

COMMENT

Telephone: (011) 673-4160

WE'RE NOT SURPRISED AT BAN

THE Government's decision to suspend the publication of the *Weekly Mail* yesterday did not come as a surprise.

Judging by the message issued to the Press by the State President, Mr P W Botha, in the past few days, we expected a much tougher clampdown on the Press than the temporary closure of the *Weekly Mail*.

But the reasons given for the suspension are specious. It had been obvious over the past months that the tightening of emergency regulations was intended to ensure that there would be no opposition to the October 26 elections.

The disastrous results of the elections showed very clearly that the Press could only reflect, but not determine the people's response to the elections.

It is for this reason that the closure of one newspaper should give all of us a cause for concern. As was said by one commentator, the closure of the *Weekly Mail* will sharpen the sword that hangs over other opposition newspapers. 2/11/80

Pro-Government newspapers cannot be an exception, for the erosion of Press freedom threatens all other freedoms, including the freedom of the Government to run a stable country.

We find it even more disturbing to learn that the Home Affairs Minister, Stoffel Botha is not prepared to meet the management of the newspaper to talk about the suspension.

We had thought this would be the right time for the Minister to face the public and explain the action which no court of law could take, since no law has been breached.

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WE are as perplexed as the co-editor of the *Weekly Mail*, Mr Anton Harber, about the final warning served on his newspaper by the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Stoffel Botha. 14/10/80

According to Mr Harber, the Minister cited eight articles in five editions which prompted the final warning. The *Weekly Mail* is being accused of promoting the image of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and the United Democratic Front.

Whenever such action is taken against a paper all journalists are affected in various ways. The effectiveness of such a threat hanging over us leads to self censorship which is not in the public interest. In the final analysis, an attack on one paper is an attack on all of us, newspapers and the public. We are particularly distressed by the dictatorial manner in which a public servant's "opinion" can lead to such assault on the civil liberties of people that servant is supposed to serve.

We have a feeling that the coming municipal elections have something to do with such action from the Government. It is unfair and totally undemocratic for politicians to try and consolidate their eroding credibility by attacking organs that cannot even challenge such action in a court of law.

The Government must stop blowing hot and cold in this fashion. It is exactly this indecisiveness that is creating problems for the National Party. On the one hand the State President and his Foreign Ministry are trying hard to operate in the type of glasnost atmosphere pursued by most leaders in the world.

The other government servants must at the same time be helping Mr Botha in a job that is as complex as it is tough.

They are doing nothing of the sort when they attack newspapers. The democracies of the world are united in their abhorrence of any attacks made against the legitimate operation of the free press.

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WHAT is fascinating about the meeting Dr Danie Craven et al had with the African National Congress are the short-term political implications.

All the short-term implications are concentrated on the coming municipal elections, or this is what conventional wisdom tends to be. Rightly or wrongly, such a crucial election — one in which the ruling party sees its influence eroding even further — does tend to influence decisions taken by the incumbent and their challengers.

Dr Craven is for all we know a card-carrying National Party member. The party itself may be using him as a suitable ploy to speak to the ANC.

Mr P W Botha and his government are fighting and using some sophistication in breaking the magical aura thrown around the rightwing radicals. Whether we like the Nats or not, we wish them all the good luck in this. The forays into Africa and other countries by Mr Botha and his foreign minister have done a lot in diverting attention from the type of media attention put on the reprehensible Dr Treurnicht and his ilk.

While we have said that some of our people would welcome a CP win we are acutely conscious of the cost that such a win would have. For if the revolution comes to a head under such an administration it would happen at very great cost, especially to our people. In fact, when things go wrong, as they inevitably would under a CP government, they will take the country down with them.

The politics of negotiation being as tricky as it is, the ANC itself will have to act carefully about being seen to make a deal with Afrikaners.

If we would presume to advise them, we would simply say in such moves the timing is crucial. What can be done today will never be contemplative tomorrow or have been proper in the past.

