

If I were the Prime Minister . . .

IF I WERE Prime Minister, I should invite to my official residence for a quiet discussion one morning in the near future the following people: a judge, the parents of Mr. Ahmed Timol and the three men who were the last to see Mr. Timol alive according to the statement of Major-General Buys.

These three men could make statements on oath before the judge describing the events which preceded the death of the detainee. Questions could be asked by the Timol family, perhaps through counsel they might be allowed to engage. The atmosphere at such a

meeting would be less tense than in any court as there would be no other persons present than those mentioned above. — MARGARET BUTLER, Hatfield, Pretoria.

Perhaps the fault is ours

CAN MAJOR-GENERAL BUYS not understand that most people would be only too glad to believe that the detainee Ahmed Timol was not tortured?

True, he did jump from a 10-storey window.

True again, the father of Mr. Essop who is ill in the Pretoria hospital, sought help from Mr. Justice Margo in order that the young man should be interrogated only by "normal" methods.

True, a number of detainees are being held incommunicado.

True, a number of detainees have died.

Can Major-General Buys not understand them, why this public outcry?

Can the Prime Minister not understand public unwillingness to accept his assurance that no investigation is necessary?

Can the police not understand that their assurance "interrogations are as humane as possible" do not give us much comfort? (Incidentally, should there ever be a time when humanness is not possible?) The Afrikaans Press is in-

clined to stress the dangers to South Africa over the borders of the country. Is it not conceivable that the fault lies within ourselves? — E. ANDERSON, Sandhurst.

Why?

AS A YOUNG PERSON, living in the country of my birth I find myself increasingly frustrated, disillusioned and sickened by the state of affairs which our Government has created.

Why must I live out my youth in a land so rife with hate, fear, intimidation, dehumanising and unjust laws?

Why can't I and my friends of other races be allowed the freedom of intimate friendship and fellowship without the fear of being picked up at 4 am in the morning and dealt with by the Security Police who can do what they like, where they like, and how they like?

How much longer will the people of South Africa sit back in their apathetic way and pretend that nothing is happening?

Do they want a Nazi dictatorship? — DENNIS A. GAZARD, Boksburg.

SETTLED IN SECRET

A GAIN, A CASE involving serious allegations of ill-treatment by the police has been settled out of court without any public investigation or explanation. The police have made a payment to a Port Elizabeth African, Mr. Temba Mize, who claimed he had been subjected to electric-shock and other torture.

There have been altogether too many secret settlements of this kind — at least six that we know of in recent years, including R5 000 paid to the Imam Haron's widow. In each serious allegations of assault or torture were made, but their truth was never fully tested. They were left hanging in the air before an increasingly disconcerted public, whose suspicions are being aroused by this apparent eagerness of the authorities to avoid an airing of the facts in open court.

Now 12 men facing charges under the Terrorism Act are likewise claiming damages for alleged assault. Surely the authorities cannot allow these to be settled out of court as well!