. In the next year, Rhodie was transferred to Holland, where he realised that the best way to spread messages, was to influence the owners of newspapers and magazines.¹⁴⁷

Since their first meeting, Rhodie and Mulder instinctively clicked. Mulder was impressed by Rhodie's high-powered, persuasive, and extrovert personality. Both men shared the same outlook, namely that Foreign Affairs and the Department of Information was not doing enough to counter negative views. In 1971, Mulder appointed Rhodie as Deputy Editor in Chief of the government 'front' magazine *To The Point*. Nine months later, Mulder approached Rhodie to discuss the new unorthodox direction the Department of Information would be taking. Mulder believed that Barrie, as Secretary, was not a suitable candidate for implementing this new approach and he would rather promote him to Auditor-General, where he could exercise his administrative proficiency. Mulder requested Rhodie to take the lead

¹⁴⁶ E. Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 40-41; Nixon, pp. 57-59, 61; De Villiers, pp. 38, 45.

¹⁴⁷ M. Rees & C. Day, *The story of the Information Scandal*, pp. 160-166; *The Citizen*, 1979.6.20, p. 2.

in the Department of Information. Rhodie consulted with his wife, Katie, who implored him to deny the offer.¹⁴⁸ Rhodie responded:

“If you worked and slaved for sixteen years in a department, seeing how men sleep at their desks, read paperbacks and sneaked off home an hour early every day because there was no work, and that at a time when South Africa was crying to heaven for a massive public information programme abroad, what would you done if you were an idealist.”¹⁴⁹

In September 1972, Rhodie became Secretary of Information at the age of 38. His appointment from the ‘outside’ over more senior officials caused controversy. The Civil Service Commission recommended an administrative official. Rhodie’s appointment was taken to cabinet, where it was decided that his media expertise was required for the position of secretary. Barrie was disappointed in Mulder’s selection of Rhodie, a man who criticised his Information projects. Barrie would keep this grudge hidden until the right opportunity presented itself.¹⁵⁰

Secretary Rhodie appointed his old colleague and friend, Lourens Erasmus Smit (LES) de Villiers. Born in 1933, De Villiers gained experience as a journalist working for the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and national newspapers. He worked for an oil company as public relations officer before entering the service of State Information under Piet Meiring. De Villiers was posted in Canada, where he faced infuriating newspaper articles on Pretoria’s policies. Even though De Villiers was experienced in propaganda, Canadians still remained largely hostile. In 1968, De Villiers was appointed as Director of the South African Information Services in New York. In the USA, De Villiers formed connections with politicians, media groups, and businessmen. He was the most experienced of all the foreign Information officers. Since 1967, the two junior men always strived for jurisdiction over the Department of Information, and by the end of 1972, Rhodie transferred and promoted De Villiers to Deputy-secretary of Special Projects.¹⁵¹

Vorster’s old friend, General ‘Tall Hendrik’ van den Bergh, would play a vital role in the affairs of the Department of Information. Both men were members of the Ossewa-Brandwag

¹⁴⁸ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 74-76; Rees & Day, pp. 160, 165; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8.

¹⁴⁹ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 76.

¹⁵⁰ Nixon, p. 61; *The Citizen*, 1980.5.15, p. 4; *Die Vaderland*, 1979.7.3, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ Archive for Contemporary Affairs (ARCA), “*Die Transvaler/Oggendblad*, 1979.6.5: The Erasmus Commission of Inquiry, Intermediate and Supplementary report into alleged irregularities in the former Department of Information”, P 58 – *J. Basson Collection*, p. 8; De Villiers, pp. 20, 22, 25-26, 31, 36-37, 47; Nixon, p. 61.

movement and both were detained during the Second World War for their opposition to joining the war. During the 1960s Vorster and Van den Bergh, as Chief of Security Police, obliterated black resistance. Prime Minister Vorster established the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) in 1966 with Van den Bergh as Secretary. The mandate of BOSS was to keep track of threats, collect and evaluate national security intelligence. Van den Bergh was a powerful individual feared by many. He defended the Apartheid regime through torture, blackmail and a band of spies that were willing to neutralise enemies if required. The general was Vorster's trusted advisor, earning him the reputation of the shadowy figure that exerted power behind the throne. A special relationship developed between Mulder, Rhoodie, and Van den Bergh. Rhoodie and Van den Bergh were committed to support Mulder as the future prime minister.¹⁵²

The Minister of Finance was keen on fuelling the propaganda war through the South African treasury. Nicolaas Johannes Diederichs, known in international business circles as 'Dr Gold', was a radical Afrikaner nationalist. Diederichs was chairman of the Broederbond and the Reddingsdaadbond, which strived for the economic welfare of Afrikaners. From 1953 onwards, he served as Member of Parliament in numerous portfolios. He retired in 1975, but was elected ceremonial State President until his death in August 1978. Diederichs' successor as Minister of Finance was Senator Owen Horwood, who would continue to provide funds for secret projects.¹⁵³

Connie Mulder's main political adversary, Pieter Willem Botha, funded the propaganda campaign through the budget of the Defence Department. Former Prime Minister Malan was impressed with the 20-year-old student from the Free State and employed P.W. Botha as a party organiser in the Cape region. The NP appointed P.W. Botha as a Union Information Officer in 1946, with one of his main duties to circulate NP propaganda. P.W. Botha used his experience in journalism to harass political antagonists. He became a Member of Parliament in 1948 and would serve in various portfolios before he was appointed as Minister of Defence in April 1966. In the same year, P.W. Botha became the leader of the NP in the Cape Province as well as a member in the Board of Directors of Perskor's rivals, the Nasionale

¹⁵² De Villiers, pp. 76-77; Rees & Day, p. 181; M. Braid, "Obituary: Hendrik van den Bergh", <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-hendrik-van-den-bergh-1246509.html>>, 1997.8.21. (Accessed on March 8, 2016); South African History Online, "The South African Bureau of State Security (BOSS) is established", <<http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/south-african-bureau-state-security-boss-established>>, *s.a.* (Accessed on March 8, 2016).

¹⁵³ Remembered.co.za, "Nicolaas Johannes Diederichs (1903-1978)", <<http://remembered.co.za/obituary/view/88>>, *s.a.* (Accessed on March 5, 2016); Rees & Day, p. 169.

Pers (Naspers). P.W. Botha was more ‘verlig’ than his rival, Mulder. Botha performed outstandingly at organising and administrative duties. He had a tough and powerful personality and his fits of anger were legendary.¹⁵⁴

Other noteworthy Information officers included Dr Denys Rhoodie and Johannes Frederick Waldeck. Eschel Rhoodie appointed his brother to the position of Deputy Secretary in the Department of Information to assist him with propaganda operations. Waldeck was employed in the Department of Information in 1964 and in 1975 he was promoted to Deputy Secretary of Administration.¹⁵⁵

The actions and visions of key role players had implications for the Department of Information prior to the actual propaganda war. Mulder’s agenda to protect South Africa and to remain a candidate for the prime ministership formed new sturdy alliances, but also nurtured hidden enemies. *The Paper Curtain* made an undeniable impression on Mulder, but how did Rhoodie intend to win the propaganda war?

3.3. ESCHEL RHOODIE’S APPROACH TO PROPAGANDA

Rhodie’s time abroad in Australia, Holland, and the USA afforded him the expertise to wage an unorthodox propaganda war. South Africa was not involved in a direct war, but rather in a ‘Battle of Words’ which would severely affect Pretoria’s survival if the fight was to be lost. Attacks by the international media, Western churches, and third world countries to isolate and boycott Pretoria, prevented South Africa from reaching its maximum potential in trade, technological advances, and ultimately its ‘rightful’ place on the continent.¹⁵⁶ James Sanders describes Rhodie’s book, promoting him as the only individual capable of taking on the mammoth task of implementing a propaganda war, as:

“The Paper Curtain was an orthodox work of propaganda in that it lacked the degree of objectivity which would have balanced analytic judgement possible. However, for all its contradictions, Rhodie’s book was a cunning polemic which managed to utilize the Afrikaner distrust of an uncontrolled media, while suggesting that resistance to the

¹⁵⁴ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.1.27, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ ARCA, “*Die Transvaler/Oggendblad*, 1979.6.5...”, P 58 – *Basson Collection*, p. 27; *Cape Herald*, 1978.12.2, p. 17.

¹⁵⁶ *The Citizen*, 1977.6.2, p. 10; E. Rhodie, *The Paper Curtain*, p. 7; Rees & Day, p. 29.

imagined misrepresentations was possible if the will, the funding and the ideas could be found.¹⁵⁷

Before Rhodie could prepare a *modus operandi* for an information campaign, he needed to recognise the challenges Pretoria faced both internally and externally to get its views across. After fourteen years of experience under various ambassadors, Rhodie criticised the Department of Foreign Affairs for having no coherent strategy in place. Foreign Affairs stagnated mainly to official diplomacy with governments and avoided other duties such as addressing the foreign media, churches, students, politicians, and AAM. He was dissatisfied with foreign diplomats' negative or hostile attitude towards the NP and South Africa, especially the High Commissioner, Anthony Hamilton, who was posted in Australia. The reluctance of private enterprises to financially support the South African cause disappointed Rhodie. He believed businesses should back the SAF and established a book foundation that would promote publications in South Africa.¹⁵⁸

Rhodie accused the Department of Information of lacking a formal information programme and the department of being ill equipped to deal with the psychological and propaganda warfare of the Cold War.¹⁵⁹ The department served as a defence mechanism, but was understaffed and had no budget for extensive campaigns. Government funding was minimal compared to the information budgets of other countries. For instance, the Arab States funded R20 million for public relations campaigns in the US. For the Department of Information to be effective, it had to act as a private agency, for which it required millions. Another serious problem was the use of ineffective white propaganda, such as films on South Africa's environment. The editor of *South African Panorama*,¹⁶⁰ Johan Beaumont, resigned in 1968 because the majority of editorial material in the publication represented South Africa's case in a wrong tone and may have inflicted more damage on South Africa's image abroad.¹⁶¹

According to Rhodie, South Africa was externally confronted by journalistic racism, reverse political discrimination, and double standards, with South Africa a scapegoat for the domestic problems of other countries. Journalistic racism is a Western notion of human dignity and the social well-being of black people – but not all black people, only those having contact with

¹⁵⁷ Sanders, p. 56.

¹⁵⁸ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 42-43; Rhodie, *The Paper Curtain*, pp. 188-190.

¹⁵⁹ It should be noted that some themes such as journalistic racism and reverse discrimination were also used as propaganda arguments.

¹⁶⁰ *South African Panorama* was a publication of the Department of Information. Sanders, p. 55.

¹⁶¹ Sanders, p. 55; De Villiers, p. 36; Rhodie, *The Paper Curtain*, p. 186; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 52, 58; *The Cape Times*, 1979.1.30, p. 8.

whites. He argued that black-on-black human rights violations were deliberately ignored, like the Burundi massacre in 1972 where an estimated 200 000 people were killed, while Sharpeville received more limelight. Newspapers 'guilty' of this trend included the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Observer*.¹⁶²

Eschel Rhoodie proposed the 'Paper Curtain' theory, which stated that South Africa's enemies were attempting to isolate the country by shrouding the positive aspects of life and development. The foreign media denied South Africa a favourable impression. International audiences were victims of biased mass communication and information systems that didn't allow viewers to receive 'facts' and examine it objectively, such as South Africa's socio-political factors. Unlike the Soviet Union's Iron Curtain set-up to protect itself, the 'paper curtain' was the doing of those who wanted to force reasoning with South Africa over segregation. Rhoodie maintained that those who invited dialogue through isolation were equally guilty of preventing meaningful dialogue.¹⁶³

Rhodie explained reverse discrimination as the consciousness of colour within Western countries, and South Africa drawing criticism because it had a white government. He believed if Vorster was black, the situation would have been different. In other words, South Africa was subjected to double standards, meaning that South Africa was judged in isolation and not according to the criteria for other countries. Yemen, East Germany, and North Korea also had legislation that discredited human rights. However, Rhodie mentioned that South Africa should focus on cultural differences, but instead the NP concentrated on racial differences and implemented laws affecting the dignity of 'natives', which the enemy successfully used to portray apartheid as Nazism. John Barrat, Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs, contended that South Africa was not the only country prey to double standards and that South Africa also utilised double standards for its own purposes. He explained that South Africa wanted to be treated as a third world country or a Western country, as circumstances dictated. Furthermore, Rhodie accused countries of using South Africa as a 'smoke screen' to hide their own internal problems. Many states in Asia, Latin America, and North America experienced more serious civil unrest, coups, rebellions, war, and racial problems than South Africa's domestic difficulties.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 31; *To The Point*, 1977.11.18, p. 7.

¹⁶³ Rhodie, *The Paper Curtain*, pp. 11, 81, 185; Sanders, p. 56.

¹⁶⁴ Rhodie, *The Paper Curtain*, pp. 176-177; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 32-33, 35; Sanders, p. 65; *Die Transvaler*, 1977.8.13, p. 2.

The strategy that Rhoodie had in mind for altering global attitudes towards South Africa was the utilisation of covert propaganda. Rhoodie still believed conventional methods would play an important role, but selling the policy of so-called separate development would be a strenuous task. South Africa was struggling to use official and diplomatic communication channels. Therefore, Rhoodie's objective was to reach opinion formers and decision makers across the world, induce their standpoint on South Africa, and establish a communication network through which South Africa could convey its messages and arguments. Rhoodie would use 'black' and 'grey' propaganda, hiding the true nature of the source and information from the recipients, and the messages would be disseminated by targeted politicians, religious leaders, newspapers, labour unions, anti-apartheid organisations, businessmen, and Members of Parliament. People were more likely to believe and trust a source that had no direct correlation with South Africa. Brownie, the ex-CIA operative, advised Rhoodie to befriend potential leaders early in their careers in order to have allies who could later exert influence. He also recommended the infiltration of student and political movements, rather than fighting them. Movements should basically be infiltrated, financed, and commandeered. The media is often unforgiving towards an organisation or country and it is a compelling task to escape the 'brutal-highlight syndrome', according to Brownie. The best way to ensure influence in the media was to have friendlies within the media or simply owning it. Another suggestion from Brownie was to get people involved in South Africa so that they would automatically search for facts.¹⁶⁵

Rhodie declared that *all* possible methods would be used to transfer massive volumes of positive information to people across the oceans. Propaganda methods included distributing books, magazines, and pamphlets to important individuals; press conferences, seminars, official and ministerial speeches, talks and interviews especially aimed at politicians and businessmen; advertisements through front organisations; purchasing foreign journalists; buying space to counter-argue in newspapers; pre-recorded television recordings for Western viewers; lobbying and public relations initiatives; blackmail tactics; buying or bribing goodwill or encouraging or discouraging people from doing something; internal censorship of movies, books, and radio; external censorship through pressure groups; intimidating apartheid critics; and paying for visits from foreign VIPs to South Africa. Influential foreign visitors to South Africa would be transformed into an 'informed corps' that would manipulate their

¹⁶⁵ Rees & Day, pp. 163-164, 171-172; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 58-59, 98.

governments not to introduce or to abstain from supporting punitive actions against Pretoria. Rhodie believed that these methods might be immoral, but when confronted with threats from anti-apartheid groups and organisations aiming to disrupt oil and arms trade, these schemes were justified weapons to use against those who opposed South Africa. He justified this action by pointing out that during the Second World War, successful deceit operations were praised on both sides.¹⁶⁶ With this reasoning, Rhodie claimed that he was acting to the benefit of South Africa: “National interest and national security made use of secret operations, such as we had planned and conducted, a moral imperative.”¹⁶⁷

The author, John Laurence, assisted with propaganda themes for the Department of Information in the 1960s, and in 1972 aided the UN in identifying several South African propaganda techniques which included untruths, half-truths, omissions, non-sequiturs, from the “horse’s mouth,” and red herrings. Untruths were only used occasionally and its propaganda themes were too complex to be analysed effectively because of the extensive detail; for example, the Bantu homelands were a complicated policy but in the end, the basic principle of homelands in itself were no valid argument. The most common technique employed was half-truths. This practice distorts information just as much as untruths, but won’t endanger the credibility of the propagandist when caught. Half-truths require frequent repetition of irrelevant facts and the suppression of relevant facts. For example, it is accurate to say that the Transkei homeland is the same size as Wales, but Transkei was much smaller than South Africa. Omission was the censorship of relevant facts that could reveal negative aspects of South African life. Non-sequiturs offered a plausible side-tracked answer to questions. For instance, if observers asked about the comparison between black and white incomes, they would be given an answer about the income of black people in contrast to Malawian incomes. From the horse’s mouth was a technique that involved natives claiming state propaganda to be true. This occurs when a government has complete control over a community. Red herrings were using the threat of communism as propaganda.¹⁶⁸ Rhodie referred to the communist’s plans to create a power block in Southern Africa as the “Kremlin’s blueprint.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 98-99; Rhodie, *The Paper Curtain*, p. 191; J.C. Laurence, *Race propaganda & South Africa: The manipulation of Western opinion and policies by the forces of white supremacy*, pp. 60-64.

¹⁶⁷ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 99.

¹⁶⁸ Laurence, pp. 51-54

¹⁶⁹ *The Citizen*, 1977.6.2, p. 10.

Propaganda themes by the Department of Information manifested in several arguments. A few of these arguments revolved around the homelands, for instance, you won't integrate different European countries into one single nation. The British would dislike being ruled by the Germans. The same principle applied to South Africa with all its different cultures. Other fabricated propaganda claimed that whites arrived in South Africa before black people. Some propaganda themes argued that South Africa fought besides the allies during the World Wars and the Korean War and are thus an ally to NATO. An argument regularly used by South Africa was that it did not interfere with other countries' internal policies and governments.¹⁷⁰ South Africa used many other contentions as propaganda regarding domestic and international communities.¹⁷¹

Eschel Rhoodie understood the customs of the Cold War. The War was fought in the hearts and minds of men and women. He planned his retaliation against international opposition through various experiences as an overseas diplomat. Even though Rhoodie was considered by some as too young to lead a department, he had the expertise to win an unorthodox covert propaganda war. South Africa intended to defend its national interest with every argument in its arsenal. As soon as Mulder noticed Rhoodie's ambitions, he appointed a determined Secretary to prove himself and Rhoodie started gathering the required support for an all-out Information campaign.

3.4. THE PRE-INFO PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

After returning with Barrie from their overseas expedition, Mulder was convinced that international media and propaganda were highly organised, sophisticated, and properly funded. Mulder advised Vorster to start an immediate counter-offensive, utilising the same unorthodox methods as the republic's foes. In a short period of time, Secretary Rhoodie would establish a vast network throughout the globe. The reason for Rhoodie's success was his ability to promote his ideas, even if it was a most unfavourable product – apartheid South Africa. The world became Rhoodie's chessboard.¹⁷²

Through Rhoodie's charismatic abilities and his knowledge of the value of personal contact, he managed to meet numerous key figures in different countries and cities. While stationed in Holland as an Information officer, Rhoodie interacted with several newspaper and magazine

¹⁷⁰ Laurence, pp. 77-78, 82, 156, 138; Rhoodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁷¹ Read John Laurence's book *Race propaganda & South Africa ...* for a broader scope about South Africa's propaganda themes.

¹⁷² Rees & Day, p. 187; Sanders, p. 55.

owners. He developed a personal friendship with owners like Hubert Jussen. Jussen was the director of the *Verenigde Nederlandse Uitgewery* and published *De Telegraaf* and the leading political magazine *Elseviers* from Amsterdam. After the Second World War, Jussen aided the allies with the recovery of the European Press. However, Jussen was aggravated by the leftist's domination over the media and contemplated the running of a conservative publication equivalent to *Time* and *Newsweek*. Together, Rhodie and Jussen hatched the plan of starting a conservative magazine. Rhodie organised a visit for Jussen to meet political leaders in South Africa.¹⁷³

Vorster was impressed with Jussen. Together, Mulder, Barrie, Van den Berg, and Jussen formulated a proposal for Vorster to launch an international news publication. Vorster summoned his top senior ministers, Ben Schoeman, (Minister of Transport), P.W. Botha, Diederichs, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hilgard Muller, to discuss the establishment of a front magazine. Only Schoeman was hesitant to accept cooperation with Jussen. Vorster accepted the proposal and in 1971 Rhodie named the front magazine *To The Point*. The magazine was initially financed by Jussen and various state departments, but would later be completely subsidised by the state's treasury. Barrie was left in charge of managing the administration and finances of *To The Point*, while Rhodie was briefly assigned as deputy editor to keep track of its ideological viewpoint. Later, Rhodie was replaced by former Information employee in London, John Poorter. Jan van Zyl Alberts, a Johannesburg businessman and friend of Vorster, became the Managing Director and Jussen the Chairman.¹⁷⁴

De Villiers describes *To The Point*'s main objective as "A news magazine which would provide the outside world with a balanced view of Africa and more specifically South Africa. In the process the magazine would inform not only foreigners but South Africans themselves about important local and world events in a more sober and accurate fashion than the *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Der Spiegel* or the *Economist* would or could."¹⁷⁵

To The Point was published with a similar appearance and layout as *Time*. It functioned on the basis of a subscription list, giving opinion leaders and important individuals a 'fair' view of South Africa. *To The Point* counteracted individual's 'biased' domestic press. The

¹⁷³ Rees & Day, pp. 187, 166, 165; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 74.

¹⁷⁴ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 74-75; Rees & Day, p. 167; *The Star*, 1979.1.19, p. 19; *Sunday Express*, 1979.2.4, p. 13.

¹⁷⁵ De Villiers, p. 14.

magazine, seemingly published by autonomous foreigners, was more likely to be accepted by overseas audiences. People believed they were studying a private publication, but were actually subjected to South Africa's views and ideas. The covert approach of *To The Point* would have a more profound impact than the overt *S.A. Financial* or the *Digest of South African Affairs*.¹⁷⁶

The first issue of *To The Point* was published in 1972. When Rhodie became Secretary of Information, he arranged for 500 copies to be disseminated through his department per week. Subscribers would pay \$18 for 27 issues per year. BOSS aided the magazine financially. *To The Point*'s sister magazine, *To The Point International*, with a subscription list of 30 000, was launched from printing offices in Antwerp in 1974. The content of the European version differed from *To The Point*, but still focused on African affairs regularly. Rhodie claimed that precautions were taken to keep *To The Point*'s secret safe by channelling funds through ghost and Swiss bank accounts. Yet, the Africa Bureau, an anti-apartheid group based in London, started making correlations between Rhodie as the former editor of the magazine and the current Secretary of Information. The French weekly magazine *Jeune Afrique* accused *To The Point* in 1972 of being a "Pretoria propaganda publication."¹⁷⁷

South African sports were taking a serious beating in the international realm in the 1970s. Prime Minister Norman Kirk of the Labour Government requested that the New Zealand Rugby Football Union should decline invitations from the Springbok rugby team to compete in the country. Pressure groups like Halt All Racist Tours (HALT) and Citizens Association for Racial Equality (CARE) were prepared to protest and disrupt rugby matches should the Springboks be allowed. After De Villiers received the task of creating an advertisement for New Zealand on South Africa's progress in the field of mixed sports, he and Rhodie realised that the advertisement needed to be placed under the name of an organisation or person not involved with the Department of Information. This was the perfect opportunity to establish a front organisation related to sports matters and aimed at contending with sports boycott groups. De Villiers chose the title Committee for Fairness in Sport (CFFT) as front organisation in 1973.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15; *The Star*, 1979.1.19, p. 19.

¹⁷⁷ Burgess, pp. 32, 75; De Villiers, pp. 15, 49; *Sunday Express*, 1979.1.14, p. 2; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 61.

¹⁷⁸ De Villiers, pp. 51-52; Burgess, p. 36.

De Villiers recruited his friend, Gert Wolmarans, a former sports editor of *Die Vaderland*, to act as the CFFT's chairman and public relations officer. Two days later, Wolmarans announced that Louis Luyt would become the CFFT's new chairman. Luyt was a highly-valued rugby player for the Orange Free State who was transformed from a poor railway clerk into a millionaire and business tycoon. He gained his riches by selling fertilisers and buying a brewery. Luyt, the apolitical sporting personality and multi-millionaire nominated for the *Sunday Times* Businessman of the Year Award, was the perfect candidate to lead the CFFT.¹⁷⁹

The reaction to the first advertisement published in newspapers in New Zealand and Britain at a substantial cost, was successful. Cash financing was supplied to Wolmarans and he paid for the advert. The advertisements started a debate around sporting issues and Wolmarans received positive letters from supporters. Shortly afterwards, the advertisement attracted wealthy sponsors, such as Dick Gross, Head of SA Breweries; the cricket personality and businessman, Wilf Isaacs; and the pro-golf star Gary Player.¹⁸⁰

Luyt continued to finance CFFT advertisements in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA. The CFFT was not a white-only organisation and allowed black membership. The black sports editor of *The World*, Leslie Sehume, was dismissed from his post because of his involvement with CFFT propaganda. Sehume was appointed General Secretary of the CFFT after he was sacked from his previous job. The services of the golf star Player was invaluable to the department's propaganda initiatives. Later, Player was tasked with inviting important American individuals and companies, such as McDonnell Douglas, Union Carbide, and the Bank of America, to attend golf games in South Africa. This strategy proved exceptionally popular among foreign businessmen and politicians. The response from the visitors was pro-South African letters requesting USA officials to be more lenient with policies directed towards Pretoria. Rhoodie added that "a personal invitation from Gary Player was worth more than several invitations from the foreign minister."¹⁸¹

Another target for the Department of Information was the infiltration and manipulation of Europe's media. After Mulder and Barrie returned from their trip to America, Barrie recruited

¹⁷⁹ De Villiers, p. 53; Daily Maverick, "Farewell, Louis Luyt", <<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-02-01-farewell-louis-luyt/#.VvE6NOalfM4>>, 2013.2.1. (Accessed on March 17, 2016).

¹⁸⁰ C. de Vries, *Die politieke implikasies van die "inligtingskandaal" tot en met die uittrede van Staatspresident B.J. Vorster* (Unpublished M.A. thesis), p. 35; De Villiers, p. 53; Burgess, pp. 36-37.

¹⁸¹ Burgess, pp. 36-37; Nixon, p. 65; De Vries, p. 35.

the services of Heinz Behrens. Behrens worked for the German Press Agency and was a public relations advisor. Behrens' duties involved feeding the European press pro-South African articles and gathering German journalists and politicians for fact-finding outings to South Africa. The German photographer and employee of *To The Point*, Carl Breyer, suggested managing a clandestine photo news agency. This agency fed seventy publications in Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, and France with articles and photos. Content was approved by Pretoria before it was sent to the European press. Breyer also functioned as a spy at African political meetings. This enabled him to inform the department about the attitude of the OAU and other African organisations. Breyer's salary and expenses cost the Department of Information R26 000 per annum. Rhodie considered Breyer's services worth more than buying space for advertisements in a foreign publication.¹⁸²

In France, the Department of Information acquired control over the magazine *Le Monde Moderne* which was an intellectual and conservative newspaper, but was struggling to survive. The department provided the magazine with a classified subscription list for 2 000 copies. The magazine would eventually survive on the subscription list only. Jean Vigneau, the publisher of *Le Monde Moderne*, was paid to start a study group called *The Institute for the Study of the Modern World*. The study group conducted a comprehensive analysis of the conditions in countries, including South Africa. The information gathered was sent to French politicians, newspapers, and businessmen. The ex-French diplomat, Jacques le Guebe, became a part-time lobbyist for South Africa. Le Guebe had several contacts among the French Foreign Ministry and other politicians. He organised meetings for the South African Ambassador in France, Louis Pienaar, and translated and submitted documents to the French Foreign Office.¹⁸³

In July 1973, a new mysterious organisation called the Club of Ten, emerged in the UK. The Club of Ten purchased advertising space in numerous newspapers and addressed and criticised the issue of biased reporting in the British media. For example, in August, a series of advertisements were placed in the *London Times* under the headline "Does Britain have a conscience?" This advertisement raised the question of black wages in South Africa compared to the wages of British workers in India, Hong Kong, and Africa. The Club of Ten was ostensibly sponsored and run by wealthy South African, British, and American businessmen, who were dissatisfied with double standards implemented by the media towards

¹⁸² Nixon, p. 70; Sanders, p. 55; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 61.

¹⁸³ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 62; Geldenhuys, p. 114.

South Africa. In reality, the Club of Ten was just another front organisation administered by one man, named Gerald Sparrow.¹⁸⁴

Sparrow preferred to be called Judge Sparrow, since he served as a former judge of the International Court in Bangkok. He was a conservative who wrote forty rather bizarre books, such as *A Portrait of a Butler*, *Great Traitors* and *Great Deceivers*. Rhodie first took notice of Sparrow on receiving articles from him while working as assistant editor of *To The Point*. In February 1972, the South African Tourist Corporation and the South African Airways sponsored Sparrow for a six-week trip to South Africa for writing a book on tourism. In November, Sparrow returned to South Africa with his Thai wife and was approached by Mulder who arranged a meeting between Sparrow and Rhodie. During the meeting, Rhodie explained the challenges South Africa was facing. Letters written to editors of newspapers and magazines were simply ignored and never reached the public. The only strategy that would bring forth results, was buying full-page political advertisements in international newspapers and magazines. Sparrow preferred the heading 'Friends of South Africa' for the cover, but Rhodie chose the Club of Ten because it sounded British and offered a mysterious feature that would spark interest from the public.¹⁸⁵

The Club of Ten attacked all the enemies of South Africa who practised so-called double standards. The Club especially condemned the UN and the World Council of Churches' anti-racism programmes. De Villiers wrote the advertisements and Sparrow referred them to publishers. Advertisements would be placed in British newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and *Daily Telegraph* and in international papers such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and the *Montreal Star*. Sparrow observed that newspapers were not hesitant to accept pro-South African advertisements. The Club of Ten's full-page advertisement propaganda method cost \$100 000 per year with some advertisements costing an astonishing \$16 000. The arguments and attacks by the Club of Ten gained influence when they were witnessed by large audiences and opinion makers.¹⁸⁶

The secretive Club of Ten drew attention from the British press. In 1974, the press started scrutinising the objectives and financing of the club. *The Guardian* decided to attack the Club of Ten's advertisement with an editorial in the same issue. The Department of Information

¹⁸⁴ G. Hull, "South Africa's propaganda war: A bibliographic essay", *African Study Review* 22(3), December 1979, p. 90; Burgess, pp. 54-55; Nixon, p. 66.

¹⁸⁵ De Vries, p. 38; Nixon, pp. 66-67; Burgess, p. 54; De Villiers, pp. 54-55.

¹⁸⁶ Nixon, pp. 67-68; Burgess, p. 55; De Vries, p. 38.

retaliated with an advertisement placed in the *London Observer* titled “An Analysis of Indignation”, accusing *The Guardian* of harassing South Africa. In June 1974, Adam Raphael and David Martin gathered compelling evidence connecting Sparrow to the South African government. Martin revealed a link between Sparrow and the Department of Information through Sparrow’s book, *Not What I Expected*, which reflected his visit to South Africa. The book was denied by British publishers, but would be sponsored by De Villiers. However, De Villiers denied the publishing of the book, since it had no propaganda value. Raphael exposed another link between Sparrow and the Pretoria government. A former employee at the South African embassy leaked the Club’s operations. According to the articles, the texts were written in South Africa and sent via teletype to London. Sparrow would receive the text from the South African House and a few days later the advertisement would appear in newspapers. Sparrow strongly denied any involvement with the Department of Information and the South African government.¹⁸⁷

The magnitude of the Club of Ten’s world-wide propaganda operations and its elusive financing concerned the British Foreign Office. They started an investigation into the financial source of the Club. The Minister of the British Foreign Office and anti-apartheid activist, Joan Lestor, feared government involvement and summoned Sparrow to explain the dealings of the Club. Sparrow agreed to publicise the names of the sponsors involved in the Club of Ten on the condition that investigations were discontinued. Sparrow was able to provide four names of wealthy South Africans, namely Luyt, the property tycoon Werner Ackermann, the financier Jan Pickard, and the potato farmer Charalampos Nichas. Luyt, Ackermann, and Pickard were associates of the Foreign Affairs Association (FAA). Sparrow still needed to get in touch with the fifth financier. Rhodie contacted De Villiers and asked him to arrange the fifth contact. On 22 August 1974, Lampis Nichas, a millionaire farmer, visibly handed over a cheque of R50 000 to Sparrow. The money was derived from the Department of Information’s secret funds and some of Nichas’ own money. After the showcase, the Foreign Office and Raphael suspended their investigation. The secret of the Department of Information was safe for the time being and any allegations of government involvement were thwarted.¹⁸⁸

The Department of Information was engaged in more activities in the UK than just the Club of Ten. Rhodie contracted two Members of Parliament (MP) in the Labour Party to promote,

¹⁸⁷ *The Guardian* 1974.6.24 & *The Guardian*, 1974.6.29 cited in Hull, p. 91; Hull, pp. 90-91; Burgess, p. 55.
¹⁸⁸ Burgess, pp. 55-56; Hull, p. 91; De Villiers, pp. 56-57.

lobby, and spy for South Africa. The two unnamed MPs were on the Department of Information's payroll, costing the department R46 000. Information obtained from the MPs' espionage activities on anti-apartheid groups, were utilised for disinformation campaigns in the UK and Holland. These disinformation initiatives, such as cancelling meetings and sending fake mail petitions, attempted to confuse activists. Another operation employed by the Department of Information was "Operation Bowler Hat". This operation appointed a conservative MP, Harold Gurden, to invite other MPs concerned with Pretoria's difficulties to visit South Africa. If members were aware of the fact that the financing came from the South African government, they would have refused to accept such outings. The Department of Information, in cooperation with BOSS, targeted members of the Liberal Party in the UK. For example, British Labour Party politician Peter Hain was beleaguered by South African smear campaigns for his stance to stop all-white sports tours. He was ostensibly framed for a bank robbery in 1975, but was later acquitted.¹⁸⁹

The Department of Information's propaganda efforts ranged from influencing small businesses to top officials. Propaganda methods were more sophisticated and covert than merely spreading literature. The Department of Information disseminated information and influence by hiring lobbying firms Rotary & Lions International, as well as Collier, Shannon, Rill & Edwards. According to the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) of 1938, lobbying for another sovereign state in America requires agents to register with the Justice Department and to disclose their conducts twice a year. However, the legislation was ineffective in prohibiting the numerous lobbyists, because the majority of agents bankrolled directly from foreign funds and therefore a loophole existed that did not require them to register. The thousands of foreign lobby networks, especially in Washington DC, were underreported. Rhodie commissioned Rotary Lions International's branches based throughout the world. They were provided with funds and speakers, with lobbying efforts largely engaging America's southern universities and small black businesses. For example, Ronald Farrar, the head of the Journalism Department at the University of Mississippi, was influenced and sent on a tour to South Africa. Farrar wrote pro-South African letters back home, stating among others that black people were not restricted by pass laws.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Nixon, pp. 68-69; Rees & Day, p. 191; J. Barber, "BOSS in Britain", *African Affairs* 82(328), July 1983, p. 316; The Guardian, "Profile: Peter Hain", <<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2009/jan/22/peter-hain-profile>>, 2009.1.22. (Accessed on March 14, 2016).

¹⁹⁰ Nixon, p. 70; Hull, p. 80.

In January 1974, Rhodie contracted the renowned Washington lobbying organisation Collier, Shannon, Rill & Edwards. The organisation selected the political merchant, Donald deKieffer, to represent the South African government in the USA. Mulder was impressed by the 28-year-old businessman with strong ties to the Republican Party. Additionally, deKieffer was married to a Japanese wife, boosting South Africa's appeal to individuals who regarded Pretoria as a racist regime. According to the organisation's registration statement to the Justice Department, the mandate the firm received from the Department of Information stipulates "Contacting publish officials, media representation and educational groups concerning reassessment of current American foreign policy toward the Republic of South Africa."¹⁹¹ Politically and economically, the intention was "Registrants intends to contact appropriate government officials in the US concerning American policies with regard to energy, mutual security, and investment within the Republic of South Africa."¹⁹² On 12 March 1974, Collier, Shannon, Rill & Edwards was registered as foreign agent at the Department of Justice at \$50 per hour for the expense of the Department of Information.¹⁹³

DeKieffer obtained his instructions from both the South African embassy and sometimes from Mulder personally. He regularly sent publications, telegrams, and press releases to the State Department, Defence Department (outwardly the Office of the Secretary of the Navy), Treasury and Interior Departments, and the Commerce Department. For example, in 1974 deKieffer distributed booklets to offices of congress concerning the importance and security of the Cape sea route. DeKieffer also targeted the USA Congress. He used his 'personal' capital to financially contribute to the campaigns of USA legislatures and senators. He also arranged social excursions with dinners and drinks for congress members. The entrainment functions cost the Department of Information roughly \$2 000 in 1974. DeKieffer also arranged fact-finding visits to South Africa for congress representatives and their families. Official members visiting South Africa rose from 11 in 1973 to 56 in 1974.¹⁹⁴

Additionally, deKieffer assisted in arranging top-level visits for South African government officials to American executives. In one case, deKieffer managed to cause a stir after the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs denied Admiral Hugo Biermann a visa to visit

¹⁹¹ The United States Department of Justice, "Report of the Attorney General to the Congress of the United States on the administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act. 1975", <https://www.fara.gov/reports/Archive/1975_FARA.pdf>, 1975.7, p. 291. (Accessed on March 24, 2016).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Hull, pp. 88-89; Nixon, p. 71; Burgess, p. 78.

¹⁹⁴ Burgess, pp. 65, 78; Nixon, p. 72.

the USA in May 1974. As part of the arms embargo policy, military personnel were prevented from making official contact. Alternatively, Biermann applied for a tourist visa, but was refused again. DeKieffer showed his remarkable lobbying skills by protesting and rounding up congressional support for Biermann's visa application. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, personally granted Biermann a visa. Thereafter, Biermann visited USA Admiral Thomas Moorer and the secretary of the navy designate, William Middendorf. DeKieffer secured meetings for Connie Mulder with Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Thomas Morgan, and Vice-president Gerald Ford.¹⁹⁵

Contact with top-level American government representatives would allow South Africa to break the diplomatic stalemate. On 12 January 1974, Mulder and De Villiers left for New York. In America, Mulder conveyed the importance of Pretoria's minerals and military cooperation, and in exchange bargained for the abolishment of the arms embargo. Mulder met with various senators and congressmen, such as Governor Ronald Reagan; the black Mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley; Republican Senate Leader, Hugh Scott; Democratic House Leader, Tip O'Neil; Congressman Andrew Young; and Thomas Morgan. He also reopened correspondence with the *New York Times*. The editorial board agreed to establish a *New York Times* bureau in South Africa, but Mulder warned that he would shut down the newspaper if its coverage was of a 'subjective' nature. On 22 January, Mulder and De Villiers discussed issues with Vice-president Ford surrounding the ties between South Africa and the US. Although Ford made no promises to Mulder, he was willing to aid, and afterwards arranged for Mulder to meet with Admiral Raymond Peet at the Pentagon. The meeting only lasted 40 minutes, but Mulder had successfully spoken to one of the top decision makers in the USA.¹⁹⁶

The Department of Information's expedition to the USA State Department did not go unnoticed. On 17 January 1974, De Villiers received a telephone call from Ken Owen of the South African *Argus Newspaper* in Washington, enquiring about Mulder's secret tour. In order to avoid compromising the mission, De Villiers declined to give any details. The visit to top state officials drew the attention of South African, as well as American and Western leaders. Owen identified three objectives Mulder was pursuing in America, namely strengthening his position to the South African 'throne', expanding his foreign experience, and aggressively attempting to change opinion based on face-to-face contact. In bypassing

¹⁹⁵ Hull, p. 89; Burgess, p. 79; Geldenhuys, p. 112.

