

## Slain activist's life honoured in Cape Town

THE Cape Town launch of the first publication dedicated to the life and death of anti-apartheid activist, Ahmed Timol, was held on February 24, in the Banqueting Hall at the Cape Town Civic Centre.

The launch was the second and the most successful of all the launches presented by the publishers of the book, STE publishers. Over 200 copies of the book were sold at the launch, which was attended by about 400 people. Many of the guests included distinguished businessmen, politicians, community leaders and the family of the author, Imtiaz Cajee, who is also the nephew of Ahmed Timol.

The speakers at the launch were the Minister in the Office of the President, Essop Pahad and the Mayor of Cape Town, Nomaindia Mfeketo.

Western Cape Premier Ebrahim Rasool played the unusual role of programme director for the launch.



**DISMAL DEPTH:** Mrs Amina Desai, a family friend of Ahmed Timol, looks out the window of the room on the tenth floor of John Vorster Square from which Ahmed Timol was thrown. "Ahmed was like a son in my house," Mrs Desai told the author.

Each of the speakers paid tribute to Ahmed Timol who died while in police custody on October 27, 1971 at the John Vorster

Square police station in Johannesburg.

Minister Pahad pointed out that although Timol was incisive and decisive in his critique of apartheid, he never judged his foes harshly and he remained a reserved and kind-hearted person. One such foe, Pahad recalls, is "that despicable principal, Lorghat, of Roodepoort High School," who collaborated with the security police whilst Timol was teaching at the school.

Both Premier Rasool and Minister Pahad said that Timol embodied a living compatibility of Muslim piety and communist ideals.

They also commented on the choice of venue – the Johannesburg Central Prison, formerly John Vorster Square – for the

Gauteng launch of the book on January 29.

This is the place where Timol was detained, tortured and killed. It was more than a symbolic act of belated defiance, but a way of confronting the grief of Timol's family and friends.

"We would never have been able to get this venue for the launch," said Minister Pahad of the Cape Town launch, "if the ANC was not in power." Minister Pahad was a close friend of Timol and the former joked that Timol was sometimes referred to as Ahmed Pahad due to the amount of time Timol spent in his company.

Minister Pahad proceeded to offer graphic descriptions of some of the methods of torture used by the security police.