

of the vigorous national debate that centres precisely on the morality and practicality of South Africa's policies. It is almost impossible not to notice the intensity and openness with which we are searching for solutions to our extraordinarily complex problems.

Perhaps Mr Young did not notice this debate because, as he admits, his visit to South Africa was brief. The brevity of his visit did not, however, prevent him from reaching sweeping conclusions concerning our affairs or from ascribing to us racial attitudes we do not hold. It did not stop him from passing judgment on our press, based to a large extent on no less an authority than *Content*, "a Toronto monthly magazine devoted primarily to news and criticism of the Canadian media". He has much to say about our Afrikaans newspapers – but does Mr Young understand Afrikaans? Has he ever in his life actually read an Afrikaans newspaper?

It is hardly necessary for me to spring to the defence of the South African press. Indeed, I am sure that our newspapers would be horrified at the prospect of a government official doing so. The South African press is quite capable of speaking for itself, as any of your readers who have ever seen a South African newspaper will be able to attest. There can, indeed, be few governments in the world that are criticized as persistently, as vehemently, and sometimes as irresponsibly, by the national press as is the South African Government.

Mr Young, nevertheless, accuses our Government of embracing "the more repressive methods of Communism" to suppress dissent in South Africa. Here, I should like to refer your readers to Moynihan's Law – so called after Daniel P. Moynihan's observation that the more voices we hear in a particular country protesting injustice the less repressive that country is likely to be. If Mr Young's charges are correct, how does he explain that every negative detail of Steve Biko's death was rigorously exposed in open court and relentlessly reported in the South African press? How does he explain that he himself was allowed to visit South Africa and to write so freely and negatively on our affairs, as so many of his colleagues also have done? How does he explain the caption to one of the photographs illustrating his own article, which reads: "At the stadium a succession of speakers condemned the South African Government and its security police". I suggest that Mr Young consult with someone who has firsthand experience of Communist and Third World countries to ascertain whether such manifestations would be tolerated in those societies.

Mr Young goes on to tell your readers that "the trends of policy are towards more repression". He completely ignores the far-reaching constitutional changes that are taking place in South Africa, the steps that have been taken away from racial discrimination, the narrowing of the wage gap and the reforms that are being made in respect of the urban blacks. He might conceivably differ with us with regard to the pace of these reforms, or even with regard to their underlying philosophy, but he cannot in all conscience pretend that they are not taking place or that they do not constitute progress.

Of course, Mr Young does not have to explain these developments, because he does not choose to mention them at all in his article. Like so many of his colleagues in the Western media, he has selected only those pieces of the South African mosaic that accord with the popular caricature of our country – a caricature that is likely to earn plenty of pats on the journalistic back but one that hardly helps the overseas public to understand what is *really* happening in our complex society.

Finally, there are Mr Young's gloomy prognostications concerning the possibility of civil war in South Africa. We reject this view. It is clearly in the overwhelming common interest of all peoples of South Africa that we should solve our problems peacefully. No one except radical interventionists and adventurers would welcome the terrible destruction that war would bring. Admittedly, our problems are complex, concerning as they do the mechanisms by which different peoples at different stages of economic development can live together amicably in a common geographic area. There is, however, a growing consensus that a viable solution must take into consideration the justifiable rights of *all* South Africa's peoples. The search for, and the evolution of, such a solution is the theme of our ongoing national debate – a debate Mr Young appears not to have noticed during his brief visit to South Africa.

D.W. Steward
Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of South Africa
Ottawa