¹⁹⁶ De Villiers, pp. 63-70; Nixon, p. 72.

normal diplomatic protocol, Mulder caused discontent in South Africa's Foreign Affairs Department. The South African embassy was unaware of the Department of Information's foreign lobbying and backdoor diplomacy strategies. The Department of Foreign Affairs deemed the actions of the Department of Information as an intrusion on their sphere of operations and diplomacy. Vorster and some MPs rejoiced in the success of the mission. However, the English press and opposition parties would taunt Mulder about who really was in control of Foreign Affairs. De Villiers believed that the conflict between the two departments was a leading factor in the Infogate debacle.¹⁹⁷

When Rhodie accepted the post of Secretary in 1972, there were in effect only three clandestine operations, with a limited official budget. The following month, Rhodie briefed the *Rand Daily Mail* on his intentions with the Department of Information: "There would be changes on the emphasis of publicity methods and he foresaw a time when 50 to 60 per cent of the department's methods would be 'hidden', not in the sense of secrecy or subversion, but on an indirect basis. Events would be exploited to South Africa's advantage, even if they did not directly affect the country."¹⁹⁸ Rhodie claimed that it could be expected from organisations pitted against Pretoria to connect South Africa to the secret projects and in time, even making accurate assumptions. Nevertheless, anti-apartheid organisations would have a gruelling task proving the existence of a link. In order to safeguard the secret operations, staff involved in these projects was kept to a minimum. The Department of Information spent R800 000 during 1973. Before the establishment of a secret fund, the Department of Information borrowed roughly R2 million from Van den Bergh's BOSS for their projects when the department was short on funds. Vorster, Mulder, and Diederichs instructed that some of the money be channelled directly to individuals handling secret projects.¹⁹⁹

The Department of Information made immense strides under the leadership of Mulder and Rhodie. In a short span of time – from 1972 to early 1974 – with an insignificant official budget, the Department of Information was able to establish front organisations and propaganda publications such as *To The Point* and the Club of Ten, influence top-level decision makers and newspaper owners in various locations across the globe, such as Reagan and Ford. These Pre-Info initiatives directed at Western nations were highly successful

¹⁹⁷ De Villiers, pp. 66-71; Burgess, pp. 64-65; Nixon, pp. 71-72; Geldenhuys, pp. 112-113.

¹⁹⁸ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1972.10.24. cited in Sanders, p. 57.

¹⁹⁹ Rees & Day, p. 186; *The Citizen*, 1980.5.16, p. 4.

compared to previous operations. Through skilled propaganda campaigns, Rhodie and his staff were able to reach audiences and officials via lobbying efforts, start debates regarding biased reporting, make people aware of South Africa's challenges through advertising and literature, and reached top executives in both the UK and USA. Although anti-apartheid supporters were already trying to unravel the mysteries surrounding the front organisations and the objectives of the Department of Information, Rhodie felt confident to expand the propaganda war. Before the war could be intensified, Rhodie and Mulder needed to secure the support and finances from Vorster and other top government officials.

3.5. THE MEETING

On 10 March 1973, Prime Minister Vorster delivered the following speech in Kroonstad: "I have told you that we live in a difficult world. I have told you that circumstances are continually changing and I have also told you and I want you to keep this always in mind, that the policies and principals of the National Party is wide enough to take all circumstances into account. What will be done, tactics will change, methods will change, measures will change, but basic policies and principles will always stay. I, as leader, am aware of the responsibility that rests on my shoulders in this regard. I accept those responsibilities and I know this – the one with the responsibility of a leader should advance in front of his people."²⁰⁰ Even though Vorster's speech had no direct correlation to the secret information campaign, he expressed his attitude of staying entrenched in the traditional Afrikaner ideology, but willing to adapt to new situations by altering normal methods and strategies.

Before planning and implementing an all-out propaganda war, Rhodie needed to assess the attitudes and views of the world. In 1973, Rhodie acquired funds from the Treasury to hire the New York public research company, Richard Manville Inc., to conduct research in 16 major Western countries about global attitudes toward South Africa. The survey was cleverly hidden by adding countries such as Uganda, Canada, Nigeria, India, and the Soviet Union, leaving interviewees unaware that the research was done on behalf of the South African government. The survey reflected the feelings towards South Africa on all demographics such as the elderly, the youth, government, decision makers, and labour unions. At a cost of R280 000, the results of the 20-volume report were both shocking and informative. It found that South Africa was one of the most disliked countries, specifically for its apartheid policies. Only Uganda, with the ruthless dictator Idi Admin in power, beat South Africa.

²⁰⁰ ARCA, "Extract of B.J. Vorster's speech", PV 895, K23 volume 1 – C. Heunis Collection, 1973.

More perturbing was the fact that India and the Soviet Union were more popular. Other results turned out to be fascinating, for example only two percent of Japanese knew who Vorster was, whereas 70% recognised Player. Richard Manville Inc. also supplied Rhodie with a list of 40 000 decision makers in the West. The survey helped Rhodie in compiling a map on the origins of the greatest criticism and ignorance, and orchestrating operations accordingly. Vorster and other cabinet ministers were impressed by this research.²⁰¹

In December 1973, Mulder and Rhodie drafted a circulatory letter with the intention of proclaiming the Department of Information's new direction, as well as protecting Mulder and his subordinates from the interference of the Department of Foreign Affairs. The circulatory letter read as follows: "In the light of increasingly political and propaganda attacks against the Republic, both in intensity and volume, as well as their unorthodox and sophisticated form, it has become necessary in the national interest in general, and to promote national security, in particular, to adapt the functions of the Department of Information accordingly."²⁰² The letter was signed by Vorster and sent to various departments. Vorster entrusted Mulder with unlimited authority on the best approach to protect and promote South Africa. Earlier in 1973, Mulder discussed with Vorster and Diederichs the plan of waging a propaganda war. Vorster also informed Muller and P.W. Botha of the broad outlines of such an initiative.²⁰³

On 6 February 1974, Rhodie was called upon to give a presentation to Vorster and Diederichs on the clandestine propaganda campaign. Also present at the meeting were Mulder, De Villiers, and Deneys Rhodie. Eschel Rhodie started with a briefing about the achievements of *To The Point*, CFFT, and the Club of Ten. He also explained that South Africa's most imminent threat is not the Soviet Union, but rather Western democracy through their newspapers, politicians, and business communities. Drastic measures were required to free South Africa from its growing isolation. The Department of Information would ensure the establishment of effective communication channels through ostensible independent newspapers, research firms, and organisations. Rhodie added that, for the sake of national interest, South Africa must participate in an unorthodox propaganda war where no

²⁰¹ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 59-60; Nixon, pp. 62-63; Rees & Day, p. 186.

²⁰² Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 63.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64; De Villiers, pp. 61-62; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8.

government rules and regulations apply. Both Vorster and Diederichs supported Rhodie's initiative to start a propaganda offensive.²⁰⁴ At the end of the project briefing, Rhodie asked:

“Mr Prime Minister. Do I understand you correctly? You just approved a five-year secret information programme, a propaganda and psychological war in which no government rules or regulations of any kind would be applied? In fact, if I had to buy a mink coat to convert a particular editor or reporter that would be in order? And if I had to send another to Hawaii with his mistress, is that also in order?”²⁰⁵

Vorster agreed to Rhodie's terms and requested a detailed memorandum of the projects before he and Diederichs were to approve funding. Rhodie again requested confirmation that Vorster was aware of the programme methods:

“Mr Prime Minister, I would not like to operate under a misconception. Are we in agreement that we are not talking about an intensification of the current Department of Information activities but in fact about the launching of a separate, no-holds-barred, propaganda war free of any government rules or regulations. Is that the case?”²⁰⁶

Vorster concurred. Rhodie wished for reassurance that he would be protected, since he would be signing and handling the projects. Thereafter, Rhodie addressed Diederichs regarding R15 to R25 million per year for five years towards the extended operations. Diederichs and Vorster told Rhodie that secrecy was paramount for the success of this campaign. They instructed him to take precautions as well as the necessary steps to keep the projects hidden. Vorster also instructed Rhodie to avoid paperwork or at least keep it to the minimum. In fact, secrecy of the projects was so important to Diederichs that he preferred not to notify Dries Pretorius of Treasury and the Secretary of Finance, Gerald Browne. Even though they knew about some of the projects before 1974, they would remain largely uninformed of the Department of Information's dealings until 1977. Rhodie was convinced that Diederichs' decision to keep Treasury in the dark was a grave blunder. According to Rhodie, this judgement caused resentment.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Rees & Day, pp. 169-170; De Villiers, pp. 73-74; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 82-83; ARCA, “*Die Transvaler/Oggendblad*, 1979.6.5...”, P 58 – *Basson Collection*, p. 6.

²⁰⁵ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 83.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 83-85; Rees & Day, p. 177.

The following month, Rhodie prepared an outline for the programme on paper and requested a total of R65 000. Included was R15 million per annum and an additional R2 million reserved for the subscription list of *To The Point*. Together Vorster, Mulder, and Diederichs would establish an informal cabinet subcommittee to evaluate the funds the projects would receive. The next obstacle was deciding how the Department of Information would be funded without placing the five-year programme in jeopardy. Vorster, Rhodie, and Diederichs understood that the funds couldn't be channelled through Van den Bergh's BOSS account, because it would inflate the budget and subsequently draw criticism from opposing parties convinced that the funds would be used to upgrade government surveillance. The solution was to cooperate with the Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha. Diederichs consulted with P.W. Botha about the importance and discussed the outlines of the programme.²⁰⁸

Money would be channelled through the Defence Department's secret Defence Special Account to BOSS and then allocated to the Department of Information's 'G' funds. The Defence Special Account was under the protection of the Official Secret Act No. 16 of 1956, which prohibits the funds from being scrutinised or disclosed in parliament. Unlike the accounts of the Defence Department and BOSS, the Department of Information was not protected by this law. Therefore, Diederichs instructed the office of the Auditor General not to audit the funds. After 1 April 1974, the funds were transferred to BOSS, which acted as 'bankers' for Rhodie, whereby he could access these monies to implement his propaganda war. Every year Rhodie would submit a report to the subcommittee comprising Vorster, Mulder, and later Horwood.²⁰⁹

P.W. Botha understood the necessity for an international information campaign and believed that it should be funded, but he opposed Diederichs' arrangements about the Defence Department funding another department. Botha believed that the propaganda undertaking was not scandalous and that Mulder should ask parliament directly to establish a secret fund in this regard. Van den Berg testified that P.W. Botha raised the issue with Vorster, but he insisted that it needed to be done. P.W. Botha felt uneasy about the manner in which the money was transferred and whether it was spent in a proper way.²¹⁰ Botha stated in a letter to the Chief of the Defence Force, dated 21 June 1976: "I still have objections against the item, Senekal. I have only accepted it upon instructions from the Prime Minister. Treasury must

²⁰⁸ Rees & Day, pp. 173-175; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 94-85.

²⁰⁹ Church, p. 40; Rees & Day, p. 173; Sanders, p. 59; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 85-86, 88.

²¹⁰ *The Citizen*, 1980.5.16, p. 3; *Randy Daily Mail*, 1978.12.8, p. 10; *Die Transvaler*, 1977.8.13, p. 6.

know about this.”²¹¹ In 1974, Diederichs was promoted to State President and was replaced by Senator Horwood as Minister of Finance. Horwood was updated by Diederichs on 21 February 1975. Afterwards, Horwood contacted Vorster to make sure of the arrangement and Vorster confirmed his orders, saying it was a matter of national interest. From 1975, Horwood approved funding for the Department of Information’s schemes.²¹²

Similar to Germany’s stupendous victories in the first three years of the Second World War, which gave the Nazis the confidence to expand their operations to the Eastern front, the initial success of the Pre-Info programmes also gave the Department of Information the confidence to extend their activities. The ideological framework of a psychological and propaganda warfare provided by Rhodie, impressed various members in government, including the Prime Minister, which in turn gave Mulder and Rhodie the authority to conduct such a war. However, cracks were already starting to appear within the NP in 1970. Vorster’s main concern was to keep the NP intact. Inter-departmental conflict between Information and Foreign Affairs were also brewing. The information campaign barely started in the early 1970s and already projects raised suspicion of government involvement. After receiving approval from Vorster and making arrangements with Diederichs and P.W. Botha, Rhodie was finally ready to start a total propaganda war with vast financial backing. The next chapter will explore the projects implemented by Rhodie in order to save apartheid South Africa from isolation and to avert negative opinion towards South Africa.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Die Transvaler*, 1977.8.13, p. 5; *The Daily News*, 1979.6.9, p. 2.

4. AN ALL-OUT PROPAGANDA WAR

With funding safely secured from the NP's secret sub-committee, Eschel Rhoodie and the Department of Information were ready to employ a grand counter attack against hostile world opinion with briefcases full of money. In 1974 Mulder stated to the House of Assembly: "I have said it before that my department will not remain on the defensive – we have now gone over to the offensive."²¹³ In a period of five years since the start of April 1974, the Department of Information would drastically expand South Africa's vast network of propaganda operations, totalling 180 projects at the cost of R65-85 million. The Department of Information would leave no stone untouched, with operations reaching deep into Africa, the USA, UK, Israel, and numerous European countries. The department also implemented clandestine inward propaganda initiatives in order to promote government views in South Africa. This chapter will examine the Information operations conducted in different geographical locations such as Africa, South Africa, the USA, UK, Israel and Europe. This chapter will also explore additional aspects such as the complications and tension experienced by the Info crew and how they strived to keep the connections of the department secret. It is important to note that many operations were not isolated to one specific geographical border, for example, a project executed in Britain might not be confined to that specific region.

4.1. AFRICAN DÉTENTE AND THE ISRAELI CONNECTION

In an effort to relieve South Africa's increasing isolation during the 1960s, B.J. Vorster attempted to reach out to African countries, and in the process establish diplomatic relationships. The African Détente or 'outward policy' initially started when Verwoerd met with Chief Leabua Jonathan of Lesotho in 1966. Vorster offered complimentary economic advice to states willing to accept it. First, Vorster reached out to bordering countries. In 1968, he met with the president of Botswana, Seretse Khama, and in 1971 with Prince Makhosini Dlamini of Swaziland. By establishing economic ties with neighbouring countries, Vorster expected that these states would reject support to the ANC and PAC. Even though Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland were dependent on the South African economy, they remained politically hostile and critical towards white rule.²¹⁴

²¹³ House of Assembly Debates (Referred as *Hansard* hereafter), 9 September–4 October 1974, part 51, col. 4353.

²¹⁴ De Vries. p. 31; South African History Online, "South Africa's foreign relations during apartheid, 1948".

South Africa's first amicable diplomatic relationship with an African country not bordering South Africa was Malawi. In 1967, President Hastings Banda realised the economic benefits of a trade agreement with South Africa. In return, Malawi received loans and employment for its citizens in the South African mines. Vorster, the first prime minister to visit an independent African state, met with Banda in Malawi in 1970. The following year, Banda formally visited South Africa as the first leader of an independent black state to visit the country. In 1971, the relationship status between South Africa and Malawi was elevated to ambassador level. Vorster's outward policy was hindered by the OAU, which strongly rejected dialogue with South Africa in 1971, favouring the liberation struggle.²¹⁵

The Department of Information had several objectives to accomplish in Africa. One of the main objectives that Eschel Rhoodie and Connie Mulder had in mind was establishing contact with prominent African leaders. The targeted leaders were unlike the economically confined countries of Lesotho, Malawi, and Botswana, but rather African leaders who had connections with international councils and possessed foreign political power. By establishing dialogue with African states, South Africa would respectively restore its image abroad, especially in the West, and obstruct isolation attempts from the UN and AAM. The Department of Information also aspired to create links with leading African states, with the intention of splitting votes within the OAU and encouraging cooperation and diplomacy from other hostile African states. Another main quest was to establish an air corridor over Africa. South Africa was losing millions of rand per year because air travel was restricted over several African countries, and instead, aircraft had to fly around Africa in order to reach Europe. Rhoodie, together with General Hendrik van den Bergh, agreed to share the responsibility of making acquaintance with African countries. Van den Bergh would make contact with Central and East Africa, while Rhoodie with his French ties, would cover French-speaking West Africa. To assist the Détente effort, some minor reforms were made to petty apartheid, for example, certain social amenities such as restaurants and hotels were open to all races.²¹⁶

In 1973, Rhoodie's expedition to establish connections with West African leaders, known as Operation Houtskoek (Wooden Shoe), became a reality after Vorster had approved Rhoodie's

²¹⁵ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, p. 553; Pretorius, p. 350; Guelke, p. 655; South African History Online, "South Africa's foreign relations during apartheid, 1948".

²¹⁶ Rees & Day, pp. 180-181; Pretorius, p. 359; Geldenhuys, p. 117; R.H. Davies & D. O'Meara, "The state of analysis of the Southern African Region: Issues raised by the South African Strategy", *Review of African Political Economy* 29, July 1984, p. 67; Rhoodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 100, 110.

backdoor diplomacy approach. While working for *To The Point*, Rhodie met Bernard Lejeune, a French journalist with contacts in France and West Africa. He aided Rhodie in organising meetings with the President of the Ivory Coast, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, and President Léopold Senghor of Senegal. Rhodie and Lejeune, acting as interpreter, met with Senghor in Paris early in 1974. Rhodie subtly influenced Senghor by praising his poems and highlighting the threat of Soviet activity in Africa. He further explained that Vorster wished to enter into a trade agreement and persuaded him that Afrikaners were in fact also African by saying: “even his language, Afrikaans, was born on the African continent, the only language to bear the name of Africa.”²¹⁷ The results of the meeting was efficacious, Senghor wanted to convene with Vorster in 14 days’ time. However, Vorster was reluctant to meet Senghor at such short notice, believing that he should first inform the cabinet and Foreign Affairs. Thereafter, Rhodie left uninvited for the capital of the Ivory Coast, Abidjan, to meet with Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny welcomed Rhodie and was willing to secretly meet Vorster in Abidjan, with both Houphouët-Boigny and Senghor present. If the meeting was successful, Houphouët-Boigny would take action and grant overflight rights for the South African Airways.²¹⁸

After Vorster was convinced by Van den Bergh, Rhodie, together with Van den Bergh, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Brand Fourie, Vorster, and his son Pieter finally set out in May 1974 to meet Houphouët-Boigny and Senghor in Abidjan. The meeting was a breakthrough and a sensation for the press, saluting Vorster as a remarkable statesman. In November 1974, a South African airliner with Secretary Rhodie and Fourie on board, landed at the Abidjan airport. The last time a South African airplane landed in an African state, was in 1961. Meanwhile, Van den Bergh managed to establish an air corridor over Africa, except for Sudan and Egypt. In 1976, Rhodie and Mulder attended the Montreal Olympics to meet with Egyptian connections. Rhodie made use of Stoffel Vermeulen (a man who lied about his title as Professor and being an honorary consul in the Middle East) to arrange a meeting with the Egyptian Minister of Interior. Soon after Mulder and Rhodie landed in Egypt, they were denied access into the country and were forced to abandon their audience with the Egyptian minister. The Department of Information’s interference with international governments

²¹⁷ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 124.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-127; Geldenhuys, pp. 117-118.

displeased Foreign Affairs, especially about not being enlightened about the department's activities.²¹⁹

The agreements between South Africa, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast did not last. The relationship between Vorster and Senghor deteriorated after Senghor requested sending a delegate to South Africa to report on improvements regarding race relations in 1975. Vorster never replied. Senghor moved against South Africa by organising an international conference for the liberation of South West Africa in January 1976. Even though the Department of Information remained in contact with the Ivory Coast, the death of the BCM leader, Steve Biko, shattered any healthy relationship with South Africa. In November 1977, Abidjan supported the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.²²⁰ In 1978, representatives from Liberia, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast commented: "that their peaceful approach to South Africa had produced no significant change."²²¹

Southern African countries were also targets of the Department of Information's propaganda onslaught. In April 1974, a coup in Lisbon instituted the independence of its African colonies, Mozambique and Angola, resulting in South Africa's loss of buffer states between black- and white-controlled Africa. The independence of Angola ushered the country into turmoil, and in Mozambique the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) took power. The white regime in Rhodesia was soon on the defence, as insurgencies from neighbouring liberation movements escalated. As a result, the NP realised that it was futile to support the Ian Smith regime, and opted to build friendly relations with more stable majority-rule states.²²² The South African government invited intervention from Zambia and Britain. The international magazine *Newsweek* accused Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, of accepting a million dollar bribe from the Department of Information to prepare a conference between black and white Rhodesian leaders at Victoria Falls in 1975. Kaunda strongly denied these allegations. On 26 August 1975, Vorster and Kaunda mediated the Victoria Falls Conference between Ian Smith and the Zimbabwean liberation movements. In September 1976, Mulder

²¹⁹ Burgess, p. 3; T. Papenfus, *Pik Botha en sy tyd*, p. 220; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 128, 130, 148; *The Cape Times*, 1978.4.24, p. 1.

²²⁰ R. Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States: From pariah to middle power*, pp. 75-77.

²²¹ Annual review of relations with Ivory Coast, December 1978, p. 1. cited in Pfister, p. 76.

²²² The Military and political activities involved in this region exceeds the scope of this thesis. For more information regarding these events, read Roger Pfister's book *Apartheid South Africa and African States: From pariah to middle power*.

and Brand Fourie were sent to inform Ian Smith that South Africa was not prepared to aid his cause.²²³

In March 1978, Smith reached an internal settlement, conceding white rule in Rhodesia. Rhodie devised a plan on the premise of funding Bishop Abel Muzorewa of the United African National Council (UANC) in the upcoming elections in order to maintain trade and flying rights over Rhodesia. Rhodie, through the Johannesburg businessman David Abrahamson, gave the prominent figure in the UANC, James Chikerema, R1.2 million for the election campaign. *The Afrikaner* reported that Muzorewa also received 400 vehicles loaded with propaganda material for the elections. Both Muzorewa and Chikerema denied these accusations. Investigations by the *Rand Daily Mail* confirmed that Chikerema was unaware of the fact that Abrahamson was sent by the Department of Information. In April 1979, the UANC won, but only remained in power briefly, since Robert Mugabe won the elections the following year.²²⁴

The South African détente efforts were dealt a blow when South African troops intervened in Angola in 1975 on orders from P.W. Botha. The NP reckoned it could take advantage of the division between the liberation movements in Angola to empower Jonas Savimbi of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), easing tension surrounding South West Africa. However, resistance from the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), with the backing of the Cubans and the Soviet Union, resulted in the withdrawal of South African forces in early 1976. Propaganda efforts from Rhodie took a serious tone in Club of Ten advertisements in February 1976, by describing the situation as the “darkest days since the Second World War.”²²⁵ According to Rhodie, the Angolan affair was disastrous for South African diplomacy and the escapade strengthened enemy propaganda. Ironically, the invasion of Angola did not deter communism, but invited Soviet Union and Cuban presence into the region. In South West Africa, the Department of Information coined the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) as terrorist, and

²²³ Davies & O’Meara, p. 67; Guelke, pp. 655-656; S. Onslow, “‘We must gain time’: South Africa, Rhodesia and the Kissinger initiative of 1976”, *South African History Journal* 56, 2006, pp. 125-128; *Sunday Times*, 1979.3.24, p. 22.

²²⁴ Rees & Day, pp. 192-193; Guelke, p. 657; *Herald*, 1981.5.25, p. 20; *Die Suidwester*, 1981.5.25, p. 4; *Die Afrikaner*, 1981.5.29, p. 1.

²²⁵ Sanders, pp. 151-152.

combined their efforts with the Department of Defence to humiliate the UN by deploying a ship transmitting supposedly SWAPO guerrilla messages.²²⁶

South Africa's Israeli connection in the 1970s began with Rhodie befriending Israeli diplomats while stationed in The Hague, Holland. Before 1973, diplomacy between South Africa and Israel was at an all-time low. In addition to the condemnation of racism by the Jewish religion, and Jews being subjected to the most severe forms of racism during the Holocaust, it offered more political advantages to remain unfriendly towards South Africa in order to maintain support from black countries. Israel took an anti-apartheid stand along with the UN in 1961, and avoided association with South Africa by downgrading the Israeli embassy to consular level in 1963. Nevertheless, South Africa continued endeavours to restore trade and diplomacy with Israel by praising them for their military triumphs during the Six Day War. The relationship between Israel and South Africa was nearly destroyed when Israel presented a donation to the OAU's Liberation Committee. By 1973, Israel was embroiled in the Yom Kippur War, burdening Israel's relations with the West because of Arab oil embargoes. Most African countries shunned Israel. These events created an ideal opportunity to re-establish diplomacy with Israel.²²⁷

The Department of Information, aware of Israel's predicament of being surrounded by hostile states – a situation similar to South Africa – started arranging meetings. The Israeli government resumed diplomacy with South Africa in 1974. At first, Vorster and the Department of Foreign Affairs was sceptical of Operation David, believing Israel to be anti-South African, and not mentioning official contact with Israel would upset the vital oil-providing Arab countries. Yet, Vorster committed himself to the operation and Rhodie, with the aid of his Israeli connections, managed to set up a meeting with the Israeli government. In June 1975, Rhodie, Mulder, and De Villiers met Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Defence Minister Shimon Peres, and Foreign Minister Yigal Allon. The outcome of the visit was so successful that the Israeli government issued an invitation to Vorster. Again Vorster showed reluctance, but Rhodie stressed the extreme importance of the invitation. Vorster visited Israel in 1976 as an official guest. Connie Mulder and Rhodie were absent during this meeting, because Vorster preferred Hilgard Muller and Brand Fourie from Foreign Affairs to escort him to Tel Aviv. Political scientist, Deon Geldenhuys, speculates that Vorster made

²²⁶ Davies & O'Meara, p. 67; Guelke, pp. 657-658; Laurence, pp. 31, 47. See also Papenfus, *Pik Botha en sy tyd*.

²²⁷ De Villiers, p. 102; N. Chazan, "The fallacies of pragmatism: Israeli foreign policy towards South Africa", *African Affairs* 83(327), April 1983, pp. 172-173.

this decision since Foreign Affairs was left out of its own sphere of duties. Nevertheless, the meeting was fruitful in bringing the two nations closer. It was decided to establish a joint Cabinet Committee that would meet on an annual basis and would encourage cooperation in the military and commercial sector. The new relationship benefited South Africa in various fields, for example, Israel abstained from voting against apartheid at the UN in 1976.²²⁸

The Department of Information also acquired the assistance of the Israeli spy, arms dealer and film producer, Arnon Milchan, to promote South Africa on a budget of R115 000. He would also channel money for the Department of Information through banks in Italy. In return, Israel would receive South African uranium for the development of nuclear weapons. Milchan would discontinue his services for South Africa after the Information Scandal became known, claiming his activities to be immoral.²²⁹

Operation Playboy was another mission executed by Rhodie in an attempt to form an alliance with OAU states. The Seychelles, a republic of scattered islands off the coast of Africa in the western Indian Ocean, was a former insignificant colony of Britain, but after decolonisation, the island became of strategic importance to the USA, France, South Africa, and the Soviet Union. Before the independence of the Seychelles on 29 June 1976, the former President, James Mancham, known for his extravagant lifestyle, contacted Rhodie in 1975 in Paris. Mancham requested Rhodie to assist him in his election campaign against his socialist opponent, Albert René. In return, Mancham would grant South Africa flight rights over the island and he would keep the Soviets at bay. Additionally, Mancham was a member of the OAU and spied on behalf of the South African government. He won the elections in 1976 with the backing of the British, and received R25 000 annually from the Department of Information. Rhodie also established a colour printing press for Mancham.²³⁰

In January 1977, Rhodie with his wife, daughter, and a sibling, Michael Rhodie; De Villiers and his wife; Jacobus Marais and his wife; two police officers; and Advocate Retief van Rooyen with his daughter, flew to the Seychelles in Luyt's aircraft. De Villiers and Rhodie planned to register the aircraft in the Seychelles in order to avoid the ban on South

²²⁸ De Villiers, pp. 102-103, 106; Geldenhuys, pp. 116-117; Chazan, pp. 173-174.

²²⁹ MERIP Middle East Report, "Profiles", *Wealth and power in the Middle East* (142), September-October 1986, p. 38; The Guardian, "Arnon milchan reveals past Israeli spy", <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/26/arnon-milchan-israeli-spy-past>>, 2013.11.13. (Accessed on May 8, 2016.); *The Star*, 1979.1.19, p. 19.

²³⁰ S. Ellis, "Africa and international corruption: The strange case of South Africa and Seychelles", *African Affairs* 95(379), April 1996, pp. 166-168, 171; De Villiers, p. 142; Geldenhuys, p. 118; *The Star*, 1981.12.10, p. 3.

African aircraft over Africa, seeing that the previous Swaziland licence would soon expire. According to De Villiers, Mancham requested that the company should appear like tourists. Rhoodie and De Villiers paid Mancham more bribes and later met with René to discuss trade, registering the aircraft, and receiving Seychellois passports. Mancham was unable to register the aircraft. While the visit to the Seychelles was official, the company did enjoy a luxurious vacation at the cost of R3 389. Rhoodie would claim that the holiday was not paid with state funds. Nonetheless, the escapade was ammunition for the South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN) during the revelation of the Information Scandal. During the visit, Rhoodie and De Villiers realised that Mancham's presidential demise was inevitable. Just after a year in office, Mancham was ousted in a coup while visiting London in June 1977.²³¹

The African Détente initially started out as a successful method of reaching out to more prominent African countries, but the effort declined from 1976 onwards, with occurrences such as the strategic withdrawal from Angola and the Soweto Uprising. Rhoodie personally blamed Vorster for the failure of the dialogue with Africa, stating that Vorster did not grasp that African leaders frequently met face to face. He also believed that the credit Vorster received for his outward-looking policy, gave him the confidence to remain in office after the 1974 elections. Implementing the African dialogue during the Vorster administration, Rhoodie claims, was a regretful decision: "If we had held back on those initiatives for several months, Mr Vorster would have had his wish and retired, and Dr Mulder would have become Prime Minister and would have got the credit for being the architect of the outward policy."²³² There are more reasons for the decline of diplomacy in African countries than Vorster's reluctance to act.²³³ Despite the failure of lasting negotiations, South Africa did succeed in forming an alliance with the formidable Israelis.²³⁴

4.2. ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A prime target of the Department of Information was the United States of America (USA). A large amount of funds was invested into propaganda operations aimed specifically at USA Congressmen and the media. Protecting the positive image of the South African white regime

²³¹ Ellis, p. 171; De Villiers, pp. 142-146; *The Star*, 1981.11.27, p. 31; *Sunday Times*, 1978.4.2, p. 1; *Die Transvaler*, 1981.11.27, p. 5.

²³² *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.3.17, p. 2.

²³³ See Davies & O'Meara, "The state of analysis of the Southern African region: Issues raised by South African strategy", *Review of Political Economy* 29, July 1984 for more information regarding the failure of the African diplomacy initiative during the Vorster administration.

²³⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.3.17, p. 2; Davies & O'Meara, p. 76; Rhoodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 132-135; De Vries, p. 31.

was vital for strengthening its economic and military power. The Department of Information enlisted the conservative businessman from Michigan, John McGoff, believing him to be an invaluable agent of propaganda projects in America. McGoff was the founder of the Panax Corporation that possessed several radio stations and forty small daily and weekly newspapers scattered throughout the middle west of America. By 1970 McGoff had a circulation of 50 000 newspapers but was sustaining financial losses. He also had ties with Republican officials and was a personal friend of Vice-president Gerald Ford. McGoff personally abetted with arranging the meeting between Mulder and the vice president. De Villiers came first into contact with McGoff and in 1968 later invited McGoff to South Africa as part of the foreign visit strategy. During McGoff's visit to South Africa he befriended Vorster, Mulder and Rhodie and returned to the USA pro-South Africa oriented. McGoff became a shareholder along with Mulder, De Villiers, Eschel and Deneys Rhodie in a South African farm called Reënberg. McGoff would regularly transfer objectionable money to upgrade infrastructure on the farm. It remains unclear to what extent McGoff used his personal assets for propaganda purposes. Previous executives claim that McGoff did not regulate editorial decisions and staff were only occasionally ordered to distribute stories regarding South Africa. It could be safely assumed that by 1974 McGoff increased sending content to be published regarding the importance of South Africa.²³⁵

In 1974, McGoff proposed a mutually beneficial business offer to the Department of Information. *The Washington Star* underwent financial difficulties and was going to sell off its shares. McGoff needed the financial backing from the South African government to purchase *The Washington Star* and converting it into a profitable newspaper. The South African government would benefit by acquiring a new tool in their arsenal to distribute pro-South African propaganda and alter the perception of US Congressmen in the capital of the USA. *The Washington Star* would also be able to counteract inimical views represented by *The Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. Although Vorster was not in favour of the operation, after discussing it with Mulder and Diederichs he decided not to stop the operation. McGoff required \$10 million from the Department of Information and was willing to contribute \$15 million of his own capital to acquire *The Washington Star*. The money was channelled through the Union Bank in Switzerland in September 1974 as a loan to dissuade investigators from noticing any irregular activities. McGoff was not the only one keen on

²³⁵ K. Rothmyer, "The South Africa lobby", *The Nation*, April 1980, pp. 455-456; K. Rothmyer, "The McGoff grab", *The Columbia Journalism Review*, November/December 1979, pp. 33-34; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1980.12.3, p. 1.

taking over *The Washington Star*; the Texan banker, Joe Allbritton, also shared an interest in the newspaper.²³⁶

The acquisition of *The Washington Star* never materialised and was eventually sold to the Texan banker. Sources vary on explaining why the bid failed. According to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), McGoff used the funds to seize more shares in the Panax Corporation. In a time span of five years from 1973, McGoff's shares in Panax increased from 43 126 to 460 000. Karen Rothmeyer asserts that McGoff was unable to raise sufficient funds to purchase the newspaper. The representative of *The Washington Star*'s titleholders, Godfrey Kauffmann, recalls that after looking over Panax's balance sheet, he discovered the company did not have the financial capacity to buy the newspaper. Kaufmann added that McGoff never put in a solid proposal. McGoff's presence in the bid for *The Washington Star* concerned its executives, believing it had some connection to his newly found South African relationship.²³⁷

In late 1974, McGoff instead bought the Californian newspaper *Sacramento Union* for R8 million. While bidding for *The Washington Star*, McGoff requested to use a portion of the R10 million and the interest generated by the money to purchase the *Sacramento Union*. Initially, Rhodie agreed to purchase the *Sacramento Union* after McGoff convinced him that it was a leading newspaper in California, which was home to Governor Reagan. In 1976, Rhodie became aware of the fact that McGoff used the original capital to buy the Californian newspaper and attempted to buy some other smaller newspapers such as the ephemeral *New York Trib*. Rhodie did not have the authority to allow the transaction of the R10 million for purchasing the *Sacramento Union*, only Mulder could approve such an agreement. Rhodie would later deny allowing the transaction. The subsequent Erasmus Commission concluded that a large amount of money was placed in the hands of McGoff

²³⁶ C. Paterson & V. Malila, "Beyond the Information Scandal: When South Africa bought into global news", *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 34(2), 2013, pp. 4-5; *The Citizen*, 1980.5.15, p. 4; ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – *Basson Collection*, pp. 23-24; Rothmyer, "The South African Lobby", pp. 455-456.

²³⁷ Rothmyer, "The South African lobby", pp. 455-456; Rothmeyer, "The McGoff grab", p. 35; Justia US Law, "Securities and Exchange Commission v. John P. McGoff, Global Communications Corp., Sacramento Publishing Co., Appellants. 647 F.2d 185 (D.C. Cir. 1981)", <<http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/647/185/237629/>>, 1981. (Accessed May, 17, 2016); Paterson & Malila, pp. 4-5.

without proper regulation and the Department of Information was unsure if South Africa had any entitlement to these properties.²³⁸

In 1975 the Department of Information channelled another \$1 350 000 to McGoff for the securement of shares in the United Press International and Television Network (UPITN). Second to Visnews, UPITN was the largest international television agency with more than 100 clients around the globe, and a major provider of news content for the American television network ABC and various third world countries. McGoff bought 50% of the shares from Paramount for Panax, and the other shareholders with 25% shares each were United Press International and Independent Television News (ITN), based in Britain. Rhodie was pleased with the fact that South African propaganda could be viewed from different media outlets worldwide. With the intention of influencing editorial control over content concerning the presentation of South Africa, McGoff managed to acquire the UPITN Chairman position in London for his right-hand man, Vice-president Clarence Rhodes. In February 1967, Rhodes staged an interview with Vorster for international television. Rhodie orchestrated the set-up of answers and questions for Vorster, clearly conveying the propaganda intentions for UPITN. Eight out of 300 documentaries produced by UPITN covered South Africa. Editor of ITN, Hugh Whitcomb, gave the assurance that McGoff never had power to prescribe editorial policy and never tried. However, Rhodie was aware that one-sided programmes may injure the project and therefore endorsed the production of programmes critical towards the NP.²³⁹

Chris Paterson and Vanessa Malila conducted a study to determine the coverage of the UPITN during and after McGoff's shareholding in the company. The study found that during the McGoff era, most of the content focused on South Africa's relation with countries not adjacent to its borders, such as the UK and the USA. After the McGoff period, stories started focusing on South Africa's affiliation with countries bordering the country. Before and after, Caucasians, specifically politicians were more likely to be aired than any other race. The

²³⁸ E. Windrich, "South Africa's propaganda war", *South Africa Today* 36(1), 1st Quarter 1989, p. 54; ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", *P 58 – Basson Collection*, pp. 23-24; Sanders, p. 60; Rothmyer, "The South African lobby", p. 456.

²³⁹ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", *P 58 – Basson Collection*, p. 24; Paterson & Malila, pp. 5-6; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.4.7, p. 1; Sanders, p. 67; Rothmyer, "The McGoff grab", pp. 36-37; Burgess, pp. 67-68.

researchers concluded that the editorial policies were intended to shift the limelight away from South Africa's real news by focusing on its relationship with other countries.²⁴⁰

Throughout the USA, the Department of Information was extremely diligent in its attempts to modify the American public's attitude towards the white government. Endeavours to distribute propaganda ranged from newspapers, books, magazines, brochures, advertisements, personal contact, television, radio, and other methods of cleverly disguised propaganda. The main overseer of propaganda operations in the USA was the Information Service of South Africa's (ISSA) office in New York. ISSA circulated numerous South African publications in the USA and Canada. Publications such as the *South African Scope*, *South African Panorama*, and the *South African Digest* numbered 35 000 in circulation. These magazines with pro-South African investment advertisements were sent to libraries, educational facilities, organisations, legislators, newspapers, executives, and bureaucrats. South African investment advertisements appeared in several prestigious newspapers and magazines, for example in the *Wall Street Journal*, reading: "South Africa. There's something in it for you" and in the *New York Times*: "If you buy or invest, South Africa makes all the difference in the world." In the *Business Week*, a special advertisement of 32 pages with the title "Grow in South Africa", emerged. The advertisement scheme was a joint venture of government departments, South African corporations, and bodies that benefited from USA commercial investments. Advertising was an appropriate means of stabilising the import of foreign capital and contributed to business relationships with American investors, especially after events such as the Soweto riots, Angola crisis, and the decrease of the gold price.²⁴¹

In the 1970s, television became an important source of information and entertainment for most Americans. The department was well aware of television as an effective medium to expose American audiences to propaganda. Propaganda films were specially modified to adhere to American viewers. An estimated 32 million people viewed ten South African propaganda films on television in 1974. ISSA also distributed 1 160 copies of 53 television documentary films commercially. The cinema film distributor, Association-Sterling films, showed ISSA films such as *Floodlift to Lesotho* in 1974, which was believed to be a success after 2 million people viewed the film. Films generally contained footage of indigenous

²⁴⁰ Paterson & Malila, pp. 10-12.

