

Police keep a blanket silence

Staff Reporter

POLICE are maintaining a blanket silence on who they are holding under the Terrorism Act's detention clause, following the recent mass raids by the Security Police.

The Commissioner of Police, General Gideon Joubert, yesterday refused to release the names and number of those held. He gave an assurance that investigations were being carried out "with all possible speed."

"Court appearances will be made as soon as possible," he added. The general also refused permission for the Rand Daily Mail to photograph the inside of the room from which the young Indian detainee, Mr. Ahmed Timol, allegedly fell to his death.

THUD

The head of the Security Police, Major-General P. J. Venter, was again unavailable at his Pretoria office for comment on the detentions and Mr. Timol's death.

African employees of a Commission Street garage, near John Vorster Square police headquarters, said yesterday they had heard a thud about 4 pm last Wednesday and saw a crowd gather round a body outside the building.

Meanwhile, protests against the death of Mr. Timol and the principle of detention without trial continue. The United Party office in Johannesburg yesterday received about 25 telegrams calling for the ending of detentions. The telegrams are being sent to the Leader of the Opposition, Sir De Villiers Graaff.

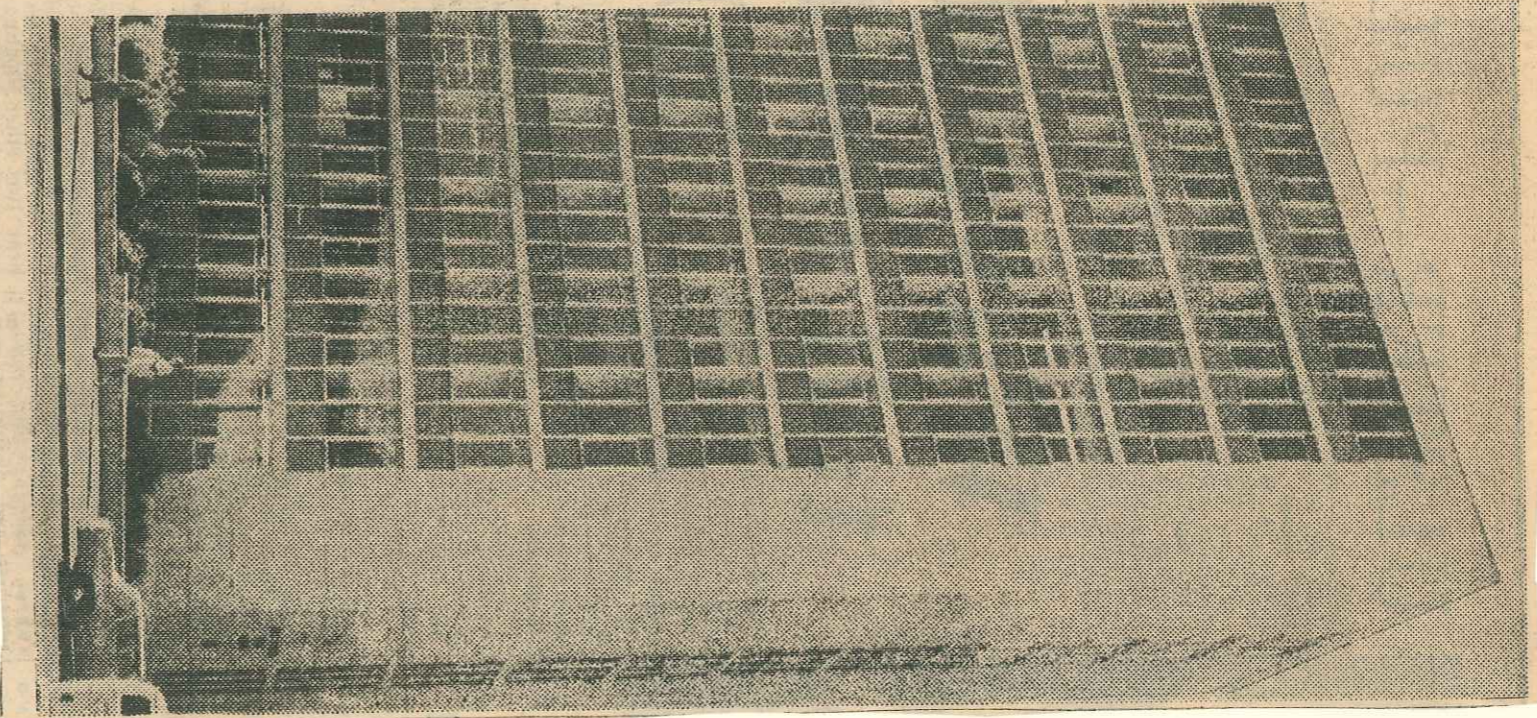
PRAYERS

The United Party shadow Minister of Justice, Mr. Michael Mitchell, told the Rand Daily Mail's Political Correspondent yesterday that he would press for the repeal of section six of the Terrorism Act which permits detentions.

Special prayers were said at Durban's Grey Street mosque for Mr. Timol, a hadji who had completed his pilgrimage to Mecca.

There are rumours among Durban Indians that another detainee, Miss Fatima Wadee, had attempted to hang herself. However, the head of the Security Police in Durban, Colonel F. Steenkamp, said Miss Wadee was well.

In an interview with the Nationalist mouthpiece, Die Burger, yesterday, the Minister of Justice, Mr. Pistor, said the police had the fullest right to use their discretion as to which laws should be invoked to detain people.



Detainee Ahmed Timol fell to his death from the 10th floor of this building — the headquarters of the Security Police.

GENERAL AT RISK

MAJOR-GENERAL C. A. BUYS, chief of the nation's CID, who is investigating the death last week of Mr. Ahmed Timol, says Mr. Timol, who was sitting calmly in a Security Police office, suddenly jumped to his feet and attempted an escape through a door. When a policeman barred his way he turned and leaped through a window to his death. General Buys added: "No one frightened him or touched him. The post-mortem will show that."

When this newspaper asked for more information General Buys retorted angrily: "Why don't you approach me first instead of going off at a tangent and blackening everybody? You have done your damndest and already thrown dirt."

These intemperate accusations suggest that he has already found everyone except this newspaper blameless. It is difficult to understand how such a highly experienced police officer should be able to reach any conclusion before he has gathered all the evidence. The post-mortem on Mr. Timol was held last week and it will be some time before the findings are known. Yet General Buys makes categorical statements of fact about Mr. Timol's condition before the fall.

Having expressed himself so forcibly, General Buys now runs the risk of being accused of lacking objectivity in this investigation. We believe the public interest would be better served if he adopted the policeman's first principles and gathered all the facts before hazarding his views about the Timol case and this newspaper.

Meanwhile, we will keep on trying to inform the public.