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## South African prison deaths

Yet another detainee has died while in the custody of the South African security police. The police swoop, the mass arrests, and then the mysterious death behind bars have become so frequent a pattern in South Africa that it threatens to become routine. What makes it doubly disturbing is that the South African Government consistently refuses to hold judicial inquiries. If they have nothing to hide, why do they not allow the normal process of independent inquiry?

Since detention without trial was introduced in South Africa some 17 people have died in mysterious circumstances. This is in addition to prisoners who have died while serving sentences, and who may (one assumes, although there is no certainty) be less liable to torture than men under interrogation. In only two of these cases have relatives of a dead detainee been able to force an independent autopsy through court injunctions or other pressure. In each case evidence of some foul play was discovered and the Government paid the widow damages. But in no case has the

Government ordered a fullscale inquiry. This was the point which the courageous priest, Rev. Bernard Wrangmore, was emphasising with his 67-day fast.

He ended his fast with the plea that the public should take up the issue. The death of Mr Timol, a young Indian schoolteacher who at one time taught in Britain, has made it imperative that the public should. The very weekend that Mr Wrangmore came to the end of his fast the South African security police were taking a new step in the continual escalation of their activities in South Africa. They made the biggest raid in their history, with searches of more than 100 homes.

Mr Vorster's police are widening their activities not only in South Africa. The evidence collected by them in England, which the prosecution produced in the recent trial of the Dean of Johannesburg, shows how active they are in this country too. Last weekend the Observer uncovered further details. There is enough prima facie material here to warrant serious attention.

## South African protests after detainee's death

From STANLEY UYS: Cape Town, October 28

Mr Ahmed Timol, aged 30, an Indian schoolteacher and one of 17 people detained by security police at the weekend, has died.

He allegedly jumped from the tenth-floor window of police headquarters in Johannesburg. "He committed suicide," said Brigadier P. Kruger, assistant chief of security police.

Mrs Helen Suzman, Progressive Party MP, said: "South Africa's stocks are at rock bottom today."

She added that the inquiry which the police have said will be held into Mr Timol's death should not be conducted by the police — "We don't want another shelved dossier."

Mrs Suzman again urged that the Government should repeal its laws providing for detention without trial. "As long as these laws remain on the statute book, death by suicide, death resulting from unknown causes, and death in suspicious circumstances, will recur again and again."

South African newspapers warned the Government that it should not underestimate the extent of public concern. Mr Marais Steyn, MP, and deputy leader of the opposition United Party, described Mr Timol's death as "absolutely dreadful."

Nine days ago the Rev. Bernard Wrangmore, of Cape Town, ended 67 days of fasting in protest against the death two years ago, in police detention,

of a Moslem leader, the Imam Abdullah Haron.

Mr Vorster refused to accede to Mr Wrangmore's request to appoint a judicial inquiry into the Imam's death. "Mr Wrangmore said today: 'I am deeply shocked that another life should have been lost.'"

Mr Timol, whose school was in Roodepoort, Transvaal, was allegedly the driver of a car in which subversive leaflets were found by the police on Friday night.

In 1964 another Indian, Suliman Salojee, jumped from the seventh floor of the police headquarters where he was being interrogated. Mr Timol is the seventeenth person to die while in security police custody during the past 10 years, and the seventh allegedly to have committed suicide.

Tonight lawyers were studying the Terrorism Act, under which the detainees are being held to find ways of ensuring that an independent pathologist is present when a post-mortem examination is held on Mr Timol tomorrow.

They also sought means of seeing another detainee, Mohammed Essop (also known as Seedat), aged 21, a medical student, who is in a Pretoria prison hospital with undisclosed injuries. There was an unconfirmed report that he had died, and police said that because of the serious nature of

the investigation concerning him, he will not be allowed visitors.

In Johannesburg Mrs Winnie Mandela, wife of the imprisoned former African nationalist leader, Nelson Mandela, was given a suspended sentence of six months for breaking a banning order. She pleaded guilty to having communicated with Mr Peter Maguane, photographer for the liberal "Johannesburg" and "Rand Daily Mail," who is also a banned person.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement has called upon people in Britain who have been political detainees and prisoners in South Africa to participate in a protest demonstration outside South Africa House, London, today.

In a statement issued in London, the African National Congress said that the death demonstrates that the ill-treatment, torture and murder of political prisoners continues despite the serious concern being shown by all the people inside South Africa.

The congress demands "an immediate halt to the current wave of South African police terror against political opponents of its racist regime," and the "right of the people of South Africa to organise freely without interference from the security police."

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