

# in this issue . . .

	Page
EDITORIALS: 1. ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG . . . . .	2
2. A MIRACLE PENDING? . . . . .	3
NAMIBIA: THE UNILATERAL DECEMBER ELECTION by Bryan O'Linn . . . . .	4
S.W.A./NAMIBIA ELECTION by Paul Weinberg . . . . .	6
CRISIS IN EDUCATION by Nthato Motlana . . . . .	8
GANDHI THE LAWYER by H. E. Mall . . . . .	9
THE TRANSVAAL GANDHI CENTENARY COUNCIL by Sheena Duncan . . . . .	11
CASEY AND COMPANY. Review by Marie Dyer . . . . .	13
COMMENT by Oscar D. Dhomo . . . . .	14
A REPLY by Sheena Duncan . . . . .	15
REVIEW: CENTURY OF SOUTH AFRICAN SHORT STORIES by Tony Voss . . . . .	16
REVIEW OF REALITY ISSUE ON ANGLO-ZULU WAR by Oscar D. Dhomo . . . . .	18
LATEST COMPARISON FROM UNESCO COURIER OCTOBER 1978 . . . . .	20

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## **EDITORIALS**

# ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

As the Information Department scandal goes rumbling on, the rumbles growing louder each time the authorities take another clumsy step to prevent the full story reaching us, it is right that we should go on pressing questions on our rulers that they would rather we didn't ask anymore.

For instance:—

How much would we ever have learnt about the scandal if Judge Mostert had not defied the Prime Minister and made public what his investigations into contraventions of currency regulations had revealed to him about the Department's activities?

And why did the Prime Minister try to keep him quiet?

And, having failed to bludgeon the Judge into silence, why did the Prime Minister immediately threaten to prosecute any newspaper which published what he said?

And when every worthwhile newspaper did publish what the Judge had said, why didn't he prosecute them?

And why was it that, up until the day before the Judge's revelations, the Government furiously denied the need for a Judicial Inquiry into the Information Department, but no sooner had he made them than one was appointed? It cannot be that it didn't know that something fishy was going on in the Department, because the report of the Erasmus Commission makes it quite clear that it did.

While the cynic's view is that the answer to all these questions is that the Government was trying to stop us ever knowing the full extent of corruption in its ranks (and, indeed, that this is still its main concern) the Prime Minister insisted that his objection to the publication of Judge Mostert's allegations was that they told only one side of the story. But if that was his view in October, why should it have changed since then? Why, for instance, should the Prime Minister's considerable weight have been thrown behind the move to force Dr Connie Mulder out of Parliament, the only place where he could safely have

given his side of the story? And why does he appear to have accepted without qualms, the extraordinary decision not to charge former security chief General van den Bergh in a court of law (the only place where he could freely have given his side of the story) for his contemptuous references to the Erasmus Commission?

Neither Dr Mulder nor General van den Bergh were ever ones for giving their opponents the opportunity to state their case in public. They preferred to ban them or detain them. But that they should enjoy the right they denied to others we have no doubt at all and certainly so if we are to get the "clean administration" to which the Prime Minister says he is committed.

The attempts which have been made so far to conceal the full extent and implications of the Information Department scandal have been as sickening as the revelations themselves. But then South Africa is sick, and has been for a long time. The Afrikaner Nationalist's carefully nurtured image of himself as the clear-eyed, incorruptible, modern-day frontiersman lies in pieces. It has shattered along the fault-lines of a thread which has run through the application of his policies ever since he came to power those thirty years ago . . . the doctrine that where the end is the survival of the Afrikaner people any means are justified.

But it is not only the Afrikaner Nationalist who suffers from the sickness which flows inevitably from the acceptance as a basic, if unacknowledged, principle, that the end will justify the means. Long before the Union of 1910, as our recent Anglo-Zulu war issue showed, this was the principle on which men like Sir Bartle Frere were acting. The only difference between now and then, perhaps, is that with the passage of time the application of the principle has become more subtle. Instead of using the gun, one now uses the law. And for more than two generations, since 1910, white South Africans have been using their power to make laws to ensure that they will prosper at the expense of others.

What could be more corrupting than that? That one should use one's power, year after year, to arrogate to oneself, at the expense of people weaker than oneself, all the best things in life? The years of apartheid have simply sharpened an old process.

The Information scandal has only indicated the surface manifestations of our malady. Its roots go much deeper than that. Basically they stem from greed.

White South Africa had better start digging down a good deal deeper into its condition and start doing something about curing it, before it can assure itself an African future. □

## A MIRACLE PENDING?

REALITY has viewed with a generally sceptical eye the progress of events in Namibia since the Turnhalle Conference was originally convened, in particular the South African-sponsored elections held last December and the DTA victory which they predictably produced. Some of the reasons for our scepticism about that election are dealt with in articles in this issue.

Nevertheless, what has happened since that election does

give grounds for hope. The agreement of all parties involved in Namibia to take part in UN-supervised elections before the end of the year and the fact that Mr Ahtisaari's January visit passed off without any serious differences appearing to arise between him and the South African authorities, suggest that we may still see a miracle performed there, and an internationally acceptable formula for independence found. Hold thumbs for that! □

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