

Alter Sect. 6 —UP demands

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THE UNITED PARTY is to demand the revision of Section Six of the Terrorism Act — the law under which Ahmed Timol was being interrogated when he jumped to his death from the tenth floor of John Vorster Square last Wednesday.

Meanwhile in PRETORIA today will be a day of penitence and fasting for Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians and Methodists, so that they can express their distress at Mr. Timol's death and the confinement in hospital of Mr. Mohammed Essop.

In PORT ELIZABETH, last night more than 50 people signed a letter to the Minister of Justice asking for a full inquiry into the detainee's death.

SUPPORT

Mr. Mike Mitchell, the United Party's shadow Minister of Justice, said yesterday the party would do everything in its power to have section six revised.

Although the party had supported the second reading of the Bill in Parliament, because special legislation was necessary to deal with terrorists on the country's borders, it had vigorously opposed the section during the committee stage.

"We will again demand that it be revised. The party has always been consistent, and has always demanded its revision," he said.

"We can see no reason whatever why this section should be used in any area where judges are available, nor have we ever been given any reason by any Nationalist Minister nor anybody else.

"What reason can there possibly be for wanting to use it when judges are available, except:

● "That you don't want judges to hear both sides of the matter.

● "That you don't want judges to lay down conditions for the detention.

POWER

● "You have absolute 'carte blanche' to use the detention for interrogation for whatever business you want, especially knowing that you are supported by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Police."

Mr. Mitchell said it was "disgraceful" for the Minister of Justice to say that the law under which people were detained could be left to the discretion of the police.

"Is he so unconcerned? Is he

happy to abandon his responsibilities? It is time these Ministers, who are so intoxicated by the exuberance of their own power which they have wielded for so long, are put in their place.

"It is time for a new government. The United Party will be as tough on terrorists and persons intent on subverting the State as we were in the days when we locked up Mr. Vorster.

"But we will do so with the admitted support of every right thinking and law abiding citizen, by operating through the normal democratic processes and the courts."

Mr. Mitchell said the Government had abdicated its responsibility "to the public, to the country, to the rule of law, to our good name, and to the folk in favour of the discretion of whatever policeman exercises the power at the time."

'Alter the Terror Act'

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In addressing the General Council of the Bar in Grahamstown some time ago, Mr. Vorster had defined democracy as meaning regular elections and a free and independent judiciary, Mr. Mitchell said.

"But his action, or lack of action, in this regard has deprived the individual of one of the foundations of democracy in terms of his own definition.

"It is no good saying that the judiciary is part of the democratic process and that we are a democracy, and at the same time moving one of the foundations of the democracy outside the access of the free and independent judiciary," he said.

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Dugard: Terror Act 'monster'

Staff Reporter

THE TERRORISM Act had become a monster in South African society, and its repeal should become the aim of all right-thinking South Africans, Professor John Dugard, Professor of Law at the University of the Witwatersrand, said yesterday.

"The prosecution and conviction of the Dean of Johannesburg has drawn attention once again to the sinister implications of the Act and the severe restrictions it places upon freedom of speech and freedom of political activity," he said.

Churches and universities would have to take note that certain subjects were virtually taboo and beyond discussion.

IMPOSSIBLE

"The morality of violence, and civil disobedience, for instance, are subjects which will in future be practically impossible to discuss, despite the fact that they are widely debated in most Western countries.

The dean's prosecution and conviction showed the far-reaching restrictions on political activity imposed by the Terrorism Act, Prof. Dugard said.

"Events of the past week highlight the horrifying features of the detention-without-trial section of the Act."