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class juvenile-delinquents (World Health Organization, 1977).
"Studyâ\200\224group mentors would have the difficult task of steering discussion to a consensus on the value of democratic principles, without resorting to indoctrination".
could be carried out 'without the need to adopt overt political stances'!

He feels his whole program

Finally, in another insulting proposal, which (naturally)

has the approval of the DeLange Committee and the Science Committee of the President's Council, he proposes improving preâ\200\224school

'education and development of black children, not by ensuring that

they get enough food to eat (World Health Organization, 1983; Second Carnegie Inquiry Into Poverty in Southern Africa, 1986; Danaher, 1986; Moosa, 1984; Dommissie, 1984a and b; Read, 1977), adequate housing, and the Opportunity to be raised by their own parents in a secure, prosperous environment (Taitt, 1980), or by the cessation of detention and torture of children (Dawes, 1987; Foster and Sandler, 1985), but by subjecting them to (yet another) Big Brother type of training environment.

He ends by quoting a homily, the sentiments of which he says he shares but which, if he would read it Carefully again (especiâ\200\224ally the part which reads 'if we fail to struggle and fail to think beyond our petty lot, we accept a sordid role'), can plainly be seen to reflect Dawes's views much more closely than his own.

Yours faithfully,

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12 Nov , 1987

Dr John M Verster, Editor
SouthAfrican Journal of Psychology
C/o National Institute for Personnel Research
P O Box 32410
Braamfontein 2017
SOUTHAFRICA

Re: PSYCHOLOGY AND POLITICS

Dear Dr Verster,

I am disappointed that you have not

Thank you for your letter of 19 Oct. , enclosing
one copy of my manuscript and postmarked somewhat later and only
received today (Nov.12).

considered my ms as a paper but suppose that, considering the
realities of S. Africa, I should be thankful that it may still be
considered for publication in truncated form.

However it is not

clear to me why this should be the only version in which it is
acceptable - except to think that it could not be granted equal
status with the 2 previous papers to which it refers â\200\224 because of
its content.

It is equally unclear to me: (a) where my paper was
directed as gggigeg rather than to the views expressed by Dr
Biesheuvel; and (b) how an organisation's invited speaker cannot
be assumed to be representing fairly closely the acceptable
expression of the views of the members of that organisation,
especially on so contentious an issue.

clear guidelines on the acceptable format of letters to the
.editor of your journal, I am having to just use my best judgment
and hope that I don't inadvertently provide further grist for
your censoring mill!

further, just forget about publishing it â\200\224 and know that your
journal really couldn't take the heat!

just publish the original abstract and have people left guessing

as to the content of the full paper.
further than it is, it will be emasculated to the point of irrelevance.

And if you are going to cut it much

Also, in the absence of

If it is shortened any

Then you might as well

My last introductory comment is that to me there is only one

Your second²⁰⁰ last paragraph reads: "I would

state worse than enslavement and that is enslavement-under-the-guise²⁰⁰ of freedom.

like to emphasize that the Journal's editorial policy is to maintain an attitude of indifference in debates on contentious topics, and to allow all parties to the debate a fair hearing, in the interests of the scholarly advancement of the discipline".
It is hard for me to imagine how you can be so naive as to believe this, especially in the light of the recent directive of

Need I remind you that the philosophy of

the government to universities that their state funding would be cut off if they did not prevent students and faculty from expressing their political views, and in the black~and~white reality of the fine print at the bottom of the Journal's letterhead which ends 'with financial assistance from the Department of â\200\230National Education'!

this Department is of 'Christian' National Education and that Vorster made it clear in 1943 that 'Christian' Nationalism in S.Africa was related to Fascism in Italy and National Socialism (Nazism) in Germany?

into believing that you are the editor of a completely and academically free journal, that's fine but don't expect someone who is free of such constraints to play along and pretend that we are dealing in complete openness and fairness with the issue at hand. Like you, I know what the limits of the tolerance of the authorities in S.Africa are.

Unlike you, I don't need to try to pretend that those limits don't exist, in a game of make-believe â\200\224 in which there are certain winners and certain losers.

