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COVER PHOTOGRAPH of a mourner at the funeral of Selby Msimang, by Joe Alfors.	

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EDITORIALS

1. NEIL AGGETT

We would not like anyone to think that, because there was no comment on Dr. Neil Aggett's death in the last issue of REALITY, we have no thoughts on the matter. We have plenty. The only reason they were not expressed then was that that issue was already with the printers when Dr. Aggett died.

Our thoughts are roughly these.

Along with Mrs. Helen Suzman we think that Dr. Aggett was killed by the Terrorism Act and its provisions for solitary confinement under interrogation, and that whether those provisions led to his death through miscalculation, as in the case of Steve Biko, or to his suicide, hardly matters.

We think that the Terrorism Act is designed to reduce those detained under its provisions to a state where most of them will say what their interrogators want them to say. If their personalities disintegrate in the process, bad luck.

We think that the occasional death of a person held under the Terrorism Act is a source of embarrassment to the

interrogators, not much more than that. After all, not one of these deaths has yet led to anyone being convicted of any crime, and there are small grounds for hope that one ever will.

We think that there are some interrogators who may even regard the deaths in detention of some detainees as a useful aid in their efforts to break down others. After the disturbances at Ngoye in 1976 a witness testified that after his arrest a policeman told him that he was going to meet a police captain "who had already killed ten people in detention". And, at the inquest into the death in detention of Mapetla Mohapi, Miss Thenjiwe Mtintso testified that, during her own detention, she had been warned by a security policeman that, if she continued to lie, she would go "the same way as Mohapi".

Finally, we think the time has long passed when our courts should refuse to accept any evidence given by anyone who has been held under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act. □