The love for sports by the white tribe could lead to a negotiated settlement. But many other elements have to be put into place for that to satisfy us all.

Surprise expressed over trips to ANC

By HORATIO MOTJUWADI

AFRICA is surprised that the African National Congress has hosted sports officials from South Africa.

The mood was summed up on Wednesday night by the Botswana-based Ishmael Bhamjee, an executive member of both the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa.

Bhamjee said that the feeling of both bodies as well as the South African Non Racial Olympic Committee, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania is that the ANC should not have hosted the officials at all.

"They have all made their stand," Bhamjee said. "The only way back into the international arena is through the Supreme Council for Sport or Santos and they will not accept South Africa with apartheid."

"The fight is really to get the people free and we feel that the ANC is wrong by promising that they will get them recognition. The ANC is in no position to get anybody recognition."

Instead, according to Bhamjee, the sessions have caused many blunders.

"Louis Luyt is pro-Government. That's why he started a Government newspaper, the *Citizen*. And who can forget Craven's statement 12 years ago about the green and gold jersey," said Bhamjee referring to recent ANC meetings with rugby bosses Dr Danie Craven and Louis Luyt.

He also pointed a finger at Kaizer Chiefs' boss, Kaizer Motsoeng, for ignoring Satero after meeting its boss, Sam Ramsamy, in 1982.

"Kaizer and George Thabe met Sam and he explained the purpose of the boycott and the way back to international sport. He is a nice guy and he would not have refused to talk to them," he said.

Motsoeng was in a National Soccer League delegation — with Rodger Sibibi, Solomon Morewa and Abdul Bhamjee — which met the ANC on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Ironically, Ishmael Bhamjee is the elder brother of the outspoken Abdul, the NSL's PRO.

Reaction to talks with ANC

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SPORTS REPORTER

17/10/88

THE general manager of the National Professional Soccer League, Mike Matloane, said: "It's a futile exercise by the NSL because, even if apartheid could be abolished tomorrow, South Africa will not be readmitted into the world soccer body (Fifa).

"This is because of the many controlling bodies in the country — based on the 1974 Fifa resolution which culminated in the expulsion of South Africa from the world body."

Matloane said one of the conditions of the resolution was that South Africa should have one united soccer body. "Regrettably, Sanfa almost achieved the formation of one single body. There was, however, still the battle to dismantle apartheid. That's the duty of the politicians, of course."

An official of the Transvaal Boxing Board, Joe Jivhuho, said: "It is a pity that it took Craven 12 years to get the point. Twelve years ago he said he could not see a black man wearing a Springbok jersey. He should be applauded for the steps he took.

"There is no sign of weakness in what he is doing. He is doing what we have been trying to do for years.

"This is not only good for rugby, but for other sports as well. Rugby has set the trend for better things. This is the beginning of a trend to scrap apartheid from the surface of South Africa.



MIKE Matloane ... NPSL



JOE Jivhuho ... "a pity".



JUNIOR Ramovha ... politics the problem.

The organising secretary of the South African Rugby Association, Merwyn Smit, said: "I am not prepared to make any comment until I have seen and spoken to Dr Craven. I am, however, in favour of multiracial rugby."

Smit is an affiliate of ...

19/10/88

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"You don't turn black by talking to people who are different from you. Apartheid in sports as well as education must go."

Junior Ramoaha, the SA Softball Federation PRO, said: "I think the rugby people are using the Lusaka talks to get back into international rugby. I think rugby, like many sporting codes in South Africa, still have a problem before going back to the international arena. The problem is the political set-up."



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Sara is an affiliate of the South African Rugby Board.

The secretary of the South African Soccer Federation, Vincent Baartjies, said: "We have no problem with the talks. But if it is true that the sole purpose of the talks is to obtain international recognition, then one has a problem."

"The problem with the talks is that they are founded on the wrong premises of obtaining recognition even before the country has ended its apartheid policies."

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PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand

Location:- Johannesburg

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DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- A2618-Ct15

Document Title:- Sowetan clippings: October 1988