So, if you have a need to deceive yourself

This letter is a critique of a paper by Biesheuvel (which

His line of demarcation between what

I see Biesheuvel's erudite attack as so

was the keynote-address at the October, 1986, conference of PASA) â\200\224 and a defence of the original article in this debate, namely the one by Dawes (1985).

much intellectualisation of the racist and classist/capitalist status quo in S.African psychology; as an attempt to discourage criticisms such as Dawes's.

he sees as legitimate and illegitimate 'intrusion of politics into the professional sphere of psychology' is arbitrary, weak and patently politically, rather than rationallyâ\200\224 or scientifically-, based.

disadvantaged at heart - and even to speak for them ~ but, in denying a role for clinicians in really pointing out the economic and public mental health hazards of Apartheid, he belies these benefactorial claims.

undisguised plea for the replacement of the present racist Apartheid structure with one which is based on economics instead â\200\224 but which would leave the majority of blacks in no less a subservient role in S.African society, only perhaps more subtly and less blatantly so.

He purports to have the best interests of the

His own prescription for the future is an

As I mentioned in my-two latest papers (1987a and b), Andrew Dawes's article in the S.African Journal of Psychology (1985) was a courageous and most perceptive piece, a breath of fresh air in the dank atmosphere of establishment S.African psychology and psychiatry when it comes to the issue of addressing the extremely pertinent area of the mental effects of Apartheid (World Health Organization, 1977 and 1983; American Psychiatric Association, 1979; Seedat, 1984; Manganyi, 1973; Dommissie, 1977, 1981, 1983a and b, 1985, 1986; Allport/Lever, 1971; Lambley, 1980/1).

also praised the Psychological Association of S.Africa for publishing it (1987a), and several other S.African psychologists for doing equally meritorious work on this issue (1987b; Manganyi, 1973; Foster and Sandler, 1985; Swartz and Foster, 1984; â\200\231Psychâ\200\224 ology in Society', 1986).

that he was accorded the prestigious reply of a keynote address.

It is a tribute to the young Dawes

I had

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thrived so largely by its exploitation of other peoples (Mzimela, 1983), a major scientific/professional priority.

He correctly points out that

As part of the third objection, he adds acculturational and educational factors to the economic ones which complicate Apartheid and keep it from being the exclusive socio-political factor compromising blacks' mental health.

the end of statutory racism would, by itself, not improve the economic and educational lot of the vast majority of blacks that much, and he, again correctly, draws on the experience of American blacks over the past 15 years or so as a case in point;

But

this fails to acknowledge that a major agenda of most health-professional organizations which are attempting to get rid of Apartheid (National (Alternative) Medical and Dental Association, 1986; Psychology in Society, 1986; Critical Health, 1987; the Health Dept of the African National Congress of S.Africa, 1986; and the Namibia Support Committee Health Collective, 1984) is precisely to address these economic and educational aspects, as well as the racist ones - unlike the reformers, such as Biesheuvel himself, who do not make provision for these factors in their vision of, or planning for, the future S.Africa.

â\200\231

Biesheuvel advises us to be humble in our view of what we as

clinicians can do as social activists on behalf of our black (Egggtigl, not just current/privileged) patients/clients, but I submit that it is not our clinical competence that is limited in its ability to be transferred to the sociopolitical sphere - it is our conscious or unconscious reluctance to give up the special privilege, wealth and power which our white skins and economic advantage in S.African society provide for us.

As his own prescription, Biesheuvel recommends in-depth

information-gathering with special interpretation of these results, which sounds suspicious (to my suspicious mind, anyway) of possible distortion of results to suit the dominant culture. He suggests studies in conflict-management, such as those done by .H W vanderMerwe's Centre for Intergroup Studies at the University of Capetown, seemingly in order to reduce the hardship of industrial Media censorship should be done in trial unrest for management.

a more sophisticated way, so that people don't get uneasy about the news they currently know they are not getting! once, most insulting (after the black leadership has been decimated by the white power-structure) and Machiavellian proposal, he says "there is an urgent need for the development of constructive leadership skills in all our ethnic groups (guess in which The demagogues and radical activists are ones, especially)...

likely to appeal more strongly to the crowd than the realistic reformists, who can only work towards a compromise and who will be dubbed "sell-outs" for their pains" (I wonder why!).

In the, at

He then describes, in broad outline, how these leadership-

students will be indoctrinated into the capitalist way of conceiving and controlling civic and business/economic affairs, in a sort of middle-class equivalent of the 'retraining camps' that were set up by the Mental Health Acts of 1974 and 1975 for lower-

macotherapy, or in the combination of psychotherapy and community psychology.

Whether he agrees with these analogies or not, he cannot gainsay the truism that every psychological, medical or other health practitioner worth his/her salt has both the scientific as well as 299;9 health obligation to report, and attempt to ameliorate, hazards to the public health of the citizenry within which he/she practises (Hippocratic Oath; Oath of Geneva; Dommissie, 1985; etc.).

ic Apartheid laws to which Dawes refers are only part of 'the root causes of their (the blacksâ\200\231) disadvantage', he concedes those laws to be 'albeit a very important part'. submit, Apartheid is not only a valid or peripheral part of what psychologists and psychiatrists should be addressing themselves and their practices to; but is a central, essential part, especiâ\200\224 ally with black patients/clientele (1983b, 1985, 1986).

