

1988

The Role of the Mainstream Press in the Current Conflict in South Africa from the Perspective of a Black South African Journalist (Program)

Institute of Bill of Rights Law at the William & Mary Law School

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MDUDUZI DENNIS LEMBEDE



at Marshall-Wythe

3:00 p.m. in Room 119

Friday, September 30, 1988

Presented by the Institute of Bill of Rights Law,
the International Law Society, and the
Black Law Student Association

MDUDUZI DENNIS LEMBEDE

Mdu Lembede was born in a small South African village, Lamontville, outside the city of Durban. Although Lamontville's population of 6,000 is small compared to other black townships, it is regarded as a hotbed of political activity and is home to many of the internal and exiled leaders of the struggle for a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Mr. Lembede was educated at schools near Durban and studied mass communications at the University of Turfloop near Johannesburg. During college, he established himself as a promising political playwright and poet. This writing led him to the field of journalism. In 1977, he was employed as a cub reporter for South Africa's biggest and most influential vernacular-language daily newspaper, *Ilanga*, owned by the South African mining giant, Anglo American Corporation. In 1983, as political uprisings and riots erupted in the townships around Durban, Mr. Lembede was among the journalists in the forefront covering the burning townships daily. This reporting established contact with the leadership of the revolutionary and progressive forces within the townships and outside the borders of the country, and Mr. Lembede became a senior political and labor news correspondent for *Ilanga*, traveling extensively in and outside of South Africa as *Ilanga's* premier reporter at large.

Two years ago Anglo-America sold *Ilanga* to one of the political organizations engaged in the fierce conflicts within South Africa. Following the sale of the paper, Mr. Lembede and twenty-two other journalists quit in protest. He then secured a job with *The Sunday Tribune*, South Africa's biggest and most prestigious English-language newspaper, and is the only black member of its editorial staff. He covers politics, labor, the trade unions, and municipal affairs. Mdu Lembede has traveled in Europe and Africa, and is fluent in many languages. He is in the United States for the first time as an Alfred Friendly Press Fellow. During this six-month fellowship he is assigned to *The Washington Post*.

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Introduction

Rodney Allan Smolla
James Gould Cutler Professor of Constitutional Law and
Director, Institute of Bill of Rights Law

Presentation

Mduduzi Dennis Lembede
Reporter, *The Sunday Tribune*, South Africa
1988 Alfred Friendly Press Fellow to *The Washington Post*

Reception

Patio
