

DBDC

DENNIS BRUTUS DEFENSE COMMITTEE

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(in formation)
*organizations for
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RELEASE: March 7, 1982

The Dennis Brutus application for political asylum places the Reagan-Crocker policy of coddling up to the minority apartheid regime of South Africa on trial. The deportation of Professor Brutus would undoubtedly place his life in jeopardy, but there would also be serious political implications to such a move.

Professor Brutus is an Advisor to the Supreme Council On Sport for Africa and his expulsion from the United States would be a clear signal to the Organization of African Unity that the Reagan Government is indifferent to the opinions of Black Africa. It will also show a regrettable lack of concern for the opinions of the 25 million Black people in the United States. This, in addition to the recent disastrous Springbok rugby tour, could well lead to a boycott of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles by the majority of the 50 African nations. The political implications, therefore, are serious, and everything must be done to avoid a situation in which we will all be the losers.

The groundswell of support from all over the United States and from abroad has, however, been heartening. Here are excerpts from a cross-section of letters from our supporters:

"... I am writing to support the request that ... Professor Brutus be granted political asylum in the United States. Professor Brutus is an internationally acclaimed advocate of human rights. His stance against the apartheid system in South Africa is important in eliminating the stigma of racial discrimination throughout the world...."

Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
The Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

"... As a writer, poet, and literary critic, Professor Brutus' accomplishments have placed him at the cutting edge of the profession. As a social critic concerned about racial injustice and the abhorrent system of apartheid in South Africa, his contributions are unparalleled..."

Association of Concerned Africa Scholars

"... Far more is at stake, however, than providing relief to an individual who ran afoul of the INS bureaucracy. To deport Professor Brutus would, I believe, send to the world a message of sympathy on the part of our government for the South African regime that imprisoned him for the "crime" of opposing that racist system...."

Howard M. Metzenbaum
U.S. Senator

"... Brutus is the most widely read poet from South Africa alive today. By virtue of his reputation as a poet, alone, he should be allowed to stay in this country. But equally important is his role in the development of African Literature studies in this country. He played a pioneering role in this field and served as the first president of the A.L.A."

Thomas A. Hale
President
African Literature Association

Now, it's your turn to send letters to your Congressmen and Senators to add their voices to the chorus of support for Professor Dennis Brutus.

Correspondence should be directed to:

Mr. Elliot Abrams
Assistant Secretary for Human Rights
State Department
2201 C. Street
Washington D.C. 20520

(with copies sent to both the Dennis Brutus Defense Committee, P.O. Box 59364, Chicago, IL, 60659 and our attorneys, Mahmoud & Associates, 53 W. Jackson, Suite #1264, Chicago, IL, 60604.)

We Need Your Help to Succeed.

Sincerely yours,

PROF. JAN CAREW
Co-Convenor: DBDC

Mr. Elliot Abrams
Assistant Secretary for Human Rights
Department of State
2201 C Street
Washington, D.C.

February 8, 1982

Dear Assistant Secretary Abrams:

The application of Professor Dennis Brutus, internationally noted poet and outspoken opponent of apartheid is forthcoming to your office for review. I urge you in the strongest terms to act favorably upon his request.

At stake is much more than providing relief to an individual entangled in I.N.S. bureaucracy. To deport Professor Brutus, I believe, would send the world a message of sympathy to the government that imprisoned him for the crime of opposing racist apartheid. In addition, there is strong reason for concern that sending Professor Brutus back to Southern Africa would make him vulnerable to reprisals.

If this nation is to be a haven for those who stand up for human rights, we can not deny Professor Brutus, who is a spokesman for basic human rights in South Africa, our hospitality.

Sincerely yours,