

Accused says Timol 'drank excessively'

Pretoria Bureau

AHMED TIMOL, the Indian school teacher who died in police detention, "drank excessively and sometimes made a nuisance of himself," one of the accused at the Pretoria terrorism trial said today.

The evidence was given by Mr Yousuf Hassan Essack, when Mr Yousuf Essack, when being cross-examined after giving evidence in his defence.

Questioned by Mr J. E. Nothing, SC, for the State, Mr Essack described Mr Timol as an "OK guy". He said Mr Timol was quiet and gentle. One of the points about Mr Timol that he did not like was that he "drank excessively and sometimes made a nuisance of himself". Mr Essack said.

Mr Essack (21), a clerk, Mr Mohamed Salihi Essop (22), a medical student, Mr Indrarsen Moodley, a lecturer, and Mrs. Aminna Desai (51), a business-woman, face a main charge under the Terrorism Act and alternative charges under the Terrorism and Suppression of Communism Acts. All have pleaded not guilty before Mr Justice Snyman in the Old Synagogue, Pretoria.

Mr Essack denied the evidence given by an earlier State witness, Mr N. Pahad. Mr Pahad had told the court that Mr Essack, who once lodged with him, said that he "worked with Inkululeko" at Mr Pahad's flat and at a Roodepoort club.

Mr Pahad had also alleged that Mr Essack said he worked with Mr Ahmed Timol.

Cross-examined, Mr Essack said that he had known Mr Pahad since 1969. Mr Pahad was treasurer of the Dynamos Football Club, of which Mr Essack was a supporter.

Mr Essack described Mr Pahad as "quite a pleasant chap." He agreed that Mr Pahad was well balanced and said he was an efficient treasurer.

He also agreed with Mr Nothing that Mr Pahad "must have had a strong personality." Mr Essack told the court that he could not explain Mr Pahad's evidence. He did not know how Mr Pahad could have been mistaken.

Earlier, while being examined by a senior advocate, Mr J. Browde, SC, Mr Essack said that he had posted letters for Mr Timol on more than one occasion.

On one occasion, while he (Mr Essack) was on the way to post his own letters, Mr Timol hailed him and asked him to

post some for him as well.

Some of Mr Timol's letters did not have stamps, and Mr Essack said he bought stamps next day at work.

The other letters he posted at a post box on the corner of West Street and Commissioner Street, Johannesburg.

Cross-examined by Mr Nothing, Mr Essack said that he knew Mr Pahad was a clerk, but did not know which firm he worked for.

Mr Nothing: You had known him for such a long time. How is it that you don't know where he works?—It did not interest me.

POLITICS

Cross-examined on his relationship with Mr Ahmed Timol, Mr Essack said that Mr Timol had not been a "particular friend." He would not know whether Mr Timol was interested in politics.

Mr Pahad's flat, where he (Mr Essack) had lodged for a time, had been a meeting place for young Indians and there Mr Timol had sometimes spoken politics.

Mr Essack said that Mr Timol was better educated than he and therefore Mr Timol's "criticisms of apartheid were more constructive."

He agreed with Mr Timol that apartheid "was not good." Mr Essack said he did not think of changing South Africa's political system. He did not discuss what should be done to improve things.

Mr Nothing — Why not? — Mr Nothing — Why not? — Well, I do not know what to do.

He said he was leading an "active and happy life" and did not bother himself with politics. He said he rather left it to "better minds."

He did not know whether Mr Timol was one of the "better minds."

Nothing referred to earlier evidence given by two State witnesses.

They had testified that they had seen Mr Timol at work one Sunday evening at the Roodepoort Social Club. He had papers, and another Indian man whom they could not identify was helping Mr Timol.

