

The Black Sash Die Swart Serp

IN the last issue of Sash we commented on the tremendous powers taken by the Cabinet in recent legislation. All that went before in this 1969 parliamentary session paled into insignificance with the passing of the General Laws Amendment Act. There was widespread protest against the introduction of Sections 10 and 29 — the clauses which earned the Act the name of Boss Act. This protest went unheeded as all protest has gone unheeded in the last twenty-one years.

How long will it be before the general public forgets that there are yet more matters which the government says they may not know about; police matters, military matters, security matters, matters which relate to or may relate to the Bureau for State Security, prison conditions, people banned, imprisoned, house arrested.

Let there be no more talk of press freedom in South Africa. The effect of a wide iron curtain of laws is becoming increasingly clear. The press dare not publish many facts which should be made known because they cannot know what it is against the law to say, and can they risk the heavy penalties which may be imposed for saying it?

Let us never forget what goes on under the surface of sunny 'peaceful' South Africa. Let us never forget those who already suffer under the security laws and those whose suffering is going to be so much greater because, in the future, no one will know of the punishment without trial inflicted upon them. Let us never forget those whose statements in their own defence may never be heard if the Prime Minister issues a certificate forbidding it. Let us never forget, however long it may be, what it means to live in a democracy.

IN die vorige uitgawe van „Sash” het ons kommentaar gelewer oor die reuse magte wat die kabinet aan hulle self toegeken het deur onlangse wetgewing. Alles wat in die 1969 Parlementêre sessie die Algemene Regswysings Wet voorafgegaan het, het nietig gelyk in vergelyking daarmee.

Wyd verspreide protes was aangeteken teen klousules 10 en 29, die klousules wat die naam van Bosswet verdien het. Die protes is oor die hoof gesien, net soos alle proteste vir die afgelope een en twintig jaar.

Hoe lank sal dit wees voor die publiek vergeet dat daar nou nog meer sake is wat die Regering hulle verhoed om kennis van te dra. Sake rakende die polisie, die leer, sekuriteit, tronk kondisies, van mense wat in die ban gedoen is of in die tronk of onder huis arres geplaas is.

Moenie laat ons nog praat van pers vryheid in Suid-Afrika nie. Die effek van 'n wye yster gordyn van wette word hoe langer hoe duideliker. Die pers durf baiekeer nie feite, wat bekend behoort te wees nie, te publiseer nie, omdat hulle nie kan vasstel wat teen die wet is nie en nie kan waag om die swaar strawwe op hulle hals te haal nie.

Laat ons nooit vergeet wat aangaan onder die oppervlakte van sonnige, „vreedsame” Suid-Afrika nie. Laat ons nooit die lyding van diegene wat reeds deur die sekuriteitswette getref is vergeet nie, en diegene wat nog meer sal ly, want in die toekoms sal niemand weet van die straf, sonder hof verhoor, wat hulle op gelê is nie. Laat ons nooit vergeet van diegene wat hulself nooit mag verdedig nie, as die Eerste Minister dit verbied nie. Laat ons nooit vergeet, al is dit nog so laat, wat dit beteken om in 'n demokratiese samelewing te leef nie.