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A quick inquest

THERE is one aspect of the Biko case everyone should be able to agree on — that it is in the national interest to establish the cause of death as quickly as possible.

We have expressed our view that inquests are not adequate to reveal the full facts about deaths in detention; that what is needed is a full judicial inquiry.

Very well then, since it has become so important to clear the air with all speed in this matter, let us have the inquest. But quickly.

It may not probe everything we believe ought to be scrutinised about methods of detention and interrogation, but in this particular case it will at least answer the one thing that has become of supreme importance.

What caused Steve Biko's death? Mr Kruger implied in several statements, which left no room for doubt in anyone's mind, that it was caused by a hunger strike.

Others, including this newspaper, immediately voiced doubts about whether this could be so. Firstly because, according to Mr Kruger himself, Mr Biko only began refusing his meals seven days before he died.

Why, for example, did he indicate to the Nat congress that Mr Biko hadn't been force-fed — then next day issue a public statement saying he had?

Why was Mr Biko referred from one doctor to another — apparently five in all — if none could find anything wrong with him?

Why did the district surgeon in Port Elizabeth feel it necessary to transfer him to Pretoria, instead of admitting him to hospital in Port Elizabeth?

And why, on arrival in Pretoria, was he not admitted to hospital there? Why did he die in his cell?

'Mail' man well ahead in Roof rally

By LEICESTER SYMONS
MASERU. — Robbie Wicks of the Rand Daily Mail team had a 14-minute lead on his KTM 250 yesterday afternoon when competitors passed through Rama's Gate, back into South Africa, after their first day's racing across Lesotho in the Star Roof of Africa Rally.

Hotel is sold for a song...

PROPERTY EDITOR
PROPERTIES belonging to a subsidiary of S M van Achterberg Ltd, in liquidation, were yesterday provisionally auctioned at prices which reached a low of only 25% of municipal valuation.

Two killed, 34 hurt in crash

Staff Reporter
AT least two people were killed and about 34 injured, 11 of them seriously, when a railway bus overturned on the road between Heidelberg and Alberton yesterday.

Maria Callas dies at 53

PARIS. — Maria Callas, acclaimed the most brilliant soprano of modern times — and the most temperamental — died in her Paris apartment yesterday aged 53. She apparently had a heart attack.

Born in New York of Greek parents, she took up singing at the age of eight as an escape from an unhappy childhood.

At her first audition — at La Scala, Milan — she was turned down because of her "imperfect" voice but went on to take the world of opera by storm.

In an interview, she spoke of every singer's need for iron discipline and constant work, always aimed at achieving perfection.



A sight to please any nature-lover's eye, Melodie Hertslet, 18, of Johannesburg, among some of the flowers that will be on display at the Transvaal Horticultural Society's wild flower show at The Wilds, Johannesburg, today and tomorrow.

Min. Kruger se aangenuoene het oarvoeding gekry
BIKO: SO IS HY DOOD
Sterf in sy sel
BPC-leier wou nie eet — sterf

How the Nat Press headlined Mr Kruger on Mr Biko's death.

Kruger's new statement creates 'utter confusion'

By JAYNE LA MONT
MINISTER OF Justice Mr Jimmy Kruger's fourth public statement since the death of Mr Steve Biko on Monday night has "sown complete and utter confusion in the public mind," Mr Ray Swart, acting leader of the PFP, said last night.

On the SABC-TV news last night and in an interview with Sapa, Mr Kruger said he had never suggested at any stage that Mr Biko had starved himself to death.

SA's man quits
By RICHARD WALKER
NEW YORK. — Andy Hatcher has quit his job as South Africa's key black publicist in the United States. No explanation was given.

I didn't say he starved to death — Kruger

SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION
THE Minister of Justice, Mr Jimmy Kruger, said yesterday he had never stated that Mr Steve Biko, the detained black activist, had starved himself to death in prison.

Mr Kruger also said that Mr Biko would have been charged with drafting and distributing pamphlets inciting people to arson and rioting.

Biko post-mortem given top priority

By SHEILA WING
THE POST-MORTEM on Mr Steve Biko was being treated as a priority case, Professor J Loubser, the State pathologist who conducted the autopsy, said yesterday.

Asked to comment on the challenge by Mr Woods, Mr Kruger said: "I am aware of local and international reaction. I think it all very premature. I think everybody should take the attitude that I have taken, that I am awaiting the report from the doctors."

Asked about claims that Mr Biko was a man of peace and would not involve himself with violence, Mr Kruger repeated that Mr Biko had been arrested in connection with the riots in Port Elizabeth and with the drafting and distributing of pamphlets inciting arson and riots.

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MARIA CALLAS
... "you must live music."



MR KRUGER
... fourth statement