



"If only the press would be quiet nobody would know about you!"—*Contact*.

£500 and five years in jail. The definition of "subversive statement" was so wide that the International Press Institute was prompted to comment, in an article entitled "South Africa: A Press in Chains," that regulations couched in such sweeping terms "constitute a serious threat to the free and responsible reporting of actual events."

Using these emergency powers, the authorities raided the premises of several newspapers and closed down two weeklies, *New Age* and *Torch*. Later, the editor of the Liberal weekly *Contact*, Mr. Patrick Duncan, and his business manager were prosecuted for publishing subversive literature, alleged to be contained in two issues of this paper. The editor of the Port Elizabeth daily, the *Evening Post*, Mr. John Sutherland, was also brought before the courts on a charge of publishing "subversive statements" during the emergency.

The S.A. Society of Journalists expressed concern at other prosecutions of journalists and publishers. They referred specifically to the cases of Mr. Parkes of the *Rand Daily Mail* and Mr. Duncan of *Contact*, who were sent to prison for refusing to disclose sources of information to the police. Mr. Parkes was released after a few hours but Mr. Duncan was held in prison for three weeks before the police released him, saying that they had obtained the required information elsewhere.

Like all Select Committees, the one which will deal with the Publications and Entertainments Bill will have a majority of Government members. In view of the strong views of the Nationalists on the question of press control, it is likely that some members will feel that the Bill does not go far enough.

They may decide that control should be exercised through a Press Commissioner, as suggested by Dr. Carel de Wet, M.P., who has described the English-language press as "the country's worst agitator." Or they may prefer to wait for suggestions from the Press Commission, which has been busy investigating the press for ten years and has so far cost the country about £80,000.

The Select Committee may even prefer the "Undesirable Publications Bill" drafted by the Commission of Enquiry in Regard to Undesirable Publications (the Cronje Commission), which submitted its report in October, 1956. This Bill provides for the compulsory registration of newspaper publishers and distributors, and for censorship enforced by severe penalties, including the blacklisting of editors, withdrawal of licences and fines of £1,000 as well as imprisonment for five years.

### Who wants Censorship?

There was been no public demand for an extension of censorship in South Africa. Only intolerant Nationalist politicians, who hate having their policies censured by critical journalists, are seeking to limit the freedom of the press.

These men, who seek to dictate to us in regard to every aspect of our lives, must be resisted. If there is to be any hope whatsoever for democratic discussion in South Africa, it is essential that public criticism of politicians, political parties and Government should be maintained. Political censorship of any kind has no place in a free society.

### DR. HERTZOG DEEPLY CONCERNED

REGARDING press censorship, Dr. Albert Hertzog has said that the success of democracy depends on the ability of the people to judge fairly, justly and reasonably on all matters of common concern. This was possible only if the information on which the people formed its judgment was in itself correct, fair and reasonable.

"South Africa's good name, her general welfare, and the interests of every section of our people have suffered so badly as a result of abuse by some journalists, both South African and foreign, and by part of the press in this country of their trusted and responsible positions, that serious-minded people cannot help feeling deeply concerned about the present state of affairs. Something has to be done. What exactly, I am not in a position to suggest. Nobody likes press censorship, and the newspapers least of all. They can easily remedy the situation. Why don't they?"