

Shallow spirit, empty heart

THE sickening events of the past two weeks have sharpened the focus on the long history of misdirected statecraft in this country.

As Sophocles put it centuries ago — and it is axiomatic that we never learn from history — I put it to Mr Vorster, the police (and the rest of his Cabinet):

Do you "think your edicts strong enough
To overrule the unwritten unalterable laws
Of God and heaven, you being only a man?
They are not of yesterday or today, but everlasting...
I think, for what my young opinion's worth,
That good as it is to have infallible wisdom,
Since that is rarely found, the next best thing
Is to be willing to listen to wise advice...
Surely to think your own the only wisdom,
And yours the only word, the only will,
Betrays a shallow spirit, an empty heart.
It is no weakness for the wisest man

To learn when he is wrong, know when to yield."

("Antigone")

As there is lamentably little likelihood of a change of government in South Africa, the

most one can hope for is that the present regime can be made to desist from the uglier manifestations of its indigestible policy.

Michael Irwin
Yeoville.

Death of a detainee

AFRIKANER SPEAKS

I AM an Afrikaner, but I am also a South African. Until recently I was proud of this fact.

Now I am ashamed of the country of my birth. Can you be proud of a country in which patriotism and party politics are inextricably confused; a country in which any opposition to inhumane policy is barely tolerated.

It is not only perversion of justice which has changed my attitude, but the apathy and acquiescence with which my people regard the wrongs in this country.

Rian Malan
Linden.

I AM sickened by what has happened and will, apparently, go on happening to detainees at the hands of the Security Police.

Has the Government no conscience? Does it think we can be fobbed off by having Current Affairs tell us how the British are treating IRA detainees?

I, like so many others, am appalled and, I must add, ashamed of being a South African under this Nationalist Government.

W. E. B.

Parkwood.

HOW will the Nationalists feel about the Bureau of State Security when their party is out of power? There is a fair chance this will happen after the next general election.

A. J. Slater

Parkhurst.

I PROTEST that Springbok Radio did not even mention the death of Ahmed Timol and the illness of Mr Essop on their 7 pm news broadcast on October 28.

O. V.
Bryanston.

Wait for the (public) inquest

IN view of the hysterical outburst of some newspapers as a result of the death of Ahmed Timol I would like to point out the following.

Whenever a person dies of unnatural causes his death is followed by an inquest, conducted by a magistrate. The

inquest is open to the public and can be reported by newspapers.

Since this procedure will also follow in the case of Mr Timol, why then the hysterical cry for a public inquiry?

The public expects that our newspapers should act responsibly. Would it not be better

in cases like this and in the best interests of our country if newspapers restrained themselves from casting suspicion on our police and Security Police until after the inquest?

If the inquest still leaves questions unanswered, then, and only then, could it become the duty of newspapers to

interfere on behalf of the public.

By going about it as they are doing now, some newspapers only succeed in creating friction between the public and our police who are trying to safeguard our country for our own benefit.

Charl Vorster
Yeoville.