²⁴¹ Special Collections & Archives University of Cape Town Libraries, *Department of Information, Annual Report for 1974*, pp. 38-39, 42; *Wall Street Journal*, 1974.3.13. & *New York Times*, 1975.1.26. & *Business Week*, 1975.11.10. cited in Burgess, pp. 67-68; Burgess, pp. 65-68.

African animals, traditional cultures, and smiling white and black kids. Moving pictures also highlighted South Africa's strategically important natural resources.²⁴²

Radio was utilised as a tool to reach audiences in rural areas. These marginalised rural regions were only subjected to one point of view. The Department of Information sent 6 000 copies of the radio programme *South African Magazine* to 125 radio stations in 1974. Listeners of small radio stations were frequently exposed to radio tapes, unaware that they were actually listening to propaganda provided by ISSA.²⁴³

Rhodie believed personal contact was a suitable method of influencing officials and citizens. Except for retaining offices and information staff in locations such as New York, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Houston, information staff were instructed to initiate 'contact tours.' These tours included giving speeches, meeting people, and corresponding with local television, press, and radio. Visits to towns and cities increased from 1974 to 1975, totalling 118 cities visited by only six information officials. Contact tours was paramount for publishing constructive reports in the American press and it served to recruit visitors for the South African foreign visit programme.²⁴⁴

Additionally, the Department of Information targeted the education sector. Foreign universities was provided with books worth R50 000 annually. Since most universities abroad only had books that shared 'unbalanced' views, the department saw it fit to sponsor these institutions with books containing a more 'unbiased' interpretation. The material conveyed progress made in race relationships over the past seven years, but oddly, the material made little or no reference to the Soweto Uprising or civil unrest experienced in the country. The Department of Information also went as far as influencing school children. ISSA recruited the services of Image Industries, a company that markets and disseminate educational material. ISSA ordered Image Industries to produce glossy brochures and a multimedia kit equipped with a sound filmstrip, wall map, South African flag, and a teacher's guide. These kits were sent to junior and high school pupils free. The programme cost the government \$90 000 for

²⁴² Special Collections..., *Department of Information, Annual Report for 1974*, p. 39; Special Collections..., *Department of Information, Annual Report for 1976*, p. 17; Burgess, p. 66; Nixon, p. 78.

²⁴³ Nixon, p. 78; Special Collections..., *Department of Information, Annual Report for 1974*, p. 39.

²⁴⁴ Special Collections..., *Department of Information, Annual Report for 1974*, pp. 39, 42-43; Special Collections..., *Department of Information, Annual Report for 1975*, p. 13; Nixon, pp. 78-79; Burgess, p. 66.

the manufacturing of 10 466 kits and printing 50 000 brochures.²⁴⁵ John Laurence voiced his concern regarding this malpractice: “By this means children outside South Africa are indoctrinated with tacit and often quite false racial or even anti-black propaganda, carrying the objective imprint of the innocent publisher.”²⁴⁶

The South African government’s principal method of influencing senators and legislators was using lobbying groups.²⁴⁷ Lobbying groups were either hired by the Department of Information or allies of Pretoria. Lobbying groups came in forms of public relationship agencies, front organization and corporations with interest in South Africa. Hull is cautious of the power that lobbying groups wield, “The strength of lobbyists in Washington, both domestic and foreign, is reflected in their ability to influence legislation that would bring tighter regulation of their activities.”²⁴⁸ South Africa acquired lobbying allies through business interest or visits to South Africa. Major corporations such as the Ford Motor Company and Gulf Oil utilised their permanent lobbying groups in the American capital to further their own needs and those of Pretoria. Corporations avoided the USA State Department and instead influenced the Commerce and Treasury Department to diminish trade and arms embargoes. In 1976, pro-South African lobbying groups were on the brink of eradicating import-export limits on Pretoria, but were stopped by Members of Congress who opposed USA involvement in Angola and doubted financial commitment to apartheid. An example of an ally gained through visits to South Africa was the American Legion. The American Legion is an organisation of conservative USA veterans who have influence over American business and politics. In 1978, the American Legion declared that it would boost South Africa’s image nationwide through the mass media and its journal *Legionnaire*; encourage investment; and urge exercises between the USA and South African Navy.²⁴⁹

Public relations agencies appointed to advance South Africa’s case, were most notably Casey, Lane and Wittendorf; Collier, Shannon, Rill and Edwards; and Sydney S. Baron. Casey, Lane and Wittendorf were tasked with preserving South Africa’s sugar quota in 1974. Donald deKieffer of Collier, Shannon, Rill and Edwards continued to provide his services to the

²⁴⁵ The United States Department of Justice, “Report of the Attorney General to the Congress of the United States on the administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act. 1975”, p. 292; De Vries, p. 26; Burgess, p. 81; *The World*, 1977.9.5, p. 4.

²⁴⁶ Laurence, p. 65.

²⁴⁷ Lobbying defined by Dictionary.com is “a group of members who work to conduct a campaign to influence members of a legislature to vote according to the group’s special interest.” Dictionary.com, “Lobby”, <<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/lobbying>>, s.a. (Accessed on May 9, 2016).

²⁴⁸ Hull, p. 80.

²⁴⁹ Burgess, p. 77; Laurence, pp. 68-68; Hull, p. 80.

Department of Information. As mentioned in the previous chapter, deKieffer arranged meetings between top USA senators and South African representatives. He also worked to influence congress campaigns and update the Department of Information on reports that might have an effect on Pretoria. By the end of 1977, deKieffer contributed “his own capital” towards the campaigns of 15 senators who were in favour of building a naval base in the Indian Ocean and who preferred African self-rule. In 1976, he also arranged fact-finding trips to South Africa for USA delegates such as John Dent, Philip Cane, and Richard Ichord. deKieffer also provided congressmen with fact sheets regarding critical issues surrounding South Africa. In a case in September 1976 concerning voting for a resolution of not acknowledging the homeland of Transkei, both Representatives Philip Cane and John Dent voted in opposition of the resolution, using the fact sheet provided by deKieffer to support their decision. In the end, the resolution was not approved because it failed to gain a two-thirds majority. DeKieffer’s services were used even after the Muldergate Scandal, costing the government a million rand per year up until March 1979.²⁵⁰

The Department of Information’s most prominent public relations consultant was Sydney S. Baron. Codenamed the ‘Red Baron’, it was the fourteenth biggest in the USA and New York’s topmost public relations company, with well-established connections in American politics. Baron was an expensive agency, handling significant corporations such as The Aluminum Company of America and Japanese Electrical Industry. The contract signed with Baron avows that Baron will directly report to the Secretary of Information and act as a public relations officer for South Africa; evaluate South African and American political, economic, strategic, and social attitudes towards South Africa; nurture objective and balanced treatment of South Africa in the American media by accurately conveying the meaning of South African policies; promote economic opportunities in South Africa for USA business and financial communities; and encourage a better understanding between the two nations, including ordinary citizens and government officials. The contract basically comes down to organising exchange visits, publications, attitude surveys, and press releases.²⁵¹

The contract with Baron on 17 March 1976 could not come at a better time. Only a month later the Soweto Uprising erupted, causing massive damage to South Africa’s international image. When faced with criticism, the owner, Sydney Baron, replied: “Every client can’t be

²⁵⁰ Hull, pp. 89-90; *Washington Post*, 1977.1.29. & *Sunday Times* (London), 1977.1.16. cited in Hull, pp. 89-90; *Beeld*, 1979.2.29, p. 3; Rees & Day, p. 200; Windrich, p. 52.

²⁵¹ P.H. Stone, “Muldergate on Madison Avenue”, *The Nation*, 14 April 1979, p. 390; *The Star*, 1977.12.8, p. 31.

Disneyworld.”²⁵² From 1976 to 1977, the payment for Baron increased from R239 000 to R565 000 per year.²⁵³ The English press was quite critical of the increased payment, and the *Daily News* argued “No amount of money will rehabilitate this country’s image if the Government persists in its disastrous handling of affairs as was demonstrated in the case of the Biko scandal.”²⁵⁴ Eschel Rhodie responded by affirming “the annual amount South Africa spends on public relations firms in America to help advance its image, is completely justifiable since we are in a struggle to survive.”²⁵⁵

Baron assigned the African-American, Andrew Hatcher, Vice-President International of Baron, to work on South Africa’s contention. Hatcher was well-known among black Americans for being the first Deputy Press Secretary in the White House during the Kennedy Administration. South Africa was delighted to acquire a black American to justify its cause by distorting the view that South Africans are racist, and a frontrunner of progress in race relations. Not only did Hatcher encourage black business investment in South Africa, but also organised visits for African-American legislators and journalists to South Africa. The movements of black guests were restricted when they visited South Africa. Daily and weekly newspapers received feature stories from Hatcher, depicting Pretoria in a favourable light. On 23 June 1976, Hatcher and the white anti-apartheid activist and executive director of the American Committee on Africa, George Houser, debated on NBC TV’s *Today Show*. Hatcher argued that South Africa was indeed changing and that the government allowed non-white participation in state affairs. Hatcher also placed advertisements supporting the independence of Transkei from South Africa in the *Ebony* and *Wall Street Journal* magazines. Furthermore, Hatcher and deKieffer worked together in public relations campaigns on television.²⁵⁶

As part of the agreement with the Department of Information, Baron organised two seminars for wealthy USA businessmen to invest in South Africa. Sponsored by the government body, the South African Trade Organisation (SAFTO), the first seminar took place in June 1977, with 300 corporate executives gathered at the Hilton Hotel in Rye, New York. Mulder was present at the seminar to explain the benefits of investing in South Africa and William Simon, Secretary of the USA Treasury, was paid \$10 000 to be a guest speaker. Hatcher resigned

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ *The Daily News*, 1977.12.8, p. 3; Stone, p. 390.

²⁵⁴ *The Daily News*, 1977.12.9, p. 22.

²⁵⁵ *Die Volksblad*, 1977.12.9, p. 3.

²⁵⁶ Nixon, pp. 84-89; Hull, p. 92; African Activist Archive, “A fine face for Apartheid”, <http://africanactivist.msu.edu/document_metadata.php?objectid=32-130-E84>, 1978. (Accessed on May 20, 2016).

after a quarrel erupted with Baron at the seminar. The next seminar was in Houston in 1978, where former President Ford was paid \$10 000 to persuade businessmen of the advantages of investing with Pretoria. McGoff was also a guest speaker at the discussion.²⁵⁷

After Hatcher's resignation in June 1977, De Villiers received a job offer from Baron. De Villiers notified Mulder and Rhodie that he would be leaving the Department of Information, since he had accepted the post of Vice-Chairman with Baron. By 1977, the Department of Information was under scrutiny from the press and suffered sensitive information leaks. Advocate Van Rooyen claims that an uncertain De Villiers approached him to inform him of Baron's offer, but needed advice from Vorster regarding leaving his civil servant position. Vorster recommended that De Villiers should dissociate himself from Rhodie. In *The Daily News* De Villiers claimed that he received an offer he could not decline and in *Die Burger* he said it was not easy to leave a department that valued him. While employed at Baron, De Villiers did manage to purchase police batons for the South African police. The South African government would not discontinue the services of Baron, even after the Information Scandal broke.²⁵⁸

Multiple times Rhodie asserted that South Africa did not interfere with the political affairs of other countries; however, the Department of Information was trying to affect the discourse of American politics. Through Baron, the Department of Information sent R855 to Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign in 1975. Rhodie's judgement of reaching leaders before they became president backfired when Carter turned out to be opposed to the minority rule in South Africa. During the Carter administration, the relationship between the United States of America and South Africa would deteriorate. Other less documented cases of South African involvement in USA politics were the financial contribution to unseat USA senators who was antagonistic towards apartheid. Rhodie claims that \$120 000 were provided for the defeat of Senator John Tunney in 1976. In 1978, the Democrat, and Chairman of the Senate's Foreign Relations subcommittee on Africa, Senator Dick Clark, was targeted. Clark was keen on emphasising racial issues in South Africa. Clark was defeated by the conservative Republican, Roger Jepsen, with the aid of a \$250 000 donation from the Department of Information for his election campaign. Jepsen denied South African involvement in his campaign, but Hatcher admitted involvement to British journalist, Anthony Sampson. He

²⁵⁷ Hull, p. 93; Stone, p. 391; Rothmeyer, "The South Africa lobby", p. 356.

²⁵⁸ De Villiers, pp. 152-153, 159; Sanders, p. 63; *The Daily News*, 1977.12.8, p. 3; *Die Burger*, 1977.9.19, p. 3; ARCA, "*Die Transvaler/Oggendblad*, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – *Basson Collection*, p. 8.

recalled that, while visiting Pretoria, he promised Mulder and Vorster that the defeat of Clark was imminent. Other evidence suggesting South African interference was the circulation of pamphlets during the election campaign accusing Clark of being lenient on communism. Needless to say, South Africa rejoiced in Clark's defeat.²⁵⁹

The USA was an important strategic target for the Department of Information. It was certainly a strenuous task to influence the views of a superpower, but the Department of Information implemented their strategy of reaching top decision makers in the USA. The Department of Information was also bent on altering the views of its own citizens.

4.3. THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION'S INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa was subjected to internal propaganda from the Department of Information and the department used the country itself as a propaganda method. Previously-mentioned foreign visiting tours or fact-finding trips were an efficient method of gaining influence, friends, and collaborators. South African businessmen and information officers abroad were instructed to search for people of importance and invite them on trips to South Africa. Most of these fact-finding trips included all expenses, overtly and covertly paid for by the Department of Information. Guests were shown Simon's Town, the homelands, and non-white universities. Foreign legislators, members of parliament and congress, editors, cultural leaders, scientists, and industrialists met with government officials, newspapers, politicians, organisations, and undercover propagandists. Visitors were pushed to buy property in South Africa so that they would be more supportive of white domination. Once foreign visitors accepted the invitation, they were treated luxuriously and entertained at the Mala Mala Game Reserve. Even though some visitors remained critical of the apartheid regime, the scheme did offer a high success rate.²⁶⁰ Visitors praised South Africa upon their return, for example, in April 1979, the French guest, Jean-Paul Pigasse, published favourable articles in Paris' financial magazine *Les Echos*. The article stated:

“The European who arrives in Johannesburg for the first time, generally has of South Africa, only the sordid or disturbing image of the Soweto riots. He imagines the country on the verge of civil war, the brutal oppression of black people by whites, the hate inspired

²⁵⁹ Rees & Day, pp. 200-201; Nixon, pp. 97-99; De Vries, p. 41; Stone, p. 391; S. Stevens, “‘From the viewpoint of a Southern Governor’: The Carter Administration and apartheid”, *Diplomatic History* 36(5), November 2012, pp. 878-879.

²⁶⁰ Burgess, pp. 3-4, 65; Laurence, pp. 64-65.

separation of races. Unless he devotes his entire visit to the game reserve, admirable it is true, and submerges himself in the deep realities of the country, he will discover that there is a great difference between myth and realities ... However disappointing this may be, to those who in Europe, continue to denounce South Africa, the whites and blacks are rubbing shoulders more and more in restaurants, in cinemas and even on beaches.”²⁶¹

Another prime example of the success of fact-finding trips was the case of the Atlantic Council. Professor John Hutchinson of California visited South Africa in November 1977. During his visit, he expressed his concern on communism and wanted to establish an organisation to combat left-wing academics, such as the Council on Foreign Relations. Rhodie discussed the establishment of the Atlantic Council with Vorster, Mulder, and Horwood. In 1978, Horwood authorised funds to establish offices in London and New York. Another effective measure to manipulate information was controlling the flow of people. Visa control supplemented the propaganda initiatives by screening those that were critical. The South African government imposed strict control over visas to ward off foreigners critical to the Apartheid regime.²⁶²

Accepting an invitation from South Africa was subject to scrutiny. Invitations might be interpreted as bribes or buy-offs. As soon as left-wing groups discovered that an individual agreed to visit South Africa, they would apply pressure on him or her concerning a visit to the racist government. Furthermore, leaks were known to occur when important visitors would arrive in South Africa, with guests being bombarded by questions from the press. Therefore, the department established a front organisation to attract prominent opinion formers. Two major information fronts were the South African Freedom Foundation and the Foreign Affairs Association. The South African Freedom Foundation was headed by Red Metrowich in Johannesburg. The foundation consisted of wealthy trustees and backers such as the Chairman of Pick ‘n Pay, Raymond Ackerman, and the Managing Director of Nedbank, Gerry Muller. The aim of the foundation was to lure influential visitors, to publish books, and to conduct research. Metrowich was also the author of a book on communism, which was distributed through the Department of Information. The Department of Information gave

²⁶¹ ARCA, “Translated article of Jean-Paul Pigasse of *Les Echos*.”, *PV 895, K24 Vol. 1 - Heunis Collection*, 1979.

²⁶² Rees & Day, pp. 201-202; W.R. Cotter, “‘We have nothing to hide’: Contacts between South Africa and the U.S.”, *Social Dynamics* 3(2), 1977, pp. 3, 4, 10.

R500 000 for the foundation and for Metrowich's companies, Valiant Publishers and Visual Publications.²⁶³

The FAA acted in a similar fashion as the South African Freedom Foundation. The FAA was established in Pretoria on 7 April 1975 and received R900 000 for research, publishing, and conscripting foreigners to visit South Africa. The organisation also arranged seminars and congresses. The front organisation was apparently founded by wealthy men such as Luyt, Ackerman, Joggie Vermooten, Dennis Greyvenstein, and Jan Pickard. In 1975, Ackerman received a list of influential Americans from deKieffer and started sending invitations to individuals he had never heard of before. Using the same methods as the Department of Information, the organisation employed the son of the New York mayor, Bernard Beame, as lobbyist. The Director of FAA, Cas de Villiers, was tasked with conducting research, which mostly involved communism in Africa and publishing fact sheets, books, and brochures for use in the USA, Britain, and Germany. Cas de Villiers met with Reagan and the former US Secretary of State, Dean Rusk.²⁶⁴

The Erasmus Commission heavily criticised Cas de Villiers for being immature and living a lavish life while he was director of FAA, while FAA funds were also used for personal ventures. Cas de Villiers purchased an expensive house of R90 000 as an office for the FAA and registered it as his own private firm. He also bought glamorous cars and had a chauffeur. The relationship between Cas de Villiers and his co-workers were strenuous, and they blamed him of having no administrative qualities, advising his officials on their own fields of expertise, committing plagiarism, being short-tempered, and using state money for personal gain. At one time, Cas de Villiers and Dr Daan Prinsloo was on the verge of a lawsuit regarding the cost of templates. The Erasmus Commission found that Cas de Villiers organised seminars insufficiently. A conference in Washington DC was in jeopardy after a sponsor withdrew because of the death of Biko. Cas de Villiers did not proceed with organising a new sponsor through his fronts in the USA. He previously used external links to organise a successful conference in Hamburg, Germany. In 1977, Cas de Villiers also developed a love interest with the public relations officer, Hester Lamprecht. The lovers used state money for vacations abroad, for example visiting Disney World. However, the Erasmus

²⁶³ De Villiers, p. 141; Rhoodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 227; Rees & Day, p. 202; Burgess, p. 33; *The Citizen*, 1978.11.25, p. 3; *The Star*, 1979.1.19, p. 19.

²⁶⁴ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, p.9; *The Star*, 1979.1.19, p. 19; *The Citizen*, 1978.11.22, p. 3; Hull, pp. 96-97; Rhoodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 268-269, 275; *The Star*, 1978.11.24, p. 5; *The Cape Times*, 1978.10.23, p. 8.

Commission did find that no huge amounts of money disappeared from the FAA under the directorship of Cas de Villiers. Rhodie defended Cas de Villiers by stating that the Erasmus Commission attacked his personality and did not view the connections he made. Rhodie blamed the accusations against Cas de Villiers on the jealousy of his co-workers.²⁶⁵

The FAA came under scrutiny after investigations started into the affairs of the Department of Information. Cas de Villiers consulted with the newly elected Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha, about disbanding the FAA after receiving threats from the press. On 21 November 1978, Pik Botha approved the disbandment of the FAA. Harry Schwarz, Chairman of the Progressive Federal Executive, was unhappy with the decision because he was of opinion that the organisation was doing excellent work.²⁶⁶

Rhodie established the front organisation, Institute for the Study of Plural Societies, in the Department of Sociology at the University of Pretoria. The front organisation was headed by Eschel's brother, Professor Nic Rhodie. The front organisation in the Department of Sociology received R100 000 towards research intended for publication and arranging conferences. Nic Rhodie's objective was to create a favourable academic and scientific impression of South Africa and the separate development policies. The Erasmus Commission mentioned that the Institute was productive and free of any irregularities.²⁶⁷

Special front organisations were established by the Department of Information to act as a conduit for the transfer of large sums of money overseas. These specialised fronts were Homerus Finance Corporation and Thor Communicators. Homerus was directed by David Abramson and John Heinrich. By 1978, the front had R200 000 of secret funds in its possession. The most important and secretive financial front for Eschel Rhodie was Thor Communicators. Rhodie appointed the film magnet, Andre Pieterse; the Jewish financier, Oscar Hurwits; and Advocate van Rooyen as directors of Thor. Millions of rand travelled through the Thor channel to a Thesaurus Continental Securities account in Switzerland. Rhodie appointed Van Rooyen as a director for his expertise in international law and his prominence. Van Rooyen was briefed about the secret operations, but never about the Department of Information's intentions or policies. As Thor received \$3.5 million in October 1976 and \$1.5 million in June 1977, Van Rooyen became confused as to where these funds

²⁶⁵ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, pp. 9-11; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 272, 275-276.

²⁶⁶ *The Citizen*, 1978.11.22, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.22, p. 1.

²⁶⁷ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, p. 11; *Rapport*, 1979.2.18, p. 12; Burgess, p. 88.

were coming from. More signing of suspicious documents and financial entries displeased Van Rooyen. For example, in April 1977, Van Rooyen was approached by lawyers who needed him to sign documents for property bought in Bantry Bay, Cape Town. Van Rooyen advised Rhodie not to buy the property since Rhodie would pay double transfer duties, a cost the state was unwilling to pay. Thereafter, Rhodie discontinued the purchase of the property.²⁶⁸

Van Rooyen's suspicions increased when Eschel Rhodie asked him in April 1977 to sign papers for renting a luxury cubicle at Loftus Versfeld. The cubicle was registered to Thor Communicators for R800 000 over a period of two years. When Van Rooyen inquired why the Department of Information required a cubicle, Rhodie explained that the cubicle would be used for meetings with secret visitors that did not wish to be seen cooperating with the government, and additionally, it was a great way of exposing the visitors to rugby. However, Van Rooyen noted that the cubicle had a name board, 'Department of Information'. Van Rooyen mentioned that it was ironic for a top secret operational facility to be visible in a stadium accommodating 60 000 people. The board was replaced with 'Thor Communicators' and after further intervention from Van Rooyen, the board was removed altogether. Van Rooyen also mentioned witnessing Rhodie and his relatives using the cubicle. The cubicles were abandoned when Van Rooyen made a phony call about an impending press investigation into the cubicles. De Villiers had a similar complaint. Rhodie required a meeting place with secret collaborators away from the Department of Information's offices at Ad Astra. Rhodie decided to utilise Hurwitz's newly constructed shopping mall as the offices for his meeting place, barely a block away from Ad Astra. The offices was formed into a suite and lavishly furnished. The Thor Communicators name board also appeared at the offices. De Villiers explained to Rhodie the disadvantages of establishing offices in a shopping mall: "There are at least four store windows facing on the entrance and neither we nor our collaborators are exactly unknown. Some would even call you a celebrity."²⁶⁹ De Villiers believed Rhodie's persistence to leave the offices intact until the Muldergate Scandal broke, was ill-conceived.²⁷⁰

Thor Communicators was a front organisation, specially adapted as a means to register property or as a channel to transfer funds for the purchase of property in South Africa,

²⁶⁸ *The Star*, 1979.1.19, p. 19; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 118, 245; Rees & Day, pp. 30, 102-104.

²⁶⁹ De Villiers, p. 114.

²⁷⁰ Rees & Day, pp. 109-110; De Villiers, pp. 113-115; De Vries, pp. 36-37.

Europe, and the USA. Rhoodie's plausible explanation for the acquisition of property was that it might be needed as an emergency reserve fund in case the secret G-fund was discontinued. Property were used as front offices, rented for an additional income, or simply never used. In South Africa, the Department of Information bought a house for Sehume of CFFS in Soweto; two houses in Pretoria, a farm at Vrekvêr, a yard in Plettenberg Bay, and flats in Clifton, Cape Town. Through Thor Communicators, Rhoodie bought six Valhalla flats for R226 000 in June 1976. Van Zyl Alberts, with his family, also bought five flats. Rhoodie claimed that these flats were for foreign secret information operatives who had a three-year guaranteed salary after their services were finished. Van Rooyen noticed that two of the flats were not available for rent from June 1976 to May 1977. Clive Parks, the landlord and agent who sold the flats, told Van Rooyen that the flats were used by Eschel and Deneys Rhoodie. The Valhalla flats went on sale for R1 million after the Information Scandal. In Europe, the department bought two apartments in France. The Department of Information, while in the USA, bought a house in Miami Beach in 1975 through another front organisation, called PineTree Drive Company. John McGoff boasted to Michigan acquaintances that he possessed a Miami Beach house and his brother, Dan McGoff, used the house to entertain guests. The house was sold in 1978 for \$360 000 after PineTree Drive was dissolved.²⁷¹

Making use of South African politicians, businessmen, and especially celebrities, was a key method to impress foreigners. As with the golf star Gary Player, the Department of Information made use of South Africa's prestigious heart surgeon, Professor Chris Barnard. Barnard performed the first heart transplant in 1967, and therefore the state conscripted him involuntarily as an unofficial representative. Barnard was paid R22 000 from the secret funds for his overseas expenses and still had to use R5 000 from his own pocket. He met with kings and leaders in the Middle East and kingmakers in the USA, and collaborated with Eschel Rhoodie in addressing audiences. For example, on 12 August 1977, Barnard and Rhoodie held a seminar for bridge engineers on how to respond to difficult questions asked by the international community. Barnard managed to establish contact with the American trade unionist, George Meany. Meany wanted to implement a trade boycott against South Africa, especially on citrus products. With the help of Sydney Baron, Barnard was able to attend a meeting with Meany in 1978. Meany suffered from heart issues and Barnard was able to

²⁷¹ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6...", P 58 – Basson Collection, p. 9; De Vries, pp. 42-43; Rees & Day, pp. 105-107; Rothmyer, "The McGoff Grab", p. 36; *The Citizen*, 1979.1.27, p. 3; *Sunday Times*, 1980.11.23, p. 5; *The Citizen*, 1980.5.27, p. 9.

examine Meany while persuading him to send trade-union delegates to South Africa. However, the initiative would ultimately fail. Previously Barnard had cooperated on this exploit, he requested that the children of Robert Sobukwe should attend his funeral. Barnard was critical of the NP, but remained a patriot: “I never did this for the Government anyway, but for South Africa. I am not a Nationalist, but a South African.”²⁷² His services as an unofficial ambassador still continued when P.W. Botha took over as Prime Minister.²⁷³

The propaganda war effort was dealt a massive blow on 16 June 1976 in Soweto. Police opened fire on a crowd of youthful protesters, leaving an estimated 200 dead. The Soweto Uprising marks the turning point in the struggle against apartheid. Black people received instant solidarity from the international community. The global media quickly focused on the shootings and the iconic image of a dying Hector Pieterse being carried by Mbuyisa Makhubo, with his sister running beside them, reflecting the true nature of discontent under the black majority. In contrast to the success of 1975, the Department of Information experienced difficulties selling the damaged image of South Africa to the free West in 1976. The first move to counter the Soweto Uprising was implementing censorship on journalists covering the unrest. The police acted as the only source of information, but foreign journalists were able to speak with locals of Soweto. As previously mentioned, the Department of Information hired Baron, and info publications failed to mention the uprising in order to protect South Africa’s image. The Carter administration was pushed for arms and trade embargoes by AAM and black leaders. Although Carter did vote at the UN for an arms embargo, Kissinger advised him not to implement a trade embargo against South Africa. Nevertheless, the Soweto Uprising resulted in limited disinvestment of foreign capital.²⁷⁴

The following year, South Africa was in the limelight again for the murder of Biko while in police custody. His death was initially a cover-up, but the journalist, Helen Zille, revealed that he was beaten to death. Resentment from the international media increased and adapted a heavy negative tone towards South Africa as a result of the Biko affair, the unmoved response from the Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, and the lack of accountability of those

²⁷² *Sunday Times*, 1979.9.9, p. 1.

²⁷³ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; *Sunday Times*, 1979.9.9, p. 1; *Die Transvaler*, 1977.6.22, p. 6; *Cape Argus*, 1980.5.15, p. 7; Rees & Day, pp. 203-204; Rothmyer, “The South Africa Lobby”, p. 458.

²⁷⁴ Nixon, pp. 81-83; Sanders, pp. 164-165; News 24, “Operation Blackwash”, <<http://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/Operation-Blackwash-20150430>>, 2013.8.25. (Accessed on May 22, 2016); M. Swilling, “Living in the interregnum: Crisis, reform and socialist alternative in South Africa”, *Third World Quarterly* 9(2), April 1987, pp. 411-412.

responsible for his death. The death of Biko was announced shortly before Cas de Villiers met with Reagan, who requested answers for his death.²⁷⁵ Rhoodie was convinced that the damage was irreversible and declared in the Department of Information's Annual Report of 1977:

“When the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed on December 14 last that 1978 was going to be the International Anti-Apartheid Year, it brought to a climax the worst period of anti-South African publicity and hostility in the country's history ... It received the most in-depth coverage of any South African news story since the first heart transplant and was extremely damaging.”²⁷⁶

Circumstances in 1977 were dreary for the Department of Information. It became apparent that the department had a mole leaking sensitive information to the English press. The department was also struggling to safeguard disorderly propaganda campaigns. However, Rhoodie still remained steadfast in his propaganda schemes towards South African and international citizens. In October 1977, Rhoodie arranged for aircraft to bombard townships with propaganda leaflets, accusing riots as the central cause of unemployment and hindering the future of the youth. Remarkably, the propaganda operation coincided with the announcement of a rise in rent. He also slammed back at foreign governments and newspapers such as the *Washington Star*, accusing them of anti-white racism and double standards. He argued that, while Biko's murder gained massive exposure, the death of Joe Torris, a 23-year old American who was drowned by the police, received minor coverage. The *Daily Dispatch* responded that Rhoodie was missing the point, since Biko was a person of status and was fighting against inhumanity.²⁷⁷

In the 1970s, South Africa was again experiencing pressure from movements for the civil rights of black people. Different views on the future of South Africa were manifested in the country's diverse groupings of Afrikaners, English speakers, and the black majority. The Department of Information recognised the need to manipulate all the cultural groups in South Africa through film, television, newspapers, and publications.

Vital to the Department of Information's propaganda scheme, was setting up publication firms to disseminate South African propaganda both internationally and locally. The most

²⁷⁵ Nixon, p. 91; Sanders, p. 63; *Die Vaderland*, 1977.10.11, p. 11; *The Cape Times*, 1978.10.23, p. 8.

²⁷⁶ Special Collections..., *Department of Information, Annual Report for 1977*, p. 3.

²⁷⁷ Sanders, p. 63; *Daily Dispatch*, 1977.11.4, p. 16; *Daily Dispatch*, 1977.10.29, p. 2; *The Citizen*, 1977.10.27, p. 14; *The Star*, 1977.10.26, p. 4.

prominent magazine was the glossy *Panorama*, which was produced on a bi-monthly basis and distributed in South Africa, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands. The Department of Information was prepared to deliver a vast amount of different publications wherever the need arose. For example, a considerable number of brochures were printed for overseas export purposes, in an attempt to deny recognition of Soweto's ghetto status and to maintain assurance that the township was developing. Other publications brought forth by the Department of Information and loaded with propaganda messages, includes *SA – Visual History*, *Tourist Guide to SA*, *Towards Dialogue and Détente*, *SWA Annual 1975*, *The Black Worker of SA*, *Swart Tuislande in Suid-Afrika* (Black Homelands in South Africa), *Stepping into the Future*, *SA – 500 Years of History in SA*, *Africa at a Glance*, and *SA Progress*. Rhodie made different publications available for South Africans travelling abroad in order to arm themselves with information so that they would be able to defend their country in arguments.²⁷⁸

The South African government also targeted black audiences through publications. The *African Development* magazine targeted literate black people in South Africa and adjacent territories. The magazine *Drum* enjoyed a respectable circulation among black South Africans. It expressed African culture and addressed the struggle of the black people. At first there was an attempt to buy *Drum*, but it failed. The Department of Information's method of countering *Drum* was by establishing *Hit* and *Pace*. These magazines contained articles on development in the homelands, black leaders, and general entertainment. According to Rhodie, *Hit* circulated 90 000 copies per month in 1978. *Pace* did well, with 86 000 sales between July and December 1978. Comics with superheroes were also distributed for the African youth. Between 1976 and 1978, *Tiger Ingwe* and *Mighty Man* were designed with the intention of diffusing so-called radical communist views, assisting others, and supporting the law. Van Zyl Alberts, a central figure in the management of 17 publication projects, was tasked to establish Afri-Comics. The artwork for the comics was done by Van Zyl Alberts' wife, Bettie, and the USA firm Richard Manville Inc.²⁷⁹

The Department of Information utilised moving pictures to indoctrinate audiences. Companies created by or linked to the Department of Information includes Visiorama; Heyns

²⁷⁸ Burgess, p. 10; *Hoofstad*, 1977.10.1, p. 6; *Die Vaderland*, 1977.9.30, p. 15.

²⁷⁹ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 280-283; South African Comic Books, "Tiger Ingwe", <<http://southafricancomicbooks.blogspot.co.za/2012/09/tiger-ingwe.html>>, 2012.9.11. (Accessed on May 24, 2016); *Sunday Express*, 1979.1.11, p. 23; South African Comic Books, "Afri-Comics", <<http://southafricancomicbooks.blogspot.co.za/2011/06/afri-comics.html>>, 2011.6.7. (Accessed on May 24, 2016).

Film and Television; Robinson Heyns; and Film Trust. The film and television production company, Visiorama, was headed by the Department of Information's cameraman, David Oosthuizen. He also spied on foreign film and television production companies operating in South Africa. Oosthuizen possessed thirty percent of shares in Visiorama and Van Zyl Alberts seventy percent. In 1974, Heyns Film and Television was bought by Van Zyl Alberts as an agent of the state, and unsurprisingly, he became the chairman of the company.²⁸⁰ Heyns Films produced the action adventure movie with Anthony Quinn, *Tiger's Don't Cry*, with money from the secret G-fund. Payment issues with Quinn were resolved by offering him a flat in Valhalla. The movie was released in several countries in 1977, such as Columbia, Norway, and West Germany. Heyns Films also produced other films with the intention of easing tension among Soweto pupils, such as *Inkunzi* and *Udeliwe*.²⁸¹

Another film entertainment propaganda scheme Eschel Rhodie had in mind was the establishment of a black film industry similar to Hollywood. This would allow the government to control what its black population was viewing. Van Zyl Alberts and the film magnate, André Pieterse, shared the idea of constructing black theatres. In 1976, Rhodie formed Film Trust Plaza, consisting of Van Zyl Albert's Alfeskor Theatres and Pieterse's Ma-Africa. Alfeskor Theatres was owned by the government and Ma-Africa acted as a private enterprise. Both companies received an interest-free loan of R825 000 for the construction of theatres. However, the production of Pieterse's movie, *Golden Rendezvous*, experienced financial difficulties. Delayed cooperation with the Department of Plural Relations and affiliated Black Administration Boards to aid in the construction of black theatres, caused Pieterse to suffer more financial losses. Pieterse, facing bankruptcy, consulted with Rhodie in January 1977 about using the R825 000 as security for a production loan. Rhodie asserted that Pieterse should prevent the banks from demanding the money back. Pieterse's attempts to save the money were in vain when he failed to sell *Golden Rendezvous* to big film companies. He was forced to use the R825 000 to pay off production debts.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, pp. 13-14; *The Star*, 1979.1.19, p. 19.

²⁸¹ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 284-286; Rees & Day, p. 49; IMDb, "Target of an assassin", <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0075307/releaseinfo>>, s.a. (Accessed on May 26, 2016).

²⁸² Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into alleged irregularities in the former Department of Information*, p. 46; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 292-295; De Vries, pp. 41-42; *Weekend Argus*, 1980.2.7, p. 7; *The Argus*, 1980.2.15, p. 2.

The Department of Information also provided the SABC with funds to deploy covert propaganda. Dubbed Project 'G-61', the SABC was tasked to finance an overseas audio news service. Between 1974 and 1978, the SABC received R445 000 for this project. Even though the Chairman of the SABC, Piet Meyer, denied these allegations and maintained that the SABC was a reliable source of information, Pik Botha confirmed the accusations as true. Investigations by the *Sunday Express* revealed that the SABC was still receiving money from secret state funds in 1981, amounting to a total of R840 000.²⁸³

Rhodie used most mediums at his disposal to channel propaganda to the masses. The aim of the propaganda varied from inciting fear, to mustering support from ordinary Afrikaans citizens. Press releases and television interviews was an effective method of getting messages across. For example, in September 1977, Rhodie called for South African citizens to arm themselves with information and sending letters to the White House and the Netherlands, objecting to foreign interference. He also requested financial aid from citizens and businesses in order to be more effective abroad in facing growing confrontation against South Africa. In 1977, the Secretary General of the UN announced that it would spend R250 000 on broadcasting anti-apartheid messages to South Africa in English and Afrikaans. Rhodie remained firm by stating that the UN has been trying for years to expose South Africans to UN propaganda.²⁸⁴

It became apparent that even though the Department of Information had numerous publications and front organisation at its disposal to alter global and local opinions, it still lacked a daily newspaper service especially targeted at English-speaking citizens. The decision to start an English daily newspaper from scratch would later prove to be the most fatal course for the political careers of the Info Cast.

4.4. THE CITIZEN

Connie Mulder, Eschel Rhodie, Van Zyl Alberts, and Les de Villiers were convinced that attempts to shape global opinion regarding South Africa was futile unless the views and perspectives of the English press could be constrained. By 1973, they became confident that the English press were inflicting tremendous harm on South Africa's image abroad. In other words, Mulder, Rhodie, and Les de Villiers were convinced that the attitude of the English

²⁸³ *Die Transvaler*, 1981.2.2, p. 2; *Sunday Express*, 1981.1.25, p. 1; *Sunday Express*, 1981.2.22, p. 7; *The Natal Witness*, 1981.1.27, p. 10.

