

# in this issue . . .

EDITORIALS:	1. STEVE BIKO AND FRANKENSTEIN . . . . .	Page 2
	2. RED HERRING . . . . .	Page 3
	3. STOKING THE FIRES . . . . .	Page 4
UNEMPLOYMENT	1. UNEMPLOYMENT IN EDENDALE by Excell Msimang . . . . .	Page 5
	2. PROBLEMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG AFRICANS by Solveig Piper . . . . .	Page 6
	3. MSINGA by Creina Alcock . . . . .	Page 7
KEEP ON KEEPING ON	by Colin Gardner . . . . .	Page 8
THE DEATH OF STEVE BIKO	by Donald Woods . . . . .	Page 12
	by Vortex . . . . .	Page 13
CLASH OF PARADIGMS	by John Wright . . . . .	Page 14
REVIEW OF FAREWELL TO INNOCENCE	by M. H. Tshabalala . . . . .	Page 18
STOP PRESS – A LUNATIC ACT . . . . .		Page 20
COVER DESIGN	by Joe Alfors	

## **EDITORIALS**

1

# STEVE BIKO AND FRANKENSTEIN

In this issue we carry a tribute to Steve Biko by his great friend, Donald Woods. The tribute has already been widely published, but we make no apology for publishing it again, so that it can reach those of our readers, in South Africa and overseas, who have not yet seen it, and can be read again by those who have. It is an eloquent and moving statement from somebody who really knew Steve Biko, the man. Anything we might try to add to it would sound trite. It introduces those who did not know him to a person very different from the ogre the South African authorities would have Steve Biko be.

Steve Biko died in the hands of the Security Police on the night of September 12th. Almost exactly fourteen years before, on the 5th September, 1963, Looksmart Ngudle became the first person to die while being held incommunicado, in detention, by the Security Police. There was a public outcry at his death. Other occasional deaths followed in those early years, and were followed by an

outcry. But the outcry didn't stop the deaths. In fact one could say that, during the last few years, deaths in detention have become commonplace. Indeed, one could go further, and say that, during the past eighteen months, there has been an epidemic of them, an average of more than one a month. And as the deaths have become more frequent the public reaction to them has become more muted. Is this fear of the consequences of protest, or has familiarity bred indifference? Whatever the answer to that question the harsh truth is that, if it had been somebody other than Steve Biko who died on September 12th, most of the world and South Africa wouldn't even have noticed it. Which raises the pertinent point, what have we let happen to us here? How have we allowed ourselves to drift from a position where any death in detention would raise an uproar to one where most go unnoticed?

It is not as if the official explanations which have been given for these deaths have been reassuring. People are said

to have died as a result of falling down the stairs, of slipping in the shower, of falling over a chair. They are said to have committed suicide, or died of natural causes. It is difficult to escape the feeling that those 'natural causes' people die of in detention wouldn't have killed them if they hadn't been there. For the other side to the story of deaths in detention is the repeated allegations of torture which have been made by witnesses and accused in cases brought under the various security laws. These allegations are almost invariably dismissed by the judges. How else is it likely to be when one man stands up and says "I was tortured!", and six or eight Security Policemen stand up and say "It's all a pack of lies! We were all there, and not one of us laid a finger on him!" On the sheer weight of the evidence presented to him, what judge is likely to find against the police? And yet — people go on dying . . .

Have the repeated successes of the Security Police in refuting accusations of torture in Court convinced them that they have nothing to fear from the law and that their position is inviolate? After all, a great many people have now died while in their care, and not a single Security Policeman, to the best of our knowledge, has ever been convicted of having done anything to any of them.

If a potential security police torturer has nothing much to fear from the Courts, has he much to fear from his boss, the Minister? Or should we perhaps ask another question first? Who is now the boss, the Minister or the security apparatus he has created? We think that, if it isn't the apparatus yet, it very soon could be. It is true that, after the death of Steve Biko, the Minister told a newspaper that some Security Police "heads might roll", but for all we know that may simply have been an attempt to draw attention away from his own miserable part in the whole matter. Certainly prior to that the impression was growing that the Security Police had come to operate with impunity, secure in the

knowledge that nothing they did would earn one word of condemnation or a single rebuke from the Minister. If that is the point we have reached then Frankenstein is alive and well in South Africa and doing exactly as he pleases.

If the death of Steve Biko halts white South Africa in the drift to moral anarchy on which it seems embarked, where anything is permissible in the name of "security", some good may come out of it. Otherwise it will have been an unmitigated tragedy and disaster. His death under any circumstances was a loss that South Africa could not afford, but that he should have died in detention is something which South Africa will, we are convinced, live bitterly to regret. That Mr Biko stood for a radical re-ordering of South African society is not in dispute, but that he believed that that re-ordered society should be non-racial in concept everyone who knew him well is emphatic about. Everybody who does not have his head buried in the sand of apartheid ideology knows that radical change in South Africa is inevitable, and when it comes, how desperately we will need the kind of steadying hand that Steve Biko could have provided.

Mr Kruger told the world that Steve Biko's death "left him cold". Well, it leaves us cold too — cold with apprehension for the future to which Mr Vorster and Mr Kruger and the Frankenstein security machine they have created are leading us all, not least the people who gave them power. For one thing is quite certain, that security machine, no matter what methods it uses, has no prospect of winning a permanent home for Afrikanerdom in Africa. That will only happen when Afrikanerdom can persuade Africa that it should give it such a home. This, given the chance, Steve Biko might have been able to help do. Without him — and Albert Luthuli — and Robert Sobukwe — and Nelson Mandela? Who knows? □

## 2

# RED HERRING

Mr Vorster has called a surprise general election almost eighteen months early. Why? Is it because the white opposition parties are in particular disarray? Does he want to show the outside world that, in the face of all its pressures, his electoral support stands firmer than ever? Did he want to divert attention from the death of Steve Biko and give his own doubting Thomases something else to think about? Does he want to crush his more reactionary critics once-and-for-all, claim an election victory as an endorsement of his new constitutional proposals, and go on from there, with the new powers with which it will invest him, to introduce changes which his own supporters won't much like?

These are some of the theories which have been put forward. There is probably something in all of them, but it is only the last which we would like to discuss here, and, as far as it is concerned, we would like to ask this question. Even if the white electorate gives Mr Vorster a more massive vote than ever before, and he takes that vote as

an endorsement of his new constitutional proposals, what prospect is there that those proposals could form the basis for a new South African political dispensation to which most people of all races could give their support? Unfortunately we think the answer to that question is — none!

The manner in which the new proposals were worked out was typically Nationalist. An all-Nationalist Committee was appointed and for months it worked in secret not talking to anyone else, hatching its plan. This Committee represented the views of, at the most, 10% of the population, and it was all-white. As a last-minute gesture to "consultation", Indian and Coloured leaders who work in apartheid institutions were called to Pretoria to be told what it was all about. At that late stage there was small chance of their views influencing the form of the proposals in any important respect and, as far as we are aware, no changes were introduced before the proposals were presented to the top councils of the Nationalist Party and, after them, to