

not Treurnicht's influence but, as Miller points out, Vorster's inability to articulate a coherent reformist vision, and rally support on that basis, that stalled his reform initiative.

My misgivings about Miller's analysis of Treurnicht's relationship with Vorster is a minor point, and does not detract from the achievement of *An African Volk* as a significant and pathbreaking study of policymaking in South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. Miller's new insights on the workings of the inner circles of the NP make this book obligatory reading for those scholars and students with any interest in the history of the apartheid state.

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SELLING APARTHEID

Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda War.

By Ron Nixon.

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Ron Nixon's new book, *Selling Apartheid*, tells the story of the apartheid regime's efforts to deal with its image problem. For forty years, the regime used secret funding, hidden propaganda, subtle co-option, overt lies, blackmail, and violence to promote the idea that apartheid was not bad. From buying American newspapers outright and hiring expensive lobbying firms, to funding sham defenders in the public sphere and co-opting corporate America with promises of tee times with professional golfer Gary Player, the story is an exciting one.

Nixon, who writes for the *The New York Times*, tells it in rich detail and with all the verve one would expect from a journalist. What the book does particularly well is illuminate the breadth of connections between the regime and organisations outside South Africa. This is not merely a story of American Southern whites who see nostalgia in apartheid; it is one of British conservatives admiring South Africa's rigid social hierarchies, of conflicting ideas about the social responsibility of business, and of progressive movements pushing divestment by American universities and states. It is also a story of contemporary relevance. Plenty of public figures today, from the Baltimore radio host Lester Kinsolving, to the recent British Prime Minister David Cameron, have taken part in South African junkets that were designed to enhance apartheid's international image.

Selling Apartheid puts this story together better than any previous work. Current scholars are not likely to revisit this chapter of history, because it is one that has simply been told too many times before. From inside South Africa's Department of Information, Eschel Rhodie wrote books about South Africa's propaganda campaign, as did his immediate subordinate, Les de Villiers. From outside, Mervyn Rees and Chris Day compiled the

political journalists' perspective. To any informed scholar of the apartheid regime, therefore, Nixon's findings are not novel.

What *Selling Apartheid* does well, however, is to flesh out the picture, providing plenty of new and telling details. There is the story of Max Yergan, the radical co-founder of the Council of African Affairs, who is pressured by the United States government into becoming a staunch anti-communist and ultimately ends up giving public support to the apartheid regime. There is a welcome focus on South Africa's propaganda campaign as the product of actors outside the Department of Information, from Foreign Minister Eric Louw to South African big business. And there are the details on the extraordinarily diffuse campaign launched in defense of apartheid by the Hamilton Wright Organization immediately after the Sharpeville massacre. While many of South Africa's efforts to rebrand apartheid were ham-handed, others were ingenious. One investment in a British book publishing company actually yielded a profit, which was in turn used to buy a photo-news agency back in South Africa. *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Chicago Tribune* all unwittingly entered into contracts with that agency, and consequently published local images hand-picked by the regime.

The major issue in this book is that of vantage point. Unsurprisingly, for a book about the apartheid regime, the author has little historical empathy for his white South African subjects. Key apartheid officials are portrayed in two dimensions, while there is no real discussion of what apartheid meant to its authors. By contrast, we learn all sorts of details about the critics of the regime, as well as about foreign actors. For example, we are told that the founder of a bank that features in the story was the grandfather of Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond novels (28–9). It is difficult to see the relevance of such insertions.

Another problem relates to the book's orientation. Instead of situating a book about South Africa in a South African context, the author chooses to locate it in a distinctly American one. The author shows great nuance in his analysis of politics, a deep familiarity with bit-players who enrich the story, and he consistently embeds the processes in a set of political norms – but only when these things are American. This bias reflects the perspective of the author and audience, rather than the nature of the subject matter, which requires rigorous analysis from a South African perspective. Tellingly, there is almost no discussion of South Africa's efforts to sell apartheid in Africa itself, a crucial part of the story; likewise, Great Britain, France, Germany, and various other foreign dimensions garner little attention.

Finally, the analysis is not anchored by a deep understanding of the apartheid era. The book would have benefited from a firmer grasp of the intellectual history of apartheid, as well as from an understanding of contemporary divisions in Afrikaner perceptions of the system – both vital to any story about the regime's propaganda campaign.

Nevertheless, *Selling Apartheid* will be a useful resource for what it does well, which is to illuminate the transnational effort that the apartheid state undertook to make apartheid look like something it was not.

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