²⁸⁴ *The Citizen*, 1977.9.27, p. 10; *Hoofstad*, 1977.9.2, p. 16; *Sunday Tribune*, 1977.12.18, p. 21.

press was a leading cause of disinvestment. Les de Villiers viewed the selective presentation of oppression and tyranny by the English press as a sign of their hostile and negative stance towards the government and South Africa. Furthermore, the English press acted as the main medium of information for foreign visitors and tourists who were unable to receive a 'balanced view' from the Afrikaans press. Rhodie pointed out that eighty percent of the foreign press obtained their news from the *Rand Daily Mail*, *The Financial Mail*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Star*. Even fact-finding visitors were exposed to the negative standpoint of the English press. There were two means of addressing the English press; first was the implementation of press censorship, and secondly, starting a counter-newspaper. At first, Vorster asked Mulder in 1975 to announce a code of conduct for the regulation of the fourth estate. Needless to say, the attempt to instigate censorship was confronted by heavy criticism from both the English and Afrikaans press. It was clear that the Department of Information needed to obtain a newspaper in order to promote balanced reporting.²⁸⁵

The undertaking to obtain an English daily newspaper to obscure the views of individuals using English as a medium of information could be divided into three phases. The first phase started when Rhodie set his eyes on buying the *Natal Mercury*. Rhodie, Van den Berg, and Piet Koornhof explored the premises of this bid but failed to make an attempt to buy the newspaper. The second phase gained momentum when Van Zyl Alberts noticed that SAAN share value was decreasing. The businessman saw the perfect opportunity to gain control over a powerful anti-government-orientated newspaper group. Van Zyl Alberts revealed his idea to Rhodie, Mulder, Les de Villiers, and Van den Bergh at a braai in the winter of 1975. Mulder would become personally involved in the project dubbed 'Anna-Marie'. Vorster approved the new tactic but warned Rhodie and Mulder to be very cautious with this project. Van Zyl Alberts was able to buy shares worth R200 000 with secret funds. Monitoring the downward spiral of SAAN shares, Van Zyl Alberts suggested in September that it was the ideal opportunity to purchase all of the shares. Rhodie decided not to use Van Zyl Alberts as a front man, since he was already managing *To The Point* and lacked the personal funds to make the bid believable. Rhodie preferred to recruit the more prominent front man, Luyt, for

²⁸⁵ De Vries, p. 43; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 314-315; Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, p. 52; De Villiers, pp. 117-118.

the business undertaking. Les de Villiers strongly objected to Rhodie's reasoning of deploying Luyt, since he was already involved in other secret assignments.²⁸⁶

Without prior warning, Luyt made an offer of R9.5 million for the SAAN shares in October 1975. Somehow the press got wind of the bid and on 28 October 1975 the press released information on Luyt's attempt to buy SAAN. Rattled by Luyt's proposal, SAAN's resistance to his bid increased. In order to create a favourable impression for Luyt, Rhodie and Van Zyl Alberts also tried to arrange with McGoff and the German publisher, Axel Springer, to back Luyt's offer. Eleven days after the initial proposal, the tension came to a halt when Abe Bailey Trust denied Luyt as a shareholder. There are multiple theories on why the bid failed, such as premature leaking of information. However, evidence in *The Citizen* suggests that Luyt, probably unintentional, made his motives clear before buying SAAN. When the press asked why a fertiliser millionaire wanted to buy a struggling newspaper group, Luyt replied that he believed SAAN should be more objective in their reporting. Without a doubt, Luyt's intention was clear and sparked unease among SAAN staff. A final offer of R12 million was made by Luyt on 3 November 1975, but was turned down within four hours. Phase two failed and the Department of Information needed a new approach.²⁸⁷

The final phase commenced when Rhodie, General Van den Bergh, Van Zyl Alberts, Les de Villiers, Luyt, and his auditor Fourie du Preez met at the Burgers Park Hotel on 10 November 1975. At the meeting, the establishment of an English daily newspaper was discussed, as well as how much government expenditure was required to set the project in motion. Luyt and Du Preez estimated that the project would cost approximately R8 million to fund. The decisive meeting took place at Les de Villiers' residence on 4 December 1975. Mulder was also present during this meeting to approve the project. This time, Luyt and Du Preez estimated that the cost of establishing a newspaper from scratch would amount to R12 million. A dispute erupted between Luyt and Van Zyl Alberts over the overall cost. Rhodie made it clear that Van Zyl Alberts would also keep an eye on figures for the project. To ease the situation, Van den Bergh explained to Luyt that Vorster had personally selected him to be the public figure heading this project because of his successful status as businessman and that he had no connection to the government, unlike Van Zyl Alberts running *To The Point*. Mulder

²⁸⁶ Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, pp. 52-53, 55; De Villiers, pp. 120-121; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 316-318.

²⁸⁷ Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, p. 56; De Villiers, p. 122; *The Citizen*, 1978.2.16, p. 14; A. Jones, "From rightest to 'brightest'? Strange tale of South Africa's *Citizen*", *Journal of South African Studies* 24(2), June 1998, p. 329.

decided that the required money should be lent to Luyt. The loan capital should be placed in a bank and used as a ‘pool’ to generate nine to ten percent interest as operating cost for *The Citizen*, roughly totalling R130 000 interest per month. It was also agreed that Luyt should repay the loan in ten years’ time at three percent interest. *The Citizen* would start producing newspapers in September 1976.²⁸⁸

A question shrouded in mystery is who had knowledge of the Department of Information’s plan to start *The Citizen*. This is where the accounts of different Info role players contradict one another. It could be reasoned that the rigid ambiguous accounts was the result of deceit to cover up lies and a communication gap between different stakeholders in the project. According to Rhodie, he personally informed Vorster on 3 November 1975 that Operation Anne-Marie was resuming in the form of the establishment of *The Citizen*. In this account, Vorster gave Rhodie permission to proceed with caution as it was vital to keep the project secret. Vorster would later explain that he only became aware of the state funding of *The Citizen* through Barrie in August 1977. Barrie denied ever informing Vorster of *The Citizen*.²⁸⁹

However, the testimony delivered by Van den Bergh to the Erasmus Commission reveals another side. After the meeting on 4 December 1975, Van den Bergh reported to Vorster about the plans to establish a new daily newspaper. Vorster instructed Van den Bergh not to get involved with Luyt or any newspaper, but to keep his ‘ears to the ground’ and to report developments to Vorster. Van den Bergh kept Vorster updated on proceedings and Vorster expressed his unhappiness about the project. When Van den Bergh informed Rhodie and Mulder that Vorster did not approve of the scheme, they replied that Vorster, in fact, did approve the project. According to sources from the *Sunday Times*, Van den Bergh provided the Erasmus Commission with documented or recorded evidence of Vorster’s knowledge in 1975. Rhodie also claimed that the cabinet was aware of the fact that *The Citizen* was funded by the state. *Die Transvaler* reported in 1979 that there existed no concrete evidence supporting Rhodie’s claims. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that senior cabinet members were not informed of the secret project and were equally surprised by the dealings of the Department of Information. For example, Horwood asserted that documents received in

²⁸⁸ Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, p. 56; De Vries, p. 44; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 318-321; De Villiers, pp. 123, 124-126; *The Star*, 1978.11.3, p. 5.

²⁸⁹ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 317-318; ARCA, “*Sunday Times*, 1979.4.1, Proof claimed that Vorster knew in 1975”, PV 451, 1/176/1/3 – J.A. Hertzog Collection, 1978; ARCA, “*Sunday Times*, 1979.4.8, Barrie: I didn’t tell Mr Vorster”, PV 451, 1/176/1/3 - Hertzog Collection, 1978.

1976-1978 for the allocation of funds from the Defence Department, mentioned nothing about *The Citizen*. The cabinet was officially informed of *The Citizen* only two days before the Premier elections of 26 September 1978.²⁹⁰

On 23 January 1976, Luyt publically announced his intention of launching *The Citizen*. This came as a great shock to the English newspaper industry. The *Rand Daily Mail* struggled to grasp why Luyt would start business in a market that was losing money. The rivalry between *The Citizen* and the SAAN Group was escalating into a newspaper feud. The *Sunday Express* and *Rand Daily Mail* started investigating *The Citizen*. The Department of Information decided to hire British-born editor of the *Financial Gazette*, Martin Spring, as the new Chief Editor of *The Citizen*. Spring was purposefully never informed of the secret state funds. In this way, his arguments denying the involvement of state funds would carry more weight. Rhodie presented Luyt with an editorial charter, stipulating the guidelines to which the newspaper should adhere.²⁹¹ These guidelines included the following:

“The Paper may not be changed; the paper shall undertake to publish nothing that will endanger the political, social, economic position of the white population of the Republic of South Africa; the paper shall not tolerate communism or further its aims; the paper shall not undertake or publish anything that will endanger the constitutional chosen Government of the Republic of South Africa; the paper supports the broad objectives of the present government in respect of separate political development of the black and the white population of the RSA, as well as anti-communism policy and security laws of the RSA.”²⁹²

Most senior newspaper editors were obligated to sign the charter. It became clear that the main purpose of *The Citizen* was to act as state propaganda organ. Rhodie also insisted that applicants for executive positions should be screened before appointment. Before the launch of *The Citizen*, Rhodie agreed to pay Luyt R220 000 to sponsor the 1976 Grand Prix and in this way advertise *The Citizen* on the track and on television. *The Citizen* launched on 7 September 1976 in Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Durban,

²⁹⁰ Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, pp. 57-58; ARCA, “*Sunday Times*, 1979.4.8... PV 451, 1/176/1/3 - Hertzog Collection, 1978; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.10.30, p. 1; *Die Transvaler*, 1979.4.3, p. 4; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.3.31, p. 2; ARCA, “*Die Transvaler/Oggendblad*, 1979.6.5...”, P 58 – Basson Collection, pp. 3-5.

²⁹¹ *The Citizen*, 1978.2.16, p. 14; Jones, p. 329; De Villiers, pp. 126, 128, 130.

²⁹² Rees & Day, p. 99.

circulating 100 000 newspapers; however, within the same week, circulation figures steadily started to decline.²⁹³

The early life of *The Citizen* was embroiled in complications. Only three days after the launch, Springer resigned as Chief Editor and was replaced by the previous editor of the *Sunday Express*, Meyer Albert ‘Johnny’ Johnson. He also remained unaware of the involvement of state funds. Even before the launch of *The Citizen*, it already suffered serious financial losses through the purchase of equipment. After the launch, the interest pool did not generate the required funds to operate *The Citizen*. Luyt returned to Rhodie for more money and Rhodie channelled another R1.15 million into *The Citizen*. The paper continued losing money at a rate of R20 000 per day.²⁹⁴

The relationship between Luyt and the Department of Information became strenuous over time as a result of several incidents. Friction between Rhodie and Luyt originated from *The Citizen*’s financial difficulties. Luyt required more funds from the Department of Information to run the newspaper. During a meeting in the Holiday Inn at Jan Smuts Airport in April 1977 with Rhodie, Van Zyl Alberts, Les de Villiers, Luyt, and Du Preez present, Luyt handed over the financial statements. The statements revealed that Luyt had invested the R12 million into his own Triomf Fertiliser Company, resulting in a clash of words between Rhodie and Luyt. Rhodie and Mulder were stunned by Luyt’s decision to place the money in his own company and not in a bank. Luyt defended himself by stating that Mulder did not specify where he was to invest the money for interest. The relationship deteriorated even further when Luyt accepted an invitation from ATV to appear on the British discussion programme *The South African Experience*. The television programme was a trap and Luyt was overwhelmed by anti-apartheid activists during the discussion. Rhodie attacked Luyt through the newspapers, accusing him of being unprofessional in defending the image of South Africa and that he should have sent someone more experienced instead. Luyt retaliated by accusing Rhodie of being a ‘know-it-all’. Luyt also accused Rhodie of endangering the entire project by frequently phoning editors and reporters at *The Citizen*. While Rhodie denied this accusation, he alleged that Luyt administered *The Citizen* poorly.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ De Villiers, pp. 126-127, 130; *Die Transvaler*, 1979.4.3, p. 4; De Vries, p. 45.

²⁹⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.15, p. 1; Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, p. 60; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.10.30, p. 1.

²⁹⁵ De Vries, p. 45; Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, pp. 60-61; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 324-325, 331; *Beeld*, 1977.12.31, p. 6; *Beeld*, 1977.12.30, p. 4; *The Citizen*, 1977.12.31, p. 9; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.5.4, p. 9.

By late 1977, the infighting and financial costs convinced Luyt to pull out of Project Anne-Marie. More funds were allocated from the secret G-funds through Thor, and an overdraft facility was created with Volkskas to finance *The Citizen*. Luyt was even forced to sell his own jet to fund the newspaper. By the end of Luyt's administration, the launching and operation of the newspaper cost the government a staggering R26 million. Luyt also used R2 million from his personal money. In a meeting on 29 July 1977, Mulder, Rhodie, Van Zyl Alberts, Du Preez, and Luyt explored the options of a possible take-over. Rhodie wanted McGoff and another American, Vic Jones, to purchase the newspaper in October 1977, but Van Zyl Alberts, Van Rooyen, and McGoff's lawyer warned him not to go ahead. In early 1978, Mulder and Rhodie approached Van Zyl Alberts and Jussen to run *The Citizen* as a front for the government. They purchased *The Citizen* in February 1978, and were still funded by the Department of Information until June 1978. The total government money spent on *The Citizen* amounted to R32 million.²⁹⁶

Contradictory to Rhodie's editorial charter, which without a doubt supported the government's views, he provided in his book, *The Real Information Scandal*, a different editorial charter that supports objectivity and balance. Rhodie claimed that he and Mulder believed *The Citizen* should be merely objective in order to correct the distorted image created by the *Rand Daily Mail*. However, the Erasmus Commission asserted that *The Citizen* did in fact pursue a political agenda. In the elections of November 1977, the NP was triumphant, winning 135 out of 165 seats.²⁹⁷ Rees and Day states that the reason for this victory was that many English speakers voted for the NP: "the newly launched Citizen newspaper played a significant role in this phenomenon."²⁹⁸ Rhodie counter-argued by using the Johnson statement of policy: "As for supporting the Government during the election, must a newspaper sit on the fence at such an important time merely to provide its objectivity?"²⁹⁹

Meanwhile, the predicament facing the Info Crew worsened. In July 1977, Barrie released a report of irregularities taking place in the Department of Information. Public scrutiny over the origin of *The Citizen* led Judge Anton Mostert to start a commission of inquiry. In October 1977, Van Rooyen approached the Mostert Commission voluntarily and Luyt was subpoenaed, spilling information about irregularities taking place within the Department of

²⁹⁶ Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, pp. 60-65; *Rapport*, 1978.2.19, p. 1; *The Citizen*, 1978.2.16, p. 14; *The Citizen*, 1978.3.9, p. 3.

²⁹⁷ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 322-323; Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, p. 60; Rees & Day, p. 10.

²⁹⁸ Rees & Day, p. 10.

²⁹⁹ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 334-335.

Information. Vorster tasked Advocate Louw Reynders with investigating irregularities and reporting back to him. Van den Bergh hindered Reynders in seeing Vorster, but after getting acquainted with Van Rooyen, a personal friend and adviser of Vorster, Reynders informed Vorster of all the department's dealings. In November 1977, Rhodie, Vorster, Reynders, Mulder, Van den Bergh, and Van Rooyen met in Vorster's home at Libertas to talk about details surrounding *The Citizen*. Discussing the negative facts regarding *The Citizen* had an impact on Vorster's health and he had to excuse himself. Vorster did not consider the project immoral, but handled recklessly. According to Van Rooyen, Vorster could handle anything, except *The Citizen*.³⁰⁰

The situation did not improve for Luyt after he sold *The Citizen*. In 1977, the press was still scrutinising Luyt and the matter of the lost R12 million. The SAAN group was not able to put forth evidence yet, but was aware of the entire *The Citizen* debacle. Furthermore, Luyt's involvement in *The Citizen* cost him R2.83 million, which Mulder said he should not be held liable for. The state ordered Luyt to pay back the loan in accordance with the initial contract between Rhodie and Luyt, which ran until 1986. By 1980, Luyt had already paid back R9 million. He was compensated for his own losses and was obligated to pay back R10 118 080.³⁰¹

In November 1978, the Afrikaans publishing giant, Perskor, bought *The Citizen* for a minimal amount. The purchase by Perskor received heavy criticism from outraged opposition parties. Leader of the Progressive Party, Colin Eglin, emphasised that the takeover was nothing but a disgrace: "By allowing *The Citizen* to be sold to a pro-Nationalist publishing company, Perskor, without public knowledge or public tender, the Government had completed the work started by Dr Connie Mulder and Dr Eschel Rhodie."³⁰² Former editor of the *Sunday Times*, Joel Mervis, commented that the takeover was more scandalous and disgusting than anything before: "This infamous deed is the takeover of the *The Citizen* by Perskor with the consent, assistance and connivance of the entire National Party."³⁰³ Perskor, still entitled to the most

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 314, 330, 333; Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, pp. 62, 63, 64; De Villiers, p. 135; *Die Burger*, 1980.5.15, p. 4.

³⁰¹ De Villiers, pp. 135-136; Erasmus Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry...*, p. 66; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.9, p. 5; *The Argus*, 1980.2.14, p. 4.

³⁰² *Pretoria News*, 1979.3.1, p. 9.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1979.2.20, p. 3.

shares in *The Citizen*, only started selling shares to the public in July 1979, and the newspaper was still operating at a loss.³⁰⁴

The story of *The Citizen* is ironic. *The Citizen*, under the umbrella of Perskor, was openly supported by the government after the Information Scandal. The role of *The Citizen* remained consistent in supporting the Afrikaners and their government. This was confirmed in a letter written by the board of Perskor to PW Botha on 5 April 1984, requesting support from the government to expand the operational area, and in return prohibiting English speakers from forming a political block against the NP; therefore *The Citizen* should be considered an indispensable instrument for the government. The newspaper, with the aid of the government, resumed its role as a countermeasure against the English daily press. Over time, *The Citizen* would secure a devoted readership, making it South Africa's third largest daily newspaper in 1998. Even more interesting is that *The Citizen* became popular among black citizens and managed to outsell its rivals, the *Rand Daily Mail* and *The Star*, the same newspapers that were bent on destroying *The Citizen*.³⁰⁵

The shaky start of *The Citizen* is only a footnote in history, but it was a project that had a massive impact on the political scene of South Africa. The government-funded daily newspaper would become the core of the Department of Information's sins. In Europe the Department of Information also brewed various schemes.

4.5. THE EUROPEAN FRONT

The Department of Information spearheaded government propaganda activities in Europe. European countries with ties to South Africa in the fields of trading, investment and technology, such as the UK, Holland, France and West Germany, were primary targets for propaganda. Holland was especially targeted for political reasons. Rhodie contemplated that if the Dutch could desert their own "kith and kin", the UN and other decision makers would surely follow this tendency. Germany was also considered an important target because it shared a language connection to Austria and Switzerland. The Department of Information wanted to bring reason to Europe through propaganda methods.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ De Vries, p. 46; Jones, p. 331; *The Citizen*, 1979.7.16, p. 3.

³⁰⁵ Jones, pp. 326, 328, 330-331; ARCA, "Perskor letter to PW Botha", *PV 202, A1/2/B2 – P.W. Botha Collection*, 1984.

³⁰⁶ Burgess, pp. 84-85; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 209-210.

The Department of Information lacked and required a major foreign publishing firm for its schemes. Fortunately in 1976 the Jewish Johannesburg businessman and member of the Progressive Federal Party, David Abrahamson, was introduced to Eschel Rhoodie. Abrahamson and his partner and friend, Stuart Pegg, a Springbok car rally driver and millionaire enjoying the lavish lifestyle, had an opportunity to buy the British publishing firm Morgan Grampian. Under the ownership of British Graham Sherren and American Max Geffen, the company was experiencing financial difficulties. Sherren proposed that Abrahamson should buy shares but he was not interested at first. On 30 April 1976 Abrahamson and Pegg acquired 20 percent shares of the equity. The reason for the business enterprise with Morgan Grampian was that a deal had been struck between Rhoodie, Pegg and Abrahamson, whereby the Department of Information loaned \$4.6 million. On 12 July 1976 Rhoodie signed a document with Abrahamson to provide more financial support for the Morgan Grampian and loaned R1.5 million to buy 8 percent shares. It was also agreed that the profits from dividends would be split into 50-50 between the Department of Information and Abrahamson's company Alpane.³⁰⁷

Owning only 28 percent was not enough for the Department of Information and they sought more shares. Numerous advantages would be possible if the Department of Information could fully take over Morgan Grampian. These benefits included a publishing company that published and distributed trade and travel journals all over the world; the company would offer BOSS agents a disguise in countries hostile to South Africa, such as Egypt and Sudan; would contribute to the annexation of the French magazine and British newspaper, *L'Express* and *The Observer*; and would provide the necessary funds for a second five-year propaganda war scheduled for 1980. However, acquiring more shares posed a problem. British law stipulated that if a party offers to buy more than 30 percent shares, they are legally obliged to buy the other shareholders out. Unless a party have a 49-51 percent share, they would be able to buy other shareholders out at a price they deem fit. A new scheme was planned to meet the 49 percent share with another South African publishing company, Hortors, but this never materialised because the South African Treasury was unable to provide an additional R9 million to purchase all the shares. In October 1977, the British company, Trafalgar House Limited, managed to purchase all the shares. The entire project cost the South Africans roughly R6.3 million. Pegg and Abrahamson sold the shares for a

³⁰⁷ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – *Basson Collection*, p.22; De Villiers, pp. 112-113; Rees & Day, pp. 123-124.

satisfying net profit of \$4.3 million, which was utilised for other projects such as *The Citizen*. Later, disagreements between the Reserve Bank and the businessmen would ensue over the Morgan Grampian contract and the profits.³⁰⁸

In the same time as the Morgan Grampian deal, Abrahamson set his eyes on buying shares in the giant South African publishing group, Hortors. Hortors was used to publish government publications, such as the Hansard of Parliament; printed 25 journals; and comprising giant publishing firms, such as Cape and Transvaal Printing and Publishing Company. Hortors would be the new means of buying foreign newspapers. Although Hortors was at first part of the scheme to acquire more shares in Morgan Grampian, profits later obtained from selling Morgan Grampian shares were used to buy shares in the Hortors equity. Rhodie supplied two R3.5 million interest-free loans for the takeover. In order to buy shares cheaply from Hortors, the loan was used to buy dollars and then converted into security rand, a method non-residents use to trade with South African assets in the international market. The money was transferred to Alpane and on 22 April 1977, Abrahamson acquired 58.6 shares in Hortors. In the process, the government lost \$4 million dollars in foreign exchange reserves. Hortors launched *Pace* and *Afri-Pix*³⁰⁹ in December 1978, but was hindered by the surfacing of the Information Scandal. Except for the security rand aspect, the Erasmus Commission was unable to find any irregularities with Hortors. Rhodie was frustrated with the Erasmus Commission for exposing a secret government operation that was clear of any fraud.³¹⁰

The Department of Information, with aid from Pegg and Abrahamson, bought newspapers and magazines in France and England. Funds were channelled through Abrahamson in April 1975 to take over the monthly magazine *France EurAfrique*. While having ownership of the Morgan Grampian, Abrahamson and Pegg tried to convince Sherren to buy the French magazine *L'Express*, but failed because Sherren was suspicious of the deal and the price was too high. They also tried through Morgan Grampian to obtain the *Investors Chronicle*, but failed because the *Financial Times* speculated that South African “funny money” was involved.³¹¹ Instead, Abrahamson and Pegg bought the *Investors Review* in October 1977.

³⁰⁸ Sanders, p. 68; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 217-221; ARCA, “Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...”, P 58 – Basson Collection, p. 22; *Evening Post*, 1979.2.14, p. 4.

³⁰⁹ An international company supplying propaganda in the form of photographs to news agencies. Rees & Day, p. 195.

³¹⁰ ARCA, “Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...”, P 58 – Basson Collection, pp. 22-23; *The Star*, 1979.1.19, p. 19; *Sunday Times*, 1979.1.14, p. 1; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 221-223; *Sunday Times*, 1979.1.28, p. 6.

³¹¹ Rees & Day, p. 127.

The aim of this journal was to dissuade disinvestment in South Africa. They also established a consumer magazine called *Vacances*. The Department of Information made R160 000 available for the French magazine *Marie Nouvelle* and R500 000 for *Gault & Milleau*. Both magazines were self-sufficient through revenue and subscription. The *Marie Nouvelle* mostly targeted French politicians, while *Gault & Milleau*, a magazine covering the food and wine industry, was exported abroad. When the Information Scandal erupted, the partners of Pegg and Abrahamson pulled out of *Vacances*, *Gault & Milleau*, and *Marie Nouvelle*, resulting in a financial loss for both the businessmen and the government.³¹²

By the end of 1977, the government front magazine *To The Point International* was experiencing problems with its staff. Its European staff became aware of the fact that the publication was infected with South African propaganda and protested. The result was a mass dismissal of staff by Hubert Jussen. *To The Point International* staff released a press statement, announcing that most of the staff left the publication because they were forced to accept propaganda from South Africa. Afterwards, *To The Point International* was converted into a domestic look-alike of *To The Point*. The government would publicly support *To The Point* until it finally ceased its operations in December 1980.³¹³

The Department of Information also had fronts, lobbies, and organisations advancing the South African image. In England, the Department of Information financed the Foreign Affairs Research Institute of London. In 1975, a contract was conceived for the Institute to work closely with the FAA and Southern African Freedom Foundation in promoting Pretoria. The Institute released a publication dealing with the Cape Sea route and organised conferences, for example the international seminar for global foreign affairs experts in June 1978. Rhodie brought South African and French individuals with mutual business interest closer by forming the French-South African Association in France and the French-South African Chamber of Commerce.³¹⁴

The South African government annually spent approximately R800 000 on pro-South African organisations, public relations, and lobbying in Germany. According to Rhodie, the German public relations advisor, Brehen, fed the press 600 reports on South Africa and brought at least 15 foreign visitors to South Africa each year. He was paid a total of R1 420 000 until

³¹² Geldenhuys, p. 114; Rees & Day, pp. 126-127; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 219, 243-244.

³¹³ Sanders, pp. 66-67; *To The Point International*, 1977.9.12, p. 5.

³¹⁴ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 210-211, 239-240; Geldenhuys, p. 144.

June 1987. The German pro-South African group, Deutsch-Südafrikanische Gesellschaft (DSAG), had 30 branches across Germany, with 3 900 members. DSAG received R100 000 per year from the Department of Information. They were responsible for press conferences; meetings on South African affairs; South African exhibitions; producing the unofficial magazine, *Afrikapost*; and student exchange programmes. DSAG were highly effective in recruiting visitors to go on fact-finding trips. Visitors such as the German politician, Franz Josef Strauss, returned praising South Africa. The prominent journal in Germany produced by the Department of Information, *Journal Sudafrica*, was circulated among Members of Parliament, journalists, and Protestant Church ministers. Rhodie hired Gerd Hennenhofer, former editor-in-chief of *Der Spiegel*, to promote the FAA, arrange conferences, lobby South Africa's cause among top German officials, and distribute books and pamphlets. The Department of Information paid him R515 000 for his services. Together with Cas de Villiers, Hennenhofer was able to organise conferences between German politicians and South African businessmen.³¹⁵

In the Netherlands, the Department of Information funded right-wing pro-South African lobbying organisations such as the Dutch South African Organisation (NZAW), Stichting Beheercentrum, Komitee Overleg Zuid-Afrika, and Nederlandse-Zuidafrikaanse Vereniging. In 1974, the NZAW received R72 000 and the Stichting Beheercentrum received R70 000 for employing counterpropaganda against AAM such as the Committee South Africa and Inter-Church Peace Council (IKV). For example, newspapers similar to the IKV's *Vredeskrant (Peace Newspaper)* were produced, but contained different content. The Department of Information only implemented 'Project Agnetha' in Norway and Sweden. Rhodie handed R10 000 to a small political party headed by Ambers Lange, a right-wing politician in Norway. The department also financed his newspaper, *Ambers Lange's Newspaper*. Surprisingly, the party managed to obtain four seats in parliament and defended South Africa until its defeat in 1977.³¹⁶

The Department of Information even went so far as invading people's religious sphere. Operation Manel was implemented when the World Council of Churches (WCC) adopted an anti-racism resolution in 1974. The Department of Information handed over R340 000 of the secret funds to Reverend Fred Shaw of the Christian League in order to counter South

³¹⁵ Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 245-247; Burgess, pp. 85-87; Geldenhuys, pp. 114-115.

³¹⁶ Burgess, p. 88; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 231-232, 248-249; De Vries, p. 40; Geldenhuys, p. 115; Rees & Day, pp. 199-200.

Africa's critics, the WCC and its affiliate, the South African Council of Churches (SACC). A secret document of 13 March 1978 reveals the objectives of the programme: "to rally support for South Africa against false representations made by the (a) World Council of Churches, (b) SACC, (c) National Council of Churches, (d) All African Conference of Churches, and (e) the news media."³¹⁷ The aim was to infiltrate and discourage the influence of the SACC and WWC over English and black churches in South Africa. In other words, the League wished for the withdrawal of membership from churches critical towards the South African policy. The Christian League also published a highly-circulated weekly newspaper, called the *Encounter*. The Department of Information's campaigns aimed against the WWC accused them of being under the influence of communism.³¹⁸

In 1977, the Club of Ten experienced a setback that would ultimately lead to the doom of the project in the following year. The British front man for the Club of Ten, Sparrow, quit the organisation in late 1976. Sparrow and the Department of Information gave different reasons for his resignation. Sparrow claims that, after visiting South Africa for a third time, he started to question his role in South Africa's propaganda war. Les de Villiers' account of the events tells another story. In 1976, the Department of Information was forced to "clip the Sparrow's wings"³¹⁹ because he demanded more money for his services and he wanted to publish a manuscript entitled, *Not what I expected*, which praised South Africa in a ludicrous fashion. As revenge, Sparrow wrote a book called *The Ad Astra Connection*, revealing the truth about the connection with Rhodie, Mulder, Vorster, and the secret funds. He described Mulder as the "light" and Rhodie as the "shadow of the light."³²⁰ The Department of Information did its utmost to rebut and discredit Sparrow's claims. In February 1977, the Club of Ten re-emerged under the administration of the former editor of the London *Evening News*, Donald Boddie. In March 1977, the Club of Ten again placed advertisements dealing with double standards and communism in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Times*, and *The Guardian*. After Les de Villiers' departure from the Department of Information, only ten advertisements were deployed and seemed to lack its previous edge. In the end, the Club of

³¹⁷ *Pretoria News*, 1981.4.1, p. 1.

³¹⁸ Burgess, pp. 85-86; Rees & Day, p. 191; *Sunday Express*, 1981.4.5, p. 9; *Sunday Express*, 1981.3.29, p. 26.

³¹⁹ De Villiers, p. 57.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

Ten cost the state \$1 million and the organisation disappeared with Rhoodie's resignation at the end of June 1978.³²¹

Before concluding this chapter, it is important to review the overall effectiveness of the campaign from the perspective of authors, experts, and individuals who, in some way, formed part of the information war. John Laurence was impressed with the extensive operations of the Department of Information by infiltrating numerous nations, including black countries, and disseminating propaganda on a grand scale. He also takes into consideration the effect that a small population of whites at the southern tip of Africa could have on worldwide masses, by commenting on the department's activities: "may be without parallel in its size and scope in human history."³²² Carl Nöffke, Director of Information at the South African Embassy in Washington DC in 1975, emphasised Rhoodie's propaganda prowess: "[Eschel Rhoodie] was probably the most brilliant propagandist of the century – I think he was better than Goebbels."³²³ Connie Mulder believed the first line of defence was the propaganda line, and the second was the military line. If the propaganda line was to falter, the military front would be mobilised. Therefore, it was more cost-effective to buy positive reporting than to buy tanks and aircraft.³²⁴ Geldenhuys describes Rhoodie as the "innovative architect of foreign policy" initiatives which downplayed the Department of Foreign Affairs and gave credit to Vorster's statesman image. Geldenhuys describes the Department of Information's successful diplomacy and propaganda style as: "Information's often grandiose conception of international politics consisted of a strange compound of wishful thinking, naiveté, and hardheaded realpolitik."³²⁵

From early 1973 to early 1976, the Department of Information had the advantage over its enemies. Les de Villiers mentions that parliament and opposition members commended the Info-Crew for their services during this time.³²⁶ Ron Nixon asserts that the Department of Information's propaganda strategy was clearly damaging the counter-propaganda initiatives of AAM groups: "the anti-apartheid movement in America and Europe had limited success in keeping the South African situation at the political forefront of public attention ... efforts to

³²¹ Sanders, pp. 65-66; De Vries, pp. 38-39; De Villiers, p. 57; Hull, pp. 91-92.

³²² Laurence, pp. 56-57.

³²³ Sanders, p. 61.

³²⁴ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8.

³²⁵ Geldenhuys, p. 119.

³²⁶ De Villiers, p. 99; Geldenhuys, p. 120.

persuade the various presidential administrations to impose sanctions had largely fallen on deaf ears and the grassroots movements pushing for sanctions and divestment had stalled.”³²⁷

Confident in his Department of Information, Mulder guaranteed that 1976 will be the most fruitful year.³²⁸ However, 1976 would prove to be a devastating year for South Africa and the Department of Information. Sanders points out that a series of crises, especially the withdrawal from Angola and the Soweto Riots, had a severe impact on the operations of the Department of Information: “the Department of Information discovered that it was impossible to control its extraordinary level of operations and provide an effective voice for the beleaguered South African government.”³²⁹ Also counting against the Department of Information, was its inability to sell the acknowledgement of independent black states, such as the Transkei, to foreign presses and governments, which was a humiliating setback.³³⁰ Rhodie admitted to making some blunders that contributed to his downfall by “putting too much on his fork,” meaning that he tried to operate secret propaganda projects all over the world and doing it overtime.³³¹ The journalists Mervyn Rees and Chris Day believe some campaigns to be ill-conceived and poorly executed.³³² Rees considered Rhodie to be his own worst enemy because his lifestyle and abuses attracted unneeded attention on himself and the clandestine programmes.³³³ Elaine Windrich asserts that the propaganda campaign may not have been that effective, since dealing with South Africa might be bad for the image of a business. For example, the case of the law firm Covington & Burling which ceased contact with South Africa after they were boycotted by law students.³³⁴ The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha, emphasised the meaninglessness of the Information projects and the reckless damage done by the Information renegades: “Their actions were so naïve and crude their good intentions can no longer serve as an excuse.”³³⁵ However, Pik’s claim can largely be dismissed, since the State Security Council decided to continue with 68 of the secret projects.³³⁶

³²⁷ Nixon, p. 81.

³²⁸ *Hansard*, 2 April – 4 June 1976, part 62, col. 5952-4.

³²⁹ Sanders, p. 61.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ Rees & Day, p. 186.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 187.

³³³ Sanders, p. 70.

³³⁴ Windrich, p. 59.

³³⁵ *The Citizen*, 1979.2.20, p. 7.

³³⁶ Geldenhuys, p. 120; *Hansard*, 21 January – 17 March 1978, part 72, col. 24.

Though it is difficult to assess the true impact of South Africa's propaganda war from 1972 – 1978 due to various reasons, such as secrecy, cover-ups, limited investigations, and the complexity of the operations, it is clear that the Department of Information was at a massive advantage during Rhodie's early years. Although not victorious, the Department of Information did create a stalemate between those who supported South Africa and AAM groups seeking to boycott the South African government in terms of the propaganda war between the entities. Rhodie understood the unorthodox means of fighting a propaganda war in the Cold War and did not hold back. For example, establishing *The Citizen* to counteract the English press was a heavy burden on the South African government. Even though *The Citizen* had a rough start, it would later prove to be a valuable governmental instrument. The operations also intertwined with foreign media presses and films. To be as effective as possible, the Department of Information utilised propaganda of which the true source was hidden, such as the purchasing of various magazines, newspapers, publishing companies, the bribing of decision makers, using extensive lobbying efforts and news agencies across the world. Even though Rhodie understood how to wage a propaganda war, he was still young and lacked the experience required for his position. The next chapter will take a look at the revelation of the Department of Information's activities and the immediate consequences for the Info-Cast.

5. MULDERGATE

The Department of Information's war for the 'minds and hearts of men and women' would alter the discourse of South African politics. The revelation of irregularities taking place within the department shifted the battle away from the 'international onslaught' and directed the fighting towards the inner circle of the NP. The Information Scandal escalated into long-anticipated confrontations between political rivals; political parties; the English and Afrikaans press; and the judicial system and press versus the state. Throughout the scandal, numerous lies, deceit, and attacks on individuals were deployed to cover up the veracity of the clandestine campaigns funded by the taxpayer. This chapter explores the 'heroes and villains' of the Information Scandal – those dedicated to revealing or suppressing the truth. The chapter explores the various reports and commissions, exposing the scandal through investigative journalism, political skirmishes, P.W. Botha's takeover as the new Prime Minister, the Erasmus Commission's inquiry, Rhodie as a fugitive abroad, and finally the downfall of B.J. Vorster and Connie Mulder. Before starting the chapter, it is important to comprehend the basic elements of a scandal in a media environment. Communication researchers compiled the following inclusive characteristics of a scandal:

“Scandals evolve if someone accuses public figures or organization of having violated social norms or of having harmed someone or something and relevant media cover the case intensively, causing consistent views and widespread anger among the audience ... Audience members then make far-reaching judgements, such as demanding a politician to step down from his public or party offices, based on only few scandalizing news items.”³³⁷

5.1. REPORTS AND COMMISSIONS

In 1976, Eschel Rhodie's predecessor and adversary, Gerald Barrie, launched an investigation into the irregularities at the Department of Information that would ultimately open up the Pandora's Box of the Muldergate Scandal. On 27 November 1976, Rhodie accepted Vorster and Hendrik van den Bergh's advice to obliterate any unnecessary and sensitive documents of the secret project and secret funds, such as letters and receipts. This act obstructed Barrie and created the impression that something of an iniquitous nature was being concealed. Although documents were destroyed, Barrie discovered that officials had travelled abroad without ministerial consent. Barrie, unaware of the secret funds and projects,

³³⁷ H.M. Kepplinger, *et al.*, “Framing scandals: Cognitive and emotional media effects”, *Journal of Communication* 62(4), August 2012, p. 659.

pushed for an audit probe into the Department of Information. Rhoodie strongly rejected his request, warning that Barrie was interfering with top-secret undertakings. Barrie dismissed the idea that the funds were not eligible for investigation. In June 1977, Barrie requested Mulder's permission to investigate the secret funds, but Mulder denied him access, fearing that his audit team might leak secret information to the opposition. Barrie continued his audit in the normal custom and presented Vorster with reports of irregularities in the department on 29 July and 1 August 1977. The reports criticised unauthorised expenditure for trips abroad, the lack of efficient planning, and control over funds.³³⁸

It is speculated that the election of 1977 was a cover-up to divert the country's attention away from leaks about irregularities within the department. In September 1977, Vorster misled the nation by calling for an election 18 months in advance, which was required by law in order to fight external threats in their 'total onslaught' on the Republic. *The Cape Times* commented that, instead of revealing the truth, the country received a triumphant NP election. George Bartlett, a member of parliament, reacted to Vorster's reason for calling the election by stating in 1978: "I believe this was not the real cause for calling that election. Rather, it was the brewing storm of the Information Scandal."³³⁹ On 30 November 1977, Vorster crushed the opposition, especially the HNP and the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), by gaining 135 of 165 elected seats. More alarming was the use of *The Citizen* to disseminate propaganda against the PFP, with the knowledge of Vorster.³⁴⁰

Circulating rumours and allegations resulted in the establishment of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Public Accounts on 30 January 1978, headed by Chairman Hennie van der Walt, a junior Member of Parliament from Schweizer-Reneke. On 6 and 14 February 1978, Barrie submitted his report to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Public Accounts, highlighting the misuse of funds by two undisclosed officials over a period of three years. The first report by the Committee was released on 14 April 1978, which found that there were indeed unauthorised expenses, but after hearing several witnesses, the majority of the Committee decided that the expenses should be authorised. Even though the state suffered no loss, there was negligence of procedures that led to irregularities. The Committee's second

³³⁸ Church, p. 41; *Sunday Tribune*, 1978.11.5, p. 2; Sanders, p. 62; De Vries, pp. 55, 57-61; Rees & Day, p. 23.

