

# Timol death theory denied

A theory that detainee Ahmed Timol fell to his death while being held out of a window at John Vorster Square as part of a torture routine known as "the parachute," has been discounted by an ex-member of the Bureau for State Security.

Gordon Winter puts forward this theory in his book, "Inside BOSS," in which he describes his activities as a spy and bases it on a conversation he is alleged to have had with a member of the Security Police and certain deductions he made from evidence presented at the inquest on Mr Timol.

According to Winter, Mr Timol may have kicked a security policeman while he was being suspended as part of "the parachute."

The Star's informant said he believed Winter's theory to be untenable for two reasons.

First, he had been informed by a person who claimed to have been present that Mr Timol, possibly disorientated and believing himself to be closer to ground level than he actually was, tried to escape and had reacted too quickly to be stopped.

"Second, and more importantly, I would point to the situation of John Vorster Square. The upper floors are plainly visible both from the motorway (M2) and from the streets below," he said.

"I cannot discount the possibility that third degree methods may not be used on occasions, but to me it is inconceivable that anyone could have attempted what Winter suggests.

# Phoney line on Timol

THE STAR  
FRIDAY NOV. 3 1972.

IT is distasteful, it is naive, it is dangerously misguided, this chorus of self-justification that now rises from the Government and its propagandists over Timol's death.

Because a court has established to its satisfaction that the late Ahmed Timol was a communist activist. This is supposed to excuse whatever led him to jump to his death from a 10th-floor police station window a year ago; and the public is told to remember this next time there is an outcry over security methods.

But what Timol was or was not does not come into it at all. The concern which The Star and many others felt at the time was over the circumstances of his death—the fact that it happened while he was in police custody, and the secrecy in which it was veiled.

Many months after Timol's death, and after protracted legal efforts by his family, the mystery was partly cleared up by an inquest finding that he jumped and was not pushed. What led him to jump remained obscure, and always will.

Can the State no longer distinguish between justice and punishment?

Does it not recognise that an accused person—any accused, no matter how guilty he may later be proved—has certain fundamental rights? And that where these rights are cut away by security laws, the police have a special duty to be extra scrupulous in their care of prisoners?

The public should not be misled by the facile, phoney propaganda line that the court finding has relevance on this point.