

What about the Courts before whom all these terrible stories are related, and then denied by a succession of police witnesses? Is there nothing they can do to uncover exactly what does go on in the interrogation chambers? It seems not. Remember the case of Joseph Mdluli, arrested one day in a state of good health, and dead the next, having been in the hands of nobody but the security police? Months later four security policemen were charged with culpable homicide. They were found not guilty because it could not be proved that they were present at the time of Mr Mdluli's death. But the judge was not happy and he remarked "I need hardly say that the problem of how Mdluli met his death is one that should be solved" Well, it will not be, for the Attorney-General of Natal announced recently that his department had carried out a further full investigation into the case and he had come to the conclusion he could not institute criminal proceedings against anyone. If it proved impossible in terms of our law to pin the Mdluli death on anyone, how on

<sup>1</sup> Natal Mercury, 15.3.1977;

<sup>2</sup> Natal Witness, 29.1.1977;

<sup>3</sup> Natal Mercury, 8.2.1977;

<sup>4</sup> Daily News, 4.2.1977;

<sup>5</sup> Natal Mercury, 23.2.1977;

<sup>6</sup> Natal Witness, 4.5.1977;

<sup>7</sup> Daily News, 19.4.1977;

earth will it ever be possible in any other detainee's case?

The Government indignantly denies that there could be any systematic psychological or physical torture of political detainees in South Africa and rejects all requests for an inquiry. Yet evidence over nearly twenty years, in a succession of political trials, suggests that torture may be used systematically by some members of the security police. If Britain was prepared to accept the findings on torture in Northern Ireland of the Human Rights Commission, why shouldn't we submit our interrogation system to the investigations of a totally independent body, perhaps the International Red Cross? Or if national pride balks at that, what about a retired Judge of Appeal? Or any other acceptably independent inquiry?

All we want to know is this. Is torture being used by some policemen in the interrogation of political detainees or is it not? □

<sup>8</sup> Weekend World, 26.5.1977;

<sup>9</sup> Daily News, 16.3.1977;

<sup>10</sup> Daily News, 13.4.1977;

<sup>11</sup> Daily News, 7.4.1977;

<sup>12</sup> Daily News, 8.3.1977;

<sup>13</sup> Weekend World, 26.5.1977.

## 2

# THE MANDELA VENDETTA

In 1964 Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment. Since then he, and the other six black men sentenced with him at the famous Rivonia trial, have been on Robben Island.

In April 1977, twelve-and-a-half years later, the Press was taken on its first conducted tour of the prison since Nelson Mandela was sent there. The tour, as with all such tours of the institutions of any state, was we suppose, intended to show the newspapermen that Robben Island was not such a bad place after all. We note that, although the newspapermen were not allowed to speak to Mr Mandela, it is quite obvious, from their reports of his attitude to their party, that he did not want to speak to them, or be seen by them. No doubt he regarded the whole visit as the piece of official window-dressing it undoubtedly was. This being the case, and his attitude being obvious, we regard the attempts by some of the newspapermen to catch a glimpse of Mr Mandela, and the photographs taken of his cell, as an insensitive and unmannerly intrusion into that small area of privateness which, over the years, we hope he may have been able to create for himself on that grim island.

This intrusion on Mr Mandela has now been followed by an announcement that he is to be charged by the prison

authorities with "insolence". We await with interest details of his offence. Is it really possible that a man of Nelson Mandela's stature, at the age of 59, can be charged with insolence? We suppose that within the terms of prison regulations, it is. Within the terms of the outside world even the suggestion that such a thing could happen is ludicrous, and shaming.

Is this, perhaps, just another episode in the campaign of persecution which the Nationalist Government has waged without let-up and with increasing vigour against the Mandela family since the 1950's? While her husband has been on Robben Island, Winnie Mandela has been subjected to every conceivable form of harassment. She has been banned. She has been imprisoned for breaking her ban. She has been detained, and charged, and had the case against her thrown out, and has then been detained again. Her ban has been allowed to expire and, after a brief spell of relatively normal living, another has been imposed upon her. And according to evidence before the Cillie Commission an attempt was made by the Security Police to implicate her in last year's Soweto upheavals by persuading at least one young man, under duress, to give false evidence against her.

And now the most vicious act of all. In the early hours of a morning in May, Mrs Mandela's Soweto house was surrounded by a small army of Security Policemen, her furniture and other belongings were loaded on to trucks, and she was transported into banishment in the village of Brandfort, O.F.S., where she has neither family, friends, nor work. She will live in a house without electricity, water or telephone, all of which she had in Soweto.

What do these heroes of the hours of darkness, who did this terrible thing to Mrs Mandela, hope to achieve by it?

Do they think that, by cutting her off from Soweto, they will somehow solve their problems there? Do they think that if they have half the Mandela family shut up on Robben Island and the other half in Brandfort, South Africa and the world will forget about them? Or have they reached the stage where only new outrages will satisfy their appetite for persecution of what is, and will continue to be, one of the most important families in South Africa? □

### 3

## AFTER VIENNA

While Mr Vorster announced at the end of his May visit to Vienna and Geneva that he regarded it as a definite success, and while he was welcomed back home by cheering crowds of Nationalist enthusiasts, rather as Dr Verwoerd was when he took South Africa out of the Commonwealth, to most South Africans his trip looked more like a disaster. For had he not perhaps cut our country's last life-line to survival? His and Mr Pik Botha's post-Vienna reports to Parliament make it look dangerously like that.

If "majority rule", to which Liberals look forward, frightens the life out of Nationalists, will they never see that "separate development", as an alternative, is a complete non-starter? Nor will it ever be anything else. Black South Africa and Black Africa and most of the rest of the world will not suddenly forget that separate development grew out of apartheid which grew out of baaskap. They will not forget that it confines Black South African aspirations to 13 % of the country, gives the richest 87% to the Whites, and is a policy in whose formulation, since the 1940's, blacks have had no say at all.

Black Africa, in the Lusaka Manifesto, recognised the tears of being swamped which White South Africans, particularly Afrikaners, experience. All that manifesto asked for from South Africa was a clear indication that apartheid would be abandoned and a deliberate move be started away from discrimination, towards a society in which black aspirations could be fully realised and black political thinking and power fully recognised on the basis of a policy acceptable to black people.

There is only one way in which such a situation can be reached and that, as we have said so often before, is by Mr Vorster sitting down and talking to black leaders and working out with them a solution to which they can subscribe. There is certainly no other way in which South Africa can make itself what Mr Pik Botha calls "internally invulnerable", and unless Mr Botha is prepared to face this fact it really isn't going to make much difference that he, and not the HNP man, won the Westdene by-election.

A recent speech by Dr Piet Koornhof has raised speculation that the Government may at last be preparing to give some serious thought to the position of urban Africans. There is no longer time for this kind of kite-flying. The moment has arrived for the Government to state quite openly that South Africa is now entirely on its own, its situation is desperate, a way back to international acceptability must be found, by all its people together, and that it intends starting talks, to work out our joint future, not only with the people it regards as black leaders, but also with all those others who are imprisoned or banned.

What a release of hope and energy and goodwill would follow such an announcement, and, whatever political formula came out of it, the road back to international recognition, and reconciliation at home, would have been laid. We would have escaped from the dangerous and suicidal dead-end in which we are now stuck.

A dream? Maybe. But the alternative is that nightmare too ghastly to contemplate which each day spent on our present course brings nearer. □