³³⁹ *The Natal Mercury*, 1978.12.19, p. 15.

³⁴⁰ D. Harrison, *The white tribe of Africa: South Africa in perspective*, p. 235; Rees & Day, p. 9; R. Erasmus, *Voorloper tot hervorming*, p. 3; *The Cape Times*, 1978.11.21, p. 8; *The Star*, 1978.11.23, p. 5; Barber, "Afrikanerdom in disarray", p. 288.

report insisted on a deeper inquiry into the finances of the Department of Information and implored the State Commission and Treasury to start an investigation of their own.³⁴¹

The findings of the Committee allowed Connie Mulder to respond to the allegations. Mulder stated that the active services of any official found guilty on any count of corruption, would be terminated without hesitation. Rhoodie claimed that the imposing of 'mass bureaucratic regulations' on the department made it difficult to outperform the republic's opponents in a propaganda war. Some individuals, such as Harry Schwarz of the PFP, were convinced that regulations straining the department should be adapted to suit the operations. Van der Walt, who was pro P.W. Botha, attacked Rhoodie's failed leadership of his department in a debate during April 1978. Christo de Vries points out that this criticism was an indirect attack on Mulder, as it was unfounded for a junior member of parliament to attack the head of a department. This means that Van der Walt had support from a senior member of parliament, and it became apparent that an inner party struggle was imminent. Revelations from reports and by the press affected the department's daily activities and as a result, an investigation was instituted by the Public Service into the effectiveness of the Department of Information's duties. On 3 May, Mulder announced a restructuring of the department, dismissing Deneys Rhoodie and Waldeck. The final report of the Select Committee was released on 12 June 1978, with the attitude of the Committee changing considerably. The report indicated that vast amounts of money would have been wasted if an audit had not been done, and that Rhoodie should relinquish his position as Secretary of Information. The Committee also discovered that Deneys Rhoodie took his family abroad on state expenses.³⁴²

In August 1977, Vorster ordered Barrie to continue his investigation into irregularities. With the approval of Barrie and Mulder, Vorster also appointed an 'expert and sophisticated' person to investigate irregularities, allegations, misappropriation of funds, rumours and stories. The man chosen by Vorster to lead the second enquiry was Advocate Louw Reynders of BOSS. Van den Bergh, who previously retired from service, was reappointed by Vorster on 16 June 1978 to evaluate the secret projects. Van den Bergh said he would return to 'save' Mulder and Vorster from inquisition. The inquiry by BOSS would protect the Information Scandal from public scrutiny through the Official Secret Act until the attention on Vorster

³⁴¹ De Vries, pp. 65-66; *Eastern Province Herald*, 1978.4.15, p. 3; Sanders, p. 63; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.12.30, p. 7.

³⁴² De Vries, pp. 67-69, 71-72, 79, 82-83; Erasmus, pp. 4-5; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.12.30, p. 7.

and Mulder was diverted. Except for the Reynders and Van den Bergh Commission, the Treasury and Public Service also carried out their own investigations.³⁴³

As the increasing probing into the misappropriation and irregularities of funds increased, the cover-up attempts also intensified. At the same time, disclosures on the Department of Information accumulated in press leaks and confrontations unfolded in parliament about the irregularities in the Department of Information.

5.2. INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

The press, especially the SAAN newspaper group, played a major role through investigative journalism in unmasking the deceit of the Department of Information. The enquiry of the *Rand Daily Mail*, *Sunday Express*, and the *Sunday Times* would earn them a spot in the journalistic hall of fame for unravelling a web of sinister and costly propaganda drives in the name of the apartheid government, extending to high-ranking officials. The most notable reporters of the SAAN group were Kitt Katzin under the command of editor Rex Gibson of the *Sunday Express*, and Mervyn Rees and Chris Day of the *Rand Daily Mail* under the editorship of Allister Sparks. Even though these newspapers were located in the same Johannesburg building, they functioned independently, keeping their leads, sources, and work secret from one another. This style of competitive journalism emphasised individuality and bolstered the strength of the different newspapers. The competing newspapers never knew how much information its opponents gathered before publishing.³⁴⁴

Investigations by the press were underway from mid-1977. Reporters sensed something devious and started searching for the truth. The first major development in the unravelling of the Information plot came when the Barrie report was leaked to the *Sunday Express*. On 19 February 1978, the *Sunday Express* published evidence from the Barrie report about two officials, named only as 'Mr A and Mr B,' going to the USA on an expensive excursion to interview a typist. The person leaking the report from the Auditor General's office remains unknown, but it provided the opposition press ammunition to confront the government about being responsible for deceit, bribery, and maladministration. The findings of the Select Committee were reported in an aggressive fashion to tarnish officials in the Department of Information. Press reports of Barrie and the Select Committees created an atmosphere of

³⁴³ De Vries, pp. 79, 86-87; Erasmus, pp. 5-6; Geldenhuys, p. 149; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.12.30, p. 7.

³⁴⁴ C. Rickard, *Thank you, Judge Mostert*, pp. 110-112; J. Mervis, *The fourth estate: A newspaper story*, p. 439.

distrust and affected the ongoing investigations into the Department of Information. Furthermore, newspapers started demanding the resignation of Connie Mulder and Eschel Rhoodie, without any clear or final evidence available yet.³⁴⁵

The Muldergate Scandal only gained traction after Katzin's report appeared in the *Sunday Express* on 2 April 1978. Weeks before the story was published, Katzin received a tip-off about an irregular trip and started inquiring about Rhoodie's visit to the Seychelles with his guests. Katzin collected and thoroughly studied various facts, such as passports, credit-card numbers, invoices, and even the cost of fuel used in Luyt's aircraft. The article reported the extravagant diplomatic and tropical holiday by Rhoodie and his family at a cost of R4 410. Katzin was at this point unable to prove any venality by Rhoodie, but he brought facts into the open which raised uncertainty as to where the money for such a lavish vacation originated from. Rees and Day from the rival newspaper praised Katzin's report: "The *Sunday Express* report was a milestone in Muldergate. Coming on top of the Auditor-General's criticism of extravagant and unnecessary spending by Rhoodie's department, it opened up the whole issue again and was the first significant contribution at that stage from a South African newspaper towards cracking the scandal."³⁴⁶ At the end of April, Katzin announced that he uncovered another startling fact about the Department of Information, but it would only be revealed on 7 May 1978. Mulder, alarmed by the facts, requested Katzin to postpone his report for a week until the case could be investigated by the state.³⁴⁷

Before Katzin could release his evidence, Rhoodie surprised South Africans by issuing a press release via the South African Press Association on 5 May 1978. In the press release, Rhoodie accused Barrie of leaking the nine-month old report to the *Sunday Times* and said he would call for an inspection by the police. Rhoodie further disclosed that the Department of Information was conducting a clandestine propaganda warfare which was overseen by an unofficial three-man Cabinet Committee (Vorster, Mulder, and Diederichs, later Horwood): "I wish to state that the Department of Information has, for years, been asked by the government to undertake sensitive and even highly secret operations as counteraction to the propaganda war being waged against South Africa."³⁴⁸ Rhoodie explained that if the undertaking of this vast project was not placed in the correct perspective, it may seem highly

³⁴⁵ De Vries, pp. 62-63, 70-71; Rickard, pp. 97, 99; *Sunday Express*, 1978.2.19, p. 1; Mervis, p. 441.

³⁴⁶ Rees & Day, p. 20.

³⁴⁷ Rickard, pp. 98-99; Rees & Day, p. 21; Mervis, pp. 440-441; *Sunday Express*, 1978.4.30, p. 1; *Sunday Express*, 1978.4.2, p. 6.

³⁴⁸ *Sunday Times*, 1978.5.7, p. 15.

irregular to individuals who did not comprehend the operation's scope and scale and would ultimately come to the wrong conclusion: "In his report the Auditor General referred to 'irregularities' and described them as unique in civil service history. That is correct, only in the sense that the country has never yet been fighting an equally unprecedented, no-holds-barred propaganda war against its enemies in which normal rules and regulations can (NOT) be applied."³⁴⁹ In the press release, Rhodie also provided an explanation for the irregularities that were found by Barrie, for example using R10 000 to pay secret agents cooperating with the department. Revealing the task of the department to the public was a ploy used by Rhodie to decrease the exposing capability of the press and to force Vorster in admitting responsibility for the projects. Rhodie also stated that the visit to the Seychelles was an official state visit. On 8 May 1978, Vorster issued a press release admitting responsibility for funding the department to wage a propaganda war and added that he was troubled by the Barrie report indicating the misappropriation of funds. The press was well aware that these statements were only the tip of the iceberg and that millions of rands were used, as more and more reports became public.³⁵⁰

Katzin and his excellent investigative reporting earned him much respect from South Africans and even from the Afrikaans press, who expressed their admiration. However, investigative reporters risk their lives in the line of duty, as testified by an investigative journalist, Mzilikazi wa Afrika: "As an investigative journalist, one needs to be very disciplined, very careful and cautious, very observant and one needs to calculate every single move one makes."³⁵¹ Katzin's family received numerous death threats and were sometimes forced to sleep over at friends after receiving scares or warnings. A more extreme case was the bizarre murder of Robert and Jean-Cora Smit.³⁵² Robert Smit was an NP candidate who served from 1971 to 1974 as an ambassador of the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC. On 22 November 1977, just before the 1977 elections, Robert and his wife were gunned down and stabbed multiple times. The killers spray-painted the puzzling words 'RUA TEM' in the kitchen on the night of the murder. Although no arrests were made, it seemed that the case did have a connection with the Muldergate Scandal. Speculations

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ *The Cape Times*, 1978.5.11, p. 8; Rickard, pp. 105-106; *The Cape Times*, 1978.7.20, p. 11; *Sunday Times*, 1978.5.7, p. 15.

³⁵¹ M. Wa Afrika, "Investigative Journalism" in A. Hadland (ed.), *Changing the fourth estate: Essays on South African journalism*, p. 33.

³⁵² For a more in depth read into this mysterious murder, read the online article of James Myburgh, "The Smit murders: Re-examined", <<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/news-and-analysis/the-smit-murders-reexamined>>, 2010.6.7. (Accessed on August 26, 2016).

suggest that Robert came across the illegitimate transfer of money from South Africa that were utilised for payoffs, bribery, and self-enrichment. The *Mail & Guardian* reported in 2006 that an unnamed source linked to the intelligence community, confirmed that Robert and Jean-Cora was assassinated by a task squad. When the *Cape Times* asked Pik Botha if the murders were committed to prevent Robert Smit from disclosing information about the slush funds, Botha replied “yes, it is a plausible explanation.”³⁵³

A major triumph for the opposition press was the revelation of *The Citizen*. Rees and Days’ investigation started when a state official, only code-named ‘Daan’, informed the two reporters in August 1977 of the Department of Information’s involvement in corruption, including a leading figure of the NP. The two journalists followed the ‘good-bad guy’ approach. Rees would aggressively interview, while Day’s style was smoother. The journalists’ investigation was not only limited to South Africa, but took them to Europe and the USA over a period of two years. The investigation into the origins of *The Citizen* began when the newspaper launched and boasted about its high circulation of 90 000. After receiving a tip-off, they discovered loads of copies of *The Citizen* at a wastepaper depot. Afterwards, the *Rand Daily Mail* formed a task force to learn the truth. The reporters followed *The Citizen* courier trucks in a stake-out fashion from the newspaper building to a dumping site on a farm called Kromdraai. Over 30 000 newspapers were dumped on a farm belonging to Luyt. Even though the reporters had unearthed a major discovery, they decided to remain silent and investigate more of the sinister dealings of the Department of Information, such as paying Sparrow of the Club of Ten to write an article about his involvement. In the months leading up to the revelation of *The Citizen*, the SAAN newspaper group already knew the truth, but could not prove *The Citizen*’s ties with the government. The opposition press only attacked *The Citizen* by implying that it was funded by the state. Allegations by the opposition press between April and September were heavily criticised by Mulder as irresponsible, especially of being biased in finding the department guilty before the Select Committee had finished its investigation.³⁵⁴

By October 1978, the SAAN group had collected an impressive amount of information about the state’s funding of *The Citizen* through millions of rands, but were still unable to publish

³⁵³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.9, p. 16; *Sunday Express*, 1979.2.11, p. 2; Harrison, p. 235; *Mail & Guardian*, “Politician’s murder ‘solved’ after 29 years”, <<http://mg.co.za/article/2006-06-01-politicians-murder-solved-after-29-years>>, 2006.6.1. (Accessed on August 26, 2016); *Cape Times*, “New claims made about who killed Robert Smith”, <<http://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/palazzolo-files/new-claims-made-about-who-killed-robert-smit-1428897>>, 2012.11.22. (Accessed on August 26, 2016).

³⁵⁴ Rees & Day, pp. 2, 3, 10, 11, 12; *The Citizen*, 1978.9.14, p. 9; *The Citizen*, 1978.6.17, p. 6.

articles due to lack of evidence. Publishing *The Citizen* story without solid proof could have dire repercussions for the newspapers, such as censorship or even closing down a newspaper. Rees and Day therefore decided to contact Judge Anton Mostert after receiving word from a source who testified before the Mostert Commission. Mostert was commissioned by Treasury under leadership of Horwood to inquire about exchange control violations in the secret funds of the Department of Information. He understood the operation of the newspaper industry, since he worked for Perskor previously and defended anti-censorship cases. Rees and Day showed Mostert the information they had gathered and Mostert was generally impressed with their investigation. After the meeting with Mostert, Rees and Day felt confident that Mostert would accept a subpoena if the *Rand Daily Mail* should run into legal challenges following publishing. However, Sparks decided to acquire more information from an overseas angle before releasing the article. Meanwhile, the *Sunday Express* was eager to expose *The Citizen*. Katzin had collected enough information to initiate the shocking revelation. Before releasing their report for the Sunday issue, Katzin called Mostert to inquire about the accuracy of their report in order to avoid embarrassment. Mostert responded by saying “I’m surprised it’s taken you so long.”³⁵⁵

On 29 October 1978, the *Sunday Express* started a new phase in the Information Scandal by releasing the first article under the headline “*The Citizen* Secret Revealed”. The *Rand Daily Mail* cancelled its plans to leave South Africa and immediately published more robust information the following day under the headline “Missing Millions.” On 1 November, the *Rand Daily Mail* revealed Rhodie and McGoff’s plans to buy the *Washington Star* and on 2 November they informed South Africans about the film of Pieterse, *Golden Rendezvous*, under the headline “Flop you paid for”. A few days before, on 31 October, the *Rand Daily Mail* also notified South Africans that Mostert was considering disclosing his commissions’ evidence in the interest of law and nation. In only one week, South Africans were horrified by the disclosures of the English press.³⁵⁶ Without a doubt the press played an enormous role in revealing the misconducts of the Department of Information, to such an extent that the *Sunday Times* asked: “If the Press had not pursued the facts through minefields of suppressive legislation, through sneer, denigration and deceit, through months of tedious labour, would the investigation ever have got beyond the Reynders and Van den Bergh

³⁵⁵ Rickard, pp. 113-117; Mervis, pp. 443-445.

³⁵⁶ Mervis, pp. 445-446; Rickard, pp. 117-119; *Sunday Times*, 1978.10.29, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.10.30, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.1, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.2, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.10.31, p. 1.

inquiries?”³⁵⁷ Former editor of the *Evening Post*, John Sutherland, commended the bravery and attitude of SAAN newspapers by stating: “The persistence and responsibility with which newspapers took up taxpayers’ cause is what the free Press is all about.”³⁵⁸

Even though the press made massive progress in exposing the truth in October 1978, it was only the tip of the iceberg. The role of the press during the Muldergate Scandal was far from over. Its greatest challenge still lay ahead. The combination of reports and investigative journalism gave way to political confrontation that would ultimately affect South African history.

5.3. POLITICAL SKIRMISHES

As allegations of irregularities by the press and various commissions started to pour in, Connie Mulder, the leader of the NP in Transvaal and the most likely successor to Vorster, was soon on the defensive, with his political dreams at stake. Apart from receiving flak from the opposition parties, it became apparent that attacks on the Department of Information were directed at Mulder in order to improve the position of the left wing within the NP. The conservatives within the NP marginalised the Pik Botha, P.W. Botha and Koornhof factions since the general elections of 1977. As a result, the left wing resorted to political manoeuvring to recuperate and gain an advantage. Mulder’s first blunder came on 31 March 1978 when Japie Basson of the PFP asked Mulder to list the trips taken by Rhodie during 1977. The list which was provided to Basson and parliament, failed to mention the trip to the Seychelles. On 2 April 1978, the *Sunday Express* published Rhodie and his guests’ visit to the Seychelles. During a gathering in the House of Assembly on 8 April 1978, Basson asked Mulder why he did not include the Seychelles trip in the list. Mulder responded by saying that the Seychelles trip was unofficial and the Department of Information did not pay for the visit. According to Reynders, who was leading an investigation into the department, a distressed Mulder asked during March if he came across anything erroneous and implored him to speed up his inquiry in order to deter attacks from the opposition.³⁵⁹

The release of the Select Committee’s first report on 14 April 1978, indicating that the Department of Information did not adhere to financial regulations, provided ammunition to the opposition parties who started pushing for an inquest. Another embarrassment awaited

³⁵⁷ *Sunday Times*, 1978.11.12, p. 16.

³⁵⁸ *Eastern Province Herald*, 1978.11.4, p. 7.

³⁵⁹ De Vries, pp. 72-73, 78; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.6.4, p. 9; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.12.30, p. 7; *The Star*, 1978.5.8, p. 12.

Mulder as Rhodie divulged the secret funds in his press release on 8 May. Rhodie, feeling the tension building, phoned Mulder while on vacation and explained that he wanted to issue a press release. Mulder advised Rhodie to consult with Vorster and Van den Bergh before releasing a statement. Without consulting Mulder, Vorster, or Van den Bergh, Rhodie's press release placed Mulder in a predicament. During the parliamentary debates, Mulder now had to confess to the House of Assembly that he had prior knowledge of the secret operations, was aware of irregularities taking place, and that he backed the decision to refuse Barrie information for his probe into the department's financial affairs. An even more disgraceful falsehood Mulder had to admit and confess to, was the fact that he misled parliament about Rhodie's official visit to the Seychelles. Misleading parliament is considered a serious offence and Rhodie and Mulder's version about the Seychelles contradicted each other.³⁶⁰

During the first day of the Parliamentary debates on 9 May 1978, Vorster admitted knowing about the secret operations and funds, and took full responsibility. Vorster explained that South Africa faced a total onslaught and that monies were channelled to the Department of Information from 1972 to combat the threat through unconventional means. On 9 May, Mulder and Rhodie faced fierce attacks from opposition parties who wanted to know, among others, where the money was channelled from and accusing Mulder of destroying the department. Harry Schwarz of the opposition stated that Rhodie could only have access to the secret funds if he was an agent of BOSS and that the Department of Information was not entitled to the secret funds. Eglin demanded the dismissal of Rhodie. Mulder responded by defending the officials of the Department of Information, stating that they acted in the interest of the country, working long hours, and should be thanked for their contribution to South Africa. He also mentioned that press releases have rendered the department obsolete and that it was unable to effectively continue with its work. Mulder strongly criticised Rhodie for his press release of accusing Barrie of leaking sensitive information. The opposition addressed the subversive and immoral nature of the Department of Information and the secret funds,³⁶¹ whereby Mulder stated "when the survival of South Africa is at stake, rules don't apply."³⁶²

10 May 1978 would be a day of infamy for Mulder and Vorster. Japie Basson followed the development of *The Citizen* since the birth of the newspaper in 1976. He was quick to draw a

³⁶⁰ De Vries, pp. 77-78; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.12.30, p. 7.

³⁶¹ *Hansard*, 8 May – 16 June 1978, part 74, col. 6393-6398, 6419; Hull, p. 85; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.12.30, p. 7; *The Citizen*, 1978.6.14, p. 6.

³⁶² *Hansard*, 8 May – 16 June 1978, part 74, col. 6367.

correlation between the newspaper and the activities of the government. He noticed the newspaper's pro-ruling party alignment through the number of government advertisements appearing in the paper, the mysterious access to government sources, and attacks on himself and opposition parties. Basson kept track of the newspaper and was certain that *The Citizen* was backed by government, but could offer no evidence for his theory. The perfect opportunity arose during Mulder's budget debate when the opposition told Mulder that "Members of Parliament, Vorster and the general public, rightfully or wrongfully needed to know if newspapers such as *The Citizen* were being sponsored by the state for political ends."³⁶³ Through careful tactics, Basson started probing Mulder with broad questions, ending up with questions regarding *The Citizen*. Mulder's reply lasted for an hour, but he did not give an answer to Basson's question. In the end, Mulder said that he answered all the questions directed at him, but Basson was not satisfied with Mulder's feedback.³⁶⁴ Basson again addressed Mulder:

"The answer that the Minister provided – he can correct me – was that the Department of Information is not the owners of the newspaper. That we know. But that was not the question ... I once again ask a simple question directed at Mulder and require a direct answer."

Mulder replied:

"I will answer directly by saying that the Department of Information does not provide funds for *The Citizen*. Is it clear and does the Honourable member accept it?"

Basson asked again:

"And the government?"

Mulder answered:

"The government does not give funds to *The Citizen*."³⁶⁵

Mulder would later claim that Vorster sent him a note, instructing him to lie about the government's funding of *The Citizen*. Unfortunately, Mulder lost this elusive note, while Vorster denied the existence of such a note advising Mulder to lie to parliament. While

³⁶³ *Hansard*, 8 May – 16 June 1978, part 74, col. 6445-6449.

³⁶⁴ J. Basson, *Politieke kaarte op die tafel*, pp. 148-150; Rickard, pp. 102-104; Church, pp. 41-42; Erasmus, p. 5.

³⁶⁵ *Hansard*, 8 May – 16 June 1978, part 74, col. 6499-6500.

Mulder replied to Basson's questions, Alwyn Schlebusch of the Free State NP listened eagerly and noticed something alarming in the manner Mulder was denying funding of *The Citizen*. Realising that something was not right, he went to see Vorster and stated that Mulder would not become the next prime minister. Vorster showed little emotion, probably because he was already aware of the truth. The opposition parties would continue to strongly criticise the Department of Information, but the chairman ruled the matter *sub judice* while being investigated by various bodies. For the time being, the truth of *The Citizen* would lay dormant until the press releases later in the year.³⁶⁶

The Van der Walt Commission's final report was released before parliament on 13 July 1978. The report maintained that the state did not suffer overall losses, but suggested that Eschel Rhoodie should be sacked from his active duty as Secretary of Information. On 16 July, Vorster decided to send Eschel Rhoodie on pension as from July, and disbanded the Department of Information. The same day, Vorster appointed Van den Bergh to evaluate the confidential funds. The Department of Information was replaced by the Bureau of National and International Communication on 1 July 1978, remaining under the supervision of Connie Mulder. The *Rand Daily Mail* described this decision as astonishing: "Never before has there been a scandal so serious as to warrant the disbanding of an entire government department and the premature retirement of its three top officials."³⁶⁷ However, this action by Vorster did not completely ease the tension; for example, the *Sunday Tribune* still insisted that Vorster should sack Connie Mulder since he failed to keep his department free from corruption.³⁶⁸

In the second half of 1978, the Information Scandal would escalate to a climax in the political realm. The unexpected death of State President Diederichs on 22 August 1978 was the start of the forerunning for the premier elections. The burden of the political skirmishes and infighting had a severe effect on Vorster's health. At Diederichs' funeral, and for many people viewing the event, it became apparent that Vorster was in poor health. Vorster's ailing health must have spooked Mulder, who called Reynders on 31 August, imploring him to release the report straightaway. With the approval of Van den Bergh, Reynders presented Vorster with the report. On the same day, Vorster was admitted to hospital for a check-up and rest. Vorster resumed his duties again on 6 September. In a press conference on 20 September 1978 at the Union Buildings, Vorster, with Pik Botha at his side, announced that he would be

³⁶⁶ D. de Villiers & J. de Villiers, *PW*, pp. 102-103; *Sunday Tribune*, 1980.5.24, p. 12; *Eastern Province Herald*, 1978.5.19, p. 3.

³⁶⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.6.16, p. 1.

³⁶⁸ Erasmus, p. 5; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.12.30, p. 7; Hull, p. 85; *Sunday Tribune*, 1978.6.18, p. 20.

resigning as the Prime Minister of South Africa and would make himself available as candidate to be elected as State President.³⁶⁹

The resignation of Vorster posed an important question to South Africans as to who would succeed Vorster as Prime Minister of South Africa, and similarly important, how the Information Scandal would be dealt with.

5.4. 'A BLOODLESS COUP'

Vorster's resignation on 20 September 1978 initiated the race for the eighth Prime Minister of South Africa. Electing the new prime minister rested in the hands of the NP caucus. The caucus consisted of 172 members, with Transvaal boasting the largest number of 80, the Cape with the second largest margin of 55, the Free State with 24, and Natal with 13. Four candidates put themselves up for election for the highest office in South Africa, namely Connie Mulder, P.W. Botha, Pik Botha, and the Minister of Labour and Mines, Fanie Botha. The election would turn out to be one of the most unusual, tense, and highly contested leadership elections in South African history. It became clear that the elections would be focused on the Muldergate Scandal. The eight days leading up to the election was packed with behind-the-scenes political manoeuvring, infighting, lobbying, and betrayal. The outcome of the bitter struggle for the election of the premier would have a profound impact on the Information Scandal, the government, and South Africa.³⁷⁰

The four premiership candidates had distinctive qualities and supporters that furthered their causes but also had negative aspects. Mulder, Minister of Plural Relations and Development, as well as Information, was in a favourable position during the build-up to the elections. Mulder, at the age of 53, was described as ambitious, a natural leader, excellent debater and an outstanding politician. Mulder, emanating a strong image as a Verwoedian separatist, was strongly backed by conservatives and moderates. He enjoyed popular support from many circles within the NP and outside. On 13 September 1978, Mulder had the majority support as leader of the Transvaal had an enormous advantage as NP leader in the north. Traditionally, electoral candidates from the larger Transvaal province were more likely to become Prime

³⁶⁹ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.6.4, p. 9; Erasmus, p. 5; Harrison, p. 236; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.12.30, p. 7.

³⁷⁰ *The Star*, 1980.1.28, pp. 12-13; De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 101; *Post*, 1978.9.24, p. 5; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8.

Minister, such as Strijdom, Verwoerd, and Vorster, with the exception of Malan when the NP's power base was mainly centred in the Cape Province.³⁷¹

Even though Mulder was considered to be the crown prince, the recent eruption of the Information debacle largely counted against him. The criticism against Mulder was mainly based on the irregularities in his department and the appointment of controversial staff. His appointment abilities may prove fatal when selecting a cabinet. However, Mulder was resilient and could recover from his setback, especially because of his important portfolio as Minister of Plural Relations and Development. Mulder described the Information Scandal as a "storm in a teacup" as newspapers were trying to damage his political career.³⁷²

Mulder's main rival, P.W. Botha, was the southern leader of the NP in the Cape Province. His leadership in the Cape was unrivalled, providing him with the support of the majority of MPs within the province. Additionally, he enjoyed some support outside the region, such as the support of the Free State provincial leader, Schlebusch. Serving as Minister of Defence, he not only managed to improve the defence force, but established a competent reputation as a strong leader and a brilliant administrator. P.W. Botha was the most senior member in the cabinet. Few people, not even P.W. Botha himself, thought that he would become prime minister. He had several disadvantages in his bid for the post. Firstly, P.W. Botha was more or less in the same age group as Vorster, which tilted the balance against him as being too old for the post. Secondly, the ongoing war in Angola also counted against him. Thirdly, his military style of leadership and explosive emotional temper and outbursts gave him the image of a dictator. His attitude towards diplomacy in foreign affairs was also questioned. Lastly, Vorster strongly doubted P.W. Botha's ability to keep the party unified.³⁷³

Surprisingly, Pik Botha decided to enter the race after Mulder was elected as the leader of the NP. The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha, cemented his position in the NP and domestic politics with his sturdy foreign policies and solution to the issue in South-West Africa. In only nine months, the junior minister managed to consolidate a powerbase in the inner politics of South Africa. Probably Pik Botha's most prominent feature was his charisma and ability to excel in public speaking. He became a popular public sensation, with the author

³⁷¹ *The Star*, 1980.1.28, pp. 12-13; De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 100; De Vries, p. 97; *Daily Dispatch*, 1978.8.11, p. 12.

³⁷² *The Daily News*, 1978.9.14, p. 22; *Evening Post*, 1978.9.14, p. 1; De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 103; *The Natal Witness*, 1978.8.11, p. 12.

³⁷³ Papenfus, p. 229; De Vries, p. 97; *The Star*, 1980.1.28, pp. 12-13; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; *Daily Dispatch*, 1978.8.11, p. 12; *Evening Post*, 1978.9.27, p. 1.

of the autobiography *Pik Botha en sy tyd*, Theresa Papenfus, comparing his energetic and compelling speeches to a pop concert. Some of his greatest speeches revolved around attacks on the hypocrisies of foreign nations. He regularly featured on television and at the UN. Polls conducted by the *Pretoria News* with 500 random people, indicated that 97 percent preferred Pik Botha over Mulder and P.W. Botha. Pik Botha formed part of the left wing with his reformative ideas and had some supporters within the NP, such as Pietie du Plessis and Dawie de Villiers. Vorster admired Pik Botha and they shared a special relationship as younger and older brothers. Vorster intentionally kept Pik Botha at his side during his press release on 20 September in order to send a message to the caucus.³⁷⁴

Although Pik Botha was popular among the public, the election of a new prime minister rested in the hands of the conservative traditional NP caucus. The majority right wing members and supporters regarded him as far too left to lead the NP. As a recent member of the caucus, Pik Botha lacked experience of the inner fundamentals of the NP, and was therefore considered as too naive. In other words, Pik was not aware of what he was getting himself into as a candidate for the premiership. Prior to the elections, Mulder strongly contested the Pik Botha-faction and tried to discredit Pik Botha numerous times. His entrance to the race as a Transvaal candidate directly threatened the unrivalled Mulder by splitting the votes of the northern Nationalists. Fanie Botha withdrew from the race early for the sake of party unity.³⁷⁵

In the days running up to the election, the Reynders report was apparently leaked to the Transvaal nationalist newspaper, *Die Transvaler*, appearing in the newspaper on 23 September 1978. The BOSS auditor, Reynders, acting as Vorster's special investigator, completed his inquiry and cleared Mulder and his department of any irregularities. The report was astonishingly short, consisting of only three paragraphs. It made no reference to any anomalies and the investigation of the secret projects was allocated to Van den Bergh. The report gave Mulder the much needed breathing space from the grip of the Muldergate ghost for the upcoming election. In spite of this, it would later become clear that Mulder leaked the Reynders report. *Die Transvaler* confirmed that Mulder handed over the report to even the odds as a victim of an inquiry. Mulder hoped that the leaked report would start a 'snowball' effect and travel to other sources of news, working indirectly as political propaganda. During

³⁷⁴ De Villiers & De Villiers, pp. 100, 111; Papenfus, pp. 207, 216, 223, 228-230; Harrison, p. 239; *The Star*, 1980.1.28, pp. 12-13; *Evening Post*, 1978.9.27, p. 1; *The Cape Times*, 1978.9.27, p. 8.

³⁷⁵ De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 100; Papenfus, pp. 224, 230; *Evening Post*, 1978.9.27, p. 1; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; *Sunday Express*, 1978.10.1, p. 2.

the time, the suspicious *Rand Daily Mail* asked why the report was issued in such a covert manner if it was completed and why it was not released to the public officially. The Reynders report affected the Pik Botha camp negatively and they even considered withdrawing because they believed it was futile to continue with Mulder cleared.³⁷⁶

Previous director of Thor Communicators, Advocate Van Rooyen, was surprised by the publication of the Reynders report in *Die Transvaler*. Van Rooyen refused to believe the report and came to the conclusion that Reynders was influenced by Van den Bergh. Both Van Rooyen and Reynders were personally exposed to the inner workings of the Department of Information. They concluded that Mulder, Van den Bergh, and Rhoodie were preparing for a takeover, in which case Mulder would seize the position of Prime Minister, Van den Bergh Security and Defence, and Rhoodie Foreign Affairs and Information. With limited options regarding the grave issue, Van Rooyen decided that it was imperative to inform the cabinet. Van Rooyen contacted Pik Botha, who at the time was worried about his position in the race, but accepted a meeting with Van Rooyen. What Van Rooyen revealed through documents about *The Citizen*, Thor Communicators, the Seychelles, and the Pretoria Loftus suite, flabbergasted Pik Botha. Van Rooyen was never fully informed on the department's policies, but to his mind only Vorster and Mulder were aware of *The Citizen* and other problems. For interest's sake, while Van Rooyen was disclosing political ammunition to Pik Botha, Mulder was enjoying a game of tennis a few blocks away, confident that he was still in the lead of the premiership race. Pik Botha was confused as to why Van Rooyen would burden him with this explosive information. If Botha used it, it would be seen as an attempt to promote his own cause. In order to avoid carrying the burden solo, Pik Botha came to the conclusion that he should enlighten the cabinet ministers, and even his rival, P.W. Botha.³⁷⁷

Pik Botha phoned P.W. Botha, informing him that he received information that would shook the foundations of government and of South Africa. Together with Van Rooyen, they agreed to meet in Cape Town on 24 September with specific ministers. P.W. Botha requested Pik Botha to bring Schlebusch with him the next morning. Van Rooyen shared the secrets of the department's projects with ministers such as Schlebusch; Pik Botha; the Minister of Economic Affairs, Chris Heunis; and P.W. Botha. Pik Botha described the department's

³⁷⁶ Harrison, p. 239; Papenfus, pp. 230, 321; *The Star*, 1980.1.28, pp. 12-13; ARCA, "The Citizen, 1979.10.9, Newspaper insists Mulder leaked Reynders report", PV 451, 1/176/1/4 - Hertzog Collection; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.9.26, p. 10; *The Citizen*, 1978.9.25, p. 5.

³⁷⁷ *The Star*, 1980.1.28, pp. 12-13; Papenfus, p. 231; Harrison, p. 239; De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 108; ARCA, "Die Transvaler, 1978.11.20, Connie en Pik Bots", PV 451, 1/176/1/2 - Hertzog Collection.

dealings as “atrocious, if true.”³⁷⁸ According to Pik Botha, he decided to align himself with P.W. Botha, since he had the best chance of becoming the next prime minister. Pik Botha asked P.W. Botha how he would address the scandal and P.W. Botha confidently responded that he would reveal and clear the whole mess. Supporters of Mulder described this action of Pik Botha as stabbing Mulder in the back. Mulder would later condone views Pik Botha expressed to other ministers and senators as a one-sided statement. Research conducted by Matthew Woessner on the influence of scandals on presidential popularity, indicates that the public form their assessment of a major political event, such as a scandal, through the influence of elites. The study focused on the use of certain language that affects a subject’s evaluation of an individual. Even though the study was based on the broad public, his study still remains relevant, since Pik Botha did influence the caucus’ perspective of Mulder by using phrases such as “atrocious, if true.”³⁷⁹

After meeting in Cape Town, Schlebusch arranged an appointment with Mulder for the evening of 24 September. Mulder, hoping the Free State leader would pledge his support to him, was to the contrary confronted by Schlebusch over disturbing evidence he was made aware of. Schlebusch openly demanded that Mulder withdraw from the premiership race because of the stories surrounding his department, but Mulder remained undeterred to give up on his goals. Demoralised by Mulder’s decision to remain in the race, Pik Botha considered retiring from the race. However, his supporters encouraged him to stay and obstruct Mulder during the election. It became clear to Pik Botha that his task was not to win the election, but merely to hinder Mulder from reaching power. Later, Pik Botha received respect and admiration for the role he played to stop the cover-up in the event of Mulder becoming the next Prime Minister.³⁸⁰

The ‘bloodless coup’, as Rhodie describes the initiative to thwart Mulder from being elected as premier, gained traction when P.W. Botha, Pik Botha, Schlebusch, Heunis, and Louwrens Muller (Minister of Transport) went to see Vorster about the ‘distasteful news’ regarding the Department of Information on the evening of 25 September. Vorster confirmed that he had knowledge of the irregularities and his cabinet colleagues implored him to address the issue

³⁷⁸ *The Star*, 1980.1.29, p. 13

³⁷⁹ M.C. Woessner, “Scandals, elites, and presidential popularity: Considering the importance of cues in public support of the president”, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35(1), March 2005, pp. 94, 112; *The Star*, 1980.1.29, p. 13; De Villiers & De Villiers, pp. 108-109; *The Natal Mercury*, 1978.11.21, p. 12; *Daily Dispatch*, 1978.11.20, p. 1.

