

Mitchell slams Security Police

ACTIONS ARE THERAT TO START

Own Correspondent

DURBAN.

THE UNCONTROLLED ACTIONS of the South African Security Police are potentially as dangerous to democracy as the acts of terrorism being committed against the country, according to Mr Michael Mitchell, the United Party shadow Minister of Justice.

Commenting in Durban today on the Prime Minister's refusal to appoint a commission of inquiry into the death of the Indian detainee, Mr Ahmed Timol, he said it appeared that the Security Police were being allowed to operate without any form of ministerial control.

"This is potentially as dangerous to democracy in South Africa as is terrorism and subversion. If it is allowed to continue it will eat at the very basis of democracy," Mr Mitchell said.

"The people want the Security Police to fight subversion because they value democracy and want it protected against subversive attacks.

"But the very people charged with the protection of our democratic system are now endangering the system themselves.

"The Prime Minister is showing incredible insensitivity to the disquiet and unease of the people by refusing to have the whole matter investigated."

Mr Mitchell said Mr Vorster had also failed to tell the public why the people detained by the Security Police were being held in terms of Section 6 of the Terrorism Act and not under Section 22 of the General Laws Amendment Act.

"Under Section 22, the police are forced to bring a detainee before a judge of the Supreme Court within 14 days. The judge has the power to order his release or determine the conditions under which the detainee is to be held.

"Parliament never intended Section 6 to be used in the urban areas where judges are

always available so that Section 22 can be used.

"Section 6 of the Terrorism Act was expressly intended for use on the borders of our country."

"The Prime Minister's snide asides and insinuations are most unfortunate and will only convince people even more that a proper explanation is needed."

Anger and concern, at home and overseas, continues to mount following the death of Mr Timol, and the Prime Minister's refusal to agree to a judicial inquiry into his death. In spite of extensive cover-

age of the Common Market issue and the continued trouble in Northern Ireland, the death of Mr Timol and Mr Vorster's refusal continue to feature prominently in the British Press and on television and radio.

Mr Vorster's rejection of demands for a judicial inquiry is carried today in front-page articles in both the Times and the Guardian and was included in television and radio news bulletins last night.

The Times report refers the reader to a leading article entitled "Police terrorism in South Africa." It is the second leader in a major British daily on the question of detainees in South Africa since Mr Timol's death.

Referring to the demand for a public inquiry which, it says, was made with "unusual vigour," the leader suggests that many White South Africans — perhaps most — are "becoming alarmed as they see that, unchecked, it (police power) can be directed towards themselves, as well as against their fellow citizens

To Page 3, Col 5

Prayer appeal

AN appeal was made today to people of all denominations to attend a prayer meeting in Johannesburg tomorrow commemorating the death in detention of Mr Ahmed Timol.

The hour-long meeting will begin at 2 pm at the Indian Sports Ground in Vrededorp, near the corner of Kruse and 17th streets.

"We would especially appeal to other members of the community to come along—they will be most welcome," said Mrs M. Coovadia, a member of the Johannesburg Moslem community.

She said that although Moslem men and women did not normally pray together they would do so tomorrow because of the special nature of the occasion.

there's a
new look
on the
fashion
horizon

Timol:

(From Page 1)

Abuse of power by the police is common to authoritarian status — the leader continues — but the "level of sheer stupidity" in the lower ranks of the South African Police is probably higher.

It says: "Brute force is no longer the sole weapon in the arsenal of police persuasion, and to let a suspect commit suicide, or to admit to it, must seem miserable bungling in other states. There is ample evidence that much police action in South Africa is the result of pure crassness."

The article ends by praising Mr Justice Marog's injunction to the police not to interrogate the medical student, Mr Mohammed Essop, in an illegal manner. "It is in the best traditions of the South African Bench."

In Johannesburg last night, the Chief Rabbi, Dr A. S. Casper, told a congregation in the Great Synagogue, that while the authorities of the State had a heavy burden of duty to maintain stability and good order in the country, the tragic events of the last few days had increased the growing disquiet on the question of the treatment of detainees.

"There are two issues here," he said. "The first is the law permitting the detention of people without trial and no recourse to the courts. This in itself must cause concern."

"But the suspicion that such detainees may be subjected to improper treatment is causing grave anxiety, and it is surely not unreasonable to ask that the circumstances be clarified by a judicial inquiry in order to set people's minds at rest. "Where human lives are involved, official responsibility becomes great."

Eighty-seven third-year students at Wits Medical School have signed a statement to The Star protesting against the detention of their colleague, Mr Mohamed Essop.

The statement says:

As third-year medical students we cannot disguise our hurt and disgust that one of our colleagues, Mohamed Salim Essop, should suffer such arbitrary State action.

That he should be summarily arrested in the early hours of the morning two weeks before his final examinations is bad enough. That he should become extremely ill in the intervening days with no explanation is ominous.

We find the circumstances of his sudden disappearance and unexpectedly severe illness quite unacceptable.

In Cape Town, Cardinal Owen McCann, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cape Town, has called for an immediate public inquiry into the death of Mr Timol.

He announced that there would be a night vigil of prayer in St Mary's Cathedral, Cape Town, on Monday.