

# President Perkinson Reflects on Visit to South Africa

By Randa "Panda" Richards

After a briefing in Washington D.C., President A.P. Perkinson ventured to South Africa. Along with ten others, Perkinson visited cities including Johannesburg, Pretoria, Namibia, Angola, Cape Town, and Durban, the first three being the capitals of South Africa. The purpose of the trip was to find out exactly why all of the fighting is going on over there. The ten day trip was a great learning experience.

The group talked with all of the different people in South Africa. There are approximately twelve to fourteen distinguishable tribes. Black radicals, black moderates, white government, political officials, white businessmen, and representatives of the radical right are just a few of the groups that President Perkinson conversed with.

Apartheid, or the policy of racial segregation, is only part of the problem. Blacks have no citizenship whatsoever therefore causing the fighting. They are treated immorally not to mention unfairly and immensely dishonest. It's no wonder they are arguing with the government.

The black communities' houses are more like shacks and their education is inadequate. Perkinson also commented, "I think there's a possibility of fixing it; there doesn't have to be a war or revolution." The end to apartheid could be a big start for both blacks and whites.

President Perkinson and the other ten members of the group left for Pretoria on November 22, 1985. This was the day after police had opened fire on fifty-thousand protestors just

out side Mamelodi. The incident left twelve black people dead. When the group arrived, the people were ready to tell their stories. Even though the majority of South Africa is against apartheid, the white government won't let it go. But the blacks are more than willing to work with the government. It is now up to P.W. Botha, President of South Africa, to either announce the end of apartheid or let the shameless fighting go on.

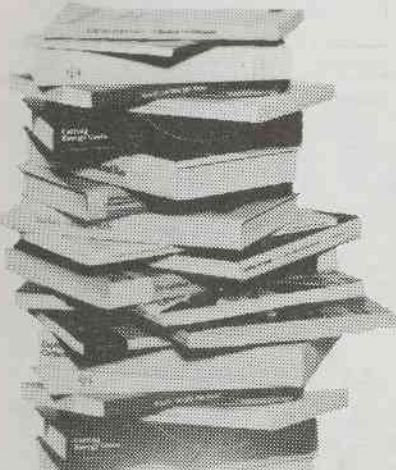
Perkinson also pointed out that the situation is so complex that we as Americans could never begin to understand it unless we experienced it ourselves. The media is very often censored so that the whole truth is not allowed out. His feelings are strong for the innocent people who have been caught up in this

disasterous predicament.

Because Perkinson and others have actually seen the way things are in South Africa, they feel the United States should help as much as possible. Perkinson is quoted as saying, "I want the U.S. to follow a middle-of-the-road policy/which is not very popular. But it may be the only way to a sane, non-destructive solution to the problem."

(Editor's Note: Students interested in learning more about South Africa, its people and problems should sign up now to attend a South African Seminar on March 15th. For information contact Stuart Brantley (ext. 435), Mary Lee Rice (ext. 213), or Dr. Bob Martin.)

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