Although Biesheuvel only admits that 'the pathogen-

Therefore, I

Biesheuvel introduces his comments on Dawes's 'politics and

mental health' with the summary judgment that this is "an inâ\200\224

saï-\202sl 29: 9: BÃ@XQthQEX gs a ssissse" (my accentuation). love to see a poll of 'disadvantaged S.Africans' on this stateâ\200\224 ment, and on the one on p.6, in which he opines that â\200\235joining the ideological bandwagon of those inside and outside S.Africa who demonstrate against Apartheid will achieve little or nothing, apart from moral selfâ\200\224satisfaction on the part of the demonstrators".

I would

He goes on to give a fair summary of the article but, after

the ritual disclaimer about his (lack of) affinity to the "mistaken (Apartheid) policy, intolerable to blacks, reprehensible in its administration", says he disagrees with both the analysis Dawes puts forward and the action he proposes should be taken. His reasons for this conclusion can only be regarded as rational~isations which, taken together, serve as an attempt at an elegant apologia for white racism. and responsible for their enactment, there are: in the first place, prejudice; in the second place, fear; in the third place, motives for economic exploitation" (sic).

They are that, â\200\235behind these laws,

,

He shows that prejudice is widespread in the world, as

though that makes it acceptable. "The seCond factor I mentioned, white fear of black majority rule, is not entirely irrational. There could be a decline in the economy... dard of living of whites would have to go... want to know what will happen to their culture..." these albeitâ\200\224considerable potential losses to a relatively small number of whites can compare with the current deprivations to the very lives, health and well-being of the vast majority of the black people. at least ask the question whether an academic or professional person, as opposed to a partisan Afrikaner politician or 'politiâ\200\224 cal animal'; should make the preservation of a culture which has

One has also been forced by Breyten Breytenbach to

Afrikaners will

As though

The privileged stan~

and experienced in S.Africa (1975), is currently in forced exile because of his views against the S.African health system, will be granted an opportunity to do so, I would here like to criticise this effort to hamstring the movement toward enlightenment in the murky waters of Apartheid psychology and psychiatry.

Dr Biesheuvel very soon gives himself away when he depicts

the 'black group' in the S.African population (p.1) as one in which "there is intimidation and violence between those who are prepared to co-operate to some extent with the white government in a reform (sic) programme, and those who want power at all costs and on their terms"! (democratic, non-racial and unitary terms being 'on their terms'). means short of 'at all costs' that will bring democracy (one person, one vote, for those who do not know what democracy means) in the foreseeable future, he should please communicate that fact to those bloodthirsty blacks out there as soon as possible so that they can cease and desist from such violence as they are bent upon.

If Dr Biesheuvel is aware of any

On page 2, he refers to the school of Community Psychology,

- which has 'considerable relevance for research into the present

S.African situation', but doesn't explain why he doesn't, at the end of his talk/article, therefore include this route among his recommendations!

And he refers to Abraham Maslow's 'psychology of being' and 'peak experiences' but doubts their "practical value in our present predicament, except to enable a select number of individuals to adapt to unpalatable life circumstances and to achieve some piece of mind" (exactly, as I had pointed out in 1977).

which Dawes (1985 and 1986) and, particularly, Swartz and Foster (1984), and Swartz (1986a and b, and 1987) have shown to be the smoke-screen behind which political psychological issues are ducked in S.Africa as the method of choice by which to pursue a politically relevant psychology.

He prefers to prescribe cross-cultural psychology ~

«

I am pleased to say that there is at least one opinion of

Biesheuvel's with which I am in entire agreement and that is that there is no such thing as value- (or bias-) free science/psychology; the only question then becomes which is the correct bias or value for the particular population-group being considered.

But

this pleasant little sailing together is then shattered by his admonition to us on where and when we are allowed to intrude values, and where and when we are not allowed to do so. his assertion that, because science and (he surely means, the

And by

'fundamentally incompatible', forgetting that political science is as much a social science as psychology is, and that that is the kind of 'politics' that Dawes and others are referring to, not party politics and forgetting that two differently-operating disciplines can be combined into very effective practice, such as in a combination of two apparently conflicting psychotherapies, or in the combination of psychotherapy and psychophar-