

Banned Books Exhibition

Merensky Library

September 2024

ANDRÉ
P. BRINK
**KENNIS
VAN DIE
AAND**

18

Kennis van die aand (1973)

Publications Act 1963

- Blasphemy,
- obscenity,
- harmful to public morals
- Sedition

Complaints – NGKerk-dominee's wife
Cronjé – Immorality Act

Looking onto darkness (1975)

Why reflect on this particular banning?

- Provides insight in very specific ideas behind censorship:
- Ideas about morality / politics / apartheid / anti communism
- BUT also:
- ideas about culture: "High Culture" and White supremacy

Short history

- Originally now laws regulating publications of entertainment
- **Relied on 1913 Customs Act**
 - Prohibiting "undesirable material" (pornography) from being brought into the country
 - Anything "indecent, obscene or objectionable" – words from British Customs laws
- **In 1931 Censorship Act**
 - Relied on BBFC (British Board of Film Censors – self regulatory body) with "43 Taboo Topics"

1948 (Malan in power) -1956 (Cronjé Commission)

- 1948 NP under DF Malan in power (Dominee in NG Kerk)
- Already in 1940's outrage about pornography and publications with "bad influence" on the morals (Romances, Detectives, Adventures – American genre fiction)
- 1954: Commission on Undesirable Publications (Cronjé Commission)
- Cronjé (from UP Sociology Dept) racist, white supremacist
 - Afrikaner as beacon of culture in Africa
 - Definition of Culture: narrow, humanist, High Culture, universal Truth, Beauty (Pop fiction as undermining this – long hair, sex, pop music, undermining the morals of Afrikaners in big cities)
 - Corrupting Christian morals and values
- This report led to resistance from Afrikaans Authors (Notably Van Wyk Louw)
 - Not possible to distinguish between art and pornography
 - Artists must be free – creating a "Republic of letters" where ideas and form can be explored freely – undeterred by political influence
- Compromise 1963 Publications Act.
 - Censors will be advised by literary Scholars – taking things in account as probable readers.
 - Truce – Afrikaans texts not banned – regarded as "art" / not sedition or undermining religion etc.



Brink

- Brink not satisfied. About more than Afrikaans freedom of expression:
- *Skryt* – Breyten Breytenbach
- *Magersfontein o, Magersfontein!* – Etienne Leroux.
- Numerous court cases – *Kennis* unbanned in 1982 – not for sale to under 18's
- Published in English
- Translated into German in DDR where books where many books were banned as well.

Breyten Breytenbach
Skryt
Om'n sinkende skip blou
te verf
Verse