³⁸⁰ Papenfus, pp. 321-322; *The Star*, 1980.1.29, p. 13; *The Star*, 1980.1.30, pp. 16-17; *Die Transvaler*, 1978.11.20, p. 20.

during the following day's cabinet meeting. On 26 September 1978, a sick and worried Vorster addressed the cabinet for the last time in the Union Buildings. After Vorster completed the cabinet agenda, he enlightened the entire cabinet broadly about the affairs of the Department of Information and *The Citizen*. Schlebusch highlighted the issue of Mulder's lie in parliament back in May. Vorster also announced that Reynders would resume his investigation and that Van den Bergh would be retiring. Needless to say, the cabinet was stunned by what Vorster had revealed, causing confusion within the Mulder camp.³⁸¹

Pik Botha was strongly convinced that if Mulder was elected as Prime Minister, South Africa would suffer the embarrassment of Mulder resigning due to the exchange investigations by the Mostert Commission. On 27 September, Heunis urged Mulder at his arrival in Cape Town to withdraw because of the implications of a corrupt image if the Prime Minister had to appear before a commission only two days after being elected. Pieter Mulder alleges that the Mostert enquiry was a ploy used by the P.W. Botha and Pik Botha camp after conventional means failed to discredit Mulder. He explains that Heunis used Mostert to subpoena Luyt to testify about *The Citizen's* dealings in order to add significance to the reason why Mulder should not be elected. This message was circulated among parliamentary members. Pik Botha phoned Mulder on the day before the elections and suggested that they should both pull out of the elections in order to salvage party unity. However, Mulder remained steadfast.³⁸²

Tensions were running high on 28 September when the NP caucus assembled to elect the new Prime Minister. Schlebusch made no secret of the fact that his province would be backing P.W. Botha. Mulder and P.W. Botha made it clear that party unity would not be damaged and that they would abide by the decision of the caucus. In the first ballot of votes, Mulder received 72 votes, Pik Botha 22, and P.W. Botha 78. Before the second round commenced, Pik Botha backed out and ordered his supporters to vote for the candidate they preferred. In the final ballot, Mulder obtained 74 votes and P.W. Botha 98. Twenty of Pik Botha's supporters voted for P.W. Botha and two for Mulder. As P.W. Botha emerged as the new Prime Minister, he encountered a crowd chanting 'We want Pik!' It is quite ironic that the candidate praised by the public would fare the worst in the caucus election. In his

³⁸¹ Rhoodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 1; De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 109; *Sunday Express*, 1978.10.1, p. 2; *Evening Post*, 1978.9.27, p. 1; *The Star*, 1980.1.30, pp. 16-17; *The Star*, 1980.1.31, p. 18.

³⁸² Papenfus, p. 326; ARCA, "Die Transvaler, 1979.10.3, Adv. Van Rooyen se rol: Dr. Mulder oor sette teen hom", PV 451. 1/176/1/4 - Hertzog Collection; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; *The Star*, 1980.2.1, p. 8.

inauguration speech, P.W. Botha ensured the public that he would bring forth a clean administration.³⁸³

Connie Mulder's determination to become Prime Minister led to his own demise. Forcing the Reynders report resulted in a counterattack from Van Rooyen and Pik Botha. However, the elections were not the end of the Muldergate Scandal, but entered its final phase with another cover-up attempt.

5.5. THE MOSTERT AND ERASMUS COMMISSIONS

In the aftermath of the caucus election, the NP was experiencing perplexity, drama, and change. For almost a year, the majority of South Africans were kept in the dark about the scandalous affairs of the Department of Information. Meanwhile, Vorster was accepted as the new ceremonial State President. P.W. Botha assured the public that the truth would be revealed speedily and with credibility, but on the contrary, P.W. Botha had no intention of releasing the facts. The actions of Judge Mostert not only dispersed the smokescreen of deception from the public, but also challenged the government and P.W. Botha directly. Initially Mostert was unwilling to release the testimonies of his witnesses, but two factors led to his disclosures. Firstly, in October the press was publishing all the information they have amassed about the scandal. Secondly, Mostert obtained a considerable amount of explosive information during the elections that was idle. In a sense, Mostert felt exploited by politicians during the elections. Mostert's press conference on 2 November would reopen and completely expose the scandal afresh.³⁸⁴

P.W. Botha requested to meet with Mostert before issuing his press release. On 2 November, Mostert arrived at the Union Buildings to see P.W. Botha. During the meeting, Mostert updated P.W. Botha on the evidence he had about improper use of millions of rand. In response, P.W. explained that the information should be handled with care and that Mostert should refrain from releasing the information in the interest of the country. Mostert refused to listen and stated: "it was the first time in the history of South Africa that a prime minister had attempted to dictate to an independent judge where his duty lies."³⁸⁵ Thereafter, P.W. Botha lost his temper and Mostert left. As soon as Mostert left the Union Building, he announced

³⁸³ *The Star*, 1980.2.1, p. 8; Harrison, p. 241; Papenfus, p. 238; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.20, p. 1; Barber, "Afrikanerdom in disarray", p. 289.

³⁸⁴ Rickard, pp. 91, 107; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; *The Cape Times*, 1978.11.9, p. 12; De Vries, p. 102.

³⁸⁵ Rickard, p. 129.

that he would be addressing the press in the afternoon. Mostert assumed that if he did not take the responsibility on himself to reveal the dealings of the government, it would continue to stay dormant. More notable was Mostert's decision to ignore an order by the highest authoritative individual in the country.³⁸⁶ At the press conference, before releasing the affidavits to the journalists, Mostert stated the reason for unveiling the information:

“The information given before me and other information at my disposal shows the improper implication of taxpayers' money running into millions of rand, moreover, there are indications from the same sources of corruption (in the widest sense of that word) relating to public funds. In such matters public interest is paramount and is usually best served by frank disclosure. Only reasons of great cogency will cause suppression or secrecy to be preferred to disclosure, I do not find such cogency in emotional appeals unsupported by valid considerations. I have therefore decided to make the evidence available to the press. In doing so I believe I have a contribution to 'clean administration.'”³⁸⁷

In order to control the situation and damage done by Mostert, P.W. Botha warned the press that disseminating the information released by Mostert was illegal and could have repercussions. However, the press blatantly ignored P.W. Botha's orders. The *Rand Daily Mail's* headline on 3 November 1978 read “It's all true.” The *Daily Dispatch* reported that it would release evidence for the sake of public interest and refused to wait for information to be released by the State President. Even the Afrikaans press joined the trend with headings such as “Bomme Bars” and “Oopgevlak” (“Bombs burst” and “Slashed Open”). The reports published affected public confidence in the government and its leaders. The only media organisation obeying P.W. Botha's instruction was the SABC, who received heavy criticism from opposition parties. Mostert became an instant hero and announced that he would continue his investigations, the questioning of more witnesses, and that he would release more information.³⁸⁸

Mostert's actions were not received too well by P.W. Botha. Many questions were being raised around the role of Vorster, such as why he had not stopped funding *The Citizen* when he was informed? Since P.W. Botha's threats failed to contain the situation, he resorted to a

³⁸⁶ Rees & Day, pp. 95-96; Rickard, pp. 121-123, 127-129; *Eastern Province Herald*, 1980.1.18, p. 10; *Daily Dispatch*, 1978.11.3, p. 1.

³⁸⁷ Rickard, p. 128.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134; De Vries, p. 105; *Evening Post*, 1978.11.3, p. 3; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.3, p. 1; *Daily Dispatch*, 1978.11.3, p. 1; Rees & Day, p. 100.

second option, namely establishing the Erasmus Commission. On 8 November 1978, P.W. Botha disbanded the Mostert and Van der Walt Commissions. P.W. Botha's reason for sacking Mostert was that there was an untenable difference between the state's point of view and the actions taken by Mostert. Mostert has gone beyond his terms of instruction as commissioner and also gave the public access to information that was unevaluated and one-sided. P.W. Botha also expressed concern that Mostert's broad inquiry may overlap with the newly established Erasmus Commission. The decision by P.W. Botha to dismiss Mostert sparked outrage and strong criticism from South Africans. The *Natal Witness* stated that P.W. Botha's actions undermined his pledge of an honest public administration, resulting in the decrease of public confidence. Eglin claimed that P.W. Botha's dictatorial tendency threatened the judicial system: "The Prime Minister's dictatorial stopping of the Mostert Commission is an abuse of executive power and an insult to the South African judiciary."³⁸⁹ On the same day that Mostert's services were terminated, P.W. Botha tried to implement an interdict prohibiting Mostert from disclosing more information, but it was unsuccessful. The following day, 9 November, evidence gathered by Mostert was confiscated by the Treasury Department. Thereafter, Mostert returned to his normal life and wished for his privacy to be respected. Startlingly, on 11 November, a petrol bomb was detonated next to Mostert's house on his neighbour's property. Police investigating the case was strongly convinced that the bomb was intended for Mostert. Mostert only commented that he did not wish for protection and was not particularly concerned about the incident.³⁹⁰

P.W. Botha and Connie Mulder agreed that a new judicial commission headed by a chief judge should be appointed to investigate irregularities. Mulder wished for a newly established commission that would investigate if any corruption occurred while implementing the projects and which would differentiate between secret international projects and the misuse of funds. Instead, on 3 November 1978, P.W. Botha and Vorster appointed Judge Rudolf Erasmus, the NP's legal advisor in the Free State, as the chairman of the commission. Erasmus was regarded as inferior to Mostert, because he was not selected as judge of the Appeal Court yet; therefore it even came as a surprise to Erasmus. However, Erasmus was eager to uncover the facts and he was ready for the challenge. Previously, Erasmus served in nine government commissions in areas such as the Delamination Commission for South Africa and South West Africa/Namibia, and the Commission on Industrial Health. The other

³⁸⁹ *The Argus*, 1978.11.8, p. 12.

³⁹⁰ Rees & Day, p. 122; Rickard, pp. 135-136, 144, 148; *The Natal Witness*, 1978.11.4, p. 1; *The Daily News*, 1978.11.9, p. 1; *Sunday Tribune*, 1978.11.12, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1980.2.26, p. 1.

two advocates joining the commission were G.F. Smalberger and A.J. Braam Lategan. The mandate given to the commission was to investigate alleged irregularities in the Department of Information that were exposed by inquiries and the press, to evaluate findings, and to provide recommendations. The commission had a month in which to report to parliament for a special sitting on 6 December. This would be the fourth special sitting in South African history since 1910. Erasmus' previous knowledge of the Muldergate Scandal only came from press reports, and delivering the first report was a mammoth task.³⁹¹

Even though the Erasmus Commission was subjected to numerous regulations, three specific rules would be put to the test, namely: "no member of the public or the press shall publish any evidence of the proceedings or have access to any of the records of the commissions ... No person shall insult, disparage or belittle the commission," and lastly, "any person who contravenes any provision of regulation 8 (B) 12, 13 or 14 or willfully hinders, resists or obstructs the commission or any officer in the exercise of any power referred to in Regulation 10 shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding R200, or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months."³⁹²

The PFP, fearing the secrecy of the Erasmus Commission behind closed doors and an imminent cover-up, appealed to the commission that Basson, Schwarz, and Zac de Beer should be present during the hearings. Erasmus rejected the appeal and stated that the commission worked independently from politics and it was for the safety of the state.³⁹³ British observer, and expert on South African Affairs, Louis Blom-Cooper, was largely negative about the newly established commission: "It seems as though the Government is putting a very large brush into the hands of three gentlemen, expecting them to sweep the dirt under the carpet."³⁹⁴

Delivering the Erasmus report in a month's time, including typing, proofreading, and translation, was no easy feat. Key players of the Info-Cast, including Mulder, P.W. Botha, Rhoodie, and Van den Bergh, offered their testimonies under oath. Unexpectedly to Erasmus, Vorster decided to testify of his own free will. It was an odd occurrence for a State President

³⁹¹ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; Erasmus, pp. 8-9, 15; ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, p. 2; ARCA, "Verslag van die betoog gelewer op 7 Augustus 1979 deur die Adjunk-Prokureur-Generaal en Mnr. Vincent by die uitleweringsaansoek van Dr. E.M. Rhoodie", PV 895, A1/K4 Vol. 1 - Heunis Collection, 1979.8.7; *The Natal Mercury*, 1978.11.4, p. 8; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.4, p. 1.

³⁹² *The Citizen*, 1978.11.8, p. 3;

³⁹³ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.10, p. 2; Erasmus, p. 4.

³⁹⁴ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.3, p. 3.

to testify before his own commission of inquiry. Mulder received a massive shock when he asked Vorster about the manner in which they were going to approach questions before the Erasmus Commission. Vorster informed Mulder that he would strongly deny his involvement and proclaim his innocence as he did not sign any documents. A troubled Mulder responded by metaphorically stating the futility of lying, “we are standing in a straight line, if they shoot me, they will shoot you standing behind me and that goes for both P.W. Botha and Horwood. We should admit what we have done and denying our involvement would only lead to our inevitable destruction.”³⁹⁵

The account given by the first report of the Erasmus Commission cleared P.W. Botha from any association with the arrangements of the secret funds and stated that he had acted honourably and with integrity by being pitted against the transfer of secret funds from the Defence Department. He was never aware of any irregularities occurring within the department. Horwood was also dismissed from any irregularities. The Erasmus Commission found Vorster’s involvement with all irregularities was bona fide, honest, and without any personal gain. On the other hand, Mulder was found negligent, unqualified to function as head of the department, and acting unlawfully by pressurising “others” to obtain better results. The findings on Rhodie’s role included deplorable negligence, deceiving the Department of Defence, and strong violations of fraud and theft. The commission concluded that legal action should be taken against the Rhodie brothers.³⁹⁶

In the sitting of 6 December 1978, P.W. Botha, satisfied with the Erasmus Commission, stated that the commission penetrated deep into the “core and essence” of the issue and would continue to root out malpractices.³⁹⁷ The *Weekend Post* attacked P.W. Botha’s behaviour during the sitting, accusing him of avoiding critical questions by opposition parties and taking an offensive stance by attacking members of the PFP. Some questions addressed to P.W. Botha asked how it was possible for him to be unaware of R64 million channelled from his Department of Defence and why there was no effort to stop these arrangements. Needless to say, the report angered and shocked South Africans when they learned that their taxes were used to fund *The Citizen*. The report raised even more questions from the public and newspapers, such as how it was possible for Rhodie to receive R16 million without the consent of Treasury, and why the state did not close down *The Citizen*, but had no difficulties

³⁹⁵ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; Erasmus, pp. 16-19.

³⁹⁶ Erasmus, pp. 19-21; Harrison, p. 242.

³⁹⁷ *The Star*, 1978.12.6, p. 1.

in closing a proper newspaper such as *The World*. It was clear that the commission was unable to retrieve all the desired answers and the investigation would continue until 30 May 1979.³⁹⁸

From December 1978 to January 1979, Van den Bergh directly challenged the mandate of the Erasmus Commission. While the parliamentary sitting was taking place, Van den Bergh arranged his own press conference on 6 December at his home in Pretoria. Van den Bergh contemptuously accused the Erasmus Commission of being a big farce, spreading lies, and should be regarded as “the biggest character assassination in the history of South Africa.” Van den Bergh also blamed the commission of being biased for their rejection of his own, Rhodie’s and Mulder’s testimonies, while accepting Vorster’s declaration regardless. He made it perfectly clear to *Beeld*, *Sunday Express*, *Hoofstad*, and *Rapport* that he informed Vorster about *The Citizen* in 1975, and would refuse to testify before the commission again. Van den Bergh directly challenged the commission through belittling, obstructing, and making evidence public.³⁹⁹

The real shock came when the state refused to prosecute Van den Bergh. Even though the Attorney General of Transvaal, Jacobus Nothling, did find Van den Bergh guilty of contempt, he preferred not to prosecute the general on the grounds that he may expose witnesses of the commission, which would not be in the best interest of the country. Justice Erasmus strongly believed that Van den Bergh should be held liable for his actions after criticising the commission, because it would result in the free criticism and dismantling of the commission. The Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, concurred with the Attorney General, saying that technically the commission had finished its work at the time when Van den Bergh made his evidence public, and therefore it was out of the commission’s mandate. P.W. Botha indirectly supported the Attorney General’s decision by not intervening in the case. The ‘above-the-law’ status of Van den Bergh for deliberately challenging the commission without prosecution sparked outrage throughout South Africa. In January 1978, a countrywide movement began flooding Pretoria, insisting on the prosecution of Van den Bergh. This movement included the forming of committees such as the Bloemfontein Committee for Equality before the Law, telephone calls, sending hundreds of telegrams from the public to

³⁹⁸ ARCA, “Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...”, P 58 – Basson Collection, p. 2; *The Natal Mercury*, 1978.12.5, p. 10; *Weekend Post*, 1978.12.9, p. 14; *The Natal Mercury*, 1978.12.19, p. 4; *The Star*, 1978.12.6, p. 1.

³⁹⁹ ARCA, “Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...”, P 58 – Basson Collection, p. 2; Erasmus p. 23; *Daily Dispatch*, 1978.12.9, p. 8; *The Star*, 1978.12.8, p. 5.

P.W. Botha demanding the prosecution of Van den Bergh, and over 100 petitions circulating the country. Van den Bergh stunned the press and public when he pitched up in Pretoria to sign the petition for his own trial and thereby ridiculing the movement. The reluctance of the state to take action again shattered public confidence. Van den Bergh never saw his day in court, but he did appear again before the Erasmus Commission to provide essential evidence.⁴⁰⁰

In contrast with Van den Bergh's scenario, the government clearly emphasised the importance of abiding by the law through its confrontation with the press. The Erasmus Commission and P.W. Botha believed that the opposition press was hindering and influencing the commission by spreading rumours based on political orientations. The courts were in favour of prohibiting the press from anticipating the findings of the commission. Since December 1978, P.W. Botha regularly threatened the press with the introduction of legislation that would stop 'rumour-mongering' and forcing journalists to disclose sources after the commission submitted its final report on 30 May 1979. The first newspaper to feel the wrath of P.W. Botha was the *Rand Daily Mail*, following an article on 15 November with the headline "Citizen – R27-million shock". On 17 January 1979, the *Rand Daily Mail* was convicted in the Johannesburg Regional Court of anticipating the findings of the commission. SAAN and Sparks were both fined R50. In February 1979, P.W. Botha issued an ultimatum to the *Sunday Express* to either apologise or close down for using leaked deleted words of Van den Bergh's testimony to the commission. On 9 March, the political correspondent of the *Sunday Express*, John Matisonn, was incarcerated for refusing to reveal his source of information regarding Frederick Shaw of the Christian League's banking account linked to the Department of Information.⁴⁰¹

As a result, the press and public started speculating why the government was clamping down on the opposition press. *The Cape Times* observed that P.W. Botha was more threatened by the publication of the facts than by the facts themselves, and the attitude of secrecy and evasion of the government would obviously breed rumours. Editor of the *Sunday Times*, Joel

⁴⁰⁰ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, p. 3; Erasmus, p. 48; *Beeld*, 1979.1.25, p. 1; *Eastern Province Herald*, 1979.2.7, p. 10; *The Star*, 1979.1.25, p. 24; *The Argus*, 1979.1.31, p. 16; *The Friend*, 1979.2.1, p. 1; *Pretoria News*, 1979.2.1, p. 1; *The Star*, 1979.2.3, p. 1; *The Citizen*, 1979.1.26, p. 1; ARCA, "Telegrams to Prime Minister P.W. Botha demanding the prosecution of General Van Den Bergh", PV 203, 1/R3/11 – Botha Collection, 1979.

⁴⁰¹ ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, p. 2; Erasmus, p. 52; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.1.18, p. 1; *The Cape Times*, 1979.1.18, p. 10; *Evening Post*, 1978.12.13, p. 10; *Sunday Tribune*, 1979.2.11, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.3.10, p. 2; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.2.20, p. 12.

Mervis, defended the opposition press by remarking that P.W. Botha was seeking revenge by directing his anger at the newspaper instead of the inner circles of the government; “The so-called rumour-mongers were accurate and truthful. The lies, deception, false denials and cover-up came chiefly from people in his own administration.”⁴⁰² A letter from a Mr C.P. Currey to P.W. Botha dated 24 January 1979, conveyed his anger on the manner in which the Information affair was being resolved. He pointed out the outrageous behaviour of the government in acting swiftly against contempt from the newspapers, but was unwilling to prosecute Van den Bergh and Mulder, while allowing Rhodie to escape.⁴⁰³ His final words to P.W. Botha in the letter were: “I beg of you that you demonstrate clearly that your administration will live up to the high ideals that you promised on the steps of the Houses of Parliament. At the moment facts suggest that you are incapable of doing so, and we cannot afford another corrupt administration.”⁴⁰⁴

The Erasmus Commission was a dominant factor in determining the outcome of the Muldergate Scandal. Therefore, it is important to analyse the procedures of the commission in order to understand the validity of its findings by viewing two critical criticisms directed at the commission. Overall, the commission focused on misconducts, irregularities, self-enrichment, and improper use of public funds, but it never questioned the objectives or doctrines of the Department of Information. The first dispute was the method of collecting the testimonies of witnesses through either cross-examinations or accumulating evidence and deciding which were truthful. According to Erasmus, a cross-examination would have been a tedious process which would have prolonged the commission’s work from six months to three years. Instead, witnesses were broadly questioned by two additional advocates. With the process followed by Erasmus, an individual was recalled to deliver an updated testimony – if they were willing to – when evidence were delivered against the particular individual. Erasmus made it clear that his commission was not a court of law, and acted to best suit the circumstances. The accuracy of this method was subjected to scrutiny. Legal experts point out that the facts were not tested as in the case of a cross-examination and could not be considered fact, since the commission had to decide which testimonies were true. Advocate Lategan stated in 1980 that he became frustrated with questioning Vorster and Horwood about their testimonies. During the debate of no-confidence early in February 1979,

⁴⁰² *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.12.12, p. 2.

⁴⁰³ ARCA, “C.P. Currey letter to P.W. Botha”, PV 203. A1/16/4 - *Botha Collection*, 1979.1.24; *The Cape Times*, 1978.1.18, p. 10; *The Argus*, 1979.3.19, p. 10.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

P.W. Botha acknowledged that errors were made by the commission, especially with findings regarding the sub-committee.⁴⁰⁵

The second decision of detaining information about the scandal and its witnesses also caused heavy speculation and criticism. Erasmus explained that withholding information about the witnesses' identity was significant to the objectivity of the commission's findings. The Erasmus Commission clarified that the abnormal dealings of the Department of Information would have a traumatic effect on the public and politics, and the consequences thereof would obstruct the commission. Disclosures would allow the newspapers to create suspicion, even on their own judgement, and influence the credibility of the commission. Revealing evidence would also have an impact on the witnesses in the sense that they would refuse to testify or sneak out of the country. While some experts, such as Professor Marinus Wiechers of the University of South Africa, agree that the Erasmus Commission had no other option, other experts such as Prof S.C. Jacobs of the Department of Law at the University of Potchefstroom, reasoned that the Erasmus Commission was unable to justify their decision on the moral high ground. Disclosing the evidence of the commission would help to clear the matter. Additionally, the disappointing decision after the first report to keep evidence confidential from the public must be seen in the light of the commission's previous statement that the information would be open for public inspection. *The Argus* pointed out that persons who were guilty of misconduct would remain uncooperative even if the hearings were fully confidential. The *Evening Post* stated that it was a disturbing move from P.W. Botha to detain the evidence of Vorster and Van den Bergh from public scrutiny in the name of national interest.⁴⁰⁶

In March 1979, the government instructed the Erasmus Commission to investigate accusations made by Rhodie – which P.W. Botha referred to as a “smear campaign”⁴⁰⁷ – regarding the cabinet's knowledge about *The Citizen*. The instruction for the Intermediate Report was to answer the question if any members of the contemporary cabinet knew about the financing or provided other financial support to *The Citizen* before it was made public on 26 September 1978. The order was issued on 14 March and Erasmus only had 16 days to interview witnesses and to complete the report. Mulder was dissatisfied with the initial report of the Erasmus Commission and refused to testify again. In a press conference on 22 March

⁴⁰⁵ Erasmus, pp. 15, 16; *Die Vaderland*, 1979.2.7, p. 15; *Sunday Times*, 1980.10.8, p. 16; Hull, p. 51.

⁴⁰⁶ ARCA, “*Die Transvaler/Oggendblad*, 1979.6.5...”, P 58 – *Basson Collection*, p. 3; Erasmus, pp. 14-15, 53; *Evening Post*, 1978.11.17, p. 6; *The Argus*, 1979.1.17, p. 18; *Die Vaderland*, 1979.1.17, p. 1.

⁴⁰⁷ *The Cape Times*, 1979.3.12, p. 2.

1979, the commission invited all relevant people to deliver their testimonies regarding knowledge of *The Citizen*. Witnesses that came forward to provide testimonies, included P.W. Botha, Heunis, and Horwood, but Mulder claimed that he was never approached to give his testimony. The Intermediate Report released at the end of March found that the cabinet had no prior knowledge of *The Citizen*. P.W. Botha and Horwood were cleared of misconduct on the principle that they did not know that the funds were utilised for *The Citizen*. Mulder and Rhoodie's versions that Horwood knew before November 1977, were dismissed.⁴⁰⁸

Following Van den Bergh's example, Mulder refused to testify again before the commission for the Complementary Report regarding his involvement in the *Washington Star* project and the Panorama publishing contract. According to Mulder, he was denied a fair hearing previously because he had to deliver an oath before he was given access to the required documents. The documents that were provided by the commission were also of no help to Mulder, or the desired documents were not available to jog his memory. The commission counter argued that Mulder was fully aware of the procedures and sued him for contempt of the commission. In August 1979, the regional court ruled in Mulder's favour because the mandate of the commission did not cover new aspects from January 1979. The Complementary Report delivered at the end of May 1979 found, without a doubt, that Vorster was aware of *The Citizen* at all times, as well as of other financial arrangements regarding the Department of Information. He was found guilty of failing to take action for more than a year in order to halt the misconduct. Erasmus pointed out that Vorster made the same mistake as Nixon in Watergate by not admitting knowledge of *The Citizen*.⁴⁰⁹

While the government and the Erasmus Commission diligently tried to avoid any leaks in South Africa, they were tested abroad by leaks and allegations from Eschel Rhoodie, who had escaped the censorship curtain of P.W. Botha and the Erasmus Commission.

5.6. ESCHEL RHOODIE AS FUGITIVE

Back in November 1978, when Mostert confirmed the allegations that sparked the climax of the Muldergate Scandal, Eschel Rhoodie interrupted his overseas visit to deliver his testimony before the Erasmus Commission. According to Rhoodie, after testifying to the

⁴⁰⁸ De Vries, p. 134; ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, pp. 3, 24; Erasmus, pp. 36-37; *The Cape Times*, 1979.3.12, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁹ *Die Transvaler*, 1979.4.3, p. 1; Erasmus, pp. 36-39, 42-43, 58-59; Harrison, pp. 242-243; De Vries, p. 142; ARCA, "Die Transvaler/Oggendblad, 1979.6.5...", P 58 – Basson Collection, pp. 3, 24; ARCA, "The Citizen, 1979.4.30. Erasmus: I still want to hear Dr Mulder", PV 451, 1/176/1/4 - Hertzog Collection.

commission – which he described as unfair – he was granted permission to continue his business visit to the USA and left on 20 November with his wife, Katy. Before Rhodie could return to South Africa to rejoin his wife on 8 December, his passport was withdrawn by Schlebusch, the minister of Internal Affairs and Immigration. Schlebusch also confiscated Katy's passport. Schlebusch's drastic actions drew a lot of criticism, both for the withdrawal of Rhodie's passport after he had left the country, and the unwarranted confiscation of Katy's passport. Schlebusch stated that it was the first initiative he took after viewing the first report of the Erasmus Commission, and that he was allowed to act if a reason existed or if he could provide proof that the steps he was taking, was in the interest of the nation. Rhodie became infuriated with the P.W. Botha administration when Katie's passport was withdrawn and her inheritance of R70 000 was seized by the state attorney in order to gain control over Rhodie's assets. The situation regarding the withdrawal of his passport, as well as heavy criticism from the Erasmus Commission, convinced Rhodie to stay clear of South Africa. Rhodie also claimed that his wife agreed with his idea of not returning to South Africa and avoiding prosecution. Schlebusch's actions increased speculations that Rhodie was intentionally kept out of the picture because he could seriously embarrass the government if he started talking.⁴¹⁰

For South Africa and the world, Rhodie disappeared off the radar when his passport was withdrawn. By January 1979, the police had failed to press charges against Rhodie and had made no attempt to extradite Rhodie to South Africa. The Minister of Police, Jimmy Kruger, stated that detectives were working around the clock and following leads obtained from material published by the Erasmus Commission. Kruger further explained the difficulties of laying charges on mere allegations and said the investigation would only be completed in May 1979. The Brazilian police informed the South African press that they were searching for Rhodie and had obtained information that he was using an Ecuador passport, but they had received no official request from the South African police to search for Rhodie. *Pretoria News* reported that Rhodie was last spotted in December 1978 and was possibly hiding in France, since he had an extensive web of 'anonymous collaborators' from his days as the Secretary of Information. While Rhodie was on the run, his family and brother received numerous threats from mostly Afrikaans speakers. Many South Africans wanted

⁴¹⁰ *Die Transvaler*, 1979.2.7, p. 7; *Beeld*, 1979.1.28, p.1; Rhodie, *The real Information Scandal*, pp. 503, 508-509; *Sunday Tribune*, 1979.1.28, p. 6; *The Natal Mercury*, 1978.12.15, p. 12.

Rhoodie to return to South Africa to “face the music”, but fortunately for Rhoodie, South Africa had few extradition treaties with international countries.⁴¹¹

A breakthrough was achieved when Rees of the *Rand Daily Mail* managed to establish contact with Rhoodie via a person only code-named the ‘Third Man.’ Rhoodie made himself available as parliamentarians gathered in February 1979 to start heated debates over the Muldergate Scandal. The search for Rhoodie and obtaining his story was a major and costly operation for the *Rand Daily Mail*, which was financed by the Morning Group. Through a series of ‘Rhoodie security checkpoints’, Rees travelled to Frankfurt, Zurich, Amsterdam, and Chicago to receive a phone call for his next orders. The journalist who exposed Rhoodie’s operations, finally met with him at the Miami International Airport. Before any arrangements could be established, Rhoodie laid down ground rules for the exclusive interview. This included that the meeting and his location would not be reported; no pictures; information should be published simultaneously with his address to the international media; and he wanted to get paid for the “information deal.”⁴¹² Rhoodie’s preconditions posed a problem for Sparks, who had to explain the purpose of the funds to the Morning Group. Sparks and Rhoodie managed to reach an agreement, whereby Sparks told his colleagues that Rees have tracked down an informant with important information regarding the secret projects. Rees and Rhoodie decided to stay out of sight in Ecuador to conduct their exclusive interview. The agreement between Rees and Rhoodie was of mutual benefit, because Rees required answers for the subpoena regarding the Muldergate Scandal and Rhoodie wanted to share his story and his unfair treatment.⁴¹³

D-Day for Rhoodie finally arrived on 5 March 1979, when he was prepared to tell the international media, through the journalist David Dimbleby and BBC producer David Harrison, his account of serving in the Department of Information for seven years. Rhoodie’s story was aided by documents and 41 tape recordings containing details of the secret projects over the last five years, with the names of significant public figures. Some of the information contained in the documents could be described as dynamite that would have dire consequences for South Africa and embarrass South Africa and its allies. It could only be

⁴¹¹ *Sunday Tribune*, 1979.1.28, p. 6; Rhoodie, *The real Information Scandal*, p. 512; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.1.23, p. 2; *Cape Herald*, 1979.1.5, p. 6; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.12.7, p. 2; *Pretoria news*, 1979.1.15, p. 9; *The Argus*, 1979.1.23, p. 5; Mervis, p. 442.

⁴¹² Mervis, p. 442.

⁴¹³ Rees & Day, pp. 150-151, 154-156; Mervis, p. 442; ARCA, “*The Citizen*, 1979.3.12, Costly trip to meet Rhoodie”, *PV 451, 1/176/1/3 - Hertzog Collection*; ARCA, “*The Citizen*, 1979.4.30. Erasmus: I still want to hear Dr Mulder”, *PV 451, 1/176/1/3 - Hertzog Collection*.

speculated that these documents included sensitive secrets, such as arms deals between South Africa and Israel. However, before disclosing this information, something odd happened. Van Den Bergh contacted Rhodie and started negotiating for the concealment of the information. The following week, Van den Bergh met with Rhodie in Paris, bringing along a millionaire businessman from Johannesburg, Josias van Zyl. For the businessman, Rhodie's exposures would not only harm South Africa, but also influence the patriotic businessman's business enterprise. Josias van Zyl persuaded Rhodie to remain silent in exchange for an offer of R500 000 and an opportunity to become his international representative. Another reason why Rhodie preferred to accept the offer was because, with his knowledge of sensitive secrets, he could become a target for South African and other hitmen. The *Daily Dispatch* reported on 15 March 1979 that Josias van Zyl and Van den Bergh's passports were confiscated by the government when they tried to further negotiate with Rhodie. On 16 March, P.W. Botha issued a warrant for Rhodie's arrest.⁴¹⁴

Meanwhile in South Africa, the *Rand Daily Mail* and other papers started to circulate Rhodie's side of the story through the South African media in March 1979. Since Rhodie accepted Josias van Zyl's offer, Rees recalled that a fearful Rhodie ordered him not to publish the information about the sensitive secrets and to only publish information they had uncovered with the rest of his personal story. Needless to say, the articles the *Rand Daily Mail* were allowed to publish, shocked the South African public and government. Jimmy Kruger and the Erasmus Commission immediately moved to acquire a court interdict to ban the publishing of Rhodie's side. Kruger was granted a court order that prohibited the publishing of allegations Rhodie made against him. On 12 March 1979, an estimated 10 000 copies of the *Rand Mail Daily* were withdrawn from circulation and later editions carried blank spaces. On the same day, the Supreme Court overruled the Erasmus Commission's interdict against the publication of Rhodie's testimony. The Erasmus Commission claimed that these disclosures would embarrass and hamper the commission and would negatively influence evidence brought before the commission. The Supreme Court overturned the

⁴¹⁴ *Dialy Dispatch*, 1979.3.15, p. 10; ARCA, "The Citizen, 1979.3.8, Rhodie to keep mum", PV 451, 1/176/1/3 - Hertzog Collection; ARCA, "Rapport, 1979.3.4, Rhodie ruk als oop", PV 451, 1/176/1/3 - Hertzog Collection; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.8.18, p. 9; ARCA, "Die Transvaler, 1979.3.5, V.d. Bergh kry uitstel by Rhodie", PV 451, 1/176/1/3 - Hertzog Collection; Rees & Day, pp. 210-212

commission's interdict because they were unable to provide any justifiable argument or fact to prevent the SAAN group from disclosing Rhoodie's story.⁴¹⁵

Even though Rhoodie accepted the agreement with Josias van Zyl not to reveal all of the tapes, he continued going public on 21 March 1979 during an interview with Dimpleby. During this international interview, Rhoodie spoke about some of the secret projects and launched attacks on Vorster and P.W. Botha. He also revealed a document containing the signature of Horwood in approving a secret project. The interview with Rhoodie was seen by millions of viewers and publications of Rhoodie's story in the *Rand Daily Mail* tore open old wounds for both the South African public and the government. After Rhoodie's appearance on the BCC, he disappeared again, living somewhere in the south of France, only briefly emerging to provide statements or to have a series of interviews with the Dutch magazine, *Elseviers*.⁴¹⁶

Rhodie's luck ran out after six months on the run when he was taken into custody on 19 July 1979 by French police at Juan-les-Pins on the Riviera. Rhodie was relocated to several French prisons before standing trial in the French Court. Notes taken from a report of opposing arguments against the extradition application for Rhodie in Aix-en-Provence, France, on 7 August 1979, argued: P.W. Botha was busy wiping out his political opponents, such as Mulder and Van den Bergh, and it was decided by P.W. Botha that Rhodie would be turned into the scapegoat; P.W. Botha appointed Judge Erasmus to replace the superior Justice Mostert; the Erasmus Commission was a farce since it offered no cross-examinations; Minister Kruger and the Erasmus Commission attempted to prohibit the press from releasing allegations made by Rhodie; the question of why Rhodie would only appropriate a small amount of money to himself when he had access to the secret funds; Chris Barnard delivered a testimony rejecting the extradition of Rhodie; and Rhodie would not receive a fair trial in South Africa. On the other hand, the French prosecutors claimed that Rhodie's offenses were not of a political nature, but reflected normal criminal charges against the law of South Africa. They also argued that Rhodie's position as Secretary was no political position and therefore he could not be considered a political refugee. On 8 August, Rhodie appeared

⁴¹⁵ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.3.13, p. 1; *The Star*, 1979.3.12, p. 3; *The Argus*, 1979.3.13, p. 4; Rees & Day, pp. 213-214; Mervis, p. 443.

⁴¹⁶ Hull, p. 51; Rees & Day, pp. 215-216; The Washington Post, "BBC given document said to implicate S. African officials", <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/03/21/bbc-given-document-said-to-implicate-s-african-officials/bc4117a1-daa7-4c10-9191-5d06ffd82830/>>, 1979.3.21. (Accessed on September 7, 2016).

before three judges of the Chamber of Accusations.⁴¹⁷ During the trial, Rhoodie was asked if his method of operations was normal, whereby Rhoodie replied: “The procedure of the Ministry of Information concerning secret projects was in its entirety irregular and abnormal.”⁴¹⁸

Rhodie’s case was dismissed by the French Court and he was extradited to Pretoria on 23 August 1976. Rhodie received seven charges of fraud and theft which included buying property in Plettenberg Bay to the amount of R33 205 from the secret funds; fraudulent activity by depositing R10 000 into the bank account of Deneys Rhodie; and another two charges of paying R10 000 to Abrahamson and Pegg. Before his appearance in the South African Court, Rhodie was kept in prison for 88 days since his capture in France. The trial started in Pretoria on 21 September. Rhodie’s defence mainly focused on the fact that he was hired to run an expensive unorthodox propaganda war and not as a ‘super clerk’ to balance the books. The Regional Court, unconvinced by Rhodie’s defence, found him guilty on five of the seven charges. Rhodie was sentenced to six years imprisonment, but was granted bail of R90 000 and application to appeal.⁴¹⁹

Eleven months later, in August 1980, the case whether Rhodie should serve time in prison or be acquitted on the charges, appeared before the presiding Judge, Justice Ernest Jansen, of the Appeal Court in Bloemfontein. By 1980, the massive public hype concerning the Information Scandal had largely died down, which was evident in the small number of people present during the trial. The verdict delivered by the Appeal Court overturned the judgement of the former Regional Court.⁴²⁰ The Appeal Court acquitted Rhodie of the five charges laid against him and offered the following statement to *The Star*. The verdict by the Appeal Court considered the extraordinary task Rhodie had to perform:

“Against a background of normal Civil Service practice his explanations for example that he paid anonymous associates directly from his own pocket and then reimbursed himself directly from State funds, could possibly be seen with a large measure of skepticism. But the exceptional circumstances have made such an approach unrealistic and unreasonable. Dr Rhodie had, in his capacity as chief administrating officer of his department, been

⁴¹⁷ ARCA, “Verslag van die betoog gelewer...”, *PV 895, A1/K4 Vol. 1 - Heunis Collection*, 1979.8.7; Harrison, p. 243

⁴¹⁸ ARCA, “Verslag van die betoog gelewer...”, *PV 895, A1/K4 Vol. 1 - Heunis Collection*, 1979.8.7

⁴¹⁹ Harrison, p. 243; Rees & Day, pp. 216-217, 221; *Die Volksblad*, 1980.9.30, p. 3; *The Citizen*, 1980.8.27, p. 3.

