

Consequences may be shattering

THE SABOTAGE BILL

TAKES SOUTH AFRICA OUT OF WESTERN BLOC

By Tom Hopkinson

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THE "Death for Sabotage" Bill has already aroused a storm of protest. But no protest has so far been directed towards what will be the Bill's most disastrous consequences if it becomes law.

Those unfortunates who will be arrested under its virtually all-embracing provisions will be victims of the Bill—but the chief victim will be the Republic of South Africa.

This Bill and the related "Censorship" Bill (the Publications and Entertainments Bill in its newest form) will have an effect far beyond the boundaries of this country. Their consequences in world politics will be shattering, since at one blow—or rather two — they take the Republic out of the influence of the Western world and thrust it towards the Eastern or Communist half.

DANGEROUS

This is a consequence so full of danger for South Africa, and presumably so unexpected by the Government, that it is important to trace accurately the steps by which it must inevitably come about.

The conflict between East and West—the "cold war", as we call it, trusting it will never become "hot"—is not simply a dispute between Russia and America as to who shall rule the world. It is a conflict of ideologies, of beliefs. And the crucial difference—the point of conflict from which all other differences derive—is over the relationship between individual and State.

The Western world believes that the individual has certain inalienable rights or freedoms, which must be upheld if a country is not to lapse into a state of tyranny. We use the words "Fascism" and "Communism" to describe the forms of tyranny familiar to us in our own lifetimes: both, in essence, are the same evil—absolute power vested in the State, against which the individual is rendered impotent by a series of oppressive laws.

The safeguards against tyranny which the Western world has developed centre round two institutions—an independent legal system and a free Press.

They include the principles

- that all laws require the consent of the majority of those affected by them;
- that justice must be impartial between individual and State, as well as between man and man;
- that every man has the right to work for changes in the government, the law, or the social system by all peaceful means;

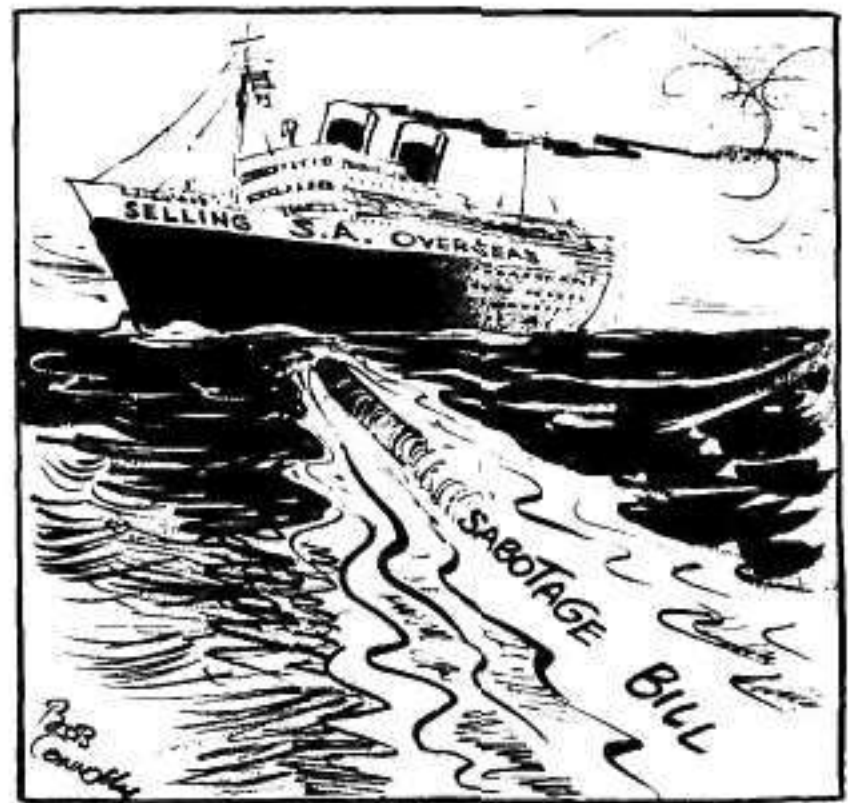
- that every man is innocent until he has been proved guilty;
- that an independent Press is an essential part of any effective working democracy; and
- that man, as man, has a right to freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of education.

DEGRADED

When the independence of law and the Press are tampered with, justice is degraded from an impartial inquiry into right and wrong to a legalistic veneer smeared over every official act or ruling.

