

South Africa:
The Early Years of Apartheid

South African Press Digests, 1949-1972

Introduction and finding list
to the microfiche collection

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Preface

This collection of *Press Digests* is a veritable goldmine of information since it summarizes all the principal developments and speeches of the first 24 years of apartheid, the formative years of one of the world's most infamous experiments to achieve ethnic separation and, indeed, an attempt at 'ethnic cleansing' of the so-called 'white cities'.

The election of the National Party in May 1949 marked the start of apartheid which was to last until 1993. The National Party's policy was characterised not only by its obsession about 'the threat of black domination', but also by its virulent anti-semitism; during the Second World War, the Afrikaner nationalists had sided with Hitler's Germany and had borrowed freely from its anti-Jewish and 'racial purity' propaganda.

It was for this reason that the South African Jewish Board of Deputies carried out a daily survey and analysis of the policies and practices of the new government. As part of this process, they read and summarized all of South Africa's principal newspapers and magazines (both English-language and Afrikaans) and issued their summaries, in English, in the form of a weekly, typed *Digest* throughout the first twenty-four years of apartheid.

Short of examining each of the publications covered by this survey, there is no other source of readily available material than these *Press Digests*. This microfiche edition is therefore uniquely important for research work connected with South Africa in particular and with race relations as a whole.

This collection of *Press Digests* has come from the private library of Colin Legum, one of the world's most eminent and highly regarded international press correspondents and writers on Africa and the Third World.

Colin Legum: Biographical Note

Colin Legum was born in Kestall, Orange Free State, South Africa, on 3 January 1919. He was educated up to matriculation standard at the local Afrikaans medium school, and had no further formal education. When he was 16, he entered journalism, starting as a copy boy and library assistant on the Johannesburg Sunday Express and subsequently the Daily Express. Over the next four years he rose to become a senior crime reporter and the papers' political correspondent. In 1959, he became editor of the Labour weekly *The Forward*, in Johannesburg, and the *SA Mineworker*, organ of the Mineworkers' Union. In 1942 he started his own publication, the *Illustrated Labour Bulletin*, a bilingual political fortnightly.

Colin Legum became active in politics as a member of the S.A. Labour Party in 1938 and in 1943 was elected as a Labour member to the Johannesburg City Council. In 1947 he became leader of the Labour Party's temporary majority on the City Council, serving as chairman of the General Purposes Committee and the Special Housing Committee. Later that same year, he was elected general secretary of the Labour Party. He was active in the 1948 elections when the Labour Party was in coalition with General Smuts' United Party in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the election of the National Party which had fought the election on its new apartheid programme.

In 1949, because he saw no immediate future for his work or political views in an apartheid South Africa, Colin Legum decided to leave South Africa to pursue his journalistic career in London. Here he not only became a part-time journalist on *The Observer*, but also a staff member of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, engaging in research into communications in industry for three years. In 1953, he joined *The Observer* as a full-time staff member, becoming Fleet Street's first Africa Correspondent - a role later enlarged to that of Commonwealth Correspondent - but he never lost interest in humanity studies based on the application and extension of Freud's ideas. Five years later, in 1958, he was made an associate editor of the paper, specialising in Third World affairs.

As Commonwealth Correspondent, Colin Legum travelled widely, but chiefly in Africa and the Middle East. He helped to formulate the paper's notable anti-colonial policy and its militant stand against apartheid and racism. During his time on the paper, he developed friendships with many of the African independence leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah, Dr. Nnamde Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Joshua Nkomo, Milton Obote, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Tshekedi and Seretse Khama, Quett Masire and Dr. Kamuzu Banda.

In 1951, with the Rev. Michael Scott, Professor Arthur Lewis and Martin Wright, he co-authored *Attitude to Africa* which was acknowledged at the time as a seminal work in the anti-colonial struggle. The following year, Colin Legum worked closely with Michael Scott, Mary Benson, David Astor and others in founding the Africa Bureau and, subsequently, the Africa Publications Trust and the Africa Education Trust.

Because Colin Legum and David Astor saw a possible disadvantage as journalists in being too publicly associated with the Africa Bureau, they both elected to be ad

hoc members of its executive. Colin Legum was, nevertheless, actively involved with the Africa Bureau on a number of key issues in the anti-colonial movement, including the campaign to end the banning order on Tshekedi and Seretse Khama from Bechuanaland; to end the exile of the Kabaka of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutesa II (which led to his writing *Must we lose Africa*); the campaign against the Central African Federation and later against Rhodesia's UDI.

Colin Legum closely followed the decolonisation of the Belgian Congo, wrote *Congo Disaster* and, having got to know Patrice Lumumtu, later contributed the foreword and biography to his collected writings, *Congo, my Country*. He similarly wrote the preface and biography of Kenneth Kaunda for his first collected works.

He took an early interest in Pan-Africanism and wrote the first modern study of the movement, *Pan-Africanism - a Short Political Guide* (1962). He also followed closely the nascent politics of the Third World and wrote a short chronicle entitled *Bandung, Cairo, Accra*.

In 1964, Colin Legum wrote, with his wife, *South Africa - Crisis for the West*, the first serious attempt to deal with the question of sanctions, the publication of which resulted in the authors being banned from their home country for 20 years. With his wife, Colin Legum also co-authored *The Bitter Choice* and, in 1961, he edited *The Africa Handbook*. But his major contribution to the study of the continent is the *Africa Contemporary Record* which he edited for 20 years from 1968 to 1989. For 5 years he also co-edited a companion series, the *Middle East Contemporary Survey* for the Shiloah Centre at the University of Tel Aviv.

In addition to the books he has written himself or in partnership with his wife, he has contributed chapters to some 26 academic books, and has written a number of pamphlets, including *The Fall of Haile Selassie*, *The Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, and *After Angola - the Coming War*. Recently, he has co-authored *Festschrift to Mwalimu Nyerere* (James Currey, 1994). His works have been translated in to Swedish, Hebrew, Arabic, French, Spanish, Italian and Chinese.

Colin Legum has become well-known as broadcaster and for his television appearances in Britain, the United States, Canada, Holland, Scandinavia and Australia as well as in a dozen African countries. Not only has he lectured extensively at universities in Britain, on the European continent, in North America, India, China, Switzerland and in Africa, but he has also been a regular lecturer at military colleges, including Sandhurst, Camberley and Greenwich Naval College in England; the NATO Defence College in Rome (where he has been on a panel of regular lecturers for 15 years); the Portuguese Diplomatic and Military College; the Netherlands Diplomatic College; the Air Force College at the Maxwell Base in Montgomery, Alabama; and the US Naval College in Monterey.

Colin Legum resigned from *The Observer* in 1984 when the paper was sold to the Lonrho multi-national because he objected to control passing into the hands of Mr. 'Tiny' Rowland. He subsequently established his own syndicated weekly newsletter *Third World Reports*.

His closest interest, apart from the anti-colonial and anti-racist movements, has always been with South Africa and, more latterly, with the situation in the Horn of Africa.

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