

TIMOL 'DID NOT DISCUSS POLITICS'

Pretoria Bureau

A FORMER woman friend of the dead detainee Mr Ahmed Timol told a Supreme Court judge today that he had never discussed politics or communism with her.

Miss Gadija Chotchia of Newclare, Johannesburg, was being cross-examined at the trial in the Old Synagogue, Pretoria, at which four Indians face a charge under the Terrorism Act and three alternative counts under the Terrorism and Suppression of Communist Act.

Mr Mohamid Salim Essop, 22, Mr Yousuf Hassan Essack, 21, Mr Indhrasen Moodley, 27, and Mrs Amina Desai, are appearing before Mr Justice Snyman. It is alleged they conspired with the South African Communist Party and/or the African National Congress and/or Mr Timol.

Cross-examined by Mr J. Browde, for Mr Essop, Miss Chotchia said Mr Timol would have been unjustified in telling people she was a potential recruit for the Communist Party.

IN THE BOOT

Police Sergeant L. G. Klein said in cross-examination that Mr Essop did not give the impression he was afraid of what would be found in his car's boot when he was stopped at a road-block.

He gave evidence about stopping a car driven by Mr Essop in a road block in Johannesburg last October.

Mr Ahmed Timol, the detainee, who later committed suicide by jumping from the 10th floor at John Vorster Square, was a passenger.

less than a metre from Mr Timol and had smelled nothing.

Constable Stephanus Fourie, who assisted Sergeant Klein at the road block, was then cross-examined.

He told the court he could not remember the exact words spoken by Sergeant Klein and Mr Essop at the roadblock.

It was possible, he said, that Mr Essop told Sergeant Klein that there were "old books" inside the shoebox in the boot.

He was not standing at the car when the boot was opened, but was positioned further up the road ready to stop other cars. He did, however, shine his torch into the boot after it had been opened.

The next witness to be cross-examined by Mr Browde was Captain G. D. Ferreira of the Security Police.

He said when the police went to the Roodepoort flat of Mr Essop they found Karl Marx's book "Das Kapital" and 11 typed pages with 583 names and addresses.

The book was on a bookshelf and the list was under the last shelf on the floor.

JUDGE'S WISH

Captain Ferreira said the book was not banned and to his knowledge could be bought in bookshops.

Mr Browde put it to him that his evidence previously had been that the list was on the last shelf. The witness replied the list was on the floor.

Miss Gadija Chotchia, of Newclare, Johannesburg, said in cross-examination she was a former friend of Mr Timol.

She was a supporter of the Coloured Labour Party which opposed communism and violence.

She had never discussed politics or communism with Mr Timol.

Mr Browde: Would he have been justified in telling people that you were a potential recruit for the Communist Party? — No.

Although Mr Timol never discussed politics, he was "aware of the position of the Coloured people in South Africa."

He had told her that he had been abroad and that he could move more freely there. He did not intend this as a criticism of the system in South Africa.

Mr Timol knew of the Labour Party's attitude to communism and violence — an attitude which she supported.

Cross-examined further, Miss Chotchia said Mr Timol knew her address. Mr Timol was unjustified if he said in a letter to the Communist Party that she was active in Coloured Labour Party politics and given them her address.

DID YOU KNOW

She did not know if Mr Timol was interested in poetry. He told her he was interested in a mail order business. When she did typing for him she was under the impression it was for a lawful mail order business.

She knew Mr Timol was interested in an Indian soccer team. Although he was a school teacher he never discussed school affairs with her.

Mr Essop had once played chess at her house and discussed folk music with her. She did not know much about Mr Essop.

Re-examined by Mr J. E. Nothling, SC (for the State), she said she told Mr Timol she was against the policies of the South African Government. She had firm views about this. She felt that "there was, and still is, a peaceful solution to the country's problems."

Asked whether she had conveyed these last views to Mr Timol she said she had not.

Mr J. Browde, SC, with Mr P. Hare, instructed by Cachalia and Lunat, appear for Mr Essop; Mr I. Mohamed, instructed by R. Bhaagwadeen, for Mr Essack; and Mr Moodley and Mr J. Coaker, SC, with Mr E. Wenzel, instructed by N. Kados, for Mr Desai. Mr J. E. Nothling, SC, with Mr K. von Lieres, appears for the State.

