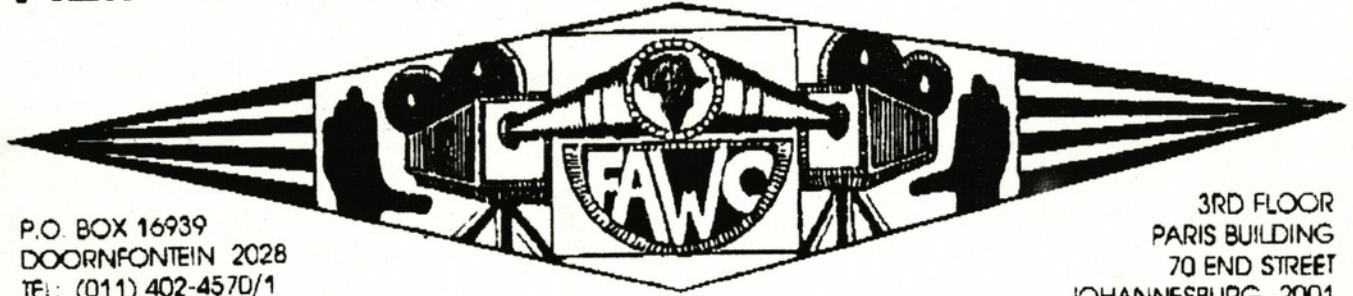


FILM AND ALLIED WORKERS ORGANISATION



P.O. BOX 16939
DOORNFONTEIN 2028
TEL: (011) 402-4570/1
FAX: (011) 402-0777

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PARIS BUILDING
70 END STREET
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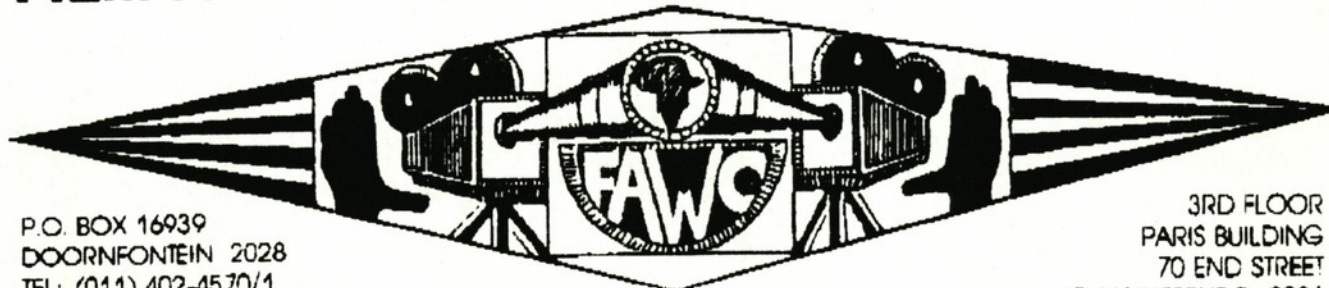
FAX TO: CHAIRMAN, CODESA WORKING GROUP ONE

FROM: WILLIE CURRIE

PAGES: THREE

DATE: 3 MARCH 1992

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FAWO RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S BROADCASTING PLANS

The Government decision to establish a neutral Commission for Telecommunications is a unilateral attempt to restructure broadcasting and pays lip service to the process of negotiations at CODESA.

Minister Louw seems hell-bent on pushing legislation through the current session of parliament regardless of what CODESA may decide about the future of broadcasting during transition. If the Minister recognises that a process of negotiation is taking place in South Africa, he should not merely inform CODESA of a government decision.

The need for an independent regulatory commission is nothing new. There has been broad consensus for over two years that the government's authoritarian control over broadcast regulation should be transferred to an independent regulatory body.

However, the main dispute has been the question of who should appoint a neutral regulatory body during the transition period. For example, the recent Campaign for Open Media (COM) conference proposed that CODESA should facilitate the appointment of an Independent Communications Authority to regulate broadcasting. If the Government insists on appointing its own commission outside of CODESA or interim government processes it will have no credibility.

The Government should make it clear whether the decision-making forum on the future of broadcasting and telecommunications is CODESA or the Department of Home Affairs.

FAWO and other major players in the broadcasting sector will not accept anything less than a negotiated settlement on the future of broadcasting.

The notion of setting up an independent electronic media complaints commission on current broadcasting recognises that there is a problem with the credibility of the SABC's broadcast news.

Unfortunately, the government-proposed complaints commission is a smokescreen which obscures the central complaint that the present SABC board is unrepresentative of the broad South African public. Even the Viljoen Task Group report states that "the desired perception that the national broadcaster should belong to the public and not to the government could be promoted by changing the existing method of appointing the Board of the SABC".

While we feel that a complaints commission or a broadcasting Ombudsman is essential to ensure impartiality, this will not in itself address the problem that a government-supporting interest group runs and manages the SABC.

The SABC is not "an independent and neutral broadcaster" and cannot become one without addressing the fact that it is controlled by a Broederbond cabal.

ISSUED BY WILLIE CURRIE (GENERAL SECRETARY): 3 MARCH 1992