Judges then cease to become the repositories of legal wisdom and experience and are regarded as the State's punitive arm, handing out sentences already prescribed to victims who, if they were ever acquitted, would be immediately re-arrested and brought before some less scrupulous tribunal.

A similar process is applied to the Press through the passing of "Press control" or "censorship" laws. Under these, newspapers and journals cease to be sources of independent judgment and comment, holding the actions of governments and their officials up to scrutiny. They are reduced to servile mouthpieces whose only task is to "explain" the government's actions to any who may doubt its wisdom, and to threaten any who may dream of opposition.



Torpedo

This is precisely what has happened in the Eastern, Communist-directed, half of the world. The basic belief of Communism is that the State and its security are paramount; the rights of the individual in comparison do not exist. Moreover, the State and the Government are both perfect as they are so that all proposals for change or improvement become "treason," and all opposition to their rulings becomes "sabotage."

OWN JUDGE

The only judge as to whether the State's security is or is not threatened by any action or opinion is the State itself. It arrests, prosecutes, passes sentence and administers punishment—all in its own case.

So follow the destruction of all those freedoms which the West holds to be basic, and the assertion of the principle that every man the Government accuses must be found guilty unless he can establish his innocence.

From this there follows again, with absolute certainty, officially organized spying to find out whether people are contravening the law by what they say or think; agents provocateurs to entrap the suspected; banishments and, since men can escape from unsupervised banishment or house arrest, concentration camps to accommodate those who have been convicted of failing to establish their own innocence.

TRAGIC

It is tragic for South Africa at this moment that so few members and supporters of the

Government travel sufficiently to be aware of the temper and feeling in the outside world.

If this legislation goes through the efforts of this country's few remaining overseas friends will be paralysed, and before long abandoned. The hands of all those working to impose boycotts and sanctions will be enormously strengthened and the task of the ill-starred South African Foundation rendered ludicrous.

The Republic of South Africa will not merely have become expendable to the Western world, it will have become abhorrent to it, and we must expect this abhorrence to be expressed before long in both word and action.

UNACCEPTABLE

It will be impossible, on political as well as grounds of principle, for the Western world to accept as part of itself a State in which the basic freedoms have not merely—as in some newly formed African or Asian states—failed to be fully implemented, but in which they have been deliberately rejected and systematically destroyed.

No amount of protestation will obscure the fact that in the great ideological battle of our time this Republic, under the guise and pretext of "anti-Communism," will have planted itself firmly on the side of Communist totalitarianism, and against the freedom of the individual.

The consequences of so frightful a miscalculation will be limitless, and they must affect every section of the community.

"SELLING SOUTH AFRICA OVERSEAS"

IT is not the speeches made in the House of Assembly by members of the Opposition which give South Africa bad publicity in the foreign Press; it is the laws enacted by this Government and all the administrative pin-pricks which accompany the implementation of the policy of small apartheid; it is the extravagances of Government members themselves with regard to matters of colour.

WHERE I have come across representatives of South Africa abroad, I have repeatedly heard the bitter complaint from them that the good work they do to-day is broken down tomorrow by a speech by a member of the Government, or by speeches made by Members of Parliament on the Government side — not speeches made by the Opposition.

THERE is a host of things one could mention that harm South Africa and which are unnecessary and which the Government could eliminate from the public life of South Africa. There are such things as married people being brought before the Court under the Immorality Act; there are the colour crises in connection with sport. . . . There is the refusal of visas, the banishments, the race classification, etc.

I HAVE here a book entitled "South African Rule of Law" (by the International Commission of Jurists). If ever there was a document which is harmful to South Africa, this is it. . . . It is a purely factual reproduction of the race legislation that we have in South Africa to-day. This is what foreigners consult when they want to get a picture of what is happening in South Africa. If ever there was a deadly charge against South Africa, it is this document . . . which is based entirely on the actions, the administration, the legislation and the regulations of the Government.

IT is a good thing for South Africa for the outside world to know that nearly 50 per cent. of the Whites of South Africa do not support the administration and the policy of this Government . . . that half the White voters of this country want to bring about a change of government.

The time has come . . . when the Government should stop regarding itself as South Africa. Every time an attack is made on the Government we are told that it is an attack on South Africa.

Mr. J. D. du P. Basson, Hansard 4181/2. 18/4/62.