⁴²⁰ Harrison, pp. 243-244; *The Citizen*, 1980.8.27, p. 3.

invested by the authorities with an exceptionally wide discretion in respect of spending money, and especially the sensitive projects such as those involving anonymous contributors. In respect of these projects the ordinary Treasury regulations would not operate. In executing his instruction to wage a psychological and propaganda war, he would have had to act unconventionally and take exceptional risk. Seen against this background and in the unusual context his explanations, which otherwise could have been suspect, become quite acceptable.”⁴²¹

Thus, at a cost exceeding R500 000, the state was unable to prove beyond doubt that Rhodie was guilty. Rhodie described the relief he experienced as “succeeding in jumping over the Berlin Wall.”⁴²² During Rhodie’s press conference in September 1980 in Johannesburg, he was asked if he “would have gone into the secret operations if he could relive the previous ten years.” Rhodie replied: “No, I would not have done it if I knew this was going to happen, but I believe in the necessity of that because I know all governments of the world are involved in this sort of thing.”⁴²³ Mulder praised the findings of the Appeal Court, claiming that the Erasmus Commission failed the test of the open court and said if Appeal judges were appointed to investigate the irregularities, there would have been no Muldergate Scandal. Erasmus commented that the commission’s findings of fraud and theft would still remain even though Rhodie was acquitted. He also added that the Info-Crew could forget about suing the commission. The national newspaper *Beeld* urged that the distasteful Information affair should be put to rest and not be allowed to dominate the political sphere again.⁴²⁴ The *Rand Daily Mail* questioned the implications of the scapegoat’s acquittal by stating: “the attempt to blame the whole Info affair on a scapegoat has collapsed. And now, two years after the event, nobody is held accountable for the biggest public scandal in South Africa’s history.”⁴²⁵

Rhodie, a free man again, craved vengeance against the men who wronged him. The sequestration order against Rhodie’s property was withdrawn and his passport was returned in December 1980. In October 1980, Rhodie continued threatening Horwood with documentary proof of his knowledge of the projects. With the Information Affair over,

⁴²¹ *The Star*, 1980.9.30, p. 3.

⁴²² *Beeld*, 1980.9.30, p. 2.

⁴²³ AP Archive, “SYND 01 10 90 DR Rhodie press conference in Johannesburg”, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTdyCDFk3KI>>, 2015.7.24. (Accessed on September 15, 2016).

⁴²⁴ *Beeld*, 1980.9.30, p. 2; *Die Vaderland*, 1980.9.30, pp. 8, 19; *Sunday Times*, 1980.10.5, p. 3; *Sunday Express*, 1980.10.5, p. 23.

⁴²⁵ *Rand Daily Mail*, 1980.10.30, p. 16.

Rhoodie moved to the USA to expand his business, Orbis; worked for foreign companies in researching the risk of investing in Africa; and completing his book. Basically, his final retaliation was his book, *The real Information Scandal*, in which he attacked the NP, especially Vorster and P.W. Botha. Rhoodie remained a patriot till his death by selling apartheid South Africa from his residence in Georgia.⁴²⁶

The mastermind behind South Africa's propaganda warfare was able to overcome the greatest challenge of his career. Rhoodie avoided prison and being labelled as the sole scapegoat of the Muldergate Scandal. However, in the final stage of the Information Scandal, the political careers of Mulder and Vorster were still in danger.

5.7. THE DOWNFALL OF C. MULDER AND B.J. VORSTER

The aftermath of Mostert's press conference plummeted South Africa into a scene of political clashes. The Muldergate storm gained strong momentum in November 1978, with dark clouds quickly descending on the political career of Connie Mulder. After the political destruction of Mulder, the storm swiftly moved over to the rest of the NP, especially P.W. Botha, Horwood, and Vorster. In his first few months as Prime Minister, P.W. Botha faced a demanding challenge to keep the government unified. From November 1978 to July 1979, South African politics were virtually immobilised by different dimensions of conflicts between the inner-party and opposition parties. After all, the height of the Muldergate Scandal made headlines in the British press with remarks such as "Muldergate makes Watergate look like a parking offence."⁴²⁷

Mulder's denial of *The Citizen* on 10 May 1978 came back to haunt him and would be a leading cause for the termination of his political career within the NP. P.W. Botha implored Mulder to reconsider his position and resign on the premises that funding *The Citizen* with state capital was unjustifiable; the loans to Luyt and the film magnate, Pieterse, were indefensible; and withholding his intentions from his cabinet colleagues were dishonourable. With the growing call to resign, Mulder accepted these terms and announced on 7 November 1978 in a cabinet meeting that he would resign. During the cabinet meeting, Mulder was allowed to state his case. P.W. Botha gave his ministers permission to accept or reject Mulder's position in cabinet. Even Mulder's closest allies abandoned him, fearing 'political

⁴²⁶ Hull, p. 52; Harrison, p. 244; *The Cape Times*, 1980.10.15, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1980.12.11, p. 3; *Die Vaderland*, 1982.2.24, p. 9.

⁴²⁷ Rickard, p. 135; *The Citizen*, 1978.12.3, p. 6; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.8, p. 1; *The Star*, 1978.11.7, p. 5.

suicide'. No member voted in favour of Mulder remaining part of the cabinet.⁴²⁸ Mulder accepted the decision of the cabinet, proclaiming his innocence and loyalty to the party in the following speech:

“In order to assist the Prime Minister Mr PW Botha in repulsing this onslaught against the National Party, the Government and the country I have decided to tender my resignation now as Minister of Plural Relations and Development. I am convinced of my innocence and therefore I am still prepared to give evidence before the Erasmus Commission to prove my honesty and integrity beyond all doubt. I have no pangs of conscience about the entire matter because everything I have done I did in the conviction that I was serving my country, South Africa, in the best way. I wish to take this opportunity to state emphatically that the Prime Minister, Mr PW Botha has handled this matter with the greatest dignity, correctness, honorableness, and decency towards me. I still have the highest respect for him. I will continue to support him in the interest of South Africa and all of use and hope to still make my own contribution in my own way and my own time.”⁴²⁹

Although Mulder had resigned from cabinet, he remained the Provincial Leader of Transvaal and Member of Parliament for Randfontein. Speculations circulated that if Mulder managed to survive the Muldergate investigations, he might be able to gather enough support to re-enter cabinet. Mulder wanted to see the verdict of the Erasmus Commission's first report before deciding whether he would resign as leader of Transvaal. However, increasing pressure from cabinet and the press forced Mulder to resign as leader of the Transvaal on 11 November 1978. A survey conducted by *Rapport* revealed that the majority of the public was convinced that Mulder was personally responsible for the misconducts in his department. *The Natal Witness* criticised Mulder by stating that he should spare the patriotism act since patriotism did not require the funding of a pro-Nationalist newspaper with taxpayer's money and lying to parliament.⁴³⁰

Mulder's resignation created a void for a new Transvaal Nationalist leader to influence South African politics, which would later initiate a new power struggle in the province. On 6 December 1978, the right-wing Deputy Minister of Plural Relations, Andries Treurnicht,

⁴²⁸ De Vries, pp. 212, 122; De Villiers & De Villiers, pp. 130-131; *Sunday Times*, 1979.2.11, p. 13; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.8, p. 1.

⁴²⁹ ARCA, “Verklaring deur Dr Connie Mulder op 8 November 1978 na aanleiding van sy bedanking uit die kabinet”, *PV 895, A1/4/2 Vol. 4 – Heunis Collection*, 1978.11.8.

⁴³⁰ De Vries, pp. 122, 123; De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 132; *The Natal Witness*, 1978.11.9, p. 14; *The Argus*, 1978.12.18, p. 8.

succeeded Mulder as the new Transvaal leader by defeating Fanie Botha with 63 votes to 45. A power shift in party politics within the NP brought considerable change, with the 'Verligte' camp gaining a strong advantage after the takeover of P.W. Botha and the dismissal of Mulder.⁴³¹

In January 1979, the NP fiercely campaigned for the removal of Mulder as Member of Parliament for Randfontein. P.W. Botha implored Mulder to resign as MP to avoid embarrassing himself, the party, and South Africa over his part in the Information Scandal. The opposition saw this move by the NP to oust Mulder from his seat as a way of silencing Mulder before the Parliamentary sessions started on 2 February. If Mulder was granted the privilege to speak in parliament, he could make further disclosures that would damage the ruling party. The opposition insisted that Mulder reveal his side of the story. However, the campaign for Mulder's resignation succeeded when he stepped down on 24 January 1979.⁴³²

The attempts of P.W. Botha to suppress the Mostert Commission, failed to silence rumours and allegations. When the parliamentary sessions started in February 1979, allegations of the cabinet's knowledge, especially P.W. Botha, Horwood, and Vorster's involvement with the Department of Information, had been widely circulated. Political pamphlets of Jaap Marais of the HNP accusing Vorster and P.W. Botha of deceiving the country similar to Mulder were even circulated to primary schools. An angry P.W. Botha, attacked by the opposition during the parliamentary session, reacted by counter-attacking with allegations such as the opposition's attacks on the government being fuelled by anti-Afrikaner sentiments and threatening to introduce laws to censor the 'rumour-mongering' press. On 7 February 1979, P.W. Botha stated that if the opposition could provide any evidence connecting cabinet members to knowledge of state funding for *The Citizen* or knowledge similar to that of Rhodie or Mulder, he would resign. Horwood told Eglin that if he could not provide evidence for his allegations about the involvement of the cabinet, he should resign. *Die*

⁴³¹ De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 132; *The Argus*, 1979.5.21, p. 14; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.11.25, p. 1; *Pretoria News*, 1978.11.8, p. 1.

⁴³² De Vries, pp. 123-125; De Villiers & De Villiers, pp. 131-132; *Eastern Province Herald*, 1979.1.16, p. 10; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.1.12, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1978.12.13, p. 2.

Burger backed P.W. Botha and Horwood by accusing the unpatriotic opposition of making foolish claims and attempting to embarrass the government.⁴³³

However, many entities remained convinced that P.W. Botha, Horwood, and Vorster were being deceitful. The *Pretoria News* criticised P.W. Botha for convincing himself of the fact that the opposition did not have access to the Cabinet's secrets. During a press conference on 3 November 1978, Marais accused P.W. of deceiving the nation by denying funding of *The Citizen* with special funds channelled from the Defence budget. Horwood had an even more difficult time dodging critical questions from the opposition. Horwood was accused of knowing about the channelling of secret funds since April 1978, and was telling an untruth by stating that he was unaware of such activities. He was questioned vigorously to a point where he was unable to evade questions, and confided to parliament that he covered the content of a document with a piece of paper and signed at the bottom. Brian Pottinger, author of the book *The imperial presidency: P.W. Botha the first 10 years*, believes that P.W. Botha saved Horwood because he was useful to Botha as an English-speaking minister in his Afrikaans cabinet and would rely on his abilities in future.⁴³⁴ Cape leader of the PFP, Brian Bamford, accused P.W. Botha of being dishonourable: "This has been the greatest scandal in South African history. Without Mr Botha's spineless acceptance of a deception of parliament, the whole mess could not have occurred."⁴³⁵

Rhodie had Vorster's political life in his hands and allegations he made public abroad, forced Vorster to re-enter party politics as the State President. Without permission from the cabinet, Vorster released a press statement on 22 March, attacking Rhodie's claims as lies and deceit; said that Mulder admitted before Senator Jack Steyl that he was never kept informed of secret projects; and disclosed that he only gained knowledge of *The Citizen* via Barrie in 1977. Vorster placed himself on the chopping block by admitting that he had knowledge of *The Citizen* prior to September 1978. The press statement by Vorster, which directly contradicted active politics, caused a great uproar. Conservatives believed that Vorster was just as guilty as Mulder and should resign, while 'Verligtes' thought Vorster had

⁴³³ *Hansard*, 2 February – 3 March 1979, part 79, col. 213-214; ARCA, "Letter from the school principle of Rust De Winter Primary School to P.W. Botha", *PV 203, A1/16/4 - Botha Collection*, 1978.2.9; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; *The Cape Times*, 1979.1.27, p. 8; Rickard, p. 57; *Die Transvaler*, 1979.2.8, p. 4; *Die Burger*, 1979.2.9, p. 7; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.6.4, p. 9.

⁴³⁴ Rickard, p. 156; Erasmus, p. 40; ARCA, "Vorster en Botha moet uit (Nie net Mulder nie)", *PV 203, A1/16/4 - Botha Collection*, 1979; *The Cape Times*, 1979.1.22, p. 1; *Pretoria News*, 1979.2.8, p. 14; B. Pottinger, *The imperial presidency: P.W. Botha the first 10 years*, p. 28.

⁴³⁵ *Daily Dispatch*, 1978.12.13, p. 13.

done the right thing by countering Rhodie's accusations. "Verligtes" also believed that Mulder was treated unfairly as the only political scapegoat in the affair. Pretoria political analyst, Professor Willem Kleynhans, strongly condemned Vorster's actions: "This is a real crisis and Mr Vorster should step down immediately – the government does not care if it rapes our constitution. For the State president to involve himself in party politics as he did this week is unthinkable. There should be a no end to a campaign for his resignation."⁴³⁶ The PFP and New Republic Party (NRP) demanded Vorster's resignation and attempted to constitutionally impeach Vorster, but failed to gain enough votes. P.W. Botha rebutted the demands of the opposition and stated that Vorster did not interfere with party politics and was merely acting in self-defence against serious allegations made by Rhodie. On 25 March 1979, Mulder hit back at Vorster by issuing a press statement asserting that Vorster was lying, and confirmed that Rhodie regularly reported updates on the secret projects to the cabinet of three consisting of himself, Vorster, and Horwood. He also mentioned the dates of three meetings where Vorster was present – 23 October 1974, 1 October 1975, 26 October 1977. Vorster never responded to these statements made by Mulder.⁴³⁷

Mulder's public statements did not go down too well with the NP. The Transvaal NP caucus still remained largely divided over the future of Mulder. Some felt that stripping him of his position as MP was punishment enough, and other colleagues insisted that he should be banned to prevent him from embarrassing the party. The cabinet caucus, believing that Mulder's intention was to harm the credibility of the government by shrouding its Natal leader, Horwood, and P.W. Botha, in doubt, announced Mulder's expulsion from the party on 3 April 1979 if he continued his damaging behaviour. On 4 April, the Transvaal NP executive board, consisting of Treurnicht, Kruger, Fanie Botha, and Hendrik Schoeman, issued an ultimatum to Mulder with the option to either drop allegations against Vorster and Horwood and accept the findings of the Erasmus Commission, or face expulsion from the party. Mulder only had 48 hours before he would automatically be expelled from the party. A desperate Mulder tried on 5 April to negotiate with the executive board for extension to clear the issue by personally explaining his case. After Treurnicht discussed the matter with the other executives, he informed Mulder that his proposal has been rejected and that he only had time

⁴³⁶ *The Star*, 1979.3.24, p. 1

⁴³⁷ De Vries, pp. 129-131; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.6.4, p. 9; Time, "Vorster quits: a final report on Muldergate", <<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,920409,00.html>>, 1979.6.18. (Accessed on August 24, 2016); *The Star*, 1979.3.23, p. 1; *Die Transvaler*, 1979.3.24, p. 24; *Sunday Times*, 1979.3.24, p. 1; *Rapport*, 1979.3.25, p.1; Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8.

until the next day. Mulder was now faced with two serious options. If he submitted to the ultimatum, it would be a major blow to his credibility and reputation. On the other hand, if he refused to adhere to the ultimatum, he would lose enormous support from conservative Transvaal Nationalists and destroy his comeback into politics. Mulder refused to submit to the ultimatum and bearing the sole ministerial responsibility for the Muldergate Scandal, and after 36 years of service, was expelled from the NP. On 29 April, Mulder released his full account of the Information Scandal for the public to make their own conclusions.⁴³⁸

In May 1979, Vorster's head was on the chopping block with the release of the final Erasmus report. The members of the Erasmus Commission changed their findings regarding Vorster's role, since new evidence came to light and the testimonies of Mulder and Rhodie could no longer be ignored. Initially, P.W. Botha tried to dissuade the growing call from his Nationalist subordinates, but the rising movement and pressure from the opposition forced him to act upon his promise of a clean administration. On Sunday 3 June 1979, P.W. Botha and other cabinet members went to see Vorster at his residence at Groote Schuur to inform him of the new findings of the commission and to demand his resignation. P.W. Botha told Vorster that he could protect him, but he could not defend him faced with the new evidence. Vorster asked if it was possible to appoint another parliamentary select committee, but P.W. Botha denied this request, stating that the committee would only be doing a similar investigation to the Erasmus Commission. Clearly Vorster questioned the ability of Erasmus to produce a fair report. Next, Vorster requested time to resign, so as not to admit guilt. Again, P.W. Botha remained unyielding. Vorster accepted his resignation and Frederik Willem de Klerk and Heunis orchestrated his resignation document. The next day, 4 June 1979, after 8 months as State president, P.W. Botha announced the resignation of Vorster, and Marais Viljoen as the replacing State President, during a parliamentary sitting. That afternoon, Vorster left Tuynhuys as a civilian.⁴³⁹

Although many South Africans knew that Vorster's demise was inevitable, his disgraceful fall from the highest office in the country still came as a shock. P.W. Botha's actions contributed to the increasing split within the NP, especially from Vorster supporters. After Vorster's ordeal, he was hurt and beaten, and severed ties with his political colleagues. Vorster began despising P.W. Botha. According to Pieter Mulder, if Vorster had

⁴³⁸ De Vries, pp. 139-142; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.6.4, p. 9; *Pretoria News*, 1979.3.21, p. 1; *Die Vaderland*, 1979.3.15, p. 4; *The Cape Times*, 1979.4.5, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.4.7, p. 1.

⁴³⁹ Rickard, pp. 153-154; De Villiers & De Villiers, pp. 134-137; Erasmus, pp. 42, 64-65; Papenfus, pp. 248-249; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1979.5.29, p. 1; *Sunday Times*, 1979.6.10, p. 18.

acknowledged the secret projects with Mulder, Van den Bergh, and Rhodie from the start, there would have been no Muldergate Scandal and the Info-Crew might even have continued with their political careers. Later, Vorster attacked P.W. Botha's notion of power-sharing with other races in speeches at Bloemfontein in 1980 and at Pretoria University in 1983. The Muldergate Scandal had a severe effect on Vorster's health and he finally succumbed to a lung disease in 1983.⁴⁴⁰

By June 1979, the Muldergate Scandal saga finally came to a close with the fall of Vorster. The scandal had the country in its grip for more than a year and nearly crippled South African politics due to fighting among various factions. The government went to great lengths to cover up the truth, but met with fierce resistance from the press, the opposition, the judicial system, and to some extent from Mulder and Rhodie. The scandal showed on the one hand the worst in people, trying to hide their guilt in the face of severe consequences and even resorting to manipulation and intimidation tactics. For example, Van den Bergh using Reynders to clear Mulder and Vorster or detonating bombs near Mostert to instil fear. However, on the other hand there were virtuous individuals showing courage and dedication in revealing the truth to the public, such as the extraordinary lengths the *Rand Daily Mail* went to in order to get both sides of the story. Vorster, Mulder, Van den Bergh, and Rhodie's careers in the public service sector were completely ruined or heavily damaged. P.W. Botha managed to save Horwood from the same fate. P.W. Botha withstood one of his first extraordinary tests as Prime Minister. Although P.W. Botha emerged as the victor, challenges still lay ahead. For South Africa, the fall of Vorster was the end of an era, but South Africa was entering the 1980s which would turn out to be the darkest period for the apartheid regime. The Information Scandal may have died down in June, but the scandal would still have an impact on South Africa in the sense that the public considered their leaders as immoral, and the split within the National Party was growing. Would P.W. Botha be able to restore South Africa and fix the rupture?

⁴⁴⁰ Haasbroek Private Collection, *Interview with P. Mulder*, 2015.10.8; Rickard, pp. 154-155; De Villiers, p. 137; Papenfus, p. 250; *Sunday Times*, 1976.10.6, p. 18; *The Cape Times*, 1980.5.15, p. 1.

6. THE CONSEQUENCES

The aftermath of the Muldergate Scandal threw the politics of the National Party into turmoil, especially during the period 1978 to 1982. The scandal bruised Afrikaners' image of having just and moral leaders. In the wake of the Information Scandal, the 1980s presented new challenges for the government and new counter strategies were adopted to protect the political and economic power of the white minority. The Soweto Riots in 1976 and the death of Steve Biko in 1977 increased the call for sanctions from abroad, while within the country, the government was facing a renewed campaign from the ANC to disrupt and weaken the Afrikaner-embedded government. The Muldergate affair led to the entrance of new prominent figures of influence into white politics, and the direction of the P.W. Botha administration cast increasing uncertainty on the role of the Afrikaner in South Africa. P.W. Botha's reformist ideas and the notion of the 'Total Strategy' in response to the 'Total Onslaught' gave way to a split within the NP. On the one hand the government adopted relaxed racial laws, while security measures were increased on the other hand. This chapter explores white politics in the aftermath of the Muldergate Scandal, briefly views the propaganda campaign directed by Pik Botha and the Department of Foreign Affairs, and lastly investigates the state of affairs between the media and the state.

6.1. P.W. BOTHA AS PRIME MINISTER

The rise of P.W. Botha as Prime Minister brought a completely new administration to the government. The wounds inflicted by the Muldergate Scandal, which shattered the honourable image of the noble Afrikaans leaders, damaged the support basis of the NP. In the final days of B.J. Vorster, party loyalty was already wavering. Along with the discourse of the Muldergate Scandal, personality clashes and P.W. Botha's mild reformative notions proposed in 1977, led to P.W. Botha's lack of popularity among the conservative Transvaal Nationalists and his failing to gain complete party unity. P.W. Botha's relationship with the conservative faction deteriorated after the dismissal of B.J. Vorster and Connie Mulder. Uncertainty over the feasibility of the Verwoerdian model of grand apartheid and the 'Verligte' status of P.W. Botha increased the divide within the NP. Treurnicht, the man who replaced the previous Transvaal leader, accumulated a group of conservatives that would challenge P.W. Botha and his new policies. On 28 June 1979, P.W. Botha delivered his 'adapt or die' speech in Upington, enlightening his audience that the NP could not stagnate and needed to modify its policies in order to stimulate the country. However, embroiled in

battles with the caucus and resistance from other Afrikaans institutions, such as churches and the Broederbond, P.W. Botha withheld his reformative policies in 1980 to avoid forcing a split within the NP.⁴⁴¹

Under the new administration of P.W. Botha, the NP perceived the threat from the Marxist Soviet Union to expand its domain in Africa, the renewed campaign of the ANC to weaken the apartheid regime, and the build-up of sanctions, as a Total Onslaught to overthrow the South African government. Any other forms of criticism and opposition towards South Africa were also viewed as part of the threat. The Total Onslaught aimed to destabilise the white minority through economic, psychological, political, and military subversion. In reaction to the Total Onslaught and P.W. Botha's catch phrase, 'adapt or die', the government introduced a new policy to defend the nation. Known as the Total Strategy, the manifest of this policy encompassed reforming the basic dimensions of apartheid. The strategy involved the incorporation of Coloureds and Indians into the central government, facilitating black economic growth, and the relaxation of institutional racial laws, the urbanisation of black people and transferring security measures to the military. The Total Strategy was a manoeuvre by the isolated government to gain more allies within the nation in order to protect the white minority. Thus, the Total Onslaught was merely a concept to bolster support for the Total Strategy.⁴⁴² The strategy also included projecting a new reformative image to the outside world, as the historian, Jan-Ad Stemmet, explains:

“The regime needed to redress its internal position in order to better its African position, so that it could improve its international position. Success essentially lay in numbers. The government needed to gain a non-white support base. If it succeeded (apart from splintering the local anti-apartheid politics) it could present itself to an anti-apartheid globe as the soundest option for South Africa.”⁴⁴³

P.W. Botha's predecessor, B.J. Vorster, initiated the first move away from grand apartheid with the introduction of integrated sport and, to an extent, his outward policy. The new

⁴⁴¹ C.R. Charney, “Towards rapture or stasis? An analysis of the 1981 South African General Election”, *African Affairs* 81(325), October 1982, p. 528; Barber, “Afrikanerdom in disarray”, p. 289; M. Spicer, “Change in South Africa? Mr P.W. Botha's strategy and policies”, *The World Today* 36(1), January 1980, p. 32; De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 149.

⁴⁴² J. Stemmet, “Apartheid and the anticipation of apocalypse: The supreme strategies of the National Party and the African National Congress, 1980-1989: An historical perspective”, *Journal for Contemporary History* 36(1), June 2011, pp. 98-100; C.R. Charney, “Class conflict and the National Party split”, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 10(2), April 1984, p. 272; Swilling, p. 412.

⁴⁴³ Stemmet, pp. 99-100.

administration would significantly chip away some of the core traditional approaches to apartheid. The first major change was the introduction of a new constitution comprising power-sharing with Coloureds and Indians. The new notion became known as the Tricameral Parliament, which consisted of three separate chambers – the white house of 178 members, the Coloured house of 85 members, and the Indian house consisting of 45 members. The three chambers would cooperate in general affairs (such as justice and defence), with the majority of the representatives white, and individual chambers would deal separately with the affairs of each racial community, for example education, culture, and local government.⁴⁴⁴

Unlike his predecessors, P.W. Botha visited Soweto in 1979 with the clear intention of gaining the trust of the black community. The programme that was invented to gain the support of black people, rested on reformative concepts such as permitting the social mobility of a black bourgeoisie, creating a black skilled and working middle class, utilising resources to uplift urban black people, and discarding discriminatory laws which maintained white privilege. For the first time since 1924, black people were allowed to register authorised black trade unions. In-service training and abolishing white-only job reservations laid the foundation for the existence of a black middle class. The new programme of the government was also committed to the enforcement of equal education for all races. Furthermore, hurtful discriminatory laws such as the Mixed Marriages Act, the Immorality Act, and laws that prohibited races to use the same public facilities would be scrapped.⁴⁴⁵

Although the outlines of the programme lagged behind in the promises made by the government, it still was an immense shift away from the apartheid implemented in the 1960s and 1970s. The major issue still remained that black people only had political rights in their failing homelands, and could exercise no rights when they resided in South Africa. The changes being implemented were in favour of protecting white privilege and business enterprise. This became apparent during November 1979 when P.W. Botha met with Afrikaans and English businessmen to discuss social and political reforms in order to protect profit and white dominance through the market rather than through racial laws. Conversely, these new changes in the constitution and law of South Africa did not go down well with the conservative nationalists who believed that control of the white state was dwindling. The

⁴⁴⁴ De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 150; Charney, “Class conflict...”, p. 273; J. Barber, “White South Africa - Into the political unknown”, *The World Today* 39(12), December 1983, pp. 490-491.

⁴⁴⁵ Harrison, p. 271; Stemmet, pp. 101-102; Charney, “Class conflict...”, pp. 272-273; Swilling, p. 413; Charney, “Towards rapture or stasis?...”, pp. 527-528.

white working class felt the pressure and started to feel threatened and anxious about black competition and the downscale of state services.⁴⁴⁶

The proposed reforms caused the NP to suffer a mild setback in the elections of April 1981. This was the first loss of votes since gaining power in 1948. The former crown prince, Connie Mulder, also entered his party, the National Conservative Party (NCP), in the General Elections. The slogan ran by the NCP, propagated: “Save South Africa – and to save South Africa the Botha government must be stopped.”⁴⁴⁷ The percentage outcome of the elections was: NP 56%; PFP 19%; NRP 8%; HNP 14%; and NCP 1%, compared to the election results of 1977: NP 65%; PFP 17%; NRP 12%; HNP 3%. The far-right HNP secured 10% more votes and the PFP took advantage of the NP’s vulnerability, which are evident in the rise of votes by 2 percent. It became clear that the NP was still reeling from the Muldergate Scandal and P.W. Botha’s unpopular reformative proposal, resulting in the loss of support to the HNP. The growing support for Marais of the HNP mostly threatened Treurnicht’s position as leader of Transvaal. However, the NP managed to lose minimal seats and remained dominant with 131 seats compared to the 34 seats of the opposition. Seizing the majority again, P.W. Botha felt confident that he could implement his new strategy – with his left wing secure – and that he would be able to keep the threat from the right wing at bay.⁴⁴⁸ Graig Charney, former reporter of the *Johannesburg Star*, commented on the significant outcome of the 1981 election: “Though power did not change hands, the 1981 election traced the outline of a possible class realignment of white political forces, with potentially far-reaching consequences. In the aftermath, nothing seemed to have changed, but nothing would ever be quite the same.”⁴⁴⁹

After the 1981 elections, P.W. Botha reorganised his cabinet with young supporters and with individuals who were in favour of his policies. The main thorn in P.W. Botha’s flesh was Treurnicht, who was too important to be left out of the cabinet, but served the insignificant portfolio of Minister of Public Works, Statistics and Tourism. Treurnicht and his followers posed a threat to P.W. Botha and his Total Strategy. Treurnicht viewed the new constitution as treason to Afrikaner Nationalism and believed the rights of different races should be

⁴⁴⁶ Charney, “Class conflict...”, pp. 269, 272-273; Charney, “Towards rapture or stasis?...”, p. 528; Harrison, p. 274.

⁴⁴⁷ *The South African Observer*, 1981.3.31, p. 10.

⁴⁴⁸ Charney, “Towards rapture or stasis?...”, pp. 529-539; Barber, “Afrikanerdom in disarray...”, p. 290; Pottinger, pp. 35-36; R. Hodder-Williams, “Well, will South Africa survive? A review article”, *African Affairs* 80(320), July 1981, p. 408.

⁴⁴⁹ Charney, “Towards rapture or stasis?...”, p. 527.

achieved separately.⁴⁵⁰ In Treurnicht and his followers' view, the mere thought of power-sharing with other races would destroy the sovereignty of the white people. He also mentioned that if petty apartheid was eliminated, big apartheid would become redundant. The liberal PFP deplored the new constitution as well, since it did not encompass the entire South African population, but excluded black people which formed 70 percent of the population.⁴⁵¹ P.W. Botha's policies intensified class conflict among the Afrikaans population. A divide was evident at the ground level of Afrikaans NP supporters between the urbanised and bourgeois Afrikaner class and the marginal farmers and miners. The former class preferred policies to be adapted to fit economical needs, while the latter remained resolute in the 'old ways' and in separate development.⁴⁵²

By February 1982, the long foreseen split in the Afrikaans populace became a reality, fuelled mainly by the question over power-sharing with other races. Two incidents escalated into the split in February. Firstly, P.W. Botha issued a mandatory request to all members in the government to accept his reformative proposals and secondly, the NP propaganda sheet, *Nat 80*, stated that the people of South Africa could only have one government. As a result of these incidents, Treurnicht and 22 MPs stormed out of parliament on 23 February 1982. Many of those leaving the NP went on to form the Conservative Party (CP), and took an estimated 18 percent of white conservative voters from the NP with them. The NP ruptured and fell from the highest level to grassroots level. In the aftermath of the split, the CP became a political force to be reckoned with, as indicated at the polls during the by-elections in 1983. Treurnicht showed his party's strength at the expense of Fanie Botha, who barely managed to keep his own seat in parliament.⁴⁵³

The long anticipated showdown over the introduction of the Tricameral parliament finally came to a close with a national electorate. After a bitter campaign among the opposition parties, white South Africans voted in favour of sharing power with Coloureds and Indians and supported the new constitution with a majority of 66 percent. On 18 September 1984, PW Botha made history by opening the first multi-racial parliamentary session. The message

⁴⁵⁰ Spicer, p. 32.

⁴⁵¹ Barber, "Afrikanerdom in disarray...", pp. 289, 291; Spicer, pp. 33-34; Barber, "White South Africa...", pp. 492-493.

⁴⁵² H. Giliomee, "'Broedertwis': Intra-Afrikaner conflicts in the transition from Apartheid", *African Affairs* 91(364), July 1992, p. 349; Spicer, p. 32.

⁴⁵³ Barber, "Afrikanerdom in disarray...", pp. 291-292; Charney, "Class conflict...", pp. 274-275; N.M. Stultz, "Interpreting constitutional change in South Africa", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22(3), September 1984, p. 354; Giliomee, "'Broedertwis'...", p. 353; Barber, "White South Africa...", pp. 494-495.

portrayed was a positive tone of cooperation and tackling challenges in a unified manner. Although P.W. Botha was challenged by the Muldergate Scandal and the conservatives, he managed to hold on to the majority of white voters and changed South African history. P.W. Botha's triumph was short-lived, since there was now a tear in Afrikaner unity, African opposition strongly re-emerged in 1984, and there was uncertainty about the future development of the constitution. Electorate support for the NP shrunk from over 80 percent in the 1981 election to less than 60 percent in the 1987 election.⁴⁵⁴

The reformative legislations towards black people did do little to ease tension. From the spring of 1984 unruliness from the black populace came again to the forefront in order to acclaim justice and freedom. In response the government mobilized its troops to crush resistance in black townships. As part of the Total Strategy new laws such as the Internal Security Act of 1982 was introduced to suppress challenges from AAM. These various laws allowed armed forces to apprehend, detain and interrogate; disperse gatherings and limit the movements of individuals; and ban newspapers not abiding legislative laws.⁴⁵⁵ The military annexed townships, arrested thousands, and killed revolutionaries in their fight against apartheid. The situation became so severe that the government was forced to declare a State of Emergency on 21 July 1985. From 1986 onwards, the nation was permanently placed in a state of emergency, and each time it was implemented with much tougher restrictions than before. Life became difficult for millions of black people living under security measures.⁴⁵⁶

The fires from the Muldergate Scandal were to a degree under control, but it spread to other areas which were still unresolved. The political landscape in South Africa was highly volatile from 1978 to 1982, with fighting among the conservative and liberal wings. South Africa managed to stay under control during the early 1980s, but international AAM were still moving against the regime.

6.2. PIK BOTHA THE NEW INFO-MAN

Since the 1970s, rumours had been circulating about merging the two separate departments, Foreign Affairs and Information. These rumours were largely caused by the conduct of the Department of Information under Connie Mulder and Eschel Rhoodie, which interfered with

⁴⁵⁴ Barber, "White South Africa...", p. 490; Stultz, p. 132; Pottinger, p. 148; *The Nationalist*, 1984.10, p. 1; Giliomee, "'Broedertwis'..."p. 348.

⁴⁵⁵ The role of the press and the government during the 1980s are discussed later in this chapter.

⁴⁵⁶ Stemmet, pp. 103-104; B. Magubane, "The current situation in South Africa: A sociological perspective", *Journal of Law and Religion* 5(2), 1987, p. 473.

external high-level diplomacy, thus duplicating the duties of Foreign Affairs. The rumours finally came true on 1 September 1978 when the Bureau for National and International Communication was placed under the control of Pik Botha. The merger became official as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information on 1 April 1980. The joint departments now concentrated on implementing new foreign policies, communication, and propaganda efforts both abroad and domestic. The mission of the department with regards to its information resolution remained the same as the one conceived by Eschel Rhoodie, countering the Total Onslaught against South Africa by infiltrating African and international audiences with the message of South Africa.⁴⁵⁷

Contrary to the political turmoil within South Africa, internationally the inauspicious Carter administration in the USA was replaced by the Reagan Administration in 1980. The intensification of the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union made Reagan determined to contain the Soviet threat, and as a result, required support from Pretoria in order to take a stance against communism in Africa. The Reagan administration adopted a policy of Constructive Engagement towards South Africa, which aimed to protect strategic interest and relaxed economic sanctions. Additionally, Constructive Engagement would complement South Africa's quest for reform. In 1979, the newly elected British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, also recognised South Africa's importance as a Cold War ally and as a valuable trade partner. She firmly believed that sanctions would hurt the black population and would not contribute to putting pressure on Pretoria. The USA and UK both deemed the ANC as communist-backed guerrillas and listed them as terrorists. The South African government received information on the ANC's activities from the CIA. Although Pretoria received support from the USA and UK, former South African allies became more critical, such as France under the leadership of socialist President Francois Mitterrand.⁴⁵⁸ Pik Botha and the government still anticipated a Total Onslaught from the UN, as they stated in their propaganda tabloid, *Nat80's*: "It is evident that the United Nations is involved in an international campaign of unprecedented proportions to destroy the South African system of government."⁴⁵⁹

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Information was completely restructured to suit its new role. The 536 personnel from the debunked Department of Information merged with

⁴⁵⁷ Geldenhuys, p. 121; Papenfus, pp. 225-226; *The Argus*, 1982.2.3, p. 16.

⁴⁵⁸ Thomson, pp. 111-112; Pfister, pp. 105-106; Nixon, pp. 104-106.

⁴⁵⁹ *Nat80's*, 1982.5, p. 6.

Foreign Affairs, which employed 687 staff in Pretoria and 1 555 members serving abroad in mostly Western nations. The department consisted of two geographical divisions, one based in Africa and the other throughout the international community. Each branch had its standard Foreign Affairs political services and a newly added Information Branch. The division which was centred on the rest of the world also consisted of a branch for media production and liaison services. The Africa division consisted of subdivisions for Southern African countries and the homelands, with different liaison branches for whites, Indians, Coloureds, and blacks. The subdivisions for the overseas branch concentrated on North and South America; Australia, Middle East, Asia, and the Far East; as well as Europe. The budget for the new department went from R137 million in 1980 to R434 million in 1982.⁴⁶⁰ The changes to the internal structure of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information allowed for better orchestration of tasks directed at specific regions.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Information's programmes that were directed at domestic audiences, catered for scepticism and criticism. Roughly 250 000 publications and video programmes promoting homeland policies were disseminated to black homelands. Campaigns, such as the spreading of thousands of pro-government pamphlets that praised the government's new constitutional proposals and education policies in June 1980; and anonymous pamphlets disseminated in Cape Town during August 1980, advising bus boycotters to continue using bus services, created controversy. Pik Botha admitted that his department was behind the spreading of pamphlets to counter subversion and the instigation of violence.⁴⁶¹ During a meeting in Scarborough in August 1980, Eglin described these propaganda campaigns as follows: "It appears that the Department of Information is becoming the propaganda wing of the Nationalist government at home, instead of being the information arm of South Africa abroad. Taxpayers' money is being used to direct Nationalist government propaganda at the taxpayer of South Africa instead of at our detractors and enemies abroad."⁴⁶²

In the post-Muldergate era, the department's media production and liaison services continued spreading film productions, radio tapes, and pro-government publications. These overt propaganda publications conveyed the traditional themes about the strategic importance of South Africa, its mineral wealth, the threat of communism, South Africa as a leading food

⁴⁶⁰ Geldenhuys, pp. 122-123, 131, 133, 139.

⁴⁶¹ *The Cape Times*, 1980.8.5, p. 2; *The Cape Times*, 1980.8.4, p. 8; *The Cape Times*, 1980.6.27, p. 12; Geldenhuys, p. 126.

