

2. Censorship

Censorship is the order of the day.

It comes not only from the all-pervading restrictions of the State of Emergency, it also comes in other forms.

The New Nation can be closed down for three months, the Weekly Mail for a month. The new anti-apartheid Afrikaans weekly, Vrye Weekblad, can be asked to pay a registration fee of R30 000 which it can lose if it doesn't behave itself. Conor Cruise O'Brien has a series of lectures cancelled, Salman Rushdie has an invitation to speak withdrawn.

In the case of the newspapers it is the threat of the law which imposes the censorship, in the case of O'Brien the threat of violence, in the case of Rushdie that of death. In the last two cases the threats came from groups which in other contexts claim to be committed to non-violence.

The Government's censorship reminds us that we live in a society that is not free; the other that, if we are not careful, we may still not be after it has gone. □

3. Self-Sufficiency

The State President has started saying that South Africa must become self-sufficient. We hope he will stop soon.

One of the lessons of the Angolan conflict seems to have been that if you want to stay competitive in the military

world you must have access to new technology. So must you in the economic world.

If Russia, with all its vast resources, cannot compete and survive on its own, what earthly chance is there of South Africa being able to do so? □

by Ian Phillips

FROM SLOGANS TO SUBSTANCE

A perspective on the ANC constitutional guidelines

South Africa's civil constitution has failed in its most essential task: to mediate and control the conflicts that threaten the security and privilege of the dominant. The state has armed itself with a potent military, statutory and judicial arsenal. The majority of its democratic opponents equally are determined not to submit. The rise of neo-fascism, the Strijdom Square massacre, and KP implementation of NP policy are but recent manifestations of apartheid. Coupled to our present economic meltdown, the country endures a deep, all-pervasive socio-political crisis. The brutality of everyday township life is emphasised by the political egg-dancing of arrogant rulers.

Diverse politicians scamper around looking for "solutions". Thus the HRSC, Constitutional Planning and Development civil servants, academics and others produce plans aplenty: partition, the boerestaat, race federations, confederations, the devolution of power, the extension of the tri-cameral system to local levels, fancy franchises. The common denominator, largely, is an oblique one, of trying to identify which democratic principles can be sacrificed to race prejudice and economic privilege in order to retain some quintessential elements of white privilege and domination in disguise.

Political debate is curtailed by many legal and customary restrictions. The statute-book is replete with examples of

the former. The latter reside in a popular, largely white, conception that "democracy" is unsuited to African conditions, and/or is too closely aligned to "communism". Since 1985, information has been further restricted by neurotic Media and Security Regulations.¹ Popular participation and the debates that emerge from and illuminate such activity, have been battered by the States of Emergency and the forces who implement Pretoria's version of "law and order". Pretoria attempts constantly to impose its interpretation of reality on South Africa and the world. It recently witnessed its interpretation of "treason", for example, endorsed in the Delmas judgement.

Debating political options or settlements involves some recognition of the principle of negotiation. There is considerable difference of opinion about the mechanics of negotiated settlements. Should they, for example, emerge from elite discussion and accommodation, the participation of ethnic entities in the nascent National Council, or from a sovereign constituent assembly based on individual selection and universal franchise? Most organisations have acknowledged a principled preference for negotiation. But negotiation also implies the existence of alternative programmes for discussion.

At this stage, the state has not proscribed the ANC's constitutional guidelines as it did the Freedom Charter for