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THE STAR

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And here is the (restricted) news

THERE is little enough justification, heaven knows, for the Church Street car-bomb killings in Pretoria. Reasons of various kinds were, however, offered by the African National Congress from its exile headquarters. Part of the sadness surrounding the event is that South Africans are permitted to know only in part what the ANC has said about its motives. If they were allowed to know more, it might help their overall understanding of what makes the organisation — without question South Africa's most important revolutionary group — seek the violent overthrow of the present Government.

Numerous top officials of the ANC are banned persons whose words, by law, may not be quoted. Thus the Press has not been able to publish the lengthy statement on the Pretoria attack made by the ANC leader, Mr Oliver Tambo. Even when leaders are not specifically banned, newspapers, in publishing statements from the organisation, run another risk of falling foul of the law — through "promoting the aims" of a banned organisation. At the best of times, but particularly when anti-ANC emotions are running high, it is difficult enough to assess what may constitute promoting the ANC's aims. Unless they are willing to face a real risk of prosecution, newspapers' only course is to submit such reports for official clear-

ance. And then they are subject to the erratic and arbitrary whims of authority.

At the weekend the police forbade publication of the ANC's first statement on the Pretoria bombing. The Minister of Police said it was mostly a propaganda "song of praise" for the success of the attack. Later the Press was told it could say that "the ANC has accepted responsibility for the abominable act." (A not very exact description, incidentally, of the somewhat equivocal stance adopted in that first statement). Only late yesterday afternoon were newspapers permitted to publish an ANC statement from Dar es Salaam which directly admitted responsibility for the outrage. "News management" might be an apt enough description of such behaviour.

If we are now entering into a new phase of internal guerilla war and tough counter-measures, South Africans deserve the right to know to the fullest possible extent what that war is about. As things stand, they need to realise that they are not allowed access to all the facts which may be relevant. It is not a matter of giving aid and comfort to the enemy, nor of disclosing security counter-measures; on those points we stand four-square behind the forces of law and order. It is simply a question of knowing whom we are fighting and what is in their minds.

TREFWOORDE

1. *Redaksioneel*

2. *Bombardement*

3. *Pretoria*

4. *Beweging*

5. *Behoort*

6. *Ongevoer*

7. *Tambo*

8. *Verklaring*

9. *ansprekkende*

10. *ANC*