⁴⁶² *The Cape Times*, 1980.6.27, p. 12.

exporter, and its recent reformative initiatives. Films produced during the 1980s targeted international anti-apartheid and anti-government propaganda films. Major publications sent to foreign politicians, academics, journalists, clergymen, businessmen, and trade unionists, included the *Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa*, *South African Panorama*, and *South African Digest*. The government also focused on sending books and magazines to libraries, universities, and high schools. For example, a new school in Massachusetts had hardly opened its doors and already it received the government magazine *Informa* and *Panorama*. Publications sent for departmental use to staff posted abroad, included *Spectrum*, *Focus*, and *Backgrounder*. USA media, represented by businessmen or right-wing Christian fundamentalists, often supported the Pretoria government. South African propaganda sneaking into the media of Christian fundamentalists, such as the *Reader's Digest*, *Human Events*, and *National Review*, not only gained support for Pretoria, but allowed anti-Pretoria conspiracy theories to flourish. Reverend Jerry Falwell, who visited South Africa in 1985 and was drafted into service as an 'anonymous businessman', gave his blessings to the South African regime on his WTBS and Liberty Federation cable network, urging millions of Christians to invest in South Africa and fight off sanctions. Business publications aided in encouraging investment in South Africa by putting the facts in a more favourable light. *Barron's National Business* and *Financial Weekly* for example told companies that compared to the "murderous Pretoria regime," other African countries such as Tanzania caused severe famine under the leadership of Julius Nyerere with the implementation of his collective villages.⁴⁶³

The majority of pre-Muldergate propaganda campaigns initiated by Eschel Rhoodie were discontinued when they were exposed by journalists during 1978, but Harrison estimates that at least 60 projects were taken over by the Department of Foreign Affairs and continued to buy friends and influence. In the 1980s, nearly 7 million dollars were spent on lobbying efforts. The South African government utilised numerous lobbying groups and individuals for specific purposes, ranging from official visits between government officials, interviews with the US Chamber of Commerce, televised interviews, immigration matters, distributing foreign films, promoting public relations, aiding with trips to South Africa, and recognising Transkei. These lobbying groups included: Bill Hecht and Associates; Busby, Rehm and Leonard; Ellis Associates; Kimberly Cameron Hallamore; Image Industries; International Gold Corporation; Marilyn Edith Perry; South African Tourist Corporation; Plaia,

⁴⁶³ Geldenhuys, pp. 126-127; Nixon, pp. 110-111; Windrich, pp. 55-56, 59.

Schaumberg & deKieffer, Chartered; and the SAF. The most prominent lobbying firms for the South African government were Baskin and Sears, as well as United International Consultants. Baskin and Sears was registered at the Department of Justice to monitor and report legislative and electoral developments concerning South Africa and briefing South African officials preparing for meetings with USA officials and journalists. John Sears previously served as Reagan's campaign manager for the presidential elections in 1980 and had unrestricted access to Reagan and top government officials. Baskin and Sears annually received \$500 000 for their services. United International Consultants received \$780 000 over a period of two years to dissuade disinvestment legislation. The South African Foundation was also a powerful lobbying force under the leadership of John Chettle as recognisable figure in Washington DC. His mission was to promote international understanding of Pretoria's potential and achievements and also keeping in touch with authors, editors, journalists, academics, and business groups.⁴⁶⁴

In the UK, lobbying efforts were also strengthened and mostly handled by Strategy Network International. The lobbying efforts were aided by organisations, think-tanks, and research institutions. These institutions included the Institute for Strategic and International Studies at the University of Georgetown, Heritage Foundation, American Enterprise Institute, International Freedom Foundation, Miami Institute for Policy Studies, and the British Foreign Affairs Research Institute. The objective of these research organisations was to submit reports and recommendations for policies that benefited South Africa and reflected it as an important ally. The Miami Institute for Policy Studies received \$50 000 from Pretoria via secret Swiss bank accounts.⁴⁶⁵

Other methods used by the South African government to gain friends and influence, included the highly successful fact-finding excursions to South Africa and interference with USA politics. All-expenses paid trips to South Africa remained effective in targeting American Members of Congress, senators, journalists, and state legislators, especially in states where disinvestment were on the rise. In 1983, an estimated 300 state legislators and senators were invited to South Africa, as well as approximately 200 journalists. Upon their return to the USA, these journalists offered favourable coverage of the situation in South Africa. A more

⁴⁶⁴ The United States Department of Justice, "Report of the Attorney General to the Congress of the United States on the administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, for the Calendar year 1983.", <https://www.fara.gov/reports/Archive/1983_FARA.pdf>, 1983. (Accessed on September 11, 2016); Nixon, pp. 104-109; Harrison, p. 224.

⁴⁶⁵ The United States Department of Justice, "Report of the Attorney General..."; Nixon, pp. 111-112.

devious scheme by the government included influencing the outcome of Congress elections to unseat Howard Wolpe. Wolpe, Chairman of the House Sub-Committee on Africa from 1982, strongly rejected white supremacy rule and implemented policies that put pressure on South Africa. Although there is hardly any existing evidence, it appears that South Africa played a role in attempting to replace Wolpe with Richard Milliman, a former employee of McGoff's newspaper. Wolpe was accused of being 'soft on communism' and being 'blind to the Soviet threat'. Unlike South Africa's previous triumphant campaigns to oust senators, Wolpe remained in his position and would be a strong backer of sanctions applied in 1985. For all the mistakes the South African government made, Pretoria remained moderately successful selling itself, as Harrison describes the propaganda emanating from South Africa as a "stable society in a troubled world."⁴⁶⁶ In the period 1979 to 1984, many major powers ignored sanctions and were tuned into the reports of a profitable economy.⁴⁶⁷ Harrison believes the reason for the success of maintaining a solid propaganda strategy should be credited to Eschel Rhoodie: "How much Rhoodie's secret projects had contributed will probably never be measured although van den Bergh once said that rather than pillory the former Secretary of Information, the government should erect a statue in his honour for all that he had done for this country."⁴⁶⁸

By August 1985, civil unrest and the growing call by AAM in the UK and USA created an atmosphere of uncertainty in the white minority regime. The USA viewed the policy of Constructive Engagement as a failure and Reagan was forced to impose limited economic sanctions against Pretoria by signing Executive Order 12532 in September 1985. The sanctions included the banning of new loans, sale of computer stock, military equipment, and transfer of technology or nuclear goods to Pretoria. Yet, South Africa and its governmental system and policies became a top issue within the USA Congress policy debates. In October 1986, the USA Congress rejected the Executive Order and adopted the more rigid Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA). This new act prohibited investment in South Africa, export of oil products, cooperation between the armed forces, and the cancellation of air transport between the two countries. Disinvestment from USA transnational corporations went from eight withdrawals in 1984 to 36 in 1985, and 54 in 1986. USA college and

⁴⁶⁶ Harrison, p. 244.

⁴⁶⁷ Windrich, pp. 53-54; Nixon, p. 107; The New York Times, "Howard Wolpe, backer of '86 Anti-Apartheid Act, Dies at 71", <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/29/us/politics/ex-congressman-howard-wolpe-who-pushed-for-anti-apartheid-act-dies-at-71.html?_r=0>, 2011.10.29. (Accessed on September 12, 2016); Harrison, p. 244.

⁴⁶⁸ Harrison, p. 244.

university disinvestment increased from an average of five between 1981 and 1984, to 52 in 1985 and 42 in 1986. Although disinvestment did the least harm to South Africa's economy, the country was effectively isolated from international capital markets and was unable to benefit from international bank loans, soon reaching economic stagnation. Without a growing economy, the government was unable to implement its Total Strategy in regard to the reform policy and the upkeep of the military. It became clear that minority rule was as much a threat to white dominance as was majority rule.⁴⁶⁹

The post-Muldergate propaganda initiative was built on the legacy of the former Department of Information under the guidance of Connie Mulder and Eschel Rhoodie. However, unlike the Soweto Uprising, South Africa's propaganda initiatives were unable to thwart the unrest in 1985 and the sanctions that followed. The global domain was not the only challenge to the government, because the press continued to remain a nuisance to P.W. Botha after the Muldergate Scandal.

6.3. THE STATE VERSUS THE PRESS

Efforts to control the press increased since P.W. Botha assumed the position of Prime Minister. During the Muldergate Scandal, the fourth estate proved its enormous power and government had learned its lesson from the affair. The relationship between government and the press deteriorated to its lowest level under the P.W. Botha Administration. P.W. Botha, with his military style of leadership, viewed the English press as a threat striving to bring his administration down. Therefore, new measures were necessary to counter the liberal press. By implementing the new Total Strategy, which implied that all aspects relating to dissidents and elements of society, such as the working class, businesses, churches, and the press, should align itself with the views of government, the government was able to impose rigorous censorship laws and regulations. From government's point of view, all of these elements should cooperate in thwarting communism and maintaining white minority rule. Any

⁴⁶⁹ Rich, p. 190; Thomson, pp. 133-134, 137, 219; R.M. Price, *The Apartheid State in crisis: Political transformation in South Africa 1975-1990*, pp. 221, 225, 232-233; National Archives, "Executive Order 12532 - Prohibiting trade and certain other transactions involving South Africa", <<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12532.html>>, 2016.8.15. (Accessed on September 15, 2016); Congress.Gov, "H.R.4868 – Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986", <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/house-bill/4868>>, 1986.5.21. (Accessed on September 15, 2016).

publication of harmful material that might embarrass the government or support the uprising of the oppressed black people, would suffer consequences under the new, stricter laws.⁴⁷⁰

P.W. Botha was put under serious scrutiny when a document leaked to the English press in November 1980, exposing the misconduct of the Prime Minister in altering the findings of the Erasmus report. Under the headline “PW in new Info Mystery” on 24 November 1980, the *Rand Daily Mail* alleged that P.W. Botha had a section of the first Erasmus Commission and a chapter of the final report in his hands before it was approved and published. The *Rand Daily Mail* was in possession of a letter signed by P.W. Botha which proved that he received the first report six days before it was presented to parliament on 30 November 1978. In another article of the same publication, Helen Zille from the *Rand Daily Mail* pointed out that annotations were made to the final report in a black and blue pen and that the ‘Verkramppte’ Nationalists intended to use this leaked document to accuse the Erasmus Commission of allowing P.W. Botha to tamper with the findings. In this way, the commission was used as a tool to dispose of P.W. Botha’s enemies. The ‘loophole’ in the document was that no one could prove or disprove that it actually was P.W. Botha’s handwriting. However, witnesses confirmed in a confidential police report that P.W. Botha gave orders that some parts of the Erasmus Commission’s report should be submitted to him before it was approved for publication, so that he could annotate elements, such as deleting and altering aspects of Vorster’s role. The police investigation requested Sparks to disclose his evidence and sources. Sparks offered evidence, but would not release the letter signed by P.W. since it would disclose the source leaking the documents. The police report strongly pointed to B.J. Vorster and his son, Pieter Vorster, as the main culprits who leaked the documents. Nevertheless, the police were unable to press any criminal charges. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that the accusations made against P.W. Botha could harm his political career. P.W. Botha denied the accusations, blaming the press of a malevolent innuendo to cast doubt on his premiership.⁴⁷¹

The press posed an immense threat to the P.W. Botha administration, especially with accusations such as the leaked documents made public by the *Rand Daily Mail*, to which the

⁴⁷⁰ W.A. Hachten & C.A. Giffard, *Total Onslaught: The South African press under attack*, pp. 8-9, 10; De Villiers & De Villiers, p. 142; A.S. Mathews, “Censorship, access to information and public debate”, *Theoria: A Journal of social and political theory* (55), October 1980, p. 27; A. Hadland, “The last word: Looking for a new South African journalism: Is the next generation ready for the challenge?”, *Communicare* 24(2), December 2005, p. 134.

⁴⁷¹ ARCA, “Lekkassie: Erasmusverslag: Berig in *Rand Daily Mail* van 24 November 1980”, PV 895, A1/K4 Vol 1 - *Heunis. Collection*, 1980; *Beeld*, 1980.11.25, p. 1; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1980.12.8, p. 3.

government had to react. During the 1970s and 1980s black militancy was on the rise, followed by labour unrest, protests, strikes, school boycotts, and acts of terrorism. The government viewed press reports of the unrest in the country as the leading cause of violence, opposition, and black activism. Therefore, ministers such as the Minister of Coloured and Indian Affairs, Marais Steyn, remarked that newspapers should decide whether they would assist law and order or preferred to seek change by force. The Deputy Minister of Information, Barend du Plessis, suggested that the media should help the government succeed in its reformative constitution by toning down the manner in which they represented the facts. Heunis said the government supported press freedom, but it had a “damage potential” that infringed on the rights of individuals. The method used by the government to neutralise the “damaging aspect” of the press, was through censorship.⁴⁷² The government’s introduction of legislation to ban information that is harmful to public interest, as Anthony Mathews described this method, was like “the surest way to cure the disease is to kill the patient.”⁴⁷³ In other words, the government censorship laws were destroying democratic principles in South Africa. Censorship legislation was already introduced during the 1970s, but this legislation would reach its peak under the P.W. Botha administration.⁴⁷⁴

With the political, economic, and social situation in South Africa deteriorating, the government opted to obscure the reality which might reflect badly on the ailing apartheid regime. Since the Soweto Uprising in 1976, the police prohibited local and foreign journalists from entering townships. This tendency continued with the unrest in June 1980 when access to townships was off limits, unless reporters were escorted by police. Along with the prohibition of access, black and white reporters were harassed by laws that allowed the police to question and imprison journalists. Other measures taken by the government in 1981 was closing down high-circulation black newspapers such as *The Post* and *Sunday Post* and forbidding leading black journalists to publish. The Second Police Amendment Act censored the press from disclosing the movements and methods used by the police to defeat the ‘terrorists’. In June 1982, the Protection of Information Act was passed, which allowed the imprisonment of journalists who failed to abide by the law on disclosing sensitive information regarding the actions of terrorists.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² *Evening Post*, 1982.6.11, p. 6.

⁴⁷³ Mathews, p. 27.

⁴⁷⁴ Hachten & Giffard, pp. 11-12, 15; *The Citizen*, 1982.7.13, p. 6; *Evening Post*, 1982.6.11, p. 6; Mathews, p. 27; P.J. Fourie, “’n Terugkeer na die onderdrukking van vryheid...”, p. 67.

⁴⁷⁵ Hachten & Giffard, pp. 12-15; Fourie, “’n Terugkeer na die onderdrukking van vryheid...”, p. 68.

In an attempt to curb the influence of the press, P.W. Botha appointed the Commission of Inquiry into the Mass Media, also known as the Steyn Commission. The mandate given to the commission was to inquire if the conduct of the mass media reflected the South African community and the current situation. The hearings by the commission ran from November 1980 until April 1981 and were finally presented to Parliament on 1 February 1982. In a 1 367-page report, the Steyn Commission concluded that the credibility of the government must be maintained, and recommended an organisation to licence journalists and splitting ownership shares of major newspaper groups, especially the Argus and SAAN groups. The Steyn Commission had fierce opposition from the South African press, even from the Afrikaans press. The press was most alarmed by the fact that all journalists had to register at a central body. By registering journalists, the government would be able to control the media and ban journalists it felt uncomfortable with, or journalists who had a history of being hostile towards the government. The code of conduct for the council of journalists was based on fairness, but the code was vague and based on what the council deemed objective and fair. Five months of outcries by the press forced the government to back down. William Hachten and Anthony Giffard identified two main reasons for the government backing off. Firstly, the NP wanted to retain its relationship with the Reagan Administration who was bent on a free press, and secondly, the unity of the Afrikaans and English press. However, on 11 June 1982, Heunis introduced the Registration of Newspapers Amendment Act, forcing all newspapers to submit to the Newspaper Press Union. This act allowed Heunis to deregister newspapers not meeting the guidelines of the central body. The government backed off when newspapers agreed to implement tougher self-regulation.⁴⁷⁶

During the State of Emergency announced in 1985, censorship reached its pinnacle. Between 1985 and 1986, media coverage of unrest was strictly prohibited in an attempt to hide the actual state of the country and filling the void with propaganda. Footage aired on the SABC regarding the riots in townships was sanitised on instruction from P.W. Botha. The attempt to control the media reached a new extreme – even by apartheid standards – when a Security Force Committee was established to constantly monitor news emanating from the media. During the State of Emergency, news reporters were taken into custody after allegedly interfering with police duties. The recording equipment of some journalists working at active unrest sites were sabotaged or confiscated. Some journalists even experienced aggressive

⁴⁷⁶ Hachten & Giffard, pp. 19, 77, 81-85; J. Frederikse, “The commercial press and the seedlings of the future”, *Third World Quarterly* 9(2), April 1987, p. 639; *The Cape Times*, 1982.2.10, p. 14.

attacks by security forces, such as physical attacks or being shot with tear gas and rubber bullets. Smear campaigns to discredit the international media was also on the foreground, with accusations such as British TV crews fabricating phony scenes by paying black people to riot, which were later revealed to be an untruth.⁴⁷⁷

Despite the government's censorship campaign against the press, the journalists who exposed the Muldergate Scandal received praises and numerous awards. In February 1979, Katzin received an award for the best investigative reporter and was proclaimed the overall winner at the Stellenbosch Farmers Winery Press awards. The following year, Rees received an award as best investigative journalist at the Stellenbosch Farmers Winery Press awards. Sparks received the Valiant for Truth media award from the Order of Christian Unity in London in 1982.⁴⁷⁸

In the post-Muldergate era, the new administration under P.W. Botha needed to adjust and adapt to new strategies in order for the government and the white minority to survive. The Total Strategy served the government's biased agenda to relieve itself from its predicament of civil unrest within the state. The propaganda strategy, still largely grounded on the rhetoric of Eschel Rhoodie's covert and unorthodox propaganda methods, continued to hold disinvestment at bay and helped the government to implement its reformatory strategy. However, the Total Strategy had a massive boomerang effect on Afrikaner unity and increased unhappiness under the black majority who were still refused to pursue political rights. The growing and final divide between the 'Verligtes' and 'Verkrampptes', came under the administration of P.W. Botha, who was unable to maintain the support of the Transvaal Nationalists. The media, focusing on the renewed unrest for the sake of informing South Africans and foreigners of the true state of South Africa, hindered the image of the NP even further. The press reports on the unrest increasingly damaged the propaganda efforts of the government, and as a result, the press was severely targeted by the government through sinister laws and commissions. By 1985, with the announcement of the State of Emergency, the propaganda offensive under the new Department of Foreign Affairs and Information, as well the reformatory strategy of P.W. Botha, was dealt a massive blow.

⁴⁷⁷ Frederikse, pp. 640-644; Windrich, pp. 57-58.

⁴⁷⁸ *Daily Dispatch*, 1982.12.10, p. 7; *Rand Daily Mail*, 1980.2.8, p. 1; *The Star*, 1979.2.15, p. 5; *The Argus*, 1979.2.16, p. 9.

7. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the South African public has been shocked by numerous scandals in recent years. The Information Scandal could be considered one of the most prominent scandals in South African history. The Information Scandal is complex in its totality and it is therefore important to view the scandal from origin to aftermath. Firstly, the study set out to conclude the impact of the propaganda war waged by the South African government. Secondly, the study presents answers to the far-reaching implications for South Africa.

The devastating effect of the Second World War cast a taboo on racial ideologies, including the dogma of the National Party, which was entrenched in racial segregation. The Cold War could be viewed as a double-edged sword for the South African government. On the one hand, the Cold War demanded the notion of freedom for everyone and the abolishment of oppressive regimes, but on the other hand the superpowers required allies. NATO considered South Africa as an important unofficial strategic ally and protected the country against severe criticism during the 1950s and 1960s. However, South Africa did not escape international criticism from entities such as the United Nations (UN), the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), or newly decolonised countries such as India. Except for political pressure from governments and organisations, the emergence of Anti-Apartheid Movements (AMM) spawning in the United States of America (USA) and Europe, created discomfort for South Africa in areas such as sports and economics. During these two decades, South Africa mainly utilised overt propaganda techniques to improve its image.

By the early 1970s, a notable crack was visible in Afrikanerdom. ‘Verligtes’ and ‘Verkrampes’ remained divided over new outlooks for the improvement of South Africa’s position when faced with increasing international isolation. South Africa still maintained stable relations with some Western countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and the USA. The South African government, especially Connie Mulder, viewed antagonistic international political and social movements against South Africa as aggressive tumours that needed to be addressed by a pro-active approach. Mulder regarded Eschel Rhoodie as the perfect ‘cure’ to tear down the Paper Curtain and save South Africa. Mulder caused resentment when he replaced the ineffective Gerald Barrie with the younger and more assertive Eschel Rhoodie.

Unlike Barrie, Rhoodie's doctorate studies in Philosophy and Political Science, his experience of serving in numerous countries as information officer, and his contact with various figures such as the Central Intelligence Agency agent code-named Brownie, provided him with a set of skills to shape the opinions of foreign publics in the Cold War setting. Rhoodie, seen as charismatic, ambitious, and persuasive, was by nature a propagandist and managed to persuade Mulder of his true potential through his book *The Paper Curtain*. Rhoodie not only managed to secure alliances from contacts abroad, but quickly fostered friendships with key figures in the South African government, such as Mulder and Hendrik van den Bergh. Together, the group of three planned to become high-level ministers under the next Mulder Administration. Mulder's selection of Rhoodie could be viewed as a better choice in contrast to Barrie, but not as the best decision. Rhoodie was young and inexperienced in terms of the Secretary post, especially when it came to administration.

Rhodie was critical towards the early Department of Information and the Department of Foreign Affairs, because it lacked a formidable strategy to mould foreign opinion. He understood that the Department of Information was ill-equipped to deal with the methods of the Cold War. Numerous battles of the Cold War were fought through a combination of foreign diplomacy and international politics. Therefore, propaganda became front-line weaponry to portray an ideal image of a country. In order to sell apartheid – the most unwanted ideology in the world – Rhodie resorted to covert and abnormal methods of conveying a positive message about South Africa. He firmly believed that the use of official channels was redundant, and that the Department of Information should reach opinion formers in an unofficial manner in order to have an impact. Rhodie also identified several factors in the West which inhibiting the flow of positive news from South Africa. Hence, Rhodie knew that he had to use external sources without any connection to the South African government, with a view of reaching foreign audiences.

The decision to start an all-out propaganda war was influenced by two major factors. Firstly, a secret worldwide study conducted on opinions revealed the damaged status of South Africa in the international community. The startling study coaxed B.J. Vorster, Van den Bergh, and Nico Diederichs into accepting a propaganda war. Secondly, the high success rate of early propaganda efforts from 1971 to 1974 boosted confidence in unconventional means and methods. Early projects with high success rates included the Club of Ten, *To The Point*, hiring lobbying firms, and making contact with important figures such as Ronald Reagan, Henry Kissinger, and Gerald Ford.

A fatal error for the careers of B.J. Vorster and Connie Mulder was the implementation of the project in absolute secrecy. The question remains: to what extent did the massive undertaking stay hidden? From the start, Mulder and Rhodie informed cabinet by circulating a letter indicating their intentions of reforming the Department of Information towards a total onslaught. Cabinet was aware of the fact that the department was adapting its strategies, but was not aware of the full extent of the mandate for the propaganda war. P.W. Botha pointed out that the running of such clandestine operations was not scandalous, and requested that official approval be sought from cabinet. In this way, the Department of Information would have been much more productive, and would have more funds and manpower at their disposal. Instead, numerous complex operations were left only to the Rhodie brothers (Eschel and Deneys) and Les de Villiers. However, keeping the arrangements secret was a safer method of protecting clandestine operations, especially projects targeting threats to the government. Vorster's decision to keep the project secret remains unknown, but in retrospect, Vorster probably did not want to endanger his statesmanship by endorsing sinister programmes.

The Department of Information mainly focused on four regions: Africa and the Middle East, North America, and Europe. The African campaign was moderately successful. Although Rhodie's backdoor-diplomacy approach was initially successful in breaking through the isolation state with other African countries, the longevity of the exploits was doomed. Internal laws and events in South Africa, such as the Soweto Riots and the death of Steve Biko prohibited any meaningful relations. Incidents such as the Seychelles and Zimbabwe ventures seemed promising prospects, but proved to be disastrous when the governments of these former pro-South African countries were replaced by anti-South African governments in a short space of time. In the Middle East, the Department of Information achieved resounding success in building a new alliance with the Israelis. However, this backdoor diplomacy would cause friction between the Department of Information and the Department of Foreign Affairs. This friction would later return to haunt Connie Mulder.

In the USA, the South African government had a high success rate. Although the campaign was riddled with blunders, such as McGoff failing to obtain the *Washington Star* and the adoption of an arms embargo, South Africa did manage to dodge several anti-apartheid legislation bullets. This was thanks to Rhodie's strategy of reaching and influencing top decision makers through a combination of hiring lobbying firms, overt propaganda, discreetly and anonymously spreading pro-South African government messages, influencing USA

politics, and meeting future leaders. The operations directed at Europe were initially successful. However, as soon as the media picked up South African involvement in the European media and government, it became apparent that the strides made by the Department of Information in 1975 would be difficult to maintain. For example, incidents such as Gerald Sparrow spilling the beans when he was replaced became a disaster for the Club of Ten. This led to growing awareness of the South African government's involvement in the media. This was evident when *To The Point International* closed down after its employees became suspicious about involvement with South African dirty money.

In South Africa, the Department of Information's propaganda strategy mostly entailed fostering unity by convincing South Africans that global views towards South Africa were unjust and hostile. While Rhodie influenced white South Africans with distorted facts about the apartheid regime and the world, propaganda aimed at Africans attempted to diffuse the resistance struggle and endeavoured to persuade Africans about the feasibility of the homelands. The Information Scandal's lasting legacy, *The Citizen*, was an excellent solution to a complex problem. Although immoral, *The Citizen* had the vital task of counterbalancing news from the English press directed at non-Afrikaans audiences. *The Citizen* was highly successful in boosting the 1977 elections in South Africa, and remained a powerful pro-government propaganda machine with a growing readership even after the Information Scandal. *The Citizen* is a testimony of propaganda being a timely process. However, multiple mistakes by Louis Luyt and Eschel Rhodie raised suspicion which encourage investigations by the free press.

The overall success of the information propaganda campaign initiative still remains difficult to analyse. Numerous mistakes by Rhodie contributed to the downfall of the propaganda campaign in 1978. These mistakes included Rhodie's inexperience in administration and his dream of becoming the Henry Kissinger of South Africa. Rhodie wanted to live the lavish life, and in doing so, jeopardised his smokescreen of operations. A prime example was citing Thor Communicators in public while meeting with foreign agents. Enjoying the high life made Rhodie reckless, and he began abusing privileges. The purchase of property through Thor Communicators was highly unusual. The real intent of the purchase of property could only be speculated on, since fraud charges against Rhodie was dismissed by the Appeal Court. Rhodie's connection and cooperation with businessmen in secret projects made it likely that both parties benefited from the secret projects. Except for hiccups in the Department of Information, South African leaders also made blunders that damaged the

propaganda efforts, especially during the Soweto Riots and the death of Steve Biko. Competition from the free press also played its role against the Department of Information's propaganda efforts.

Despite all the mistakes, the propaganda war fought by a small number of whites at the southern tip of Africa was an impressive effort to shape world opinion. Rhoodie understood the method of waging a total propaganda war, and transformed the propaganda operations of South Africa. Pik Botha's propaganda strategies were either adopted or based on Rhoodie's approach. The methods applied by the Department of Information recovered the high ground when Anti-Apartheid Movement propaganda was largely ignored by specific governments and sanctions were stalled for a while. If Rhoodie remained the Secretary of Information, the propaganda war would have expanded the lifespan of apartheid, but would not have stopped the eventual demise of apartheid. Propaganda could not fight forever against alternative viewpoints offered by the free press.

The build-up to the Information Scandal began when Barrie, unaware of the secret funds and carrying a grudge, started investigating irregularities in the Department of Information. It is safe to assume that Barrie is responsible for leaking his report to the press. The Information Scandal gained traction when the *Sunday Express* revealed Rhoodie's trip to the Seychelles. The Information Scandal quickly unfolded into a series of cover-ups. The first cover-up started when Mulder and Rhoodie provided different accounts of the visit to the Seychelles. With his back against the wall, Rhoodie blew the whistle and exposed the secret agenda of the Department of Information. The decision to reveal the secret was a smart move from Rhoodie, because it forced Vorster into acting and prevented him from putting the blame on Rhoodie and Mulder. The second cover-up occurred when Vorster appointed Van den Bergh and Louw Reynders of BOSS to investigate the matter.

The caucus elections of 1978 were extremely unusual in the sense that it altered the history of South Africa. Connie Mulder would have been a more suitable choice as the next Prime Minister. He was popular among the NP caucus and had experience in foreign diplomatic visits. It seems as if Mulder would have been the ideal candidate to uphold South Africa's image abroad and to keep the Afrikaner at home unified. During the caucus elections, rumours of Mulder's guilt in the Information Scandal surfaced and were employed by political enemies as a strategy to discredit Mulder. Instead, P.W. Botha, who played the part of financing the secret project from his department, was elected as Prime Minister. P.W.

Botha's promise of a clean administration was put to the test when Mostert released his commission's evidence to the public, after being exploited in the caucus elections in order to discredit Mulder. This act by Mostert angered P.W. Botha, because the newly elected Prime Minister and members of his cabinet came under the spotlight. Initially, P.W. Botha tried to save Vorster, but Mostert rendered this impossible.

P.W. Botha's threats to the press fell on deaf ears and led to another cover-up strategy, nby means of the Erasmus Commission. While the Erasmus Commission believed it was serving a righteous cause, it became evident that Vorster and P.W. Botha appointed loyal members whom they could control. The Erasmus Commission was without any doubt a cover-up, with strong evidence pointing in this direction. First of all, Mostert was sacked and replaced by an inferior judge. Secondly, the matter was ruled *sub judice* to prevent leaks that might endanger the truth. Thirdly, the *Rand Daily Mail* offered evidence of P.W. Botha tampering with the commission in order to save Vorster. Fourthly, the government acted quickly to punish newspapers covering the Information affair, but refused to prosecute Van den Bergh. Fifthly, Rhoodie being found innocent bears testimony to the prejudice of the Erasmus Commission. Lastly, P.W. Botha refused to give Mulder a fair chance of offering his account of the events.

It even makes sense to state that Eschel Rhoodie was deliberately kept out of the country with a view to silence him and to prevent him from embarrassing the South African government. This is apparent in the withdrawal of his passport while he was on a business trip abroad, and the hesitation of the police to search for him. Rhoodie was most likely under the impression that he was being chased and should remain hidden, which silenced him. The plan to keep Rhoodie silent was obstructed when the press tracked him down for an interview. Rhoodie retaliated by accusing Vorster and Owen Horwood on international TV of being involved in the mess. After this, P.W. Botha issued a warrant for the arrest of Rhoodie. The damage that was done by Rhoodie and later Mulder, made the cover-up impossible and as a result, Vorster became vulnerable.

The propaganda war to save South Africa would place a heavy burden on South African politics. Initially, it caused havoc from 1978 until 1982. The events of the Information Scandal shattered South Africa's propaganda projects and left a void in addressing international hostilities. Based on the premises of Rhoodie and Mulder's rhetoric, P.W. Botha devised a new strategy called the Total Onslaught. This was a method to gain allies and ease

critical views from abroad. However, the Total Strategy would fail in the long run as it caused a rupture in Afrikaner unity and created tension among the black populace. Unrest ensued as a result, which reflected negatively on South Africa's international image. From the options available to him, P.W. Botha was forced to utilise a military style of leadership to keep control of the country.

The use of the military to suppress the population during a state of emergency became a major concern for the free press. Apartheid South Africa was a complex society. It was based on democratic principles – but only for the white minority. Unlike many oppressive states, the South African government never had a monopoly over the flow of information. The English press was always an uncomfortable thorn in the flesh of the government. During the Information Scandal, P.W. Botha noted the devastating power of the press as the bearer of different views. In order to shape the views of South Africans and the world, P.W. Botha knew that he had to control the flow of information. In the process, he hampered the media with restrictions and laws in order to curb information emanating from South Africa. This approach caused more harm, since the P.W. Botha Administration made use of dictatorial policies. Rather a diplomatic approach was required to save the ailing NP regime in the 1980s.

The joint Departments of Foreign Affairs and Information was perhaps a better alternative for combating negative views. The joint departments could coordinate their efforts more effectively than working as two separate entities, which created distrust and frustration. South African propaganda continued to keep disinvestments at bay during the early 1980s, but with the outbreak of unrest, and with South Africa receiving more attention from the international world, the battle for the hearts and minds of the global community was over.

The Information Scandal still leaves some questions unanswered, such as the role of Hendrik van den Bergh and BOSS during South Africa's propaganda war. Another question was the level of involvement by NP cabinet ministers during the Information saga. An in-depth study is required into the covert operations of the NP, from the early 1980s until the fall of apartheid in 1994. Many of the secret operations implemented by Eschel Rhodie also require deeper investigation, such as the connections with Israel and Egypt.

A notable feature of this study is its explanation of the struggle by a controversial regime to keep itself in power within a changing democratic world by means of persuasion and deceit. The regime pumps misinformation into the world as a mechanism for survival. One can only

speculate on the amount of shocking facts and truths governments and businesses worldwide have buried under a curtain of lies in the name of profit, power, and of course, 'in the interest of the nation'.

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SUMMARY

The Information Scandal, also known as Muldergate Scandal, originated when Prime Minister John Vorster and members of the Department of Information realised that international and local opinion were hostile towards the white dominated regime and its apartheid laws. The unwanted image of apartheid resulted in the deterioration of vital international links, trade, and cooperation with foreign nationalities. In order to combat this negative representation of South Africa, the Department of Information resorted to an unorthodox propaganda campaign in the 1970s.

The Minister of the Department of Information, Dr Connie Mulder, and the Secretary of Information, Dr Eschel Rhoodie, believed unconventional methods of influencing opinions were justified for South Africa's survival. The Department of Information's propaganda campaign started to gain traction in 1974 when Vorster concurred to allocate a huge amount of resources to the programme. In the five years that the clandestine propaganda campaign was active, approximately 180 information projects were operational and cost millions of rand to fund.

By 1977 cracks were starting to appear in the clandestine operation. A report leaked by the Auditor-General, Gerald Barrie, revealed the misuse of state funds. The Department of Information was convinced that no one would notice if irregularities of R64 million occurred. However, between 1977 and 1979 journalists exposed many of the secret operations.

The Scandal ruined the political careers of Vorster, with the Head of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), General Hendrik van den Bergh, as well as Mulder and Rhoodie. Muldergate left the Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, with an opportunity to depose Mulder and later Vorster, ultimately securing the position of Prime Minister. While Rhoodie left the country to become a fugitive, Vorster and Mulder were taking the full brunt of the allegations. In the process, Mulder lost his leadership position within the NP, while Vorster retired as Prime Minister in 1978 and became the Ceremonial President of South Africa. Later that same year, Vorster was forced to resign from his new post in disgrace after the Erasmus Commission found him accountable of being actively involved in the Information Debacle.

After more than thirty years since the Information Scandal settled, this study conveys a comprehensive history of the disinformation campaign. The main research objective of this

dissertation is to view the events of the Information Scandal as they unfolded, and after exploring the events of the Information Scandal, to be able to answer two main questions. Firstly, the approach the Department of Information applied and the impact that the propaganda campaign had on its targeted audience with an attempt to reveal whether the campaign was initially successful, or not. The second question addresses the consequences of the scandal when it met public scrutiny: how did the scandal influenced the individuals, the political sphere of South Africa and the international community's reaction.

In the analysis of the Information Scandal from a contemporary perspective, the dissertation uncovers new insights into the betrayals, cover ups and deceit. It explains the use of unorthodox propaganda and its consequences from a historical point of view in assessing the successes, failures and options faced by those involved in the scandal. Hence, it creates a comprehensive historical narrative of the Information Scandal. The most notable feature of this research is how a mainly Afrikaner regime battled and tried to keep itself in power in a changing democratic world by means of persuasion and deceit.

Key words:

South Africa

Information Scandal

Propaganda

Diplomacy

International

Politics

Information

Media

Apartheid

National Party

OPSOMMING

Die Inligting-skandaal, ook bekend as die Muldergate-Skandaal, het sy oorsprong in eerste minister John Vorster en lede van die Departement van Inligting se besef dat internasionale en plaaslike opinie vyandig is teenoor die wit dominerende regime en sy apartheidswette. Die ongewenste beeld van apartheid het gelei tot die agteruitgang van noodsaaklike internasionale bande, handel en samewerking met die buiteland. Om hierdie negatiewe voorstelling van Suid-Afrika die hoof te bied, het die Departement van Inligting homself na 'n onkonvensionele propaganda veldtog in die 1970's gewend.

Die minister van die Departement van Inligting, dr. Connie Mulder, en die sekretaris van inligting, dr. Eschel Rhoodie, was oortuig dat onkonvensionele metodes om opinies te beïnvloed geregverdig was vir die oorlewing van Suid-Afrika. Vorster se besluit om groot bedrae hulpbronne aan die program toe te ken, het veroorsaak dat die propaganda-veldtogte van die Departement van Inligting in 1974 versnel het. In die vyf jare wat die geheimsinnige propaganda-veldtog aktief was, is ongeveer 180 inligtingsprojekte in werking gestel. Dit het miljoene rande gekos om te befonds.

Teen 1977 het daar krake in die geheimsinnige operasie begin ontstaan. 'n Verslag wat deur die ouditeur-generaal, Gerald Barrie, uitgelek is, het gedui op die misbruik van staatsfondse. Die Departement van Inligting was oortuig dat niemand sou besef dat onreëlmatighede van R65 miljoen plaas gevind het nie. Tussen 1977 en 1979 het joernaliste egter die geheime operasie oopgevelek.

Die skandaal het die politieke loopbane van Vorster, tesame met die hoof van die Buro van Staatsveiligheid, generaal Hendrik van den Bergh, asook Mulder en Rhoodie verwoes. Die Muldergate-skandaal het P.W. Botha die geleentheid gebied om ontslae van Mulder en later Vorster te raak, en om sy posisie as eerste minister te konsolideer. Terwyl Rhoodie die land as 'n voortvlugtige verlaat het, het Mulder en Vorster die ergste kritiek ontvang. In die proses het Mulder sy leierskapposisie binne die Nasionale Party verloor, terwyl Vorster as eerste minister in 1978 bedank het en die seremoniële president van Suid-Afrika geword het. Later in dieselfde jaar was Vorster verplig om uit hierdie amp te bedank nadat die Erasmus-kommissie hom vir sy aktiewe betrokkenheid in die Inligtingsdebakel verantwoordelik gehou het.

Na meer as dertig jaar sedert die Inligting-skandaal, is dit moontlik om in hierdie studie 'n omvattende geskiedenis oor die disinformasie-veldtog te lewer. Een van die belangrikste invalshoeke van hierdie verhandeling is om die gebeurtenisse van die Inligting-skandaal te ontsluit soos wat dit ontvou het. Daarna is die verhandeling in staat om twee deurdringende vrae te beantwoord. Eerstens, die benadering wat die Departement van Inligting geïmplementeer het en die impak wat die propaganda veldtog op sy teikengehoor gehad het, asook om aan te dui of die veldtog aanvanklik suksesvol was of nie. Die tweede vraag wat die verhandeling aanspreek, is die gevolge van die skandaal toe dit openbaar gemaak is, dit wil sê, hoe het die skandaal die betrokke individue, die politieke sfeer van Suid-Afrika en die reaksie van die internasionale gemeenskap beïnvloed het.

Die ontleding van die Inligting-skandaal uit 'n hedendaagse perspektief in hierdie verhouding ontbloom nuwe insigte oor verraad, toesmeer van ondersoek en bedrieëry. Dit verduidelik die gebruik van onortodokse propaganda en ondersoek die gevolge daarvan uit 'n historiese oogpunt – veral wat betrek die sukses, mislukkings en opsies van diegene wat verantwoordelik was vir die skandaal. Dus, die studie skep 'n omvattende historiese narratief oor die Inligting-skandaal. Die noemenswaardigste kenmerk van dié navorsing is hoe 'n Afrikaner regime gepoog het om deur middel van oorreding en bedrieëry die mag in 'n veranderende demokratiese wêreld te behou.

Sleutelwoorde:

Suid-Afrika

Inligting-skandaal

Propaganda

Diplomasie

Internasionaal

Politiek

Inligting

Media

Apartheid

Nasionale Party